

“Why You Gotta Be So Rude?”: The Transformation of Indonesian’s Taboo Words into English

Nadia Khumairo Ma’shumah^{1*}, Isra F. Sianipar³

Graduate School of Linguistics, Faculty of Cultural Sciences,

Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

nadia.khumairo@mail.ugm.ac.id, israframithasianipar96@mail.ugm.ac.id

Arif Nur Syamsi²

Master of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Languages and Arts,

State University of Yogyakarta (UNY), Indonesia

syamsi.arifnur@gmail.com

Muhammad Rauuf Oktavian Nur⁴

English Education Program,

Universitas Tidar, Magelang, Indonesia

nur.mro@students.untidar.ac.id

Abstract

In translation practice, the quality of the translated manuscript is influenced by the translators’ competencies by bringing culture, languages, social life, and language psychology (psycholinguistics) into account. Thus, the rendering process of taboo words frequently poses problems in translation. This study aimed at probing the emergence and transformation of taboo words as the impact of the translation of Indonesian novels to English. This study used two material objects. They were an original Indonesian novel, ‘Cantik Itu Luka’ (CIL, 2020/2002 by Eka Kurniawan published by PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama as the Source Text (ST) and its English translation entitled ‘Beauty is A Wound’ (BIAW, 2015) translated by Annie Tucker published by Pushkin Press as the Target Text (TT). In conducting this research, researchers were stepping on Slamia (2020) on taboo words classification and Ávila-Cabrera (2015) on the tension of taboo loads for detecting taboo words transformation. Meanwhile, data were generated using documentation techniques through content analysis and scrutinized using descriptive-qualitative methods.

This study led to conclusions that the transformations of taboo words were manifested and reflected by toning up or increasing, toning down or decreasing, maintaining, neutralizing, as well as omitting the SL's taboo word in the TL. Therefore, we also found through the findings that the concept of transformation is not always appropriate for translation due to the deviation of meanings and references as taboo words in the literary text were rich in aesthetic and poetic values. These findings indicate that although translators have the authority to carry out the transformation, it was not always appropriate to be used in some contexts.

Keywords: *translator competencies, transformation, taboo words*

1. INTRODUCTION

Taboo words have the potential to cause discomfort, harm, or injury if spoken or written since it is defined as “any (string of) words which violates polite social norms” (Allan & Burrige, 2006; Driscoll, 2020). Taboo words and morality are interdependent (Slamia, 2020). As a result, rejection towards them became unavoidable everywhere since people have their schemata, values, and social norms. They were sanctioned, limited, and normatively unacceptable in the public domain, including social attitudes and actual legislation (Allan & Burrige, 2006; Driscoll, 2020; Jay, 2009). Hence, they are frequently deleted or censored, especially in translated literary works when the source text contains taboo words (Diaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014).

Nonetheless, every language plays an essential function in society. Society cannot deny that taboo words are a social phenomenon and social behavior regarding language. Indeed, they were used as multifunctional, pragmatic units to express emotional attitudes in various discourse functions (Dewaele, 2004). Although the fact shows that translating taboo words is very sensitive and limited due to rejection and censorship from various patrons, it does not mean that they are untranslatable and can be simply ignored. Furthermore, taboo words cannot be quickly censored because they are linked to local traditions and are used differently by different linguistic communities (Díaz-Cintas, 2001; Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015).

Considering what has emerged, translating taboo words is a challenging and exciting study, mainly when it involves two different languages with two different cultures and norms that carry different social values. Translating taboo words results in at least three possibilities. *First*, a taboo word in the source text may not be offensive and taboo in the target text, so the translator will translate it directly. *Second*, a taboo word in the source text is offensive and taboo in the target text, so it needs more consideration. *Third*, the term which is not offensive and taboo in the source text is considered offensive and taboo in the target text, so the translator must have another choice of words to replace that one to ensure good translation quality.

Studying taboo words as a kind of paradox is vital for translators, translation practitioners, and academia to create better meanings and communication understandings.

Therefore, they need to reconsider the modes of taboo words’ translation. Hence, this research focuses on the transformation of taboo words in the literary work when translated into another language. The Indonesian to English pair was chosen as the variable in this study by focusing on product orientation. This study used a magical realism novel, ‘*Cantik Itu Luka*’, written by Eka Kurniawan (2020) as the Source Text (ST) and its Indonesian translation, ‘Beauty is A Wound’ (2015) translated by Annie Tucker as the Target Text (TT).

The novel ‘*Cantik Itu Luka*’ was chosen as it has received widespread acclaim from society, the media, and literary critics. It has been translated into more than 30 languages, including Korean, Polish, Spanish, Swedish, Vietnamese, and Japanese. Furthermore, the acceptability of the translation was evidenced and supported by the inclusion of ‘Beauty is a Wound’ in the list of 100 notable books by The New York Times, longlist announced of The Man Booker International Press (2016) and the winner of World Reader Award (2016). ‘*Cantik Itu Luka*’ depicted the life of Dewi Ayu, a beautiful prostitute who was famous and contested in Halimunda during the Dutch colonial period in Indonesia. According to the story, Dewi Ayu and her lovely children are wreaking havoc on the lives of the village’s men. Their sexuality destroys life and frequently causes men to suffer.

