



The Linguistic Study of Swearing in Selected American Movies

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Abstract

This paper deals with the subject of swearing in American movies through stylistic and linguistic analysis models in two movies: one from the action genre and the other one from the romance genre. The paper studies key questions in relation to whether the genre, theme, and tenor of a movie have the influence of the frequency, types, and functions of English swearing expressions. In addition to that, the study examines the impact of gender type on the use of swearing within the texts used in these movies. This was based on the hypothesis that differences in swearing frequency, types, and functions arise due to both the genre of the movies and the gender of the characters in the movies. To address these questions, the researcher has developed a theoretical framework for swearing in English language. Two movies were selected with an adopted model, and the statistical tools were used to calculate the frequency and percentage of swearing expressions in the analyzed texts. The findings of the study reveal that the frequency, types, and functions of English swearing are significantly influenced by the movie's genre and tenor, as well as by the gender of the characters. These results form the basis for a set of conclusions drawn at the end of the study for further studies.

Keywords: Swearing Expressions, Action and Romantic Movies, Gender, Profanity.

"لێکۆڵینهوهی زمانهوانی سویندخواردن له فیلمه ههلبژێردراوه کانی ئەمریکیدا"

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پوخته

ئهم توێژینهوهیه لێکۆڵینهوهیه کێ زمانهوانیه له بواری پراگماتیدا که به دوا داچون بۆ دیاردیهی سویندخواردن له فیلمه کاندیدا دهکات به تایبهتی له زمانی ئینگلیزیدا له ڕیگهه شیکارییه کێ شیوازاناسی و گوتارییهوه بۆ دو فیلمی ئەمریکی: یه کیکیان له بابتهی ئەکشن و ئەوی دیکهیان له بابتهی رۆمانسی. توێژینهوه که لێکۆڵینهوه له پرسیاره سه رهکییه کان دهکات که په یوه ندییان به وه وه ههیه که ئایا ناوه روک و بابتهی فیلمیک کاریگه رییان له سه ره دوباره بونه وه و جوړ و ئه رکه کانی ده رپینی جنیودان ههیه یان نا. جگه له وهش کاریگه رپي ره گه زی ئەکته ری فلیمه کان له سه ره به کاره یێانی وشه ی جنیودان له ناو ئەم دهقه سینه مایانه دا ههیه بونی ههیه یان نا.

توێژینه وه که له سه ره ئەو گریمانه یه دامه زراوه که جیاوازی له زوړی و دوباره بونه وه و جوړ و ئه رکی جنیودان که به وه ی هه ردو جوړی فیلمه کان و ره گه زی کاره کته ره کانه وه دروست ده بیت. بۆ وه لامدانه وه ی ئەم پرسیارانه، توێژه ر چوارچیه یه کێ تیوری له سه ره جنیودان په ره پێدا وه پالپشت به و سه ره چاوه و لێکۆڵینه وه کانی پێشتر له سه ره بابته ی سویندخواردندا له زمانی ئینگلیزیدا ئەنجام درا ون. دو فیلم وه ک نمونه ی به به کاره یێانی مۆدیلێکی دامه زرا وه لێژێردان، و ئامرازه ئامارییه کان به کاره یێان بۆ ژماردنی دوباره بونه وه و رێژه ی سه دی ده رپینی جنیودان له دهقه شیکرا وه کاند.

ده ره نجامه کانی توێژینه وه که ئەوه ده رده خه ن که دوباره بونه وه و جوړ و ئه رکه کانی جنیودان له زمانی ئینگلیزیدا به شیوه یه کێ به رچا وه ژیر کاریگه ری جوړ و ناوه روکی فیلمه که دایه، هه ره وه ره گه زی کاره کته ره کان رو ئی هه یه. ئەم ئەنجامانه بنه مای کۆمه لێک ده ره نجام پێکده هێن که له کو تایی توێژینه وه که دا بۆ لێکۆڵینه وه ی زیاتر ده ره یێار ون.

کلیله وشه کان: ده رپینی جنیودان، فیلمی ئەکشن و رۆمانسی، ره گه ز، قسه ی ناشرین.

1-Introduction

Swearing is a common phenomenon in our daily life. Hardly a day passes without hearing or uttering swear words. This phenomenon has recently attracted the attention of scholars in various areas such as pragmatics, stylistics, rhetoric and discourse analysis. However, some registers can still be considered virgin in terms of swearing at least in Iraqi universities among them is the audio-visual text, which is tackled here in this study. It is thought that the frequency, type and function of swearing expressions can be affected by the genre of the audio-visual texts and the characters' gender in the texts too. This particular theme has not been well-studied using a theoretical framework which relies on a qualitative and quantitative analytical approach.

The study is an attempt to answer the following questions and fill in the gap resulting from these questions.

