



ISSN: 1994-4217 (Print) 2518-5586(online)

Journal of College of Education

Available online at: <https://eduj.uowasit.edu.iq>

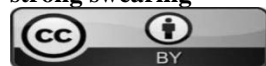
Lectu. Aziz Khalaf
Abid Saleh (Ph.D)

General Directorate of
Education Wasit

Email:
aziz.zrejy.hum58@student.uobabylon.edu.iq

Keywords :

swearing, Friends,
gender, mild swearing,
strong swearing



Article info

Article history:

Received 1.Oct.2024

Accepted 3.Nov.2024

Published 28.Nov.2024



A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Swear Words in Friends Series

A B S T R A C T

The present study focuses on the use of swearing words in the Friends sitcom. It is a qualitative and quantitative analysis. The aim of this study is to investigate the types of swearing words used in the American society through analyzing one of the most popular TV. series, the Friends, in the United States and different parts of the world

Two models are adopted in this study, Andersson and Hirsch's (1985) model which classifies swearing words into their syntactic and morphological patterns, and Tony's (2006) model which classifies swearing words according to their positive or negative connotations. The data consist of ten seasons, each season consists of fifteen episodes. The data has been downloaded as PDF from the Internet, and an automatic research has done for every word in the sitcom.

The conclusions arrived at are that female actors do swearing more than male actors, the characters in the sitcom use different types of swearing words, the swearing words vary according to their syntactic and morphological patterns, and that mild and very mild swearing words are used most by the characters of the sitcom.

© 2022 EDUJ, College of Education for Human Science, Wasit University

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31185/eduj.Vol57.Iss2.4118>

تحليل لغوي اجتماعي لألفاظ القسم في مسلسل الاصدقاء

م.د. عزيز خلف عبد صالح

المديرية العامة لتربية واسط

المستخلص

تتناول الدراسة الحالية ألفاظ القسم في المسلسل الكوميدي "الاصدقاء". توصف هذه الدراسة بأنها تحليل نوعي وكمي يهدف إلى التعرف على أنواع ألفاظ القسم المستخدمة في المجتمع الأمريكي من خلال تحليل أحد أشهر البرامج التلفزيونية في الولايات المتحدة وأجزاء مختلفة من العالم.

تبنيت الدراسة نظريتين، أندرسون وهيرش (1985) التي تصنف ألفاظ القسم إلى أنماطها النحوية والصرفية؛ ونظرية توني (2006) التي تصنف كلمات القسم حسب دلالاتها الإيجابية أو السلبية. تتكون عينة البحث من عشرة أجزاء، كل جزء

يتكون من خمسة عشر حلقة. تم تحميل الحلقات بصيغة PDF من الإنترنت، وتم إجراء بحث تلقائي لكل كلمة في المسرحية الهزلية.

الاستنتاجات التي توصلت إليها الدراسة هي أن النساء يستخدمن الفاظ القسم أكثر من الرجال، وأن الشخصيات في المسرحية تستخدم أنواعًا مختلفة من كلمات القسم، وتختلف كلمات القسم وفقًا لأنماطها النحوية والصرفية. كذلك توصلت الدراسة بأن كلمات القسم الخفيفة والخفيفة جدًا هي الأكثر استخدامًا من قبل الممثلين.

الكلمات الافتتاحية: القسم ، مسلسل الاصدقاء ، الجنس ، كلمات القسم الخفيفة ، كلمات القسم القوية

1.Introduction

People in their communication and interaction have some ways to express their feelings and attitudes to others. One familiar way is that of swearing in conversations. Participants, however, insert swear words not only to express their anger, but as a way of expressing their happiness. In modern era, people show a tendency to use swear words in their daily language. Swear words are the lowest language choice, but they often have different messages within meaning. A swear word, as Ljung (2011) suggests, "should be used in a non-technical sense. The word 'bitch', for example, is non-swearing when it means a female dog, but it will be swearing when used to disparage a woman" (p.25). Although many swear words have lost their literal meaning, their use still has the power to provoke.

To most people, swear words have negative connotations, and are considered as bad language. They are also seen as something trivial, unsuitable, and are related to low social class and low prestige. In spite of this, some researchers see swearing as having a crucial role in the cognitive and social development of children and hence should be encouraged if used within the right contexts (Andersson & Trudgill, 1992).

How frequently are swear words used in a conversation and how strong they are tied to gender roles and culture? The expressions in which they are used in swearing involve elements that are in some way taboo or stigmatized. McEnery (2005) points out that in previous studies male and female speeches are distinguished in that male speakers use more and stronger swear words. The purpose of this study is to investigate swear words in the American series *Friends*.

Five questions can be raised:

1. Who do swearing more in the *Friends* series, male or female actors?
2. Does this have a relation to gender identity in the *Friends* series?
3. What kinds of swear words do occur in the *Friends* series?
4. What are the most dominant ones in the *Friends* series?