Meanwhile, based on the translator’s competencies, Annie Tucker (who has lived in Indonesia for a while as an activist and researcher and has been living in Los Angeles now) is an award-winning translator who aims out significant and enduring books published in Bahasa Indonesia and introduces them to English-language audiences. Through her competencies, she has translated for a variety of publications and organizations, ranging from The New York Times to independent curators and private art galleries. Her translation of Beauty is a Wound has been recognized by a PEN/Heim Translation Award, the World Reader’s Award, and is a New York Times Notable book of 2015. Her job in translating ‘*Cantik Itu Luka*’ into English was also proved by bringing ‘*Cantik Itu Luka*’ into the longlist announced of Best Translated Book Awards (2016). In other words, her qualification as a translator is satisfactory, so it deserves to be taken into account.

Based on the fact that each linguistic community perceives reality in its particular way and discovers its own culture, this study was founded on evidence that translators played a critical role in translation negotiations. Indeed, translators function as cultural mediators. Thus, the translator’s job is more than just translating from one language to another. Translators must focus on how translation is positioned as a creative art form by creating an appropriate audience design, implementing methods, techniques, or strategies, and making the right decisions (Machali, 2009). To contextualize the translated text, the translator’s knowledge and awareness of various cultures are required to achieve the most appropriate translation results. In some circumstances, the translator must identify and assess the impact and emotional value of a given word or expression in the source culture before translating it into an equivalent target culture deemed appropriate in the context (Diaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section included relevant theories and previous studies that served as the foundation for this study. This section consists of the basic classification of taboo words,

strategies in translating taboo words which we called taboo words' transformation, and aforementioned studies on taboo words as well as their translation.

2.1 Basic Classification of Taboo Words

The classification of taboo words varies considerably and continues to expand. Among the most widely used categories are Jay's (1992) classification of taboo words into ten categories, including cursing, profanity, blasphemy, taboo, obscenity, vulgarity, slang, epithets, insults, slurs, and scatology. Other examples are Crystal's (2003) categorization of topics of taboo words, which include sex, supernatural, excretion, and death; Batistella (2005) classified taboo words into epithets, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity; Napoli & Hoeksema (2009) who also categorize the topics into religion, health, sex, and bodily excretions. Whereas Driscoll (2020) called taboo words (which were conjoint with taboo references) as part of taboo languages.

However, some of the previously mentioned categorizations were overlapped. Thus, Slamia (2020) made five major categorizations as umbrellas for detecting taboo words. By dissecting and rearranging the previous categorizations of taboo language, Slamia (2020) classified taboo words into (1) sex (including reproductive organs, bodily functions, and sexual acts); (2) cursing (relating to swearing words, sex, and others, bodily excretion diction, and obscene words); (3) religion (encompassing terms that express religion-based profanities), name-calling (denoting racial and/or ethnical names and insults); and also (4) death (relating to death condition).

2.2 Detecting Strategies in Translating Taboo Words

Up to this point, research on translation studies has been overly focused on translation strategies in general, such as utilizing Newmark's (1988) or Molina & Albir's (2002) theories. As a result, many studies focus exclusively on changes in physical form. Meanwhile, translation studies must take into account differences in meaning or value between the source and target languages. As such, this study will detect changes in the translation of taboo words by comparing changes in tension caused by taboo loads to Ávila-Cabrera's (2015) classification of taboo loads as toned up, maintained, toned down, neutralized, and omitted taboo words. Thus, the change in value that occurs in the translation of taboo words which were called taboo words' transformation will be considered in this study.

2.3 Aforementioned Studies on Taboo Words as well as Their Translation

Studies on taboo words and prediction have been undertaken in psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, communication studies, media studies, philosophy, psychology, and law. From a sociolinguistic point of view, some researcher such as Kusumaningsih (2019) focuses on the classifications, functions, and the factors which cause the characters to use the taboo words in '21 Jump Street' movie, Anggita (2017) focuses on the types and functions of taboo words uttered by the characters in 'Bad Teacher' movie. Whereas from the translation viewpoint, many studies examined taboo words and references and how to deal with them. Debbas & Haider (2020), for example, analyzed the strategies used to

translate religious remarks as part of taboo references by retaining unchanged, retaining unchanged with added guidance, and retaining unchanged with detailed explanation. In a recent study, Slamia (2020) found that Arabic translators used technical tips to delete taboo words by examining the translation of taboo words in interlingual film subtitling. Meanwhile, literal translation, partial rendering, and inaccurate equivalence have caused ambiguities and errors in Arabic subtitles. Similarly, Lovihandrie et al. (2018) investigate the strategies Indonesian translators use to translate taboo words in *‘Bared to You’*, analyze the implementation and analyze the equivalence achieved in the translation. Pratama (2017) attempted to clarify the meanings of taboo terms used in the film *‘The Help’*. Additionally, he attempted to demonstrate how the translator translated taboo words into the target language to produce functions as close to the source language as possible without ignoring technical aspects of subtitling.

