

## AN ANALYSIS OF SWEAR-WORDS USED IN PONDOK TINGGI DIALECT OF KERINCI LANGUAGE

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### Abstrak

Pengungkapan perasaan melalui bahasa dapat disampaikan secara baik-baik atau pun secara kasar (kata-kata kasar atau umpah serapah). Istilah ini dalam bahasa Inggris lebih dikenal "swear words". Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan jenis-jenis, arti, serta fungsi dari kata-kata umpatan yang diucapkan oleh penduduk asli Pondok Tinggi Kota Sungai Penuh. Penelitian yang dilakukan di Desa Pondok Tinggi ini termasuk dalam penelitian deskriptif. Dari hasil penelitian, peneliti menemukan enam jenis kata-kata umpatan yang dikelompokkan berdasarkan tipe-tipe penyayitubersaldarinamabinatang, alat pengeluaran, bagian dan fungsi tubuh, nama tumbuhan, nama setandan seks. Dari penelitian ini didapatkan arti serta fungsi dari kata-kata umpatan berdasarkan konteks situasi dari kata-kata umpatan dilihat dari ekspresi penuturnya. Mengingat penelitian ini masih dapat dikembangkan lagi, disarankan bagi peneliti lainnya untuk dapat menghasilkan penelitian lanjutan yang lebih mendalam lagi.

**Kata Kunci: Bahasa, Kata Umpatan, Pondok Tinggi**

### Abstract

The expression of feelings can be delivered politely or impolitely. The impolite expression usually delivered by using swear words or obscenities. In English, it is well-known as swear words. This study aimed to describe the types, meaning, and function of swear words spoken by natives in Pondok Tinggi, Sungai Penuh city. The research that was conducted in Pondok Tinggi, was included into descriptive study where the facts are what exactly found related to those words. From the results of the study, researchers found six different types of swear words that grouped by type that came from the name of the animal, excretion, parts and body functions, the plant names, name of the devil and sex. From this study, the meaning and the function of swear words based on the context of the situation of swear words seen from expression of native speakers. As this research can be still developed, it is advisable for other researchers to be able to produce advanced research for a deeper findings.

**Key words: Language, Swear Words, Pondok Tinggi**

## Introduction

Kerinci is one of the regencies in Jambi Province. It is located in Sumatra Island between two different provinces; West Sumatra and Bengkulu. Kerinci lies on the land between Mount Kerinci and Mount Raya, 1° 41 Southern Longitude to 2° 26 Southern Longitude and 101° 08 Eastern Longitude to 101° 50 Eastern Longitude.<sup>1</sup>

Like other places, Kerinci has its own daily language that is used as daily language called Kerinci Language. The number of its speaker is about 302. 809 people, Kerinci Language has several variants of dialects namely dialect of Siulak, PondokTinggi, Semurup, Rawang, TanjungPauh, Jujun, DusunBaru, Semerah, Pulau Tengah, and so on.<sup>2</sup>

Udin says that Kerinci language that is included into Austronesian Language family functions as a tool of communication in its Society.<sup>3</sup> Besides that it is also used as society literary medium that is expressed through folksong, pantun, and aphorism. Also, Kerinci Language is of course as symbol and identity of this region to express their feeling and ideas.

Kerinci people use Kerinci Language as the way to express their feelings and ideas. Wardaugh says that language is arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication.<sup>4</sup> Humans use language and it allows people to say things to each other and express their communicative needs. Language is also a way to express one's feeling no matter it is bad or good. When something is good, one will praise, but when it is bad he will be angry and may say something bad because of feeling of indignation and annoying.

To express annoying feeling, people usually use swear-words. According to Crystal swear-words and obscenities are probably the commonest signals to be used when someone is in anger or frustrated states.<sup>5</sup>

Swear-words may consists of bad words that is used to express emotion. It is usually impolite and not nice to hear, but using these words can not be denied because they are coming out naturally of one's mouth as an expression of unsatisfactory of human feelings.

Most people express their indignations by using swear-words, and so do Kerinci people, for example “*oiantau, mokdudeukntangakla! Alaulahkumah*”. It means “hey ghost,

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<sup>1</sup>Ensiklopedi Nasional Indonesia 3B. 1988. *Jambi*. Jakarta: PT. CiptaAdiPusaka., p.141-142

<sup>2</sup>Ensiklopedi Nasional Indonesia 3B, *Ibid*.

<sup>3</sup>Udin, Syamsuddin, et al. 1983. *Struktur Sastra Lisan Kerinci*. Padang. Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan., p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Wardaugh, Ronald. 1986. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Massachussets: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., p. 3.

