CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter attempts to review some literatures related to the study. It covers some theories such as sociolinguistics, bad language, taboo, swearwords, types of swearing, reasons for swearing, and the explanation of *Pulp Fiction* movie. Theoretical framework and analytical construct of the study are also explained at the end of this chapter.

A. Sociolinguistics

The emergence of language is inseparable from society. The study which concerns on this phenomenon is called Sociolinguistics. According to Yule (2010:254), sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and society in order to analyze language from social perspective. Those social perspectives include social anthropology, psychology, and sociology. Similar to Yule, Holmes (2013:01) also states that sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and society. It deals with either the phenomena on how the society interacts differently in different social context or the social function of language and the way it is used in order to convey the social meaning.

In addition, Wardhaugh (2006:13) also defines that sociolinguistics is the study which investigates the relation between language and society in order to comprehend the structure of language and the function of language in communication. From the definitions which are cited above, it can be seen that sociolinguistics study always concerns and relates with society and language, they

are interconected to one another in order to seek out how the language affects the society as well as in vice versa.

Since the relation between society and language are potential in sociolinguistics, Wardhaugh (2006:10) determines that there are four possible relationships between language and society. The first relationship is the social structure which might influence or determine linguistic structure and/or behavior. This can be seen by seeing the *age-grading* phenomenon whereby the ways children speak to adults are different as the ways adults speak to children. The second relationship is vice versa, that is the linguistic structure and/or behavior might influence or determine social structure. For instance, as explained by Whorfian Hypothesis in Wardhaugh (2006:225) that the language a person speaks affects that person's relationship to the external world in one or more ways. The third possible relationship is that the influence is bi-directional; it means that society and language probably influence one another. The last possibility is that there is no relationship between language and society. This factor will be possible since Chomsky, a linguist, develops an asocial linguistics as a preliminary to any other term of linguistics, such as an asocial approach being, which logically prior according to him.

In relation between language and society, one of the concepts which seems reliable is Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee's theory or known as Whorfian Hypothesis (in Wardhaugh, 2006: 221). They state that the structure of language reflects the speakers of language on how they view the world. In other words, Whorfian Hyphothesis deals with the perspective of speakers which is influenced

by their language to view the world. Therefore, they determine three concepts of the language which reflect the circumstances of the speaker.

The first concept is that the physical environments in social circumstance reflect its language. It means that the use of language tends to depend on how the society sees things on their own perspective. This can be seen in the term of coconut tree. It has only one term to describe the tree in English, but Javanese language is completely different. Almost every part of the coconut tree has their own name, since all of the parts of coconut tree are considered to be useful for locals. The second concept is that the language which reflects the social environment may have an effect of the structure of vocabulary. In this case, the Inuit tribe who lives in Artic is well considered as the example, since they can think more intelligently about snow rather than anyone because their language contains more sophisticated and subtle words distinguishing various forms of it.

The third concept is environment which affects the use of language may reflects social values as well. Indeed there are various social values in every society, especially when it comes to the use of language. It becomes standardization of the society to define which one is either good or bad. Generally, they are divided into two categories; those are good language and bad language. Good language concerns on the use of language appropriately in order to be accepted by society. It contains the use of polite tone, not intimidating, and employing common words. On the other hand, bad language is considered as inappropriate language to use in daily conversation, since it is prohibited by social values in society. It contains the use of strong tone, intimidating, employing

uncommon or harsh words. Since the research focuses on swearing which belong to bad language, detailed information about it is needed in the next section.

B. Bad language

According to McEnery (2006:01), bad language is words or phrases which seem to be inappropriately used in polite conversation since it will cause offence. It is fairly acceptable since the use of bad language must bring unpleasant toward the hearers, hence it is not suggested to use such language in formal conversation. However, Andersson and Trudgill (in Doyle, 2006: 2) state that the use of bad language may slightly change from what it is previously thought to be bad language to become standard language. It is possible since each classification of bad language enriches the knowledge of the language itself and the society may unconsciously use it as daily conversation.

In order to give more comprehensive understanding about bad language, Jay (1992:2-9) has classified bad language into ten categories, they are:

1. Cursing: It is used to provoke someone through offensive words by using divine term. Non-religious term may be applied as well in which the speaker's intention is to express anger toward the hearer.
2. Profanity: The use of words which refer to divine terms of religion but their meaning are totally unrelated with the speakers' intention toward the hearer.
3. Blasphemy: Words which are uttered by someone in order to provoke certain religion.

