The Hate U Give's Swear Words & Word Formation Processes Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The Black characters in *The Hate U Give* novel like to use many swear words in order to express their feelings and emotions. This is a study which deals with word formation process. To analyze the word formation processes in both swear words and non-swear words are the purposes of this study. To help conducting this study, close reading and note taking are used to collect the data. This study found that there are two types of swear words frequently used by the Black characters. Also, Expletive Interjection is the most frequent type of swear words which means that using swear words is how the Black characters express their emotions and feelings in certain situations.

Keywords: The Hate U Give, Swearing, Word Formation Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Chaika (1982) stated that people use language in order to reveal personal identity, character and background. The most unique and striking word formations are found in the way black Americans use English, plus some word formation processes not commonly found in Standard English. On the other hand, some people tend to use language as a medium to express emotions such as anger, sadness, and disappointment. They like to use foul language that is considered bad and harsh in some cultures. Nevertheless, each of swear words has more than literal meaning because it also carries an emotional connotation (Pinker, 2007).

We often find swear words in our daily lives both in private and public settings. We can also find them easily in novels, films, songs or

television programs. The same thing goes to the utterances from Black Americans characters in *The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas* novel. The differences between this novel and other novels that consist of swear words is that, the conflict about racism between Black and White Americans in the novel raises the use of swear words and the words are varied just like what the linguists have categorized. The main character, who is a Black American, lives in two different worlds mainly a Black, poor American neighbourhood who love to use swear words but her parents takes her to a school full of White, rich and polite Americans. While in her neighbourhood, it is very common to use swear words even the children as well but it is totally different in her school. This caused an uneasy balance life between them, from the differences of the way of speaking to the way of living. Then it rises evenmore when she becomes the only witness to a fatal shooting by a White policeman to an innocent young Black American guy in Black neighbourhood and goes viral which leads to a riot full of heat. The novel was expanded from a true story and become even more interesting to be analyzed because of the heat of the conflict that is raised in the novel which make them use more swear words.

This study's purpose is to analyze the word formation processes found in every utterences uttered by the Black Americans characters. Even though the study of word formation processes and swear words are still studied up until now, none has analyzed about this novel whereas it is a considerably new novel which is written in 2017. There are some similar studies such as first, Ningrum & Rohmah (2014), Alfiani (2018), Wulandari (2017), Susetyaningsih (2017), Prawinanto et al., (2020) who analyzed about word formation processes and swearing analysis, but none have conducted a study which combines both swearing and word formation processes in a novel with Black American conflicts, where in fact the conflict raised in this novel which is about racism that caused the heat between the characters. Furthermore, this novel was expanded from a true story when the writer wrote in college in reaction to the police shooting of Oscar Grant. Furthermore, it can be said that this is a relatively new and enthralling study.

This study combined the word formation processes theory from Brinton & Brinton (2002) and O' Grady et al., (1996) which resulted 11 types of word formation processes such as *onomatopoeia, back formation, derivation & inflection*, *acronyms, reduplication, compounding, conversion, blending, , clipping or shortening, coinage*.

For the swearing types analysis, this study used the theory from Ljung (2011) who stated that there are two functions of swearing such as *Stand–Alone* and *Slot-fillers*. *Stand-Alone* is classified

itno three types and they are *Unfriendly Suggestion* which used to express agression at somebody, *Curse* which consists of an expression from the speaker's wish to harm another person and *Expletive Interjection* which has expressive meaning that relates to the speaker's emotional. *Slot-fillers* is classified into four categories and they are *Anaphpric Use of Epithet* that is classified into a noun, *Adjective of Dislike* that is used to indicate the dislike from speaker, *Emphasis* which is used to put emphasis on following nouns and *Adverbial or Adjective Intensifier* which is used to elevate the meaning of some words. The used theory are deemed to be the most suited theories in analyzing the data in this study.

METHOD

This is a library research using descriptive – qualitative method. This study is also a non-participant observation (Sudaryanto, 1993).

The data is taken from *The Hate U Give* novel written by Angie Thomas. The primary data was collected from the word formation processes of Black American characters discovered in the novel. The population for this study is taken from all utterances spoken by the Black American characters in the novel. Meanwhile the sample for this study are reserved only for utterances that can be analyzed using the word formation, and the theory of swearing. The samples of this study were collected by purposive sampling method (Srikunto, 1998) from each of the utterances from Black American characters that can be categorized as the types of word formation process in the novel. This study categorizes the word-forming processes in black American speech to identify and explain the types of swearing and the reasons for using profanity in them.

There are some steps done by the writer in analyzing the data. Once the data were collected, the writer then began to categorize, classify, analayze, discuss, and report. First, the writer categorized the utterances that might possibly become the proofs for the research such as the types of word formation processes, types of swearing and the reasons behind the use of swear words. There are some initials used in this study DX (derivation), RX (reduplication, CX (compounding), VX (conversion), Bx (blending), FX (backformation), SX (clipping or shortening), GX (coinage), AX (acronym), OX (anomotopoeia), IX (inflections). Second, the writer analyzed the data by using the chosen theories. The quantitative method was used in this stage to support the description of the data and they were listing and summing. Third, the writer validated the findings to the chosen

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theories that were applied to find out whether the findings could elaborately explained to answer the research questions. Fourth, the writer reported and conclude the findings into description. In addition, some suggestion also be added to make this research could become maximized in the future.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The first part deals with the analysis of the word formation process, including the types that occur in novels and the most common types. In the second part, we will discuss the types of swear words and why they are used in the novel. The example of the data's explanations are stated in description.