Nevertheless, based on the studies mentioned earlier, a small number of taboo words translations and analyses in various studies conducted, especially in Indonesia, are still considered safe and still in their infancy by using outside or foreign literature. This study goes one step further by examining the emergence of taboo words concerning the actual location (indigenous area) where taboo words appear in Indonesian (as insiders) and the transformation of decisions used by the translator to transfer them from Indonesian into English. This research will provide an overview of analyzing taboo words through a new perspective in translation. By framing taboo words as a social phenomenon, this study identified what happened rather than what should have happened in society. Although being polite can be far more important than being accurate in some translation contexts (Baker, 2018), this research was temporarily set aside from the norms since it was used for research purposes and scientific development purposes in translating literary text, including pathic expression. Thus, the revelation can be accomplished by omitting lexemes that in general usage indicate an adverse judgment, such as *‘rude’* or *‘impolite’*, relying on the fact that the observation of this topic may be found offensive for discussion in an academic setting (Jay in Driscoll, 2020).

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study was conducted to better understand the existing topic and phenomenon by determining the research design, data collection, data analysis: to identify, select, process, analyze information, and data triangulation to avoid possible subjectivity while collecting and analyzing the data.

3.1 Research Design

This study was designed within Toury’s (1980) Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) paradigm from a methodological standpoint by analyzing translation phenomenon from the translation product. The design was chosen as this study aims to explore and dive in-depth into the transformation of taboo words from the existing Source Text (ST) to the Target Text (TT). Thus, descriptive exploration is needed in this study rather than numbers.

3.2 Data Collection Techniques

Data preserving in this study were collected from an Indonesian novel entitled “*Cantik Itu Luka*” written by Eka Kurniawan (2002), published by PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, Jakarta (consisting of 505 pages with 18 chapters) was positioned as the Source Text (ST). Meanwhile, “Beauty Is a Wound”, translated by Annie Tucker (2015) in English which was published by Pushkin Press (consisting of 470 pages with 18 chapters), was positioned as the Target Text (TT). Hence, the data were in the form of words, phrases, and clauses containing taboo words.

The data were collected by extracting the taboo language from the source language novel in a complete form to maintain the context and directly put it into a table and its categorization. Then followed by extracting the TT novel considering the data found in the ST novel. Hence, the data were taken, observed, and collected using documentation techniques through content analysis methods in the form of words and phrases containing offensive terms, taboo words, taboo references, and their transformation when translated into the target text. Slamia's (2020) theory identified the types of taboo words. Meanwhile, the transformation of taboo words was formulated and arranged through the data patterns by adopting Ávila-Cabrera's (2015) theory on taboo loads in subtitles. This theory was used to analyze the transformation of the taboo words from the SL into TL. By using statistical descriptive calculations, 53 taboo words, as well as their transformation, were collected and scrutinized from the narrative data.

3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

This research was data-driven research where the decisions are based on the analysis and interpretation of the existing data (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). As this research was in the translation field, this research applied a descriptive-qualitative method by using textual analysis by producing textual descriptions of the existing phenomena under the examination (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). To determine whether a word or phrase in the TL data is truly taboo, an examination of the Urban Dictionary (see www.urbandictionary.com) is conducted. The meanings of English taboo words were searched using Collins online dictionary (see www.collinsdictionary.com) and Cambridge online dictionary (see <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>), whereas the meanings of Indonesian taboo words were searched through ‘*Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*’ or KBBI online (see <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/>). At the same time, contextual analysis based on Indonesian norms, customs, and religions is used to determine whether a word or phrase is taboo in the SL. As a result, the source text was used to understand the translators' choices rather than evaluate the target text.

3.4 Data Triangulation

As the research involved taboo language which is closely related to culture, subjectivity should be concerned due to the possibility of the various points of view. Therefore, triangulation is needed to ensure the accuracy of the analysis. Theoretical triangulation in this research applied multiple theories (as mentioned in the literature review and findings and discussion sections) while the data triangulation involved and positioned

the researchers as Indonesian native speakers as triangulators who possess resourceful knowledge regarding taboo language in the source language. This way, the accuracy of exploring the taboo language in the source language could be reliable. Meanwhile, methodological triangulation was utilized by applying appropriate methodologies implied during data collection, observation, and analysis (as mentioned in the research methods section). The various triangulation techniques in this study were used to avoid subjectivity and bias.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Focusing on the translation as a product, the transformation of taboo words in the target text was turned out into some patterns. In these findings and discussion section, the transformations of the translation of taboo words were manifested and reflected by (1) toning up SL's taboo words in the TL (2 data); (2) toning down SL's taboo words in the TL (4 data); (3) maintaining SL's taboo words in the TL (41 data); (4) neutralizing SL's taboo words in the TL (5 data); and (5) omitting SL's taboo words in the TL (1 data). Results of this study were shown, described, and explained below.

4.1 SL's Taboo Words were Toned Up in the TL

From the analysis, it can be identified that SL's taboo words were toned up in the TL (which is well known as a dysphemism) when common or mild taboo words are translated and transformed into harsher taboo words. The examples of the excerpts are shown below.

