



Translation Quality of Pragmatic Function of Swearing in Heather Graham's Novel Based on Gender

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Abstract

Translating swearing is a challenge when it comes to a conservative target language, as it is considered taboo and inappropriate. However, certain swearing might carry certain pragmatic function from the speaker. Gender of the speaker may contribute to the reason swearing, male and female speaker might carry different function as well as the diction of the swearing itself. Therefore, the aim of this research is to investigate the shifting of pragmatic function of swearing translation as well as its impact to the translation quality based on gender. This research is qualitative research which employed pragmatic and sociolinguistic as the approach. The results showed that the swearing found is dominated by male speaker, and the most carried function is cathartic. There are shifting found as a result from the implementation of deletion and reduction technique. It draws down the translation quality scores especially the accuracy aspect.

Keywords: *Pragmatic Function; Translation Quality; Swearing*

Introduction

Translation upon taboo language and swearing still become a topic that interesting to be explored. Especially in a conservative target language like Indonesia. Each country has their own censorship regulation towards visual or written product that imported, including movies and novels. Considering facts that there might be rejection from the viewers or readers if the content is not suitable with their cultural norms. It also become consideration for translator in translating their products to avoid certain rejection. However, the existence of certain language in a product might contain certain message from the creator, it could be the emotion or the situation that the creator wants to portray. Hence, the knowledge upon taboo or any other form of it should be mastered by the translator.

Swearing defined as the use of taboo language to express speaker's emotion, also to communicate it to the listener (Jay, 1992; Jay, 2000). It is often used in verbal and written communication. In a novel, it is common to include swearing, to express the character's emotion or even define how the character would react in certain situation. Despite of its function as a form of expression, it is often considered as a violation to a norm for a society that still uphold certain culture and norms, since the diction is mostly

rude. However, cultural norms are differed in each country, therefore the acceptability of swearing is also different depends on how the society perceive its function. There are many factors that could cause someone to swear in public. Most of them is annoyance, pressure from their environment, and even the speaker's gender. According to the research, male speaker is most likely to swear in public compared to female speaker (Setiawan & Fatimatuzzahroh, 2018). The reason behind this is mostly because of the stigma formed by the society that female should be more polite regarding to their behaviour that includes their way of communicate to others. Furthermore, speaker's gender might also affect the pragmatic function that a swearing could carry. According to Wajnryb (2005) as cited in Khalaf & Rashid (2019) pragmatic function of swearing is divided into three, namely cathartic, social and abusive. It is based on the situation when the swearing occurred and the intention whether it is to degrade someone's pride or simply a way to express anger or disappointment.

As a translator, it is important to have understanding upon these functions, in order to find the right equivalent to convey the message contained in the source text. However, considering the norms and acceptability of the swearing in the target text, might become a problem for a translator to decide whether to preserve it or not. Furthermore, swearing also part of character's portrayal through conversation, therefore if it is not preserved in the target language it could resulted into various shifting.

The research upon swearing already been done by several researchers, however it mostly focused on the negative impact that caused by swearing and the acceptability in the society. The analysis of the speaker's gender is mostly focused on male speaker and the diction that often used by male speaker (Ameri & Ghazizadeh, 2014; Drößiger, 2017; Setiawan & Fatimatuzzahroh, 2018; Khalaf & Rashid, 2019). Further research upon the pragmatic function and the speaker's gender contribution is still lacking. The study upon swearing translation have been done before by several researcher, however it only defined the techniques that mostly used by translators to translate the swearing (Khalaf & Rashid, 2016; Khalaf & Rashid, 2020). There are also the researches upon strategy used by translator in order to face cultural norms in the target text when translate certain swearing (Valdeon, 2019; Nugroho & Asmarani, 2019; Debbas & Haider, 2020; Slamia, 2020). However, it did not define speaker's analysis upon swearing.

Based on those reviews, there are several research gaps that could be explored. First is the analysis of pragmatic function that carried by each gender of the speaker, second is whether it would shift in its translation. Therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate the shifting of pragmatic function of swearing translation as well as its impact to the translation quality.

Methods

This research is descriptive qualitative research, which examine swearing and the meaning carried by it as a linguistic phenomenon. This research used pragmatic and sociolinguistic as the approach, as it would examine the pragmatic function of the swearing also the gender contribution to the occurrences.

The data collection in this research is done by document analysis and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The document in this research is the swearing spoken by female and male character in Heather Graham' Novels entitled *Ghostwalk* and *Unhallowed Ground* in English as the source language and Indonesian as the target language. Focus Group Discussion is done with two raters who had good understanding regarding linguistic and translation, in order to get detailed assessment regarding the translation quality. The research used instrument from Nababan et al (2012) to assess the translation quality, which includes accuracy, acceptability and readability.