4. Taboo: Taboo is kind of words which are created in order to make society acknowledge that there are many things in their culture which need to be prevented and by doing such things will be considered as extremely prohibited.
5. Obscenity: The use of obscenity words which contain sexual or lust term and the intention is inciting the hearer toward depravity.
6. Vulgarity: The language which is commonly used by low class or uneducated people.
7. Slang: Non-standard language which is developed by certain group of society in order to communicate among them.
8. Epithet: Abusive words or phrases used in order to express frustrated or reduced anger of the speaker.
9. Insults and Slurs: the use of those two categories have the same function, it is used to express verbal attack to the hearers. Mostly, insult references are about physical, mental, or physiological disability of the hearers in order to mock them. Meanwhile, slurs tend to use racial, ethnic, or social class as references.
10. Scatology: the use of words which refer to human waste products and processes.

Each classification gives explanation about bad language clearly. In fact, they are almost similar with one another, for example the use of words in profanity, cursing, and blasphemy can be the same; one thing which differs among them is the intention of how the speaker used it. Since this research focuses on

swearing which becomes the part of taboo, thus, the explanation about taboo needs to be explored further in the next section.

C. Taboo

Taboo or used to be known as *tabu* is discovered by Captain Cook from Tongan language in the end of eighteenth century. It roughly translates as "forbid or forbidden", which include any kind of prohibition both in behavior and language (Allan & Burridge, 2006:02). Since then, Cook introduced the term into English language, and it has been accepted and pronounced as taboo in English.

The definition of taboo can be different for some experts, but it regularly refers to prohibition in certain context. According to Hughes (2006:462), taboo used to be related to sexual, racial, or religious topic that should be prohibited, but nowadays, it is simply an act that should not be expressed when it comes to social indiscretion, both action and speech. In contrast, Sigmund Freud (1919:31) regards taboo as restrictions which differ from religious or moral prohibitions, they are not related upon any divine ordinance, but they tend to impose themselves using their own judge. It means that the nature of taboo is not generated by commandment of God but the society imposes their own prohibitions; they are differentiated from moral prohibitions as well by declaring their abstinences in which it is controlled by the dominance of certain social class. In short, taboo may differ from its definitions but the similar thing which relate with taboo is, it relates with the certain culture of society in each social class.

To support the conclusion above, Freitas (2008:26) states words and expressions will potentially become taboo for some people if they are employed

by other social class. This can be seen on the use word of nigger through society. It can be considered as offensive when other races, particularly white people, addressing it toward black people, meanwhile black people is freely address that term toward themselves. Hence, it can be concluded that taboo occurs when something is inappropriate with the value of society and the circumstances in which either words or acts are used by people in certain culture.

Taboo can be classified into two categories; they are behavioral and verbal taboo. Behavioral taboo or non-verbal taboo refers to acts which are prohibited based on traditional values or social customs, in which they consist of cultural customs, religious belief, and ethic norm. On the other hand, verbal taboo is prohibition of some words, expressions, and topic in social interactions (Ekstrom, 2010:5). This study focuses on the use of verbal taboo, since swearing as the topic of this research is the part of verbal taboo.

The use of verbal taboo usually does not relate with other culture, since each culture has its own taboo. However, there are several cases which make it relates to other cultures, particularly for bilingual persons. Haas (in Wardhaugh, 2006:239) states that verbal taboo or taboo words emerge due to the factors of bilingual circumstances. This can be seen from the cases of bilingual students between English and Thai language. They tend to prevent employing the word *fag* and *phrig* in Thai which mean sheath and chili due to similarity of phonetic sounds in English which refer to taboo words. On the other hand, Thai students hardly use words *yet* and *key* due to similarity of Thai words which refer to intercourse and excrement. These kinds of circumstances in which bilinguals

response to taboo words are strongly acceptable since Steven Pinker (in Fairman, 2009:51) states that the response of taboo words are not only emotional but involuntary, which means that people are not only reacted on unwanted sound; they subconsciously look it up in memory and react to interpret the meaning and connotations of those words.

