

The Translation of the English F-word into Indonesian

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Abstract—This article aims to analyze the translation strategies applied when translating the word “fuck” in Everything is F*cked into Indonesian’s *Segala-galanya Ambyar*. By using the descriptive qualitative method supported by the note-taking technique, the data were collected with a linguistic software application of parallel corpus named AntPConc version 1.2.1 (Anthony, 2017). The keyword “*fuck*” is used to create a concordance containing the lexical fuck and its derivation (fuckedness), inflection (fucking), or compound form (clusterfuck). The collected data were analyzed using a theory of translation and translation strategies. The result showed that five translation strategies are applied. They are translation by a more general word (superordinate), a more neutral/less expressive word, cultural substitution, paraphrase using unrelated words, and omission. The translation by a more neutral/less expressive word was the most frequently used strategy.

Keywords: swear words, fuck, translation strategies

Abstrak –Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi penerjemahan pada kata *fuck* dalam *Everything is F*cked* ke dalam Bahasa Indonesia “Segala-galanya Ambyar.” Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif yang didukung teknik catat, data dalam penelitian ini dikumpulkan dengan aplikasi linguistik perangkat lunak corpus parallel bernama *AntPConc* versi 1.2.1 tahun 2017 oleh Anthony. Kata kunci “*fuck*” dimanfaatkan untuk memunculkan konkordansi yang mengandung leksikal *fuck*, bentuk derivasi (*fuckedness*), infleksi (*fucking*), maupun bentuk majemuk (*clusterfuck*). Data yang terkumpul dianalisis dengan teori penerjemahan dan strategi penerjemahan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat lima jenis strategi penerjemahan pada tingkat kata yang meliputi penerjemahan dengan kata yang lebih umum, kata yang lebih netral, substitusi budaya, parafrasa kata yang tidak berkaitan, dan pelepasan. Strategi penerjemahan yang paling banyak ditemukan berupa strategi penerjemahan dengan kata yang lebih netral.

Kata Kunci: kata umpatan, *fuck*, strategi penerjemahan

1. Introduction

The word “fuck” has been regarded as the most powerful taboo term for copulation over several centuries (Hughes, 2006). Although the presence of this word has caused problems in specialized dictionaries, the use of fuck in conversation has become the most powerful word in the English language. Therefore, the usage of the swear word “fuck” is mostly spoken in conversation that the word is not often recorded in print but is frequent in coarse speech. However, the present phenomena describe that the word “fuck” appears in books, not only in conversations.

In literature, the words “fuck” express both positive and negative emotions (Kidman, 1993). It also emphasizes the message to express people’s feelings (Wene & Ena, 2020). The fact that the word could represent positive and negative meanings is an intriguing reason to be analyzed especially in translation studies: how the translator renders the meaning of “fuck” which has various meanings into the target language and is understood by the target readers without eliminating the message. For instance, “fucking good” has different emotions compared to “fucking miserable.” “Fucking good” occurs as a positive emotion, while “fucking miserable” means the opposite. Moreover, “fuck” also lends itself to regular word classes such as a noun in “stupid fuck”, a verb in “fuck you!”, or the verbal stem in a word-formation like “fucker” (Ljung, 2011). Sheidlower and Black (2009) also stated that “fuck” is an efficient word that can work as a noun, a verb, an adjective, and an adverb (Sheidlower & Black, 2009).

Since the word “fuck” represents obscenity, vulgar, profane language, and pornography, the translation of “fuck” into Indonesian is not always about swearing. It also strengthens the way to show emotional expression and emotive life (Jay, 2000). They can be translated into non-swearing words in the target language. The translation of “fuck” is rendering the meaning into Indonesian which brings cases in the form of meaning equivalence, self-censorship for bad language, the unavoidable

shift of sentence structure, clarity, acceptance, naturalness translation result, and others. Here, the translator must ensure that the translation is accepted by the target language readers which becomes the issue in translation studies.

