Swearing in *The Wolf of Wall Street*:

A Pragmatic Study

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Abstract

Although swearing is considered as an offensive act, it frequently occurs in movies which represent an instance of everyday conversation. It is the use of language to express a spectrum of emotions such as anger, frustration and annoyance. It also infuses intimacy, solidarity and jocularity. The present study tries to explore swearing from a pragmatic perspective taking the context in which it occurs into account. It also investigates its pragmatic functions, the reasons underlie the use of swear words and the different categories of swearing used in Martin Scorsese's *The Wolf of Wall Street*. Besides, the study aims at developing an eclectic model to be used for data analysis.

Keywords: Swearing, Pragmatic function, Impoliteness, Abusive, Emphatic, Descriptive, Idiomatic

1. Theoretical Underpinnings

1.1 Introduction

It is stated that swearing is an instance of bad language. It signifies any word or phrase which is likely to cause offence when used in polite conversation. Additionally, utilizing swear words may lead a hearer to make several inferences regarding the speaker's emotional state, social class or religious beliefs and even educational achievements (McEnery, 2006).

Jay and Janschewitz (2008) assert that the main purpose of swearing is to express emotions, especially anger and frustration. Besides, swear words are well suited to express emotion as their primary meanings are connotative. The emotional impact of swearing depends on one's experience with a culture and its language conventions.

Moreover, it is proposed that swearing represents one of the several devices that languages offer speakers as a way to give additional emphasis to their speech, often in combination with other emphasizing techniques such as stress, intonation and tone of voice. The contribution of

swearing in such situations is the additional strength provided by the taboo words essential for swearing to occur. Hence, in order for an utterance to be taken as swearing, it should violate certain taboos that are regarded inviolable in the cultures in question (Ljung, 2011).

Amalia (2014) mentions that people usually associate swearing with the use of nasty words, which are not allowed to be used in conversation or talk. Swearing makes many people upset, annoyed, insulted, mad or even angry. It has often been considered as undereducated, obscene, rude and impolite in society despite the fact that many people use it in daily life. Broadly speaking, swearing is more tolerated in informal and private settings than in public ones.

1.2 Definitions

Hughes (2006) proposes that swearing represents a perennial source of fascination for those interested in language and community as it continually invokes controversies and raises topical issues. A unique spectrum of style and content has emerged in oaths, profanity, foul language, and ethnic slurs over time, on a scale from the most sacred utterances to the most taboo.

It is stated that the verb *swear* has two distinctive senses. the first is the making of a formal promise or oath, such as swearing to tell the truth. The second sense is totally different. Here, it does not refer to the actual word employed but rather a meta-linguistic word that describes the use of foul language for a specific end. This kind of swearing is marked by reference to taboo or stigmatized material and strong nonliteral force. It is usually connected with intense attitude or emotion (Wajnryb, 2005). As for the present study, it concentrates on the second meaning.

Andersson and Trudgill (1990) define swearing as comprising the following three criteria:

1). It refers to something that is taboo or stigmatized.

2). It should not be interpreted literally.

3). It can be used to express emotions and attitudes.

According to Bandin and Paramasivam (2014), these three features stress the essential principles of swearing that are common to all languages; it cannot function without appealing to taboo or stigmatized topics, it requires a high degree of creative or figurative use of language, and it not usually occurs in natural speech.

Similarly, Jay and Janschewitz (2008) identify swearing as the use of taboo language with the pursuit of conveying the speaker's emotional state and communicating that information to listener. Contrary to most other speech, swearing is basically intended to express connotative or emotional meaning, the meaning of the words themselves are essentially interpreted as connotative.

It is said that swearing refers to a linguistic practice grounded on taboo, or that which is forbidden; expletives, or swear-words. It can be taken as denoting areas of social or cultural taboo, such as sex or bodily functions. Using a swear-word means transgressing a linguistic taboo in order to perform specific interpersonal, social and psychological functions (Stapleton,

2010).

Broadly speaking, swearing refers to the use of words which has the potential of being offensive, inappropriate, objectable or unacceptable in any given social context. The availability of numerous labels for swear-words or such language use demonstrates the divergent nature of swearing. Actually, not every use of a swear-word represents an example of swearing,(e. g. *If you 're looking for sympathy, you 'll find it between shit and syphilis in the dictionary*), nor has the definition of swearing conventionally been constrained to the use of a specific subsets of words. (Fagersten, 2012)

Ljung (2011) recognizes the following five major themes that are likely to occur in most languages featuring swearing.