- (1) ST : *Alamanda berkata. “**Terkutuklah kau setan pemerkosa!**” sebelum ia menangis dan tak sadarkan diri.* (CIL, 2002/2020: 240)
TT : ‘Alamanda sobbed.” **Fuck you, you raping satan!**” and fainted.’ (BIAW, 2015: 231)
- (2) ST : *“Pergilah ke neraka **dengan sarapan pagi terkutukmu itu,**” kata Alamanda.* (CIL, 2002/2020: 243)
TT : *“Go to hell and **take your fucking breakfast with you,**” said Alamanda.’* (BIAW, 2015: 234)

Excerpt (1) represented how religious cursing was transformed into harsher cursing, covering sexual or scatological references by translating ‘*terkutuklah kau*’ into ‘fuck you’. Based on the analysis, the translator's decision to transform religious cursing into scatological cursing tends to increase or tone up the degree or level of taboo words by changing Indonesian common or mild taboo words into harsher English taboo words. In other words, the word “fuck” intensifies the meaning more substantial, more vivid, and more elaborate the curses. This can effectively show the character's contempt and offense against somebody in the translated literary work, as every nation has its degree of taboo words and idiomatic meanings. Whereas in excerpt (2), the taboo word ‘fucking’ (F-word) was used as an emotionally charged language in the dialogic interaction. Hence, the F-word can convey the sense of a specific emotional situation. In this case, F-word was used to build and emphasize the character's hotheaded situation (in this context, Alamanda was angry with

Shodancho) as it has a phatic or exclamatory function rather than a phatic or exclamatory function denotative function (Diaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014).

- (3) ST: *Edi Idiot telah mati, tapi **begundal** baru telah datang.* (CIL,2002/2020: 263)
TT: 'Edi idiot was dead, but a new **scoundrel** had arrived.' (BIAW, 2015: 252)

In excerpt (3), the word '*begundal* [thug]' which refers to '*kaki tangan penjahat*', was translated into 'scoundrel [*bajingan*]', which refers to a person, especially a man, who mistreats other people and has no moral principles' (see www.dictionary.cambridge.org). The phenomenon in excerpt (3) shows a translator's tendency to tone up taboo words. This decision was predicted to be used in the Indonesian context because 'scoundrel [*bajingan*]' has a rougher level than '*begundal* [thug]'. The word '*begundal* [thug]' is considered uncommon to be used in daily life. The word itself is often used within narrative art to show artistic elements only. Nevertheless, toned-up taboo words cause reference or meaning deviation since '*begundal* [thug]' and 'scoundrel [*bajingan*]' have very different meanings.

- (4) ST: "**Tai**," kata Ma Gedik. "Kenapa kau mau jadi gundik?" (CIL, 2002/2020:31)
TT: "**Shit!**" screamed Ma Gedik. "Why do you want to become someone's concubine?" (BIAW, 2015: 33)

- (5) ST: "*Geledah saja **taiku**,*" kata Dewi Ayu dalam hati. (CIL, 2002/2020: 65)
TT: "You can go ahead and search my **shit**," Dewi Ayu thought to herself.' (BIAW, 2015: 64)

In excerpts (4) and (5), the word '*tai*', which belongs to obscenity described as human excretion or bodily excrement, was translated into a harsh taboo word 'shit' rather than 'feces' or 'poop'. The word was chosen since it is used in the context of an exclamation of disgust, anger, or annoyance. The decision was made since the word '*tai*' is in the same level both in the roughness and frequency level in terms of daily life used as the word '*shit*'. In this context, the word '*tai*' in the source text and 'shit' in the target text were used to swear since Ma Gendik and Dewi Ayu were in a high temper.

4.2 SL's Taboo Words were Toned Down in the TL

The analysis through data patterns showed that SL's taboo words were toned down in the TL. The phenomenon is well known as a euphemism when harsh taboo words are translated and transformed into mild taboo words or by using less inflammatory words to evoke extreme reactions. In this case, the translator tends to avoid taboo behavior unless the translator intends to violate them. The examples of the excerpts are shown and described below.

- (6) ST : *Ketergesa-gesaannya segera berbuah ketika ia melenguh pendek dengan tubuh menghentak; awalnya Dewi Ayu menganggapnya seperti hentakan*

seorang lelaki yang memuntahkan isi buah pelirnya, tapi ternyata lebih dari itu, si lelaki tua juga memuntahkan nyawanya. (CIL, 2002/2020: 15)

TT: ‘His haste quickly bore fruit when he let out a brief groan and his body spasm; at first, Dewi Ayu thought it was the spasm of a man spewing the contents of his **balls**, but it turned out, it was more than that—the old man also spewed his soul.’ (BIAW, 2015: 16)

In excerpt (6), a sex taboo words ‘*buah pelir*’, which belongs to ‘either of the two-round male sex organs that produce sperm and are contained in the scrotum’ (see www.dictionary.cambridge.org) and has synonymous meaning with ‘testicles’ was toned down into a vulgar taboo word ‘balls’ as a metaphor. It was chosen as the word “balls” is usually used in some literary works to build emotions and describe manliness.