Word Formation Processes

This study found 11 types of word formation processes according to the chosen theories:

Table 1:
Word Formation Processes

Types	Quantity
DX	175
OX	32
CX	117
AX	10
BX	392
FX	5
SX	329
GX	359
VX	12
RX	5
IX	2,017
Total	3,454

Reduplication

This process is frequently uttered by Starr such as *nae – nae* in page 7, which is used to picture dancing movements in a party, *Tay – Tay* in page 50 that is actually a singer named Taylor Swift and *Starr – Starr* in page 120, her name.

Compounding

The word *freeway* [noun] in page 176 is compounding because it can stand independently and has two words, *free* [adjective] and *way* [noun]. The word *freeway* means a toll without fees.

Conversion of Functional Shifts
The word *munch* in page 22 and *kicks* in page 13 can be categorized as conversion. *Munch* can be used as a verb, meaning of eating something in the mouth. However, it is also used as subject in this novel.

"How you feeling, Munch?" (p.22)

This sentence is referred to Starr, where her family calls her name with *munch*. Another example is *kicks,* it can be use as a verb as well as a noun which means sneakers that is famous among the Black American characters in this novel such as in the sentence below.

"I like your kicks!" (p.13).

Back Formation
The example of this data is *begged* in page 115. The root is *beg,* that comes from *beggar*, that is created by removing the real or supposed affix from another word. Thus, it can be called as a back formation process.

Clipping or Shortening
Almost every characters in this novel like to use this process while talking to tohers. Nevertheless, this study did not find all types of clipping.

Midddle Clipping
The word *a'ight* in page 133 is done by omitting the middle letters of the original word which is *alright*.

Back Clipping
The word *ol'* in page 9 comes from *old* and the word *gon'* in page 9 comes from *gonna* can be categorized as back clipping.

Coinage
The use of *nah* as another variation of saying *no* is commonly found in the Black American characters' utterances in this novel. The example of the sentence is as below.

"Girl, **nah**. And mess up my outfit? You seem alright." (p. 155)

Another example of this process such as *momma*, which is a new variaton of saying *mother*. Instead of using *mother*, all Black American characters in this novel use *momma* to call their mothers. It can be seen in the sentence below.

"... Everybody knew his momma was a crackhead" (p. 132)

Another word that is frequently used in this novel is *Nigga*. In this novel, the word *nigga* is used as nother varation to describe a close friend among the Black American characters just like in the sentence below.

"Nigga, you said you moving" (p. 151)

Acronyms

The example of this data is *THUG LIFE*. The *word THUG LIFE* stands for *The Hate U Give Liittle Infants Fucks Everybody,* comes from Tupac's lyric in the novel turns out has its meaning to the Black Americasn in this novel.

Onomatopoeia

The example of this data is *mwah*, it is a natural sound of kissing something from our mouth with a context that the speaker, Lisa Carter is talking to Starr and kisses her from afar.

"... I love you. Mwah!" (p. 56)

Another example is *pow*, it is the imitation of a gunshot. Since this novel talks about racism, incident, and riot, thus this novel also presents the reader about a gunshot by using the imitation word such as *pow*.

Word Formation Processes of Swear Words

There are 123 utterances found that consist of swear words but there are only some of them that can be categorized. The most frequenty type is compounding with 27 data and the less frequent type is acronym with only 1 data. The examples of the data explanation are stated in description.

Compounding

The word *Goddamn* as part of swearing is commonly found in this novel. The word *Goddamn* is categorized as compounding because it is a combination of two words namely *God* [noun] and *damn* [adjective]. It is often used by speakers to express feelings such as anger, frustration, etc. Another example is *bullshit*, made of bull and shit that can stand independently as a word because both of them are free morphemes. It is usually used to response some actions that are seen as false or misleading. In this context, it is used by Starr to

response her friend named Khalil that says there is nothing he can do. Starr is trying to say that Khalil's utterance is not true or false.

Acronym

This study only found one word that belongs to acronym and it is *BS*, stands for *Bullshit.* The speaker of this word is Maverick or Starr's father. He talks in front of his family while watching the white cop's father who does talk show on television. The white cop's father says that his son is the victim, not Khalil who got killed. Thus, Maverick says that it is such a bullshit, because it is a nonsense knowing that Khalil is the one the becomes victim because he is murdered even though he did not do anything.

Inflection

This study found 5 swear words that can be categorized as inflection. The example of the data is *fucks. Fucks* can be categorized as inflection because it is made from a root *fuck* added with inflection of 3rd person singular *-s* and becomes *fucks*. It gives meaning to the readers that it is done by a singular person.

