

## Taboo Words In “What Came Before He Shot Her Novel” By Elizabeth George

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### *Abstrak*

*Tujuan Penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi tipe-tipe kata tabu dan menganalisis fungsi kata tabu tersebut dalam novel berjudul “What Came Before He Shot Her”. Teori untuk mengidentifikasi tipe-tipe kata tabu berasal dari Timothy Jay (1992) sedangkan untuk menentukan fungsi dari kata tabo tersebut menggunakan teori oleh Liedlich(1973). Metode analisis deskriptif digunakan untuk menganalisa data. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan sepuluh jenis tipe kata tabu dan enam jenis fungsi kata tabu yang ditemukan dalam novel ini.*

*Kata kunci: Tipe kata tabu, fungsi kata tabu*

### **1. Background**

Each person always uses a language to interact with others to understand each other. And because of that, language has a very important function in society, because language is a way to interact one person with others, especially in communication. Through language, speakers can identify themselves as well as they view their language as a symbol of their identity, for example, the song of their nation and when they meet each other they greet and shake hands. Language is not simply a means of communicating of information; it is also a means of establishing and maintaining the relationship with other people.

To establish and maintain relationship with other people, there are many kinds of language and cultural identities built by languages; one of them is non-standard language and cultural identities, that is, taboo words. The taboo words originally comes from Polynesian language, namely, *tabu*. Taboo is a behavior which is believed to be forbidden or highly immoral and very improper which is prohibited for irrational rather

than rational reason (Trudgill 2003). Language taboo has to do with the words and expressions which are not commonly used, that is, the words which are usually shocking, offensive, blasphemous or indecent when they are used. "Swear words" are common examples of words which are subject to linguistic taboo. (Jay 1992)

Based on the explanation above, this study analyzes the kind of taboo words and the function of taboo words taken from the novel that writer read.

## **2. Problems**

There are two problems that can be formulated from the background:

1. What types of English taboo words are used in the novel "*What came before he shot her*" by Elizabeth George?
2. What are the functions of English taboo words found in the novel "*What came before he shot her*" by Elizabeth George?

## **3. Aims of the study**

The aims of this present study are as follows:

1. To classify the types of taboo words used in the novel "what came before he shot her".
2. To analyze the function of taboo words in the novel "what came before he shot her".

## **4. Research Method**

### **4.1 Data Source**

The primary data in this study were taken from the novel *what came before he shot her* by Elizabeth George about murder investigation which was published in 2007 by the writer's Division Headline. In this novel the main character was Joel Campbell and the supporting characters was his brother and sister Glory, Vanessa, and Toby Campbell. They asserted many utterances used as the source of the data in the present study.

The data are really relevant to this study because English taboo words are included in most of the statements which have different functions and meanings.

#### 4.2 Method and Technique of Collecting Data

In this study, the data were limited only to the conversations that contain taboo words to make the writing not excessive. The data were collected through observation. The observation means that the researcher studied or observed a specific situation; note taking, listing, and identifying were also done.

#### 4.3 Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

The method and technique of analyzing data for this research used in the present study was the descriptive method. The taboo words were classified based on their categories proposed by Timothy Jay (1992); the taboo words were classified based on the theory proposed by Liedlich (1973).

### Result and Discussion

From the observation in the Novel, all types of taboo words were found in the novel in the novel "*What Came Before He Shot Her*".

#### 5.1 Types of Taboo Words

Data 1  
Epithets

A brief but powerful burst of emotional language, epithets are loud in presentation and more offensive than any other type of cursing (Jay 1992).

1. Damn

George Gilbert 'Look **damn** odd, glor,' (page 3)

The word 'damn' in the sentence above was used to express disbelief. George Gilbert used the word "damn" to express his disbelief to Glory because she just accepted three children of her cousin to be in her care that made George Gilbert surprised and not believe that Glory Campbell became more kind.

#### Data 2

##### Profanity

The words or phrases in profanity are based on the church's distinction between secular and religious speech (Jay 1992).

##### 1. Jesus

Jesus is the central figure of Christianity, whom the teachings of most Christian denomination hold to be the son of god. Christian holds Jesus to be awaited Messiah of the Old Testament and refers him to Jesus Christ.

Boy: '**Jesus**, I go for coke, weed, olly, E, anyt'ing.'(Page 15)

The word 'Jesus' here is considered taboo because it was not said in a religious situation, or religious context. The word here is said by a boy that was desperate to get a drink and want to make the girl pay attention to him.

#### Data 3

##### Blasphemy

Unlike profanity, blasphemy is directly critiques the church and the religious figures (Jay 1992).

##### 1. Goddamn Cow

Goddamn cow is an exclamation of angry used mostly in American and Canadian English. It is another word like oath for "Goddamn for the Christ sake!

Kendra Osborne: she choose the words 'shit and that **goddamn cow**'(page 24)

That Goddamn Cow' in this situation is not related with some religious affair. Kendra was saying 'Shit and that Goddamn Cow' just a way to express her anger because someone was throwing garbage into her garage.

## 5.2 Function of taboo words

#### Data 1

##### Create Attention

Sometimes people launched taboo words in order to get attention from their surrounding or the listener (Liedlich 1973).

##### 1. Fucking

Fucking is a male and female sex relationship. The word "fucking" can also be used as informal intensifiers as shown in the sentence below:

Boys: 'Jesus, I go for coke, weed, olly, E, anyt'ing. I'm just **fucking** itching, you

know.’(page 15)

The boys said ‘fucking’; it doesn’t mean that he hadan sexual intercourse or had a sex with a woman. The boy said the obscenity word ‘fucking’ in order to intensify the word that he uttered so he could get the girl’s attention and make the boy more famous around the girl in the bar.

Data 2  
Discredit

Some people expressed their dislike or unsatisfaction with some persons, institution or government by launching some words. Therefore, some dissatisfactory feelings about many things which they believe being not suitable for the public standard; people used taboo word to attack them (Liedlich 1973).

#### 1. Slag

A ‘Slag’ is a word used to define people who can make a decision in his or her life and always make his or her life hard with the choice that they choose. Slag was generally used to insult people who was promiscuous or cannot organize his way of life. As shown in Sentence below:

Kendra Osborne: ‘You want the world know you as a **slag**?’ (Page 97)

It was when Aunt Kendra in this conversation with Vanessa said ‘slag’ because she was very disappointed with his nephew Vanessa’s life where Vanessa got drunk and Kendra wanted Vanessa to start change her life to be a better and nice life.

## 6. Conclusion

Based on the analysis above there are two points that can be drawn as the conclusion, that is, all of the types of taboo words and functions were found in the novel “What came before he shot her”. If, counted, there are ten types of taboo words found in the novel such as cursing, profanity, blasphemy, taboo, obscenity, vulgarity slang epithets, insult or slur, and scatology and regarding the function of the taboo words, six functions were found, namely, creating attention, discredit, endearment, creating strong intrapersonal identification, and providing catharsis.

## **7. Bibliography**

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