(7) ST : “*Ini suara orang bercinta di atas tempat tidur*”, kata Dewi Ayu lagi. (CIL, 2002/2020:26)

TT: ‘It’s the sound of people **making love**,” Dewi Ayu continued.’ (BIAW, 2015: 27)

(8) ST: *Kini Sang Shodancho bisa bergerak lebih leluasa, mendustai dirinya sendiri bahwa ia tengah bercinta dengan istrinya, sampai tembaknya memuntahkan cairan sperma ke permukaan lempengan besi pelindung vagina istrinya. (CIL, /2020: 238)*

TT: ‘Now Shodancho could move freely, fooling himself into thinking that he was **making love** to his wife until his weapon hurled sperm across the surface of the metal slab protecting her vagina.’ (BIAW, 2015: 230)

In excerpts (7) and (8), the verb ‘*bercinta*’ as sexual activity was translated into a ‘making love’ rather than ‘having sex’ since ‘making love’ was described as an emotionally intimate connection to another person rather than just a physical connection. This means the translator tends to tone down the level of taboo words in the target language (TL) by using mild taboo words.

(9) ST: *...ia menghabiskan upah satu harinya untuk tempat tidur dan seorang perempuan gembrot dengan lubang kemaluan sebesar liang tikus...(CIL, 2002/2020: 33)*

TT: ‘...he spent one day’s pay on a bed and an obese woman with a **vagina** as big as a mouse hole.’ (BIAW, 2015: 34)

In excerpt (9), women’s genital or anatomy ‘*lubang kemaluan*’ was toned down into ‘vagina’ by the translator rather than ‘cunt’, which can be used as a disparaging and obscene term for a woman in the United States, an unpleasant or stupid man or woman in the United Kingdom, or a contemptible man in Australia and New Zealand. Nevertheless, we classified this datum as toned down rather than neutralized in this case. Although ‘vagina’ was positioned as orthophemism language, which refers to a word that was used as an alternative

to a dispreferred expression by avoiding possible loss of face by the reader as well as the harmful face-threatening act (Allan & Burridge, 2006), the use of the word 'vagina' was still taboo to be used in standard and still labeled as private in some context (Braun, 1999). This limitation is due to an understanding that calling women "bodies with vaginas" belongs to the dehumanizing language.

- (10) ST: *Ia telah memulai karirnya sebagai **germo**.* (CIL, 2002/2020: 86)
TT: 'She had begun her career as **a madam**.' (BIAW, 2015: 84)

Different from the previous excerpts, in excerpt (10), the word 'germo' which refers to 'induk semang bagi perempuan pelacur' (see www.kbbi.web.id) was toned down into 'a madam' from the French "*Ma dame*" [my lady] which was connected to 'a woman who is in charge of a group of prostitutes who live or work in the same house' (see www.dictionary.cambridge.org). Thus, the word 'madam' was chosen rather than 'pimp' or 'procurer' as the translator's decision since it sounds more polite and shows power in society as 'madam' usually influences the economics of the underground world.

4.3 SL's Taboo Words were Maintained in the TL

The analysis through data patterns showed that SL's taboo words were maintained in the TL by directly translating the SL into the TL. Some types of taboo words relating to women's and men's bodies and their effluvia; the organs and acts of sex, micturition, and defecation; as well as naming, addressing, and viewing persons, were maintained in the TL. The examples of the excerpts are shown and described below.

- (11) ST : "*Tak masalah apakah kau atau **kontol** anjing yang akan memerawaninya, ia ingin kawin denganmu,*" kata su jawara galak. (CIL, 2002/2020: 30)
TT : "It doesn't matter whether it's you or a dog's **dick** that takes her virginity, she wants to marry you," the tough guy snarled.' (BIAW, 2015: 31)

Despite that 'penis' and all its synonymous words are often present in narratives via dialogue (Rosewarne, 2013), in Indonesian culture, talking penis as 'kontol' which refers to men's genitalia (such in excerpt (11)) was offensive because it belongs to a harsh vulgar taboo word. In the context of usage, the two words 'kontol' and 'dick' are the main choices as cursing words that refer to male genitalia in each language. The word 'kontol' is more often used for rude and indecent things. It is also commonly used by society's low level as a swearing word describing anger. In a different context, the word 'penis' comes from Latin 'peos' or 'posthe', which is generally used in science, medical and educational terms.

- (12) ST: *Seolah **dewa cabul** merasuki mereka, keduanya berlari mendekat dan berpelukan begitu erat, saling mencium di bawah kehangatan matahari tropis.* (CIL, 2002/2020:37)
TT: 'As if **a lewd god** took possession of them, they embraced ever so tightly, kissing beneath the heat of the tropical sun.' (BIAW, 2015: 38)

In excerpt (12), *‘dewa cabul’* was translated into ‘a lewd god’ as religious cursing. As Christians are called to be God’s holy people, they must rid themselves of obscene talk and profane jesting. The phrase ‘a lewd god’ became taboo since it was used as a sarcastic word by positioning God as an unclean and impure spirit.

