

STRATEGIES AND PRAGMATIC EQUIVALENCE OF THE WORD *FUCK* TRANSLATION IN *THE WOLF OF WALL STREET* MOVIE

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Abstract

The choice of strategy for translating the word *fuck* in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie has its own impact on the equivalence of pragmatic meanings in the target text. This study aims to explain: (1) form, pragmatic function, and translation strategy of the word *fuck*, and (2) the implication of the word *fuck* translation strategy on pragmatic equivalence in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie. The words of *fuck* were identified from the both English and Indonesian subtitles. Then, the data were categorized and the implications were investigated. The results indicate that there are 506 words of *fuck* which are classified into three forms, namely: interjection, emphazier, and expletive slot filler. The functions conveyed by these taboo words are: catharsis, abusive, and social. These taboo words were translated using omission (72.9%), cultural substitution (15.0%), neutral words (11.5%) and loan word (0.6%). The omission and the neutral word strategy largely eliminated the function of the word *fuck*, whereas the loan word and cultural substitution strategy were able to maintain the function of the word *fuck*. However, the very large percentage of use of the omission strategy makes the translation results lose much of its pragmatic function and emotive value.

Keywords: Translation strategy, taboo word, pragmatic equivalence, the wolf of wall street movie

Introduction

The word *fuck* is a taboo word that is popularly used by English language speakers. Etymologically this word comes from Latin *futuere* (or *pungere* or *battuere*), French *foutre*, German *ficken* which all have

the contextual meaning of 'hitting' or 'beating' and the meaning of 'sexual activity' (Wajnryb, 2005: 52). It also has links to widely spoken German words (Middle Dutch *fokken*, Norwegian *fukka*, and Swiss *focka*), all of which mean 'to hit' or 'push' (p. 53).

In *An Encyclopedia of Swearing*, Hughes (2006: 188-189) notes that the word *fuck* firstly appeared not among the lower classes but among Scottish poets and aristocrats. William Dunbar is recorded as the first person to use it in his poet, namely in 1503, when he said "He wald have *fukkit*". Sir David Lindsay, a Scottish satirist, also used it in 1535 when criticizing the hypocrisy of the pastor, "Bischops ... may *fuck* their fill and be *vnmarryit*" in *Satire of the Three Estates*. Since 1857, the word has been categorized as obscene libel or 'obscene slander'. This means that a publisher can be sued if it publishes a book containing that word.

Based on the classification of Ljung (2011: 5) the word *fuck* can be divided into several forms, including: interjection or interjection, such as *fuck!* and *motherfucker!*; emphasizer or to emphasize especially question sentences, for example *what the fuck is that?*; and expletive slot filler or in the form of filler which actually has no meaning at all, for example *He is not my fucking friend*. In any form of use, this taboo word is strictly prohibited, especially in official contexts and situations. State and religious institutions usually play a role in this prohibition because the word *fuck* is a lexicon that contains offensive emotions (Jay, 2009: 153). However, the measure of taboo discrepancy depends on contextual and pragmatic variables, such as: the interpersonal relationship background of the speaker and speech partners, social and physical background, and choice of diction and tone of speech (p. 154).

The word *fuck*, which was originally so avoided, is now increasingly appearing in world films, especially Hollywood. Hughes (2006: 192-193) states that this word has even been accepted as part of popular culture, especially in movies and television shows. Some movies that started the use of the word *fuck* included: *Apocalypse Now!* (1980), *Platoon* (1987), and *Full Metal Jacket* (1988).

Guinness World Records records *The Wolf of Wall Street* as the movie which contains the most of taboo words (Park, 2018). This movie tells the life story of a stockbroker named Jordan Belfort. The word taboo in this film is not spoken in the suburbs but on Wall Street, New York.

The abundant amount of taboo words in this film portrays another side of the world of investing which is glamorous yet full of deception.

Translating the word fuck in a film is certainly a challenge. However, the translator needs to consider the norms and culture of the target language community. Unlike Hollywood, Indonesian cinema avoids using taboo words. Foreign movies which contain taboo words will be adapted to the norms and culture prevailing here through a censorship process. Therefore, translators often have a tendency to soften taboo words found in foreign films compared, for example, by translating them using taboo words in the target language with the aim that the subtitles can be well received by the public in the target language.

The obstacle that arises later is that this softening effort often has a negative impact on the translation results, including the loss of the emotive value. The function of the presence of taboo words in the source text will then disappear in the target text. This clearly interferes with the pragmatic equivalence of the translation. The relationship between the translation strategy and the shift in the function of this taboo word has not been noticed by many studies. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by explaining: (1) the form, pragmatic function, and strategy of translating the word fuck in *The Wolf of Wall Street*, and (2) the implications of the translation strategy on the function of the word fuck in *The Wolf of Wall Street*.