The data analysis procedure in this research follows Spradely (1980) model which includes domain, taxonomy and componential analysis. In the domain analysis the researcher would classify the swearing based on the speaker's gender, the pragmatic function carried by each swearing, and the translation technique that applied. In the taxonomy analysis the researcher would classify the translation

shifting and the translation quality. Later on, both domain and taxonomy classification would be connected using componential analysis. In the end, the researcher could draw the conclusion from the analysis.

Results and Discussion

a) Pragmatic Function of Swearing Based on Gender

According to Wanjryb (2005) as cited in Khalaf & Rashid (2019) pragmatic function of swearing divided into three kinds namely cathartic, social and abusive. Cathartic function is carried when the swearing is intended as an expression of surprise from the speaker. Social function is carried commonly in a relaxed situation among friends or speakers who had certain level of intimacy, and not intended to attack. Abusive function is carried mostly to attack or degrade someone, it appears when someone is fully angry. The table below shows the frequency of pragmatic function carried by male and female speaker in *Ghostwalk* and *Unhallowed Ground*.

Table 1 Pragmatic function of swearing based on gender

Novel Title	Participant	Σ	Pragmatic Function of Swearing	Σ	%
<i>Ghostwalk</i>	Male	5 8	<i>Cathartic</i>	4	69%
			<i>Social</i>	1	17%
			<i>Abusive</i>	0	0%
	Female	1 6	<i>Cathartic</i>	1	75%
			<i>Social</i>	2	13%
			<i>Abusive</i>	2	13%
<i>Unhallowed Ground</i>	Male	9	<i>Cathartic</i>	4	44%
			<i>Social</i>	3	33%
			<i>Abusive</i>	2	22%
	Female	1 3	<i>Cathartic</i>	5	38%
			<i>Social</i>	2	15%
			<i>Abusive</i>	6	46%
Total		9 6		9 6	100 %

Example 1

Male : "**Damn.** Wish I'd seen the bum
Female : "**Good heavens,** no!"

Example 1 shows cathartic function carried by male and female speaker in novel the novel. The difference can be seen from the swearing chosen for both genders, the swearing from female speaker is less rude compared to male speaker. Even though both carried the same function to express annoyance from both speakers. The diction appeared from female speaker does not necessarily not show up at all from male speaker, but it more frequent to appear from female speaker.

Example 2

Male : "**Damn gorgeous wacko**"

Female : "I've never actually seen a ghost before, **and sure as hell**, one never talked to me before."

Example 2 shows social function carried by male and female speaker. Swearing that carried this function both appear in circle of friends and colleagues that gained trust from the speaker, or in other words have certain level of intimacy with the speaker. Since it is not intended to attack or degrade someone, it leans rather on the positive side despite the diction that considered rude. In terms of rudeness level, the diction appeared to have the same level in both genders.

Example 3

Male : "**Hey, asshole**, there was no call for that,"

Female : "**Damn you**, don't you dare be angry with me,"

Example 3 shows abusive function carried by male and female speaker. The diction used by both genders have the same impact and rudeness level in degrading or attacking someone

b) *Translation Quality of Swearing Which Carried Pragmatic Function*

Table 2 Translation quality of swearing

Novel Title	Participant	Pragmatic Function of Swearing	Translation Techniques	Σ	The Average Score of Translation Quality		
					Accuracy	Acceptability	Readability
Ghostwalk	Male	Cathartic	Established equivalent	57	2,65	2,95	3
			Reduction	10			
			Paraphrase	4			
			Explication	3			
			Discursive creation	5			
			Variation	4			
			Pure borrowing	2			
			Modulation	1			
			Social	Established equivalent			
		Reduction		6			
		Discursive creation		2			
		Pure borrowing		2			
		Paraphrase		1			
		Variation		3			
		Abusive	Established equivalent	8	2,25	2,5	2,5
			Reduction	2			
			Variation	2			
			Discursive	1			

		creation					
		Deletion	1				
Female	Cathartic	Literal translation	3	2,5	2,75	2,75	
		Established equivalent	14				
		Pure borrowing	6				
		Reduction	1				
	Social	Established equivalent	5	2	3	3	
		Reduction	1				
		Pure borrowing	1				
	Abusive	Established equivalent	2	3	3	3	
		Variation	1				
	<i>Unhallowed Ground</i>	Male	Cathartic	Established equivalent	2	2,25	2,5
Discursive creation				1			
Deletion				1			
Social			Established equivalent	5	1,6	2,3	2,3
		Reduction	2				
		Deletion	1				
		Variation	1				
Abusive		Paraphrase	1	2	3	3	
		Reduction	2				
		Established equivalent	2				
		Variation	2				
Female		Cathartic	Established equivalent	6	2,8	2,8	3
			Discursive creation	1			
		Social	Discursive creation	1	2	3	3
			Established equivalent	1			
	Reduction		1				
	Variation		1				
	Abusive	Established equivalent	1	2,5	3	3	
		Reduction	3				
		Implication	1				

