

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter Present an introduction of the research it also contains background of study, problem statement, the objective of the study, research question and hypothesis, and benefits of the research

A. Background of the Study

Language functions as a tool for communication, emotional expression, and social interaction. In daily communication, speakers often use informal language to express feelings, attitudes, or emphasis. One common feature of informal English is the use of profanity-based intensifiers. These expressions appear frequently in movies, video games, social media, and online discussions.

These strong words are used to make another word stronger like an adjective. According to Quirk et al. (1985), intensifiers increase the degree or intensity of an expression. In informal English communication, profanity words such as “damn,” “bloody,” and “fucking” often function as intensifiers instead of literal swear words. For example, in the sentence “That game is fucking difficult,” the word “fucking” intensifies the adjective “difficult.”

We see these words a lot in casual English media. When we learn English outside of the classroom like when we watch movies play video games or use media, we are exposed to casual language and slang. This is called learning. We can also learn language when we are doing something fun online like watching a video or chatting with friends. We might see expressions like "difficult" or "fucking amazing" when we are watching a movie playing a game or reading comments online. Wu et al. (2024) found that online spaces increasingly expose EFL learners to English swearing, while Harmaini (2026) reported that Indonesian Generation Z learners encounter English through platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. Xavier (2024) also showed that audiovisual media use taboo language for characterization and social meaning. Therefore, students need to understand

profanity-based intensifiers in context rather than interpret every occurrence as a direct insult. This means that students see words not just as something offensive but also as a natural part of communication. Jay (2009) said that strong words can have social and practical functions depending on how they are used.

Students often see words in English media. Some students do not understand what these words mean or how they are used. We do not often talk about English expressions in the classroom. Students have levels of understanding when it comes to profanity.

For students who are learning to be English teachers it is important to understand expressions because real-life communication is often different from the English we learn in textbooks. Students who watch movies or use social media a lot may understand strong words in different ways depending on their background, culture and language skills. Some students may understand these words as emphasis markers while others may think they are insults or aggressive language. Previous studies have examined taboo language, swearing, and profanity in different contexts. Love (2021) looked at how people use profanity in casual conversations in the UK. Khusna et al. (2022) studied how young Indonesian think about swearing. Daulay et al. (2024) looked at the types and functions of language in a movie script of *Uncut Gems*.

Xavier (2024) how profanity is used in movies to show what characters are like and to tell stories. Wu et al. (2024) studied how people who learn English as a language think about and experience strong English words. These studies show that strong words have functions, including linguistic, social and media-related functions. However, they do not specifically look at how Indonesian students who are learning to be English teachers understand words in casual English media. This study tries to fill this gap by looking at how students understand expressions like "difficult" "bloody stupid" and "fucking amazing".

This research wants to find out how students understand words, in casual English media. The study looks at how students interpret the meanings and functions of words through a quantitative analysis using Google Forms.

B. Limitation of the Problem

This study is about English Education students. How they understand profanities that are used to make things sound stronger in informal English media like video games, movies, social media and other things they find online. It looks at how these profanities are used to make something mean more rather than when people use them to insult someone or express strong feelings.

The participants of this study are undergraduate students enrolled in English Education programs and other programs from several universities in Indonesia. The study is limited to investigating three aspects: how much these students have seen profanity used in informal English media, how well they know some specific profanity that were chosen for the study, and what they think these words mean when they are used in a sentence. The study does not look at things about profanity, such as what people think about them how they are used when people talk or how they make people feel because that is not what this study is about.

C. Research Questions

The study addresses the following questions:

1. How frequently are English Education students exposed to profanity-based intensifiers through informal English media?
2. How often do English Education students use English-based profanity in daily communication?
3. How do students interpret the functions of profanity-based intensifiers in English expressions?

D. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To identify students' understanding of profanity-based intensifiers in informal English media.
2. To determine the most familiar profanity intensifiers among students.
3. To analyze students' interpretation of profanity intensifier functions.

E. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to provide benefits for:

1. Students:

The study on English expressions helps students learn about the English that people use every day in real life.

2. Lecturers:

The study gives teachers some ideas about how students understand informal English expressions when they are learning English.

3. Researchers:

The study on English expressions will be useful for people who study how language is used in different situations and how it affects the people who use it.

4. Future Researchers:

The study on English expressions will be a good guide, for people who want to study things like profanity, strong language how people use language or the language that people use in the media.