As for reference, research on the translation of the word fuck is not limited only to the equivalence or its collocation in defining the translation result. For instance, the translation ideology of swearing words has been analyzed by Arif (2019) which leads to many categories in defining fuck as *berengsek* or *bercinta* based on its context or even not translated to be accepted in the target language. He reveals that the domestication ideology is used by the translator on the movie subtitles with the tendency in deleting the taboo words. Meanwhile, the translation of the swear word “fuck” was conducted by Putri (2020). She analyzed the translation of the word “fuck” for ELT (English Language Teaching) which means a study relating to pedagogy and translation. She finds the techniques for a grammar-translation method for ELT along with their implementations such as reading comprehension, antonyms or synonyms, deductive application of rules, fill-in-the-blanks, and the use of words in sentences (Putri, 2020). They describe how the swear words are translated based on the purpose of the study. Arif (2019) focused on the translation technique since he wanted to find out what ideology is used in movie subtitle translation, meanwhile Putri (2019) focused on the grammatical categories of fuck with few explanations on the translation technique she used. However, this present study is emphasizing the translation of the swear word “fuck” with translation strategies discussed further.

This research analyzed the translation of the swear word “fuck” by using AntPConc, a software application to collect both source and target texts. The software collected the swearing expressions from the book entitled “Everything is F*cked” by Mark Manson which contains swearing expressions “fuck.” For instance, the expression comes with “This is a story of everything being completely and utterly fucked” or “Pilecki, the comic book superhero motherfucker” (Manson,

2019). These words have various translation result as in “utterly fucked” is translated into *tanpa sisa menjadi ambyar* and “motherfucker” is translated into *sinting*. The title Everything is F*cked is translated into *Segala-galanya Ambyar* by Adinto F. Susanto, and the word Fucked is translated into *Ambyar*. The translator chose *ambyar* as the translation of “fuck” and *ambyar* in Indonesian means *tercerai-berai*. The Indonesian translation of *ambyar* is a state of being shattered, messy, broken, or damaged. From the translation strategy, fucked into *ambyar* is translated by applying word-level strategies by Baker (2018) on the translation by a more neutral/less expressive word. This strategy means translating a more neutral and acceptable word into the target language (Baker, 2018). This concludes the word “fuck” has many perspectives according to the speakers’ objectives, mood, emotion, and state of affairs. Therefore, in translating the word fuck, the translator needs to understand the conceptual thinking of the speakers in SL and fully acknowledge the message or the sense of meaning in TL when choosing the correct word for its translation.

2. Research Method

The methods used were observation methods. Since this research used digital books as the data, the collected data were conducted in digital by using AntPConc, the toolkit for parallel corpus by Laurence Anthony (Anthony, 2017). This application means collecting the swearing expressions with the word fuck from the books. The data source is an English self-development book entitled Everything is F*cked and its translation *Segala-galanya Ambyar*. Manson’s book was translated by Adinto F. Susanto and published by Grasindo in 2020.

There are ways to collect the data by using AntPConc. Indeed, steps to finalize the corpus of the books are to ensure the paragraphs in the books are separated into one sentence and confirm that each sentence is sharing the same line between SL and TL book. If it does not, the translation result will not match in the application. Then, with one click, all the data were collected and transferred

into Microsoft Office. To support the analysis, a simple quantitative method is applied.

The observation method is a method for collecting the data that is carried out through the process of observing the use of the language (Zaim, 2014). Then, documentation or taking notes techniques were applied to collect the data. Zaim (2014) also stated that these techniques used written sources to obtain data. These can be in the form of magazines, newspapers, literary works, laws, regulations, etc. In each of these, there are various kinds of writing such as news, headlines, etc. Furthermore, the advantages of using qualitative documentation are mentioned by Creswell (2014), which enables obtaining the language and words on the data, also can be accessed in convenient time as an unobtrusive source of information (Creswell, 2014).

