THE USE OF SWEAR WORDS IN TWITTER

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ABSTRACT

The *f*-word is a popular swear word used on social media and it is used in different forms and functions. This study investigates the uses of the *f*-word on a social media platform, Twitter. This study was carried out to address the following questions: (1) What are the syntactic forms of the *f*-word found on Twitter? (2) What are the functions of the *f*-word on Twitter? (3) What are the differences and similarities of the findings of this study with McEnery and Xiao's (2004) study of the *f*-word in the British National Corpus (BNC)? The data comprised a corpus of 12,000-word from Twitter. Holster's (2005) classification was used in this study to examine the syntactic forms of the *f*-word. This study employed McEnery et al. (2000) and Ljung (2011) typologies to analyze the functions of the *f*-word. The findings showed that the *f*-word is highly used as a verb, and it is used mainly to curse on Twitter. The results obtained in this study show some similarities to McEnery and Xiao's (2004 findings in the BNC.

Keywords: *f*-word, Twitter, syntactic forms, functions

ABSTRAK

Perkataan *f* adalah perkataan bersumpah yang popular digunakan di media sosial dan ia digunakan dalam pelbagai bentuk dan fungsi yang berbeza. Kajian ini mengkaji penggunaan perkataan tersebut di media sosial, Twitter. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menjawab soalan-soalan berikut: (1) Apakah sintaktik perkataan *f* yang digunakan di Twitter? (2) Apakah fungsi perkataan *f* yang digunakan di Twitter? (3) Apakah perbezaan dan persamaan hasil kajian ini dengan kajian McEnery dan Xiao (2004) tentang perkataan *f* di British National Corpus (BNC)? Data kajian ini terdiri daripada corpus merangkumi 12,000 perkataan dari Twitter. Klasifikasi Holster (2005) telah digunakan dalam kajian ini untuk mengkaji struktur sintaktif perkataan *f*. Kajian ini menggunakan tipologi McEnery et al. (2000) dan Ljung (2011) untuk menganalisis fungsi penggunaan perkataan tersebut. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa perkataan ini banyak digunakan dalam bentuk kata kerja dan untuk tujuan mengutuk di laman Twitter. Hasil kajian ini mempunyai beberapa penemuan yang serupa dengan hasil kajian McEnery dan Xiao (2004) dalam BNC.

Kata kunci: perkataan *f*, Twitter, sintaktik, fungsi

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"Through difficulties and problems, God gives us the opportunity to grow.

So when your hopes, dreams and goals are dashed, search among the wreckage,

you may find a golden opportunity hidden in the ruins"

-APJ Abdul Kalam-

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the overview of this study. It presents the background of the study, aims, problem statement, research questions, the significance and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

McEnery and Xiao (2004, p. 235) say that, "swearing is a part of everyday language use". Swear words generally refer to something, which is culturally stigmatized (Andersson & Trudgill, 1990). However, there are bound to be differences in relations to how and why swear words are used, as well as different levels of acceptance or tolerance about the swearing. An example of this would be the word 'shit' which refers to excrement, but which can also be used to express an emotion such as anger, dissatisfaction, and frustration (Crystal, 1987). However, swear words can also be used to express more 'positive' reactions like happiness or surprise and for social goals, including identity and group membership, and this seems to have become a trend in social media (Aitchison, 2006). In fact, Aitchison (2006, p. 23) explains that, "swearing is no longer regarded as a restricted activity since it is used frequently in the society today and people use it in order to seem friendly".

On social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, the use of swear words can be expected, especially as Facebook updates and tweets tend to be used to express users' feelings and emotions openly. For example, a study on the use of profanity in tweets in the United Kingdom by the Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis (CASA) found

particular trends in the use of swearing in tweets based on time of the day and week, and geographical region in the UK. This study examined 1.3 million tweets collected over a week. This case study revealed that the use of swear words in the tweets are higher on weekends especially during football matches. The tweets contain swearing found on weekdays shows that people tend to swear when leaving to work, during lunchtime and after working hours. This study also revealed that swearing often occurs in rural areas rather than urban areas. Thus, the researcher of this study, Dr. Hannah Fry, stated that Twitter has a reputation to become the home of the angry since it contains a high percentage of tweets containing swear words (Where in the UK do people swear most on Twitter?, 2014).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Twitter has over 300 million active users as of the date 31 December 2015. (Twitter, n.d). Twitter is used as a medium to communicate with the people from various countries. It is a favourite platform for celebrities and world leaders to interact with their followers by updating their current activities. According to the co-creator of Twitter, tweets are short and simple messages that people can understand clearly (Sagolla, 2009). Messages posted on Twitter are referred tweets. Although, Facebook is a popular social network platform, Twitter was chosen for this study because Facebook users mostly restricted the viewers of their updates. In contrast, the tweets are mostly public and can be viewed by anyone. Tweets are limited to 140 characters. Retweets (RT), hashtags (#), mention (@) are the components of the tweets. Tweets can be posted embedded with pictures and videos. Figure 1.1 shows an example of a tweet and it is a retweet of the United States President in February 2016. As shown in Figure 1.1, President Barack Obama retweeted or shared @WhiteHouse tweet about

climate change, which mentioned @LeoDiCarpio with the hashtag #Oscars and was
embedded with a picture.

Figure 1.1: An example of a tweet

In relation to the *f*-word, research has previously been conducted to analyse the *f*-word. For example, McEnery and Xiao (2004) conducted a study to examine how a particular swear word, the *f*-word is used in the British National Corpus (BNC). Further, Ljung (2001) used the patterns of *f*-words found in BNC to define swearing (Ljung, 2011). However, there is a dearth of published research on the use of the *f*-word on social media. More precisely, there appears to be a lack of published research as to how and why swear words are used on Twitter. This is the gap that this study aims to fill by exploring how a particular swear word, the *f*-word, is used on Twitter.

1.3 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate the forms and functions of the *f*-word used on Twitter. The research questions that this study aims to answer are as follows:

   1. What are the syntactic forms of the *f-word* on Twitter?

   2. What are the functions of the *f-word* on Twitter?

3. What are the differences and similarities of the findings of this study with McEnery and Xiao's (2004) study of the *f*-word in BNC?

1.4 Significance of the study

Perceptions of swear words seem to have changed, and they are not always regarded negatively. Swearing may not always be considered acceptable when it is used in specific situations within the particular boundaries such as in informal conversations among friends (Jay & Janschewitz, 2008). This study identifies patterns of the *f*-word used on Twitter and how people use it for different purposes rather than to offend others. This study has the potential to provide useful insights about the *f*-word and how its literal meaning has encroached the area of politeness (Hughes, 2006). Understanding the use of this generally taboo word in English can contribute to research in this area and act as a reference to analyse the use of other swear words, particularly on social media.

1.5 Scope and limitations of the study

This study only investigates one particular swear word, the *f*-word, that people use on social media. Twitter was chosen as a platform to collect data for this study because as previously mentioned, posts on Twitter, or tweets, are mostly public, and can be viewed by anyone. The *f*-words, found in the tweets were analysed according to the forms and functions.

1.6 Summary

Several studies have been conducted on the use of swear words in social media. However, there is a lack of studies done on the use of the *f*-word on social media. This study aims to analyse the forms and functions of the *f*-word used on twitter. This

research will provide the information about the current pattern of the *f*-words used on Twitter. The following chapter will review the existing literature and previous studies. Chapter Three explains the methods used in this study and chapter four presents and discusses the results and findings of this study. Chapter Five presents the summary and conclusion of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the existing literature on swearing. In this chapter, the definition of swearing, history of the *f*-word, as well as types and functions of the *f*-words are discussed. The chapter also examines related studies on swearing and *f*-words.

2.1 Social Networking Sites

Social networking sites (SNS) have become an important tool of communication to communicate globally. SNS are not only used to communicate with the people in a user's network, but to interact with new people to extend one's social network. There are many social networking sites available for users to create their own profile and interact with the people around the world (Boyd, 2007). Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, Tumblr, Instagram, Flicker were listed as the top ten social networking sites used by people worldwide ("Top 15 Most Popular Social Networking Sites", n.d).

Facebook is ranked as the most popular networking site, followed by Twitter with a huge number of the users (The top 500 sites on the web, n.d). Recent statistics in the United States on the market share of the social media sites show that Facebook ranked as the most visited site with 45.4 percentage of market share and Twitter recorded 4.8 percentages of market share. Figure 2.1 shows the market share of the popular social media sites in the United States (Leading social media websites in the United States in 2015, based on share of visits, n.d).
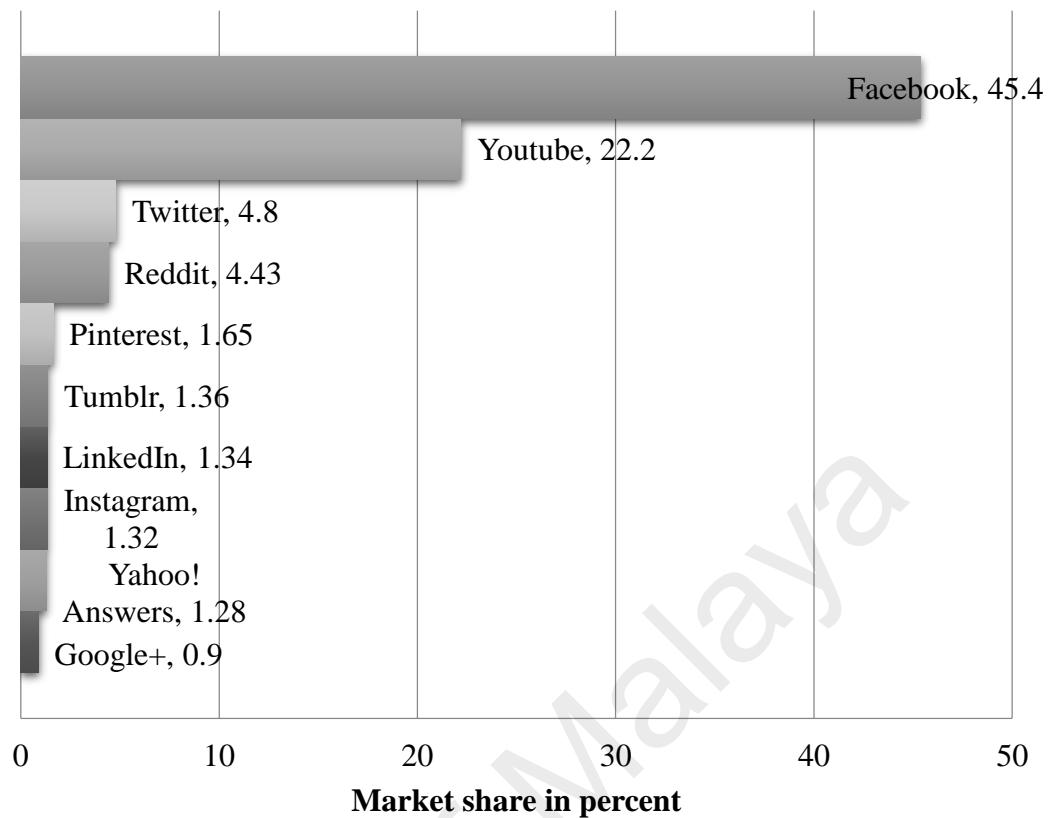
Figure 2.1: Market share of the most popular social media sites in the United States in 2015

As shown in Figure 2.1, Twitter is the third most popular social networking site after Facebook. Twitter is a popular social networking site that is used to share thoughts and to communicate with other users. Most of the conversations found in social networking sites are informal because the users tend to communicate with their friends, and to share their feelings.

2.2 Twitter

Based on the Twitter homepage (Twitter, n.d.), Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, Biz stone and Noah Glass founded Twitter in 2006. The headquarters of Twitter is located in San Francisco, California, USA. Twitter became a famous social networking with 100 million users by 2012 (Ibid). Active users of Twitter increased to 302 million in 2015, and 80% of active users of Twitter are mobile users. Alexa's web traffic analysis

stated that Twitter is one of the ten most visited websites among all the websites around the world. Twitter allows users to get updates from public figures, companies and celebrities. It is used to share thoughts, ideas and communicate. Twitter 'conversations' generally take place between people who do not know each other.