<sup>5</sup>Crystal, David. 1991. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press., p. 10.

don't sit in the dark place!enter the house!"). From the example above we know that a swearword is uttered, that is *antau*. *Antau* means ghost to describe somebody who are in a dark place at night. The speaker is angry because from the intonation and the expression we know that is in an expression of anger. That is why the speaker calls her with *antau*.

From such phenomenon above the reasearcher would like to know what type,meaning and function of the words when she is saying so. So this study is analyzing the swear-words used by Kerinci People to express their bad feelings and temper. The problems of the analysis will be formulated as follow: what are the types, meaning and functions of swear-wordsused by the speakers based on context of utterances used in PondokTinggi dialect of Kerinci language.

## **Review of Related Literature**

### **1. Semantics**

Semantics is the study of meaning language. Crane says that the study of semantics, most basically, should specify the meaning of words and sentences and explain how they are interrelate.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, Moore says that an understanding of semantics is essential to the study of language acquisition and of language change.<sup>7</sup> It is about how users acquire a sense of meaning, as speakers and writers, listeners, and readers and how meaning alter over time. So from the definitions above we can conclude that semantics is the study of meaning between words and sentences and how users acquire the meaning of the utterances.

Semantics has two kinds of meaning; denotative and connotative. Crane says that denotative meaning is a part of meaning of word or phrase that is akin to a definition. In addition, Moore says that denotation is the core or central meaning of a word or lexeme, as far as it can be decribed in a dictionary.<sup>8</sup> While connotative meaning is connected with psychology and culture, as it means the personal or emotional associationsaoused by words. Connotative meaning includes varied aspects. Connotative meaning of "book" would be "the notions of an object collected libraries, form of printed media, and best seller". The connotative meaning of a word may include shades of feeling and judgment. From the statements of Moore and Crane, it can be concluded that denotative is the true meaning just like in dictionary but connotative is a cultural meaning depends on the users.

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<sup>6</sup> Crane, L. Ben. 1981. *An Introduction to Linguistics*. Toronto; Little, Brown and Company., P. 129.

<sup>7</sup> Moore, Andrew. 2000. *Semantics-meanings, etymology and the lexicon*. Web Address: <http://www.shunsley.eril.net/armoore/lang/semantics.htm>, retrieved on January 6<sup>th</sup> 2008.

<sup>8</sup>Moore, Andrew, *Ibid*.

## 2. Pragmatics

Pragmatics is the branch of linguistics study about the using language according to the context and function. The context and the functions can not be separated because the function of the language can only be observed from its context. According to Leech pragmatics is a study of how utterances have meaning in a situation.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Brown and Yule say that pragmatics is linguistics with contextual considerations, necessarily belong to area of language study.<sup>10</sup> From these definition, pragmatics is the study of language about how utterances have meaning in a context. If we want to know the functions of a language, we must understand the context.

We do need pragmatics in communication, according to Mey (1993) pragmatics is needed if we want a fuller, deeper, and generally more reasonable account of human language behavior. So when we want to know about the meaning and the function of a language we use pragmatics to solve it. All things that related with pragmatics is related with a context. Context is an environment that is in steady development, prompted by the continuous interaction of the people engaged in language use, the users of the language. Context decides what the presupposition will be in the speakers mind and what it will be in the utterances. All depend in a context. We may not define something without refer to the context, because context is all the answers.

## 3. Context

Pragmatics cannot be separated from context. If we want to know about the function of language we must understand the context first. Yasin (1991:259) defines context as external factor that determines communicative function.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, he says that context is stated as the situation of speech act interaction by two participants or more that can produce an utterance. So it can be said that context is the main element that makes a function of language, since it will be difficult to get idea of the utterance without looking at the context. According to Werth, context is divided into two; extralinguistics and linguistics context.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Leech, Geoffrey. 1983. *Principle of Pragmatics*. Singapore: Longman Singapore Publisher Ptc. Ltd., p. 16.

<sup>10</sup> Brown, Gillian and George Yule. 1983. *Discourse Analysis*. London; Cambridge University

<sup>11</sup> Yasin, Anas. 1991. *GrammatikaKomunikatif: Sebuah Model* (Unpublished S3 Dissertation). Malang: IKIP Malang., p. 259.

<sup>12</sup> Yasin, Anas, *Ibid.*, p. 264.

a. Extralinguistics Context

Extralinguistics context is situational context. It consists of cultural context and immediate context.

