



An analysis of translation techniques of cursing terms in English subtitle of 'Lara Ati' Movie

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ABSTRACT

This study is conducted to discuss in more detail about a translator's strategy to translate the source language (SL) into the target language (TL), in particular the translation about cursing terms in movie Lara Ati. It is a descriptive qualitative design. This study focuses on swear words, phrases and sentences produced by the cast. The data in this study were collected through several steps, namely watching, identifying, making notes, and classifying the data. This study used Andersson & Trudgill (1990)'s theory and Molina and Albir (2002)'s theory. The results show the techniques most often used by translators are adaptation and amplification with 5 frequencies each. This study also found that the most frequent swear word in the movie "Yowis Ben 3" is expletive as many as 14 data.

Keyword: Translation, Cursing terms, translation techniques



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1. Introduction

The characteristics differences between one language with others languages can be seen from the variety of grammatical systems, vocabulary, pronunciation, and others elements. Cursing term is one of the elements of language diversity, included in vocabulary. In some cases, cursing term in two difference language probably has the same structure or similar structure because they have the same language roots, for example "bodoh" in Indonesia has the same meaning with the word "bodoh" in Indonesia because both languages have the same language roots. But also in some cases, cursing term can has the difference structure because the society that use the language experience the development, for example the word "anjing" also can be known as "anjir", "anying" and "anjay".

Cursing term is a term that used to give the emphasis on the sentence and also used to be a respond of feelings such as anger, disappointment and upset. Curse terms are generally connotative (Ljung, 2011). Cursing term is based on the word that people assume it taboo. It is because the word contain things like race, religion, organs, animals, vital organs etc (Freud, 2004). As time and culture develop, the use of a taboo word can lead to the discomfort of the listener.

In translation area, the translator often faces challenges for example the translator needs to find the appropriate language to translate cursing term in source language to target language. For example, in Indonesia the word "babi" becomes taboo and considered to mock someone but in china, the word "pig" considered to

praise someone appearance that looks cute. The translator needs to understand the origin of the cursing term and also the context of the source language because it affects the result of the translation. translator proficiency is an underlying skill and knowledge of the translator to deliver a translation. (Sutopo, 2006). During this digital era, we often see translation problem in movie subtitle. There are so many movie streaming platforms that provide the subtitle for the viewers. The translator must be able to mediate between the source language and the target language, so the meaning in the source language not missing.

“*Lara ati*” is one of the movies from Netflix, one of the movie streaming platforms. This movie provides various phenomenon of cursing term usage. The cursing terms that used by the characters in “*Lara ati*” movie use Javanese language, where Javanese people have the difference words in cursing. The cursing terms in Javanese such as *jancok*, *jamput* etc have no meaning in Indonesian and also in English. The Javanese language ability of the translator becomes important to be used to translate the fellow words in the right context in target language. This becomes one of the backgrounds for researchers to study the phenomenon of cursing term usage and its translation techniques.

Recent studies have examined the cursing terms on subtitling and dubbing and the translation technique as conducted by (Aprianti, 2009; Puruhito, 2021; Sarah, n.d.; Septyaningrum, 2015). The researchers focus on the study of translation techniques and the translation quality of cursing terms that occur in the various movies and novels such as Everything sucks, The Catcher in the Rye, The adventures of Tintin: Prisoners of the sun, and Four brothers. However, in these previous studies, there are similarities in the categorization theory of cursing terms that focus in the classification of cursing terms based on the types and the analysis of translation techniques that used by each translator. The difference of the previous studies and this study is the data used, where the previous studies use English movies and novels to be the source of data and analysis the Indonesian translation, while this study uses Indonesian movie that use Javanese language as the source of data and analysis the English translation.

Other studies analyze the strategies used to translate profanities from English to Arabic (Mounadil, 2023; Slamia, 2020), while Afandi & Authar, (2021) investigate translations into Indonesian and Majeed (2023) into Kurdish. Common translation techniques identified include omission, euphemism, cultural equivalence, and literal translation (Hasibuan, 2021; Mounadil, 2023; Slamia, 2020). The studies highlight the challenges translators face due to cultural differences, technical constraints, and varying degrees of social acceptability for profanities across cultures (Thawabteh et al., 2022).

Based on the discussion above, the translation techniques used to translate the Javanese cursing terms in the movie “*Lara Ati*” becomes interesting to analysed. The researcher will analyse the terms that contain cursing or swearing in the “*Lara Ati*” movie by applying the classification theory by Andersson & Trudgill (1990) that focuses on the function of cursing terms, namely Expletive, Abusive, Auxiliary, and Humorous. After the classification, the researcher connects it with the techniques that the translator uses to translate the cursing terms with (Molina & Albir, 2002).

2. Method

This research uses qualitative study because the data of this research is from text not numeric, such as words, clauses, and also sentences. Qualitative study focuses on provide the researcher interpretive (Kuswono, 2019). Based on the Creswell (2014), the qualitative study does not deal with numeric and statistic result but only focus on how the researcher interpret the data. This research also use content analysis as the technique to help the researcher analyze the data. According to Parry et al., (2014), content analysis has three approaches that purposes to interpret meaning of the data, there are conventional, directed and summative. In this research, the researcher describes and analyses the subtitle of the movie called “*Lara Ati*”.