Literature Review

Translation Strategies

Understanding the function of the word fuck is an important thing in the translation process so that the translator can use the suitable translation strategy to achieve translation equivalence. Baker (2018: 24-45) summarizes the existing translation strategies and reformulates them into eight translation strategies: (1) Strategy using superordinate or general words. General words are very often to use when translating un-equivalent words in the target language. (2) Neutral or less expressive word strategy. This strategy is commonly used to avoid offensive words to soften the effects. (3) Cultural substitution strategy. This strategy is used for translating specific words that only exist in the culture of the target language in order to bring a similar impact with the

word in the source language, even though they sometimes have different propositional meanings. (4) Loan word strategy with or without explanation. This strategy is usually carried out when the target language really does not have an equivalent word or the translator deliberately wants to introduce the meaning of the source text completely. (5) Paraphrasing using related words. Concepts in the source language are lexicalized or restated differently in the target language. (6) Paraphrasing using unrelated words. It is basically paraphrasing using by using unrelated words and concepts. (7) Translation strategy by means of omission. Omission will be possible if the word does not interfere with the core meaning of the clause or sentence. (8) Translation strategy using illustrations. It is the only translation strategy that uses non-linguistic elements, namely using visual aids.

Pragmatic Equivalent in Translation

The equivalence, according to Nida (1964: 12), is a process of searching for the closest natural words of the source language message, in terms of meaning and style. Meanwhile, according to Venuti (2012: 5) equivalence can mean truth, accuracy, adequacy and connectivity between meanings in source language and target language. Translation equivalence can be achieved by selecting the correct translation orientation. Both also introduced the types of translation based on their orientation. The ideology of translation foreignization and domestication introduced by Venuti (2008: 15) intersects with the equivalence of formal and dynamic translation from Nida (1964: 12). Foreignization and formal equivalence are oriented towards the source language by prioritizing the original meaning of the source text, while domestication and dynamic equivalence are oriented towards the target language by prioritizing the meaning and response of the audience to the target language.

Pragmatic equivalence relates to the entanglement of meanings beyond the textual meaning and more to the contextual meaning. The contextual meaning of the word taboo is closely related to the function or reason for what the word taboo is used. It is these taboo-word functions that translators should maintain in the target language in order to achieve pragmatic equivalence. The functions of taboo words according to Wajnryb (2005: 30-40) include: (1) The catharsis function, which is the most instinctive or spontaneous function among other

functions. A swear word that functions as catharsis usually comes out of someone's mouth when the person's feet accidentally trip over the table. This swear word expresses both the irritation and the pain that is being felt at that moment. (2) Abusive function, namely a function to verbally attack people. The abusive function has significant differences with the catharsis function in terms of the involvement of others. The swear word catharsis requires someone else as the object of the curse while the swear word catharsis does not. An example is the taboo word someone uses when he sees a reckless motorist on the road. The taboo word that is spoken is intended to curse the driver who could endanger him and others around him. (3) Social function, namely a function to show friendship. Taboo words that appear in an interaction aimed at other people but are not intended to be offensive can be an indication that speakers and the interlocutors have a close interpersonal relationship or are in a relaxed situation.

Translation of Taboo Words in The Wolf of Wall Street Movie

The Wolf of Wall Street is a movie listed in the Guinness World Records as the film with the most of taboo words (Park, 2018). The availability of abundant taboo data in this film makes this film used as an object of research in various subtitles, namely Park (2018) in Korean subtitle, Abu Sirrieh et al. (2019) and Hawel (2019) in Arabic subtitle, and Bram and Putra (2019) and Sari et al. (2016) in Indonesian subtitle. Apparently none of the previous research concerned on how taboo translation relates to its pragmatic functions. Hence, this study aims at filling the gap by exploring that the choice of translation strategies has something to do not only with meaning but also with pragmatic equivalence.

Method

The formal object of this research is the word taboo fuck and its combination of words found in the material object in the form of the English and Indonesian subtitles of The Wolf of Wall Street movie. The movie, which was inspired by a true story, was made in 2013 and directed by Martin Scorsese. This film has been named the film with the most of taboo words by Guinness World Records (Park, 2019). Therefore, this movie is rated R or Restricted, which means when

watching this film, children under the age of 17 must be accompanied by parents or adults.