1) Cultural Context

The cultural context is not included as a language but it will influence the way to express the language. Yasin explains, "Culture of language society will determine personality, attitude, and behavior of society."<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the three factors above will influence the way speaking, and so determine the language pattern in use". These characteristics will influence the way to express the language form and structure of language of people influences the way of his attitude and thinking. It can be summarized that cultural context can form the language pattern that is used in certain place.

2) Immediate Context

Freedle says that immediate context is sociolinguistics variable that has immediate relations to utterance.<sup>14</sup> The variables in immediate context are:

- (a) Setting is place, time, and situation in which utterance takes place
- (b) Participants are determines form of language applied by speaker
- (c) Form of language refers to the way that one is used; it can be literal and written language
- (d) Topic is what the participant speaks about
- (e) Function also constitutes one of the aspects that influence the form of language applied.

It can be concluded that each of the variables in immediate context has connection between them. It is impossible to produce a meaningful utterance by leaving one of the variables since each of them has each function that determines the completeness of meaning.

b. Linguistic Context

Linguistic context is language sign that is able to give information of the relationship between the sign and element. There are two kinds of context, a subpart of linguistic context, namely discourse and semotactic context. Discourse context is discussed more in linguistics context, while semotactic context is related much to syntax. For instance: the determination of meaning based on interrelated element in category or proposition and utterance. So it can be concluded that discourse context is a discourse that

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<sup>13</sup>Yasin, Anas, *Ibid.*, p. 264.

<sup>14</sup>Yasin, Anas, *Ibid.*, p. 264.

constitutes the environment of utterance, whereas semotactic context is the determination of meaning according to the link of element in a category proposition and utterance. Discourse context plays more role than semotactic since discourse context established meaning of an utterance by viewing the environment where an utterance occurred.

#### 4. *Swear-words*

The word swear or swearing is a noun. The word swear is synonymous. It has two meaning that are quite different. Here are the definitions taken from [www.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.thefreedictionary.com):<sup>15</sup>

- a. Swearing is profane or obscene expression usually of surprise or anger; “expletives were deleted“ curse, curse word, expletive, oath, swear-words, cuss, profanity-vulgar or irreverent speech or action.
- b. Swearing is a commitment to tell the truth (especially in a court of law); to lie under oath is to become subject to presecution for perjury oath dedication, commitment-a message that makes a pledge.

In this research the data that were analyzed is swearing as bad words used to express anger, emotion and jokes.

Based on the Oxford Companion to English Language swear-words is a non-technical term for a word or phrase that is obscene, abusive, and specially offensive. They are usually associated with the genitals and sexual activity, excrement and may combine elements from each area for example fucking shit, fucking hell.

According to Crystal swear-words are the commonest signals to be used as emotional expression, especially when one is in anger or frustrated state.<sup>16</sup> Swear-words are a part of language aspects we speak to express emotion and feeling. To support this, Fagersten, said that in very basic terms, swearing refers to the use of words which have the potential to be offensive, inappropriate, objectionable, or unacceptable in any given social context.<sup>17</sup>

Andersson and Trudgill(in Staplepton, 2010) suggest that swearing can be defined as language use in which the expression:(a) refers to something taboo or stigmatised; (b) is not

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<sup>15</sup>Thefreedictionary.com.2016.*Definition of Swearing.* Web Address: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/swearing>, retrieved on January 6<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>16</sup>Crystal, David. 1991. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language.* Cambridge; Cambridge University Press., p. 10.

<sup>17</sup>Fägersten, Kristy Beers.2012. *Who's Swearing Now? The Social Aspects of Conversational Swearing.* Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing

to be interpreted literally; and (c) expresses strong emotions or attitudes.<sup>18</sup> Then we can conclude that swear-words are taboo words that are forbidden to say, but practiced in daily life.

However, on the other side Pinker noticed that swear words, such as ‘fuck’ in English swear-words, appear frequently in certain contexts and can play a different range of functions, including the role of positive politeness.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, ‘fuck’ can often be associated with expressions of solidarity, including friendly terms of address and in group membership. It shows that swear-words are not always impolite, it is also beneficial to maintain friendship and intimacy. To sum up, the emotion can be the feeling of anger or it can be intimacy as well.

