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Animal Swear Words in Compliments on X: A Pragmatic Study

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Abstract

Few people know that swear words are not always used to express anger. They can also be used to express positive emotions, such as compliments. The phenomenon of using swear words in compliments was found on one social media, X, formerly known as Twitter. This study aims to analyze the pragmatic meanings and pragmatic functions of animal swear words in English compliments on social media X. This study is descriptive research with a qualitative approach. The data were collected by observing the animal swear words-contained tweets on X. The data were analyzed by using the distributional method (the basic technique and either one of the seven extended techniques: deletion, substitution, extension, insertion, reversion, transformation, and repetition) and the identity method by referring to the theories of Hughes (2006), Ljung (2010), Kreidler (2008), and Spears (2000). The results of the study showed that the word *bitch* ('female dog'; 'unpleasant woman') was the only swear word used in compliments. The pragmatic meaning of the swear word is an utterance, meaning 'girl' or 'guy.' Meanwhile, the practical functions of the swear word in compliments are as an anaphoric use of epithets and noun supports. This study is expected to reduce misunderstandings among Indonesian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students when communicating with other English speakers on social media X.

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INTRODUCTION

Swear words are words that are considered offensive when used in specific contexts. This term is also known as cursing, swearing, profanities, etc. (Beers Fägersten, 2007; Goddard, 2015; Lafreniere et al., 2022; Lev-Ari & McKay, 2023; Putri et al., 2024). One of the swear words is the word *bitch*. If this word is used in the sentence, "*basal plasma LH and FSH concentrations were increased significantly after gonadectomy in both **bitches** and male dogs.*" (Spruijt et al., 2023), it would not be considered offensive. However, the same word could be deemed improper when used in the sentence, "*Get away from him, you **bitch**!*"

Many researchers have studied swear words and their purposes. Some researchers found that these words are used to outlet negative emotions like anger or frustration. Van Lancker and Cummings (1999) discovered that cursing can happen habitually in anger, frustration, and other intense emotional situations. Burns (2008) also found that "swearing provides a socially sanctioned outlet for aggression." In their research article, Jay and Janschewitz (2008) state that the main objective of swearing is to express emotions, "especially anger and frustration." In line with previous researchers, Sukanob-Nicolau (2016) found anger to be the primary reason young learners swear. In research similar to Sukanob-Nicolau's (2016), Amrullah (2016) also found that anger was one of the factors that made university students swear. Popușoi et al. (2018) say that swearing is a possible way to deal with anger.

On the other hand, other researchers also discovered that swear words are not only used to express negative emotions like anger but they can also be used to express positive emotions. Jay (2009), who likened swearing to taboo words, states that swear words can also be used to express positive emotions. Horan (2013) It also confirms that swearing can be used to express positive emotions like joy and surprise, besides negative emotions like frustration, anger, and pain. Wang (2013) and Wang et al. (2014) In addition to being used to express sadness, swear words can also express love, gratitude, happiness, and solidarity. In his research article, Finn (2017) Encouraged ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers to teach English swearing as it can have positive outcomes and as a tool to gain outstanding bonds among peers and a good reputation.

In addition, Stapleton (2020) argues that besides having negative traits (offensiveness and incompetence), swear words are also used to show positive characteristics, such as solidarity, informality, and humor. Fredy and Haristiani (2020) found that "swear words are not only used

to blaspheme and vilify, but also to express praises, wonders, and create an atmosphere of close intimacy." Similar to Stapleton (2020) and Fredy and Haristiani (2020), Jumanto and Sulistyorini (2021) state that swearing can "instill solidarity or confirm camaraderie". Wilson and Wedlock (2023) also discovered that swearing can be used to engender solidarity and perform leadership. McEnery et al. (2023) found that swearing can have a positive effect. Stephens et al. (2023) Discovered that repeated swear words can increase positive emotions, sense of humor, and self-confidence. Setyaningtias et al. (2023) report that swear words "can be employed to attain positive and negative personal and impersonal results."