As forbidden language, taboo is still employed by people for certain purposes. According to Timothy (in Ekstrom, 2010:9) states that the use of taboo language is an effective way in order to express and relieve the depression of human beings, in which they are considered as emotional, sexual, and aggressive animal. It means that the use of taboo words may be efficient in order to express anger rather than using physical action which can cause violence. In fact, the use of taboo words which contain emotional expressions can be called as swearing.

As the part of taboo, swearing is interesting phenomenon which needs to be explored further since its definition tends to overlap with taboo. According to Ljung (2011:12), he states that taboo words which use literal meaning cannot be considered as swearing. Conversely, the use of taboo words which is not referred to literal meaning can be regarded as successful swearing. The example of this situation is when the speaker uses the word *shit*. *Shit*, the strong language of excrement, can be regarded as both taboo and swearing depends on its circumstances. The example sentence such “that bird tried to shit on my head just now” is regarded as taboo due to the literal meaning of bird trying to defecate on someone. On the other hand, the sentence “I don’t give a shit about that” is regarded as swearing since the use of shit does not refer to excrement or metaphor

and contain emotional expression in it. Shortly, it can be concluded that taboo is not always considered as swearing, while swearing is always taboo.

D. Swearing

As stated by Ljung (2011:5), swearing is language device in order to give emphasis of the speakers through various techniques like stress, intonation and tone of voice. This is line with Patrick (in Vingerhoets, 2013:290) who states that swearing refers to primitive act of speech due to the annoyance or frustration feeling, in which it is similar with growling of the animal. Hence, swearing is one of the ways used by the speakers to express their emotional feeling toward something or someone.

In addition, in order to analyze swearing phenomena, one of the factors which need to be concerned is swearwords. As Horan (2011:18) argues that the expression of swearing refers to communicative activities which involve variety of lexical resources. Lexical resources in this definition can be regarded as swearwords.

1) Characteristics of swearwords

Taboo words which are uttered in emotive ways are considered as swearwords. Jay (1999:51-52) states that swearwords are unique in order to express strong emotion, in which they differ with non-curse words, curses increase their power to swear rather to prevent them; hence breaking the taboo in order to say curse words is understood as swearing when the speakers is in emotional state. Such emotional states involve angry, shocked, upset, or even happy. In order to make it clear, Hagen (2013:4) gives example case of person who walks on the

street and finds out that there is a car ramming into pedestrians. That person will probably utter swearwords such as “oh shit” automatically. Hence, that phrase can be regarded as swearing in which it shows relief button in emotional states.

According to Andersson (in Ljung 2011:7-8), swearwords can be potentially accepted by concerning on both of their content and their form, viz. words whose literal meaning is bad and whose form is vilified by speakers. This can be seen on the example of the word *shit* which is regarded as unpleasant in both of its content and its form. The term of *faeces*, on the other hand, is considered bad only on its content but it is neutral on its form. Therefore, the sentence such “Shit, I stepped in the faeces” is a well-formed swearing sentence, but the sentence such “Faeces, I stepped in the shit” is not.

Characteristic of swearwords in every language is arguably to involve taboo phenomena in its culture. This is related with Andersson’s view (in Karjaleinen, 2002:17) who state that swearwords in western culture usually employ taboo words in the scope of religion, sexual things, excrement, death, prostitution, crime and physical or mentally disabled. Similarly, Wardhaugh (2006:239) cites that the subjects which deal with taboo or swearing involve the topic of sex, death, excretion, bodily functions, religious subjects, and politics. Furthermore, Pinker (2007:339) argues that although swearwords can be categorized into various things, yet the original of swearwords in languages is religion, particularly English. The blasphemy words such as, *God, Jesus, Hell, and Christ*, are used to be former swearwords back then. However, secularization emerges in society which makes swearwords using religious terms are slightly

degrade their power, hence, nowadays, the speakers employ other terms which have the equal degree of sensitivity. These explanations give a clear illustration that consideration of the use of swearwords usage is not on one subject, it depends on how the subjects are sensitive enough in the norms of society.