Twitter allows people to create personal accounts by using their email addresses. Twitter users are divided into two groups, which are the common users and verified users. The verified accounts are owned by public figures. The verified users on Twitter can be identified by a small blue checkmark beside the username on Twitter page. This blue checkmark used to help the users identify authentic profiles of public figures. This feature is created to avoid users impersonating as public figures. This feature is only created for famous personalities, and is not applied to common users. This blue checkmark is used by famous people from various industries, such as entertainment, fashion, sports, politics, business and official organizations. Examples of verified Twitter accounts are shown in Figure 2.2, Figure 2.3 and Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.2: Official Twitter account of Barack Obama, the President of the United States

Blue checkmark

Figure 2.3: Official Twitter account of Rajinikanth, an Indian moviestar

Blue checkmark
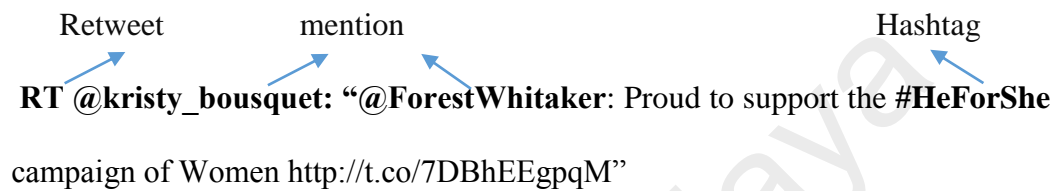
Figure 2.4: Official Twitter account of Neymar Junior, a Brazilian footballer

The features in Twitter are trending topics, news feed, retweets (RT), follow and followers, handle, mentions (@) and hashtags (#). Trending topics are one of the interesting features on Twitter. Users tend to start a conversation by creating a hashtag (a topic of the conversation) to allow other users to participate in the conversation. When a huge number of users participate in the conversation using a hashtag, it will become a trending topic on Twitter. Trending topic is usually about the current incident and users expressing their thoughts on them. Trending topics will always be shown in the sidebar of the Twitter page. Current trending topics can be found in the trendsmap on Twitter. Trendsmaps show the real-time local tweets that trend worldwide. Trendsmap updates trending topics, within minutes, depending on the number of people tweeting about a topic. Users can get the updates from trendsmap by following trendsmap accounts and users can select the country or states of their choice to get the latest trending topics in their location as shown in Figure 2.5 (TrendsmapSolutions, n.d).

Figure 2.5: Trendsmap Malaysia's Twitter Account

Tweets contain 140 characters of text and are usually public. Unlike Facebook, Twitter does not require friend requests to connect with people. Twitter users will follow other, and have their own followers. There is no special permission needed to follow a user unless the user has made the profile private. Handle refers to the username on Twitter and feed contains updates from the followed users. An example of a tweet is as follows:

Retweet   mention   Hashtag

RT @kristy_bousquet: "@ForestWhitaker: Proud to support the **#HeForShe** campaign of Women http://t.co/7DBhEEgpqM"

A retweet (RT) is sharing interesting tweets of other users to comment or express an opinion. Particular news or information is spread virally when a huge number of followers re-share a tweet. Hashtags is a subject or title of a conversation on Twitter. The hashtags are used for a specific subject to allow others to participate in the discussion and to find the tweets based on topics. The words in hashtags should not have spaces. Mention (@) is a tool to address another user by his/ her username in a tweet. Figure 2.6 shows an example of a Twitter account.

Followers and following accounts   Recent Tweets   compose a new Tweet

Trending topics

Figure 2.6: An example of a Twitter account page

Researchers have found that people swear more on Twitter than in real life communication because people do not see each other on social media. A research on swearing conducted by Wang et al. (2014), found that one tweet out of 13 tweets contains swear words. Wang et al. (2014) also identified the seven most popular swear words with the *f*-word being ranked as the highest among the seven swear words. Although swearing activity is common on Twitter, some hashtags have been censored by Twitter because it was found offensive for other users. The examples of the

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censored hashtags are #Thatsafrican and #thingsdarkiessay (Twitter Is No Place for #NoHomo, 2011).

Twitter has been banned in a few countries such as China, Iran and North Korea. China banned Twitter in 2009 because of its ability to send real-time messages to a huge number of followers, and to avoid political news and national events leaked by the citizens (Facebook, Twitter and now Google + banned: why is China so anti-social network?, 2011). Iran blocked Twitter in 2009 due to presidential election controversy while social media access is restricted in North Korea (Turkey is the latest country to block Twitter and YouTube, 2014). Turkey joined the list to ban Twitter in 2014, which was done by the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. This was, due to anti-government movements in social media. Turkish internet users showed their dissatisfaction over the ban by lifting the blockade with the help of Twitter itself and created the hashtags #TwitterisblockedinTurkey and #DictatorErdogan which was trending worldwide (Turkey's Twitter ban condemned -- even by nation's own president, 2014).

2.3 Swearing

As mentioned in Chapter 1, swearing occurs when a person uses a word or phrase to offend someone in a conversation (McEnery, 2005). According to Crystal (2003, p. 173), "swearing is an outburst, an explosion, which gives relief to surges of emotional energy". The offensiveness of a word is not analysed by its sound, but with the social construction and this can change over time. Swearing has two definitions, which are oath-taking and using offensive language (Ljung, 2011). The first definition of swearing is making a solemn promise or oath taking. For example, *I swear that I will be faithful in my duty*. The second definition of swearing is using offensive language

in anger and it refers to an act of invoking harm or evil on someone or something" (Ljung, 2011, p. 3). Offensive language usually contains vulgar words, which are restricted in public use. Swearing generally refers to impolite behaviour rather than polite behaviour. Polite behaviour is having good sense, such as good manners, social etiquette and social graces. For example, the word 'please' is used when requesting something from someone.

Several studies have been conducted in order to investigate the use of swear words in social media. Thelwall (2008) conducted a study on cursing activity on MySpace, a youth-oriented social network site. The most popular curse words used in MySpace is the *f*-word, followed by *shit, ass, nigga, piss bitch, hell, whore, dick* and *pussy*. The functions of the *f*-words were analysed according to McEnery and Xiao's (2004) study of the British National Corpus. Thelwall (2008) found that there in contrast to McEnery and Xiao's (2004) study, the use of emphatic intensifier is higher in the BNC while in MySpace, it recorded the lowest use. Personal insults and idiomatic 'set phrase' are common in the BNC and MySpace. *Fucking* is the most common swear word used as an emphatic intensifier in the BNC and MySpace (Thelwall, 2008).

Nasution and Rosa (2012) conducted a study on swear words found in Yahoo Messenger. Yahoo Messenger is one of the social networking sites, which allow the users to chat, send pictures or make a call or video call. This study analysed the forms and functions of swear words used in the chat room of Yahoo Messenger (Nasution & Rosa, 2012). The script of swear words from the Indian chat room was obtained for data analysis. Swear words found in the data were analysed using Montagu's (1967) classification. According to Montagu (1967), there are thirteen types of swearing, but

the findings of Nasution and Rosa (2010) showed that there are only six types of swear words found in the India chat room, Yahoo Messenger as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Types of swear words found in Yahoo Messenger (Nasution & Rosa, 2012)

Nu.	Types of swear words	Swear words found in Yahoo Messenger's chat room
1.	Names of supernatural or infernal powers of gods, angels and devils	*God, Jesus,* and *Gosh*
2.	Names connected with the sacred matters of religion	-
3.	Names or allusions to saints, priests, prophets, biblical characters and persons conspicuous in church history	-
4.	Names of sacred place	-
5.	Words relating to the future	*Hell*
6.	The names of ancestors and heroes	*By the blood of my father*
7.	The names of a ruler sovereign or symbol of authority or the attributes or many of these.	-
8.	Oaths by natural objects, forces and phenomena	*The sun* and *the moon*
9.	Vulgar or obscene words.	*Shit, fuck,* and *asshole.*
10.	The word "bloody" and its various forms	-
11.	Expletives include words or phrases that have unusual force for various reasons	-
12.	Oaths in the names of classical divinities	-
13.	Oath by animals, plants, and their products	*Bitch* and *damn.*

The functions of the swear words found in this study were analysed according to Crystal's (1987) theory, where there are ten functions of swear words. However, only seven functions of swear words were found in the India chat room of Yahoo Messenger. The users used swear words to express anger, surprise, disappointment, humour, disbelief, to promise and to convince. Examples of these functions are as follows:

Anger:	*Jesus, God, Hell, Shit, Asshole, Damn* and *Bitch.*
Humour:	*By the moon* and *Shit*
Surprise:	*God* and *Damn.*
Disbelief:	*God* and *Fuck.*
To promise:	*By the blood of my father.*
To convince:	*By the moon* and *By the sun.*
Disappointment:	*Hell* and *Bitch.*

In another study on swearing, Wang, Chen, Thirunarayan and Sheth (2014), conducted a study on curse words used on Twitter. This study examined the most frequently used curse words, and the reasons why people often use curse words on Twitter. This study also analysed the relationship between the use of curse words and contextual variables such as time, location and communication type. The data in this study consisted of 51 million tweets collected from Twitter. This study revealed that 7.73% of the collected tweets contained curse words, and seven curse words were identified as the most frequently used curse words on Twitter. The most frequently used curse words found in this study was the *f*-word, followed by *shit, ass, bitch, nigga, hell, whore, dick, piss* and *pussy.* The curse words are used to express emotions such as anger, love, joy, sadness and thankfulness. They are mostly used to express negative emotions such as sadness and anger in this study. This study found that men curse more than women and users from lower social rankings curse more often than high social rank users (Wang et al., 2014).

2.4 The *f*-word

F-words are among the most frequently used swear words in English (McEnery & Xiao, 2004). Ljung (2011) defines the meaning of the *f*-word as to strike, push, copulate or to have sex. This word is an interesting swear word that is used in English today because it reflects a range of emotions such as love, pain, hate and anger (Andersson & Trudgill, 1990). Hughes (2006) states that the *f*-word has been generally related to the term for copulation over the past centuries. Although, the *f*-word is considered taboo and is generally restricted to public use, currently this word has trespassed the field of polite discourse (Hughes 2006, p. 192). The *f*-word is ranked among the 3000 most spoken words in the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995). Thus, the *f*-word, which was once regarded as a taboo word, is currently used in songs, movies, television shows and social media.

The uses of *f*-words are common and acceptable in some English-speaking contexts (Murphy, 2009). For instance, a fashion company, French Connection in the United Kingdom uses "*fcuk*" as their brand. This company printed the T-shirts with the messages such as *hot as fcuk, cool as fcuk, fcuk me, fcuk fear, too busy to fcuk, lucky fcuk* and *fcuk this* and successfully sold one million *fcuk* T-shirts (Fairman, 2006). As an example of films, the Martin Scorsese's film, *"The Wolf of Wall Street"* which was released in 2013, starring Leonardo DiCarpio, received complaints about its excessive use of swear words. This three-hour movie recorded 506 uses of the *f*-word and it was regarded as the highest record for a non-documentary film (The *f*-word is everywhere, 2014).

Previously, Bailey and Timm (1976) found that the *f*-word was a strong expletive, and McEnery and Xiao (2004) found that the *f*-word was used more frequently in written

texts than daily speech. In another study, Howe (2012) who conducted a research on the use of the *f*-word in the British National Corpus and Blog Authorship Corpus, found that the *f*-word is mostly used by teenage groups and males compared to females. This research also revealed that people from lower social class used the *f*-word more frequently. These studies show how language trends shift in terms of use and users.

2.5 Syntactic forms of the *f*-word

The swear word *fuck* can be used in many different parts of speech, such as a noun, verb, adjective, adverb, or interjection. Ljung (2011, p. 40) says that the *f*-word can take any form in a single sentence for example,

- *"Fuck* the *fucking fuckers"*

- *"Fucking fuckers fucked* "

These examples have a verb *(fuck)*, an adverb *(fucking)* and a noun *(fuckers)*. Ljung (2011) provides more examples of variations of *fuck* such as a noun: *fucker, stupid fuck* and *not give a fuck*, verb: *fuck you! Fuck up* and *fuck off*, adverb: *fucking*, infixing or infixation: *absofuckinglutely* and *docufuckingmentary* (Ljung, 2011, p. 40).

Holster (2005) conducted a study on ESOL teacher's attitudes towards teaching about taboo language to adult learners of conversational English. In this study, Holster (2005) classified the form of the *f*-word into six groups: intransitive verbs, adjectives, as part of an adverb, adverbs intensifying an adjective, noun and inflex (part of a word). Table 2.2 shows the different syntactic forms of the *f*-word based on Holster's (2005, p. 63) classification.

Table 2.2: Classification of the *f*-word

Syntactic forms	Examples
A transitive verb.	*John fucked Susan.*
An intransitive verb.	*John fucks.*
An adjective.	*It's so fucking cold.*
As part of an adverb.	*Susan complains too fucking much.*
As an adverb intensifying an adjective.	*Susan is fucking beautiful.*
As a noun.	*John doesn't give a fuck.*
As an inflex (part of a word).	*That's out-fucking-standing!*

(Holster, 2005, p. 63)

2.6 Functions of swear words

In the past, there were few typologies used by researchers to analyse the different types and functions of swearing. Montagu (1967) defines seven different forms of swearing as *swearing, cursing, profanity, blasphemy, obscenity, vulgarity* and *euphemistic swearing.* Table 2.3 shows Montagu's classification of swearing.

