

Swear words among young learners: A case study of the elementary students

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Abstract

This case study examines the usage of swear words among young learners. It aims to find out the most frequently used swear words, the intense emotions that triggered the participants to swear, the strategies used to tone down the swear words, and the contributors to learning how to swear. A combination of quantitative (Likert scale survey, open-ended survey, and data elicitation from drawings,) and qualitative (interview) studies was conducted among the 109 elementary students from school A. The findings revealed that the most frequently used swear words were related to intellectual based terms and religion; anger was the primary reason for the young learners to swear to someone; the use of acronyms was commonly explored to tone down the offensiveness of the swear words, and moms were the highest contributors for the young learners to learn how to swear. Despite the limitations of the data elicitation, the instrument offered a richer data in comparison with the two other quantitative instruments (Likert scale survey and open-ended survey). It did not only present the *emotions, toning down strategies, contributors, categories* and *variations* but it also revealed the *locations* and *situational instances* where the swear words were used. Interview, on the other hand, was valuable to support the qualitative findings related to emotions and reasons for toning down strategies whereas other findings can be quantified using the frequencies presented in the quantitative instruments. Moreover, the findings also discovered that some swear words under study such as *OMG, Oh my God, or gosh* were not considered as swear words since they were mainstream words in this particular study.

Keywords: language usage, swear words, young learners

Introduction

Swearing exists in most people's repertoire. Unlike language in general, it is not typically taught in school in the usual sense, but is rather picked up from peers, parents, or media. Most often than not, society condemns the use of swear words and despises their offensiveness. They are

sanctioned or restricted under the assumption that some harm will occur if they are spoken. Nevertheless, the exact nature of harm to befall the speaker, listener, or society has never been entirely clear (McEnery, 2006).

Swearing has shown significant impact with problems at home, in school, and at the workplace (Jay, 2010 as cited in Psych Central News Edition, 2010). Its prevalent use has been alarming. In fact, Jay (2009) estimated that the average adolescent used roughly 80 to 90 swear words a day and this conversational swearing can be observed in the hallway or in the classroom (cited in Glover, 2008). In a different note, the point of swearing is to vent one's emotions such as anger, frustrations or even excitements. Jay (2002 as cited in McGuinness, 2013) mentioned that there is no other language as efficient or effective at conveying emotional information as swearing itself.

The review of related literature shows that researches on swearing were mostly conducted among teenagers and older people particularly in the western countries. Further, the research tools used to gather the data included corpus, Likert scale survey, reality TV shows and interviews. However, the participants in this particular study were young learners. The tools employed to gather the significant data were the following: Likert scale survey, open-ended survey, data elicitation from drawings, and finally interviews. Further, no research has been conducted yet in the Indonesian context that deals particularly with the group of children who were non-native English speakers and Indonesian citizens by birth; yet, their swear words' utterances were all in English. Thus, the study seeks to analyze the following research questions:

1. What are the most frequently used swear words by the participants?
2. What triggers the participants to use the swear words?
3. How do the participants tone down the use of the swear words?
4. How do the participants learn how to swear?

Theoretical framework

The categories of swear words postulated by Andersson and Hirsch (1985) which included sexual organs, sexual relations, religion, church, excrement, death, the physically or mentally disabled, prostitution, narcotics, and crime were helpful in accounting the frequency of swear words which focused on the general categories and specific swear words. In addition, swear word themes such as animal, racism and intellectual based term (McEnery, 2006) were also considered. Ljung's (2011) religious themes like celestial and diabolic were utilized to categorize the swear words that the young learners' used. Lastly, McEnery and Xiao's (2004) framework on the

variations of *fuck* was also taken into account since this specific swear word is so colorful and famous among the young learners. The aforementioned framework serve to answer Research Question 1 related to the frequency of swear words in certain categories.

The framework of motives (Andersson & Hirsch, 1985) with two fundamental types: ‘because of’ and ‘in order to’ elicited the swearing behavior. ‘Because of’ discovered the expressive language functions which included the violation of expectations or norms (e.g. ethical aspects) and emotional and mental states (e.g. anger, pain, surprise) and ‘in order to’ identified the evocative language functions: social goals (e.g. group identity) and psychological goal (e.g. arousal interest). This framework supported Research Question 2 regarding the emotions that triggered the young learners to swear.