2.1 Sources of data and data

The source of data in this research is the movie from Netflix, named “*Lara ati*” produced by Bayu Skak. The movie duration is 116 minutes. This movie contains two languages, Javanese and Indonesian language. The data of this research is all the terms included words, phrases, and sentences in the “*Lara ati*” movie that contain cursing or swearing. The data also includes the Javanese and Indonesian cursing terms.

2.2 Data Collection methods

To collect the data, this research uses content analysis. Based on Tharenou, Donohue, Cooper (2007)'s statement, content analysis is a technique to help the researcher examines the data by analyse the spoken, written and also the visual. This research uses content analysis to help the researcher finds the data and the right information from the movie. This technique also helps the researcher explore the information contained in the movie, in a way to be scientifically accounted for. There are several steps to collect the data: (1) Watching the movie with Indonesian subtitles, (2) Collecting the cursing terms by take notes of several words that contain cursing terms, (3) Watching the movie with English subtitle to find the technique that used by the translator, (4) Classifying the cursing terms by their function and by the translaiom technique that used by the translator uses some codes.

2.3 Data Analysis Methods

The qualitative data analysis has three steps to analyse the data, there are condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verifying. These process include: (1) reducing and selecting the data that not relevant to the research, (2) classifying and describing the data, the researcher use codes, LA means *Lara Ati*, EX means expletive, AB means abusive, AU means auxiliary, and HUM means Humorous and M1-M30 (or more) means the minutes. The codes will be provided in bracket and separated by using slashes. The position of the codes are in the end of data. This can be modelled as LA/AB/M2

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Types of cursing terms in “Lara ati” movie

The data in this study showed that the researcher finds 26 data of cursing terms in the source language of the “Lara ati” movie. The researcher also found all types of cursing terms function based on Andersson and Trudgill's theory (1990). The types of cursing function can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. types of cursing terms

No.	Types of cursing terms	frequency
1.	Expletive	14
2.	Abusive	5
3.	Auxiliary	5
4.	Humorous	2
	Amount	26

3.1.1 Expletive

Expletive is the most common type among all the cursing word data obtained. Expletive in language context means words or phrases used to express emotion, emphasis in a sentence, and also purposes to expressing surprise, annoyance, or frustration. Expletive typically do not have an important grammatical function but onlyto provide stress or as a conversational complement. Based on the movie named “Lara Ati” that contain cursing terms, Expletive can be exemplified:

1) *Lambene!* (LA/EX/M2)

Context: Joko was annoyed at his sister for telling his mother about his secret.

Cursing term that joko uses is a curse term that he said reflexively because he annoyed with his sister. He reflexively uses cursing terms to emphasize his feeling wich is the emotion of annoyance.

2) *Nemen arek iki* (LA/EX/M6)

Context: Joko's mother feeling upset with Joko for not telling her about his secret.

Cursing term that his mother use was because she upset with Joko that he does not tell his mother about his secret and the cursing terms used as a respond to Joko's explanation

3) *Lambe mu iku loh* (LA/EX/ M6)

Context: Joko's sister heated up the situation by saying that Joko would be purposing to Farah.

The cursing term that Joko use was to respond his sister's behaviour because he felt annoyed with his sister and he respond it by uttering a cursing term

4) *Gateli* (LA/EX/M7)

Context: two people jokes about a souvenir

The cursing term appears in order to respond the opponent's jokes. The speaker feels annoyed by the joke uttered by the interlocutor.

5) *Jancok!* (LA/EX/M9)

Context: Joko finds out that Farah, his girlfriend wants get married with another man.

Cursing term that joko uses is a culture term that he said reflexively because he feeling heartbreak after he knows that his girlfriend will marry another man.

6) *Halah-halah, alasan kon!* (LA/EX/M16)

Context: Joko's friends are arguing because they cannot get a seat.

Cursing term that Riki, one of Joko's friends expressed was a respond to the unfairness of his friend.

7) *Waduh Jamput* (LA/EX/M20)

Context: Joko's mother was shocked to find out that Joko and Farah broke up, so his mother hit his father's leg.

Cursing term that his father used was to respond thing that her mother did. This cursing word is used to express pain because someone's behaviour.

8) *walah, Jancok!* (LA/EX/M20)

Context: Joko saw a new post from Farah, where Farah was with her new boyfriend.

Cursing terms that Joko used was because he felt annoyed and he respond by uttering a cursing term.

9) *hah? Mek ngono tok? Nang ngono tak kirim telung wulan maneh, cok!cok! Asu!* (LA/EX/M26)

Context: one of the Joko's friends, Fadly likes Joko's sister, Ajeng. So Fadly taking Joko home in order to seeking Ajeng's attention but Ajeng does not care about him.

The cursing term uttered by Fadly occurred to express his disappointment because what he expected did not go smoothly.