As stated in the previous research, one of the positive emotions that can be expressed through swear words is praise or compliment. According to Mohr (2013), swear words can be used to compliment. One example that she mentioned was the swear word, *nigger*, which can be a compliment, a sign of affection, and a term of respect, especially among young African American men. Darojad (2018) found that compliments contain swear words. Those swear words include *damn*, *heck*, and *fuck/fucking*. Similar to Darojad (2018), Putri et al. (2019b) I also discovered that fuck, fucking along with douchebag is a sexual activity-theme swear word used in compliments. In another research, Putri et al. (2019a), found that family-theme swearing such as *bastard*, *son of a bitch*, and *motherfucker* were found in compliments. Fredy and Haristiani (2020) also discovered that compliments can be expressed through swear words. Similar to Mohr (2013), Putri et al. (2024) also found that *nigga* and *whitey* as racial swearing used in compliments.

There are some criteria for swear words used in compliments. First, a word can be categorized as a swear word if it is a taboo word used non-literally or metaphorically (Ljung, 2010). For instance, the word *bitch* is one of the taboo words in English (Spears, 2000). However, if it is used in the sentence, "*dog owners and breeders should check all **bitches** and male dogs before coitus and prevent the copulation between stray and valuable dogs*" (Cizmeci & Guler, 2018), it is not a swear word since it is meant literally ('female dogs'). On the other hand, if it is used in the sentence, "*you're a mean girl and a **bitch***", it is a swear word because it was meant metaphorically, not literally ('whore'; 'unpleasant woman').

The second criterion is that the word is formulaic (Ljung, 2010). Formulaic language means verbal expressions that come from "phonologically coherent phrases that are memorized as a whole can be retrieved holistically,

and are socially acceptable" (Spears, 2000). The phrase *you're a mean girl and a bitch* above is formulaic because the negative form (**you're a mean girl and not a bitch*) is not acceptable. Then the third criterion is that the word is used emotionally. The word *bitch* in the sentence "*you're a mean girl and a bitch*" is used to convey the speaker's emotion, unlike how it is used in the sentence "*dog owners and breeders should check all bitches and male dogs before coitus and prevent the copulation between stray and valuable dogs*" (Cizmeci & Guler, 2018). The fourth criterion is that if the word is used in a compliment, it either emphasizes or does not change the meaning of the compliment (Darojad, 2018; Fredy & Haristiani, 2020; Mohr, 2013; Putri et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2024).

Those swear word criteria and the previous studies' results are in line with the same phenomenon found on one of the social media, X, where Indonesia is ranked fourth globally in terms of the number of users (Annur, 2023). The research team found one tweet that used a swear word in a compliment that was spoken in writing by the account @samantitheos (@samantitheos' Post, 2024):

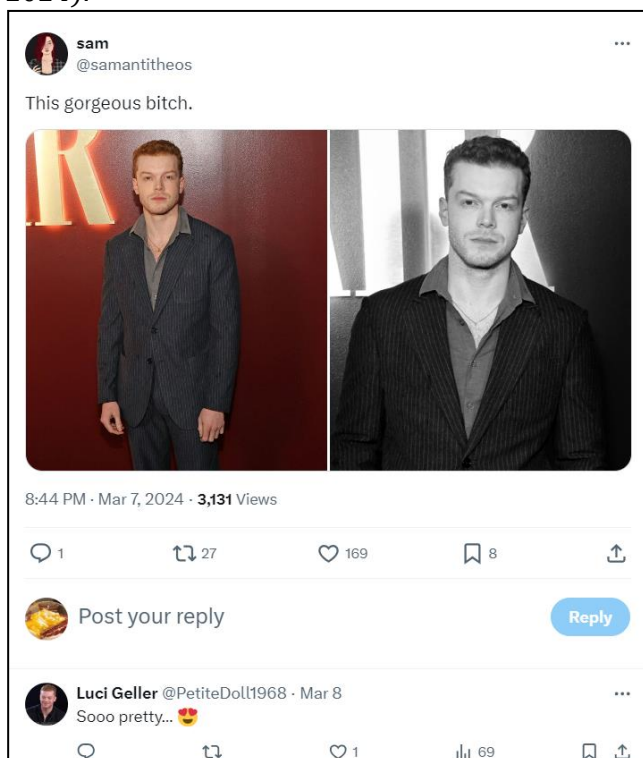


Figure 1. Tweet from the @samantitheos account on social media X

The account @samantitheos posted two pictures of actor Cameron Monaghan with a caption, "*This gorgeous bitch.*" Account @PetiteDoll1968 replied to that tweet by saying, "*Sooo pretty... (heart-eyes emoticon)*". Based on the context of the tweet (interaction between the accounts), it is evident that the word *bitch* was not

meant negatively. Instead, it was used by the account @samantitheos to compliment actor Cameron Monaghan's good looks. Account @PetiteDoll1968's reply showed that the word *bitch* in the tweet was perceived positively since she did not have any problem with the use of the swear word.