1). The religious/supernatural theme

2). The scatological theme

3). The sex organs theme

4). The sexual activity theme

5). The mother (family) theme

1.3 Motivational and Contextual Factors of Swearing

It is suggested that swearing refers to an utterance of strong emotions. Thus, it is likely to appear in situations in which a specific intense emotion emerges or when a person conveys a strong attitude regarding another person (Vingerhoets et al., 2013).

It is mentioned that the functions and effects of swearing are highly dependent on the context in which the interaction takes place.

Mey (1999) believes that in order to comprehend an utterance, one needs to know the circumstances surrounding its being uttered. In isolation, utterances do not make sense or make the wrong one. In its broadest sense, context stands for the cultural, political, and economic conditions of people whose actions and words are attempted to describe or capture within the minutest context of language.

Pragmatically speaking, swearing can be understood in terms of the meaning it is taken to have in specific circumstances and what it is achieved. That is, it is only when a swearword is located in a certain context that it becomes possible to speak of meaning and achievement (Wajnryb, 2005).

The communicative act of swearing is influenced by a number of pragmatic contextual variables such as the conversational topic, the speaker-listener relationship, including gender occupation, and status, and the social-physical settings of the communication with regard to whether swearing occurs in a public or private location, and the level of formality of the occasion. Hence, to fully understand swearing, one has to appreciate the contexts and communities in which it takes place (Jay & Janschewitz, 2008).

It can be said that swearing usually appears when the sweater under goes a strong emotion or when he/she wishes to achieve specific aims via swearing. In the proper context, the risk of being subjected to negative reactions is less probable. The best suited context to swear seems to be an informal setting with familiar people of the same status and gender, such as a sport club's locker room or in a pub with friends (Vingerhoets et al., 2013).

1.4 The Pragmatic Functions of Swearing

Due to the fact that communicating the expressive functionality embodies the most important issue when tackling swearwords, it seems convenient to study them from the perspective of speech act theory.

In the sets of lectures that were posthumously published as *How to do Things with Words*, Austin revolts against the view of language that placed the truth-conditions as central to language understanding (Levinson, 1983).

In his own search for ways of coping with language as a sort of action, Austin first made a distinction between constative and performative utterances. In this dichotomy, constatives, such as *We went down to Como*, are utterances in which something is said which can be evaluated a long a dimension of truth. Performatives, on the other hand, are utterances, such as I promise to go to Como, in which something is done which can be evaluated a long a dimension of felicity (Verschueren, 1999).

According to Levinson (1983), Austin isolates three basic senses in which in saying something one is doing something. Therefore, three kinds of acts are simultaneously performed.

So, whenever we produce an utterance, we are engaged in three acts. A locutionary act is the production of a well formed utterance in any language one is speaking. The illocutionary act is the meaning we intend to convey. The perlocutionay act is the effects of our words. For instance, when saying, Please open the door, and the listener does so, the speaker has achieved his perlocutionary aim (Black, 2006).

It is noted that swear words can be utilized to perform diverse pragmatic functions. Comprehending these pragmatic functions requires stressing the implications of pragmatics in determining the intended meaning of utterances.

According to Yule (1996), pragmatics explores how a great deal of what is unsaid is recognized as part of what is communicated. It also involves the interpretation of what people mean in a certain context and how the latter affects what is stated. Hence, it is the study of contextual meaning.

It is worth mentioning that in pragmatics, meaning is not considered to be as stable as linguistic forms. On the contrary, it is dynamically created in the course of employing language (Verschueren, 1999).

Montagu (2001) differentiates between *annoyance swearing* and *social swearing*. The former signifies a mechanism for tension release and usually negatively charged, whereas the latter is

focused on managing aspects of social relationships and interactions, and tends to be positively regarded, like expletives, invectives, and outbursts brought on by anger and aggression, or with abusive and injurious functions. Social swearing, which is the commonest, depends for its influence on an audience, while annoyance swearing constituted a relation to stress regardless of audience. With increasing stress social swearing diminished and annoyance swearing increased.

The act of swearing is not only associated with the experiences of negative feelings such as anger, fear, or even frustration. Swear words can be employed in combination with positive emotional experiences, such as happiness, surprise, intimacy, or humour. Swearing can also occur neutrally, neither intentionally nor tactically, and in situations that are neither positive or negative (Fagersten & Stapleton, 2017).

