

Taboo Language in Daily Conversations of English Education Students at HKBP Nommensen University

Aroon Fritz Ogest Malau¹, Sahlan Tampubolon¹, Susanti¹

¹Universitas HKBP Nommensen Medan, Indonesia

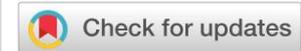
*Correspondence: yessypasaribu@uhn.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the types of Indonesian taboo language used by fifth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at HKBP Nommensen University and to analyze the contextual factors influencing their use in daily conversations. Taboo language frequently appears in informal communication and reflects social interaction patterns among students. This research employed a descriptive qualitative method. The data were collected through natural observation and audio recordings of students' conversations around the ground floor area of Building L at HKBP Nommensen University. A total of 193 taboo expressions were identified from 35 speech events. The data were analyzed using the classification of taboo language proposed by Edwin L. Battistella, while the contextual analysis was interpreted through the SPEAKING model developed by Dell Hymes. The findings reveal that epithets are the most frequently used type of taboo language in students' conversations. These expressions are commonly used in informal interactions to express emotions, humor, and solidarity among peers. The study indicates that taboo language in this context functions not only as offensive language but also as a strategy for maintaining social bonding among students.

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1. Introduction

Language plays a fundamental role in human communication and reflects the social values, norms, and identities of its speakers. In sociolinguistics, language is not only used to convey information but also functions as a means of expressing emotions, attitudes, and interpersonal relationships within a community. According to Wardhaugh (2006), sociolinguistics examines the relationship between language and society, particularly how social factors influence linguistic choices in different communicative situations. One linguistic phenomenon that often appears in informal interactions is taboo language (Prihandoko et al., 2019; Aswad et al., 2019; Weda et al., 2021; Andini et al., 2026).

Taboo language refers to words or expressions that are socially restricted or considered offensive within a particular cultural context. Although such expressions are often avoided in formal communication, they frequently occur in everyday conversations, especially among young people and peer groups (Chalak, 2025; Yaumi et al., 2023; Weda et al., 2022; Youngsun et al., 2024). Taboo expressions may function as a way to express anger, surprise, humor, frustration, or solidarity among speakers. Battistella (2005) classifies taboo language into four main categories: epithets, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity. Epithets are insulting expressions directed at individuals, profanity involves the misuse of religious terms, vulgarity refers to crude references to bodily functions, and obscenity relates to explicit sexual expressions. This classification provides a useful framework for analyzing different forms of taboo expressions in communication.

The use of taboo language has become increasingly visible in informal interactions among university students. In daily conversations, students may use taboo expressions to express emotions, strengthen group solidarity, or create humor within peer groups. However, this phenomenon becomes particularly significant when it occurs among students of English Education programs who are prospective teachers. As future educators, they are expected to demonstrate appropriate language use and serve as role models for their students (Said et al., 2021; Pratiwi et al., 2026; Anggriyani et al., 2025; Adinda et al., 2025). Therefore, understanding how taboo language is used in their daily interactions becomes important in exploring the relationship between language behavior, social context, and professional identity.

Several previous studies have examined taboo language in different social and cultural contexts. Wardani et al., (2023) investigated language taboos in Acehese traditional social activities and found that taboo expressions are strongly

influenced by cultural norms and moral values within the community. Similarly, Tristiani et al., (2024) analyzed taboo expressions in the Balinese language and highlighted how religious and cultural principles shape language restrictions in traditional society. In the academic context, Hary (2020) examined taboo and euphemism among English Department students at Universitas Pamulang and found that students often combine taboo expressions with euphemistic strategies in their conversations. Wahyuni (2024) also explored the use of taboo language among male English Department students at Universitas Airlangga and reported that taboo expressions frequently function as markers of peer solidarity and emotional expression.