2.1 Swearing and Identity

The concept of prestige, as stated by Ljung, (2006) is central to sociolinguistic study. A positive or negative value is one pivotal characteristic assigned to speech habits and language variations, and this is reflected on the speaker's personality. Through their different choices of speech acts, which can be conscious or subconscious, speakers, in general, show what groups in society they belong to. Accents these people talk have overt

prestige; they are associated with social power, identity, education and wealth, which explains why so many people strive to follow this language norm.

Moreover, the concept of prestige is complicated. Language plays an important role in forming part of group identification and solidarity and can also be an effective sign of difference, including or excluding people from a particular group. In this sense, standard language forms may not always be the most valued in certain contexts. This might seem to be especially true of working class vernacular, which has been studied by researchers such as Hudson and Newcastle-born Milroy. Such studies have pointed to a psychologist research showing that low prestige ethnic and social groups see their language as a powerful symbol of group identity. This is why it is important for such people to maintain this group identity, despite the social benefits that might be gained from adopting standardized code (Hughes, 1992).

Andersson and Trudgill (1992) argue that swearing is a social activity that is usually associated with very informal language or lower-class interlocutors. This association between swearing and working class generally makes the usage of this kind of language outside of what is seen as appropriate (middle class) polite conversation, something which is regarded as negative and connected with low prestige. However, swearing can, in the right circumstances, be associated with positive values and earn the speaker a different kind of prestige. The term *covert prestige* was coined by Labov, and is an important notion in sociolinguistic analysis (Andersson & Trudgill, 1992). Trudgill has in his research found that many British middle class men, who do not have a natural working class pronunciation, often would claim to have it for the sake of seeming tough and strong: it has *covert prestige*. This is probably also true when it comes to the use of expletives where informants might be prone to over-report their usage for the sake of gaining *covert prestige* (Ljung 2006). McEnery (2005) argues that swearing or “bad language words” may be considered markers of distinction, rather than simply markers of difference when discussing non-prestige forms of language, which can explain the frequent expletive usage in working-class vernacular.

2.2 Gendered Swearing

The classic sociolinguistic assumption states that there are fundamental distinctions which distinguish between the way men and women speak. What has previously been pointed out is that women generally use more formal and polite styles, and aim to be as close as possible to standard language than men. These ideas have been supported by a number of scholars and linguists such as Trudgill (1974) and Lakoff (1975), and have come to the conclusion that women are more aware of the social effect that language has, and that they accordingly adapt their style by employing more correct forms than men in their attempting to be closer to standardized speech norms (Ljung, 2006). Regarding expletive usage, what has already been emphasized about gender distinction is that men utter more, stronger, and more offensive expletives than women, and that women contrarily use a higher frequency of milder swear words than men. Both genders, in this respect, are satisfied with expletive usage in same-sex groups, but it is more possible for men to swear in public than women (Jay & Janschewitz, 2008).

However, this traditional view that women are more polite in their speech than men has been seen by feminist researchers as an overgeneralization. They say that the distinction between men and women speech is for the most part stereotypical and not supported by empirical evidence. As emphasized by these critics, other social factors, such as social networks, social status, age, and education influence for a great extent female language use as much as they do male, and older linguistic research involving women is challenged for being biased, and that results obtained thereof have been distorted, since male forms are taken as norm and female forms as deviant, and that researchers have failed to support their hypotheses about sex differences in speech with reliable empirical results. The critics point out that it is the difference that is emphasized and that overlap is ignored, and that the characteristics attributed to women often tend to be overgeneralized, when they are only partially true. The descriptions of women's more frequent use of polite language are questioned for being prescriptive rather than descriptive. Such an enquiry aims to prescribe how women ought to talk, and the traditional assumption that women and men differ in their use of swear words and other taboo words. Later, this has been criticized for the lack of firm evidence to confirm or deny (Hughes, 1992).

2.3 The language of Swearing

Frequent use of swear words are often thought to be as bad language. Language of swearing, however, is rich in diversity, and innovative in word choices and usage, and creative in derivation and compounding. As far grammar is concerned, it shows an aspect that has its own distinctive syntactic and morphological patterns (Ljung, 2011).

2.3.1 Word Formation

Andersson and Hirsch (1985,pp.35-49) outline the syntactic and morphological patterns of swearing, using a grammatical hierarchy of different elements in which swearing may appear as:

1. *Separate utterances*: The first kind of swearing is more common. It includes some examples of expletives like "*shit!, fuck!, hell!*", and abusives like "*You bastard!, You motherfucker!*". It is possible for such constructions to be elaborated and varied endlessly; especially when it comes to abusive swearing, name-calling, and most taboo-categories.
2. *Adsentences*: This type of swearing expressions is tied to a sentence, and sometimes used as complements that occur before or after grammatical sentences. These swearing expressions may serve several communicative functions one of which contributes to the expressive and evocative functions of the utterance. They may appear either initially, like the example "*shit, I forget my keys!*", or finally, as in "*shut up, you bastard!*".
3. *Major constituents of a sentence*: Swearing expressions may function as major constituents of a sentence. It is either the subject, object, or predicate. The most abusive expressions can function as subject and object, as in the two examples "*that bastard doesn't know anything*" and "*throw that shit away!*". Verbal functions are not common, but do occur, as in the examples "*he fucks up everything!*".