- 1) Are there gender differences in swearing expressions in these texts?
- 2) Are there differences in swearing expressions due to the nature and theme of audio-visual texts?
- 3) Are there differences in the functions and purposes of swearing expressions in these texts?
- 4) Does the tenor of these texts influence the type and function of swearing expressions in them?

To answer the research questions, the steps below are taken: developing a brief theoretical framework of swearing, adopting a model by the researcher for analyzing swearing, selecting a sample of movies and analyzing it according to the adopted model, analyzing results by employing suitable statistical tools and setting conclusions based on the results of the study.

2- Definitions of Swearing

Swearing has become a part of our daily conversation and our language use; many swear words are used by speakers every day. This leads us to believe that swearing is a widespread phenomenon that has been defined differently by various linguists and scholars. Although swearing is considered to be problematic it plays an important role in the language. This is because we all have swear words in our vocabularies. Some forms of swearing appear to be universal, while others are more specific to a culture. So, there are different definitions of swearing. Below is a brief account of some of these definitions.

2-1 Commonsense Definition of Swearing

Most language speakers do not worry about what the notion of swearing is. They believe it is self-evident for them as are most of the other cultural categories embodied in English. Speakers have two different senses for this notion. They either describe it in terms of bad language or religious language. Those speakers present examples of what they consider swear words and under what circumstances they could be used. Swearing was defined using profane or offensive language, e.g. "*He swore under his breath*" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2023).

Many researchers, among whom are Baily and Timm (1976), classify swearing solely in terms of the lexical items. For these reasons, what is strange is not the existence of such assumptions about swearing among language speakers, but the fact that such attitudes are frequently carried over into academic studies of swearing. This has been shown by a number of studies of swearing which assume that what is swearing and is not swearing is intuitively obvious and requires no examination. (Montagus, 1967)

Swearing cannot be simply accepted as a type of linguistic description without qualification. Many commentators have demonstrated that the categories represented in English are not as has often been claimed by exemplars of universal trends. To them, swearing is a type of speech act and often a reflection of an emotional attitude, the assumption that swearing is a basic human instinct appears to amount to little more than Western cultural imperialism (Verschuren, 1985; Wierzbicka, 1991).

2-2 Lexicographic Definitions of Swearing

The Oxford Dictionary of Synonyms and Antonyms defines swearing as informal bad language, blasphemy, curse, execration, expletive, oath, obscenity or profanity (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023, p. 367). While Oxford English Dictionary views swearing as uttering a form of oath lightly or irreverently, as a mere intensive, or an expression of anger, vexation or other strong feelings or uttering profane language habitually: more widely to use bad language.

Crystal (1992, p. 381) in an encyclopedic dictionary of language and languages, defines swearing as referring to three different types:

a-profanity is a relatively mild notion.

b-blasphemy, is much more serious, being the expression of gross irreverence towards the divine and,

c-obscenity, is the language which arouses disgust, because of its cruel reference to textual functions.

2-3 Scholarly Definitions of Swearing

Swearing is an English item denoting a particular type of linguistic behavior. As it has got various denotations in English dictionaries, it has also been defined in different ways by different linguists and scholars. Anderson and Trudgill (1992, p. 53) define swearing as that

it refers to something taboo in a given culture or something to be interpreted non-literally or something expresses strong emotions and attitudes.

Taylor (1976, p. 43) states that there is one mistake with this definition: it fails to account for the intuition of many speakers that a word such as *cunt* is a swear word whether it is being used literally or not.

Hughes (1991, p. 6), on the other hand, defines swearing as the item which is especially used if one would like to insult, curse, offend something, and even to emphasize their feelings.

Douma (1989, p. 87) states that swearing is a solemn appeal or call to God, a person or thing held sacred by the person using this appeal or call to confirm something being affirmed or defined or to witness what one says, to witness that a person is keeping his promise or covenant or to witness the fulfilment of his vow.

Crystal (1987, p. 10) defines swearing as words used for emotional expressions. He makes no attempt to delineate them from other emotive forms in language rather than to say that "swear words and obscenities are probably the commonest signals to be used in this way.

Finally, Liedlich (1973, p.107) views swearing as these words which are viewed as indecent and offensive. They should not be spoken because they are commonly not suitable with religion or customs in a civilized society. However, some people (if not many) like to swear because by swearing, they can express strong emotions openly.

3- Theoretical Background

Swearing was first tackled during the 1960s. Since then, increasing attention has been paid to it, which was represented by various publicans like Sagarin (1962) and Montagu (1967). Crawford (1995, p. 22) mentions that linguists, scholars, psychologists, and communication researchers started in the early 1970s to focus on the study of swearing.

Many studies, like Van Lanker and Cummings (1999), had a psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic view of swearing. There are also other studies which have taken a linguistic, sociolinguistic, or historical view of swearing such as Taylor (1975), Anderson (1977; 1985) Anderson and Hirsch (1985), McEnery (2006) and others.