Other studies further demonstrate the diverse perspectives used to analyze taboo language. Salsabila and Hadiyansyah (2024) analyzed taboo vocabulary in student interaction and found that taboo expressions may serve positive interpersonal functions such as strengthening intimacy among speakers. Setyaningtiyas et al., (2023) examined swearing words among multicultural students and concluded that taboo language functions as a form of youth expression that transcends cultural boundaries. From a psychological perspective, Husain et al., (2023) explained that profanity may function as a self-defense mechanism for expressing emotional pressure. Meanwhile, Alhakimi et al., (2024) discussed the educational values of taboo expressions in the Sasak speech community and emphasized the importance of understanding taboo language within moral and cultural education. Sasabone et al., (2024) also analyzed taboo expressions using a forensic linguistic approach and demonstrated that taboo words can be systematically analyzed as context-dependent communicative acts. In addition, Hasnah al., (2022) explored the types and functions of taboo words in classroom interactions among students, finding that students used them to attract attention, express disdain, and provoke peers, while not all categories of taboo words were observed.

Although previous studies have explored taboo language from various perspectives, most of them focus on traditional communities, cultural norms, psychological aspects, or general youth communication. Only a limited number of studies specifically examine taboo language among English Education students who are prospective teachers. Furthermore, many studies mainly identify the occurrence of taboo expressions without analyzing the communicative context in which these expressions appear. As a result, the contextual dynamics of taboo language in student interactions remain insufficiently explored.

To address this limitation, the present study investigates the use of Indonesian taboo language among fifth-semester English Education students at Nommensen HKBP University in their daily conversations. This study applies Battistella's (2005) classification to identify the types of taboo language used by students. In addition, the communicative context of these expressions is analyzed using the SPEAKING framework proposed by Dell Hymes (1974), which examines components such as setting, participants, ends, act sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms, and genre.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on English Education students as future educators and in its combination of taboo language classification with contextual analysis using Hymes' SPEAKING model. By examining both the types and contexts of taboo expressions, this research provides a deeper understanding of how taboo language functions within informal academic interactions and contributes to sociolinguistic discussions on language behavior among prospective teachers.

2. Methodology

This research was a descriptive qualitative method that aimed to describe and analyze the types and contexts of taboo language used by fifth-semester students in the English Education Department at Universitas HKBP Nommensen. According to Creswell, (2014), qualitative research focuses on understanding social phenomena from the perspectives of participants rather than relying on numerical data. This study examined how taboo expressions appeared naturally in students' daily conversations without manipulating or controlling any variables.

The data source of this research consisted of natural conversations among fifth-semester English Education students at Universitas HKBP Nommensen. The population of this study included 24 students, and because the number of participants was relatively small, this research applied total sampling. According to Etikan et al., (2016), total sampling is a sampling technique in which all members of a population are included as research participants when the population size is manageable. Therefore, all 24 students were involved as participants in this research. The data were collected through observation, recording, and documentation. The researcher observed students' informal conversations in campus environments and recorded the interactions using a smartphone to capture both verbal and non-verbal communication. Field notes were also used to document contextual information such as the time, location, and participants involved in the interaction. All recorded conversations were then transcribed into written form to facilitate further analysis.

The data were analyzed descriptively using qualitative data analysis procedures proposed by Miles et al, (2014), which include data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The taboo expressions identified in the conversations were classified based on the theory proposed by Battistella (2005), while the contextual meaning of each expression was analyzed using the SPEAKING framework developed by Dell Hymess, (1974).

3. Results and Discussion

This data was obtained from fifth-semester students in the English Education Department at Universitas HKBP Nommensen. The total population consisted of 24 students, both male and female, who actively participated in academic and non-academic activities within the university. The researcher observed the students in various informal settings, such as campus areas and canteens, to collect natural utterances containing taboo language. In this section, the researcher presents data consisting of selected excerpts of student interactions that include taboo expressions. These excerpts were then classified according to, Battistella (2005) types of taboo language: vulgarity, epithets, and profanity. Each piece of data was examined thoroughly, taking into account the social context, participants' relationships, and the situational factors that influenced the use of taboo words.

Table 1 presents the types of taboo language used by students in their interactions. The data are classified into four categories: Epithets, Profanity, Vulgarity, and Obscenity. This classification is used to show the variation of taboo expressions found in students' daily conversations. It also provides a general overview of how each type is distributed across the data.