Data were collected by firstly watching the movie, then identifying the word fuck in the both subtitles, and encoding them. The collected words of fuck were then analyzed by categorizing word fuck based on its form (Ljung, 2011), pragmatic function (Wajnryb, 2005), and translation strategy (Baker, 2018); and linking the translation strategies used with its pragmatic function, whether they have implications on the pragmatic equivalent of the target text.

Discussion

The Form of The Word Fuck

It has been found 506 fuck words and their variations in the The Wolf of Wall Street movie. These words come in a variety of forms. Using classification of taboo word by Ljung (2011: 5), the form of fuck in this movie could be categorized into: interjection, emphasizer, and expletive slot filler. The examples of interjection form are: fuck, fuckety-fuck-fuck, motherfucker, and fuck off as shown in the following utterances.

1. ST: *Fuck!*
TT: *Sial!*
2. ST: *fuckety-fuck-fuck, Jordan,*
TT: *Karena, begitulah, Jordan,*
3. ST: *Motherfucker!*
TT: *Keparat!*
4. ST: *Oh, fuck off.*
TT: *Oh, sial!*

The word fuck also appears in the form of a question that uses wh-words. Here, this taboo word emphasizes the question sentence. An example of this emphasizer is shown below.

5. ST: *Where the fuck is it?*
TT: *Di manakah itu?*

In addition, the word fuck appears in the form of expletive slot fillers or as filler words that actually have no meaning but can express the emotions of the utterance. Words which appear in this form are:

fucking, and motherfucking. In utterances (6) and (7) these two words are not even translated into the target language at all, but this does not interfere with the unity of the meaning of each of these sentences.

- 6. ST: *Get your fucking hands off me!*
TT: *Lepaskan tanganmu!*
- 7. ST: *I fucking love you, Jordan!*
TT: *Aku menyayangimu, Jordan!*

Translation Strategy of The Word Fuck

The translation strategy used in translating the word fuck in The Wolf of Wall Street movies namely: omission, cultural substitution, and load words. The high percentage of omission translation strategies as shown in table 1 indicates that the translator tries to soften the word fuck in the target language. This is in line with the results of Park (2019) 's research on Korean, Hawel (2019) and Abu Sirrieh et al. (2019) on Arabic which show that taboo words are more frequently translated by using omission than other translation strategies.

Table 1. Strategy for translating the word *fuck*.

Translation Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Omission	369	72.9%
Cultural substitution	76	15%
Loan word	58	11.5%
Borrowing	3	0.6%

Omission Strategy

The omission strategy was used 369 times or 72.9% and made it the most widely used strategy in translating the word fuck in this film. This strategy is mostly used in translating emphaziser and expletive slot fillers such as fuck in utterance (5) and fucking in utterance (6). Although the propositional meaning of a sentence is not reduced at all, the omission strategy eliminates the emotive meaning of these taboo words. Jordan Belfort's anger at the loss of his money and his lover's jewelry was on utterance (5) and Stratton Oakmont employee's frustration at utterance (6) towards FBI officers who caught him is not expressed in the target language subtitles.

The greater loss of emotive value occurs in (8) where two taboo words are simultaneously removed from the translation. The taboo

words cooksucking and motherfucking which are used together as adjectives which describe the same object, namely Steve Madden, shows the great emotion of Jordan Belfort to the person who deceived him in the sale of shares.

8. ST: *Even though I owned 85% of Steve-cocksucking-motherfucking-Madden Shoes*

TT: *Walaupun aku memiliki 85% dari sepatu Steve Madden*

Baker (2019: 43) views that omission as commonplace in translation and in certain contexts is not detrimental at all. But on the other hand, the omission strategy or Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002) called this reduction in fact eliminating the emotive value of a sentence that the speaker intends to convey through intensive, so that it has the potential to produce inaccurate translation products (Sari et al., 2016: 97).

Cultural Substitution Strategy

The cultural substitution strategy is carried out by replacing the word BSu with a word that does not have the same propositional meaning but can have the same impact on the target reader (Baker, 2019: 30). This cultural substitution strategy is similar to Davoodi's (2009) taboo for taboo translation strategy because they both focus on producing an impact for the audience.

As many as 15.0% of the word taboo fuck in the subtitle of the film *The Wolf of Wall Street* was translated using a cultural substitution strategy. This strategy translates the word fuck into a taboo word in the target language even though the literal meaning is so far away. The word fuck in utterance (9) is translated as affair which comes from the root word Satan which according to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) V means "the word to express the anger" (2019). Another form of cultural substitution exists in (10) where fuck can be translated into bad luck. Based on KBBI V (2019), bad luck falls into the category of harsh words and means "the wretched one; hell." Both fuck and bad luck have a literal meaning that is far removed from the literal meaning of fuck which according to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary means "an act of having sex" (2008).