Table 1
Research Questions and Theoretical Framework Summary

Research Questions	Theoretical Framework
1. What are the most frequently used swear words by the participants?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual organs, sexual relations, religion, church, excrement, death, the physically or mentally disabled, prostitution, narcotics, and crime (Andersson & Hirsch, 1985) • Animal, racism, and intellectual based term (McEnery, 2006) • Religion themes: celestial and diabolic (Ljung, 2011) • Variations of <i>fuck</i> (McEnery & Xiao, 2004)
2. What triggers the participants to use the swear words?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stockdale, Framework of Motives (Andersson & Hirsch, 1985)
3. How do the participants tone down the use of swear words?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politeness Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987)
4. How do the participants learn how to swear?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profanity in Media Framework (Coyne, Stockdale, Nelson & Fraser, 2011)

The Politeness Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) was focused on the ‘face’ specifically the positive face--the social sense of self that everyone expects to recognize. The positive face needs the rational members of the

society to present themselves in the best image possible to sustain self-sufficient, pure, and free from filthy matters that may damage the integrity of their faces both physically and linguistically. The said theory was used as a model to answer Research Question 3 related to toning down of swear words.

The profanity and media model (Coyne, Stockdale, Nelson & Fraser, 2011) demonstrated that exposure to swear words on television and in video games is related to more-supportive attitudes regarding swear words' usage. This model was used as a backbone to address Research Question 4 on the contributors to learning how to swear. Table 1 above recapitulates the research questions and the theoretical framework used to analyze the use of swear words among the young learners.

Research Methodology

Prior to the study, the Primary Year Programme coordinator's approval was sought to conduct the data elicitation and surveys (open-ended survey and Likert scale survey). After the approval, the author coordinated with the grade level heads to instigate the process. In addition, the author asked the help of the school counselor regarding the parents' permission to allow the young learners to participate in the survey. The counselor mentioned that the teachers can act as the young learners' guardians in the absence of the parents since the survey was conducted in the school during school days.

One hundred nine (109) Indonesian elementary students studying at school A whose age bracket was between eight to ten years old were the participants of the study. These participants were unique since their swear words' utterances were all in English. The Likert scale survey result showed that the language preference to speak was English (78 or 72%), followed by Indonesian (20 or 18%) and finally both English and Indonesian (11 or 10%). Further, the participants' exposure to the English language was supported by their eight English subjects (English, Mathematics, Science, Information Technology, Computer, Dance, Physical Education and Arts) offered in the school curriculum. More so, the young learners were not directly affected by the national examinations given by the Ministry of Education. National examinations were mandatory for Grades 6, 9, and 12. The tenets behind giving exams to the upper grade levels were basically to address the Grade 6 students who were entering junior high school, Grade 9 students who were entering high school and Grade 12 students who were entering the university level.

There are four instruments used to quantify and qualify the data. The quantitative data included the surveys (Likert scale survey and open-ended

survey) and data elicitation from drawings. The qualitative data took into account the interview. **Likert scale survey** ranged from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with ten indicators. This supported the findings of Research Question 2. **Open-ended survey** allowed the participants to write the swear words and the corresponding reasons in using the said cuss words. The participants were not limited to write only one swear word but they listed all swear words that they used or are using. This tool provided data to address all the four research questions. **Data elicitation** was used to illustrate only an instance where the young learners used the swear words. This tool supported the findings of the four research questions. **Interview** supported the quantitative data (open-ended survey and data elicitation) specifically focusing on addressing the Research Questions 2 (trigger) and Research Question 3 (tone down).

Data Analysis Method

To address Research Question 1, data elicitation and open-ended survey were utilized to find out the most frequently used swear words of the participants. The most frequently used swear words were categorized according to the general category, specific swear words, variations, locations and situational instances. Seemingly, for Research Question 2 which was related to what triggers the participants to use the swear words, all the four instruments (data elicitation from drawings, open-ended survey, Likert scale survey, and introspective individual interviews) were maximized. As regards to Research Question 3 which was associated to toning down the use of swear words, three instruments were employed namely: data elicitation from drawings, open-ended survey, and interviews. Finally, Research Question 4 used data elicitation and open-ended survey to gather the data.

The findings of the data fully maximized the use of quantitative data (open-ended and data elicitation). The interview served as a supporting tool to solidify the emotions that triggered the young learners to swear and the toning down strategies to soften the use of swear words. In addition, the Likert scale survey was utilized to reinforce the findings related to Research Question 2 (emotions that trigger to swear).