Table 1 Types of taboo language used by students

No	Types of Taboo Language	Total
1	Epithets	136
2	Profanity	28
3	Vulgarity	17
4	Obscenity	12
Total		193

The data show that Epithets dominate the use of taboo language, with 136 occurrences out of 193, indicating that students often use direct insults or name-calling in their interactions. Profanity (28), Vulgarity (17), and Obscenity (12) appear less frequently, suggesting that more explicit or sensitive expressions are used more selectively. Overall, students tend to rely on Epithets as a common way to express emotions such as annoyance, joking, or social judgment in informal situations.

3.1 Types of Taboo Language

Types of Taboo Word Batistella (2005 :72) suggests four types of taboo words: epithets, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity.

3.1.1 Epithets

Epithets include words used as insults or derogatory remarks toward someone's identity, race, gender, appearance, or ability. These expressions often appear in emotionally charged situations such as anger or frustration. For example, words like *bitch* or *faggot* are used to attack or provoke others. Such expressions represent strong emotional reactions rather than reasoned communication.

In the peer interactions captured across multiple speech events, epithets emerge as a dominant linguistic strategy for expressing anger, frustration, and social judgment. They function not merely as emotional outbursts but as deliberate labels that target the addressee's identity, moral standing, intelligence, or physical appearance. In these interactions, speakers frequently invoke animal metaphors, sexualized insults, and derogatory comments on intellect or behavior, showing how deeply embedded epithets are in the construction of peer social hierarchies.

Data 1

JM: “Meninggal kau, bodoh”

(You're dead, you idiot)

The term *idiot* functions as a cognitive epithet that directly attacks the intellectual capacity of the interlocutor. Rather than criticizing a particular mistake or behavior, JM assigns an essential and generalized deficiency, framing the addressee as inherently lacking intelligence. The structure of the utterance intensifies the insult: the hyperbolic threat “*you're dead*” precedes the label *idiot*, amplifying emotional hostility and positioning the insult as both confrontational and personal. In this interaction, the epithet operates to delegitimize the interlocutor's reasoning ability and symbolically lower their status within the conversational hierarchy.

3.1.2 Profanity

Profanity involves the misuse of sacred or religious references in inappropriate or secular contexts. Although not always meant to insult religion, profanity reflects the speaker's emotional state, such as anger or surprise. Common examples include words like God, Jesus Christ, hell, damn that are uttered spontaneously to express frustration or disbelief.

In the peer interactions documented across the dataset, profanity appears primarily through the use of religious references that are detached from their sacred meanings and recontextualized as emotional intensifiers. Unlike epithets, which target the identity of the interlocutor, profanity in this corpus functions to express shock, frustration, disbelief, or exaggeration by invoking divine or supernatural entities. These expressions do not operate as theological statements; rather, they secularize sacred terms and employ them as discursive tools to heighten emotional force within informal peer communication.

Data 2

DS : “*diam kau setan.*”

(Shut up, you devil.)

The term devil functions here as profanity derived from a religious lexicon. Instead of referring to a literal theological being, the expression reduces the sacred concept of *setan* (devil) to a confrontational label used in irritation. The utterance does not engage with religious doctrine; rather, it mobilizes a religious symbol as an emotional amplifier. By calling the interlocutor the devil, DS intensifies annoyance and dramatizes the interaction. The sacred reference is stripped of its spiritual gravity and repositioned as a socially permissible outburst within peer discourse. Comparable uses of religious profanity recur throughout the dataset.

3.1.3 Vulgarity

Vulgarity is characterized by crude or coarse expressions to bodily functions or sexual. Vulgar words are often used instance, ass or cunt may be used not literally, but as slang expressions of intensity or irritation. instead draw their force from the direct mention of socially restricted anatomical and excretory terms. The shock value and offensiveness stem from their literal reference to intimate or unclean bodily domains, which are conventionally avoided in polite discourse.