As for the pragmatic functions of swearing, Pinker (2007) suggests that people swear in at least five different ways:

1). Descriptive   Let's fuck

2). Idiomatic   It's fucked up

3). Abusive   Fuck you, mother-fucker

4). Emphatic   This is fucking amazing

5). Cathartically   Fuck

In his study of cross-cultural swearing, Ljung (2011) suggests that the functions of swearing fall into two major subgroups, the stand-alones and the slot fillers. Additionally, there exists a third smaller functional category termed replacive swearing.

The stand-alones are swearing constructions that function as utterances of their own. Some of these are speech acts, for instances the oaths, the curses and the unfriendly suggestions. Others have a less marked illocutionary character, for example the expletive interjections expressing anger, surprise, pain and other feelings are often claimed to be the most typical exponents of swearing. The remaining stand-alones include affirmations, denials, ritual insults and name-calling (ibid).

As for the second group, they are instances of swearing that serve to make up longer strings. They vary from clear cases of traditional degree modification, such as *bloody cold*, *damned quickly* to constructions that are more difficult to analyze but which nevertheless involve placing a swearword in the right slot in a given string, for example *What the hell do you mean?*(ibid)

As for the last category, it is stated that the meanings established in replacive swearing are not literal associated once and for all with certain words, but represent the listener's interpretation of the words involved. In another context, such words may be assigned quite different meanings. Hence, these are interpreted in terms of the linguistic and situational settings (ibid: 35).

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1.5 Swearing and (Im)politeness

Dynel (2012) proposes that swearwords tend to be considered as impolite and are even reported to have represented one of the first strands research on impoliteness.

However, Jay and Janschewitz (2008) assert that within impoliteness research, the impetus for swearing is investigated and swearing is not considered as a face-threatening act. That is, studies of swearing have shown that swearing in public is a frequent act, and most of its instances are conversational. They are not highly emotional, confrontational, rude or aggressive. Moreover, through numerous incidents of recorded swearing, researchers have never seen any form of physical aggression as an outcome of swearing. Hence, swearing can be polite, impolite or neither and it could be employed in association with any emotional state.

The most influential work in politeness theory is Brown and Levinson's (1987). They assert that their notion of face is based on that of Goffman's (1967) and the English folk notion of face, which ties up with notions of being embarrassed, humiliated or losing face. Face refers to the public self-image that every individual wishes to maintain for himself. Their concept of face is broken down into positive and negative face.

According to Jay and Janschewitz (2008), the approach above conceptualizes interpersonal communication as situations where a speaker's motivation is to stimulate social harmony and to escape threatening the face of a listener via behaviours such as swearing. Besides, it does not necessitates an investigation of the diversity of swearing. Nevertheless, impoliteness approaches depict situations in which speakers purposely or accidently employ offensive speech for purposes beyond that of maintaining social harmony.

Bousfield (2008) considers impoliteness as the broad opposite of politeness. That is, while politeness seeks to mitigate face-threatening acts, impoliteness constitutes the communication of deliberately gratuitous and conflictive verbal face-threatening acts which are purposefully conveyed.

It is asserted that defining impoliteness constitutes a real challenge. This is due to the fact that although some behaviours are typically impolite, they will not always be so in all situations. Therefore, impoliteness depends on how one perceives what is said and done and how that relates to the situation (Culpeper, 2011).

Moreover, impoliteness requires (a) a mental attitude held by a participant and comprised of negative evaluation beliefs about certain behaviours in certain social contexts, and (b) the activation of that attitude by those incontext behaviours. Based on what has been said, impoliteness can be defined as a negative attitude towards specific behaviours occurring in specific contexts (ibid: 23).

For the successful performance of impoliteness, and according to Bousfield (2008:72), the intention of the speaker to cause offence must be recognized by those in a recipient role. That is, impoliteness does not occur where one rather than both participants intends/perceives face-threats.

Swearing can be regarded as rudeness on the behalf of a speaker when it is perceived as an insult to a listener. Pinpointing participants' identity, relationships, social norms, intentions and motivations are essential for measuring the rudeness of swearing in discourse. That is, judgements of rudeness do not only depend on the propositional content of swearwords but also on appropriateness in a certain situation. In a given situation, swearing may be appropriate and not taken as only polite or impolite (Jay & Janschewitz, 2008).

