

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of five sub-chapters, namely the background of the study, statements of the problem, objectives of the study, significances of the study, scope, and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Language in linguistics is a fundamental instrument for communication. Whether it's written or spoken makes no difference. Language is an instrument through which we may communicate with one another. According to Yule (2010), "Language is the systematic, conventional use of sounds, signs, or written symbols for the communication of thoughts, feelings, ideas, and information by means of humans express themselves." It emphasizes the systematic nature of language, indicating that it follow the rules and conventions, and highlights its primary function as a tool for expression and interaction among individuals and within communities. One branch of linguistics that focuses on language addressing social and cultural phenomena in society named sociolinguistics.

According to Bucholtz and Hall (2019), Sociolinguistics is the field of study that examines the connection between language and society. It delves into the ways in which language is employed in diverse social contexts, and how various social elements such as culture, gender, race, ethnicity, and social class influence both language usage and language evolution. Sociolinguistics aims to understand how linguistic variations are distributed and valued within different communities, and how language is utilized to establish and negotiate social identities and power dynamics. Furthermore, sociolinguistic research investigates the fluctuations in language use over time and across geographical locations, while also examining how language attitudes and beliefs are shaped by social and political factors.

Taboo words are language expressions that are generally avoided in public discourse due to their offensive, vulgar, or impolite nature. However, despite their negative connotations, taboo words have been an integral part of human communication for centuries. They are used to express strong emotions, emphasize a point, or create a sense of camaraderie among certain groups. In recent years,

taboo words have become increasingly prevalent in popular media, including music, films, and television shows. In particular, song lyrics have been a significant source of taboo words, with many artists using them to add shock value or to push the boundaries of acceptable language.

The use of taboo words in song lyrics has generated controversy among scholars, policymakers, and the general public, with some viewing such language as a reflection of a breakdown in societal norms and values, while others see it as an expression of freedom of speech and artistic creativity. Studying taboos is essential because they reveal the core beliefs, values, and moral boundaries of a society, indicating what a culture considers sacred, forbidden, or dangerous. These unspoken rules offer insight into a community's worldview, priorities, and mechanisms for regulating behavior. Taboos also serve as tools of social control, reinforcing power structures and maintaining order by signaling who holds authority and who is marginalized. When these taboos such as those related to gender roles, sexuality, or mental health are broken or challenged, they often signal significant social change or cultural transformation, making the study of taboo language in music a valuable lens through which to observe progress, resistance, and evolving values within society.

Additionally, studying taboos across different cultures promotes empathy and cross-cultural understanding. What is forbidden in one culture might be normal in another, and recognizing these differences helps reduce prejudice and ethnocentrism. Taboos related to issues like death, menstruation, or mental illness, when studied and discussed openly, can also reduce stigma and encourage healthier conversations in public and private life.

Finally, taboo studies provide valuable psychological insight. They help us understand why people avoid certain topics, how shame and fear operate, and what lies beneath societal repression. This is especially important in fields like therapy, education, and public health, where breaking taboos can lead to healing, awareness, and growth.

Taboo words are part of the discussion in sociolinguistics. According to Allan and Burridge (2006), Taboo words are always associated with impolite language and should never be used in communication. As a result, taboo words persist as offensive and savage words in most languages, including English. Furthermore, taboo words are language variations used by people to express emotions such as anger, disappointment, and dissatisfaction.

Related to the study of taboo words, there are two major topics that can be analyzed; the types of taboo words, and the function of taboo words themselves. There are many experts who have done research on taboo words. For example, the research from Jay (1992) and Batistella (2005) have already proposed types of taboo words. According to Batistella, there are four types of taboo words. They are; epithets, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity. In addition, Jay also states that there are nine types of taboo words. They are; obscenity, profanity, vulgarity, epithets, blasphemy, cursing, slang, insult and slur, and scatology.

Infant Annihilator is a British deathcore band formed in 2012, consisting of two members: Eddie Pickard and Aaron Kitcher. Their third studio album, *The Battle of Yaldabaoth*, was released in 2019 and features 14 songs on the album. The album explores themes such as criticism of religion and respect for technology, while musically combining elements of death metal which has deep growl vocals, fast tempo, heavy guitar riffs, dark lyrical themes (death, destruction, suffering), deathcore which has a combination of death metal + hardcore; breakdown, screaming vocals, chugging riffs, and intense song structures, and black metal *Atmosfer gelap*, tremolo picking, tema anti-agama/okultisme, scream tinggi, dan produksi raw, complete with complex guitar riffs and drum solos. All three genres are known for their intensity and aggression. By combining them, Infant Annihilator is able to create music that is incredibly brutal and complex. Pushing the technical and emotional boundaries of extreme music. Providing a sonic experience full of pressure and chaos in accordance with the dark and controversial lyrical themes. The band is not bound by one genre. They utilize the characteristics of each genre to highlight the dynamics of the music (e.g. transitioning from fast riffs to slow breakdowns), Combine theatrical and dramatic elements, Create an

atmosphere of horror and chaos that matches their visuals and lyrics. Several tracks, including "*Three Bastards*," "*Swinaecologist*," and "*Flayed and Consumed*," contain lyrics with taboo elements such as profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity. However, these lyrical choices align with the aggressive nature of the deathcore genre and serve to challenge conventional social and moral boundaries.