As previously stated, the word *bitch* is one of the swear words in English (Spears, 2000). The word *bitch* in Figure 1 fits the criteria of swear words in a compliment by Ljung (2010), Mohr (2013), Darojad (2018), Fredy and Haristiani (2020) and Putri et al. (2019a, 2019b, 2024): (1) a taboo word used non-literally or metaphorically, (2) the word is included in the formulaic language, (3) the word is used emotionally, and (4) the word either emphasizes or does not change the meaning of the compliment. In the tweet by the account @samantitheos in Figure 1, if the word *bitch* is translated as 'whore', the overall meaning of the utterance will not be by the context. On the other hand, if the word *bitch* is translated as 'guy,' then the meaning of the utterance becomes appropriate.

Next, the word *bitch* above is formulaic because the negative form of the phrase (**this not-gorgeous bitch*) is unacceptable; only the positive form is socially acceptable. Furthermore, the word *bitch* in the tweet above also meets the criteria for swear words because it is used as an emotive language. It also emphasizes the compliment. In other words, it is used to express the speaker's emotions, who wants to highlight his praise of the actor's physical appearance.

Moreover, swear words have many categories. Hughes (2006) and Ljung (2010) group swear word categories into religious/supernatural, sex organ, family, prostitution, illness, ancestors, animals, racial/ethnic, death, and sexual activities. These categorizations are based on the literal meaning of the words. Since the swear word *bitch* has the literal meaning 'female dogs,' it is in the group of animal swear words.

Meanwhile, the meaning of the swear words has its categories, too. Kreidler (2008) states four types of meaning: utterance meaning, lexical meaning, grammatical meaning, and linguistic meaning. Utterance meaning refers to the meaning based on the context of the utterance. Lexical meaning, on the other hand, is the same as literal meaning. Grammatical meaning means that the grammatical system of the language determines the meaning of the word. Linguistic meaning refers to the meaning conveyed by the linguistic forms. In Figure 1, the swear word *bitch* has utterance meaning 'guy' since its literal meaning ('female dogs') does not suitable with the context of the tweet. The meaning of the swear word also could

not be determined by the grammatical system or linguistic form.

On the other hand, there are some pragmatic functions of swear words in compliments. Ljung (2010) describes their three functions: stand-alone, slot fillers, and replacive swearing. As stand-alone, they can function as expletive interjections, oaths, curses, affirmation and contradiction, unfriendly suggestions, ritual insults, or name-calling. Contrariwise, slot fillers can function as adverbial, adjectival intensifiers, adjectives of dislike, emphasis, modal adverbials, anaphoric use of epithets, or noun supports. Finally, as replacive swearing, they give new literal meaning to ordinary non-taboo nouns and verbs.

The use of swear words in compliments is interesting and important to study. As stated previously, similar studies about swear words in compliments have been conducted. Darojad (2018), studied compliments in the comment section of *Sing!*, an online software for singing karaoke. One of his findings is that swear words *damn*, *heck*, *fuck*, and *fucking* were also used in compliments. Similar to him, in their research about sexual activity swearing in compliments in X, Putri et al. (2019b) found that swear words *fuck*, *fucking*, and *douchebag* were also used in compliments in the tweets. In another study, Putri et al. (2019a) investigated the use of family-theme swearing in compliments in social media X. They discovered that swear words *bastard*, *son of a bitch*, and *motherfucker* were used in the compliments.

Thus, this research investigates the pragmatic meanings and functions of animal swear words in compliments on social media X. No research about animal swear words in compliments on social media X has been conducted preceding this one. This research aims to describe the pragmatic meanings and pragmatic functions of animal swear words in English compliments on social media X. X, the fourth most popular social media in Indonesia (Statista, 2024), has been used as one of the media to practice English by Indonesian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students (Faiza, 2020; Harjanto, 2021; Kusuma et al., 2023). Therefore, it is necessary to conduct this research to help Indonesian EFL students reduce misunderstanding while communicating with other English speakers on social media X.