Jay and Janschewitz (2008) conceptualize all examples of swearing as either propositional or non-propositional. The former is deliberately planned and intentional in that the speaker determines the content of the utterance. This can be polite or impolite, or potentially non. It is polite when it promotes social harmony, as in face building, e. g. *This pie is pretty fucking good!* However, when it is utilized intentionally to attack someone, it is rude as in face threat, e.g. *You fucking asshole!*

Nevertheless, non-propositional swearing is unintentional, unplanned and uncontrollable. It requires automatic emotional responses, occurring most frequently in response to sudden bursts of emotion or as a consequence of brain damage. It is not regarded as polite or impolite, except to an uninformed listener who may be irritated at the content of the utterance. Such offense on the part of the speaker is accidental (ibid).

2. Data Description and Analysis

In order to achieve the aims of the current study, the researcher identifies utterances containing swearwords in the movie in question according to Andersson and Trudgill's (1990) definition. Besides, the data will be analyzed according to the eclectic model that will be developed in the next section

2.1 Data Description

As for this study, the data are provided by *The Wolf of Wall street*. It is a biographical black comedy crime film directed by Martin Scorsese and written by Terence Winter. It is based on a novel with the same title by Jordan Belfort. It recounts Belfort's perspective on his career as a stockbroker in New York City and how his firm, Stratton Oakmont, involved in rampant corruption and fraud on Wall Street which eventually led to his downfall. *The Wolf of Wall Street* is premiered in New York City on December 17 2013, and was released in the United States on December 25, 2013, distributed by Paramount Pictures (Web Source: 1).

The researcher concentrates on exchanges produced by the four main characters: Jordan, Naomi, Donnie and Max. The reason for selecting this film is the fact that it is included in the Wikipedia's list for movies which make an extensive use of swearing.

2.2 The Eclectic Model

Concerning the analysis of data, an eclectic model will be developed and used for analyzing swearing in *The Wolf of Wall Street*. This model is based on Wajnryb's (2005) modal of swearing pragmatic functions, Adeoye's (2005) insights regarding swearing reasons, and Stapleton's (2010) swearwords categories.

2.2.1 Pragmatic Functions

According to Wajnryb's (2005) swearwords are utilized to perform three functions. These are explained below:

1. Cathartic: This represents the commonest type. It is the act of letting off steam, releasing some emotion that speaks regardless of the words employed. It is characterized as belonging to the expressive or emotional function of language. Thus, it is commonly conveys psychological emotions such as anger, pain, frustration and the like. It is beneficial to a speaker as it is used as a vehicle to restore psychological equilibrium and reduce stress levels. It may be directed at an inanimate target but it is usually aimed at the speaker himself/herself and it does not necessitate the presence of an audience.

2. Abusive: abusive swearing is as emotive as cathartic swearing but it differs from it in its participation framework. A defining characteristic of abusive swearing is the necessary presence of an audience. That is, whereas cathartic swearers can utter their words to an audience of non, abusive swearing involves a target, since the abusive swearer wants to wound, to rupture, and to inflict harm. More specifically, it is resorted to substitute physical attacks.

3. Social: While cathartic and abusive swearing can be regarded as siblings, social swearing is not even a second cousin. It occurs in relaxed settings where identical groups of people feel comfortable. Social variables such as class, gender and age effect the use of social swearing. That is, there is less swearing in mixed-gender groups than in single-gender ones. Despite the fact that such swearing is directed at others, it is not derogatory. It usually assume assumes the form of abusive swearing but performs the reverse function. The intent is social solidarity, playfulness and group membership

2.2.2 Swearing Reasons

According to Adeoye (2005) cited in (Wulandari, 2012), two reasons can be attributed to the utilization of swearing:

a. Hearing something strange

It typically occurs when people hear something that they have never heard before. They are inclined to convey a negative reaction to it.

b. Expressing emotions

Crystal (1997: 173) proposes that swearing refers to an outburst, an explosion which give relief to surges of emotional energy. It is a substitute for an aggressive bodily response, and can be directed either at people or objects. It expresses a spectrum of emotions ranging from mild annoyance through strong frustration to seething anger. Below are the main reasons for swearing:

1). To express frustration or anger

2). To express surprise or shock

3). To shock someone

4). To insult someone

5). To indicate friendship or to assert identity in a group.