2) Types of Swearing

Pinker (2007:350) proposes five types of swearing. They are dysphemistic, abusive, idiomatic, emphatic, and cathartic. Each subject is explained below.

a) Dysphemistic Swearing

Dysphemistic swearing emerges when the taboo words are used in literal sense to refer some objects towards activity. According to Pinker (2007:351), he states dysphemism emerges once the speakers demand to remind the listeners about disagreement of something, hence the speakers tend to change the gutter of their language by using taboo language to convey just how vile something is. In other words, one needs to employ dysphemism when the politeness is no longer employed in conversation and the intention is to show the listeners how awful something truly is. Furthermore, dysphemism is the opposite of euphemism. In case of euphemism asks the speakers to replace harsh word into the mild one, dysphemism tends to force the listeners to judge the words negatively. In order to see how the dysphemistic swearing employs in society, Pinker gives the example in the following sentence.

> So the plumber wanted to talk to me while he was working under the sink, and I had to look at the crack in his **ass** the whole time. (Pinker, 2007:352)

In this example, the speaker tells the story about his experience with the plumber. Instead of using polite term like *buttock* which seems to be appropriate, the speaker tends to use literal term like *ass* in order to convey his own distress to the listener.

b) Abusive Swearing

According to Pinker (2007:353) taboo word is not only useful when the speaker attempts to convey it in order to release distress to the listeners but also when they want to create that distress in listeners. This act can be called as abusive s wearing. It emerges when one urges to intimidate, punish, or downgrade the pride of certain person in certain circumstance by cursing. Furthermore, there are three ways in order to express abusive swearing. First, by referring the listeners toward effluvia and their associated organs such as *piece of shit, asshole, cunt, twit, prick, schmuck, putz, shithead,* and *dickhead.* Second, by referring the listeners toward sexual activity such as *incest like motherfucker, sodomy activity like bugger, fellatio thing like cocksucker, and masturbation like wanker.* The last is advising the listeners to do undignified activities such as *kiss my ass, fuck yourself,* and *shove it up your ass.* Those three methods seem to be unreasonable and inappropriate when it comes to refer to someone, but they are regularly employed in society since the intention is definitely to mock or humiliate certain person. An example of this type of utterance can be seen in the following sentence.

> **I'll stick a pig's leg up your cunt** until your back teeth rattle.
> (Pinker, 2007: 354)

In this example, it is clearly shown that the speaker tries to abuse the listener using strong words which seem indecent. Actually, most of the sayings are not in literal meaning, since the speaker's intention is just to abuse the listener.

c) Idiomatic Swearing

Idiomatic swearing is employed by speakers usually without referring into any object. It becomes an abstract concept of swearing since the use of it does not imply any meaning to the listeners. Therefore, Pinker (2007:352) states that the speaker tends to use idiomatic in order to arouse listener attentions, to assert macho/cool pose, and to express informal situations between the speaker and listener. These strange expressions become examples on how idiomatic swearing works out in society.

> *we're shit out of luck.*
> *what a pain the ass.*
> *get your shit together.*
>
> (Pinker, 2007:357)

The uses of swearing in these expressions do not make sense since their meanings cannot be interpreted. They just simply express idiomatic terms in order to imply something.

d) Emphatic Swearing

Emphatic swearing is used by adding word which contains sexual meaning or excretory organ in order to emphasize an exclamation (Pinker, 2007:360). In other words, the speaker employs emphatic swearing in order to emphasize the statement toward the listeners. This example becomes well-referenced on how the emphatic swearing used in conversation.

> I come home to my **fucking** house after three f**ucking** years in the **fucking** war, and what do I **fucking**-well find? My wife in bed, engaging in illicit sexual relations with a male!" (Pinker, 2007:359)

This example shows that the speaker is disappointed since he has been at war for years and finds out that his wife cheated on him. Therefore, he adds swearwords in his explanation in order to emphasize his disappointment through the listener.

e) **Cathartic Swearing**

Cathartic swearing emerges when the speaker blurts swearwords out in a moment of sudden pain, frustration, or regret (Pinker 2007:364). The intention of this swearing is just simply to release stress button or tension of the speaker. In fact, the use of cathartic swearing depends on its circumstance. The speaker may employ catharsis which refers to sexuality, excrement, or even religion, but the uses of them are totally different in every occasion. These examples taken from Pinker give explanation clearly about this type.

> ……when we bump our head, we don't shout cunt, or whore, or prick. Though these words are just as taboo as shit, fuck, and damn……people shout asshole when they suffer a sudden affront from human perpetrator, but not when they pick up a hot casserole or have mousetrap snap on their finger. (Pinker 2007:366)

These conditions which cited form Pinker show that the uses of cathartic swearing are specific in both occasion and language. One may not randomly utter swearword in every occasion, it particularly depends on memorized pairing between a sound and a meaning which is shared throughout the language a language in community.

