

DAWAH AND TABOO WORD: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY ON ISLAMIC LECTURES BY MADURESE KYAIS

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Abstrak. Dakwah dan kata-kata tabu secara umum dianggap sebagai dua hal yang kontradiktif. Namun, ada kemungkinan untuk mendengar kata-kata tabu dalam dakwah. Oleh karena itu, artikel ini bertujuan untuk mempelajari kata-kata tabu yang digunakan oleh kyai-kyai yang berasal dari Madura dalam kajian-kajian Islami. Studi ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif. Data dalam studi ini berasal dari video Youtube tentang kajian-kajian ilmiah oleh Kyai-Kyai Madura. Ada empat video yang dipilih berdasarkan kriteria-kriteria tertentu. Hasil temuan menunjukkan empat kyai Madura menyebutkan kata-kata tabu dalam kajian-kajian Islami. Kata-kata tabu dapat dikategorikan ke dalam kata umpatan, kata cabul, kata empat-huruf, kata kotor dan nama binatang. Semua kata tersebut dapat digunakan sebagai humor, tetapi hanya kata umpatan yang dapat digunakan untuk mempersuasi orang dan kata cabul, kata kotor, dan nama binatang untuk mendeskripsikan sesuatu.

Kata kunci: humor, Kajian Ilmiah, Madura, Kata Tabu, Sociolinguistik

Abstract. Dawah and taboo words are generally considered as two contradict things. However, there is a possibility to hear taboo words in dawah. Therefore, this article aims to study taboo words used by Madurese Kyais in their Islamic lectures. The study uses descriptive qualitative method. The data are Youtube videos of Islamic lectures by Madurese Kyais. There are four videos chosen based on some criteria. The findings show that all four Madurese Kyais mention taboo words in their Islamic lectures. The taboo words can be categorized into swear or curse words, obscene words, four-lettered words, dirty words, and animal names. All of them can be used as humor, but only swear word can be used to persuade people and obscene words, dirty words, and animal names to describe something.

Keywords: humor, Islamic lectures, Madurese, taboo words, Sociolinguistics

INTRODUCTION

Wardhaugh (1986) shares the definition of taboo as “*the prohibition or avoidance in any society of behavior believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment, or shame*”. It generally links to sex, death, excretion, bodily functions, religious matters, and also politics. Since taboo is a prohibition, it involves avoidance of certain activities in pursuit of well-being for us and has connected with fear of punishment (Allan and Burridge, 1991).

However, taboo has existed in language and culture. Taboo can be found easily in our society. Taboos exist in a variety of contexts, some of them being known in most societies and others being more context-specific (Keturi and Lehmonen, 2012). The fact that taboo has always existed leads some researchers more interested in this field of study. It is also examined from different perspectives for instance taboo words in movies (Azzaro, 2005; Ekstrom, 2008; Febrianuswantoro, 2012; Lie, 2013; Trulyfiona, 2014), taboo words in literary works (Rashida, 2013; Teimoori, 2012), taboo words in a single language and speech community (Mbaya, 2002; Fakuade et al., 2011), taboo words in institutional educations (Keturi and Lehmonen, 2012), and taboo words in advertising (Zaaraoui, 2007).

Although the topic of taboos has been studied by many researchers, in my knowledge there is no study in the use of taboo word in public speech, especially by spiritual or religious leader. Some studies in analyzing public speech just focus on political speech such as SBY’s speech (S. Luhukay, 2007), Bush’s speech (Pu, 2007), Barrack Obama’s speech (Wang, 2010), and Pakistan founding father Quaid-e-Azam’s speech (Nawaz et al., 2013). In the meantime, the previous studies of religious speeches only examine the method of Islamic speeches (Maulana, 2008; Sopyan, 2009; Masyitoh, 2011) and both stylistic and rhetoric (Mu’minin, 2009). All of these studies do not analyze an illogical thing as interesting topic such as the use of taboo words in Islamic lecture.