2.2.3 Swearwords Categories

According to Stapleton(2010: 290), in modern English the majority of swear-words can be categorized as stemming from one of three taboo areas:

a. Excretory/scatological: those which pertain to bodily functions and associated with body parts

b. Sexual: those which relate to sexual acts or to genitalia.

c. Profanity: those which pertain to religious issues

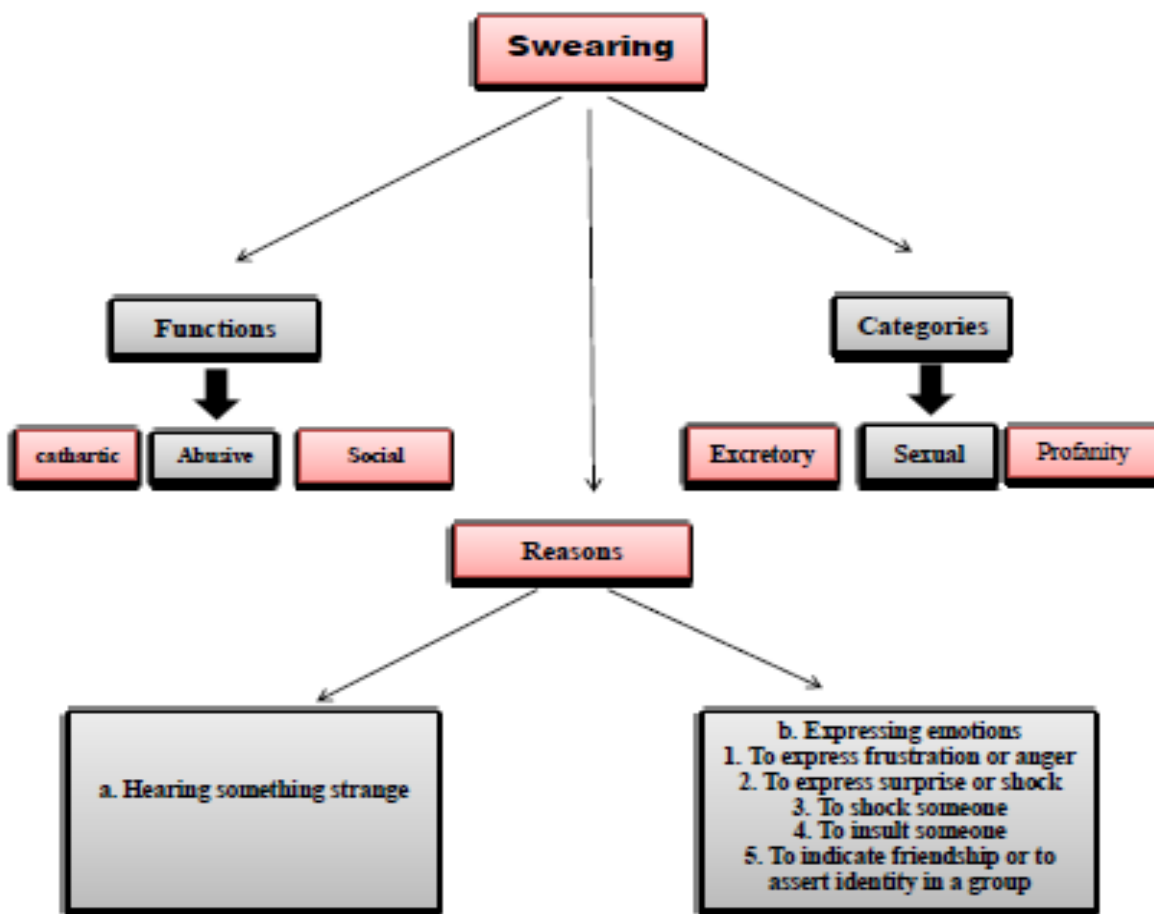The eclectic model of swearing developed in this section is illustrated in Figure (1) below:

Figure 1. The Eclectic Model for Analysis of Swearing

2.3 Analysis and Findings

2.3.1 Swearing Functions

This section dedicated to the analysis of swearing pragmatic functions in detail. Representative examples will be used.