### 5. The Types of Swear-words

There are nine types of swear-words in English offered by Crystal, but in this research only taken six of them that is commonly used by people. They are from sex, excretion, supernatural, body parts and functions, devils, and animal. Their explanations will be followed:

a. Swear-words from sex, such as: *cunt, fuck*

The word *cunt* and *fuck* come from something that is connected with sexual organ. *Fuck* is having sexual activity with somebody, while *cunt* refers to female sexual.

b. Swear-words from excretion, such as: *shit, piss*

The words *shit* and *piss* are taken from excretion system. *Shit* means solid matter passed from the bowels. *Piss* is to pass urine.

c. Swear-words from plant, such as: *blooming*

The word *blooming* is taken from plant. *Blooming* means flower especially of plants admired chiefly for their flower.

d. Swear-words from body parts, such as: *balls, ass* and *asshole*

The words *balls* and *ass* are taken from the part and the function of the body. *Balls* mean testicle. *Ass* means buttock. *Asshole* means anus.

e. Swear-words from devil, such as: *son of the devil, holy ghost*

The words *devil* and *ghost* are taken from the devil. *Devil* means evil spirit. *Ghost* means the spirit of a dead person that appears to somebody.

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<sup>18</sup> Stapleton, Karyn. 2010. Swearing in Miriam A. Locher, Sage & L. Graham (eds). *Interpersonal Pragmatics* (289-305). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co.

<sup>19</sup> Pinker, Steven. 2008. *Freedom's Curse*. *The Atlantic Monthly* 302 : 28-29



f. Swear-words from animals, such as: *bitch, rat, and dog*

The words *bitch, rat* and *dog* are taken from kinds of animals. Bitch means a female dog. Rat means animal like, but larger than mouse. Dog means common domestic animals.

### 6. *The Functions of Swear-words*

The functions of swear-words are complex. According to Crystal most obviously the function of swear-words is an outlet for frustration or pent-up emotion and a mean of releasing nervous energy after a sudden shock. Swear-words are used to express the feeling of anger and emotion.<sup>20</sup>

Swear-words usually are negative meaning as you see in the types of swear-words above. Using it gives negative comments to the listeners. They can be hurt. Some people say that swear-words are taboo, rude and vulgar culturally. It is an expression of negative way for annoying, emotion, anger, and indignation. Emotion means uncontrolled feeling, and anger is the feeling that makes people want to have a quarrel or fight. Most people will use this spontaneously and after that they may feel better.

However, sometimes swear-words give positive advantages for specific environment. It depends on the culture and to who we talk to. For example the environment among truck drivers in Padang. They will not be offended when one of them call him by using swearword because it is very common in their environment and it functions to maintain their intimacy.

In fact, Stapleton had discussed three major interpersonal function of swear-words, they are:

- a. Expressing emotion and/or aggression
- b. Humour and verbal emphasis
- c. Social bonding and solidarity<sup>21</sup>

So it can be concluded that saying swear-words can have negative and positive effect in communication.

### **Method of the Research**

In this research, the researcher is using descriptive qualitative research. Since it is a field study, the data of this research will be swear-words used by native speakers of PondokTinggi at PondokTinggi village. Native speakers of PondokTinggi dialect are the source of the data. The data will be taken from non-participant observation and field note. The

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<sup>20</sup>Crystal, David., *Op. Cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>21</sup>Stapleton, Karyn., *Op. Cit.*



instruments that will be used in this research are tape recorder and note book. Researcher as the key instrument will use them to record and note the data obtained during the data collection in the field. The data will be collected through the following steps: 1) the researcher will enter the social situations and getting along with the people to observe the interactions among people in social situation; 2) the researcher will do eavesdropping and selective listening technique in observation; 3) taking notes the data in the tape recorder and notebook; and 4) the researcher will go back to the speakers to ask them questions about the swear-words they just utter. In analyzing the data, the researcher will follow these steps below: 1) describing context of the utterance; 2) transcribing the data taken from the field research as the original utterances of informants; 3) translating the data. The data will be translated into English language; 4) taking out Swear-words from the utterances; 5) determining the types of swear-words. The types of data will be determined by referring to the types of swear-words; 6) referring to the data and identifying the meaning of swear-words based on context of situation; 7) referring to the data and identifying the functions of swear-words based on context of situation; 8) determining the particular context used by the speaker of swear-words; and 9) grouping the data into similar types and also their meaning and functions.