4. *Part of a constituent of a sentence*: Swearing expressions function as: adjectival modification, adverbs of degree or modifying a question word. The word *fucking*, for example, functions as an adjectival modification, as in “That *fucking* train is always late”, and an adverb of degree as in “We saw a *fucking* good film!”. Modifying a question word requires the swearing expression to appear directly after the question word, as in “Who *the hell* has taken my books?”

5. *Part of a word*: Swearing elements, in this type, are attached to another word, before the word (prefix) like *shit* in “*shitfaced*” or after the word, for example, *ass* in “*lame-ass*”. As for infixing, the representative example is the word *fucking* in “*abso-fucking-lutely!*”.

2.3.2 Swearing Words in Categories

McEnery (2006, p.29) argues that bad language words are a marker, making a distinction between males and females regarding swearing words. The distinction is marked quantitatively with a small set of word forms and is more generally marked qualitatively, with males typically using a stronger set of words than females. He classifies what he refers to as bad language words (henceforth. BLW):

1. Very mild: *bird, bloody, crap, damn, god, hell, hussy, idiot, pig, pillock, sod, son-of-a-bitch, tart.*
2. Mild: *arse, balls, bitch, bugger, christ, cow, dickhead, git, jesus, jew, moron, pissed off, screw, shit, slag, slut, sod, tit, tits, tosser.*
3. Moderate: *asshole, arsehole, bastard, bollocks, gay, nigger, piss, paki, poofter, prick, shag, spastic, twat, wanker, whore*
4. Strong: *fuck*
5. Very strong: *cunt, motherfucker*

In Tony's (2006) model, swearing words are classified into five categories. First, there are some words which are used very mildly in a conversation such as *bird, bloody, crap, etc.* The second group is used mildly with a lesser degree than the first group such as *arse, balls, bitch, bugger, etc.* The third set of swearing words is on the borderline between the mild or strong group. It includes some racist and sexy words. The fourth and fifth groups are mentioned to be strong and very strong. They include sexy words such *cunt, etc.*

2.4 Friends as TV show

Friends, as the name implies, is a TV. show about six close friends in their age of early twenties who live in the city of New York. The sitcom is mainly around the lives of three men and three woman characters. The friends keep meeting daily at a coffee shop called “Central Perk”. Despite coming from different backgrounds and have different jobs, the characters somehow all came together and became friends, the circumstances of whom will gradually be revealed through the flashback throughout the events.

Though the previous American TV. shows focused on family life, *Friends* was the first sitcom that has made its focus on friendship. Friendship is the central theme in the TV. show, which is considered to be a very important part of a teenager's and young adult's life. The characters of the sitcom are all unique, but at one and the same time each one has

qualities that seem familiar to the audience, because everyone finds some of their own characteristics reflected in each character of the sitcom. The sitcom is, however, successful not only for the reason that each character is related to the other, but also the simple and effective combination of humor and reference to different socio-critical topics. The American sitcom, observationally comedy, combines seemingly incongruous surprise elements, sarcasm with perfectly-timed punch lines. The characters seem to be clever and quick on the comeback, and a large and dedicated team of writers worked professionally to include taboo topics, humor and jokes.

The *Friends* sitcom is not only a successful television show, but its effect has extended beyond the realms of television. Every woman, for an instance, imitated Jennifer Aniston's hairstyle, guys wanted to tempt women by using Joey's famous pick-up line "*How you doin'?*", and being a nerd and interested in academia was suddenly made acceptable thanks to Ross. The name of Rachel's daughter, Emma became so popular that many people named their girls after it. Perhaps most interestingly of all, the show has become a useful source for teaching English language, particularly American accent.

In the United States, the *Friends* sitcom scored about 23.6 million viewers per episode over its 10-year run and the series finale is ranked number four on the list of most-watched series finales with 52.5 million viewers (Tagliamonte, 2007). What is most striking, however, is that over 20 years after the first episode was aired, it seems to have lost none of its popularity. Countless reruns have been aired all over the world.

3. Methodology and Data Analysis

This study is qualitative and quantitative, that is, it focuses on both, the types and frequency of the swearing words. Some swearing words are so important that they occur frequently in the episodes. The data of the study is taken from the script using documentation technique. Therefore, the data has been downloaded from the Internet as PDF.

The researcher uses an electronic research for the swearing words in all the ten seasons, each season consists of twenty-four episodes.

(<https://www.fanfr.com/scripts/saison1/friendsgeneration2.php?nav=script&ve>). Two models are adopted in this study, Andersson and Hirsch's (1985) model which classifies swearing words into their syntactic and morphological patterns and Tony's (2006) model which classifies them according to their positive or negative connotations. The procedures of data analysis are coding, analyzing, discussing, and reporting. In addition, the analysis gives an account for the type and frequency of each swear word in the *Friends*.

