DYSPHEMISM FOUND IN "*RONNY CHIENG: ASIAN COMEDIAN DESTROYS AMERICA!*" MOVIE SCRIPT

THESIS

Submitted as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements to Obtain Bachelor of Arts (S.S) in English Literature Program

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ABSTRACT

Febby Surya Hadi. (2023). *Dysphemism Found In "Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!" Movie Script*. Thesis. Padang: English Language and Literature Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts. Universitas Negeri Padang.

This research investigates the dysphemism in the movie script of "*Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!*" This research is aimed at finding the types and the functions of dysphemism, as well as determining the influence of cultural background differences on the use of dysphemism in the movie script. Descriptive qualitative method is used in this research. The data is taken from the utterances of Ronny in the movie. Allan and Burridge (2006) theory on dysphemism is employed in this research. The findings revealed that there are 101 dysphemistic words and phrases found in the movie script. There are five types and six functions found in the utterances of Ronny Chieng. In addition, the researcher found parents' terms used as curse words, which does not reflect Asian culture. The researcher can conclude that dysphemism is mostly used with negative intentions by using negative terms. However, one dysphemistic term turns out to function as positive intentions despite the terms used might still considered offensive. The cultural background is indeed influencing the use of dysphemism. Further researchers are suggested to conduct a research on dysphemism by comparing the dysphemistic words or phrases between Asian and American stand-up comedians, since this research only examines one multicultural stand-up comedian.

Keywords: Dysphemism, *Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!*, Culture

ABSTRAK

Febby Surya Hadi. (2023). *Dysphemism Found In "Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!" Movie Script*. **Skripsi. Padang: Departemen Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. Universitas Negeri Padang.**

      Penelitian ini mengkaji tentang disfemisme yang terdapat dalam naskah film *"Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!"*. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan jenis dan fungsi dari disfemisme, serta mengidentifikasi pengaruh dari perbedaan latar belakang budaya dalam penggunaan disfemisme dalam naksah film tersebut. Metode deskriptif kualitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 101 kata dan frasa disfemistik dalam naskah film tersebut. Ada lima jenis dan enam fungsi disfemisme yang ditemukan dalam ucapan Ronny Chieng. Selain itu, penulis menemukan istilah berhubungan dengan orang tua yang digunakan sebagai kata-kata kutukan dan makian, yang tidak menggambarkan budaya Asia. Penulis dapat menyimpulkan bahwa disfemisme kebanyakan digunakan dengan tujuan yang negatif menggunakan istilah negatif. Tetapi, satu istilah disfemistik ternyata juga digunakan untuk tujuan positif walaupun tetap menggunakan istilah yang mungkin dianggap kasar. Latar belakang budaya benar mempengaruhi penggunaan disfemisme. Peneliti selanjutnya disarankan untuk melakukan penelitian tentang disfemisme dengan membandingkan kata dan frasa disfemistik antara *stand-up* komedian Asia dengan *stand-up* komedian Amerika, karena penelitian ini hanya menganalisis satu orang *stand-up* komedian dengan latar belakang multikultural.

Kata Kunci: Disfemisme, *Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!*, Budaya

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

People around the world have tons of languages, cultures, and backgrounds. They possess certain behavior, customs, and mindsets according to their environment, nature, and occupations. These differences affect their use of language, whether the language styles, dialects, the pronunciations, and the tones when speaking. This leads to the differences in sentence's context when one speaks the same sentences with other from different societies.

Sociolinguistics is a field of study that looks at how languages relate with their contexts. The study of sociolinguistics, which focuses on how people use language in various social contexts, reveals a wealth of knowledge about how language functions as well as the social dynamics in a society (Wardhaugh, 2002).

Swear word is one of the objects to study the language context, since identical swear words in one's culture might have different context in other cultures. Some cultures might consider some negative or harsh words as swear words, while in other cultures they are not.

Nowadays, there is a lot of attention paid to swear words because people frequently use them, whether they are joyful or frustrated. Swearing has become trendy since some people use it to sound cool due to the fear of missing out (FOMO). Additionally, most people can remember swear words from other languages easily and use them to curse at others so that the addressee will not react angrily because they cannot understand what the speaker means. As Dewaele in Horan (2013) stated, multilingual prefer to use swearing in their

second or third language because they feel more liberated from its taboo and the social stigma associated with it. Horan (2013) also explained that both native and non-native speakers of one language find it amusing to learn taboo languages; anything that is perceived as harsh or dangerous immediately attracts their curiosity. One type of swear words that attracts lots of interest is dysphemism.