METHOD

This research is qualitative and descriptive. Implementing a qualitative approach in research means using non-qualitative materials, such as textual materials and audiovisual materials (Saldaña, 2011). This research is qualitative since this research data were tweets on social media X

that contained compliments with animal swear words.

This research is also descriptive since it fits Gall et al.'s definition of descriptive research. (2003). They state that descriptive research "involves describing characteristics of a particular sample of individuals or other phenomena." Since it examines the animal swear words that appear in compliments on social networking platform X as they are, this research can be classified as descriptive research.

The tweets chosen for this study include compliments and swear words related to animals. To explain the context of each tweet, the researchers also chose tweets with replies. The tweets from public X accounts in December 2018 were the ones that were selected. That is one of the most popular periods to tweet; thus, that is why the tweets from that time were chosen (Statista, 2024).

The observational method was used to gather the data. This method was conducted by monitoring the use of language researched (Sudaryanto, 2015). The observation was conducted without interacting with the tweets' speakers (or the writers). To confirm that such tweets include animal swear words, the researchers also employed the theories of Hughes (2006) and Ljung (2010).

The researchers' processes to get the data are explained in detail below.

1. Researchers used social media X's *Advanced Search* function to search for animal swear words in the tweets. This feature enabled the researchers to restrict the tweets' duration to December 1st through December 31st, 2018.
2. Researchers separated the compliment-containing tweets from the other tweets that only contained animal swear words.
3. Researchers matched the swear words in those tweets to the theories of Hughes (2006) and Ljung (2010) to confirm that they were indeed animal swear words.
4. Researchers eliminated the tweets that did not have any reply. Replies in the tweets were needed to find the context of the tweets.
5. Researchers obtained the research data, i.e., the animal swear words in the compliments from the tweets.

Next, the researchers used Sudaryanto's (2015) distributional method (the basic technique and one of the seven extended techniques: deletion, substitution, extension, insertion, reversion, transformation, and repetition) and identity method to analyze the data. The researchers consulted Spears (2000) and Kreidler's theory of meaning (2008) to determine the pragmatic

meanings of the animal swear words discovered. In contrast, Ljung's (2010) the researchers consulted the theory of the swearing functions to ascertain the pragmatic functions of the animal swear words.

The researchers completed the following steps to analyze the animal swear words' pragmatic meanings:

1. Researchers determined the context of the utterances by examining the replies, any media uploaded, and, if needed, by looking up the details about the X users and their conversation topic.
2. After understanding the context of the tweet, researchers either deleted, substituted, extended, inserted, reversed, transformed, or repeated the animal words with another word in English. Researchers also referred to Spears (2000) and Kreidler's theory of meaning (2008) to determine the pragmatic meaning of the animal swear words.
3. Researchers obtained the pragmatic meanings of the animal swear words.

Finally, to determine the pragmatic functions of the animal swear words, the researchers took the following steps:

1. After acquiring the pragmatic meanings of the animal swear words, researchers referred to Ljung's (2010) theory of swearing functions to determine their pragmatic functions.
2. Researchers gained the pragmatic functions of the animal swear words.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research bore several results. The first one is that the only animal swear word used in the context of compliments in social media X was the word *bitch*. Secondly, the pragmatic meaning of the animal swear words in compliment speech acts tweeted in December 2018 was as utterance meaning. All of them were meant as 'girl' or 'guy'. This research also shows two pragmatic functions of animal swear words in compliments on X during December 2018. The swear words have pragmatic functions such as anaphoric use of epithets and noun supports. A more detailed description of the data result and analysis is written below. "C" stands for "Candidate", while "U" stands for "Utterance."

Pragmatic Meanings of Animal Swear Words in Compliments on Social Media X

Based on the result of the research, it was found that the animal swear words used in compliments on social media X was meant as 'girl' or 'guy.'