Throughout the ten seasons used in the analysis, the transcription is limited only to the actual spoken language. The descriptions of sounds, laughter, etc. are neglected. Nor is any text that is added in the subtitles, but not part of the spoken dialogue (e.g. speaker indications), included. The data were sorted chronologically and coded for several features, such as the name of the speaker, the gender, and whether the turn contained any swearing.

Andersson and Trudgill (1992, p.14) argue that although the purpose of swearing is to be offensive, insulting etc., there is more to it than that, and that what is often referred to as

“bad language” may only be so in certain contexts or respects. These distinctions are closely tied to cultures and ideologies deciding and evaluating what is good and bad. The sort of swearing and the types of words that are used in a language can, therefore, tell us something about the beliefs and values of its speakers.

3.1. Male and Female Swearing

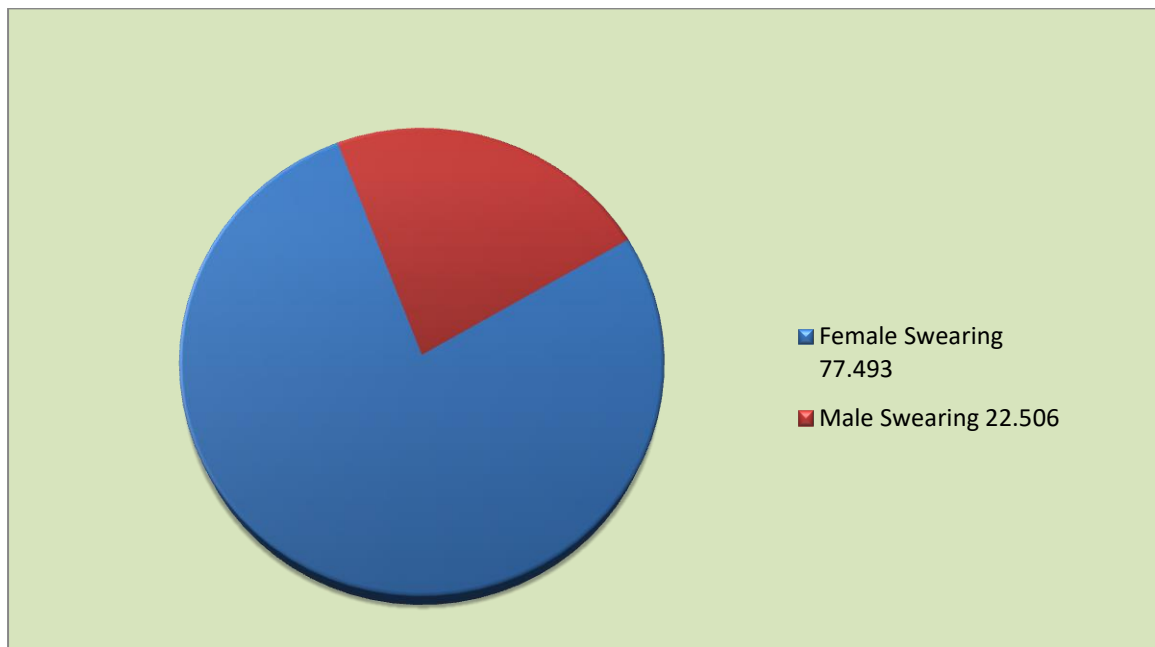
The data of the analysis includes (391) swearing expressions used by the characters of the *Friends*, (88) instances of which are uttered by male actors and (303) instances by female actors. This comparison is shown in Table 1. Swearing

Table 1: Frequencies of Swearing by Gender

Actors	Swearing Male Actors	Swearing Female Actors	Total
Frequencies	88	303	391
%	22.506 %	77.493 %	99.999 %

The data in Table 1 shows that female actors swear more than male actors do. As Table 1 shows, the total number of swearing words is (391), 88 words are only uttered by male actors; whereas (303) swearing words are uttered by female actors. The normalized frequencies show excessive use of swearing words by female actors, with a high percentage of (77.493%); and little use by male actors, with somewhat a low percentage of (22.506%).