3) Reasons for swearing

Andersson (in Karjalainen, 2002:24), classifies the reasons of swearing into three motives. They are psychological, social, and linguistic motives. Those motives will be explained further below.

a) Psychological Motives

The uses of swearwords emerge under frustration-aggression syndrome circumstances (Anderson, in Karjeleinen 2002:26). In other words, swearing is the main device in order to express emotions and stress relief (Harran, 2010:3). Therefore, swearwords which are triggered by emotion of the speakers do not emerge deliberately, but more likely come as a reflex in every circumstance. Moreover, Andersson (in Karjeleinen 2002:25) gives the illustration of psychology as the motive of swearing when there is a person gets one's fingers stuck in the door of the pub or the church, the possibility of uttering swearwords will always be the same, since it reflexively comes out in order to release stress over the pain.

b) Social Motives

The uses of swearwords in social motives are employed in order to asset the identity in a group of society, for instance, to shock, to amuse, to insult, to indicate friendship, or even to make social distance. In contrast with psychological motives, swearwords in social motives are highly deliberate due to the interactions with surrounding. This illustration gives the example on how social motives can be triggered as the factors of swearing.

> Not too long ago, a friend of mine was on the 3T tram in downtown Helsinki, on her way to work. Two teenage girls were sitting in the back of the tram, talking loudly to each other in a very vulgar manner. The swearword "vittu" (roughly equivalent to English 'fuck' in terms of offensiveness) was used excessively, which led to a pained silence in the tram. The girls, however, seemed oblivious to the embarrassment they were causing among their fellow travelers. Next to the girls sat an elderly, sweet-looking lady, who was getting ready to get off the tram. After a while she stood up and said, very calmly: "Anteeks, mun pitäis nyt vittu jäädä pois", which translates roughly to "Excuse me, I need to get off the fucking tram". The tram roared with laughter as the little old lady made her exit, leaving the girls dumbfounded. (Karjeleinen, 2002:27)

In this condition, the use of swearing uttered by the old lady is clearly influenced by her surrounding, since her intention is to imitate the way the girls' speaking in order to mock them. Thus, it can be considered that the use of swearing in this condition is triggered by social motives.

c) **Linguistic Motives**

The way people react to swearwords can be different. One may consider that swearword is acceptable in certain circumstance or even in all situations, while the others may consider that swearwords must be removed from society. According to Andersson (in Karjeleinen 2002:30), a speaker employs a swearword freely as long as it can convey the message through the hearer. People may have various ways of speaking in order to express themselves using different lexicon, grammatical structures, and so on. For instance, either sentences of "What a very nice rocking chair" or "What a fucking nice rocking chair" are acceptable, in which it depends on context.

Therefore, it can be assumed that the uses of swearwords in linguistic motives do not provoke the hearer. They simply as pure motives on linguistic subjects in order to show someone's way of speaking in daily life, such as to give emphasis on people's communication.

E. *Pulp Fiction* Movie

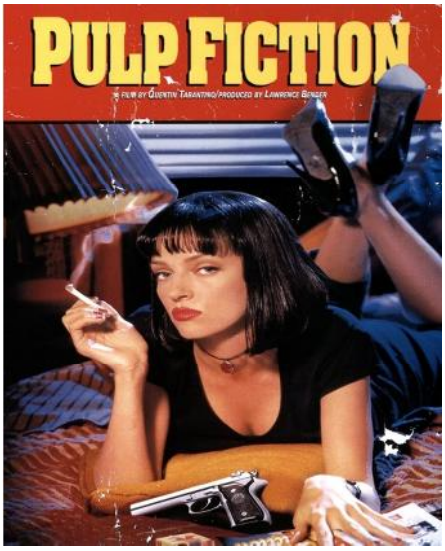

Figure 1. *Pulp Fiction* Poster

Pulp Fiction is American neo-noir crime black comedy written and directed by Quentin Tarantino. This movie features electric dialogue, ironic mix of humor, violence, and nonlinear storyline. Although each scene is not in chronological order, it will lead to understanding by watching the whole scenes. The great artists in Hollywood such as, John Travolta, Samuel L. Jackson, and Bruce Willis are also involved in it.