(13) ST : *“Tai,” kata Ma Gedik. “Kenapa kau mau jadi **gundik**?”* (CIL, 2002/2020: 31)

TT : *““Shit!” screamed Ma Gedik. “Why do you want to become someone’s **concubine**?””* (BIAW, 2015: 33)

In excerpt (13), the word *‘gundik’* which refers to ‘a secondary wife’ or ‘a woman who lived with and had a sexual relationship with a man of higher social rank without always being married to him’ was maintained by directly translating it into ‘concubine’ with the same reference (see www.collinsdictionary.com). The word *‘gundik’* and ‘concubine’ was taboo since it was related to polygamy and prostitution practices closely related to the colonial era.

(14) ST : *Si Cantik tidak **masturbasi**, ia bercinta dengan seseorang tapi kau tak tahu siapa.* (CIL, 2002/2020: 26)

TT : *‘Beauty isn’t **masturbating**, she is making love to someone but you just won’t know who.’* (BIAW, 2015: 27)

(15) ST : *Di akhir **ejakulasinya**, Kliwon terlempar ke samping dan mendengar gadis tu mengerang dan menggeliat.* (CIL, 2002/2020: 192)

TT : *‘After **ejaculating**, Kliwon collapsed on his side and heard the girl moan and writhe.’* (BIAW, 2015: 185)

Since female masturbation (such in excerpt (14)) was considered immoral, focusing on isolationism of a male or female’s self-pleasure, the word ‘masturbation’ has been considered inherently sinful and deviated from religion, norms, and custom. Because of that, it has been seen as a taboo subject for a long time in many societies. In the same manner, *‘ejakulasi’* in excerpt (15), which refers to ‘the expulsion of semen from men’s body’, was directly translated into ‘ejaculating’.

(16) ST : *“Masalahnya dadanya belum juga tumbuh, dan bahkan **bulu kemaluannya** belum muncul pula.”* (CIL, 2002/2020: 174)

TT : *““The problem is, her breasts haven’t even started to grow, and she doesn’t even have any **pubic hair** yet.””* (BIAW, 2015: 167)

(17) ST : *Di balik rumput belukar pandan, ia membuka pakaiannya dan menyuruh lelaki itu mengisap **puting susunya**, yang tengah tumbuh begitu mungil.* (CIL, /2020: 31)

TT : 'Behind a clump of pandan shrubs, she took off her blouse and told the guy to suck on her adorable pert little **nipple**.' (BIAW, 2015: 32)

(18) ST : ***Buah dadanya** sempurna perempuan dewasa, Krisan memandangnya cukup lama, membayangkan ia menyentuhnya, meremasnya, menciumnya, dan menyentuh putingnya dalam sentuhan nakal.* (CIL, 2002/2020: 433)

TT : 'Her **breasts** were as perfect as a full-grown woman's and Krisan looked at them for quite a while, imagining that he was caressing them, kissing them, and teasing their nipples with a naughty touch.' (BIAW, 2015: 398)

(19) ST : *Tapi Krisan tetap ngaceng sebab ia tahu, di balik kaus oblong itu **buah dada** gadis itu tak terlindung kutang.* (CIL, 2002/2020: 433)

TT : 'But Krisan stayed hard because he could still see the outline of her **nipples** through that t-shirt.' (BIAW, 2015: 398)

Talking about females' anatomies or genital organs was considered taboo and sensitive in many societies. Same with another excerpt, female's anatomy such as '*bulu kemaluan*' (in excerpt (16)), '*buah dada*' (in excerpts (18) and (19)), and '*puting*' (in excerpt (17) and (18)), had directly translated them into the same references in English. Thus, a translator tended to maintain taboo words and references by translating taboo into taboo in the target language.

(20) ST : *Jadi ia akan segera punya anak, membuktikan bahwa desas-desus ia tak pernah bercinta dengan istrinya dan bahwa ia **impoten** dan bahwa ia **dikebiri** sama sekali tak beralasan, karena ia akan punya anak.* (CIL, 2002/2020: 246)

TT : 'So, he was going to have a child, proving the gossip that he had never made love to his wife, that he was **impotent**, and he had been **castrated** was all completely false.' (BIAW, 2015: 236)

Sex and disability are taboo subjects that are rarely discussed in society. Thus, people are intentionally left out of many conversations about sex. Nevertheless, in excerpt (20), the translator has maintained taboo words and references by directly translating '*impoten*' into 'impotent', which refers to 'male's inability to perform sexual intercourse (see www.collinsdictionary.com) and '*kebiri*' into 'castrate' which refers to 'the action of surgery to remove the male's testicles' (see www.collinsdictionary.com).