Most of the studies have not been intended as overall accounts for swearing, but the interest has been in focusing on a particular aspect of swearing. For this reason, scholars have studied and taken swearing for granted as a linguistic, psychological, social or neurological category in its own right.

Three stages of swearing can be distinguished in modern English (Green, 2004). The first stage is a euphemism for blasphemy which was started around the 16th century. There are some examples of the swear words of this stage; God blind me, bloody by our lady, etc. The second stage started around the 18th century. The blasphemy in this stage lost its potency because there was an effort from England to clean up the language. Therefore, the use of words for parts of the body and what people do with them became a taboo word, such as "*cock, cunt etc.*".

The last stage started later in the 20th century. In this stage, the swear words are more racist and sexist. Young people have become less concerned with the traditional swear words such as *Nigger, paki.... etc.*

Kaye and Sapolsky (2004, p. 911) state that although swearing has existed throughout human history, it has recently lost much of its status as a taboo linguistic practice becoming more commonplace in everyday discourse as well as on network television.

Cressman, et al., (2009, p. 1) mention that according to the 'Associated Press (2006)' nearly three-fourths of poll respondents reported that they hear profanity more often than in past years. Some two-thirds perceive that swearing has become more prevalent in society. Glover (2008) states that adolescents' use of swearing has increased over the past ten years with the average youth approximately ninety swear words per day.

"Swearing refers to the use of language that has 'the potential to be offensive, inappropriate, objectionable, or unacceptable in any given social context.'" (Beers Fägersten and Stapleton, 2021, p318).

"Swearing these days is understood generally as the strongly emotional use of taboo terms to carry out such acts as abusing, offending, or emphasizing." Stapleton et al., (2022, p.452).

4- Types of Swearing

Ljung (1984, p.14) states that there are two types of swearing: social and aggressive. Aggressive swearing seems to appear under very tiring circumstances, while social

swearing, on the other hand, means that people use bad language to fill a group belonging. Ljung (1984, p. 14) believes that both types are important equally.

Jay (2000) classifies profanity by word type, using the categories of swearing, obscenity, profanity, blasphemy, name-calling, insulting, verbal aggression, taboo speech, ethnic-racial slurs, vulgarity, slang and scatology. Many other scholars have tried to classify the types of swearing words.

4-1 Types of Swear Words

There are eight types of swear words as shown by (Liedlich, 1973, p. 108), copulative terms, excretory terms, death, racial terms and Christ's word. Below is a brief account of each of these words.

4-1-1 Copulative Terms

Copulative comes from the word (couple) which refers to a combination of two persons (man and woman) united by marriage and having united in sexual intercourse. It also means something that connects or joins together. Examples of this type are (*Fuck, fuck you, and get fuck*).

4-1-2 Excretory Terms

These terms come from the word excrete which means to separate and eliminate the solid waste matter or the bowls from one's body through the anus. Examples are (*shit and piss*)

4-1-3 Human Genitals Terms

These terms come from genital, which means the sex organs of human beings from the reproduction system for the next generation. Examples are (*cock, rooster, haystack and hay cock*).

4-1-4 Sexual Irregularities

The words related to this type explain that the persons like to change their partner while they have sex intercourse. Examples are (*bitch and chick*).

4-1-5 -Animal Terms

Terms of this type are related to the behavior of animals' religious beliefs and practices from prehistoric times. In some religions, animals are closely associated with God. For

instance, a bull which is called 'Apis' is considered the representative of the God Osiris. Examples are (*dog, monkey....etc.*)

4-1-6 Death Terms

These terms refer to something which makes people fear to face it. For example: (*Go to hell*).

4-1-7 Racial Terms

The terms included in this type are related to someone's race and place. For instance (*Nigger, Paki ...etc.*).

4-1-8 Christ's Word Terms

The word of *God*, so signally absent from the older heroic asseverations, was used and abused, elevated, debased and distorted as never before. Examples are (*Jesus, fucking Christ, Godmann ...etc.*).

5- Functions of Swearing

Hussein (2009, p. 28) states that there are four functions of swearing which are considered an integral part of people's entire tradition. It plays a significant role in everyday aspects of this life. Swearing derives its socio-cultural significance not only from its religious background but also from other social, cultural and political factors. One more function can still be added to the list, which is 'expressing emotions'. The researchers find that sometimes, people tend to express their emotions, feelings and attitudes when they swear. These functions are explained below:

5-1 Emphasis

Speakers may basically preface their speech acts as part of their confirmation and persuasion strategies with swearing to emphasize the statement they have made. However, it should be pointed out that swearing is not in such cases meaningless. It might be used as a politeness marker. Sometimes, negation is accompanied by emphasis, which makes the speaker's swearing to reflect gravity, seriousness, intensity and earnestness.

5-2 Humor

By humor, we mean words or actions, which are intended to cause laughter. It has been portrayed as the quality of arousing people's feelings of amusement to engage and entertain them in an effort to make them laugh.