1. Summary of the Movie

The movie begins with two gangsters, Vincent and Jules (John Travolta and Samuel L. Jackson), who have a mission to finish off some people in order to

claim important briefcase which belong to their boss, Marsellus (Ving Rhames). They manage to wipe out all their targets and take one person as informer, called Marvin. Unfortunately, Marvin is dead during the trip since Vincent accidentally pulls the trigger of his gun. Therefore, they try to hide the incident with lots of struggle until they safely deliver the suitcase to their boss.

Another scene tells about Butch (Bruce Willis) story. Butch is a professional prizefighter in boxing match. In the end of his career, Marsellus ask him to pretend to be lost in the next match. In reward, Marsellus will give him amount of money to guarantee his retired day. Unfortunately, Butch breaks his promise to Marcellus since he accidently beats his opponent on the first round. He decides to flee from the town in order to prevent Marsellus' anger, but he cancels it since he finds out that his girlfriend forgets his precious watch. Hence, he risks his life to go back into his apartment carefully but he surprisingly meets Marcellus in the street instead. Marcellus tries to chase him and end up crashing into another car. Both Butch and Marcellus are seriously hurt, but Marcellus does not care about his wound. He chases him by gun until Butch ducks into the gun shop. Unlucky for both of them, at the gun shop they are captured by a couple of homosexuals. Those people attempt to rape Marsellus first in a secret room. While Marsellus is being raped, Butch manages to escape and thinking about escape. When he sees a lot of weapons in a shop, he changes his mind and rescues Marsellus instead. The last, Since Butch helps Marcellus in his critical time, Marsellus chooses to forget Butch's faults and let him out of the town instead.

2. The Main Characters in *Pulp Fiction* Movie

There are two main characters in *Pulp Fiction* Movie; John Travolta as Vincent Vega and Bruce Willis as Butch Coolidge. They become main characters in this movie since most of the scenes tell the stories about them. Vincent plays a role as the hit man who executes the target ordered by his boss. He has a partner accompanying him, called Jules. Even though both of them seem to be a good partner, they always argue about something in their conversations. The use of swearword becomes common for them in order to show intimacy, and also provoking when it comes to talk with the enemy. Similar with both of them, Butch, who plays the role as the prizefighter, utters swearwords in every circumstance whenever he is being insecure and threatened. The two main characters of this movie become well portrayed of swearing phenomena in society, particularly in criminal lifestyle. These kinds of phenomena strengthen Patrick's view about swearing (in Vingerhoets 2013:297), in which he states that swearwords are primarily used by soldier, sailors, laborer, uneducated people, and criminals. In other words, bad language is frequently employed by person whose life in low class or tough life, and criminal lifestyle which becomes the background of the characters in *Pulp Fiction* Movie is suitable to be analyzed using sociolinguistics approach.

F. Previous Studies

In relation with swearing subjects, there are many studies which were conducted with the same topic. One of the studies is the research conducted by Vingerhotes (2013). In his article entitled "Swearing: A Biopsychosocial

Perspective", he finds out that the use of swearing provides a sense of stress relief and replacement behavior for physical aggression. Moreover, the demographic factors such as gender or age and social class may influence a person's swearing behavior.

Another study which conducts the same topic as swearing is an undergraduate thesis entitled "A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Swearing Uttered by the Main Character in the Film *the Wolf of Wall Street"* written by "Ririn Susetyaningsih (2014). In this research, she classifies both the types of swearing and the reasons for swearing uttered by the main character of the movie. The results of this research show that the main character mostly uses auxiliary swearing, since most of the utterances of the character are complementary. In addition, linguistic motive becomes the most frequent reason which uttered by the main characters.

The similarity between these two researches is they conduct the same topic. It is the phenomena of swearing in society. The differences between them lie on the objective of the research and the theories which they applied. Therefore, in this study, the researcher attempts to combine the theories which applied in them in order to give more comprehensive about swearing phenomena.

G. Theoretical Framework

In this study, the object of analysis is Pulp Fiction Movie. The research uses sociolinguistics approach. The focus of the research is to find out the use of swearwords uttered by Vincent Vega and Butch Coolidge as the main characters in the Movie.