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Result

The result showed that five strategies are applied when translating the word fuck into Indonesian, such as translation by a more general word (superordinate), a more neutral/less expressive word, cultural substitution, paraphrase using unrelated word, and omission. These are the strategies focusing on word-level strategies. Translation by a more neutral/less expressive word is the most frequently used in the translation strategies of fuck in Everything is F*cked into *Segala-galanya Ambyar*. This indicates that the swear words are mostly translated with more neutral words without translating the swear words.

3.2. Discussion

Based on the data that has been collected, five translation strategies to translate “fuck” were found. The following are the analysis of the swear words fuck and translation strategies in Everything is F*cked and in *Segala-galanya Ambyar*.

Translation by A More General Word (Superordinate)

The translation applied this strategy with 8.82% occurrence. It is when the text that does not

have the most equivalent word to translate into the target language.

(1) SL : someone who had nothing but his intelligence and reasoning, and his life had quickly degenerated into a total **clusterfuck**.

TL : *seseorang yang tidak memiliki apa pun, selain kecerdasan dan penalaran, dan kehidupannya dengan cepat terjun bebas hingga benar-benar **ambyar**.*

When someone stated “fuck”, it represents figurative sense depending on the context of the situation. In the text, “clusterfuck” is a close compound consisting of cluster and fuck, which cluster means a group of similar things or people positioned or occurring closely together. As they are joined together—forming a new word clusterfuck—it means a state of chaos that is hard to handle. In Indonesian, *ambyar* is defined as broken or shattered, it can also be defined as a total chaotic state of affairs. The translation itself is not formally used to describe how things going as it is often used when speaking with friends. However, in the translation book, the translator tries to find the most suitable word to be understood by the target readers.

The translator applied a more general word strategy on word-level translation to translate clusterfuck into *ambyar*. Baker defined this as the commonest strategy for a word that does not have the most equivalent word to translate into the target text. Therefore, the translator chose the word *ambyar* since this strategy is meant to generalize the word in the source text into the target text to be acceptable to the target readers.

(2) SL : In the farthest reaches of their minds, nothing could be that **fucked**.

TL : *Dalam angan mereka yang paling liar sekalipun, tidak ada yang **sebangsat itu**.*

The meaning of “fucked” implies what happened in World War II when Secret Polish Army murdered thousands of Jews people every day and the death toll could potentially be million. The context shows how evil people can be, and how people’s thought comes with the possibility and willingness to murder their kind. “Fucked” refers to this situation in the past. Therefore, the translation *sebangsat itu* where the prefix *se-* combines with the adjective *bangsat* has to end with object *itu* since the prefix refers to its comparability, similar with, or equal to, so the word needs a noun or objects to express the comparison or similarity. The adjective “fucked” in the sentence describes what happened with the subject which shares the same meaning as the target text.

The target language indicates a translation by a more general word strategy. *Bangsat* is the translation of “fucked” by applying a more general word strategy, which is also translated as a swear word in Indonesian. The swear word *bangsat* is a common swearing in Indonesia since it has many words to swear or curse. For instance, when people are very upset about something, they will likely say *bangsat* rather than any other swear word. Furthermore, this translation strategy is applied where fucked could mean bad in general, then the translation reflects the word in Indonesia which is commonly used for swearing. Fucked into *bangsat* refers to the same sense in both languages. Both words mean a chaotic state of affairs and impressing how people are capable of doing cruel things toward their kind.

Translation by A More Neutral/Less Expressive Word

The translation applied this strategy with 54.41% occurrence. It is when the target language sounds less expressive and neutral than the source language.

(3) SL : So, we’ve got it backward: everything being **fucked** doesn’t require hope; hope requires everything being **fucked**.

TL : *Maka, jika kita menengok ke belakang: Segala **kekacauan** terjadi tanpa mensyaratkan harapan; harapanlah yang membutuhkan segala **kekacauan**.*

Known as the bad language, swear word, and the most powerful taboo word, “fuck” can be translated in many ways according to the context. In the data, “fucked” is translated into *kekacauan*. *Kekacauan* comes from the root *kacau* in Indonesia meaning a complete confusion and disorder. “Fuck” does not always mean *kacau* in Indonesian since its meaning is based on the target language contexts. In the target text, the translator tends to make it sound less expressive or neutral. If it is translated to English, *kacau* means chaos and it is not a swear word in the target language, it is a common word to describe the state of affairs. The translator does not translate fucked into swear word in Indonesia, therefore the strategy for word-level used by the translator is the translation by a more neutral or less expressive word. Although it is not translated as a swear word in the target text, both texts have equal meaning and are clear to the target readers.