Data 3

PT: “*Kont*I, arghh, benci kali.*”

(*Dick, arghh, I really hate it.*)

It presents a direct lexical reference to male genitalia. Here, *dick* is not used descriptively but as an exclamatory outburst of frustration. The anatomical term is detached from its literal biological meaning and repurposed as a raw emotional discharge. The intensity lies in the abrupt insertion of a sexual organ into a non- sexual complaint, heightening the emotional tone of the interaction. A comparable pattern appears in Speech Event 13 (JM), where the speaker states, “*Later, just grab his face and say this: damn it, dick!*” In this case, the same term is projected outward toward another person, transforming a genital reference into an aggressive verbal attack.

3.1.4 Obscenity

Obscenity refers to words that are considered morally offensive or socially unacceptable because of their sexual or indecent meanings. Obscenity includes expressions like *fuck* or *shit*, which are typically avoided in formal situations. However, these words are often used to emphasize strong emotion rather than their literal sexual or excretory sense.

In the peer interactions documented across several speech events, obscenity emerges through explicit references to sexual acts and sexualized behavior. Unlike epithets or general vulgarity, these utterances focus specifically on sexual conduct, whether real, implied, or as a form of teasing, thereby transgressing social taboos related to sexuality. The linguistic force of these statements derives from the combination of literal sexual content and the social impropriety of articulating such acts in a peer context.

Data 4

MS states :*"Ngemut-ngemut kau tadi sama abang itu ya"*

(You were sucking on that guy earlier, weren't you?).

The verb sucking directly evokes oral sexual activity. The utterance transforms an intimate act into a public accusation, thereby producing embarrassment. The sexual reference is not descriptive but insinuating; it frames the interlocutor as sexually involved in a way that invites ridicule. In the same event, KS responds with, "You think I was fucking? Do you think I'm gay or what, pussy?". Here, the explicit verb fucking intensifies the exchange by foregrounding sexual intercourse itself. The obscenity lies in the blunt naming of the act, which shifts the interaction from teasing to confrontational exposure.

The contextual analysis of taboo expressions, examined through Dell Hymes' SPEAKING framework, shows that their use is closely tied to setting, participants, and communicative purpose. The Ground Floor of Building L was the most common location for these interactions, offering a semi-public yet relaxed environment that encourages spontaneous expression. Other areas, such as classrooms, libraries, and laboratories, showed lower frequencies, suggesting that structured settings limit taboo language. All interactions occurred among close friends, highlighting the role of relational intimacy and trust, which allow potentially offensive expressions to be interpreted as playful or affiliative. Hierarchical interactions, such as with lecturers or unfamiliar peers, rarely produced taboo language, confirming that these expressions are socially negotiated within equal-status peer groups.

Table 2 presents the contexts and situations in which taboo language is used by students, based on the SPEAKING components. The data are organized into eight elements, including setting, participants, ends, act sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms, and genre. This classification aims to describe how contextual factors influence the use of taboo expressions in student interactions. It also provides an overview of where, how, and why such language occurs in everyday communication.

Table 2 Contexts and Situations language used by students

No	Component	Category found	Total
1	Setting and Scene	FKIP Library	2
		Ground Floor of Building L	16
		In front of the FKIP Administration Office.	5
		The entrance next to Building L	1
		Classroom I.4.1	2
		Third floor of Building L	2
		Language laboratory	5
		Second floor of building L	2
	informal peer space	35	

2	Participants	Close Friends	35		
3	Ends	Evaluative Relational	6		
		Expressive	17		
		Narrative	9		
4	Act Sequence	Direct Speech	2		
		Critical	35		
		Playful	3		
		Irritated	21		
		Mocking	2		
		Judgmental	4		
		Confrontational	2		
		Humorous	1		
		Supportive	1		
		Reflective	1		
5	Key	Lighthearted	1		
		Mock-confrontational	1		
		Teasing	1		
		Provocative	1		
		6	Instrumentalities	Oral Spoken Language	35
		7	Norms	Taboo accepted among peers	35
8	Genre	Informal peer dialogue	35		
Total			315		

The data show that taboo language is mostly used in informal peer settings, particularly among close friends, with informal peer space being the most frequent location. It is commonly expressed through direct speech and oral communication, often in a playful, teasing, or humorous tone. Overall, the findings indicate that taboo language is widely accepted among peers and functions as a natural part of informal student interaction.