The use of taboo words in Islamic lecture among Madurese society is not a strange case. Madurese Kyais are demanded to be able to attract the attention of audiences. Thus, in order to deliver an attractive speech, Madurese Kyais sometimes insert taboo words on the sidelines of their speeches.

Madurese originally refers to a native or inhabitant of Madura Island, East Java Province, Indonesia. However, Nooteboom (2015) defines Madurese as Madurese-speaking people. He does not limit the term to Madurese from or living in Madura Island but including any region including mainland East Java. This study regards Madurese as people who live inside and outside Madura Island, have a Madurese lineage, and speak Madurese. *Manfred Ziemnek (1986) defines Kyai as “a founder and leader of a Muslim boarding school as educated Muslim who dedicated his life for sake of God as well as to disseminate and explore teachings and views of Islam through Islamic education”*.

Dawah and taboo words are generally considered as two contradict things. It seems impossible for Madurese kyais use taboo words because of some reasons such as their purity of heart, politeness, education, religious environment, and so on. Not all Madurese Kyais use taboo words. Every Kyai has his distinct character on delivering

their Islamic lectures. Nevertheless, in some cases it happens. The case, however, makes me determined to investigate further on the use of taboo words by Madurese Kyais in their Islamic lectures.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive qualitative is a method that serves the purpose of straight descriptions of phenomena. It is typically an eclectic but reasonable combination of sampling, and data collection, analysis, and representation techniques (Sandelowski, 2000.)

The source of data was Youtube. The data were the transcribed texts of Madurese Kyais' Islamic lecture videos. Data collection was done in several steps. First, the videos were downloaded from Youtube. There were four videos selected based on the top four videos found in the search results "Ceramah Kyai Madura" by sorting the view count:

- a. KH MA (33:16)
- b. KH MS (34:32)
- c. KH HH (1:04:30)
- d. HB AA (1:10:02)

Second, the videos were transcribed in the original language, Madurese language. Then the transcribed texts were analyzed in terms of taboo words, types of taboo words based on Apte's (1994) categorization (swear or curse words, obscene words, four-lettered words, and dirty words), and the function of taboo words.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Taboo Words

Taboo words found in Islamic lectures by Madurese Kyais are shown in following table 1.

No	Madurese code	Kyai	Number of data
1	KH MA		8
2	KH MS		8
3	KH HH		4
4	HB AA		13
Total			33

Table 1. Number of taboo words

As table 1 shows, all Madurese Kyais use taboo words in their Islamic lectures. The number of taboo words is varied. HB AA uses the most frequent taboo words, 13 times, i.e. '*essèna sampèr*' (something inside the long cloth of batik), '*soso*' (breast) (mentioned 6 times), '*abângkang*' (naked) (mentioned 2 times), '*kotang*' (bra), '*bettèsa*' (her calf), '*pokanga*' (her thigh), and '*korang ajhâr!*' (God damn it!). Meanwhile, KH

HH uses the least frequent taboo words, 4 times, i.e. *'brâkay'* (monitor lizard), *'nèng-konèng è attassâ aèng'* (the yellow thing on the water), *'taè'* (feces), and *'korang ajhâr!'* (God damn it!). KH MA and KH MS use the same number of taboo words. KH MA mentions 8 taboo words, i.e. *'jhâ' pas pettengnga dâina!'* (if only his forehead turned black!), *'to'-kento'an'* (fake flatulence) (mentioned two times), *'rang-ghârângan'* (beaver), and *'haram!'* (I swear!) (mentioned four times). KH MS also mentions 8 taboo words, i.e. *'sè konèng è songay'* (the yellow thing in the river), *'nong-ghunong'* (mountains), *'songay'a bâdâ'* (there is a river), *'bu-rombuna'* (dirt), *'monteng'* (coccyx or bottom) (mentioned 2 times), *'bhâbâna tabu''* (under the stomach), and *'tompes!'* (Go to hell!).

Types of Taboo Words

The taboo words are classified into Apte's (1994) categorization, i.e. swear or curse words, obscene words, four-lettered words, and dirty words.