Utterance Meaning 'Girl'

Datum 1

- | | | |
|----|----|---|
| C1 | | (posted a picture of herself) |
| C2 | U1 | <u>I question my sexuality every time this <i>bitch</i> posts a photo</u> |
| | U2 | I do |
| C3 | U3 | I love how you girls bring each other up. |
| | U4 | It's like being in the women's bathroom in a nightclub but on social media. |

(Source: Candidates' conversation, December 2, 2018, 6:15 AM)

In Datum 1, three female users were conversing: C1, C2, and C3. User C1 posted a photo of herself. Her post was then replied to by user C2, who said, "*I question my sexuality every time this **bitch** posts a photo. I do.*" C3 replied to C2's tweet: "*I love how you girls bring each other up. It's like being in the women's bathroom in a nightclub but on social media.*"

User C2's comment about C1's picture generally can be understood as a compliment. Her way of praising C1's beauty was by stating that C1's attractiveness made her question her sexual orientation. C3 joined the conversation and complimented C1 and C2's closeness. She likened their closeness to the atmosphere in nightclub's female bathrooms. Female bathrooms in nightclubs have a reputation as a place where women can get unwavering support from other women, as they are prone to be taken advantage of by men (Gupta, 2023).

In her compliment to C1's beauty, C2 used the animal swear word *bitch*. The literal definition of the word *bitch* is a female dog' (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, 2024). However, that meaning does not fit the context of the conversation. C3's response showed that C2's utterance was not meant negatively, although the animal swears it. Instead, it could be deduced from her response that U1 by C2 was meant as a compliment. Since the utterance was meant to be a compliment and was spoken to a girl, replacing the term *bitch* with a *girl* makes more sense. If the sentence, *I question my sexuality every time this **bitch** posts a photo* is changed into; *I question my sexuality every time this **girl** posts a picture*, the meaning of the compliment would remain the same. The animal swear word *bitch* in the tweet, therefore, has the pragmatic meaning 'girl.'

Datum 2

- | | | |
|----|----|--|
| C1 | U1 | (posted a GIF of actress Scarlett Johansson smiling) <u>this gorgeous <i>bitch</i></u> |
|----|----|--|

- C2 U2 (I *posted a GIF of a man being hysterical*) her smile
 C1 U3 the cutest patootie to ever patoot
 C3 U4 i would do anything to be with her
 C1 U5 she just told me the feelings were mutual

(Source: Candidates' conversation, December 23, 2018, 3:47 PM)

Users C1, C2, and C3 were exchanging tweets about an actress, Scarlett Johansson. The conversation was started by Candidate 1, who posted a GIF (Graphic Interchange Format – a type of file that showcases animated pictures) of actress Scarlett Johansson smiling with the caption “*This gorgeous bitch*”. Her two friends, Candidate 2 and Candidate 3, replied to this tweet. Candidate 2 replied to the tweet by posting a reaction GIF of a man screaming with the caption, “*Her smile*.” Candidate 3 also responded to Candidate 1’s tweet by writing, “*I would do anything to be with her*,” which then replied by C1, “*she just told me the feelings mutual*.”

Seeing the replies by C2 and C3, U1 can be understood as a compliment despite it containing the animal swear word *bitch*. They would not reply by focusing on the actress’s beauty if that word were understood as harmful. The word *bitch* has the literal meaning of ‘a female dog’ or ‘an unpleasant woman.’ (Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries, 2024; Spears, 2000). However, neither meaning fits the context of the candidates’ conversation, as shown in Datum 2. None of the replies were angered by the use of the word *bitch*; therefore, it was not meant in a negative way as a swear word. On the other hand, if the word *bitch* were meant as ‘girl,’ it would suit the context. Thus, the animal swears the word *bitch* in Datum 2 has a pragmatic meaning, ‘girl.’

Utterance Meaning ‘Guy’

Datum 3

- C1 U1 (*posted a picture of YouTuber Cody Garrett*) HAPPY BIRTHDAY, CODY WE LOVE YOU @DonutOperator
 C2 U2 Such a handsome *bitch*
 C3 U3 I second
 C4 U4 Can confirm.

(Source: Candidates' conversation, December 4, 2018, 5:12 AM)

C1 is an X account for an Unsubscribe Podcast podcast that congratulated one of its host's birthdays, Cody Garrett, with a picture of him. Candidate 2 replied to the tweet by saying, “*Such a handsome bitch*”. Candidate 3 replied to C2 by

saying, “I second.” Candidate 4 also replied to Candidate 2 by saying, “*Can confirm*.”