3.2. Context and Situation of Taboo Words

The context and situation in which taboo language is used, using the 8 components of the SPEAKING model by Dell Hymes. Each speech event is analyzed according to Setting and Scene, Participants, Ends, Act Sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genre to understand how taboo words are produced, interpreted, and regulated among the students.

3.2.1 Setting and Scene

Setting refers to the time and place where a speech event occurs, while scene relates to the psychological or social atmosphere surrounding it. The physical and social context plays an essential role in shaping the form of language used.

All interactions took place within institutional settings at FKIP, including the FKIP Library, the Ground Floor and other floors of Building L, the Language Laboratory, Classroom I.4.1, as well as semi-public areas such as in front of the FKIP Administration Office and the entrance next to Building L. Although these locations are formally academic, the interactions exhibited a relaxed and informal atmosphere. Participants, who were close friends, used these spaces for spontaneous conversation, teasing, and light evaluative commentary, indicating that the physical formality of the environment did not constrain their communication.

Some spaces, such as the library, classrooms, and laboratory, which are typically associated with serious academic activities, temporarily functioned as informal peer interaction areas. The timing of the events and the relational closeness among participants shaped the social atmosphere more than the institutional character of the location. Overall, the participants transformed formal settings into informal peer interaction spaces, where familiarity, humor, and emotional expression were the primary determinants of the discourse.

3.2.2 Participants

Participants refer to the individuals involved in the speech events, specifically the people who engage in verbal interaction, shape the discourse, and influence the social dynamics of communication. Participants are crucial because their relationships, familiarity, and social roles determine how language is used, including choices of tone, expressions, and the level of informality or playfulness.

The participants across all speech events are consistently close friends sharing symmetrical and familiar relationships. Whether in dyads, small groups, or larger peer clusters, there is no observable hierarchy or power imbalance; all interactions occur on an equal footing. This relational symmetry allows participants to engage in teasing, playful insults, mockery, and even strong or vulgar language without escalating into real conflict. The familiarity and intimacy among participants create a safe communicative space where personal experiences, emotional expressions, and evaluative commentary can be freely shared.

Group dynamics vary from small dyads to multiple participants, yet in all cases, the interactions remain collaborative and peer-oriented. Rapid turn-taking, overlapping speech, and collective reinforcement of narratives are common, reflecting mutual understanding and group solidarity. Expressions of frustration, humor, or moral judgment are negotiated through shared participation, highlighting relational closeness rather than dominance or formal authority.

Overall, the interactions demonstrate that peer intimacy and symmetrical friendship are the primary factors shaping the discourse. Hierarchical distance, institutional setting, or formal constraints do not influence the participants' communication; instead, relational familiarity guides the tone, content, and style of all exchanges.

3.2.3 Ends

Ends refer to the communicative purposes or goals of a speech event, encompassing both the explicit and implicit intentions behind an interaction. Ends describe what participants aim to achieve through their communication, whether it is to convey information, express emotions, maintain social relationships, entertain, or influence others.

Across the 35 speech events observed in this study, the Ends are predominantly relational, expressive, and solidaristic. While some conversations have superficial transactional goals such as coordinating a task or reminding peers about assignments the primary communicative purpose is maintaining social bonds, sharing emotions, and reinforcing peer intimacy. Participants frequently use humor, teasing, mock insults, exaggeration, and playful provocation. Even when vulgar or harsh language appears, it functions as a mechanism to strengthen group cohesion rather than to threaten or insult. Narrative exchanges, storytelling, and commentary about absent peers are also common, serving to align participants' perspectives, affirm in-group solidarity, and create shared amusement.

3.2.4 Act Sequence

Act Sequence refers to the order and organization of communicative acts within a speech event. It describes how the conversation unfolds step by step, including the initiation, response, escalation, and closure of interactions. Act Sequences allow researchers to trace patterns such as provocation, elaboration, humor, evaluation, and emotional intensification, showing how meaning and social dynamics develop over time.