2.3.1.1The Cathartic Functions of swearwords in *The Wolf of Wall Street*

Data analysis has revealed that some swearwords used in the movie in question are cathartically utilized by the main characters to achieve a spectrum of emotions such as that of surprise, annoyance anger and frustration. In this regard, Ljung (2011) asserts that swearing is emotive language , that is, it reflects the speaker's feelings and attitudes. This will be illustrated below:

Example 1:

A: You made seventy grand in one month.

B: Seventy two actually.

A: Holy shit.

In this example, the interjection holy shit is used by Donnie in consequences of the information presented by Jordan which was that Jordan, who worked as a stock broker, had earned seventy two thousand dollars in a month. This is taken as an expression of surprise which shows that the speaker is surprised or cannot believe that the addressee could earn such great amount of money in a short time. It can be inferred that the speaker intended to convey the illocutionary act of surprise.

Example 2:

A: Who the hell has the goddamn gall to call this house on a Tuesday evening! Goddamn i!

This example also represents an instance of the cathartic function of swearing. The speaker Max employs the expletive goddamn to convey his feelings of anger and annoyance. The speaker's reaction is caused by the fact that he was interrupted while watching his favourite TV show. Indirectly, he is performing the speech of complaint as he expresses his annoyance and disapproval regarding the state of affair. Additionally, and as mentioned previously, swearing is a device that languages offers speakers to give emphasis to their speech. Here, the speaker uses the swearword goddamn twice to emphasize the utterance. Contrary to the first example, this instance expresses a negative emotion.

Example 3:

A: I got a call from cousin Betty. Aunt Emma's dead

B: Fucking heart attack. Boom-snap, she was gone. Shuffled off her mortal coil and twenty million dollars in a Swiss bank account.

Here, the swearword fucking is used cathartically by Jordan when Naomi tells him that aunt

Emma has died out of heart attack. In order to protect his money against tax men, Jordan resorts to storing it in Swiss accounts. Hence, he travels to Switzerland to meet a group of French Swiss bankers who convince him to store the money in someone's else account. Upon receiving this news, the speaker feels sad because aunt Emma's death leaves his twenty millions in her account inaccessible. So, the speaker intends to convey the illocutionary force of frustration and anger.

2.3.1.2 The Abusive Functions of swearwords in *The Wolf of Wall Street*

Concerning the abusive functions, most swearwords used by the main characters in this movie are employed to attack, challenge or insult others.

Example 4:

A: If you bastards don't wipe those smug fucking looks off your faces, I swear to God I'm gonna wipe 'em off for you!

B: Actually, Max, my portion of the bill is hardly anything, so I'm the same page as you…..

A: Shut the fuck up, Feinberg, you only have a portion because of my son, you worthless twerp!

In this example, swearing is utilized abusively by the listener. The speaker supervises his son's bank account and discovers that the latter has spent 26 thousand dollars for a dinner. The speaker gets furious and criticizes his son and his partners for such extravagant spending. The intended illocutionary force of the utterance is that of insult and this becomes evident in the use of the two swearwords bastard and twerp.

According to Holtgraves (2001), people often perform speech acts that directly threatens another's face such as that of insult and challenge. In this instance, swearing is employed to intensify the insults and the commands. Ljung (2011) proposes that some swear words can be used as a slot-filler whose function is that of an intensifier conveying a higher degree of the following adjective or adverb. That is, the idiomatic expression shut up is already rude directive. Thus, the fuck is added to make it sound more intense.

Example 5:

A: The fuck you doing?

B: Cleaning my fishbowl

A: On new issue day?! On cocksucking, motherfucking new issue day?!

A: This is what happens when you fuck with your pets on new issue day! Now take your bowtie, get your shit and get the fuck out!

In the example above, the speaker uses swearwords aggressively with the intention to insult the listener. It is an important day of an initial public offering at Stratton Oakmont where a ladies shoe designer named Steve Madden tries to convince the company in question to sell his shares. Upon catching a stockbroker cleaning his goldfish, the speaker feels angry and

determines to insult and degrade the listener by swallowing his goldfish and dismissing him in front of everybody else.

The swearwords cocksucking and motherfucking are very offensive or derogatory. They are used here to render the insult more intense or forceful.

Example 6:

A: Even though I owned 85% of Steve Cocksucker-Madden-fucking-Shoes, the shares were in his fucking name. Motherfucker knew I was in trouble with the Feds and was trying to take advantage.