5-3 Praising

Praising is the act of making a positive statement about a person, object or idea, either in public or privately. Expressing admiration, flirtation and appreciation by the speakers involve different body parts which depict a woman's beauty and charm such as the face, the eyes, cheeks, neck, hair ...etc. Both women and men (young and old) may receive praise by admiring their appearance, achievements or behavior. However, praising is also used to emphasize the gravity of actions and expressions.

5-4 Humiliation

Humiliation is to reduce to a lower position in one's own eyes or other's eyes. Some people resort to different techniques to humiliate others. Pointing to a person's dignified body part and coming at it with an insulting object, is one of the techniques used by the speakers to humiliate others.

5-5 Expressing Emotions

Expressing emotion means 'to move', 'to excite', 'to stirrup', or 'to agitate'. Arousal-behaviour is emotion, which is an affect-laden state of the organism. This effect means an experience of pleasantness, unpleasantness, excitation, calmness, tension and relaxation. When someone loves, fears, and hates, this is how they express their emotions. Some of the other emotions are joy, acceptance, surprise, sadness, anger, disgust... etc.

Emotion is a subjective experience of prolonged feelings. Feeling refers to "experiencing", "sensing" or having a conscious process". Specific meaning of feeling is,

- (a) 'sensory experience' such as warmth or pain, and
- (b) 'affective states', such as feelings of well-being, a feeling of depression, and a feeling of desire etc.

6- Objects People Swear by

There are many objects which people swear by. Solemn appeals to divine powers for their backing of what one says or does. People also depend on God when expressing anger and surprise besides the religious background of swearing (Hussein, 2009, p. 38)

People in the past swore by many different objects. They swore by idols, heads of fathers, weapons of war etc. This dramatic shift can be attributed to a shift from religious to secular practice the objects include the following:

6-1 God and God's Attributes

This object is related to the religious functions of swearing. When the swearer intends to strengthen his words, he/she usually adds extra descriptions or attributes of God either before or after the name.

6-2 Prophet's names

All religions in the world including Islam believe in the prophets and messengers, which means that they do not leave out any of them. So, swearers swear in the names of their Prophets.

6-3 Holy Books

Muslims in general swear by the Holy Quran because of their religious background of Islam. Christians, on the other hand, swear by the Virgin Mary, the Gospel and the Cross.

6-4 Divorce

Another object of swearing, especially in Eastern countries, is the use of divorce. When the need arises, the person intensifies his action or promise by swearing to divorce his wife as a condition to fulfill his vow.

6-5 Family and Relatives

Members of the family sometimes show a great amount of respect and love to other members of the family or their relatives. For this reason, they swear by their names, and by the dignified body organs of their family members.

6-6 Important People

Swearers often swear by important people who play an essential role in their swearing. This includes holy men, leaders, heroes ...etc. In contrast, some people swear by

insignificant persons of bad reputation or sometimes enemy figures to arouse humor or to criticize a particular situation.

6-7 Body Organs

Some swearers swear by body parts or body organs that represent dignity and humor such as the head, the beard, the face and the moustache. They also swear by organs which represent insult, indignity, and humiliation such as the foot, buttocks, and pudendum. There are also organs including this type that represent strength, bravery, sacrifice and benefaction, such as *arms, blood and the chest*.

6-8 Moral Values

Swearing may also swear by cultural and social ideals and values such as the honor of their parents, sisters and daughters.

6-9 Food Items

People swear sometimes by food items and drinks, which play an important role in their lives. They also swear by benefaction which includes all of the food items and drinks because they are the creation of God.

6-10 Important Holy Places

Swearing can also be influenced by the religious environment. Since shrines are part of the dogma of Muslims all over the world, it is natural to hear swearing which involves one or more of the Muslim holy places.

6-11 Objects of the Globe and Natural Phenomena

Allah Almighty in the holy Koran swore by the objects related to the objects of the Globe and Natural phenomena. Many Muslims do not find any harm to swear by *the sky, the earth, the mountain...* etc.

6-12 Important Dates

Important dates like the day of the resurrection, Ramadan, Friday and so on, occupy an important part of Muslim's belief. The influence of the Quran on people's behavior pertaining to swearing-making is evident through the over-estimation of many important dates by God.

6-13 Animals

Some people swear by animals. In some religions animals are closely associated with gods, for instance, *a bull* called *Apis* is considered the representative of *the God Osiris*. Examples are (*dogs, monkeys*).

6-14 Miscellaneous Objects

Swearers also swear by other things including vehicle spare parts, stones, nails. Some people use different objects whose meanings are either unknown or ambiguous. Some mechanics swear by car spare parts while others swear by bricks, crank and gear vehicle spare parts and are used by people in general and laborers and mechanics in particular when making swearing. These ideas denote the real objects when used by mechanics or people who deal with vehicle spare parts. But sometimes (*crank and gear*) have a sexual connotation when used by people who are not necessarily familiar with their meaning.