Across the 35 speech events, the Act Sequences reveal a dynamic pattern of interaction dominated by teasing, storytelling, exaggeration, and collective reinforcement. Typically, an exchange begins with a statement or provocation, followed by immediate reactions from peers, including playful insult, hyperbolic evaluation, or humorous exaggeration.

Participants often escalate the discourse through repeated intensification, animal-based metaphors, or mock threats, and the sequence concludes with laughter, agreement, or closure signals. Even in interactions that have a superficial transactional purpose, such as reminding someone about an assignment or coordinating an activity, the Act Sequence frequently incorporates relational and expressive elements, maintaining solidarity and group cohesion. Structurally, these sequences demonstrate that conversational meaning is co-constructed: each participant's contribution shapes the flow and tone of the interaction, creating a cyclical process of initiation, response, escalation, and resolution that balances both playful and evaluative purposes.

In essence, the Act Sequence highlights the stepwise progression of social and emotional work within peer interactions. It shows how humor, exaggeration, and collective response are integral to maintaining relationships, reinforcing shared norms, and managing emotional expression, even when the conversation superficially appears to focus on mundane or practical topics. By analyzing the Act Sequence, we can understand not just what is communicated, but how it is delivered, negotiated, and experienced within the social group.

3.2.5 Key

Key refers to the tone, mood, or manner in which participants deliver their communicative acts. It indicates whether the interaction is playful, serious, sarcastic, humorous, or confrontational, and helps interpret the social and emotional meanings behind the language used.

Across the 35 speech events, the Key is predominantly playful, humorous, and performative, even when the lexical items contain insults, dysphemistic expressions, or sexual references. Participants frequently employ exaggeration, hyperbole, laughter, and expressive gestures to signal joking, teasing, or mock criticism. Even potentially offensive or vulgar language is framed within a humorous or ironic tone, mitigating its seriousness and preventing real conflict. Some speech events show emotionally charged keys, such as anger or disgust, but the intensity is often directed toward absent third parties rather than internal group members, maintaining internal cohesion. Overall, the Key functions as a social cue that regulates interaction, conveys solidarity, reinforces peer bonds, and transforms potentially confrontational exchanges into shared amusement or supportive venting.

3.2.6 Instrumentalities

Instrumentalities refers to the forms and channels of communication through which a speech event is realized, including the mode of speech (oral, written, digital), the language varieties used, and the stylistic or dialectal features that shape interaction. It describes how language is used as a tool to convey meaning, highlighting both verbal and non-verbal resources that participants employ to construct social and emotional effects.

Across the 35 speech events analyzed, the Instrumentalities reveal a predominantly oral, informal, and spontaneous mode of communication among peers. The conversations are conducted in informal Indonesian, often mixed with slang, dysphemistic expressions, animal metaphors, and occasional English code-mixing, reflecting youth conversational styles and peer intimacy. The lexical choices include taboo words, sexualized expressions, exaggerations, and hyperbolic imagery, which serve primarily as emotional intensifiers, humorous devices, and markers of relational closeness, rather than literal meanings. Rapid turn-taking, overlapping speech, short clauses, repetition, gestural cues (such as head tapping or pointing), and multimodal elements (e.g., showing photos) further reinforce the spontaneous and performative nature of the interactions. These features collectively illustrate that the participants co-construct meaning not only through words but also through expressive delivery, humor, and physical cues, maintaining social cohesion and peer alignment.

Structurally, the Instrumentalities demonstrate that informal oral discourse among peers is multifaceted, combining lexical creativity, performative exaggeration, and non-verbal signals to achieve relational and affective goals. Even when the conversation touches on sensitive or taboo topics, the informal, expressive, and performative features ensure that the discourse remains playful, humorous, and socially regulated, rather than genuinely hostile. In essence, Instrumentalities in these interactions highlight the tools and strategies participants use to manage social bonds, convey emotion, and negotiate meaning within a trusted peer environment.