Here, abusive swearing is directed towards a specific target. It is resorted to insult the addressee. While the speaker is on his way to Italy on a holiday, one of his employee calls and tells him that Steve Madden starts unloading shares. The speaker insults and accuses the former of attempting to take advantage of the latter's troubles with the FBI. Here, the intended illocutionary force of the utterance is that of an accusation. To make the accusation sound more offensive, the speaker uses several swearwords such as cocksucker, fucking and motherfucker.

The swear word fucking functions as an emphatic and derogatory adjective and it expresses the speaker's negative opinion of the person in question. According to Ljung (2011), the expletive slot fillers cocksucker and motherfucker have a extreme taboo load since they are grounded on the taboo themes of fellatio and incent respectively.

2.3.1.3 The Social Functions of swearwords in *The Wolf of Wall Street*

As regards the social functions, some swearwords employed in *The Wolf of Wall Street* are resorted to by the main characters in order to show familiarity or creating humourious effect.

Example 7:

A: If you want a cracker or something, I'm gonna have some treats in my pocket. I want to be in a strip club with you guys. Literally pull out a brief case and have a little fucking guy pop out of there. You know how much fucking pussy you get?

In this instance, the swearwords fucking pussy is uttered by the speaker addressing two of his friends. According to Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, the word pussy has two senses; it is either a vulgar slang referring to a female genitalia or a slang insult. In the example above, it is derogatory because it is used here to belittle a man by characterizing him as being weak or cowardly. The expletive fucking is acting as an intensifier which strengthens the following noun. Such combination can be very offensive.

Nevertheless, in this example fucking pussy are used to convey a social function. The speaker intends to tease the addressees through the use of swearing. It can be inferred that the intended illocutionary force is that of teasing or jesting.

Example 8:

A: Then you wait. Whoever speaks first loses. At this point, where are we in the sale?

Chester?

B: About to close?

A: No, you sweet and sour douchebag. We 're at the beginning of the beginning! This where the sale starts. You as a salesman are almost hoping he says no so you can finally do your fucking job!

As for the previous example, the word douchebag is utilizes by speaker directed at a stockbroker whose name is Chester. According to Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, this word has the meaning of a bag used for giving douches. However in swearing, it also means a detestable, offensive or disgusting person. As such this word is derogatory because it reflects the speaker's negative option of the addressee. However, in this context it performs a social function that of creating a jesting effect. The intended illocutionary force is that of a jocular insult.

The addressee is a close friend of the speaker and one of a group of stockbrokers who help establish the speaker's own company called Stratton Oakmont. This utterance occurs while the speaker is talking to an investor on the speakerphone trying to convince him to purchase stocks with other stockbrokers listening. He makes rough sexual gestures to every brokers as the investor signs on.

According to Wajnryb (2005: 34), social swearing occurs in relaxed settings where similar groups of people feel at ease as in the previous instance.

Additionally, the speaker uses the expletive fucking which functions as intensifier.

Example 9:

A: What are you two retards doing?

B: Nothing. Working out.

A: Bo Dietl's on the phone

It can be seen that he speaker is addressing her husband and his friend describing them as being retards. According to Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, retard is a slang insult which means a foolish or stupid person or someone who does not develop normally. Hence, it is offensive due to the fact that it conveys the speaker's negative attitude towards the persons addressed. In this context, however, it has a social function. The speaker goes downstairs to find the addressees working out. She tells her husband that Bo Dietle is on the phone. Here, retards is used in the pursuit of signaling friendship and familiarity.

2.3.2 The Reasons behind the Use of Swearing in *The Wolf of Wall Street*

As regards the current study, the use of swearing can be attributed to three main reasons. These will be illustrated citing representative examples from the movie under study.

1. Expressing frustration or anger

A: This was fucking great. I hadn't laundered a dime yet and already I was under arrest.

Here, the speaker feels frustrated as he wakes up to find himself restrained in his seat on the airplane. In order to get his money laundered in an overseas account, the speaker travels to Switzerland. Due to the fact that he takes a drug before the flight he attacks the stewardess and insults the polite the thing that causes the latter to tie him to the chair.

2. Expressing surprise

A: They called it Black Monday. By four p.m. the market was down 508 points, the biggest one-day drop since the crash of 29

B: Holy. Fucking. Shit.

The speaker B is surprised and stunned by the news regarding the drop in the shares market. He employs the swearwords *holy shit* combined with the expletive *fucking* to emphasize the extent to which he is astonished.