6-15 Health and Life

People may swear by their own life or the life of their dear ones, like (*son, daughter, mother, grandfather ...etc.*). They may also swear by their health which is the vital valuable energy working for the survival of the human race.

6-16 The Souls

People sometimes swear by the souls of their dead fathers and mothers, or the souls of their grandfathers who are dear to them. They remember them and do not swear falsely by their souls.

6-17 Holy Times

Time is also used as an object for swearing by the people. It is also used in the holy Koran. The God himself has sworn in the Koran by morning time and the night when it becomes dark.

6-18 Folk Terms

These terms are classified into several groups, and each of these groups is subdivided into a number of subgroups. The first of these groups is Evil speaking which in turn has two subgroups cursing and profane language.

Evil language includes cursing (imprecation, malediction, malison, hex, damnation) while profane language includes (profanity, profane swearing, profane oath and blasphemy).

The second major sub-group is that of Vulgar Language which would be characterized as a language that mentions things or activities, offensive to standards of decency, etiquette, or hygiene. There are two further sub-groups here: obscene language and dirty language together. Obscene Language includes vile, foul, filthy language, obscenity, filth, and ribaldry, while dirty language includes dirty talk and scatology.

The third group refers more to the function or use of this speech behavior than to the speech referred to (Abuse). Abuse includes vituperation, invective, obloquy, scurrility, opprobrium, contumely, and billingsgate. These terms all refer to language used in order to insult or defame another.

The fourth group is expletive language, which refers to the uttering of bad language as an exclamation. Oath is also placed under this group.

7-The Adopted Model

To answer the research questions, the systematic analysis of the phenomenon of swearing in the selected sample, a special model has been adopted. The model consists of three elements: devices used in swearing, functions of swearing and the gender of the swearer. The first element analyses the devices used by the swearer, while the second element analyses the functions behind each act of swearing. Finally, the acts of swearing and their functions are analyzed in terms of the swearer's gender.

8- Analysis of the Selected Samples

8-1 Analysis of the First Film (Bad Boys II Film): An Action Film

8-1-1 Introductory Background:

Bad Boys II is a 1995 American [action film](#) produced by [Don Simpson](#) and [Jerry Bruckheimer](#), producers of [Top Gun](#) and [Beverly Hills Cop](#). It is directed by [Michael Bay](#) in his directorial debut, and starring [Martin Lawrence](#), [Will Smith](#), [Téa Leoni](#) and [Tchéky Karyo](#). It spawned a 2003 film sequel, [Bad Boys II](#).

Marcus Burnett ([Martin Lawrence](#)) and Mike Lowrey ([Will Smith](#)) are best friends and detectives in the narcotics division of the [Miami-Dade Police Department](#). One night, \$100 million of seized heroin is stolen from a secure police vault. This is a major blow to Burnett and Lowrey because it was the biggest drug bust of their careers. [Internal Affairs](#) thinks that it was an inside job and warns Miami PD that if they do not recover the drugs in five days, the narcotics division will be shut down.

8-1-2 Analysis of Swearing in the Film No.1

To have a comprehensive view of swearing devices, and functions in the first film, it can be more useful to start the analysis with the table (1) which shows the frequency and percentages of swearing devices and functions according to gender.

It is obvious from table (1) that this film is rich with swearing. The table shows that swearings occur (357) times in the film. This high frequency of swearing can be due to its nature and tenor. Being an action film filled with tension, anger, adventures, and violence, with characters who have informal relationships with each other, the characters very often tend to swear to express their emotions and attitudes towards what is going on.

Table 1: The Frequency and Percentage of Swearing Devices and Functions According to Gender in the First Film

Devices	Frequency & percentage				Total		Function	Frequency& percentage				Total	
Religious	Male		female		Fr	%		Male		Female		Fr	%
	44	93-61%	3	6.39%	47	13.54%		7	100%	0	0%	7	14.89%
							Emphasis	2	50%	2	50%	4	8.51%
							Praise	1	100%	0	0%	1	2.13%
							Humor	13	100%	0	0%	13	27.66%
							Humiliation	21	95.45%	1	4.55%	22	46.81%
							Emotion						
Racial terms	10	90.90%	1	9.10%	11	3,17%	Humor	5	83.33%	1	16.67%	6	54.55%
							Praise	1	100%	0	0%	1	9.1%
							Humiliation	3	100%	0	0%	3	27.27%
							Emotion	1	100%	0	0%	1	9.1%
Social	161	98.77%	2	1.22%	163	46.97%	Emphasis	6	100%	0	0%	6	3.68%
							Humor	30	96.77%	1	3.23%	31	19.1%
							Humiliation	112	99.11%	1	0.89%	113	69.33%
							Emotion	13	100%	0	0%	13	7.98%