3.2.7 Norms

Norms refer to the socially agreed-upon rules and expectations that guide behavior and language use within a particular speech community. Norms determine what is considered acceptable, polite, or offensive in specific relational and contextual settings. They provide insight into the **social and** cultural frameworks that shape interaction, highlighting how participants manage face, solidarity, and relational alignment.

Across the 35 speech events analyzed, the Norms reflect a high tolerance for teasing, vulgarity, and emotionally expressive language within trusted peer groups. Within these intimate friendships, acts that might be considered face-threatening in broader or formal contexts such as mild insults, profanity, sexualized jokes, exaggerated evaluations, or body-related teasing are socially permissible. Laughter, reciprocal teasing, apologies, and playful exaggeration serve as mechanisms to maintain relational balance and reinforce group cohesion. Participants are aware of situational boundaries; language that is acceptable within a private dyadic or close group setting would often be deemed

Inappropriate in formal, hierarchical, or semi-public contexts. Furthermore, the Norms reveal that emotional venting, storytelling about past experiences, and self-mockery are tolerated and even encouraged as **tools for** bonding, solidarity, and catharsis, provided they occur within established relational trust. Overall, the Norms demonstrate that peer-group interactions are regulated by implicit social rules that prioritize intimacy, shared humor, and emotional expression, balancing playful engagement with awareness of contextual propriety.

3.2.8 Genre

Genre refers to the type or category of communicative events, reflecting the social purpose and structural features of the interaction. It highlights the patterned ways in which participants use language to achieve relational, expressive, or task-related goals. Understanding Genre allows researchers to identify whether a speech event is casual conversation, gossip, playful teasing, argument, narrative, or any other communicative form.

Across the 35 speech events, the Genre is predominantly informal peer interaction characterized by spontaneity, humor, and relational bonding. Most interactions can be categorized as casual peer banter, playful teasing, gossip, or narrative storytelling. Even when the content touches on academic topics, moral evaluation, or task coordination, the conversational style remains unstructured, emotionally expressive, and collaboratively shaped. Participants often engage in rapid turn-taking, overlapping speech, and exaggeration, reflecting the dynamic, co-constructed nature of informal peer discourse.

The Genre analysis shows that these speech events serve multiple social functions simultaneously: maintaining intimacy, reinforcing group solidarity, expressing emotion, and negotiating relational roles. Humor, exaggeration, and self-mockery are recurring features, illustrating that the discourse prioritizes relational and expressive purposes over formal argumentation or structured presentation. This underscores how informal peer conversation functions as both a site of social interaction and a medium for emotional and evaluative expression within youth groups.

4. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the use of informal language, taboo expressions, and interactional patterns among young adult peers in a boarding house setting. The findings reveal that peer interactions are predominantly oral, informal, and highly spontaneous, featuring slang, dysphemistic expressions, animal-based metaphors, and exaggeration as expressive devices. Instrumentalities show that language functions not only as a medium for conveying information but also as a tool for emotional intensification, humor, and relational bonding. Norms within the peer group demonstrate tolerance for teasing, mild profanity, and playful criticism, which are socially permissible in this context but would be inappropriate in formal or hierarchical interactions. The Act Sequence analysis highlights the dynamic structure of these interactions, including initiation, response, escalation, and resolution, showing that conversational meaning is co-constructed and emotionally reinforced through collective participation. Genre analysis indicates that these exchanges fall under casual peer banter, gossip, and storytelling, reflecting spontaneity, humor, and group cohesion rather than structured or formal discourse.

The implications of these findings extend both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study contributes to discourse and sociolinguistic research by demonstrating how informal and taboo language operates as a social and emotional tool in peer communication. Practically, understanding these interactional norms can inform educators, counselors, and youth mentors in interpreting peer communication, managing relational dynamics, and fostering positive social environments. Overall, the study underscores that informal language and playful exaggeration function as integral components of peer-group solidarity, emotional expression, and relational negotiation, emphasizing the co-constructed nature of conversational meaning in everyday youth interactions.

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