Utterance 3 and Utterance 4 show that C3 and C4 agreed with C2’s tweet. Both users did not reprimand the animal swear word *bitch* used by C1. It means they did not see the swear word as something refuting the compliment “handsome.” If the animal swears word *bitch* in U2 was replaced by its literal meaning, ‘a female dog’, it would not suit the context.

In addition, replacing it with ‘an unpleasant woman’ would not suit the context either since it was a compliment, and Cody Garrett is a guy. However, substituting the animal swear word for a *guy* would fit the context of the tweets’ exchange. *Such a handsome guy* has the same meaning as *such a handsome bitch* in this context. Therefore, the animal swears the word *bitch* was meant as ‘guy.’

Datum 4

- C1 (*posted a picture of himself*)
 U1 Pretty handsome ass *bitch*
 C2 (*smiling face with heart-shaped eyes emoticon*)
 C1 (*face throwing a kiss emoticon*)

(Source: Candidates' conversation, December 12, 2018, 9:41 AM)

Datum 4 contains a conversation between Candidate 1 and Candidate 2. C1 uploaded a picture of himself smiling. With the picture, he also wrote a caption, “*Pretty handsome ass bitch*”. His friend, Candidate 2, replied to the tweet by sending a smiling face with heart-shaped eyes emoticon. Candidate 1 then replied to C2’s tweet by sending a different emoticon. He sent a face-throwing a kiss emoticon.

In his tweet, U1, C1 complimented himself by stating he was handsome. However, he also included the animal swear word *bitch* in his compliment about himself. It could be concluded that U1 was a compliment despite the swear sword because C2 did not rebuke his use of the swear word. Instead, she sent an emoticon implying that she agreed with the utterance. C1 then replied with another emoticon.

It is also observed that the animal swear word *bitch* in U1 was not meant negatively. If it were substituted with *an unpleasant woman* or *a female dog* (Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries, 2024; Spears, 2000), the utterance would not be suitable for the context of the conversation in Datum 4. On the other hand, if it were replaced with a *guy*, it would fit. In this context, *a pretty handsome ass bitch would have the same meaning as a pretty handsome ass guy*. Therefore, the animal swears

the word *bitch* in Datum 4 has a pragmatic meaning of 'guy.'

Pragmatic Functions of Animal Swear Words in Compliments on Social Media X

Based on the result of the research, it was found that the animal swear word used in compliments on social media X has pragmatic functions as Anaphoric Use of Epithets and Noun Supports.

Anaphoric Use of Epithets

Datum 5

- C1 U1 your *bitch* has a cute rack
 C2 U2 lemme hug that too
 C1 U3 ok!

(Source: Candidates' conversation, December 30, 2018, 2:27 PM)

Candidate 1 shared two images of her chest on social media X. She also tweeted to herself, "*Your bitch has a cute rack*," as a compliment. Rack refers to the breast. Candidate 2, her partner, wondered whether he may also embrace her chest, to which C1 responded, "Okay!"

A female dog is what the word *bitch* means (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, 2024). According to Spears (2000), it can also be used as a derogatory phrase or epithet to characterize 'an unpleasant or irritating female.' The tweet's context indicates that the user did not use the term *bitch* to disparage herself. The word *bitch* can be swapped out for the word *girl*.

Moreover, C1 used the term *your bitch* to refer to herself as the speaker. It indicates that the pronoun *I* was substituted with it. The identical meaning can be seen when the phrase is rewritten as *I have a nice rack*. It demonstrates how the preceding tweet exchange's swear word *bitch* has a pragmatic function as an anaphoric use of epithet.

Datum 6

- C1 (posted a picture of herself)
 U1 This cute *bitch* is going to dye her hair again
 C2 U2 Let's gooooo. I'm still thinking about how I'll dye mine next. xD
 C1 U3 Do something gooooooooood
 C3 U4 Cute and very pretty*

(Source: Candidates' conversation, December 11, 2018, 7:38 PM)

Candidate 1, a female, uploaded a picture of herself on her X account. With that photo, she wrote, "*This cute bitch is gonna dye her hair again*." Her two friends, Candidate 2 and Candidate 3, replied to that tweet without complaining about the

use of the word *bitch*. Their lack of complaint shows that the animal swear word is not interpreted negatively. Candidate 2 encouraged C1 to dye her hair while wondering what color she should use for her hair next. Meanwhile, Candidate 3 added the adjectival phrases *very pretty* to the word *cute* used earlier by Candidate 1.