(21) ST : *"**Pergilah ke neraka** dengan sarapan pagi terkutukmu itu," kata Alamanda.* (CIL, 2002/2020: 243)

TT : *"**Go to hell** and take your fucking breakfast with you," said Alamanda.*' (BIAW, 2015: 234)

- (22) ST : “***Terkutuklah kemaluan dan rahimmu,***” katanya sambil berlalu, berpakaian dan pergi meninggalkan kamar istrinya. (CIL, 2002/2020: 239)
TT : ““**Your cunt and your womb are cursed.**” He got up, got dressed, and left his wife’s room.’ (BIAW, 2015: 230)
- (23) ST : “***Terkutuklah kau, Shodancho,***” kata Alamanda sambil berdiri di atas tempat tidur serta menyingkir ke arah dinding. (CIL, 2002/2020: 239- 40)
TT : ““**You are cursed, Shodancho!**” said Alamanda, standing on the bed and shrinking back toward the wall.’ (BIAW, 2015: 230)

Cursing in the form of sexual and religion was strongly judged as taboo as they usually used to show the acts of abusing, offending, letting off steam, intensifying what is being said, or simply signaling displeasure. Took a look into the existing data, the translator maintained some forms of SL’s cursing in TL because it had a powerful function to emphasize character’s emotions, such as ‘*pergilah ke neraka*’, which was translated into ‘go to hell’ in excerpt (21), ‘*terkutuklah kemaluan dan rahimmu*’ which was translated into ‘your cunt and womb are cursed’ using modulation strategy in excerpt (22), and ‘*terkutuklah kau*’ which was translated into ‘you are cursed’ in excerpt (23).

4.4 SL’s Taboo Words were Neutralized in the TL

Data patterns showed that SL’s Taboo Words were neutralized in the TL by using more general and neutral words or references to avoid taboos. The examples of the excerpts are shown and described below.

- (24) ST: “*Aku bahkan tidak yakin bisa **memerawani**nya.*” (CIL, 2002/2020:30)
TT: ““I’m not even sure I can **marry** her.”” (BIAW, 2015: 31)

In excerpt (24), the translation of a taboo verb ‘*memerawani*’ which refers to ‘a sexual intercourse’ into ‘marry’, which refers to ‘to become the legally accepted husband or wife of someone in an official or religious ceremony (see www.dictionary.cambridge.org), was a translator’s way to neutralize taboo words by using more general words. This tendency shows the transformation of taboo words and references from the SL to the TL.

- (25) ST : Masih untung jika ia bisa memberi seorang perempuan makan, ia bahkan nyaris lupa bagaimana **menyetubuhi** mereka...(CIL, 2002/2020: 30)
TT : ‘He would be lucky if he even remembered how to support a woman, since he had practically forgotten how to **sleep** with one.’ (BIAW, 2015: 31)

Same as the previous excerpt, the word ‘*menyetubuhi*’ in excerpt (25) was transformed into ‘sleep’ as a more neutral word by omitting negative effects. This decision was chosen since ‘sleep’ as a metaphorical word connected with ‘having sex’ sounds more polite to use.

- (26) ST : “*Untuk apa? Kau tak perlu jadi **jongos** orang Belanda.*” (CIL, 2002/2020: 31)

TT : “‘Why? You don’t have to become a **maid** for the Dutch.’” (BIAW, 2015: 32)

In excerpt (26), the word ‘jongos’, which refers to male domestic helpers, was transformed into ‘maid’ as the neutral ones associated with a woman who works as a servant. Through the definition, it can be seen that the deviation of meaning impacted the transformation.

(27) ST : “*‘Ngentot pelacur bukanlah pengkhianatan, sebab mereka dibayar dengan uang dan tidak dengan cinta.’* ... (CIL, 2002/2020: 33)

TT : “‘**Doing it** with prostitute is not a betrayal, because prostitutes are paid with money and not with love.’” (BIAW, 2015: 34)

(28) ST : “*‘Kau harus lewati dulu mayatku sebelum kau bisa ikut ngentot.’* kata lelaki penghadang. (CIL, 2002/2020: 188)

TT : “‘You’ll have to get by my dead body before you can **have a go**.’” (BIAW, 2015: 182)

The word ‘ngentot’ derives from ‘kencan total (kentot)’, a slang language used by Indonesian. In excerpts (27) and (28), the words ‘ngentot’ was transformed into ‘doing it’ and ‘have a go’. This decision was in line with what Cronin (2006) and Catford (1965) said: when translation is transformed into creative and situational rather than static and binary, any differences are possible in translation depending on their context.

(29) ST : *...perempuan-perempuan saleh menutup wajah mereka dengan ujung kerudung dan para laki-laki dibuat ngaceng tanpa berani saling memandang...*(CIL, /2020: 37-38)

TT : ‘The virtuous women covered their faces with the edges of their veils and all the men **got hard** and did not dare to look at one another,...’ (BIAW, 2015: 38)

(30) ST : *Tapi Krisan tetap ngaceng sebab ia tahu, di balik kaus oblong itu buah dada gadis itu tak terlindung kutang.* (CIL, 2002/2020: 433)

TT : ‘But Krisan **stayed hard** because he could still see the outline of her nipples through that t-shirt.’ (BIAW, 2015: 398)

(31) ST : *Gadis itu meringis kesakitan, setiap kali jarinya bergerak di selangkangan...* CIL, 2002/2020: 54)

TT: ‘The girl whimpered a little at the pain, and trembled every time her finger moved in **between her legs**...’(BIAW, 2015: 53).