(4) SL : Because even if all the problems of today get magically fixed, our minds will still perceive the inevitable **fuckedness** of tomorrow.

TL : *Karena bahkan jika seluruh permasalahan hari ini bisa terpecahkan secara ajaib, pikiran kita akan senantiasa mendapati adanya **bencana** yang sudah menunggu di masa depan.*

This data shows that the English swear word “fuck” has a form of derivative “fuckedness” which means another level of chaos. Fuckedness is translated into *bencana* or disaster in English. The data also shows that the swear word is not translated into swear word in the target language. It changes the

sense of swearing into a noun which acceptable to the target reader.

Fuckedness into *bencana* is equivalent since fuckedness means another level of chaos. The translator applies a less expressive word strategy since *bencana* is not a swear word in Indonesia, it is a noun translated as a disaster in English. Therefore, the swear word interpreted as a dreadful state of affairs is transferred its meaning into *bencana* which has the same context and understanding with a less expressive strategy.

Translation by Cultural Substitution

The translation applied this strategy with 7.35% occurrence. It is when the strategy involves replacing a culture-specific item or expression with a target-language item.

(5 S : "You don't pray to God to
) L say, "**Fuck**, yeah. I'm
awesome!" No."
T : "*Anda tidak mungkin
L memanjatkan doa pada Tuhan
secara begini, "**Yo-yo**, yang di
sana! Lihat betapa hebatnya
saya!" Tidak."*

The English swear word “fuck” into *yo-yo* in Indonesian applied cultural substitution strategy since this strategy involves replacing a culture-specific item or expression with a target-language item that does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader. Baker (2018) also mentioned that for instance by evoking a similar context in the target culture. The translator’s decision to use this strategy depends on the purpose of the translation to state the culture of Indonesian when saying the slang word *yo-yo*, which is also an interjection without translating it as a swear word.

Fuck into *yo-yo* shared the same sense of meaning since *yo-yo* in Indonesian reflects the sudden utterance to complete the sentence.

(6) SL : Riiiiight, and I'm the **fucking** tooth fairy.

TL : "O iyaaaaaa, dan kamu pasti Ibu Peri yang **baik hati**."

"Fucking" into *baik hati* needs a context to be correctly translated. The sentence shows "fucking tooth fairy" is translated into *Ibu Peri yang baik hati*. After knowing the intended meaning, the translator applied the cultural substitution strategy since it transfers a target-language item for a culture-specific item that may not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader. For instance, "fucking tooth fairy" translated into *Ibu Peri yang baik hati* shared a similar context, which is accepted in the target culture. By applying this strategy, the target reader will easily understand what the speaker intended to say. In another perspective, *baik hati* is the equivalent word for translating "fucking" into Indonesian that gives the reader a concept that can be identified.

Translation by Paraphrase Using Unrelated Word

The translation applied this strategy with 2.94% occurrence. It is when paraphrasing the target text in a particular context if the word in the source text is not lexicalized.

(7) SL : You manage your finances because if you don't, you will be royally **fucked** one day down the road.

TL : *Anda mengelola keuangan Anda karena jika tidak, Anda*

akan menjadi gembel busuk di jalanan.