Table 2.3: Typology of swearing by Montagu (1967, p. 105)

Functions	Descriptions
Swearing	To express the feeling of aggressiveness that follows upon frustration in words possessing strong emotional associations
Cursing	Involves the 'calling down of evil upon its object'
Profanity	'The form of swearing in, which the names of attributes of the figures of objects of religious veneration are uttered'
Blasphemy	The 'act of vilifying or ridiculing the figures of objects of religious veneration'
Obscenity	'Involves indecent words and phrases'
Vulgarity	Use of crude words such as 'bloody'
Euphemistic Swearing	'Mild, vague or corrupted expressions are substituted for the original strong ones'

Ljung (2011) states that the classification suggested by Montagu lacks a common basis of classification in which swear words can be categorized in more than one

category. For example, *Jesus fucking Christ!* The use of swear word in this sentence can be categorized into four categories which are profane, obscene and vulgar or blasphemous (Ljung, 2011, p. 25). Ljung (2011) felt that Montagu's (1967) classification was too general, and that the categories in that classification such as cursing, profanity, blasphemy, obscenity, vulgarity and euphemistic, are subcategories of swearing. Montagu (1967) introduced a parallel classification of swearing as an addition to his previous classification, which are *abusive, adjurative, asseverative, ejaculatory* or *exclamatory*, *execratory, expletive*, *hortatory*, *interjectional* and *objurgatory*. This classification mostly based on semantic and pragmatic criteria differs from the previous classification which only focused on the general sense of the swear word. However, the same problem was found in his second classification, where *abusive* has similar functions as *interjectional, ejaculatory* or *exclamatory*.

Pinker (2007) introduced another typology of swearing. Pinker pointed out that people swear in five different ways as shown below (Pinker, 2007, p. 350)

- Descriptive swearing: *Let's fuck!*

- Idiomatic swearing: *It's fucked up.*

- Abusive swearing: *Fuck you, motherfucker!*

- Emphatic swearing: *It's fucking amazing*

- Cathartic swearing: *Fuck!*

Pinker's classification defines what the speaker does when swearing. Descriptive swearing occurs when a speaker wants to describe something. The idiomatic swearing refers to an emphasis on something while abusive swearing occurs when a speaker intends to abuse someone. Cathartic swearing occurs when a speaker released strong emotions.

Pinker's typology is considered less comprehensive and it repeats the similar problems as Montagu's classifications. For example, *fuck you*! can be categorized into abusive, idiomatic and cathartic swearing. Pinker's five-way classification had fewer categories and was too broad (Ljung, 2011). This typology is different from the McEnery et al. (2000) typology of swearing, which consisted 16 categories, and it was used in McEnery and Xiao's (2004) study which analysed the pattern of swear words used in written and spoken form in the British National Corpus (BNC).

2.7 McEnery et al.'s typology of swearing

McEnery et al. (2000) categorized the functions of swearing based on syntactic and pragmatic criteria. McEnery et al. (2000) define how the swear words are used, and what their functions are. This typology was used to analyse the *f*-word in the BNC corpus. McEnery et al. (2000) classified the functions of swear words into 16 categories and the categories are shown in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: McEnery et al. (2000, p. 45) typology of swearing

Code Description	Description	Examples
PredNeg	Predicative negative adjective	*'the film is shit'*
AdvB	Adverbial booster	*'Fucking marvellous' 'Fucking awful'*
Curse	Cursing expletive	*'Fuck You!/ Me!/ Him!/ It!'*
Dest	Destinational usage	*'Fuck off!' 'He fucked off'*
EmphAdv	Emphatic adverb/adjective	*'He fucking did it' 'in the fucking car'*
Figurtv	Figurative extension of literal meaning	*'to fuck about'*
Gen	General expletive	*'(Oh) Fuck!'*
Idiom	Idiomatic 'set phrase'	*'fuck all' ' give a fuck'*
Literal	Literal usage denoting taboo referent	*'We fucked'*

Code Description	Description	Examples
Image	Imagery based on literal meaning	*'kick shit out of'*
PremNeg	Premodifying intensifying negative adjective	*'the fucking idiot'*
Pron	'Pronominal' form with undefined referent:	*Like fuck/fat as fuck*
Personal	Personal insults referring to defined entity	*You fuck!/that fuck*
Reclaimed	'Reclaimed' usage – no negative intent, Niggers/Niggaz as used by African American rapper.	
Oath	Religious oath used for emphasis 'by God'	
Unc	Unclassifiable	*The use of the word "fuck"/you never fucking*

As shown in Table 2.4, McEnery et al. (2000) classified the use of swear words according to its part of speech. In the examples shown in Table 2.4, the *f*-word was categorized in different categories based on how it is used in the speech. The examples of the *f*-word used in these categories such as curse, destinational usage, general expletives and literal usage are mostly used as a verb but differ according to its functions. For example, the *f*-word, (*fucking*) can be used as an adverbial booster or as a premodifying adjectival intensifier. The *f*-word acting as a premodifying adjectival negative describes something or someone negatively like *'the fucking idiot'*. Adverbial booster of the *f*-word act as an adjective intensifier like *'fucking beautiful'* and '*fucking marvelous'*. The *f*-word (*fucking*) also is used as an emphatic adverb or an adjective. For example, '*He fucking did it'* is an emphatic adverb refers to a surprising action while '*in the fucking car'* is an emphatic adjective which describes

a car. In curse, the *f*-word is used to insult someone and destionational usage also intended to insult a person by demanding to leave or disappear.

The *f*-word is used as a general expletive to express anger, annoyance, surprise or frustration. 'Pronominal' form of the *f*-word is used to describe something with an undefined referent. In pronominal form, the words 'like' or 'as' are used to describe the degree or extent of something. For example, *'fat as fuck'* and the '*fuck*' used is an undefined referent. Figurative extension of literal meaning refers to an action using the *f*-word as to '*fuck about'*.

Personal insults are used to insult someone or something like *'you fuck'* or *'that fuck'* and religious oath is used by replacing God's name with it as '*for fuck's sake'*. The use of the *f*-word which could not be categorized in any categories is labelled as an unclassifiable. Literal usage denoting taboo referent refers to the original meaning of the swear word which is being used. Imagery based on literal meaning and predicative negative adjective do not apply to the *f*-word. Idiomatic 'set phrase' is used to emphasize on something. Examples such as '*fuck all'* and '*don't give* a *fuck'* are idiomatic 'set phrase' which means not care or bother about something. The idiomatic 'set phrase' also used with WH-constructions such as '*who the fuck?'* and '*what the fuck?'* The use of the word *Niggers/Niggaz* in 'reclaimed usage' refers to a derogatory use of the word. This is common in the speech of African American rappers but rare in British English.

McEnery and Xiao (2004) used McEnery et al.'s (2000) typology to analyse the use of the *f*-word in the BNC corpus. However, McEnery and Xiao (2004) made a few changes when implementing this typology. Four categories of this typology such as

predicative negative adjective, 'reclaimed' usage, religious oath and imagery based on literal meaning were omitted because these categories are not applicable for the *f-word*. The categories which have similar functions were merged. For example, the categories such as premodifying negative adjective and adverbial booster was merged into the empathic intensifier category, while figurative extension of literal meaning was merged into the idiomatic 'set phrase' category. This revised typology had nine categories out of 16 categories.

The findings of McEnery and Xiao (2004) study revealed that the *f-*word was frequently used as an emphatic intensifier, followed by an idiomatic 'set phrase'. McEnery and Xiao's (2004) study in the BNC analysed the five forms of *f-*word which are *fuck, fucked, fucks, fucking* and *fucker(s)*. The findings of this study revealed that the *f-*word form (*fucking)* was frequently used in BNC. The findings also revealed that the *f-*word often occurs in speech than writing because "written language requires planning and can be edited while the spoken language is not pre-planned and is more dynamic" (McEnery and Xiao, 2004, p. 236). McEnery and Xiao (2004) found that men swear more than women in the BNC because it is more socially accepted.

2.8 Ljung's typology of swearing

Ljung's (2011) typology of swearing is the most recent analysis of swearing. Ljung (2011) defines what constitutes swearing into four criteria, which are formulaic language, utterances that contain swear words, does not have the literal meaning, and emotive language. Ljung states that the use of a swear word or a taboo word is necessary for swearing to take place, and the swear word which is used with no literal meaning only is regarded as swearing. For example, *Hell!* and *Oh hell!*. The '*hell*' means a place where the people who sinned will be sent but in this example, the word

'*hell*' has no literal meaning. Swearing activity also can express emotions such as joy, pain, anger, happiness and surprise. For example, interjections such as *Shit!, Fuck!, Damn! Hell*! and *Bloody hell!* are used to express anger. (Ljung, 2011, p. 29).

Ljung further categorized the functions of swear words into two major groups in his typology, which are stand-alones and slot fillers. The stand-alones functions are expletive interjections, oaths, curses, unfriendly suggestions, affirmations, ritual insults and name-calling. The slot fillers are adverbial/adjectival intensifiers, adjectives of dislike, emphasis, modal adverbials, anaphoric use of epithets and noun supports (Ljung, 2011). Table 2.5 shows Ljung's typology of swearing.

Table 2.5: Ljung's (2011) typology of swearing

Functions	Description/ Emotions	Examples
Stand-alones		
Expletive interjections	Speaker's reactions to different mishaps and disappointments	*Shit!* / *Fuck!*
Oaths	Invoking a divine witness	*For heaven's sake/ For fuck's sake*
Curses	Inflict harm or punishment on someone or something	*Fuck you!*
Affirmation and contradiction	Affirming something	*Fuck hell it is!*
Unfriendly suggestions	To express aggression directed at somebody	*Fuck off!*
Ritual insults	Refer to alleged sexual exploits involving "somebody's mother or sister"	*Your sister's cunt!*
Name-calling	Express the speaker's – negative or positive opinion of her/his addressee or a third party"	*Fucker*
Slot fillers		
Adverbial/adjectival intensifiers	To express a high degree of an adjective and adverb	*What a fucking athlete/idiot.*
Adjectives of dislike	To express the speaker's dislike towards the referent of that noun	*I hate that fucking Swede*
Emphasis	It serves to emphasize or attract attention to the associated item	*Fuck of me!/ Abso-fucking-lutely!*

Functions	Description/ Emotions	Examples
Modal adverbials	Modal adverbials seem to occur primarily in mid-sentence position and classified as 'pragmatic markers'	*They fucking bought one drink between them*
Anaphoric use of epithets	"Used in the same way as personal pronouns"	*Tell the bastard/motherfucker to mind his own business*
Noun supports	Epithets	*Bastard, Motherfucker*

2.8 Stand-alones

Stand-alones are speech acts and swearing expressions that function of their own. Ljung (2011) categorized stand-alones into three categories which are curses, oaths and unfriendly suggestions. Expletive interjections are stand alone functions that have fewer speech acts' character and they express various kinds of feeling such as surprise, anger, happiness or pain. Expletives interjections are the most popular function associated with the term of swearing (Crystal, 1997). Ritual-insults, affirmation, oaths, unfriendly suggestions and name-callings are categorized as stand-alone functions. The detailed descriptions of these functions are discussed in the following sections.

2.8.1.1 Expletive interjections

The use of expletive interjections is very common in English, and Ljung's (2009) study of the BNC revealed that the speakers used expletive interjections approximately one per 1000 words. Expletive interjections are the output of the speaker's positive or negative emotional reaction to what is being or has just been said in a certain situation. Expletive interjections also are used by the speakers to express disappointment in an unfavourable situation (Crystal, 1997). According to Carther and McCarthy (2006, p. 226), "interjections refer to a single word or short

phrase which are used to express annoyance, anger and frustration". However, Ljung (2011) sees that expletives function as having different kinds of pragmatic functions, where they can be considered as exclamations that have different functions. The *f-*word is an exclamation, which can be used as a verb or a noun. This word can be used to express various emotions such as disappointment, surprise or anger.