Findings and discussion

This section is divided into four sub-sections: frequency of the swear words, triggering emotions to swear, toning down of swear words and contributors to learning how to swear.

Frequency of the swear words

The swear words were categorized into five sub-sections: general, specific, variations, locations and situational instances.

1. General Categories

The general categories of swear words identified eight types: *animals, death, excrement, family specific bad words, intellectual based terms, racism, religion and sexual references*. However, only five of these types (*religion, intellectual based terms, sexual references, excrement and family specific bad word*) were illustrated in the data elicitation in comparison to the open-ended survey which covered all the eight categories. The primary reason was attributed to the nature of the instrument which allowed only one occasion for the young learners to draw an instance of using the swear words. Although the open-ended survey showed that the highest frequency was the intellectual based term, the overall findings from both quantitative tools (open-ended survey and data elicitation) showed that the young learners' most frequently used words were related to religion. The celestial swear words under the category of religion (e.g. *Oh my God* and *OMG*) were remarkably used since they were forms of expressions, or additions to the participants' utterances in order to heighten their points. This proved the statement of Jay and Janschewitz (2008) that the decision to use swear words is calculated and it involved the consideration of context in which many pragmatic factors such as conversational topic, speaker-listener relationship, social-physical setting of the communication and the level of formality of the occasion play a part as well.

As regards to the comparison between the findings of the two genders, it demonstrated that the girls predominantly used swear words which were related to the *intellectual based terms*, boys, while the boys preferred the use *sexual references* as it seemed to show their strong masculine side and validated their point that "They are boys." Further, the assumption that the linguistic restrictions imposed on people communicating within the sphere of sex should have triggered the formation of a large number of lexical items to veil the shamefulness, and embarrassment.

2. Specific swear words

A total of 50 specific swear words from the findings of the open-ended survey and 30 from the data elicitation were identified. Table 2 presents the top five swear words.

Table 2 demonstrated that the word *stupid* stood out from the findings of the open-ended survey. The primary reason was attributed to the nature of the instrument that allowed the participants to write all the swear

words they used. Further, *stupid* indicated both negative and positive connotation towards another person or to oneself. The table below presents the diverse function of *stupid*.

Table 2
Samples of Specific Swear Words

Open-ended Survey	Percentage	Elicited Data	Percentage
<i>stupid</i>	36%	<i>OMG</i>	24%
<i>shit</i>	27%	<i>oh my God</i>	12%
<i>fuck</i>	20%	<i>f-word</i>	9%
<i>shut-up</i>	17%	<i>fuck</i>	7%
<i>damn it</i>	13%	<i>stupid</i>	7%

Table 3
Diverse Function of *Stupid*

	Negative Connotation	Positive Connotation
Towards a Person	Anger Why did you push me? <i>Stupid!</i>	Conformity <i>Stupid</i> , right? Solidarity You <i>stupid!</i> (jokingly said to a friend during an online game)
	Frustration <i>Stupid!</i> He cut the line.	Form of Expression <i>Stupid!</i> (an add on word to a statement and not necessarily a marker to highlight a point)
Towards Oneself	Incompetence <i>Stupid!</i> That's the price of not listening to the teacher.	

Henceforth, a word can be coined as a swear word if the receiver was scandalized with the word that she/he heard or seen. In contrary, the data elicitation revealed that the most commonly used swear word was *OMG*. It attributed to the fact that the participants considered the swear word as mainstream since it was commonly heard everywhere or uttered by someone; hence, the swear word's offensiveness was desensitized.

3. variations of swear words

A total of eight variations were identified and the findings revealed that *fuck* topped the list of both the open-ended survey with six variations (*f-word*, *f****, *fuck*, *fuck off*, *fudge* and *mother fucker*) and data elicitation with its nine variations (*f**k*, *fuck*, *fucker*, *f-word*, *GTFO* (*get the fuck out*), *STFU* (*shut the fuck u*), *what a fuck*, *what in the f**k* and *WTF*). Despite the limitation of the data elicitation (instance of drawing was done once only), it still offered a richer data than the open-ended survey. That is, the elementary students exhibited their sense of creativity and style in exploring variations as a possible means to moderate the vulgarity of the word in order to save themselves from embarrassment or from being branded as impolite individuals. Although the current findings conformed to Ljung's (2011) findings, that is, the sources of the most popular swear word is *fuck* and its numerous variations, it demonstrated that it was focused on the parts of the speech (e.g. the variation of *fucking*, which can be used as both an adjective and an adverb and as an idiomatic expressions such as *to give a fuck* or *for fuck's sake*) unlike the current findings which identified the single words or simple phrases.