Figure 1: Male and Female Swearing



3.2.Types of Swearing Words in Male and Female’s Talk

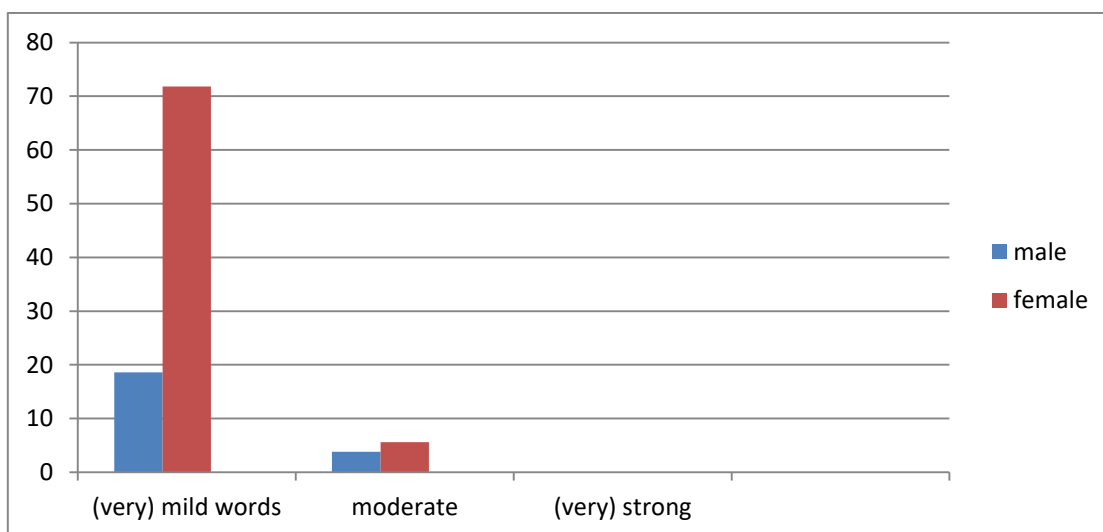
Table 2 shows the types of swearing words used in the *Friends* series. The analysis proves that only two main types of swearing words have occurred in the data, (*very mild* and *moderate* words. The data does not support *strong* and *very strong* swearing words.

Table 2: *Types of Swearing Words Used by Male and Female Actors*

Swear words	Gender	Frequency	%
(very) mild words	male	73	18.670
	female	281	71.867
moderate	male	15	3.836
	female	22	5.626
(very) strong	male	0	0
	female	0	0
Total		391	99.999

As shown in Table 2, the characters in the *Friends* tend to overuse (*very mild* swearing words. Of the total number, there are (354) swearing words allocated with different frequencies to male actors having (73) with (18.670%) and female actors having (281) with (71.867%). *Moderate* swearing words have occurred less in the data with only (37) frequencies, (22) of which are uttered by female actors with (5.626%) and (15) by male actors with (3.863%). The data has not supported the *very strong* type of swearing in the American sitcom under study.

Figure 2: *Types of Swearing Words and Gender*



In the *Friends* series, there are twenty different types of swear words uttered. They together make up twenty-five types, presented in Table 3. The words are written in their base form, and presented as the form of *word class*. They could have appeared in some different forms of the sitcom. By classifying them into *form* [word class], not all of them take different word classes. For example, the most various one used in the *Friends* episodes is *damn*. The word *damn*, for example, occurs as an interjection, a verb, and an adjective. It is also noted that this word appears in Table 3 as a clause, either as an imperative as in, *damn it*, or as, a declarative, “*God damn it*”. The word *crap* appears in Table 3 once as an adjective and the other time as a noun.

There are three words that compose the majority of all swearing; *god*, (205) tokens, *stupid* (54) tokens, and *hell* (35) tokens. The word *god* in the *Friends* is used only as a noun. Its frequency of the occurrence is (71.741%), allocated to women, with (66.006%) percentage, and men with (5.681%) percentage. The word *stupid* forms a lesser degree with a total frequency of (30.722%), allocated to male actors with (18.181%) and female actors with (12.541%). The word *stupid* is used only as an adjective. The next swearing word which forms the third high percentage is *hell*, with the total percentage of (30.096%), (26.136%) of which is used by male actors, and (3.960%) by female actors. Table 3 shows that the word *hell* is uttered only as a noun.

The word *bloody*, uttered only as an adjective, forms only (2.272%) frequency. The word *damn* is the most various. Table 3 shows six types, as *damn* (interjection), *damn* (verb), *damned* (adjective), *damnedly* (adjective), *damn it* (imperative clause), and *God damn it* (declarative clause). The word *bitch* occurs as a noun only, with a total percentage of (7.991%). It is used by male actors with the percentage of (5.681%) and female actors with the percentage of (2.310%). The word *pig*, which is used as a noun only, used with a low occurrence, (1.136%) by male actors and (1.980%) by female actors. The only word which is used as a compound is *cow*. Once it occurs as a base with a percentage of (6.195%). As for the compound word *cowboy*, it occurs in the *Friends* series only with a total frequency of (1.796%).

Women utter the word *god* as a noun and an interjection. The swearing word *stupid* is used by male and female actors as an adjective. The word *hell* is used as a noun by both male and female actors. Table 3 also presents some swearing words with a very low occurrence in the *Friends* series. The word *crap*, for example, is used only one time by male actors, the phrase “*god damn it*” is uttered only once by women, and the words *gaygas* and *tat* which are used only once by female actors.