According to Gehweiler (2008) the earliest, most used interjections are *Jesus!, God!* and *Christ!* She classified the expletives interjections into two groups which are primary (have no homonyms) and secondary (have homonyms). Primary interjections consisted of moderated expletives (*Crikey!, gee! and gosh!*) and euphemistic expletives *(Heck! Goodness!).* Taboo expletives are secondary interjections which have homonyms. Taboo expletives have proper name and non-names homonyms. The examples of proper name expletives are *Jesus, God* and *Christ*. Expletives like *fuck* and *shit* are non-names homonyms (Ljung, 2011). *F-*word expletives can take different forms such as

- *Fuck!*

- *Fuking Hell!*

- *Oh Fuck!*

- *Fuck Yes!*

2.8.1.2 Oaths

An oath is the oldest form of swearing. Oaths occur when a speaker wants to convey a truth invoking a higher being witness. Ljung (2011) states that a speaker's promise about a future action is called an oath. Oaths are often followed by the name of the higher being and preposition 'by'. For example,

- *I swear by almighty God that I will be loyal.*

The preposition by has been replaced with *for.. sake* in modern English. The empty slot in *for.. sake* usually filled with religious terms. The examples of oaths below represent the development of religious oaths over the past few years:

- *For God's sake*

- *For (fuck)'s sake*

The oath (*for*) *fuck* ('s) *sake* found in BNC was described as a modern type of oath found in religious terms in swearing (Ljung, 2011). The oaths found in the *BNC* spoken language are as follows:

- *for God ('s) sake*(*s*),

- (*for*) *goodness sake*(*s*)

- (*for*) *Christ ('s) sake*(*s*)

- (*for*) *heaven ('s) sake*(*s*)

(Ljung, 2011, p. 102)

2.8.1.3 Curses

Cursing is a swearing behaviour in which the speaker intends to harm or punish someone or something by invoking a supernatural power. For example, *The devil take you!* or *May the devil take you!* are old types of cursing utterances. The modern form of cursing has more compressed constructions of utterances such as *fuck you!* and *damn you!* (Ljung, 2011, p. 31). Curses often take place in a conversation when a speaker gets angry and disappointed with someone or over something. Cursing is often directed at a third person. For example,

- **Fuck** *you!*

- **Fuck** *it!*

- **Fuck** *him!*

Speakers tend to curse when disappointed or upset with a particular system or culture. For example,

- *Fucking fucks* the pair of you!

- *Fuck* commodity culture

(Ljung, 2011, p. 110)

Cursing activity can occur without involving the third party and Ljung (2011) defines it as self-cursing. This situation happens when the speakers curse themselves when an unfavourable incident happens to them. For example,

- *Fuck* me if she isn't right

- I'll be *fucking* if I ask permission for that

- I'm *buggered* if I can remember where

(Ljung, 2011, p. 112)

These cursing utterances constructions are 'Something bad may happen to me + *if* clause'. Another term in self-cursing is a speaker's reaction to a new information or an event. For examples,

- *Fuck me* there's no way I'm not doing it by the book!

- *Fuck me* they've had some fun!

(Ljung, 2011, p. 112)

2.8.1.4 Affirmation and contradiction

Contradiction and affirmation are used to express certain swearing expressions. For example, expressions like *Innocent, my ass!* are affirmation and contradiction**.** Other examples of this function are ***fuck****/sod/bugger/my arse/the hell it is* (Ljung, 2011, p. 32).

2.8.1.5 Unfriendly suggestions

Unfriendly suggestions are used to express aggression towards someone. This function refers to the speaker's reaction towards something unpleasant. Examples of this unfriendly suggestions are**:**

- ***Fuck off!***
- *Go to hell!*

Unfriendly suggestions also are directed at someone or an animal as shown in the following examples:

- ***Fuck*** *yourself!*
- *Go **fuck** yourself!*
- *Get **fucked!***
- ***Fuck*** *a duck*
- *Get **fucked** in the ass!*

(Ljung, 2011, p. 133)

2.8.1.6 Ritual insults

Ritual insults refer to alleged sexual exploits involving somebody's mother or sister. Ritual insults are often used with the term *your mother* or *your mother's*. The examples of ritual insults are as follows

- *Your mother! or your sister's cunt!*
- *Somebody **fucked** your mother*
- ***Fuck*** *your mother!*

(Ljung, 2011, p. 122)

2.8.1.7 Name-calling

Name-calling is used to indirectly insult the third person. Name-calling is used to express the speaker's negative or positive opinion of a third party. Examples of the name-calling function are as follows:

- *You retard/cunt/wanker/bastard*

- *You **fucker/fuckass/fuckarse***

<div align="right">(Ljung, 2011, p. 126)</div>

Name-calling also refers to a certain group of people, like *thieves, murderers, traitors* and are used for people who do illegal work, while *idiot, moron, fool* are used for people who are not intelligent. Other terms like *kike, yid, nigger*, are usedfor people who belong to certain ethnic groups:

- *You retard/cunt/wanker/bastard*

- *You **fucker/fuckass/fuckarse*** (Ljung, 2011, p. 126)

2.8.2 Slot fillers

Slot fillers always occur in the middle of sentences, and they are not themselves independent utterances. Slot-fillers are used as a part of long utterances. Examples of slot fillers that are used in English are ***fucking,*** *goddamn, goddamned, damn* and *damned*. Slot-fillers are used to express the speaker's feelings and attitudes towards something or someone. Their functions are further explained in the following section.

2.8.2.1 Adverbial/adjectival intensifiers

Adverbial/adjectival intensifier expressing a high degree of the following adjective or adverb and this is a very common function of the slot-filler. Intensifiers like 'as' and 'like' are used to describe something or a person. Adverbial/adjectival can also be

used to express a high degree of a following gradable noun as '*It's a bloody miracle*' and '*she's a damn bitch*'. The example of adverbial/adjectival intensifiers are follows:

- *You are so bloody lucky*

- *What a **fucking** athlete/idiot*

- *It's bloody marvelous*

- *They drove damn fast*

(Ljung, 2011, p. 148)

2.8.2.2 Adjective of dislike

Some swear word function to express the speaker's dislike towards someone or something. Examples of this function are:

- *I hate that **fucking** Swede*

- *That bloody bird crapped on my head*

- *Nonchalant like most blokes do in the **fucking** underwear department*

(Ljung, 2011, p. 150)

2.8.2.3 Emphasis

Other swear word serve to emphasize and attracts attention with the associated item. Emphasis is often placed on the following noun. For example, '*I need a glass of water, not a bloody bathtub*' and '*you don't have to tell me every damned time!*'. Other examples of the swear words used to emphasize are:

- *What the hell is that?*

- *Get the **fuck** of me!*

- *Why the **fuck***

- *Shut the **fuck** up*

(Ljung, 2011, p. 34)

2.8.2.4 Modal adverbials

Modal adverbials are classified as pragmatic markers which express subjectivity and also could be included in a syntactic category. Modal adverbials often occur primarily in mid-sentence position. Swear words such as *bloody, bloody hell* and *fucking* are expletive modal adverbial that are used in contexts like '*They fucking bought one drink between them or you bloody can't do that!*' (Ljung, 2011, p. 34).

2.8.2.5 Anaphoric use of epithets

Swear words categorized into the anaphoric use of epithets are mostly in noun or pronoun forms. For example:

- *Asshole/Arsehole*
- *Bastard*
- *Bugger*
- **Motherfucker**

(Ljung, 2011, p. 34)

2.8.2.6 Noun supports

The constructions of noun supports are straight forward: Subject + BE+ Adjective or Subject + Predicate + Adverbial. Noun support is epithets that lose its negativity and used as a "filler" with an adjective (Ljung, 2011, p. 35). Ljung explains noun supports by pointing out the examples such as the following:

- *John is a boring son of a bitch*
- *Philip is a hard-working son of a bitch*"

Existing studies on swearing are mostly focused on swearing that occurs in writing form and speech. For instance, McEnery et al. (2000) and McEnery and Xiao's (2004) study investigate the frequency of occurrence of the swear word in the BNC. These studies investigate types of forms and functions of the swear words. While, Ljung (2011) classified swearing by analysing previous typologies and creates his own typology for swearing. However, there are only few studies have been done regarding swearing on social media. This study explore the use of the *f*-word in a new aspect by employing McEnery and Xiao (2004) typology to identify the use of *f*-word on Twitter. This seem to be new approach of analysing the *f*-word and the results obtained in this study indicate the differences in the use of *f*-word in the past and in the present time. This is the gap that this study aims to fill by exploring the use of the *f*-word on Twitter.

2.9 Summary

In this chapter, the literature regarding swearing, including the functions of swearing and its uses on social networking sites was reviewed. The methods used to collect date for this study will be discussed in the following chapter.

<div align="center">**CHAPTER THREE**</div>

<div align="center">**METHODOLOGY**</div>

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methods used to collect data for this study. It provides information about the source of data and the data collection procedure.

3.1 Data

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the present study sought to investigate the syntactic forms and functions of the *f*-word on Twitter. Swearing occurs when users share their experiences or opinions about someone or an issue on Twitter. Users tend to swear on Twitter not only to express negative emotions but also positive emotions.

Swear words on Twitter occurred at the rate of 1.15 percent which is higher than swear words used in daily conversation which is 0.5 percent (Wang et al., 2014). Although, there are many swear words used on Twitter, there are some swear words which are used more frequently by Twitter users. The swear words such as *fuck, shit, ass, bitch, nigga, hell, whore, dick, piss* and *pussy* are listed as most commonly used swear words on Twitter. The *f*-word is the most popular swear word among these swear words (Wang et al., 2014). As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study only investigates *fuck* or *f*-word to answer the following research questions.

1. What are the syntactic forms of the *f-word* on Twitter?

2. What are the functions of the *f-word* on Twitter?

3. What are the differences and similarities of the findings of this study with McEnery and Xiao's (2004) study of the *f*-word in BNC?

The tweet archivist was used as a tool to collect data for this study. The tweets were archived from https://www.tweetarchivist.com. Tweet Archivist updates tweets archives hourly, generates charts or report and exports archived tweets to PDF or Excel file. Figure 3.1 shows the image of the tweet archivist.
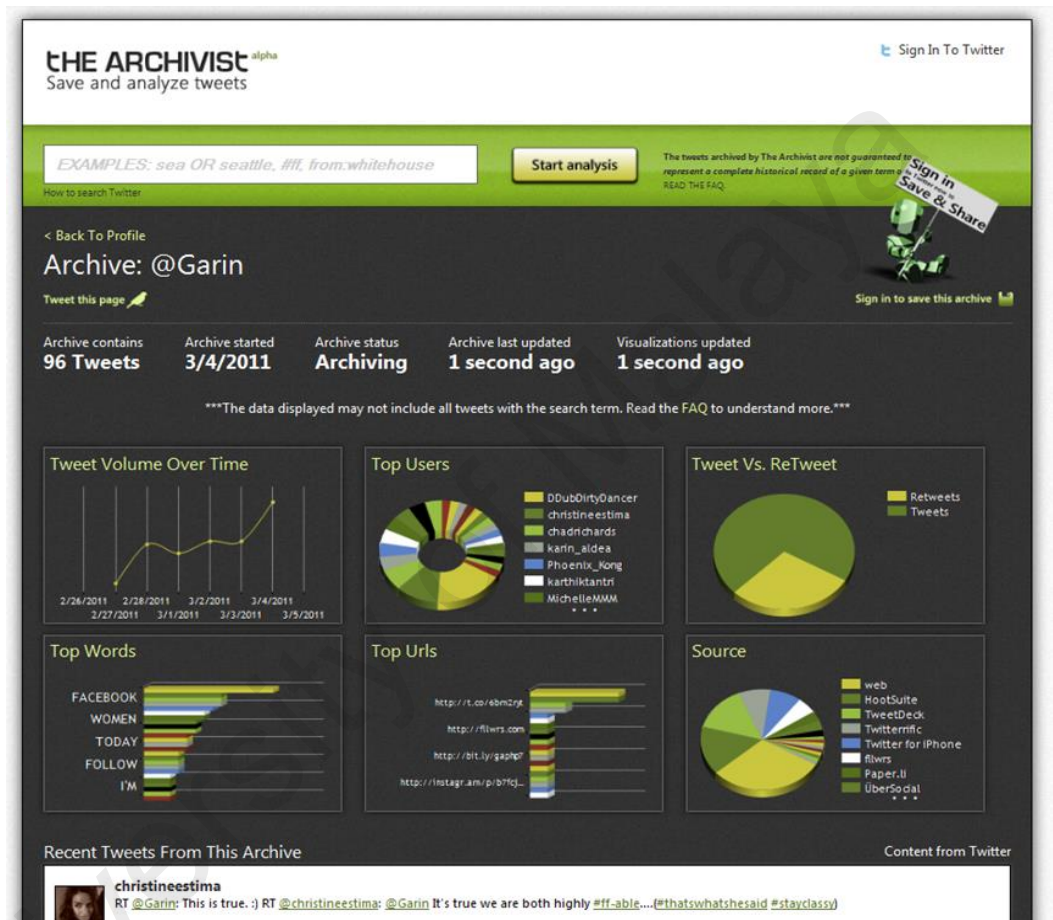
Figure 3.1: Tweets archivist

As shown in Figure 3.1, Tweet archivist can analyse collected tweets to various categories such as tweet volume, top users, top words, top URLs, tweets or retweets and source. For this study, the tweets were collected using a keyword that is the *f-word*. The tweets were collected from the tweet Archivist by following steps shown in Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3.