Types of Swear Words

This study found 6 out of 7 functions. In total, there are 70 data out of 123 data of swearing that can be analyzed with swear words theory. The expletive interjection is the most dominant function used by the Black American characters in the novel. Meanwhile the least function goes to anaphoric use of epithet for only one utterance.. However, this study did not find any adjective or adverbial intensifier in the novel.

Stand – Alone

This study only found 3 out of 4 types of stand alone, and they are expletive interjection, curse and unfriendly suggestions.

Curse

There are 4 curse utterances. The example of this data is *Fuck the police!*. After Khalil was shot dead by white police for holding a hairbrush, black Americans in Garden Heights rioted against the police for mistreatment of them. In this novel, black Americans are often caught up in police misbehavior, which leads to their anger and riots. Devante is one of the black kids in the neighborhood who vents his anger by cursing the police and calling them "shit". The utterance above consists of the taboo word "fuck" followed by the direct object "police".

Expletive Interjection
It is also the most frequent type of swearing in this novel with 70 data. The examples of this type are *dammit*, where Maverick is surprised. His sense of amazement curses him. *Dammit* is a blending of the word omitting the letter 'n' from *damn* and *it*. According to Merriam-Webster's dictionary, the word *damn* is an interjection used as a mild curse.

Unfriendly Suggestions
This study only found 1 data of this type which is *my ass*, stated by Maverick. He says this because his only daughter, Starr, witnessed his best friend being hairbrushed by a white police officer the day before, and his brother-in-law, who is a detective, could ask Starr for police questioning. Concerned about his daughter's mental state, Maverick further believes that the white police officer, Khalil, was deliberately killed simply because he was black and that no further investigation is necessary. This statement is classified as an unfriendly innuendo, as the use of donkeys leads to sexual conduct.

Slot – Fillers
This study found 4 types of slot-fillers swearing, namely adjective of dislike, emphasis and anaphoric use of epithet. This study did not find any type of adverbial or adjetive intensifier.

Adjective of Dislike
There are 3 data and the example of this data is *bitch* in page 9 and page 12, stated by Starr. When Starr is taken to a party in Garden Heights with his sister-in-law Kenya, she is drawn into helping Kenya run over someone she doesn't like. She doesn't like Denasia in Kenya. Because she dances with Devante, who Denasia is also in love with Kenya. Kenya calls herself a bitch, and according to the Cambridge Dictionary, *bitch* means both a bitch and a surly woman who causes trouble. With these two words Kenya expresses her dislike of Denasia.

Emphasis
This study found 48 data of this type and the examples are *shut **the hell** up* from page 72 and *keep your **damn** voice down* from page 72. Both examples are cited by the star's grandmother Nana, who enjoys cursing in almost daily conversation. She uses her word "hell" to silence someone. Nana emphasizes her own remarks using the word "damn" so that no one can hear her conversation. In this context, we

see that in order for Nana to emphasize the meaning of her statement, she puts a curse in front of the words she wants to emphasize.

Anaphoric use of Epithet

This study only found 1 data of this type, namely *that **bastard*** from page 114 stated by Maverick. The incident with Khalil was broadcast on national television, and somehow the white police officer who killed Khalil had his father interviewed on TV, telling him that Khalil was a drug dealer and the white policeman was an innocent boy who escaped. He said he was working just to protect the neighborhood. In fact, there is no evidence that Khalil brought drugs into the car during the incident. In this context, the word *bastard* is a noun referring to the white cop father who conducts the incredible interviews that anger Maverick.

Reasons for Using Swear Words

From the explanation above, it can be said that all age and gender of the Black American characters often use swear words.

"*No cursing … 'Cause they hear it from Nana enough….*" (p. 101)

Uncle Carlos, who lives with Nana, is in charge of the voice. He tells the reader that Nana likes to curse in everyday conversation. He tells Devante, not to swear because he has children who have been told many bad things from Nana. If you connect the dots with the most common types of swear words, they use all swear words to express their feelings and emotions. Moreover, being around more mature people who enjoy cursing and see it as a normal way of expressing their feelings may make it more common for young people to curse in everyday conversation.

CONCLUSION

Analysis was performed by the authors on previous pages and chapters. The conclusions of the responses to this are presented in this chapter. First, the authors believe that all sorts of word-formation processes by Professors Laurel J. Brinton and Donna Brinton (2010) and O'Grady (1996) can be concluded to be found in the utterance of the Black American characters in the novel. The most common type is the 2,020-word IX, and the less common types are DX and FX with 5 words each. The authors also analyzed the word formation process of

swear words uttered by black American characters randomly selected from novels. The author could not find any sort of word-formation process in the swear words uttered by black American characters. In fact, it has only three types of word formation processes. There are compounding as the most frequent type (27), inflection (5) and acronym (1) The authors were unable to find all types of swear words mentioned by Ljung (2011). In fact, the authors could only find 6 out of 8 types. Namely, expletive interjection, curse, unfriendly suggestion, adjective of dislike, emphasis and anaphoric use of epithet. In addition, expletive interjection is the most common form. The reason is that black characters in America, regardless of gender or age, prefer to express their feelings and emotions in everyday conversations**.**

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