There are 11 techniques which employed by the translator, namely established equivalent, reduction, paraphrase, explisitation, discursive creation, variation, pure borrowing, modulation, deletion, and literal translation. Most implemented technique is established equivalent. The total average of translation quality aspects is found 2,32 for accuracy, 2,8 for acceptability and 2,83 for readability. These results represent rather good quality for accuracy aspect, and very good quality for acceptability and readability aspect. These results are also portrayed the impact of the implementation of certain technique to translate swearing.

Example 1

ST: “**Oh, hell**, it’s getting busy around here,”
 TT: **Oh sial**. Sangat sibuk di sini,”

Example 1 shows the implementation of established equivalent technique. The translator translated the swearing with the diction that is commonly used in the target text and have the same impact as the source text. It resulted into good score in every aspect of translation quality, it is accurate, acceptable and have high readability level.

Example 2

ST: “**Hell**, I’m a homicide cop. I’ve worked in Jacksonville, Miami and Houston—tough towns, all of them—and I’ve never seen anything like this.”
 TT : “Padahal aku polisi bagian pembunuhan. Bekerja di Jacksonville, Miami dan Houston – kota yang padat, semuanya – dan aku tak pernah melihat hal seperti ini.”

Example 2 shows the implementation of deletion technique where the swearing is not appeared in the target text. It resulted into low score in terms of accuracy aspect, but scored as acceptable and have high readability level.

There are patterns that showed up throughout this research, regarding to the translation technique. The use of established equivalent scored very good in every aspect, meaning also preserved the pragmatic function that carried from the source text. Meanwhile the implementation of deletion and reduction technique, scored low in accuracy but considered as acceptable and have high readability level. However, it also creates shifting in the pragmatic function which mostly it no longer considered swearing in the target language, or in other words, the pragmatic function is completely disappear.

From the total of 96 data, there are 39 data that shifted. The form of shifting found in this research are swearing that lost its pragmatic function, as the swearing is not present at the target language or translated but not identified as a swearing.

Example 1

ST: Should anyone be murdered? **Hell, no**.
 TT: Haruskah seseorang dibunuh? **Tentu saja tidak**.

Example 1 shows how the highlighted swearing in the source text did not appear in the target text. Contextually the translation conveyed the same meaning as the source text. However, the absence of the swearing indicates different level of power, making the translation flatter compared to the source text.

Example 2

ST: **Hell**, I think they ask your approval before they hire anyone at O’Malley’s.”
 TT: **Hei**, sepertinya mereka harus meminta persetujuanmu sebelum mempekerjakan siapa pun di O’Malley’s.”

Example 2 shows the swearing 'Hell' translated into 'Hei' which commonly used as greeting in the target language. It shows how it no longer hold its function as a swearing, even shift from its original form.

The tendency to erase swearing in this research means that the translator considers the acceptability and the readability level more rather than the accuracy. It can be seen from the shifting examples, the translator even considered to change the function of swearing into greeting in order to have a better flow in the target language. Since it is a novel translation, the translator decision to focus more on the plot is not completely wrong. However, if the emotion that portrayed through the swearing is able to be translated it would also help the plot to be easily understand.

Conclusion

This research showed that in fictional translation, especially novel the translator considers more on the flow of the story rather than the accuracy of the phrase. The decision upon this resulting on the translation quality scores especially accuracy aspect compared to the acceptability and readability aspect. The shifting found as the result of the decision also showed that the translator did not fully pay attention to the pragmatic function that the swearing might carry, which could change the mood or emotion that the source text try to portray.

However, though some aspects are not quite accurate the translator manage to preserve some pragmatic function, proven by from 96 data there are 57 data are not shifted. It is not easy to create a perfect translation with many considerations upon the target language. Hopefully, translator could consider these aspects more since novel are did not have visual like film. Readers may have difficulties in imagining the emotion if it's not translated properly.

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