Overall, the album "*The Battle of Yaldabaoth*" features a mix of intense music and controversial lyrics, reflecting a unique style and identity as they display extreme and unconventional traits in various musical, lyrical, and visual aspects that set them apart from other bands. Their lyrics are very explicit, blasphemous, and full of symbolic violence, discussing taboo themes such as: abuse in religious institutions, criticism of morality, vicious depictions of religious figures. Despite its controversial content, "*The Battle of Yaldabaoth*" has received critical acclaim from many metal critics, with some calling it one of the best death metal albums of the year. The album has also been praised for its production quality and the band's ability to seamlessly blend various death metal subgenres, including technical death metal, deathcore, and blackened death metal.

In their review of "*The Battle of Yaldabaoth*", music publication *Sputnikmusic* refers to Infant Annihilator as a "British/United States based deathcore group," affirming the band's position within the deathcore genre. The review emphasizes the band's aggressive musical style and lyrical extremity, characteristics emblematic of deathcore's blend of death metal intensity and metalcore breakdowns. *Sputnikmusic* highlights how the album pushes the boundaries of taste and brutality, employing shocking imagery and technical complexity to both disturb and impress listeners. This classification and analysis further reinforce Infant Annihilator's identity within the extreme subgenres of modern metal. As stated in the review, "*Infant Annihilator* is a British/United States based deathcore group and "*The Battle of Yaldabaoth*" is their most accomplished release to date" (*Sputnikmusic*, 2019, September 13). Overall, "*The Battle of Yaldabaoth*" stands as a significant artistic statement for the band, showcasing their technical prowess and boldness in challenging musical norms; however, its explicit content and controversial themes may not be suitable for all audiences.

This study aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of taboo words present in the lyrics of The Battle of Yaldabaoth album by Infant Annihilator. Specifically, it will explore the types of taboo words used, the contexts in which they are employed, and their potential impact on listeners. By examining these aspects, the research seeks to shed light on the function of taboo language in contemporary music and to offer insights into its linguistic, social, and cultural implications. Understanding how taboo words are integrated into lyrics can reveal underlying social norms, emotional expressions, and identity constructions within modern musical discourse (Johnson, 2015).

For example, in the phrase “Municipal bastards”, a phrase that appears in the lyrics of “Three Bastards” by Infant Annihilator on the album The Battle of Yaldabaoth, from the lyrics of the song refers to those who live in urban structures (perhaps city dwellers, elites, religious authorities), but commit despicable acts supported by moral and religious hypocrisy, and is then revealed in a very satirical and exaggerated way typical of Infant Annihilator. (published September 11, 2019), Such usage demonstrates how taboo words can evolve from their original derogatory meanings to serve as expressions of intimacy or solidarity, thus influencing their acceptability and social perception over time. Consequently, exploring these variations and contextual meanings is crucial for understanding the dynamic role of taboo language in artistic expression and social interaction (Brown, 2020). Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to ongoing discussions about the boundaries of language, emotional communication, and social acceptance in contemporary music culture.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

This study is about taboo words in song lyrics on “*The Battle Yaldabaoth*” album by Infant Annihilator. To make the analysis easy, the following questions are formulated:

1. What are the types of taboo words found in the song lyrics of “*The Battle Yaldabaoth*” album by Infant Annihilator?
2. What are the functions of taboo words in song lyrics on “*The Battle of Yaldabaoth*” album by Infant Annihilator?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Relevant to the research question, this study tries to fulfill the following objectives:

1. To identify the types of taboo words in song lyrics on "*The Battle Yaldabaoth*" album by Infant Annihilator.
2. To explain the function of taboo words in song lyrics on "*The Battle Yaldabaoth*" album by Infant Annihilator.

1.4 Significances of the Study

By examining taboo words, researchers, students, and lecturers can gain valuable insights into language, culture, and society, enriching their understanding of human communication and behavior. For researchers, investigating taboo language offers a window into cultural norms, social dynamics, and power structures, while also contributing to the study of language variation and change, highlighting linguistic evolution and adaptation. For students, exploring taboo words enhances linguistic awareness and sociolinguistic competence, equipping them to navigate diverse communication contexts more effectively. It also fosters critical thinking about language taboos and freedom of speech, promoting intellectual inquiry and debate. For lecturers, incorporating taboo language into instruction encourages students to examine language attitudes, stereotypes, and societal power dynamics. Additionally, addressing taboo language in the classroom fosters open dialogue and critical reflection on its broader implications for communication and culture.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of the study on the sociolinguistic analysis of taboo words in the album "*The Battle of Yaldabaoth*" by Infant Annihilator is limited to the analysis of the lyrics of the songs in the album. The study will focus on identifying and analyzing the types of taboo words for the first research problem and the functions of taboo words for the second research problem. The types of taboo words proposed by Timothy Jay (1992). The writer also uses the theory proposed by Timothy Jay (1992) to explain the functions of taboo words. The limitation of this research is an

utterance that contains taboo words in the song lyrics of *The battle yaldabaoth* album by Infant Annihilator.