Table 3: Types of Swearing Words Uttered by Women and Men

	Word	Frequency of Male actors	%	Frequency of Female actors	%
1	crap [adj.]	1	1.136	0	0
	crap [n.]	3	3.409	3	0.990
2	bloody [adj.]	2	2.272	0	0
3	damn [interj.]	3	3.409	1	0.330
	damn [v]	2	2.272	1	0.330
	damned [adj.]	0	0	1	0.330
	damnedly [adj.]	0	0	1	0.330
	damn it /damit[clause]	4	4.545	1	0.330
4	god damn it [clause]	0	0	1	0.330
5	bitch [n]	5	5.681	7	2.310
6	hell [n]	23	26.136	12	3.960
7	stupid [adj.]	16	18.181	38	12.541
8	god [n]	5	5.681	200	66.006
9	pig [n]	1	1.136	6	1.980
10	bugger [n]	0	0	1	0.330
11	pissed [adj.]	1	1.136	0	0
12	ass [n]	8	9.090	13	4.290
13	pisst [interj.]	1	1.136	0	0
14	slut [interj.]	1	1.136	0	0
15	whore [n]	0	0	4	1.320
16	cow [n]	4	4.545	5	1.650
	cowboy (s) [n]	1	1.136	2	0.660
17	gay [adj.]	7	7.954	4	1.320
	gaygas [adj.]	0	0	1	0.330
18	tat [interj.]	0	0	1	0.330
Total		88	99.991	303	99.997

This study is different from the previous study by *Gustafson* (2012), which shows that the word *shit and fuck* are used with high frequency of occurrence. These words constitute the majority of all swearing. In the present study, Table 3 shows no use of such words. *Gustafson's* analysis shows no use of the words *god, stupid, and hell* which form the majority of the occurrence in the present study. Two swearing words occur in both studies but in different frequencies, such as *crap* and *bloody*. This difference is due to the data which is different in both studies. In *Gustafson* (2012), the data is taken from "*The Thick of It*," a British comedy television sitcom that satirizes the inner workings of the British government.

3.3. Individual Characters' Swearing

Table 4 demonstrates that there are some characters swear more than others. Normalized frequencies are calculated for the individuals who appear to swear more than others do. Some characters are never calculated because the normalized frequencies of their swearing are very low, as well as, they are not main characters in the TV. series, such as *Paul, Mr. Geeler,*

Susan, etc. The characters which are calculated are those who, first, show high normalized frequencies of swearing words; second, they are main characters in the *Friends* series.

Table 4: Normalized Frequencies of Swearing by Male and Female Actors

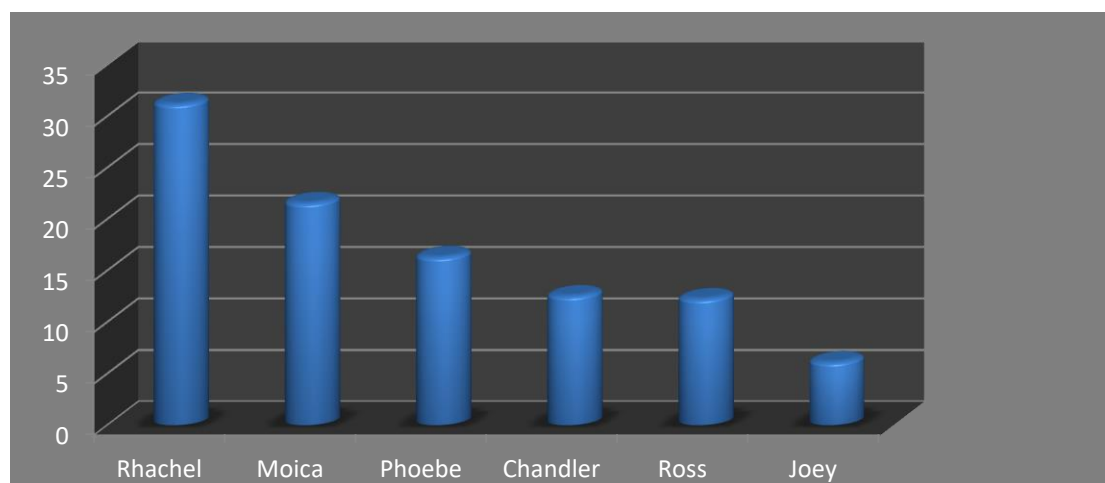
Character	Types of words	Number of swear words	%
Rachel	10	107	31.195
Monica	8	74	21.574
Phoebe	10	56	16.326
Chandler	8	43	12.536
Ross	9	42	12.244
Joey	10	21	6.122
Total		343	99.997

Table 4 shows that Rachel swears nearly twice as much as do Monica, and Phoebe. She utters (107) tokens of swearing words, with the occurrence of (31.195%). Then comes Monica second. She utters (74) tokens of spoken swear words. The frequency of her participation is (21.574%). Phoebe comes last. She says (56) tokens of swearing words, with the frequency of occurrence of (16.326%).

Only three male actors are included in Table 4, Chandler, Ross, and Joey. Table 4 shows no big difference among them in using the swearing words. Chandler comes first. He utters (43) tokens of swearing words, with the frequency of (12.536%). Ross is different from Chandler only in one word. He uses (42) tokens of swear words. The normalized frequency of his swearing is (12.244%). Joey seems to use little swearing if compared with both Chandler and Ross. The frequency of his swearing is only (6.122%).