The context of the conversation in Datum 6 displays that the word *bitch* cannot be meant as a female dog' or 'an unpleasant woman' as its literal meaning based on Oxford Learner's Dictionaries (2024) and Spears (2000). If the word *girl* replaced the word, it would suit the context of the conversation more. Therefore, in this conversation, the word *bitch* has a pragmatic meaning as 'girl.'

The noun phrase *this cute bitch* was also used by Candidate 1 to refer to herself. The use of this noun phrase also demonstrates how it has a pragmatic function as an anaphoric use of epithet. According to Ljung (2010), a swear word used as an anaphoric use of epithet means that it is used as an anaphoric pronoun. In C1's utterance, the noun phrase *this cute bitch* can be replaced with the pronoun *I*. It allows the whole utterance to be tweaked. *I'm going to dye my hair again*. Thus, the animal swears the word *bitch* in this conversation has a pragmatic function as an anaphoric use of epithet.

Datum 7

- C1 U1 (posted a short video clip of a baseball player, Brayan Rocchio, hitting a home run in a baseball game)
 Brayan Rocchio goes yard to put the @CleGuardians on the board #ALCS
 C2 U2 Holy fuck you, handsome *bitch* I love you
 C3 U3 And we fucken love you, bro
 C4 U4 Garrett Wilson garbage time reception (check mark emoticon)

(Source: Candidates' conversation, December 15, 2018, 8:35 AM)

Candidate 1 is an official X account of the United States' MLB or Major League Baseball. It posted a video of a baseball match between two baseball teams. In the short video, one of the players from Cleveland Guardians, Brayan Rocchio, "goes yard," a baseball term to say 'hitting a home run.' This tweet was then replied to by one of its followers, C2, who wrote, "*Holy fuck you, handsome bitch I love you*." C2's tweet was replied to by C3 and C4, who said, "*And we fucken love you bro*" and "*Garett Wilson garbage time reception*"

consecutively. C3 tweeted "I love you" to C2, while C3 referred to the opposite team player, Garrett Wilson's slow response to Brayan Rocchio's hit.

Based on the context in Datum 7, it is observed that the animal swear word *bitch* in U2 was not meant negatively as an 'a female dog' or 'an unpleasant woman.' Understanding the utterance as "*Holy fuck you, handsome female dog, I love you*" or "*Holy fuck you, handsome, unpleasant woman, I love you*" would not suit the compliment uttered in U2. Considering Brayan Rocchio is a man, and U2 is a compliment, if the sentence was understood as "Holy fuck you, handsome guy, I love you," it would be more appropriate. Thus, the word *bitch* in the tweet was meant as 'guy.'

By referring to the theory of Ljung (2010), it is shown that the animal swearing word *bitch* has a pragmatic function as anaphoric use of an epithet. The epithet *bitch* in this tweet was used as an anaphoric reference to the baseball player shown in the video of the tweet Brayan Rocchio. It means that the animal swear word was used as an anaphoric pronoun. Therefore, the animal swearing word *bitch* in Datum 7 functioned as anaphoric use of an epithet.

Noun Supports

Datum 8

- | | | |
|----|----|--|
| C1 | U1 | I PASSED MY BIOLOGY EXAM |
| | U2 | <u>MAYBE I AM A SMART <i>BITCH</i> AFTER ALL</u> |
| C2 | U3 | WELL DONE |
| C1 | U4 | THANKS |
| C2 | U5 | Genuinely I'm so crap at all sciences |
| | U6 | so I'm so proud |
| C1 | U7 | <3 <3 <3 |
| C3 | U8 | Congrats |
| C1 | U9 | thank you!! |
| C4 | U1 | YAAAAS! YOU GOT IT C1 |
| | 0 | |
| C1 | U1 | THANKS!!! |
| | 1 | |

(Source: Candidates' conversation, December 14, 2018, 9:50 PM)

On social media X, Candidate 1 wrote about successfully passing her biology exam. Additionally, she complimented herself, stating, "*Maybe I am a smart bitch after all.*" C2, C3, and C4 congratulated her. It appears that *bitch* was not taken as an insult because none of the responses expressed disapproval of it.