STEP 1:

Enter *F*-word and start archiving

Figure 3.2: Tweet Archivist Desktop

STEP 2:

Export archived tweets to Excel
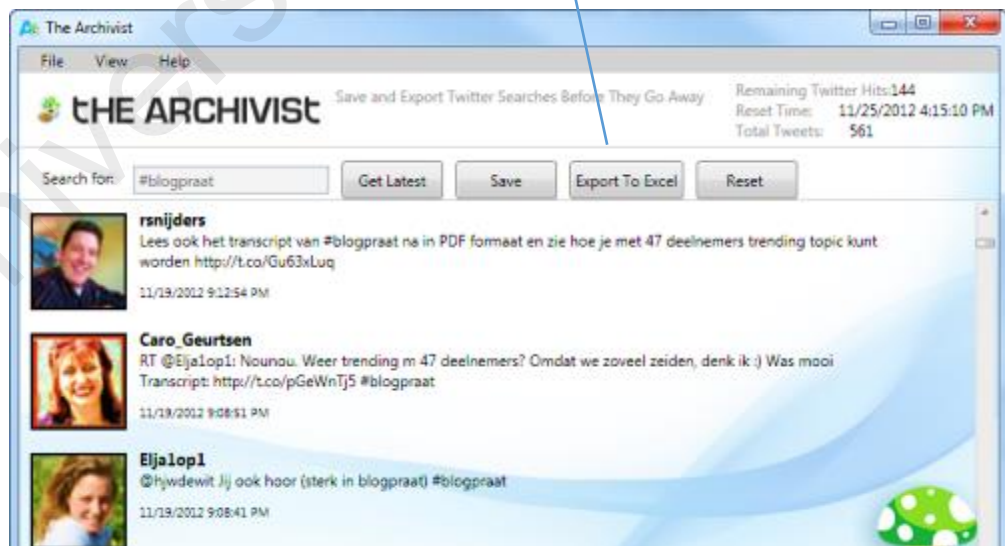
Figure 3.3: Tweet Archivist Desktop

After completing those steps, the archived tweets were saved in excel file for analysis. Figure 3.4 shows the image of the archived tweets in excel file.

Figure 3.4: Tweets saved in the excel file

The collected tweets consisted of direct messages and retweets. The retweets were found to be repeated several times in the collected data. Repeated retweets were identified and deleted. Some of the tweets did not contain the *f*-word and some tweets have the *f*-word in the username. Those tweets were also identified and deleted from the data. For this study, a thousand tweets were collected in this way, which was deemed suitable.

3.2 Twitter users

Tweets, which are posted publicly, were collected for data analysis. The tweets that contained the *f*-word were analysed for this study. The tweets were collected randomly from Twitter. The Twitter users were not selected from a specific group or country.

The data collected from the Tweet Archivist were saved in an excel file. The *f*-word used in each tweet was analysed according to its syntactic forms and functions. The forms of *f*-word were analysed according to the categories shown in Figure 3.5 (Holster, 2005, p. 63).
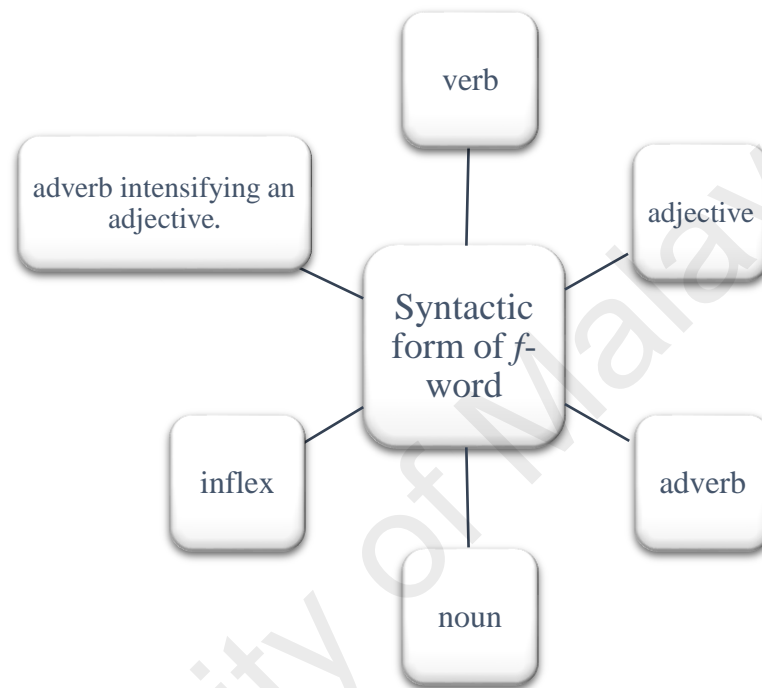
Figure 3.5 Syntactic form of the *f*-word

Holster's (2005) classification (see 2.5) was adopted for this study instead of McEnery and Xiao's (2004) (see 2.7) classification of the forms of the *f*-word used in the BNC. McEnery and Xiao's (2004) study in the BNC only focuses on the five forms of *f*-word which are *fuck, fucked, fucks, fucking* and *fucker(s)* and the syntactic forms were not described in the BNC. Holster's (2005) classification described the syntactic forms in detail, and was used to categorize the forms of the *f*-word in this study. This classification was thus applied in this study to analyse the syntactic forms of the *f*-word.

This study adopted both McEnery et al.'s (2000) typology and Ljung's (2011) typology to analyse the functions of the *f*-word. McEnery et al's (2000) typology consisted of 16 categories as shown in Table 2.4, in Chapter 2. Ljung's (2011) consisted of stand-alones and slot fillers as discussed in Chapter 2 (see 2.8). This study employed both typologies because Ljung's typology (2011) have few more categories which was not discussed in McEnery et al. typology (2000) and Ljung (2011) typology were created by analysing the current use of the swear word since both typologies have 10 years gap. Both typologies were used for data analysis, and the functions were modified by combining those categories which have the same functions as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: The functions of swear words adapted from McEnery et al. (2000) and Ljung (2011) typologies

McEnery et al. typology	Ljung typology	Modified functions
The predicative negative adjective	-	The predicative negative adjective
Cursing expletives	Curses	Curses
Destinational usage	-	Destinational usage
Emphatic adverb/adjective, Premodifying intensifying negative adjective and Adverbial booster	Adjectives of dislikes	Emphatic intensifier
General expletives	Expletive interjections	Expletives
Idiomatic 'set phrase' and Figurative extension of literal meaning	Emphasis	Idiomatic 'set phrase'
Imagery based on literal meaning	-	Image

McEnery et al. typology	Ljung typology	Modified functions
Literal usage denoting taboo referent (literal)	--	Literal usage
'Pronominal' form	Adverbial/ adjectival intensifier	Pronominal form
Personal insults	Name-calling	Personal insults
'Reclaimed' usage	-	Reclaimed usage
Religious oath	Oaths	Religious oaths
Unclassifiable	-	Unclassifiable
-	Unfriendly suggestions	Unfriendly suggestions
-	Affirmation and contradiction	Affirmation and contradiction
-	Ritual insults	Ritual insults
-	Modal adverbials	Modal adverbials
-	Anaphoric use of epithets	Anaphoric use of epithets
-	Noun supports	Noun supports

This study adapted the original McEnery et al.'s (2000) typology to analyze the use of the *f*-word on Twitter. But, few categories within McEnery et al.'s (2000) typology which have almost the same functions were combined by following revised typology of McEnery and Xiao's (2004) which was used in the BNC. These changes made to make the data analysis process easier and more organized by not having too many categories. The emphatic adverb/adjective, adverbial booster and premodifying intensifying negative adjective were grouped into the same category (emphatic intensifier), while figurative extension of literal meaning and idiomatic 'set phrase' were grouped into the same category (idiomatic 'set phrase').

The categories which had the same functions in McEnery et al.'s (2000) and Ljung's (2011) typologies were combined into one category (refer the modified functions in Table 3.1). The curses, religious oath and general expletives were categorized into one category. The 'pronominal' form (McEnery et al., 2000) and adverbial/adjectival intensifiers (Ljung, 2011) were also categorized under the same category. Idiomatic 'set phrase' and emphasis also were grouped in the same category. The adjectives of dislikes from Ljung's (2011) typology combined into emphatic intensifier category (McEnery et al., 2000). The name calling function and personal insults also were combined into one category. Therefore, there are 19 categories of functions of swear words used in this study. These 19 categories are presented in Table 3.2 and the examples provided was Ljung's and McEnery's examples of the swear words.

Table 3.2: Functions and examples

Modified functions	Examples
The predicative negative adjective	*'the film is shit'*
Curses	*'Fuck You!/Me!/Him!/It!'*
Destinational usage	*Fuck off!'*
Emphatic intensifier	*Fucking marvellous'* *'Fucking awful'* *'He fucking did it in the fucking car'*
Expletives	*'(Oh) Fuck!'*
Idiomatic 'set phrase'	*'to fuck about', what the fuck*
Image	*'kick shit out of'*
Literal usage	*'We fucked'*
Pronominal form	*Like fuck/fat as fuck*
Personal insults	*You fuck!/that fuck*
Reclaimed usage	*Nigga or Nigger*
Religious oaths	*For fucks sake*
Unclassifiable	*The use of the word "fuck"/you never fucking*

Unfriendly suggestions	*Fuck yourself or fuck a duck*
Affirmation and contradiction	*Fuck hell it is!*
Ritual insults	*Fuck your mother or sister!*
Modal adverbials	*They fucking bought one drink between them*
Anaphoric use of epithets	*motherfucker*
Noun supports	*Tell the bastard/motherfucker to mind his own business*

3.3 Data analysis

The following steps show the data analysis procedure adopted in this study.

Step 1: Identified *f*-word in the tweet

Tweets
RT @_julissaaab: @bryxn *fuck* you. you won??
Im just so confused and I'm still trying to figure out what the *fuck* happened
@NBA2K *Fuck* your shooting mechanics

Step 2: *f*-word categorized according to its syntactic forms

RT @_julissaaab: @bryxn *fuck* you. you won??	**verb**
Im just so confused and I'm still trying to figure out what the *fuck* happened	**noun**
@NBA2K *Fuck* your shooting mechanics	**verb**

Step 3: *f*-word analysed according its functions as shown in Table 3.1

RT @_julissaaab: @bryxn *fuck* you. you won??	**curse**
Im just so confused and I'm still trying to figure out what the *fuck* happened	**Idiomatic 'set phrase'**
@NBA2K *Fuck* your shooting mechanics	**curse**

After completing steps 1-3, the total number of *f*-words in each category was calculated. The highest and the lowest use of *f*-words in all the categories were identified. The frequency of the collected tweets was calculated in percentage based on the syntactic forms and functions of the *f*-word. The frequency obtained from this study was then compared to the findings of the study of the *f*-word found in the British National Corpus (McEnery & Xiao, 2004).

3.4 Summary

This chapter discussed the methods used in this study. This chapter also provided information about the source of the data and data collection process. The results of the data analysis are discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the analysis of tweets that contain the *f*-word are presented according to its syntactic forms and its functions. The most frequently used *f*-word forms and functions were identified in the analysis.

4.1 The syntactic forms of *f*-words found on Twitter

The collected tweets for this study were grouped according to the syntactic forms of the *f*-word found in the tweets. As discussed in Chapter 2, the syntactic forms of the *f*-words were categorized according to Holster's classification (Holster, 2005). A total of 1000 tweets collected was categorized into five subgroups, which are verbs, nouns, adverbs, adverbs intensifying adjective and adjectives. Table 4.1 shows the types of syntactic forms of *f*-words found in the 1000 tweets and the percentage of occurrence.

Table 4.1: The types of syntactic forms of *f*-words

Forms	Frequency of occurrence of the *f*-word	Percentage of occurrence (%)
Verbs	533	53.3
Adverbs	7	0.7
Adverb intensifying adjectives	6	0.6
Adjectives	57	5.7
Nouns	397	39.7
Total	1000	100

Based on the results shown in Table 4.1, the most frequently used form of the *f*-word was verbs followed by nouns, adjectives, adverbs and adverb intensifying adjectives. The verb form of the *f*-word recorded the highest percentage of occurrence which is 53.3% in the data. Secondly, the noun form of the *f*-word was frequently used by

Twitter users which recorded 39.7%. The occurrence of the adjective form of the *f*-word recorded percentage of 5.7%. Other forms of the *f*-word which are adverb intensifying adjectives (0.6%) and adverbs (0.7%) were the least used form of the *f*-word found in the data.