As shown in Table 4, individual female actors come first. It is evidenced from the results in Table 4 that female actors individually swear more than male actors do. The three characters, Rachel, Monica and Phoebe come first with somewhat a big difference. Men anyhow come last, Chandler, Ross and Joey. Figure 3 shows the big difference between the first character, Rachel and the last one Joey.

Figure 3: Normalized Frequencies of Swearing by Individual Characters



The types of swearing words used in the *Friends* seasons are different from one character to another. Three characters utter ten types of swearing words, Rachel, Phoebe, and Joey. Monica and Chandler both use eight types of swearing words. Ross utters nine types throughout the *Friends* series. Two characters are analyzed as samples, a female actor (Rachel) and a male actor (Chandler).

3.4. Two Samples of Analysis

The reason behind choosing Rachel and Chandler is that they do have the high frequency among other female actors and male actors respectively. Here are some excerpts from Rachel and Chandler swearing:

Rachel's Swearing

1. Rachel: "Has anybody seen my engagement ring?"

Phoebe: "Yeah, it's beautiful."

Rachel: "Oh *God*, oh *God*, oh *God* oh *God* oh *God* oh *God*..."

2. Ross: "And hey, here's to a lousy Christmas."

Rachel: "And a *crappy* New Year."

Chandler: "Here, here!"

3. Monica: "Boy, you are really not a morning person."

Rachel: "(ANGRILY) BACK OFF!!! (SHE STARTS BANGING ON THEIR DOOR.) Get up! Get up! Get up! *God damn it!* Get up, get up, get up, get up, get up!!"

4. Monica: "So you hit her in the face?"

Rachel: "No, she was already in, but then this big *bitch* behind me tried to steal my umbrella, so I clocked her. Ohhh! I can't believe this, all I wanted was a few hours outside of work to see Joshua, so he can go ahead and start falling in love with me."

5. Rachel: "What the *hell* is that?! (TO MONICA) What the hell is that? Is that you?"

6. Rachel: "Ok, I know this is gonna sound really *stupid*, but I feel that if I can do this, you know, if I can actually do my own laundry, there isn't anything I can't do."

7. Rachel: "Phoebe, if I had never met him this never would have happened!"

Rachel and Phoebe: "I'm so sorry! No I'm sorry! No I'm sorry! No I'm sorry!"

Phoebe: "No, wait, oh, what are we sorry about?"

Rachel: "I don't know...right, he's the *pig!*"

8. Rachel: "Alright. Well then how about I call your supervisor, and I tell her that you shot my friend in the *ass* with a dart?"

9. Rachel: "Okay, but Phoebe, Phoebe, Jack gave up a *cow*, I gave up an orthodontist. Okay, II- I know, I know I didn't love him."

10. Rachel: "C'mon, he's right. *Tit* for *tat*."

Chandler's Swearing

1. Chandler: "Yeah, well, you wouldn't think it was cool if you're eleven years old and all your friends are passing around page 79 of 'Mistress Bitch'."
2. Chandler: "Alright. Once I got on the subway, right, and it was at night, and I rode it all the way to Brooklyn... just for the *hell* of it."
3. Chandler: "Joey's not a friend. He's...a *stupid* man who left us his credit card. Another drink? Some dessert? A big screen TV?"
4. Chandler: "I'm not gonna talk to her, she obviously got my message and is choosing not to call me. Now I'm needy and snubbed. *God*, I miss just being needy."
5. Chandler: "Steps! (HE OPENS THE DOOR TO HIS APARTMENT TO ROSS AND JOEY LOOKING AT THE NEW PLAYBOY) *Slut!* (ROSS AND JOEY QUICKLY HIDE THE PLAYBOY BEHIND THEIR BACKS. CHANDLER WONDERS INTO THE GIRL.SAPARTMENT.) You will all be very happy to hear that Kathy is sleeping with that guy!"
6. Chandler: "Hey, that monkey's got a Ross on its *ass!*"
7. Chandler: "I say, Drew! Are you seeing anybody right now? (DREW LOOKS AT HIM) Ogee- op, I'm not asking for me, I'm. I mean. No, I'm-I'm not *gay*, I'm not asking you out."
8. Chandler: "Okay, what do you saw I go over there and say how much I like her? (JOEY GIVES HIM A THUMBS UP) No-no it'll be good, I can tell her much I've been thinking about her. That I haven't stopped thinking about her since the moment I met her. That I'm so fantastically, over-the-top, wanna-slit-my-own-throat in love with her, that for every minute of every hour of every day I can't believe my own *damn* bad luck that you met her first!!" (<https://www.fanfr.com/scripts/saison1/friendsgeneration2.php?nav=script>)

The types of words in Rachel and Phoebe's swearing, as well as other characters are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5: Types of Words in Rachel and Phoebe, and Other Characters' Swearing