Dysphemism is words or phrases employed in a sentence as a way to produce harsh or unpleasant words to complete the sentence's context. Dysphemism is a phrase that has offensive implications regarding the denotatum (the thing that a linguistic expression refers to), the audience, or both, and it is used in place of a neutral or euphemistic term for that purpose (Allan and Burridge, 2006). Dysphemism can be found in a lot of literature work, such as books and movie scripts in form of serious conversations or jokes.

Jokes made by stand-up comedians contain many dysphemism, especially jokes about politics and other countries. Discourse in politics contains many dysphemistic expressions if compared to other discourses (Olimat, 2020), but dysphemism in political jokes is unbeatable. Most comedians use lots of swear words if they are talking about politics to express mostly what they do not like about certain people in power without mentioning their names. Jokes on other countries are used by comedians either to express their amazement or to show dislikes in form of racist expressions. The comedians use dysphemism in a political sense or talk about other countries mostly to criticize one of these two topics in a funny way. One of the famous comedians that use dysphemism on his stage is Ronny Chieng.

Ronny Chieng, an Asian comedian, uses dysphemism to describe America and the Americans in the Netflix movie "*Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!*" He expresses hatred and uses offensive words and phrases during his speech in the movie. Not only did he target the Americans, he also used dysphemistic expressions while talking about Asians and their culture, especially Chinese. Ronny, who is of Asian descent, has spent some time living in the United States. He was raised in an Asian household with a strong Chinese culture before moving to the United States, where he was exposed to American culture. Ronny experiences a kind of culture shock after being exposed to American culture, which leads him to compare cultures from his perspective.

Furthermore, there were some previous studies about dysphemism to take as references. Rahman (2017) conducted a cross-cultural study on swearing in Asian and European languages. He conducted this research to find out the similarities and differences between swear words used by Asian languages and western languages. Sitanggang, Setia, and Ganie (2020) analyzed types of dysphemism and reveal their functions, which explain why the characters use such words. They used the theory of dysphemism by Allan and Burridge (2006). Another study is conducted by Olimat (2020), who used the analysis of the Critical-political Discourse by Van Dijk (1997), and conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). The study found out that Trump's speech contains dysphemism, which functions to defend himself, influence audiences' thoughts, and insult other institutions or countries. Then, Putranti, Nababan, and Tarjana (2017) conducted a study, which investigates the translation of sexual terms from an English novel into Indonesian. A study by Mulya, Elsa, Sartika, and Guntar

(2021) titled "Dysphemism among Indonesian High School Students" aimed to investigate the types and uses of dysphemism among high school students. Another study by Maulana, Aziz, and Daud (2020), "Dysphemism Used in *Prohaba* Newspaper," aimed at investigating dysphemism types and functions in *Prohaba* Newspaper in 2018. They used the theory of dysphemism's type by Warren (1992) and the theory of dysphemism's function by Allan and Burridge (2006). Lastly, the research entitled "Dysphemism in Animated Films" by Gorčević, Dazdarević, and Zoranić (2021) tried to discover dysphemism in animated movies based on the researchers' assumption that animated movies' scriptwriters use some kind of dysphemistic expressions even though they have to be avoided.

As a result, the study on dysphemism has been done in many different angles with different literary work objects and texts. It seemed essential to conduct research on dysphemism in movies, particularly in "*Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!*" because Ronny has a different cultural background than American stand-up comedians. While American stand-up comedians solely have knowledge of American culture, Ronny has exposure to both American and Asian cultures. As Hughes (2006) mentioned, some swear words appear to be used across cultures, while others are more culture-specific. Variations based on nationality, class, and gender, occasionally appear in some language communities. Jay and Janschewitz (2008) also explained that socio-cultural factors affect swearing words. Swearing is affected by pragmatic (contextual) factors like the conversational subject, the speaker-listener dynamic, including gender, occupation, and status, and the social-physical communication setting, including where it

takes place, the location setting, and the degree of formality of the occasion. In addition, Ronny recently was criticized as racist for his controversial speech "Indians are not Asian" on his stage at The Daily Show, October 25th 2022. The researcher was interested whether Ronny stated controversial speech such as racist speech in his movie, "*Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!*", since the title itself lead us into thinking that the movie would be super offensive for the Americans.