4.1.1 Verb form

The findings show that Twitter users prefer to use the verb form of the *f*-word than other syntactic forms. This finding is similar to Kaye and Sapolsky (2005) finding, where the *f*-word is listed among the most often verbalized words. The verb form of the *f*-word was used to refer a second person like *'fuck you'* and *'fuck yourself'*. '*Fuck* you' was the most frequently used verb form found in the data. The examples of this verb forms are as follows:

1. All you ever do is play victim! Just because I get fed up with your bullshit and tell you about it, I'm the asshole? *Fuck* you.

2. Dear stick shift, go *fuck* your self.

3. go *fuck* yourself and do a good song.

The verb form of the *f*-word also is used to refer a third person. For example, *'fuck him', 'fuck that bitch'* and *'fuck it'*. *'Fuck* it' was second frequently used verb form of the *f*-word found in the data. The examples of the use of verb form of the *f*-word are as follows:

4. A big, loud shoutout to @FilmChef930 for his birthday today. He's 23, though, so *fuck* him. (Just kidding. You're loved more than you know.)

5. RT @LifeWithSelG: Her face after the girl who stole her glasses gave her a letter has no price. She was ready to *fuck* that bitch up. http:/…

6. @LouisRoberts94 never let it be said I don't write English good. Well. ***Fuck*** it!

Moreover, the verb form of the *f*-word was also used by the Twitter users as a form of *self-cursing.* They tend to curse themselves like '***fuck me***' as shown in examples the examples below:

7. RT @Lowkey: at least life wants to ***fuck*** me

8. ***Fuck*** me that's depressing ?? Morning all! https://t.co/wqmNCgaIOG

9. Its 1:05 am I have work tomorrow..Instead of sleeping I'm watching boys over flowers... ***Fuck*** me...

The verb form of the *f*-word also used to refer a system like government as in example 12 or used to refer to a specific thing, such as '***fuck*** *this essay', '***fuck*** *your suggestions'* and '***fuck*** *your genders'* as in the following examples:

10. ***Fuck*** Govt. Fuck Single Gateway. https://t.co/FzGoOyoOkX

11. RT @JalenBatGang: ***Fuck*** this essay, I'm going to sleep.

12. RT @Nellacaaa: Ducking your questions, ***fuck*** your suggestions!

The *f*-word was mostly used as a transitive verb. The *f*-word was used as transitive verb as it often have directed object, something or someone. The examples of the transitive verb of the *f*-word found in the data are as follows:

13. They're in love. ***Fuck*** the war

14. shid she be rolling her eyes and talking hella shit in Spanish to Gabby so ***fuck*** her real talk let that bitch stuggle

15. RT @SheswantstheD: I'd try to ***fuck*** everyone up in this ???? http://t.co/jYBoACXTQq

On the other hand, intransitive verb of the *f*-word was least used verb form found in the data. This finding indicates that the *f*-word was often used to refer to someone or something. The examples below are intransitive verb of the *f*-word found in the data:

16. RT @JazzyGoingLIVE: We should just get drunk and *fuck*

17. Let *fuck* now

18. Just saw a husband full on hit his wife. Girlfriend and I (and 5 others) intervened, called the cops.People, man. Just... *Fuck.*

The *f*-word also was used as a phrasal verb, and there are six phrasal verbs with *f*-word found in this study which are *fuck with, fuck around, fuck around with, fuck up, fuck over* and *fuck off.* The examples of these phrasal verbs are as follows:

19. I'm up Smoken An *Fuck*n Round On SnapChat Come *fuck* with me

20. @pinche_sam *fuck around with

21. @SeanHolst13 *Fuck* around do nothin but sky hooks

22. RT @candyurenaxo: I hate when ppl sugar coat shit around me like bitch just be straight the *fuck* up,thanks.

23. don't *fuck* over a person who's only intention was to love you

24. RT @iJustBabe: What's mine is mine, dude. Just *fuck* off!

4.1.2 Noun form

The second most frequently used form of the *f*-word in this study is a noun. The examples of the *f*-word being used as a noun are as follows:

1. RT @gemmadanieIs: *Fuck* *sake* al go trick or treating x http://t.co/KEo6SXexQE

2. RT @ChyntaPutriLove: *Fuck* yess:* http://t.co/xTgTAp9Vzw

3. a BMW or a masserati like *fuck* dude who cares what you drive or what people think about you

The noun form of the *f*-word is also used with an interrogative word or question word which is used to ask a question. The question words or WH-words found in this study are '*who the **fuck**', 'how the **fuck***', '*where the **fuck***'**,** '*what the **fuck***' and '*why the **fuck***'. The examples of the use of interrogative words used with the *f*-word can be seen in the following examples:

4. How the *fuck* did she manages to loose the first set when she was leading 4-0 seriously

5. @thecjpearson who the fuck in their right mind would want to shut them down. What a joke.

6. RT @joey_lgnd: Man why the *fuck* am I not good enough for anyone?

7. i couldn't tell u where the *fuck* my head is right now

The *f*-word was used by the speakers to address or name a person as '*fuck* boy' and '*fuck* buddy'. '*Fuck* boy' and '*fuck* buddy' are used as compound nouns that describe a person and the *f*-word act as an adjective followed by a noun.

8. When my friends tell me about the *fuck* boys they deal with http://t.co/lLsoeFMNRp

9. So this Babcock guy that i did business with is just trying to tell me hes a *fuck* boy by not doing his own part of the transaction smh !

10. RT @skinnyxFreddy: i can't even have a one night stand or *fuck* buddy, bcus i end up thinking we're dating. ??

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4.1.3 Adjective form

As shown in Table 4.1, the adjective form of the *f*-word was found in 5.7% of the collected tweets. The adjectives were used to describe specific feelings or personalities. '*Funny as **fuck***' and *'bored as **fuck***' are some of the examples of adjectives that users used to describe something or someone. The examples of the *f*-word used as adjectives are as follows.

1. RT @harrystylism: HARRY IS SO WEIRD AND FUNNY AS ***FUCK*** LMAO#EMABiggestFans1D http://t.co/2zXcrFxxso

2. RT @MrRondeezy: Bored as ***fuck***. Somebody dm me while I cook

3. When you're high as ***fuck*** and show up to the wrong movie set. http://t.co/j7y1XQk30D

4.1.4 Adverb form

The adverb form of the *f*-word was the least used syntactic form in the data. The following examples show the *f*-word being used as adverbs form on Twitter.

1. I'm up Smoken An ***Fuck*ing** Round On SnapChat Come *fuck* with me

2. I swear people were ***fuck*ing** put on this earth to piss me off *fuck* sake

3. kelly said some "I'll ***fuck*ing** chunk the *fuck* it bucket @ "

4.1.5 Adverb Intensifying Adjective form

The adverb intensifying adjective was also the least used syntactic form of the *f*-word on Twitter. The adverb of the *f*-word (*fucking*) was used to intensify adjectives like ridiculous, lethal and perfect as shown in the examples below:

1. RT @Luke5SOSloljoke: Michael is ***fuck*ing** perfect the way he is. If you think he needs to lose weight or needs "muscles" you should get the f…

2. @DrewWestLA @Robomodo isnt it ***fuck*ing** ridiculous?!? Back to roots my ass ***fuck*** you robomodo

3. RT @jimull: hey monty is that all you do *fuck* hot ***fuck*ing** woman all the time NO FAIR :) xx https://t.co/o3Ff0afADC

4.2 The functions of the *f*-word on Twitter

As explained in Chapter 3, the tweets collected for this study were classified according to a combination of McEnery et al. (2000) and Ljung's (2011) typologies to analyse the functions of the *f*-word used. The tweets in this study were categorized according to the functions of the *f*-word, where the functions were grouped into 19 categories. Table 4.2 shows the functions of the *f*-word found in the data.

Table 4.2: The functions of the *f*-word

Functions	Frequency of occurrence of the *f*-word	Percentage of occurrence (100%)
The predicative negative adjectives	-	-
Curses	360	36
Destinational usages	31	3.1
Emphatic intensifiers	23	2.3
Expletives	133	13.3
Idiomatic 'set phrase'	295	29.5
Imagery based on literal meaning	-	-
Literal usages	-	-
'Pronominal' forms	66	6.6
Personal insults	25	2.5
'Reclaimed' usage	-	-
Religious oaths	21	2.1
Unclassifiable	33	3.3
Unfriendly suggestions	8	0.8
Affirmations and contradictions	-	-
Ritual insults	4	0.4
Modal adverbials	-	-
Anaphoric use of epithets	1	0.1
Noun supports	-	-
Total	**1000**	**100**

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Based on the results shown in Table 4.2, the *f*-word was frequently used to curse. The *f*-word used to curse recorded 36% of occurrence in the data. Idiomatic 'set phrase' of the *f*-word was recorded second highest percentage of occurrence, which is 29.5%, followed by expletives 13.3%. The pronominal form of the *f*-word recorded 6.6% of the use. Other functions of the *f*-word, such as destinational usage, emphatic intensifiers, personal insults, religious oaths and unclassifiable functions recorded a low percentage of occurrence from 2% to 3%. Unfriendly suggestions, name-calling, ritual insults and anaphoric use of epithet were the least used in the data (1%).

Functions such as predicative negative adjectives, 'reclaimed' usage, literal usage denoting taboo referent and imagery based on literal meaning from McEnery et. al. (2000) were not found in the data. The functions from Ljung typology (2011) such as modal adverbials, affirmation and contradiction and noun supports were also not found in the data. Overall, seven categories out of a total 19 categories of the functions of the *f*-word were not found in the data. A total of 12 categories of functions of the *f*-word found in this study are discussed in the following sections.

4.2.1 Curses

As mentioned earlier in section 4.2, to curse is the most frequently used function of the *f*-word found in the data. The *f*-word as a curse was often used to curse someone with negative or positive emotions. Emotions such as anger, love, joy, sadness and thankfulness can be expressed with the *f*-word. Wang et al. (2014) found that people often use swear words to express negative emotions such as sadness and anger. This study also found similar findings. which that the *f*-word is used mostly to express negative emotions rather than positive emotions. The following examples show that

the *f*-word was used to express anger toward a group of people or to their attitude as shown in the examples below:

1. RT @jenny_k162: **FUCK** PEOPLE'S OPINION WHOSE SHITTY BAND FAILED @SetItOff ALL THE WAY ??????

2. I'm quitting my job tomorrow and by quitting I'm just not showing up anymore cause **fuck** them

As in example 1, '*fuck people's opinion*' is used as a replacement for saying 'doesn't care or bother' in a anger way. In the other word, the speaker curse that he/her doesn't 'give a damn' about others opinion. While in example 2, the speaker wants to quit his/her job and expresses disappointment and anger towards the people in the workplace by cursing '*fuck them*'.

The users used *f*-word to curse to express their hatred and pain. In example 1, the speaker's expresses his/her hatred over his/her best friend by cursing *'fuck you'* because disappointed over a fake friendship. While in example 2, the speaker expresses pain and hatred over a person who hurt his/her feelings by using *f*-word

3. done with fake stupid bitches who claim to be my "best friend" lol **fuck** you, you stupid c

4. I hate the person I've became ever since you broke my heart. **Fuck** you.

The *f*-word was also used to express aggression towards something or a certain system. The following examples show that the speakers used the *f*-word to express their dissatisfaction and anger towards something or an organization like '**fuck** *it'*, '**fuck** *the constituition'* and '**fuck** *work'* as found in the data.

5. The amount of sleep I have had this week is so damn low. I need a break. **Fuck** it. I'm staying home tomorrow morning. ASL, please forgive me.

6. @Rowemanticize **_FUCK_** WORK I WANNA PLAY GAMES BUT I HAVE TO BE UP IN SIX HOURS GAAAAAAAH

7. @megynkelly @RealBenCarson except when you're Christian. Then **_fuck_** the constitution because of your faith.

In examples 5, the speaker used '**_fuck it_**' to express the feelings of 'don't care' or 'don't bother' about others and really needs a break. In example 6, the speaker tend to curse the work or job (**_fuck_** _work_) as he/her wants to play games but needs to wake up earlier.