In comparison between genders, both boys' and girls' most frequently used swear word variation was *fuck*; nevertheless, the girls employed more variation of swear words than their male counterpart. The current finding opposed the study of McEnery & Xiao (2004) that male speakers used *fuck* (and different word forms) more than twice as frequently as female speakers. Primary reason can be attributed to the fact that McEnery & Xiao's respondents were adults and their data were based on the production of the British National Corpus, with metadata pertaining to demographic features such as age, gender and social class.

4. Location where Swear Words are used

A total of seven locations (*house*, *school*, *mall*, *sports area*, *restaurant*, *inside the car*, *movie house*) were identified wherein *house* was recognized as the most frequently explored area where swear words were used by the young learners. Surprisingly, it was in the same location where the participants predominantly used the swear words related to *sexual references* (e.g. *mother fucker*, *f****, *fuck off*) which were perceived to be stronger and more offensive words by the young learners. It demonstrated that the atmosphere in the house offered the participants a breathing space to use swear words since there were few pairs of ears to hear them say the bad words or sometimes they were alone in their bedrooms watching TV or searching something from their personal laptops. Accordingly, Wang (2013)

argued that the instance of swearing occurred at home signals that the users are in a more casual and relaxed environment.

On the other hand, the *school* came as the second highest location since the young learners were tricky to identify areas which were less guarded by the teachers such as the basement, canteen, and playground. Accordingly, Dewaele (2004) supported that children learn the tricky rules governing swearing in their speech community as part of their socialization process. These swear words are used with peers in certain contexts, to show group membership, but they would be banned within the classroom. Likewise, Jay (2009) stated that as individuals grow up in a culture, they learned what speech is appropriate and which is offensive in a given situation.

5. Situational Instances

Among the ten situational instances, *watching television* was the most frequently used circumstance by the young learners. This was followed by the *presence of annoying people* who were identified as siblings or classmates. The aforementioned situational instances generally occurred in the house where the young learners used the swear words related to sexual references (*fuck*) or celestials (*OMG* and *oh my God*). This signified a consistent finding with the most frequent locations (*house* and *school*) where swear words were uttered by the overall participants.

The Triggering Emotions to Swear

Six identified emotions (*angry, pissed off, annoyed, surprised, mad* and *shocked*) triggered the young learners to use the swear words in *Talking to Others*. It demonstrated that *anger* topped the list and interestingly, thesaurus suggested that it is synonymous in meaning with *pissed off, annoyed* and *mad*. This was also supported by the result of the Likert scale survey which divulged that 45 (41%) out of the 109 participants disagreed that "*Swearing reduces anger.*" Nevertheless, *anger, pissed off, mad* and *annoyed* were associated with a negative feeling towards someone. Meanwhile, the emotional intense feelings such as *surprised* (e.g. a classmate pushed her from behind) and *shocked* (e.g. meeting a friend unexpectedly in the same place in the mall), suggested a different perspective--more of a positive and welcoming emotion.

In contrary, the *Talking to Oneself* which is described as spontaneously and subconsciously uttering of swear words to oneself or to an object (e.g. new toy) or an event (e.g. online games, TV shows) revealed that *admirable* topped the list. Interestingly, *admirable, shocked* and *surprised feelings* preferably used the celestial category (e.g. *OMG* and *oh*

my God) that appeared to lose their “swearwordness” due to their regular usage in public and that no one was calling the participants’ attention whether the words were prohibited or not; while, *angry* feeling was identified to connote a negative response.

Apparently, the comparison between the results of *Talking to Others* and *Talking to Oneself* hinted that the young learners exhibited their intense feelings mostly when they were dealing with someone. It can be speculated that it is normal to get angry with someone because of his/her exhibited bizarre behavior in comparison to something which did not do anything against the user. Although *admirable* can also be expressed to someone to show high regard of positive adoration, yet, in this particular study it was only linked to something. It demonstrated that the appreciation and likable feelings of something were described as visually extra ordinary and endearing such as a cute puppy, long black hair or the presence of the phenomenal eclipse.