Body organ& process	121	98.37%	2	1.63%	123	35.44%	Emphasis	11	100%	0	0%	11	8.94%
							Humor	18	100%	0	0%	18	14.63%
							Humiliation	82	97.62%	2	2.38%	84	68.29%
							Emotion	10	100%	0	0%	10	8.13%
Animal	13	100%	0	0%	13	3.74%	Emphasis	1	100%	0	0%	1	7.69%
							Humor	4	100%	0	0%	4	30.77%
							Humiliation	8	100%	0	0%	8	61.54%
Total	349	97.76%	8	2.24%	357	100%		349	97.76%	8	2.24%	357	100%

The results shown in Table (1) reveal that the most frequent swearing device is a social one. This high frequency of social devices can be due to the setting of the film, its theme and its tenor. As mentioned earlier, the film talks about a social phenomenon that is very frequent in American society. The characters can be divided into two groups: gang members and policemen. Certainly, the relationship between these two groups is very informal. This informality is clear from the high frequency of copulative terms.

In opposition, both gang members and police officers use social swearing devices mainly for the humiliation which occurs (113) times and represents (69.33%) of the total number of functions of swearing. Using social devices for humor comes next. It occurs (31) times and represents (19.1%) of the total number of the function of swearing in the film.

The characters also use social devices to express their emotion. This occurs (13) times which represents (7.98%) of the total number of the swearing function. The use of swearing for expressing emotion can be explained on the basis of the actions going on in the film. Characters tend to swear to express their deep emotions and feelings such as surprise, anger and fear.

Regarding the function of emphasis, this occurs only (6) times and represents (3.68%) of the total number of swearing functions.

As for gender differences, the table shows that in general female characters do few swearings. It can be argued that, again, this is due to the nature of action films where the heroes and action-doers are mainly males while female roles are usually minor. Female characters use social devices of swearing only two times.

The next most frequent device used for swearing are terms related to the body's organs and body processes. Again, it can be argued that this high frequency of those terms can be traced to the nature of the film and the informal relation between characters. Being mainly

uneducated enough gang members tend to use these terms very frequently mainly for the purpose of humiliation which occurs (84) times and represents (68.29%) of the total number of swearings.

However, these terms are used for other purposes such as humor, emphasis and expressing emotion which occur (18, 11, 10) times and represent (14.63%, 8.94%, and 8.13%) respectively. Again, the female characters do not use these terms a lot except twice where they use them for humiliation.

Though the film is an action one where characters exercise violence and break laws, religious words still play a role in the film. This can be seen from the use of the religious terms for swearing. The frequency of these terms is (47) which represents (13.54%) of the total number of swearing devices used in the film. So one can argue that the religious background of the characters seems to influence their style of swearing. They mainly use religious terms for expressing emotions which occurs (22) times and represents (46.81%) of the total number of functions of swearing. Humiliation comes next and occurs (13) times which represents (27.66%) of the total swearing functions. In addition, terms are used for emphasis, praise, and humor which occur (7, 4, 1) times which represent (14.89%, 8.51%, and 2.13%) respectively of the total number of swearing.

Due to the informality of the film and its characters in general and the low education of the gang numbers using animal names for swearing occurs (13) times which represents (3.74%) of the total number of swearing devices in the film. The characters attack and call each other's names by using animal names. This can be seen from the high frequency of humiliation which occurs (8) times and represents (61.54%) while humor and emphasis occur (4, 1) times and represent (30.77%, and 7.69%) respectively of the total number of swearing functions. Similarly, animal names are used only by male characters. This can be justified in terms of the fact that usually, female characters seem to be less aggressive and violent.

The white/black discrimination is not absent from the film. This can be seen from the use of racial terms such as (negro) by the characters. These terms occur (11) times and represent (3.17%) of the total number of swearing devices.

These terms are mainly used for humor and humiliation which occur (6, 3) times and represent (54.55%, and 27.27%) respectively of the total number of swearing functions. While praise and expressing emotion occurs only (1) time and represents (9.1%) for each.

Female characters seem to have a very humble share in using racial terms where it is used only one time and represents (16.67%).

8-2 Analysis of the Second Film (Boys and Girls Film): A Romantic Film

8-2-1 Introductory Background:

Boys and Girls is a romantic comedy film that was released in 2000, and directed by [Robert Iscove](#). The two main characters, Ryan (played by [Freddie Prinze, Jr.](#)) and Jennifer ([Claire Forlani](#)) meet each other initially as adolescent teenagers. They later realize that they are two people whose lives are intertwined through fate.

Jennifer Burrows and Ryan Walker meet at 10 years old aboard an airplane and quickly find out that they both have different views on life. Several years later, Ryan is the mascot of his high school, while Jennifer is elected Homecoming Queen of hers. During the halftime ceremony between the two schools, Ryan is chased by the rival mascots and loses his mascot head, only to find it run over by Jennifer's ceremonial car. Jennifer later finds Ryan and tries to console him about his costume. The two, again realizing they are too different and do not get along as friends, part ways once more.