3. Insulting someone

A: Donnie, that piece of shit. I'm gonna kill him! That fat prick motherfucker!

The speaker knows that Donnie leaves Brad (a mutual friend) to get arrested and causes the speaker's home and work phones to get tapped by the police. In this instance, the speaker uses derogatory swearing in order to insult and demean the person involved.

Ljung (2011) suggests that the swearwords *shit*, *prick* and *motherfucker* are all termed as epithets which means an offensive expression conveying the speaker's negative attitude towards the addressee.

It is worth mentioning that other reasons for the utilization of swearing by the main characters in the data under study are revealed by the analysis. These are the speaker's intention to create a teasing effect or to get the content of the utterance emphasized.

2.3.3 Categories of Swearwords in *The Wolf of Wall Street*

In *The Wolf of Wall Street*, swearwords can be distributed across three main categories. These will be discussed below.

1. Excretory or Scatological swearwords such as shit, piece of shit, bullshit, shit bag, give a shit, piss, ass, and asshole.

It should be noted that the word *shit* generally means feces. However, in the data under study, it sometimes used as an expletive interjection conveying the meaning of surprise as in *Holy shit!*. Additionally, it also functions as an expletive epithet as in *You 're dead, you piece of shit* .

Similarly, the word *ass* which has the meaning of butt, is used in the movie to refer to a stupid person or a fool. As in *You asshole!*

2. Sexual swearwords like dick, cock, cunt, pussy, balls, prick, fuck, fucking, fuck out, fuck over, fucked up, fucknut, fuckface, mother-fucker, cock-sucker, and cockless

Words such *prick* which has the meaning of a male genitalia is used in the data to express as an insult meaning a stupid or unpleasant person, as in *killed this prick*. Similarly, the word *pussy* which means a female genitalia is employed to convey the meaning of a coward or a weak person, as in *how much fucking pussy*.

In this movie, the word *fuck* is sometimes used literally, as in *some little hooker you fucked last night*. However, it is also employed to expresses different sheds of meaning such as that of anger or annoyance, as in *fuck! the kids makes it look so easy! Fucking* is utilized by the main characters as an emphatic and/or derogatory adjective, as in *my incredible fucking success* and *a fucking imbecile*. Moreover, words such as *mother-fucker* is used as an insulting term as in *the motherfucker stole fifty grand in cash and jewelry.*

3. Profanity swearwords like hell, goddamn, and Jesus/ Christ. These words lost their literal meaning when used in swearing. In the data under scrutiny, they convey a negative attitude or simply an emphasis.

The *hell's* all this!

My *goddamn* wedding videos

Oh *sweet Jesus*

Finally, it is worth mentioning that other swearwords which do not fit neatly into any of the foregoing categories are revealed by the analysis. These include, among other, bastards, morons, halfwit, twerp, crazy, imbecile, scumbag, retard, junkie, bitch, son of bitch, whore, hooker, and gay.

3. Conclusions

On the basis of the analysis carried out in the previous section, the following conclusions can be made:

1). Despite the fact that swearing is often regarded an offensive concept, it is ubiquitous in everyday conversations where interlocutors employ it to accomplish different pragmatic and communicative ends. Additionally, it has been proven by the analysis that it is a pragmatic concept because different contextual variables are required to account for it.

2). As regards the pragmatic functions carried out by swearing, the analysis shows that three functions are utilized by the main characters of *The Wolf of Wall Street.* These are cathartic, abusive and social functions. Whereas both the first and second are associated with venting emotions whether positive or negative, the third has to do with demonstrating familiarity or creating humour.

3). As revealed by the analysis, three main reasons underlie the use of swearwords. They include the speaker's intention to express anger or frustration, surprise or to insult someone. Swearwords are sometimes used by the main characters for other purposes such as emphasizing the content of the utterance.

4). In *The Wolf of Wall Street*, swearwords resorted to can be classified into three categories

each category is associated with a particular area. These comprise Excretory or Scatological, Sexual and Profanity. It can be proposed that those associated with sexual activities or the genitalia such as fuck, cock, dick, prick and pussy are used extensively by the main characters throughout the movie. They are sometimes used in their literal sense but they are also utilized to express different sheds of meaning.

5). The eclectic model of swearing developed by the study has proven to be successfully workable in analyzing the data selected for the current paper.

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