The Toning Down of Swear Words

Four strategies such as the use of acronyms, euphemisms, self-censoring and asterisks were used to soften the offensiveness of the swear words. Among the four, the use of acronyms (e.g. *OMG*) was mostly utilized. The young learners claimed that the use of acronyms was easier and shorter to utter as it was associated with social networking such as *whatsapp*. This finding supported Shi Yun’s (2012) study among the Chinese teenagers in Singapore who also used acronyms in covering the offensiveness of the words and only when they spelt out the acronyms that they realized their offensive contents.

Seemingly, euphemisms were used to replace the swear words (*gosh* instead of *God*, *heck* instead of *hell*, *fudge* instead of *fuck*) and to modulate their tones. Interestingly, in the process that the young learners were euphemizing the swear word, certain patterns were identified such as retaining the first letter of the word and changing the word that has approximately the same sound as the original swear word. In addition, euphemisms were also utilized to save one’s face from embarrassment. Henceforth, the positive politeness strategy which is one of the categories of the Politeness Theory postulated by Brown and Levinson (1987) seems to rationalize that the participants under study continually tried to present their best image to keep their faces pure, and free from vulgar and harsh words that may harm their uprightness.

Likewise, the use of self-censoring (e.g. *b-word*, *f-word*, and *s-word*) was employed by the participants. The young learners claimed that they were stressed to say aloud the full words because of the negative

connotations attached to the words as these information and knowledge were instilled in their mind by adults (e.g. moms). Comparably, girls were more conscious to use euphemisms more than their male counterpart. Exploring the use of self-censoring would somehow reduce the vulgarity of the words and save themselves from embarrassment or for being branded as individuals who are impolite. Accordingly, this may seem to warrant similar result with Bowers and Pleydell-Pearce's (2011) findings that college students used self-censoring because they were affected by the visual form of the swear words. It can be construed that the college students demonstrated reasonable understanding about the connotative and denotative meanings of the offensive words as opposed to the elementary students' knowledge which they still worked out for the meanings of the swear words especially those which are related to sexual references.

In respect to the use of asterisks, the young learners were cognizant and selective in using swear words related to *sexual references* (f*** and assh***), *excrement* (sh**) and *animal* (b****). This demonstrated that the swear words with asterisks have higher level of inappropriateness and offensiveness than the other swear words. It can be speculated that the linguistic restrictions imposed among the young learners in uttering the sexual related swear words triggered them to be creative in formulating asterisks to soften the offensiveness of the swear words. On a different note, the number of asterisks assigned per missing letters marked that the young learners were familiar with the spelling of the words despite the fact they did not know the denotative and connotative meanings.

Contributors to Learning how to Swear

Six people (*moms, dad, cousin, sister, brother, and friends*) were identified in the findings of the study. Out of six, *moms* were the top contributors for the young learners to learn how to swear. *Moms'* strong bonding and personal monitoring with their children's academic performance more than other individuals seemed to have bearing on the swearing phenomenon. Such example was revealed when Student 56 mentioned about his mom's statement "*Oh my God, why did you forget to copy your homework? What will we study then?*" Accordingly, Mokbel (2013) highlighted that children are spending majority of their formative years with their mothers which inevitably exposing them to swear words from their mothers before any other sources. This is an interesting relationship since mothers reportedly tend to be the primary disciplinarians with verbal punishment (Baruch & Jenkins, 2007) more common than physical punishment (Jay, King & Duncan, 2006).

In consonance to *media* section (*TV, books, pictures, YouTube, movies, and internet*), *movies* were identified as the highest contributory factors. In addition, *internet* and *YouTube* were also used as portals for entertainment, educational and technical skills enhancements whereby in the process of the navigating the web, the probability of taking the risks in opening the links led the users to discover unfavorable words that were considered offensive and inappropriate. Thus, it can be construed that the current study holds through with Coyne, Stockdale, Nelson and Fraser's (2011) findings which claimed that the self-reported exposure to swear words on television and in video games was related to more-supportive attitudes in increasing the swear words' usage.

On the other hand, between *people* and *media*, it appeared that *people* (e.g. *mom*) have stronger and more powerful clout for the young generations to learn how to swear in comparison with the *TV, YouTube, etc.* Young learners responded faster to human stimuli, that is, they personally interact, exchange ideas and hear from each other; whereas, the media provided one way interaction with the respondents.