8-2-2 Analysis of the Second Sample

As Table (2) shows the number of swearing expressions that occur in this film is very few. The total number of these expressions is only (16). Again, this may be due to the nature of the film which is romantic. Characters in this type of film usually have more formal relationships with each other than in other types of films.

Table 2: The Frequency and Percentage of Swearing Devices and Functions According to Gender in the Second Film

Device	Frequency & percentage				Total			Frequency& percentage				Total	
	Female		Male		Fr	%		Male		Female		Fr	%
religious	11	91.66%	1	8.33%	12	75%	Emphasis	0	0%	2	100%	2	16.66%
							Emotion	0	0%	8	100%	8	66.66%
							Humiliation	1	50%	1	50%	2	16.66%

Social	1	50%	1	50%	2	12.5%	Humiliation	1	50%	1	50%	2	100%
Bodily organs	2	100%	0	0%	2	12.5%	Humor	0	100%	2	0%	2	100%
Total	14	87.5%	2	12.5%	16	100%		2	12.5%	14	87.5%	16	100%

In addition, the characters usually are less tense. This is simply because such films lack high degrees of violent action. It can be also added that these characters are usually more educated than those in other films such as action films.

However, religion seems to play a key role in shaping the type of swearing expressions used by these characters. This is clearly seen from the fact that religious devices are the most frequent ones used in this film. They occur (12) times and represent (75%) of the total number of swearing expressions. In addition to the religious nature of swearing devices, another factor that characterizes swearing in romantic films is that the majority of swearings are done by females whose swearing represents (87.5%) of the total number of swearing in this film. While male's swearing represents only (12.5%). This variation can be due to the fact that usually females tend to express their emotions much more than males do. This is clear from the fact that the percentage of swearing for expressing emotions is (66.66%) of the total number of swearing by using religious devices. Another point that confirms this viewpoint is that only females use religious devices for expressing emotion. The rest of the religious swearing expressions are used for emphasis and humiliation which represent (16.66%) for each. Again, there is a gender difference in the function of religious swearing expressions. Only females use swearing for emphasis, while this gender difference disappears in the use of swearing for humiliation. The percentage of using swearing for humiliation is 8.33% for both.

Social devices are not very frequent in romantic films. They occur only two times which represents (12.5%) of the total number of swearings. These are only used for humiliation equally by females and males.

This low frequency of social devices can be traced to the formal relationships between the characters who avoid the use of the other informal devices of swearing such as folk terms, bodily organs and processes, animal names ...etc.

The formality of the relations between the characters is the result of the low frequency of another time of swearing device: bodily organs. These represent only (12.5%) of the total number of swearing expressions in the film.

The gender of the characters plays a key role in using this kind of swearing device. Bodily organs seem to be embarrassing for female characters. This is why bodily organs are used only by males and only for the purpose of humour.

9- A Comparison Between Action and Romantic Films in Terms of Swearing

The results of analyzing the two films show essential differences between the two types in terms of the frequency, types, functions of swearing and gender of the swearer. The results show that swearing characterizes action films as being different from romantic ones. This can be seen from the great number of swearing expressions which is about (357), while that of romantic films is only (16). As mentioned earlier, this difference can be due to the setting of the film and its nature. Being filled with actions, adventures, and young characters with informal relations, action films exceed romantic films in the number of swearing expressions used and the function behind swearing too.

As Table (3) shows the tenor of the film also is a decisive factor. This can be seen from the type of swearing devices used in both films. Because of its informal relation between the characters, the most frequent swearing device is that of social devices which occur (163) times and represents (45.65%) while in romantic films social devices occur only (2) times and represent (12.5%) of the total number of swearing devices. Clearly, this difference is the result of the formal tenor of romantic film.

The informal setting of an action film is also manifested in the frequent use of bodily organs which occur (123) times and represent (34.45%) in comparison with romantic films where bodily organs occur only (2) times and represent only (12.5%) of the total number of swearing.

The formal relation between the characters in the romantic film as well as their education is behind the low frequency of the use of the bodily organs swearing expressions. In spite of its informality, religious devices are more frequent in action films, where they occur (47) times and represent (13.16%) of the total number of swearing devices. However, in romantic films religious devices occur only (12) times which represents (75%) of the total number of swearing devices.

Finally, animal names and racial terms are not an exception. They occur (13, and 11) times respectively which represent (3.08%, and 3.64%) of the total number of swearing but they never occur in romantic films.

Table 3: The Frequency and Percentage of Swearing Devices According to Gender in the First and Second Film

Device	Action film						Romantic Film					
	Fr	Per	Male	Per	Female		Fr	Per	Male	Per	Female	Per
Religious	47	13.16%	44	93.61%	3	6.38%	12	75%	1	8.33%	11	91.66%
Racial	11	3.08%	10	90.90%	1	9.10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Social	163	45.45%	161	98.77%	2	1.23%	2	12.5%	1	50%	1	50%
Bodily organs	123	34.45%	121	98.37%	2	1.63%	2	12.5%	0	0%	2	100%
Animals	13	3.64%	13	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	357						16					

As for the function of swearing, table (4) shows that there are obvious differences between the two films. Similarly, the differences are due to the informal and aggressive relationship between the characters in the action film. This view can be supported by the high-frequent use of swearing for the purpose of humiliation which occurs (221) times and represents (61.90%) of the total number of swearing expressions. Characters in action films tend to humiliate each other via swearing devices in action films.