9. ST: *Fuck you!*

- TT: *Persetan kau!*
10. ST: *Fuck!*
TT: *Sial!*

Although most of the word *fucking* becomes expletive slot filler, some have a core meaning and are translated using cultural substitution in the form of a taboo word in the target language.

11. ST: *Fucking digits.*
TT: *Digit-digit keparat.*

The cultural substitution strategy is able to present a translation equivalence that is closer to the taboo word of the source language because this strategy prioritizes the impact felt by the audience from the translation results, not merely on the similarity of literal meanings.

Neutral Word Strategy

This strategy is used 58 times or 11.5% and is the third most used strategy in translating the word *fuck* variant in the film *The Wolf of Wall Street*. The verb phrase *give a fuck* has only one possible equivalent in Indonesian, namely *peduli*. The word *care* clearly doesn't have an emotive meaning or is not as expressive as *give a fuck*. In (12) there is a clear difference in the way of expressing meanings between English and Indonesian. In English, insults are not only conveyed in the form of interjection, nouns and adjectives, but also in the form of verbs. Whereas in Indonesian, taboo word is more in the form of interjection and nouns.

12. ST: *Nobody gives a fuck.*
TT: *Tak ada yang peduli.*

The word *fucking* in (13) is not in the form of expletive slot filler, it has the role of an adjective which gives information to the adjective in front of it which is convenient. *Fucking* here is translated as a word that has no equal emotive value, namely *sangat*. Strategy used in (12) and (13) can also be considered as euphemism as it softens the taboo words of the source text (Surya, 2014).

13. ST: *Well, isn't that just fucking convenient for you!*

TT: *Bukankah sungguh nyaman bagimu?*

The choice of strategy with the use of neutral words is mostly driven by differences in the concept of lexicalization and expressive meanings in the two languages which are actually part of several general obstacles in the mismatches conveyed by Baker (2018: 19-24). This difference in literal meaning according to Fernández Dobao (2006) is not so important in translating taboo words because what needs to be paid close attention is the emotional equivalence and behavior of the speaker so that the impact felt by the audience on the translation results with the original text can be the same.

Loan Word Strategy

Only three times this strategy was used. The only word translated using this strategy is fucksville. This word has a very close connection with the situation and culture of the United States of America where many city names ended by -ville. Fucksville itself never existed in the United States. This word was made only to show Donnie's anger and ridicule towards Brad who acted as if he were a king. Therefore, Donnie calls him The Emperor of Fucksville.

14. ST: *Oh, my gosh. The Emperor of Fucksville came down from Fucksville to give me a pass!*

TT: *Kaisar Fucksville datang dari Fucksville untuk beri aku ijin lewat.*

There is no exact equivalent of fucksville in Indonesian. This is due to differences in regional naming systems in the United States and Indonesia as well as the flexibility of the word fuck itself. Indonesian does not have swear words, it can be positioned as any class of words such as the word fuck. Therefore, the translator uses this loan word strategy as an option because this strategy is appropriate to use when meeting words that have specific cultural meanings (Baker, 2019: 34).

Loan word strategy does not include in what Yamayanti et al. (2016) suggest on their study that generally strategies used by translator are literal and idiomatic. Loan word is an alternative option when two options cannot provide the equivalence and accommodate the intention of the translator to maintain the cultural meaning of the word.

The Implication of Translation Strategy for the Pragmatic Function of the Word Fuck

Table 2 shows that the word fuck has a social function of 75%. Abusive function is only 21% and is a function that only appears at certain times unlike the social function that appears in almost all occasions. The least function used was catharsis as much as 4%. These taboo words pragmatic functions proposed by Wajnryb (2005) inform how each taboo word contain not only meaning bt also specific emotion.

Table below shows that most of the word fuck and its combination of words are mostly used just not to offend or attack the interlocutor verbally, but to show that the taboo word, especially fuck, has become the norm and the character's speaking style. It can also prove that this film wants to show the dark and dirty side of Wall Street and the world of US stock investing in general.

Table 2. Pragmatic function of the word *fuck*

<i>Pragmatic Function</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Social	202	75%
Abusive	104	21%
Catharsis	20	4%

Strategy for the Omission of Social, Catharsis and Abusive Functions

The choice of translation strategy used has implications for the pragmatic function of the word *fuck*, which in fact has undergone several shifts. All the pragmatic functions of taboo words are lost when the omission translation strategy is used. The *fuck* on utterance (8) is translated with the omission strategy resulting in a loss of abusive function in the utterance. Jordan Belfort's anger towards Steve Madden is not expressed at all in the target text.