In this research, the researcher formulates the objectives into two points. The first objective is to identify the types of swearing employed by Vincent Vega and Butch Coolidge. The second objective is to describe the reasons why both the characters utter swearwords in their conversations. The researcher used type of swearing proposed by Seven Pinker (2007) and reason for swearing proposed by Anderson in Karjeleinen (2002) to analyze two objectives of the research.

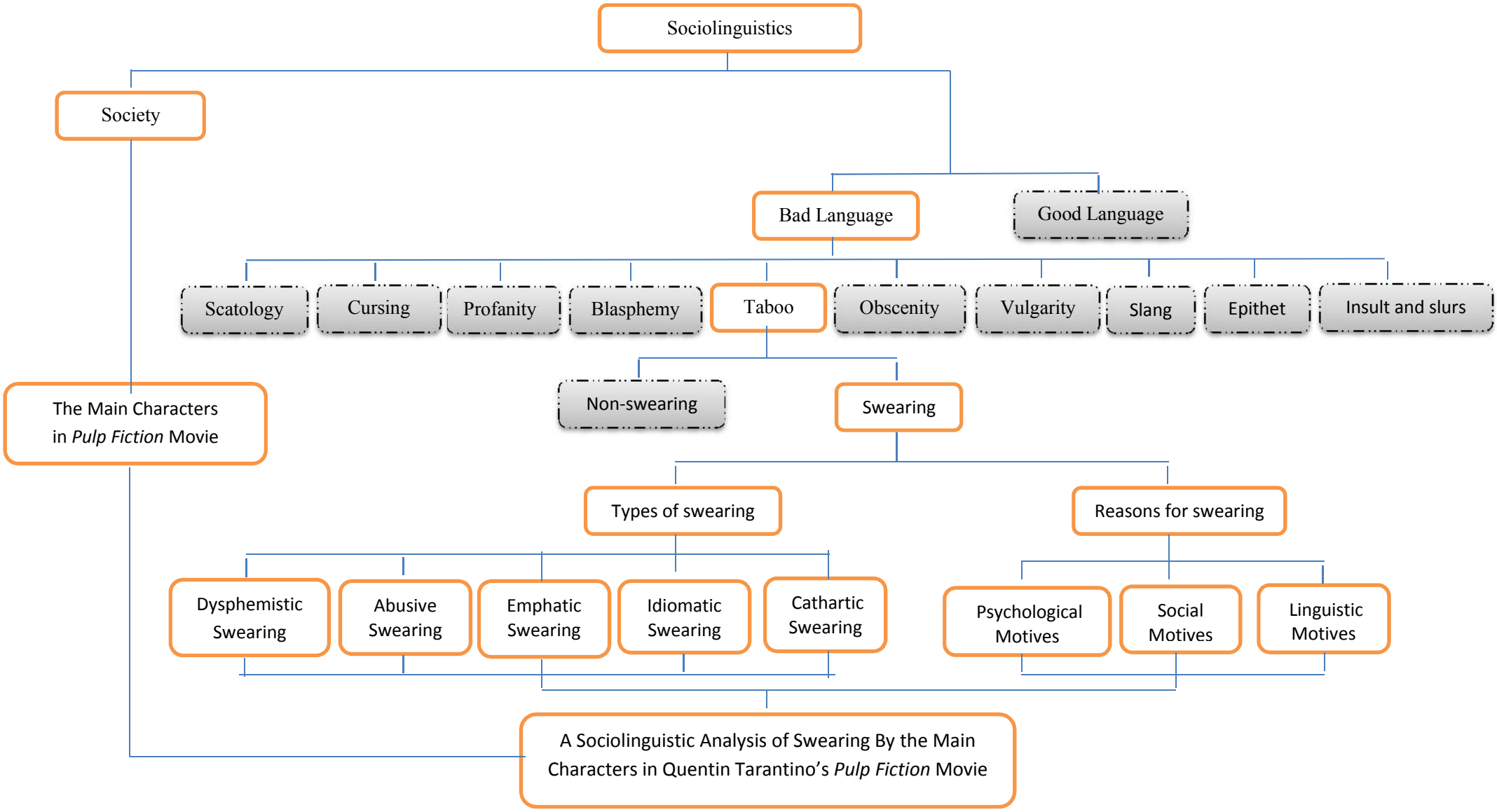

FIGURE 2. Analytical Construct