## **Findings and Discussion**

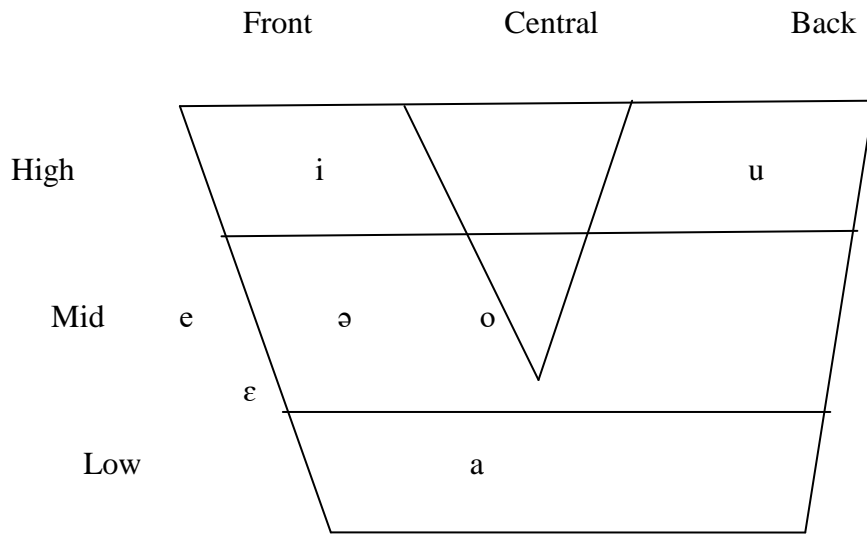
### ***Findings***

In explaining the data, the researcher puts together each corpus of data one by one together with its analysis. Each data had been translated into English in each dialogue. The data is written phonetically based on Pondok Tinggi dialect. According to Anwar et al Kerinci has 6 vowels, 19 consonants and 13 diphthongs.<sup>22</sup> So to support this research, the researcher puts vowel, consonants, and diphthongs chart below in order to give general description about Kerinci language especially Pondok Tinggi dialect:

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<sup>22</sup>Anwar, Joesnidar. dkk. 1982. *Morfologi Kata benda dan Kata Sifat Bahasa Kerinci*. Padang: Department Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan., p. 13.

### 1. Vowel Chart



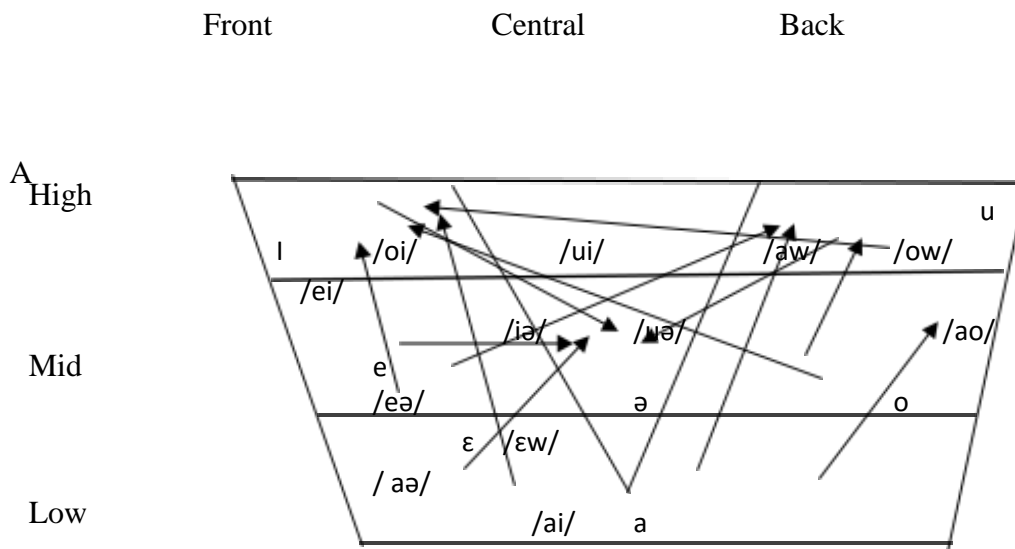
### 2. Consonants Chart

	<b>Bilabial</b>	<b>Alveolar</b>	<b>Palatal</b>	<b>Velar</b>	<b>Glotal</b>
<b>Stop</b>	P b	t d	c J	k g	?
<b>Vibrate</b>		r			
<b>Nasal</b>	m	n	ń	ŋ	
<b>Fricative</b>		s			h
<b>Lateral</b>		l			
<b>Central</b>	w	y			

### 3. Diphthongs Chart of Pondok Tinggi Dialect

There are 13 diphthongs in Pondok Tinggi dialect, they are:

/ iə, eə, ei, aə, ao, ew, aw, oy, ea, ow, uə, uy, ay/. The Position of the diphthongs can be seen as below:



After collecting data and analyzing them, the researcher can describe her findings as follow:

1. In expressing their feelings, people in PondokTinggi use six types of swear words. They are:
  - a. Swear words from animal. The names of animals that are used as swear words are **animal, dog, rhinoceros, elephant, mouse deer, crocodile, sheep, and monkey**. People there mostly use this kind of swear words.
  - b. Swear words from body part and function. People there use the word **carcass** as the swearword from body part, and the words **deaf** and **talkative** from function of body part.
  - c. Swear words from devil. They are **ghost** and **evil**.
  - d. Swear words from excretion. They are **fart** and **feces**.
  - e. Swear words from plant. It was only one during he research that is **kapok tree**.
  - f. Swearword from sex. It is **female genital**.
2. The meaning of swear words used by people in PondokTinggi is various. Swear words are used to describe a person. For example, a child is described with monkey because they have same characters; playful, active, moving here moving there, but the meaning of each swear words can be different in different context.
3. The function of swear words are various too. Their functions are not always the same. They depend on the context, whether they are to express anger, emotion, annoying feeling,

or only to create a joke, but mostly the swear words in PondokTinggi mostly to show anger and emotion.

### **Discussion**

The result of this study shows that in expressing anger and emotional feeling, people in PondokTinggi used various swear words. According to Crystal swear-words are the commonest signals to be used as emotional expression, especially when one is in anger or frustrated state.<sup>23</sup> They used swear words if they cannot control their feeling.

Christie has proposed that scholarship in the field of politeness has shown that the interactional effects of swearwords are context-dependent.<sup>24</sup> She provides a brief illustration of how such studies have supported the claims, focusing on just two: Culpeper et al. (2003), who have shown that, where the intention is to cause offence, the use of a swearword can function as an impoliteness strategy; and Daly et al. (2004) who have shown that swearing can also express solidarity when it functions as a positive politeness strategy.

In PondokTinggi swear words are uttered by older people to younger people. For example, mother to her daughter, father to her son, uncle to his nephew, brother to young sister, and so on. Moreover, Swear words are also uttered among friends, among people who have the same age. However, swear words rarely uttered by younger to older, even though it might happen sometimes.

People in PondokTinggi often used the names of animals to describe someone else. They use elephant to associate with big fat person, monkey to associate with naughty child, sheep to associate with someone who smells bad, and so on. They also use swearwords from devil, excretion, and body part and function. However, they rarely use swearwords from sex, as rarely as swear words from plants.

Animal is always used as swearwords in many languages to express anger. It is because animal has lower degree than human. Human is created with feeling and commonsense while animal is not. The name of animal that are used as swear words are various depend on the context. People usually use dog, pig, and monkey. These animals are bad. monkey is animal that has ugly face, while dog and pig are animals that are forbidden to be eaten by Muslim people.

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<sup>23</sup> Crystal, David., *Op. Cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>24</sup> Christie, Christine. 2013. *The relevance of taboo language: An analysis of the indexical values of swearwords*. *Journal of Pragmatics* 58 (2013) 152--169

Body parts and excretion, which are used as swearwords, is part that is taboo or excrete things like carcass, feces, fart, ass, and sex genital. Ghost and evil are often to be swear words. Ghost and evil are included into devil. Devil is human's enemy. They have bad performance and behavior. Their missions are to disturb human, so human can lose his/her imaan. Based on Al Quran Surah Al Baqarah verse 34:

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

Meaning:

*“ And behold, We said to the Angels: “Bow down to Adam”; And they bowed down not so iblis:He refused and was haughty: he was of those who reject faith”*

From the verse above,it can be concluded that devil is human's enemy because devil did not want to bow to Adam. Devil must obey to Allah order and bow to Adam, but they did not do it. Devils become one types of swear words to substitute people who behave like them.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, the researcher can conclude that:

1. The types of swear words used in PondokTinggi dialect of Kerinci language are 6 (six) types. They are swear words from animal, body part and function, excretion, sex, plant, and devil.
2. The meaning of swear words used in PondokTinggi dialect of Kerinci language are various depend on the context, for example: monkey is used to describe naughty child, ghost is used to describe a girl sitting in the dark place, elephant is used to describe big fat gisl, and so on.
3. The function of swear words used in PondokTinggi dialect of Kerinci language are also various depend on context. The researcher can conclude that most of the function of swear words are to express anger,emotion, and annoyed feeling, however swear words are not only to show anxiety. They are also used to show a joke that functions to maintain relationship among friends and family.

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