Conclusion and pedagogical implications

This particular study highlighted the use of swear words among the young learners. Specifically, it focused on the seven findings: categories, variations, locations, situational instances, emotions, toning down strategies and contributors. Some swear words under study are not recognized as swear words by the participants in this particular study. For instance, the family-specific swear word (*shut up*) which served as an expression to mark solidarity and used as a literal term to denote silence. The other one is celestial category like *OMG, Oh my God, or gosh* which are considered mainstream words. They are commonly heard everywhere and uttered by everyone including adults. Adults do not even bother to remind the children that these words are inappropriate to mention in public; thus, children feel comfortable of using them without inhibition.

Despite the limitations of the data elicitation -- the young learners illustrated only an instance of using the swear word -- the instrument offered a richer data in comparison with the two other quantitative instruments such (scale survey, open-ended survey). It did not only present the *emotions, toning down strategies, contributors, categories* and *variations* but it also revealed the *locations* and *situational instances* where the swear words were used. Henceforth, based on the three quantitative instruments, data elicitation offered the most findings to the study. This was followed by open-ended and finally by Likert scale survey. Interview, on the other hand,

was valuable to support the qualitative findings related to emotions and reasons for toning down strategies whereas other findings can be quantified using the frequencies presented in the quantitative instruments.

The findings of this study can provide practical implications to the parents and educational institutions to raise awareness related to their children/students' usage of swear words and to identify strategies on how to manage the evident usage of swear words as the act itself is considered unbecoming especially with children.

Parents especially the mothers can raise their level of self-consciousness when subconsciously uttering swear words since they were identified as primary contributors for the children to learning how to swear. Their mixed messages such as reminding their children that using swear words is bad; however, they themselves are observed to use the offensive words which may signal confusion and uncertainty among the young generations.

Selections of media (broadcast, digital and print) should be carefully chosen by adults (parents and teachers). Some children who are left under the care of helpers and who are free to explore and watch TV shows or search YouTube presentations during their leisure time should be provided with appropriate guidance. Since media is inescapable for this young generation, proper education can alert them about the usage of profane languages.

The limitation of the study can be contributed to the nature of the research which was a cross-sectional study. The participants were followed over a period of time, from the time that they were in Grade 3 and 4 (school year 2014-2015) up to the time that they were in Grade 4 and 5 (school year 2015-2016). As suggested by the design, it captured only the information based on that specific time period which might not be applicable to a greater majority. Another limitation was that the study was conducted in only one private co-educational school in Jakarta, Indonesia and that the result may not hold through to the greater majority. Furthermore, almost all the participants' language preference was English and the utility of the language can be contributed to the family orientation, school environment and social standing in the society.

In reference to the primary data, the natural data using audio-recording and/or audio-visual recording were difficult to capture. Locations such as canteen, playground and library where children usually hang out was visited and explored yet they (children) were seldom or never at all heard to use swear words. These swear words might be used with peers in certain contexts (group membership), but they would be banned within the classroom or school. Therefore, I also extended the use of natural data through journal writings. Participants were asked to come up a journal

related to their learning attributes and swear word utterances since audio recording was not feasible. After three weeks of monitoring the journals of the elementary students, not a single swear word was listed. Since acquiring the natural data through videotaping was a complex process, the author changed her course and decided to explore on using the data elicitation from drawings to find out the swearing phenomenon among young learners. They were asked to draw cases and instances where they happened to use the swear words. By this time, the author was successful to gather evidences to further support her research questions.

The current study considers its limitations. However, with the realms of possibilities, future researches can be explored using videotaping the participants' actual utterance of swear words to find out the utterances of swear words in the natural settings to provide in-depth analyses of their usage. A further study can also be extended to find out the toning down of swear words particularly in the aspects of the asterisks that represent the missing letters in writing the swear words and the euphemized words that changed their beginning letters and approximately retained their similar sounds (e.g. *jezz* instead of *Jesus* or *fudge* instead of *fuck*). The use of sexual reference swear word such as *fuck* can be extended to conduct further research to discover why the male participants' preference is geared on this specific category more than the other categories. Another prospective study can be conducted across age groups which can be extended to middle school and high school to determine whether various age levels produce different types of swear words and their corresponding word variations. As mostly of the linguistic studies on swear words are focused on the part of the users, it is also interesting to explore the reaction of the receiver when the user uttered a swear word during an interaction process. The pragmatic function of the swear words can also be considered. The use of social media (e.g. skype, BBM, line, yahoo messenger, viber) can be looked into to determine which media communication is commonly used by the children to exchange messages that may contain the use of swear words. This is to determine if the use of social media has a direct impact on the elementary student's usage of the swear words.

The author

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