Character	The number of Types of words	Types of words	A word said only by one character
Rachel	10	Cow/ ass/ pig/ stupid/ hell/ bitch/ God damn it/ tat/ damn	God damn it
Monica	8	Damn/ God/ hell/ pissed/ ass/ stupid/ gay/ gaygas	pissed
Phoebe	10	Crap/ God/ bitch/ hell/ pig/ ass/ whore/ cow/ stupid/ gay	
Chandler	8	Gay/ ass /slut/ God/ tat/ stupid/ bitch/ damn/ hell	slut
Ross	9	Crap/ bloody/ damn/ God/ bitch/ hell/ cow/ stupid/ gay	
Joey	10	Crap/ damn/ God/ hell/ pig/ ass/ pisst/ cow/ stupid/ gay	

As Table 5 shows, all the characters in the *Friends* series utter the same type of swearing words. The repeated words by all the characters are: *cow, ass, pig, stupid, hell, bitch, tat and damn*. From sociolinguistic perspective, these swearing words are either popular in the American society or they have special effect in social interaction. These words are considered as either very mild such as, *bloody, crap, damn, god, hell, and pig*; or mild such as *cow, bitch, pissed, and stupid*. Some words are considered to be moderate such as *gay, gaygas and whore*.

Some words are said only one time by some characters. For example, the clause, *God damn it*, said by Rachel, is considered to be very mild. The word, *pissed*, said by Monica; and *slut*, said by Chandler are both considered to be mild.

Table 5 presents no use of strong or very strong swearing words such as, *fuck, cunt, and motherfucker*. The reason behind this is that, as suggested by Vierrether (2017), the purpose of creating *Friends* series is to fascinate, entertain, and influence people all over the world. In addition, it has paved the way to many similar sitcoms that have the same basic idea of a group of friends living in the same city and helping each other through daily struggles with their jobs or difficult situations.

4. Conclusions

1. Unlike Gustafson, (2012) study which shows that men swear more than women, the present study shows that women do swear more than men. In more than one situation in the sitcom, women characters seem to do swearing either at the beginning of a sentence or at the end of it. This swearing sometimes happens as a singular type of word and sometimes through the repetition of this word.
2. Rachel, who is considered to be one of the main characters, does swearing more than any other character in the *Friends* series. This is may be related to her character, social identity. Swearing shows the power that Rachel has on the other characters in the sitcom, especially her status as a mother to the daughter, Emma,
3. The characters in the *Friends* sitcom do not limit themselves to a specific set of swearing words. Rather they use different types of words. Some of these words are repeated more than once, others occur only once. The swearing words used in the sitcom are less various. A few of them vary in word class such as the word *damn*, others have only one form such as *god, bitch, etc.*
4. The *Friends* series shows an excessive use of (*very*) *mild* swearing words such as *cow, ass, pig, stupid, hell, bitch, tat and damn*. From sociolinguistic perspective, this shows the intimate discourse among friends, especially if one knows that the title of the sitcom is *Friends* which shows a permanent friendship. This, in turn, effect the discourse used in the sitcom.
5. The sitcom is devoid of using *strong* and *very strong* (sexy) swearing words. The analysis of the data shows no use of some words such as *fuck, cunt and motherfucker*. These words, as stated by Tony (2006), have negative connotations. Not using such words is an indication of the polite discourse used through the sitcom series.
6. There are some swearing words which are uttered more than the others. For instance. The word *god* scores the highest degree of frequency, and said by every character in the

sitcom. Being very mild, the word *god*, as suggested by (McEnery, 2006), expresses explanation in more than one situation in the sitcom. Additionally, some swearing words are used by single characters such as the word *pissed* and *slut*.

References

- Andersson, L. G., & Hirsch, R. (1985). *A project on swearing: a comparison between American English and Swedish*. Department of Linguistics, University of Göteborg [Institutionen för lingvistik, Göteborgs universitet].
- Andersson, L. and Trudgill, P. (1990). *Bad Language*. Oxford Basil Blackwell.
- Gustafson, E. (2017). Swearing on television-gender, language, and power in *The thick of it*. *Rask No46*, 97-119.
- Hughes, S. E. (1992). Expletives of lower working-class women. *Language in Society*, 21(2), 291-303.
- Jay, T. and K. Janschewitz. (2008) The pragmatics of swearing. *Journal of Politeness Research* 4, pp. 267-288.
- Ljung, M. (2010). *Swearing: A cross-cultural linguistic study*. Springer.
- McEnery, T. (2004). *Swearing in English: Bad language, purity and power from 1586 to the present*. Routledge.
- Stapleton, K. (2003) Gender and swearing: a community practice, *Woman and Language* 26 (2), pp. 22-33.
- Tagliamonte, S., & Roberts, C. (2005). So weird; so cool; so innovative: The use of intensifiers in the television: The use of intensifiers in the television series *Friends*. *American speech*, 80(3), 280-300.
- Vierrether, T. (2017). *Cultural and Linguistic Issues of Sitcom Dubbing: An Analysis of "Friends"* (Master's thesis, Bowling Green State University).