1. Swear or curse words

There are four words which when uttered involve damnation, misfortune, or disrespect of the targeted object or person, i.e. *'haram!'* (I swear!), *'jhâ' pas pettengnga dâina!'* (if only his forehead turned black!), *'korang ajhâr!'* (God damn it!), and *'tompes!'* (Go to hell!). The word *'haram!'* belongs to swear word. It derives from Arabic *'haram'* (literally, "forbidden in Islam"). The swear word is generally used by Madurese to convince others. The rest words belong to curse words. *'Jhâ' pas pettengnga dâina!'* is an imaginary bad situation that supposing other's forehead turning black in order to learn. *'Korang ajhâr!'* and *'tompes!'* are anger expressions. *'Korang ajhâr!'* shows that the speaker regards a person having a bad behavior. On the other hand, *'tompes!'* is wishing someone's death.

2. Obscene words

There are eleven words referring to sexual organs, sexual attractions and sexual acts. The sexual organs are not directly mentioned by Madurese Kyais. They use euphemism and imagery words, i.e. *'bhâbâna tabu''* (under the stomach), *'bu-rombuna'* (dirt), *'essèna sampèr'* (something inside the long cloth of batik), and *'songay'* (river). *'Bhâbâna tabu''*, *'essèna sampèr'*, and *'songay'* refer to woman genital organ. Meanwhile, *'bu-rombuna'* refers to its hair. There are four parts of woman body related to sexual attractions, i.e. *'bettès'* (calf), *'monteng'* (bottom), *'pokang'* (thigh), and *'soso'* (breast). The word *'nong-ghunong'* (mountains) is an imagery word of *'soso'*. Besides the parts of woman body, there is woman underwear *'kotang'* that is also related to sexual attraction. In addition, sexual act is mentioned by using word *'abângkang'* (being naked).

3. Four-lettered words

Among taboo words used by Madurese Kyais, only one word is considered as a word having four letters in its spelling. It is *'soso'* (breast). The word *'soso'* is considered profane because its reference to intimate part of woman body.

4. Dirty words

There are four words that refer to scatological substances (such as menstruation, urine, feces, and spittle), i.e. *'nèng-konèng è attassâ aèng'* (the yellow thing on the

water), 'taè' (feces), 'to'-kento'an' (fake flatus), and 'sè konèng è songay' (the yellow thing in the river). 'Nèng-konèng è attassâ àèng', 'taè', and 'sè konèng è songay' refer to the same object, feces. 'Taè' is Madurese word for feces. Meanwhile, 'nèng-konèng è attassâ àèng' and 'sè konèng è songay' are euphemism for feces commonly found on the water (of river) or in the river. The last word 'to'-kento'an' is related to stomach gas. Thus, feces and stomach gas are considered dirty words.

Besides all classification of the taboo words above, there are other two taboo words related to animal names, i.e. 'brâkay' (monitor lizard) and 'rang-ghârângan' (beaver). Both animal names are used to call others.

Functions of Taboo Words

The use of taboo words by Madurese kyais has three functions, i.e. humor, persuasion, and description.

1. Humor

Islamic lectures usually sound monotonous and rigid. Hence, the all taboo words are applied for humor. They are used to attract audience's attention and break the ice. For instance, swear word 'haram!' and curse words 'korang ajhâr!' and 'tompes!' Instead of cursing someone else, these swear and curse words are used for making audience laugh.

Excerpt 1:

KH MA : *Kulâ nèka, ta' langkong nyo'on sapura. Haq lillahi ta'ala. Adu dâ' râmman sè ngoca'a yâ? (laugh). Billahi todus!*

I, I'm sorry. I swear in the name of God. Huft. How can I say that? I swear I'm shy!

Audiences : (laugh)

KH MA : *Acerama è ajuna kèyaè nèka todus. Abâ ta' andi' èlmo ni. Mennanga dân kaulâ nèka ghun sètong. Mennang kecca'!*

I am not confidence to speak in front of an Islamic leader. I can do it because of one thing, I'm talkative.