Table 4: The Frequency and Percentage of Swearing Functions According to Gender in the First and Second Film

Function	Action film						Romantic Film					
	Fr	Per	Male	Per	Female		Fr	Per	Male	Per	Female	Per
Emphasis	25	7%	25	100%	0	0%	2	12.5%	0	0%	2	100%
Humor	60	16.8%	58	96.66%	2	3.34%	2	12.5%	2	100%	0	0%
Praise	5	1.4%	3	60%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Humiliation	221	61.9%	218	98.64%	3	1.36%	4	25%	2	50%	2	50%
Emotion	46	12.88%	45	97.82%	1	2.18%	8	50%	0	0%	8	100%
Total	357						16					

However, this high-frequent use of humiliation is not found in the romantic film where humiliation occurs only (4) times which represents (25%) of the total number of swearing expressions. This is due to the formal relationship between the characters.

The second most frequent function of swearing in the action film is humor which occurs (60) times and represents (16.80%). This percentage is considered very high in comparison with romantic films where humor occurs (2) times and represents only (12.5%) of the total number of swearing.

Expressing emotion is more frequently used in romantic film which occurs (8) times and represents (50%) of the total number of swearing expressions while in action films, it occurs (46) times and represents only (12.88%). It can be argued that this difference is due to the nature of romantic films where characters are more concerned with expressing their feelings and attitudes.

As for emphasis, the results show that it is used more frequently in action films where characters tend not to have great confidence in each other. It occurs (25) times and represents (7%) of the total number of swearing. Yet, this percentage is lower than that used in romantic films where emphasis occurs (2) times and represents (12.5%). Finally, praise is never used in the romantic film, while it occurs (5) times which represents (1.40%) in the action film.

As for gender, table (5) shows that the results in action films are characterized by a high frequency of males' swearing which occurs (349) times representing (97.75%) of the total number of swearing. On the contrary females' swearings occur (14) times and represent (87.5%) of the total number of swearings.

Table 5: The Frequency and Percentage of Swearing According to Gender in the First and Second Film

Gender	Action film		Romantic film	
Female	8	2.25%	14	87.5 %
Male	349	97.75%	2	12.5 %
Total	357	100%	16	100%

Clearly, the reason behind this difference is the fact that in each action film, most of the actions are carried out by male characters while in romantic films both males and females take part in the actions. But the fact that females' swearing is more frequent in romantic films can be due to the fact that the female characters tend to emphasize their feelings, attitudes and emotions via swearing.

11-Conclusions

Within its scope, and the procedures followed, the results of the study lead to the following conclusions:

- 1- Swearing devices are more frequent in action films than in romantic films. The reason behind this variation is due to the nature of the setting and themes of the film.
- 2-There are gender differences in terms of the frequency of swearing expressions and their functions in both types of films.
- 3-Males' swearings are more frequent in action films while the reverse is true in romantic films.
- 4-Body organs and social devices are more frequent swearing expression types in action films due to the informal tenor of the film. While these devices are much less frequent in romantic films.
- 5-Being concerned with expressing feelings, emotions, and attitudes, romantic films lack any use of racial terms and animal names. However, the two types are used in action films

due to the fact that characters are more concerned with violent actions and criminal affairs.

6-Religious devices play a key role in both films. However, they are more frequent in romantic films.

7- The nature of the film also influences the frequency of the function of swearing. Humiliation and humor are more frequent in action films due to the nature of these films in which characters have aggressive relationships with each other.

8-Romantic films are characterized by a high percentage of swearing expressions used for expressing emotions. Praising disappears completely in romantic films while it is used in action films but with low frequency.

In the end, it can be recommended that further studies need to be carried out to explore swearing expressions in other types of movies. This is to identify the particular functions carried by these expressions. Additionally, the impact of swearing expressions character development and audience perception can also be investigated in those films.

Regarding the pedagogical implications of the results, EFL teachers, educators and syllabus designers can make use of the substantial contribution those types of films can have to the vocabulary development of the English language. Based on the results, action films can be a good source of information for teachers who teach vocabulary. The film texts can be used to teach the functions of those swearing expressions as they have a frequent number of those terms with specific functions. Similarly, films are considered an authentic source of English language terms and expressions for educators and syllabus designers. The nature and type of audio-visual texts with a particular function and the use of the terms and expressions in them form very effective teaching resources due to their enjoyable characteristics. Hence, textbooks and language teaching materials need to use different types of films for language teaching and learning.

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