Likewise, what happens with social functions as in speech (7). This utterance (7) was uttered by one of Stratton Oakmont's employees to his boss, Jordan Belfort, who was about to separate. The word *fucking* here shows how much the employee loves him. Yet this omission strategy keeps such emotions from conveying. The utterance in the target text becomes normal.

While the impact of this strategy on catharsis function is shown in utterance (15). In this utterance, it can be seen that the surprise felt by

the speaker is stronger in the source language with the existence of *fucking* as an expletive slot filler when compared to the target language.

15. ST: *Jesus fucking Christ!*

TT: *Astaga!*

The high number of omission in this translation is understandable. According to Afandi and Cholsy (2018) in subtitle translation, omission can be inevitable due to: word limitation, the existence of audio and visual that can represent context, and cultural difference. Besides, according to Santaemilia (2008) translators do not carry out censorship without consideration. The translator usually has considered three things: the ideology of the translation, aesthetics and cultural aspects. The translator, in the context of this research, ignores emotive values to achieve other goals, for example in order to conform to the norms and culture of the community in the target language so that the translated subtitles can be well received.

Neutral Word Strategy on Abusive and Social Functions

A similar effect is caused by a translation strategy using neutral words. Like the omission strategy, this strategy also has a significant impact on the abusive function. In utterance (16) the translator only shows the main purpose of the utterance which is to expel people using the word *go*. Whereas the phrase *fuck you* to expel people is a very strong word and has a very strong emotive value.

16. ST: *Fuck you*

TT: *Pergilah.*

The social function of the word taboo in utterance (17) is lost because the word *fuck* is only translated according to its meaning without including its emotive value. Workplace situations that are full of taboo words yet warm and friendly are lost in the target text because they are translated using inexpressive words.

17. ST: *Let's fuck!*

TT: *Ayo mulai!*

This result is in line with research by Abu Sirrieh et al. (2019) suggesting that euphemism, including the use of neutral word, and omission

are more likely to use when translating text relating to sexual, and religion. This is to prevent the abusive function to transfer to target text.

Cultural Substitution Word Strategy on Abusive Functions

Cultural substitution and loan word strategies have a different impact. This cultural substitution strategy is the strategy most capable of maintaining the pragmatic function of taboo words because this strategy translates taboo words in the source language into taboo words in the target language. Therefore, all fuck words translated using this strategy actually perform abusive function. Motherfucker in (18) is equivalent to bajingan because both are taboo words and is able to denote abusive function.

18. ST: *You motherfucker, you can't get any at 44 ...*

TT: *Kau bajingan, kau tak bisa dapatkan pada 44...*

This finding corroborates with the study from Nasir (2019) indicating that the most used strategy to translate taboo words in an English book to Indonesian language is paraphrasing using related words. This strategy can retain the emotion of taboo words in target text.

Loan Word Strategy for Abusive Function

Loan word strategy retains its full emotive meaning because this strategy does not involve any change as seen in utterance (14). This strategy is usually used to translate words with specific cultural meaning (Baker, 2019). However, this strategy actually has the potential to reduce the pragmatic function if the audience does not understand the loan words used. Audiences who do not understand the meaning of the word fucksville in utterance (14) will, of course, be confused so that they do not feel the abusive function of the word.

The shift of these pragmatic functions greatly affects the equivalence of the results of the translation itself. The audience response when reading English subtitles and Indonesian subtitles is likely to be different. Yet it is this similarity of emotions and responses that should be pursued.

Conclusion

The word *fuck* in *The Wolf of Wall Street* appears in the form of interjection, emphasizer, and expletive slot filler. This taboo word occupies the following functions: social, abusive, and catharsis. The word *fuck* in this film is then translated using several strategies including: omission, neutral words, cultural substitution, and loan word.

The excessive use of taboo words in order to show the dark and harsh side of Wall Street, especially Jordan Belfort's personal life, becomes invisible due to the many use of omission strategies. The choice of translation strategy is driven by differences in the linguistic aspects of the two languages, namely differences in the concept of lexicalization and differences in expressive meanings. In addition, the translator's intention to refine the subtitles to match the community norms in the target language has become one of the reasons.

The translator's efforts to soften taboo words in Indonesian subtitles have an impact on the results of the translation itself. The large percentage of use of the omission strategy results in drastic loss of the pragmatic functions of the word taboo *fuck*. The function that has the most significant impact is the social function because this function is found the most in the movie. In addition, the abusive function also has a very pronounced impact. Emotive value that shows the speaker's anger is missing in the target text. Explosive emotions do not convey well in the target text. The result is that the utterance containing curses becomes just like ordinary speech.

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