Audiences : (laugh)

KH MA : *Kecca'. Yâ la dâ' râmman jâ' la bâgiân. Kulâ nèka bânnè alèm. Ma' onèng hadis? Ma' onèng kor'an? Haram ollèna ngapalagi kulâ!*

Talkative. What can I do? It's my responsibility. I'm not a Muslim scholar. Why do I know Hadith? Why do I know Koran? I swear I memorized it.

Audiences : (laugh longer)

KH MA : *Kèng todus-*
But I'm shy.

Audiences : (Laugh harder and give applause)

KH MA : *Ollèna ngapalagi (laugh)*
I memorized it.

Excerpt 1 is taken from first Islamic lecture video by KH MA. KH MA makes a confession about his real condition in the stage and his knowledge of Islam. He says he is a little bit nervous to speak in front of other Islamic leader. He also confesses that he

does not master all of Islamic teachings. He tries to memorize hadith and ayah of Koran before delivering it to audience. He uses swear word '*haram*' to convince the audience as well as to lighten audiences' mood. It can be seen as audiences laugh longer than before after hearing his swear word.

Other four types of taboo words also have the same function as humor, for instance, animal name '*brâkay*' (monitor lizard).

Excerpt 2:

KH HH : *Dâ' iyâ jârèyâ sè kadhâng ghun èghutèk dhâpa' pas ngadhèp, jhâ' rèng pas adhèp ka tèmbo'. Eghutek polè, nongngèp.*

Do you know, sometimes, when the bride is touched lightly with groom's finger, she turns to the wall instead. He tries to touch again, she faces down.

Audiences : (laugh)

KH HH : *Enca'na sè lakè', "mon èdhina nongngèp dâ' iyâ kana', tarèng angò' abinèa brâkay engko'."*

The groom said, "It's better to marry a monitor lizard rather than being treated like this."

Audiences : (Laugh harder and longer)

Excerpt 2 is taken from third Islamic lecture video by KH HH. KH HH tells a groom's frustration facing a rejection of the bride. The groom compares his bride to a monitor lizard and regards the animal is a better choice. The use of animal name '*brâkay*' to compare with the bride is an irony. However it is able to raise a fun. The audiences laugh harder and longer after hearing the word.

2. Persuasion

The swear word has another function. It is also used for persuading or convincing other. For example in excerpt 1. The swear word '*haram*' is commonly used for swearing. Yet it is categorized as taboo word because Madurese have to swear under name of God such as '*billahi!*' and '*demi Allah!*'. By using the swear word '*haram!*', Madurese kyais intend to convince audience that their words are the truth.

3. Description

Another function of using taboo words is for describing thing. The use of obscene words, dirty words, and animal names carries this function. The phrases '*nèng-konèng è attassâ aèng*' and '*sè konèng è songay*' are used to describe feces that are commonly found in the river. These phrases indirectly describe Madurese open defecation behavior. In a certain case, taboo words are the only choice, for instance, to describe parts of woman body and woman's clothing. It is impossible to change word '*bettès*', '*monteng*', and '*pokang*' with another words. However, the word '*soso*' can be replaced by word '*nong-ghunong*'. Yet using word '*nong-ghunong*' in public speech is considered as taboo because its meaning is still the same and it cause woman audiences feel ashamed.

Humor is the main function of using taboo words in Islamic lectures. It covers almost all functions. Using taboo words for stressing and description will give such sense of humor. The swear word shares both humor and persuasion function. It also

occurs in descriptive word related to woman underwear 'kotang'. The taboo word will be ridiculous in audiences' ears then it will make them laugh instead.

CONCLUSION

From four Islamic lectures by Madurese Kyais, there are 33 taboo words found. They are categorized into five types, i.e. swear or curse words, obscene words, four-lettered words, dirty words, and animal names. Those taboo words have three function, i.e. humor, persuasion, and description. All taboo words have function as humor, but only swear word has a function to persuade people. In addition, obscene words, dirty words, and animal names also have a function as description word.

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