The researcher was interested to find out whether the cultural background differences lead to different use of dysphemism or not. As Mugair (2014) stated, dysphemism deals with culturally delicate topics, which is why applied linguists in general and sociolinguists in particular have not given them much academic attention. Although the aforementioned researches were all interested in exploring dysphemism, they all had different study objects, but none of them studied dysphemism based on the utterances of stand-up comedians. Based on those findings, the researcher was motivated to investigate dysphemism since, in order for the audience to enjoy the movie; they must be able to understand the jokes as well as Ronny's cultural background.

About this matter, the researcher was planning to conduct research about dysphemism which were found in Ronny Chieng's expressions in "*Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!*" movie scripts. The researcher would be focusing on the types and the functions of dysphemism, and on the influence of cultural background differences on dysphemism. The researcher would use the theory of the types and functions of dysphemism by Allan and Burridge (2006) since their book "Forbidden Words: Taboo and the Censoring of Language"

classifies the types into many varieties, and it provides thorough explanations about the functions of dysphemism. The researcher would use the theory of Rahman (2017) on the influence of cultural background differences on dysphemism.

1.2   Identification of the Problem

Referring to the background of the problem above, it was noticed that many researchers had done the study of dysphemism in different perspectives. They also used different literary works and texts, this subject can be studies on its types and functions, discourse approach, novel translation, English language learning, news language, and animated movies using different theories. However, it seemed that the cultural identification on using dysphemism remain unfold. Rahman (2017) has conducted a research on swear words based on cultural identification, but he studied swear words based on each culture then compared them to the other. Ronny Chieng, as the object of the research, is exposed to both Asian and western culture, which made the researcher curious whether Ronny Chieng only uses swear words based on one culture, or he uses a combination of swear words based on both Asian and western culture. In addition, none of the previous researches studied dysphemism based on the utterances of stand-up comedians. Thus, the researcher was interested in conducting this research because the previous studies had not explored types and functions of dysphemism based on the utterances of stand-up comedians.

1.3   Limitation of the Problem

This study focused on analyzing the six types of dysphemism and its functions that were found in the utterances of Ronny Chieng based on the "*Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!*" movie script. The researcher would also be focusing on the influence of the cultural background differences to the types and the functions of dysphemism.

1.4   Formulation of the Problem

Based on the limitation, this study was formulated into "What types and functions of dysphemism are used in Ronny Chieng's utterances?" and "What cultural background differences aspects influence the use of dysphemism?"

1.5   Research Questions

The research questions found in this research were:

1. What types of dysphemism are found in Ronny Chieng's expressions in "*Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!*" movie script?

2. What are the functions of dysphemism found in Ronny Chieng's expressions in "*Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!*" movie script?

3. What cultural background differences aspects influence the use of dysphemism in "*Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!*" movie script?

1.6   Purposes of the Research

Based on the research questions, the purposes of the research were:

1. To identify and explain the types of dysphemism used in "*Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!*" movie script.

2. To identify and explain the functions of dysphemism used in "*Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!*" movie script.

3. To identify and analyze the influence of cultural background differences to the types and the functions found in "*Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!*" movie script.

1.7   Significance of the Research

This research was expected to give more understanding, particularly about dysphemism used in movie scripts. This research was intended to help readers with their speech or discourse so that they could express the meaning more clearly.

By conducting this research, the researcher hoped this research could be useful when one wants to conduct another related research, also the researcher wanted to show the reason behind the use of dysphemistic words and phrases in certain conditions so that people do not use it in inappropriate conditions. In addition, the researcher wished the audience of the movie would find this research helpful in understanding the meaning of dysphemism in the movie. Moreover, the result of this research was expected to give comprehension on the type of dysphemism that is popular among stand-up comedians.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

1. Dysphemism is words or phrases employed in a sentence as a way to produce harsh or unpleasant words to complete the sentence's context.

2. "*Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!*" is a Netflix comedy movie. Ronny Chieng as the main actor in the movie, do a stand-up comedy mostly about roasting America and Americans in front of a large audience. Ronny, who has lived in America for a quite long time, compares the Asian and American culture and preferences, which often leads to the appearance of stereotypes.