The speaker also tends to express his/her dissatisfaction over sports, where the speaker curses a particular baseball team, the Dodgers. Wang et al. (2014) has stated that the cursing occurs more frequently on Twitter during sports events take place. The examples of cursing a baseball team found in this study indicates that there was a baseball match took place as in the date where the data collected for this study:

8. @Dodgers **_fuck_** La.The bitches live in Medford!

9. Know this is a lil late but **_fuck_** yea Dodgers Clinched! Lets hope they perform in play offs #OctoberBaseball

10. **_Fuck_** the bitch ass Dodgers

Although, curses are often used in anger, it was also used for positive emotions as shown in the following example follows. The _f_-word in example 11 (**_fuck_** him) was used as a joke.

11. A big, loud shoutout to @FilmChef930 for his birthday today. He's 23, though, so **_fuck_** him. (Just kidding. You're loved more than you know.)

Twitter users also tend to curse themselves as ***fuck*** *me.* Ljung (2011) defines it as a *self-cursing* and it is used without involving a third party. *Self-cursing* often occurs when an unfavourable incident happens as can be seen in example 12, the user curses himself/herself with anger about his/her life. Ljung (2011) states that *self-cursing* is used for negative reactions as shown in the example below

12. *Fuck* my *fuck*in life. Just ***fuck*** me.????

4.2.2 Idiomatic 'set phrase'

The second most frequently used function of the *f*-word was idiomatic use and this is similar to the findings in the BNC. Idiomatic use or idiomatic 'set phrase' usually takes the noun form, and it is used to emphasize on something. The idiomatic 'set phrase' is often used with WH-words such as *how the* ***fuck,*** *what the* ***fuck,*** *what the* ***fuck****, where the* ***fuck*** and *who the* ***fuck****.* Other examples of *f*-words used as idiomatic 'set phrase' are ***fuck*** *up,* ***fuck*** *around,* ***fuck*** out, ***fuck*** *down,* ***fuck*** *with, get the* ***fuck*** *away* and *give a* ***fuck****.* Table 4.3 shows the frequency of the idiomatic use of the *f*-word found in this study.

Table 4.3: Idiomatic use of the *f*-word found on Twitter

Idiomatic use	Tweets
WH-words	109
fuck *with*	29
fuck *around*	8
fuck *up*	47
fuck *out*	32
fuck *down*	2
give a ***fuck***	32
get the ***fuck*** *away*	2
Total	261

As can be seen in Table 4.3, the uses of the *f*-word with WH-words was higher than other idiomatic use of the *f*-word and found in 109 of the tweets. Table 4.4 shows the idiomatic use of the *f*-word with WH-words found in the data.

Table 4.4: Idiomatic use with WH-words

WH-words	Frequency of occurrence
why the **fuck**	24
what the **fuck**	63
who the **fuck**	6
where the **fuck**	4
how the **fuck**	12

What the **fuck***'* has been the most frequently used idiomatic 'set phrase' with WH-words found in the data. The idiomatic 'set phrase' *what the* **fuck** is often used to express shock or surprise over something. It is also abbreviated as '*wtf*' as can be seen in example 1. *'What the* **fuck***'* is also used to state confusion about what has happened as in the examples 2 and 3.

1. *wtf?!!!!* what the **fuck**

2. Im just so confused and I'm still trying to figure out what the **fuck** happened

3. @luke_brooks @James_Yammouni what the **fuck** is happening

The idiomatic 'set phrase' *what the fuck* was also used by users to ask about something new or new information as shown in the examples below

4. RT @kylekinane: what the **fuck** is a squad goal? are they on fleek? is this about kendrick lamaze again?

5. what the **fuck** he meant by electronics anyway

6. @DruggyBuilder what the **fuck** was she smoking ???? http://t.co/2vD6Kdkvrh

The use of 'why the **fuck**' is the second most often used idiomatic 'set phrase', Idiomatic 'set phrase, 'why the **fuck**' is often used to express disappointment or to inquire about something. 'Why the fuck' is also saying 'why' in an angry way. The following are examples of this idiomatic use are as follows

1. 4am... Why the **fuck** am I still up? I am an idiot. I'm totally going to pay for this.

2. Why the **fuck** haven't I talked to Savannah and becca since Saturday. Like they won't reply to me ??

3. RT @isabelaseraffim: Why the **fuck** did I like you

As in example 1, 'why the **fuck**' is used by the speaker who disappointed over himself/herself and regret that he/she did not sleep earlier. In example 2, the speaker regrets his act that why haven't talk to the two person. The speaker showed his/her disappointment for liking someone by cursing 'why the fuck'.

The use of 'how the **fuck**' is the least used idiomatic 'set phrase' with WH-words. The idiomatic 'set phrase' how the **fuck** is used to express surprise or anger over something.

1. How the **fuck** did she manages to loose the first set when she was leading 4-0 seriously

2. RT @vinnycrack: How the **fuck** he lose her? Nigga turn the corner she right there http://t.co/qFViXdF0GX

3. How the **fuck** is my internet so *fuck*en slow at 1 in the morning?

Example 1 show that users used 'how the **fuck**' to express anger over a player who failed to win a game. While in example 2 also the speaker used 'how the **fuck**' to express anger at someone. The speaker expresses his/her anger over slow connection of internet by saying 'how the **fuck**'.

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The idiomatic 'set phrase' '*who the **fuck***' was used by the users to address someone as shown in the following examples. The users used '*who the **fuck***' *to* address an unknown person as in the examples 1 and 2.

1. Who The *Fuck* Is #2

2. Who the *fuck* calling mama at 1 in da mornin? ??

The idiomatic 'set phrase' '*where the **fuck***' is used by users to seek information about a location of a place or people. The following examples show the use of '*where the fuck*' in the data:

1. RT @twaimz: AWWW THIS IS SO CUTEEEE now where the *fuck* is camp rock 3 http://t.co/FCapZZUQ0k

2. i couldn't tell u where the *fuck* my head is right now

3. Where the *fuck* is everybody?! ??it's boring like shit on here

The idiomatic 'set phrase', '***fuck** up*' was mostly used to show anger and 's*hut the **fuck** up*' is the popular form of '***fuck** up*' found in the data. Fifteen tweets with *shut the **fuck** up*' were found, where tweeiting was used to stop someone from doing something or to tell them to stop talking. The examples of this are as follows:

1. RT @kneeyama: oh no you cant get your a1's anymore shut the *fuck* up

2. @lguerruero39 obviously I know what song it is, but you love me so just shut the *fuck* up

The idiomatic 'set phrase', '***fuck*** up' also means to spoil, ruin or mess up something as shown in the following examples:

3. 20/24 so far. Hope night shoot i dont *fuck* up.

4. I stick to falsies bcos I have my own glue and I store my lashes somewhere dry and clean ?? Eyelash extensions *fuck* up your real lashes too??

5. I didn't *fuck* up my liner it's a miracle! http://t.co/3hxWnT4gya

The use of the idiomatic 'set phrase' **'*fuck* with'** was often used to express anger as can be seen in the following examples.

1. RT @HailKingSoup: I don't care about what people think of me. It's either you *fuck* with Me or You dont.If you do..cool. If you don't...oh…

2. Don't *fuck* with other people's feelings just because you can't resist your slut-ass urges.

3. RT @BryceSerna10: Don't *fuck* with the homies

The idiomatic 'set phrase' '*give a fuck*' is used when a person doesn't care or worry about what others will think or say. The examples of the use of *give a **fuck*** are as follows:

1. RT @BartRodkey: Don't you love being the last one to find out but the first one to not give a ***fuck***

2. RT @glaadysx3_: I must really care if i actually give a ***fuck*** bout' what you doing ????

3. I don't give a ***fuck*** about anyone not liking me, just don't smile in my face when you see me..

The idiomatic 'set phrase', **'*fuck around'*** means that someone or a group of people is spending time doing nothing or unimportant things as shown in example 1. '*Fuck around'* also used by users to tell someone 'don't mess around' as in example 2.

1. @SeanHolst13 ***Fuck*** around do nothin but sky hooks

2. RT @AssholeCasanova: I swear all females come with pro lurk skills, don't ***fuck*** around

'***Fuck*** *down*' and '***fuck*** *away*' have a lower frequency of use in the data and they are the new forms of the idiomatic use of the *f*-word found in this study as it was not found in the BNC. '***Fuck*** away' is used to tell someone to 'stay away' as in the examples 1 and 2. The following examples show the use of these idiomatic 'set phrase'

1. RT @BEATKINGKONG: Stay the ***fuck*** away from me and my family if you put ketchup on eggs or rice.

2. get the ***fuck*** away from me before i do something unnecessary

3. RT @thenikqistina: Do parents even realise how hard their childrens are trying their best for them? Pipe the ***fuck*** down with the yelling. We…

4. RT @JahovasWitniss: You can't *fuck*ing fart these days without offending someone and their beliefs. Everyone calm the ***fuck*** down and just liv…

4.2.3 Expletives interjections

F-words being used as expletives was the third highest used function of the *f*-word found on Twitter. This function was used to show surprise or anger over something as in the following examples

1. Oh ***fuck***, it's Midweek. I was on a right old roll there too.

2. Just been invited to a school reunion.... ***Fuck*** I'm old!!

3. RT @Haiimstephanie: ***Fuck*** yeah I do. ?????????? https://t.co/jM7CgT9IMp

Expletives also are used to express positive emotions. The expletives *'fuck'* in the examples 4 and 5 was used to praise someone.

4. RT @AscArLy: *Fuck* she's so cute

5. RT @ArletteAlfaro: @Molano_8 *fuck* no you're amazing and fun in every single category my love ????

4.2.4 Pronominal form

The pronominal form of the *f*-word was used to describe something or a personality. In this function, the *f*-word was used with the word 'as' or 'like' to describe a high degree of an object, situation, quality or an action. The adjectives like 'silly', 'broke', 'annoying', 'rich', 'dirty', 'loud' and 'dumb' were used with the *f*-word to describe someone or something. The following examples show the pronominal form of the *f*-word which are used in the study.

1. I'm silly as *fuck* ??

2. You say this shit like only $5. Ya boy is broke as *fuck*. Hook me up https://t.co/YxusaVodRr

3. When someone is so manipulatingly clever but they're also dumb as *fuck* at the same time. The WORST people

The *f*-word used as a pronominal form also can express positive situations such as *'good as fuck'* or *'nice as fuck'* as shown in the examples 4 and 5. The *f*-word is used to praise the personality of a person like *'beauty as fuck', 'hot as fuck', 'weird and funny as fuck'* and *'addicting as fuck'*.

4. Bed time lol tonight was nice as *fuck*. Can't wait to be home though. It's going to be so much fun. http://t.co/NOnW5KKWZP

5. RT   @TheDrizzyBible: Papi   looking   good   as   ***fuck***
   http://t.co/M081cwZfFX

6. RT @FemaleBibIe: everything about you is addicting as ***fuck***

The following examples show the pronominal function, which used the intensifier 'like' to express something.

7. @mtansy_ yeh we did, we went to like 3 clubs and at all we were like ***fuck*** this *fuck* that and ended up going back to soon's lawl ????

8. Oh and of course my period tracker Saif I'll be getting mine right before I head up north. Like ***fuck***. Bear country

4.2.5 Personal insults

Personal insults of the *f*-word comprised 2% of the use in the data. Personal insults were used to address a third person as ***fucker, fuck*** *boy* or ***fuck*** *man.* Personal insults often related to negative emotion such as anger or disappointment over someone as shown in the following example 1 and 3. In example 2, the user used the word 'big ***fuck***' to refer to an important person and speaker telling the listener to stop acting like an important person with anger. The examples of personal insults found in the data were '***fucker***', '***fuck*** *boy*' and '*big* ***fuck***'.