The word ‘ngaceng’, which refers to ‘erection or lubrication’, was translated into ‘[...] hard’ in excerpt (29) and (30) rather than ‘hard-on’, ‘stiffy’, ‘boner’, or ‘ramrod’. In the

same manner, ‘*selangkangan*’ in excerpt (31) was transformed by using description into ‘between her legs’ rather than ‘crotch’, ‘groin’ or ‘lap’. This means that there was a translator’s tendency to neutralize taboo-ness by using more neutral words.

4.5 SL’s Taboo Words were Omitted in the TL

From the analysis, it cannot be denied that the translator also used omission or deletion as the translator’s decision in translating SL’s taboo words into TL. The examples of the excerpts are shown and described below.

(32) ST : “*Shodancho setan, iblis, brengsek, **terkutuk**, perkosalah aku dan tombakmu akan patah menghantam perisai besiku!*” kata Alamanda akhirnya. (CIL, 2002/2020: 238)

TT : “Shodancho, you accursed satan, you devil, you asshole, [Ø], try to rape me and your spear will break against my iron shield!” Alamanda said finally. (BIAW, 2015:229)

(33) ST : *Tapi Krisan tetap ngaceng sebab ia tahu, di balik kaus oblong itu buah dada gadis itu tak terlindung **kutang**.* (CIL, 2002/2020: 433)

TT : ‘But Krisan stayed hard because he could still see the outline of her nipples [Ø] through that t-shirt.’ (BIAW, 2015: 398)

In excerpt (31), the word ‘*terkutuk*’ as a kind of cursing and ‘*kutang*’ in excerpt (32) as ‘a piece of women’s underwear’ was deleted or omitted in the TL. Nevertheless, deleting taboo words in excerpt (33) caused severe problems since there was reference deviation since the bra was not equal with the entire T-shirt.

From the examples of the data presented above, Ávila-Cabrera’s (2015) theory on taboo loads revealed the transformation of taboo words from Indonesian to English. The findings in our study have added evidence that the transformation concept in translation can be used as an option to cope with the sensitivity of taboo words. Through the data patterns, this research found that the transformation of taboo words from the SL into the TL was manifested and reflected by (a) toning up SL’s taboo words in the TL, as shown in excerpts (1) to (5). As the implication, their meaning becomes more powerful, vivid, and elaborate in the TL; (b) toning down SL’s taboo words in the TL as shown in excerpts (6) to (10), so that they are more appealing to the target readers; and (c) maintaining SL’s taboo words in the TL to achieve equivalent meanings both the SL and the TL. Meanwhile, the decision to maintain SL’s taboo words in the TL became the most secure option for the translator to retain an equal emotional effect on both the SL and the TL as in excerpt (11) to (23). Thus, maintaining SL’s taboo words in the TL was frequently used by the translator in “*Cantik Itu Luka*”.

Nevertheless, we should say that the implementation of taboo loads (based on our in-depth analysis) for detecting taboo words’ transformation was quite accurate. We called it quite accurate or partially accurate rather than totally accurate based on some essential considerations. Relying on the findings, we found that the decisions by (d) neutralizing and/or by (e) to omitting SL’s taboo word in the TL (as part of censorship strategies), in

some points, brought the translator into some significant issues. From the excerpts (24) to (33), we identified a sense of ambiguity and deviation when the translator decides to neutralize and/or omit the taboos. *Firstly*, the intended meanings served by the original author were changed as the impact of reference deviation. In this case, meaning equivalence cannot be fully achieved. *Secondly*, we detected that neutralizing and omitting taboo words potentially alleviate the emotional reactions that the author wishes to convey to the reader. Consequently, the translator cannot achieve pragmatic and semiotic equivalence in the TL.

In the end, the existing findings show that the concept of transformation is not always appropriate. As literary texts cannot be viewed in the same way as other types of texts, a literary text does not rely solely on logical reality but also aesthetic and poetic values. As the literary expression is a creative liberation of the linguistic resources that society employs continuously (Leech & Short, 1981), its primary objective is to elicit an affective response from the readers by emotionally involving them in comprehending the text. Taboo words can function as stylistic features. Therefore, the translator needs to reconsider the intended meanings served by the original author and the effects and risks of each transformation when applied to the TL, although the naturalization and the omission may be used to avoid offense.

5. CONCLUSION

What underlies all the issues related to marked language (such as taboo words) is the consideration of what is generally acceptable for written in the target culture. Nevertheless, despite the translation of taboo words being very sensitive and restricted, they do not mean untranslatable and forbidden to translate, primarily when they were functioned to build the reader's emotion and show the character's emotional force. In this case, some transformation in translation happened as the solution in rendering taboo words. Nevertheless, since there are some gaps in language and culture, the concept of transformation was not always appropriate to be used in some contexts. Thus, translators' knowledge becomes the key point due to their sensitivity to draw a linear connection between taboo words' meanings and contexts.

However, relating to this research, since we engage our inspection on the disclosure and the transformation of taboo words based on the emerging data, we admit that the findings explored in this study are only limited to the analysis of translation's transformation by using five strategies that appear in "*Cantik itu Luka*" and its translation. It means that this research becomes open, dynamic, and transformational to be developed further. Therefore, a follow-up study is needed to produce applicable and valid evidence.

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