The literal definition of *bitch* is 'a female dog.' It is a derogatory term to describe 'an unpleasant woman.' (Spears, 2000). However, none of this definition makes sense considering the tweet's context. It is evident that the tweet's usage

of *bitch* fulfills Ljung's (2010) criteria for a swear word to serve as a noun support. The tweet still conveys the same if the swear word is taken out and the text is modified to "*maybe I am smart after all.*" Therefore, *bitch* serves as a noun support in this case.

Datum 9

- | | | |
|----|----|--|
| C1 | U1 | There are two wolves inside of me one is thinking, Man, I'm a hot <i>bitch</i> in this crop top. The other is trying to shame me for being fat and wearing one |
| C2 | U2 | I LOVE U IN THAT CROP TOP, BB |
| | U3 | IT GOES HARD |
| C1 | U4 | AGZHWXHD, YOU ARE BIASED!!!! |
| C3 | U5 | You're a hot bitch serving mega cunt. No, putting yourself down is allowed. |

(Source: Candidates' conversation, December 12, 2018, 8:10 AM)

Candidate 1 wrote about "two wolves" inside her on her X account. One agreed with her wearing a crop top, but the other did not. She used the animal swear word *bitch* in the utterance that showed her approval of a crop top. Her two friends, Candidate 2 and Candidate 3, supported her outfit choice. Their approval shows that the word *bitch* was not meant negatively in the conversation. Instead, if the word *bitch* was substituted with a *girl*, it would suit the context. Therefore, the animal swear word *bitch* was meant as 'girl' in this context.

The animal swear word *bitch* also has a pragmatic function as a noun support in Datum 9. This conclusion can be drawn by eliminating the swear word from the utterance. If the swear word was omitted and the utterance was modified into "*there are two wolves inside of me one is thinking, man. I'm kind of hot in this crop top the other is trying to shame me for being fat and wearing one,*" the meaning would still be the same. Hence, the animal swears word *bitch* in this context has a pragmatic function as a noun support.

Datum 10

- | | | |
|----|----|--|
| C1 | | (posted a video of her character successfully gaining a point in a video game) |
| | U1 | <u>I'm a smart <i>bitch</i></u> |
| C2 | U2 | What's it like having a brain? |

(Source: Candidates' conversation, December 1, 2018, 5:10 PM)

Candidate 1 uploaded a screen-recorded video of her character in a game, successfully gaining a point. With the video, she wrote a caption, "*I'm kind of a smart *bitch**". The word *bitch* fits

Ljung's criteria for swear words. (2010). However, it was not meant literally as an 'a female dog' or 'an unpleasant woman.' 'Girl' would fit the context of the conversation more since the whole utterance (U2) was a compliment. Candidate 2's response, "What is it like having a brain?" strengthens this conclusion.

The animal swears word bitch also has a pragmatic function as a noun support in Datum 10. If the word *bitch* was removed from R1 and the sentence was modified into "I'm kind of smart," The context of the conversation would still be intact. Therefore, the animal swears word bitch has a pragmatic function as a noun support in Datum 10.

CONCLUSION

Animal swear words are often interpreted negatively like other types of swear words. However, there are many instances where they can be used to convey something positive. One of the places where they can be used positively is social media X. This research shows that animal swear words can also be used in compliments. The animal swears the word bitch has a pragmatic meaning as 'girl' or 'guy' when used in compliments. It also has pragmatic functions, such as the anaphoric use of epithets and noun supports. It means that the animal swear word was either used as an anaphoric pronoun or to replace a noun. The results of this study show that there are relations between the pragmatic meaning and the pragmatic function of the animal swear words used in compliments. The animal swear words with pragmatic meanings, such as the nouns 'girl' or 'guy,' have the same pragmatic function as nouns. They are used either to replace a noun or act as a noun. This research results hopefully can motivate EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers in Indonesia to teach about swear words, especially animal swear words, their meanings, and their functions. Hopefully, it can help Indonesian EFL students avoid misunderstandings when communicating with other English speakers, such as on social media like X.

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