"Fucked" as the swear word is not always expressing emotion from the speaker. It also represents the bad state of affairs according to the context in the text. In the data, "fucked" is explained by the phrase "fucked one day down the road" meaning that whoever it may concern will have bad luck or bad occurrence of events or incidents on the road. Fucked translated into *gembel busuk* applied the strategy of translation by paraphrase using unrelated words since the translator unpacked the meaning of the source item. The related meaning to "fucked" is linear with bad events which is equivalent to *gembel busuk* in Indonesian. In applying translation by paraphrase using unrelated words, the theory emphasizes on paraphrasing the target text in a particular context if the word in the source text is not lexicalized. Therefore, the translator chose *gembel busuk* as the translation to "fucked" since it is related to the context in the matter of a place. *Gembel busuk* in English means rottenly poor, that a person is very poor until he lives down the road. This proves that translation by paraphrase using unrelated words strategy is the unrelated word of "fucked", but it still serves the intended meaning from the source text and is defined as equivalent translation.

(8) SL : Who the **fuck** that did this guy think he was?

TL : *Dia pikir dia ini jagoan, ya?*

The English swear word "fuck" does not translate into Indonesian. Instead of classifying this data into omission strategy since the translator omits the swear word, the data meet the criteria of the unrelated word despite the omission.

Baker (2018) stated that if the concept expressed by the source item is not lexicalized at all in the target language, the paraphrase strategy can still be used in some contexts. This means the concept in English is not easily understood with the meaning in the target language, therefore this strategy recommends paraphrase to make the sentence in the target language understood by the target readers. This also applies to the translation of the data. The translator applied this strategy and paraphrasing the target text without changing the intended meaning from the source text. The “Who the fuck” phrase in the source language represents the Indonesian word *jagoan* which happened to be changing the point of view in translating. Therefore, after the concept of the source text is unpacked, the translator applied translation by paraphrase using the unrelated word strategy to give the target reader a relevant meaning based on the source text.

Translation by Omission

The translation applied this strategy with 26.47% occurrence. It is when the word does not have any vital development to the target text, therefore it is omitted.

(9) SL : Meanwhile, this guy was **fucking** burning alive and he didn't even move.

TL : *Sementara, orang ini terbakar hidup-hidup dan ia tidak bergerak sedikit pun.*

As the Indonesian language does not have any word to translate the emotion that occurs in the swear word “fucking”, the swear word is omitted in the translation. Also, for other reasons, the translator meant to euphemize the bad words in the source language to be softened in the target language. The swear

word fucking is not vital enough to the meaning in the target text since “fucking” appears as an expressive feeling in the context of the situation where a monk burnt himself to death without moving. In English, it is acceptable to write “fucking” to express the emotion, but in Indonesian it could be translated as *benar-benar* which means truly or really in English. In the target text, the translator decided to omit the swear word to simplify the translation and not to distract the readers with lengthy explanations.

(10) SL : I will give you permanent fulfillment, **motherfucker**.

TL : *Saya akan berikan produk yang bisa dipakai selamanya.*

Since Indonesian culture is preventing taboo due to etiquette violations (Junaidi & Wardani, 2019), the translator omitted the swear word “motherfucker.” It also results in the naturalness and acceptance of the translation if the swear word is omitted in the target text. There is no equal word to describe “motherfucker” in Indonesian. Although it is translated to the nearest form and meaning of “motherfucker”, it would not be accepted and also not natural to the target readers. For instance, the source text is stated “I will give you permanent fulfillment, motherfucker.” Then, if it translates into *Saya akan berikan produk yang bisa dipakai selamanya, brengsek*, it will violate the naturalness and acceptance of the target language since Indonesians are mostly never spoken or write swear words without the occurrence of anger or any negative emotions, in which in the text does not involve any kind of negative emotions. Therefore, in this case, it is not appropriate to translate the swear word into the target text. On the other hand, to

omit the swear word is no harm since the word does not have any vital development to the target text, it also would be more natural without translating the swear word.

4. Conclusion

Based on the result and discussion, the strategies applied are translation by 1) a more general word (superordinate) with 8.82% occurrence, 2) a more neutral/less expressive word 54.41%, 3) cultural substitution 7.35%, 4) paraphrase using unrelated words 2.94%, and 5) omission 26.47%. It is implied that the translation by a more neutral/less expressive word is the most frequently applied translation strategy. In other words, they are translated into non-swearing words.

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