1. RT @NepentheZ: This ***fuck***er just doesn't really know who he wants to be lmao. Ronaldo, Ronaldinho, Rivaldo. *Fuck* it, I'm all of them. http:/…

2. fking hell, stop acting like a big ***fuck*** here

3. Why did I have to give the last of my Zanz to that ***fuck*** boy earlier ????

4.2.6 Destinational usage

The destinational usage '*fuck* off' is used to ask someone to leave or go away in a rude way. It was also used to express disappointment and anger over someone as in the examples 1 and 3. The following examples show the destinational usage of the *f*-word:

1. RT @IAMoffat: *Fuck* off messi http://t.co/OZGO76K2bj
2. RT @tuscansweater: next Friday needs to hurry up so I can tell everyone to *fuck* off and go into seclusion and listen to the new 1975 album …
3. @MelieVanellie *fuck* off I know what you're going to do

4.2.7 Unfriendly suggestion

McEnery et al. (2000) categorized '*fuck off*' as destinational usage while Ljung (2011) categorized it as an unfriendly suggestion. In this study, *fuck off* was categorized in destinational usage and the unfriendly suggestion was used to categorize other *f*-word functions in the unfriendly suggestion category except *fuck off*. Unfriendly suggestions are used to express aggression towards someone. The term *self-fucking* or *fuck* an animal or an object are categorized as unfriendly suggestions. These functions are often directed to someone to show anger or disappointment. Examples of the unfriendly suggestions found in the data are '*fuck yourself*'!, '*go fuck yourself!*', '*fuck a duck*' and '*fuck a cactus!*' The following examples show unfriendly suggestions using the *f*-word found in the data:

1. go *fuck* yourself and do a good song.
2. RT @newhappycabby: #UbermovesLDN into a duck #ubered #saveuber Their abusing the wildlife now .*Fuck* a duck http://t.co/GYWuvkXhbE
3. @camerondallas YOU AR UGLY AF GO *FUCK* A CACTUS AND

4.2.8 Oaths

The use of the *f*-word by replacing God's name with it is categorized as oath. The use of the *f*-word such as ***fuck*** *sake,* ***fuck*** *knows* and *thank* ***fuck*** are considered as oaths. '*For* ***fuck*** *sake'* is a another way of saying '*for God's sake'* as in the example 1. '*Thank fuck'* and '*fuck knows'* in example 2 and 3 refer to '*thank God'* and *'God Knows'*.

1. RT @gemmadanieIs: ***Fuck*** sake al go trick or treating x http://t.co/KEo6SXexQE

2. @xLizziDx he didn't rate his fringe players last season, ***fuck*** knows what we're going to do now

3. Saw something at uni saying 'SWP are rape apologists'Thank ***fuck*** someone is saying something about it at this uni, SWP are quite large here.

4.2.9 Ritual insults

Ritual insults is a sexual term used involving somebody's mother or sister and king or queen. Rituals insults found in the data indicate that the users used the *f*-word with reference to someone's mother, sister or daughter. Ritual insults found in the data are as shown in the following examples:

1. RT @yadongarea: #YAMF to @ssexygirl_***fuck*** you my daughtie! fr : daddy http://t.co/qJI9Zi1cbg

2. i will ***fuck*** his momma cryinnnnnnnnnnnnngggggggggg

3. RT @JoshEvans_: Is it acceptable to punch ***fuck*** out your sister if they become a juicy pr

4.2.10 Emphatic intensifier

Emphatic intensifiers of the *f*-word (*fucking*) is used as an emphatic adverb or an adjective. The *fucking* used as an emphatic intensifier is an emotionally charged form used to 'add' to someone's expression. The following examples show how the *f*-word is used as an emphatic intensifier:

1. RT @oppressorshim: @blankirt but he's def a cute one and *fucking* optimistic he lives life all the right ways and basically lives the motto …

2. RT @Luke5SOSloljoke: Michael is *fucking* perfect the way he is. If you think he needs to lose weight or needs "muscles" you should get the f…

3. Holy fuck The Phantom Pain is so goddamn good. Like really *fucking* good. Easily the best game this year.

4.2.11 Anaphoric use of epithets

Anaphoric use of epithets of the *f*-word found in the data was 'motherfucker' and it is shown in the example below :

1. These *motherfuckers* out here always wanna play fuck fuck, i'll play motherfucking fuck fuck - spencer pratt ??

4.2.12 Unclassified

The use of the *f*-word which could not be categorized under any of the categories was categorized as having an unclassified function. The following examples show some of the unclassified *f* –word:

1. BITCH I HOPE THE *FUCK* YOU DO YOULL BE A DEAD SON OF A BITCH ILL TELL U DAT

2. One hit more and i can own ya, one more *fuck* and i can own ya

3. Cup of tea, *fuck* of coffee. http://t.co/ylDq8CqvAQ

As in the examples 1 and 2, what was the speaker referring to by using the *f*-word, could not be identified and *'the fuck you do'* or *'one more fuck'* could not be categorized under any categories. Moreover, '**fuck** *of coffee'* may refer to a 'cup of coffee' and cup may has been replaced with *fuck.* But, still '*fuck of coffee'* could not fit into any categories and it seem to be new pattern of the use of the *f*-word.

4.3 The relationship between *f*-word syntactic form and functions

The relationship of the syntactic forms of the *f*-word and functions of the *f*-word were identified after the data were analyzed according to its forms and functions. The *f*-words used 'to curse' always takes the verb form. For example, **fuck** *him,* **fuck** *it,* **fuck** *them* and **fuck** *her.* Destinational usage, **fuck** *off* is used as a verb form. Ritual insults and unfriendly suggestion are always directed towards someone and used as a verb.

The idiomatic 'set phrase' often used as a noun. The idiomatic 'set phrase' used with question words or WH-words used the noun form of the word such as '*who the* **fuck***'*, '*how the* **fuck***'*, '*where the* **fuck***'*, '*what the* **fuck***'* and '*why the* **fuck***'.* However, there are some idiomatic use which used the *f*-word as a verb. For example, **fuck** *up,* **fuck** *around,* **fuck** *out,* **fuck** *down* and **fuck** *with.* Expletives, personal insults and oaths are always used as nouns. For example, **fuck** *yess!!,* **fuck** *boy* and **fuck** *sake.* The pronominal functions always take the adjective form. For example, *funny as* **fuck***, soft as* **fuck** and *nice as* **fuck.**

4.4 Comparison of findings of this study and McEnery and Xiao's (2004) study of the *f*-word in the British National Corpus (BNC)

Unlike this study, where the verbs constituted the most frequent form of the *f*-word, McEnery and Xiao (2004) found that ***fuck*ing** was the most frequently used syntactic form in the BNC. This swear word, ***fucking*,** can be used as an adjective or an adverb. The noun form of the *f*-word was the second highly used *f*-word form in the present study while the verb form recorded the second highest use in the BNC. The adjectives and adverbs were the least used forms found in this study. The percentage of occurrence of the *f*-word based on its functions found in both studies, which are in the BNC and the present study are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Percentage of occurrence of the *f*-word found in the BNC and in the present study

Functions	Percentage of occurrence of the *f*-word in the BNC (%)	Percentage of occurrence of the *f*-word in the present study (%)
The predicative negative adjectives	-	-
Curse	5.99	34
Destinational usage	5.43	3.1
Emphatic intensifier	55.85	2.3
Expletives	6.72	13.3
Idiomatic 'set phrase'	12.30	29.4
Imagery based on literal meaning	-	-
Literal usage	7.16	-
'Pronominal' form	1.54	6.6
Personal insults	1.87	2.5
'Reclaimed' usage	-	-
Religious oath	-	2.1
Unclassifiable	3.14	3.1

In terms of functions, the findings from the present study differ from what was found in the BNC by McEnery and Xiao (2004). This finding indicates that the use *f*-word has changed from the past and this study revealed the current pattern of the use of *f*-

word. Emphatic intensifiers, followed by idiomatic 'set phrase', was the most frequently used function of the *f*-word in the BNC. On the other hand, in the present study to curse was most frequently used function. In the present time, the *f*-word is mainly used to curse and mostly associated with negative emotions as revealed by this study. Other similar findings of this study to the BNC were that the use of the *f*-word, was not found in three categories which were predicative negative adjectives, imagery based on literal meaning and 'reclaimed usage'. The religious oath of the *f*-word, which was not found in the BNC, was however found in the present study. The comparison of the frequency of occurrence of idiomatic 'set phrase' of the *f*-word found in the BNC and in the present study is shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Comparison of idiomatic use of the *f*-word found in the BNC and in the present study

Idiomatic use of the *f*-word	Frequency of occurrence of the *f*-word in the BNC	Frequency of occurrence of the *f*-word in the present study
WH-words	126	109
fuck with	12	29
fuck up/ *fuck* off	69	78
fuck around/ fuck out	12	40
fuck down	-	2
give a *fuck*	17	32
get the *fuck* away	-	2

Idiomatic use found in this study was similar to the findings in the BNC which second highest used functions. The use of WH-words in the BNC recorded the highest used idiomatic function compare to other functions, such as '*give a fuck, fuck up, fuck with* and *fuck around.* The second highest used idiomatic use found in this study was *fuck up* and this finding is also similar to the finding in the BNC. In this study, the least used idiomatic function was *fuck* around and this result was similar to the findings in the BNC. *Fuck* out was often used in the present study while it was the

least used in the BNC. The use of ***fuck*** down and *get the **fuck** away* were identified in this study and it was not found in the BNC. Although, ***fuck*** down recorded the lowest use, but it seems to be a new type of the *f*-word which was used in recent times. The use of ***fuck*** *around,* ***fuck*** *out* and *give a **fuck*** found in this study was higher and it was the least used forms in the BNC.

4.5 Summary

In this chapter, the results of the forms and functions of *f*-word were identified. The collected tweets were analysed according to Holster's classification (2005) for syntactic forms of the *f*-word, and a combination of McEnery et al. (2000) and Ljung (2011) typologies for the functions of *f*-words. The relationship between syntactic forms and functions of the *f*-word were discussed in this chapter. The similarities and differences of the findings of this study with the findings of McEnery and Xiao's (2004) study of the *f*-word in the British National Corpus (BNC) also were identified in this chapter. The conclusion of this study will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

The chapter presents the summary of the findings of this study. Recommendations for future studies are also provided in this study.

5.1 Summary

This study was carried out to identify how swear words are used on the social networking site, Twitter. This study only focuses on one swear word, which is the *f*-word. The syntactic forms and functions of the *f*-word used on Twitter were investigated in this study through an analysis of 1000 tweets. The summary of the findings will be discussed according to the research questions.

5.2 Research Question 1: What are the syntactic forms of the *f*-word on Twitter?

The tweets collected for this were analysed according to the syntactic forms of the *f*-word. The *f*-word in each tweet was examined to identify the syntactic forms. The findings on the syntactic forms of the *f*-word are shown in Table 4.1 in the previous chapter. The findings show that the *f*-word is mostly used as a verb form and this finding is similar to Kaye and Sapolsky (2005) finding. This study revealed that the *f*-word used on Twitter is often verbalised. The *f*-word also was frequently used as a noun. The other syntactic forms such as adjectives, adverbs and adverb intensifying adjectives were the least used in the data.

5.3 Research Question 2: What are the functions of the *f*-word on Twitter

The classification of the functions of the *f*-word was carried out by combining the typologies from McEnery et al. (2000) and Ljung (2011) typologies. The findings show that curses were the most frequently used function of the *f*-word. This was followed by idiomatic use and expletives.

This study identified the relationship of the syntactic form of the *f*-word and functions of the *f*-word. Curse often takes the verb form while other functions such as idiomatic 'set phrase' and expletives, personal insults and oaths are often used as nouns. The pronominal function of the *f*-word always takes the adjective form.

5.4 Comparison of findings of this study and McEnery and Xiao's (2004) study of the *f*-word in the British National Corpus (BNC)

McEnery and Xiao (2004) have found that the –ing form of the *f*-word (***fucking***) was most frequently used in the BNC, followed by verbs. In contrast, the present study found the verb to be the most used form of the *f*-word while adverbs were the least used syntactic form.

In terms of functions, the findings of the present study also differ from McEnery and Xiao's (2004) study of the BNC, with cursing being the most frequently used function of the *f*-word in this study. In the BNC, however, the *f*-word was frequently used as an emphatic intensifier, followed by idiomatic use. What is similar is the use of WH-words as the most frequently used WH- word in idiomatic use in both studies. Another similar pattern found was the three categories of functions which were predicative negative adjectives, imagery based on literal meaning and 'reclaimed' usage did not appear in both studies.

This study found some similar findings with the past studies done on swearing in the BNC. However, this study identified the current use of the *f*-word and the findings of this study had shown few new patterns in the use of the *f*-word as discussed in Chapter 4. The idiomatic use, ***fuck*** down seems to be a new type of the *f*-word which was used in recent times and it was not found in the BNC. The use of ***fuck around, fuck out*** and *give a **fuck*** recorded the highest percentage of use in this study while it was the least used forms in the BNC.

5.5 Limitations of the study

As discussed in Chapter 1, this study is limited as it investigated one particular swear word, the *f*-word that people use on social media, Twitter.

5.6 Recommendation for future studies

For future studies, it is recommended to conduct a study on swearing focusing on other social networking sites. The researchers may focus on different social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram. It is also recommended that future researchers identify the most used swears words other than the *f*-word used in the social networking sites. The identified swear words were analysed according to its functions and why these words are used. The researchers also may do a comparison of the use of swear words in the past and in the present based on its functions to identify the new pattern of the use of swear words. Gender and age factors should be considered in the future research on swear words.

5.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, the *f*-word is a popular swear word used on Twitter and it is used in different forms and functions.

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