10) *yeuh.. Cemimus!* (LA/EX/M37)

Context: Fadly complained a lot, making Ajeng annoyed.

Cursing term spoken by Ajeng is her feeling of annoyance when she heard what Fadly complained about.

11) *Sumpah kon? Yo kon gendeng, yu.* (LA/EX/M45)

Context: Joko founds that Ayu doing wrong things to his boyfriend.

The cursing term spoken by Joko is an expression of his surprised feeling because of what Ayu did.

12) *sikat, sikat! Ditawari sek bingung iki. Tak sikat juga untu-mu, kon iku!* (LA/EX/M52)

Context: Ayu offers a job that suits with Joko's passion and all Joko's friends force Joko to accept the offer, making Joko annoyed.

The cursing term appears because Joko is annoyed to his friends because his friends force him to accept the job from Ayu while he still confused about his choice and how his parents will respond.

13) *Aneh arek iki, sumpah!* (LA/EX/M55)

Context: Ayu asks Joko to meet his ex-girlfriends in order to know why he got dumped.

Cursing term appears as a response from Joko to Ayu's request which he considers strange because he thinks it is impossible for him to meet all his exes because he feels embarrassed.

14) *kon iku gendeng yo jok!* (LA/EX/M75)

Context: Joko's mother found out that Joko resigned from the company and choose to work with Ayu.

This cursing term appears to express feelings of annoyance and anger because Joko chose to resign from the company with a sedentary salary an move to work with Ayu.

3.1.2 Abusive

Specifically, the abusive term function type is a type of cursing terms usage by the speaker with the aims to attacking, hurting and demeaning the interlocutor. Generally, this type used is related to the elements of slurs or insults. This type is not always addressed to the interlocutor in front of the speaker, but it can be addressed to a third person who is not with the speaker. Based on the movie named "Lara Ati" that contain cursing terms, Expletive can be exemplified:

1) *Bapak mu jualan kertas ta?* (LA/AB/M13)

Context: Joko's Boss patronizes his junior who throws paper at Joko.

Joko's boss use the cursing term to degrading his junior because he has a higher position.

2) *kon iku ancene ngerepoti wong tua ae!* (LA/AB/M26)

Context: His mother realize that he and Farah was broke up

Joko's mother feels that Joko always makes the wrong choices and demeans Joko because she feels that Joko always causes her trouble.

3) *yo isin due lanangan kek kon, gak due pendirian blas, cok!* (LA/AB/M59)

Context: Joko asks one of his ex-girlfriends about the reasons why he got dumped.

His ex-girlfriend meant to say the truth, but her words were demeaning to Joko. She knows that Joko will be hurt by her statement but she still said it to attack Joko.

4) *yo lanang ancene gatel* (LA/AB/M72)

Context: Joko sees the satay seller who is flirting with Ayu.

Joko said the words that demeaned the satay seller even though he knew that the satay seller would not listen to his words because they were in a distance.

5) *Apaan lu, njing?* (LA/AB/M93)

Context: Joko fought with Ayu's boyfriend.

Ayu's boyfriend, Alan is from Jakarta and he knows that Joko is from Surabaya, so he uses the word 'lu' to degrading Joko because he thinks that people who come from capital city are superior.

3.1.3 Auxiliary

This type is used by the speaker when the speaker wants to give more emphasis in the speech that the speaker delivers. This emphasis is particularly shown in the speaker's decision to use cursing words as a replacement for certain vocabulary in an utterance. The use of this type is influenced by the speaker's feelings or emotions which are varied and not limited to negative emotions and not always specifically directed to the speech partner but also can be deliver to an event. Based on the movie named "Lara Ati" that contain cursing terms, auxiliary can be exemplified:

1) *yo 'opo si, cok? Koncoe nang kene.* (LA/AU/M17)

Context: Fadly left when he saw beautiful women and left his friends behind.

The word 'cok' used to emphasis the sentence that Riki said in order to make Fadly hears what Riki said to him.

2) *cok nggilani cok!* (LA/AU/M57)

Context: one of Joko ex-girlfriends feels disgusted by Joko question

The word 'cok' used to emphasis the sentence and also as a notice to her surrounding in order to make everyone there knew that she was disgusted.

3) *Lek sampe kon ngomong aku seng coret-core, tak antemi kon* (LA/AU/M58)

Context: flashback when Joko was in high school, Joko was bullied by his friends.

The phrase "tak antemi kon" is used to threaten Joko and he added that phrase to emphasize his threat towards Joko.

4) *tak antemi yo sampean!* (LA/AU/M63)

Context: Joko warns the satay seller to stop teasing Ayu.

That sentence occur as a warning for satay seller and also to emphasize the warning sentence that Joko conveyed.

5) *tak goreng awak mu ndang wajan tahu tek!* (LA/AU/M104)

Context: Joko's mother warn him about his new job.

That sentence occur as a warning to Joko and also emphasize the warning sentence that his mother conveyed.

3.1.4 Humorous

This type is usually used to convey humor. Usually the form of vocabulary in this type is similar to the vocabulary in the abusive type but in this type the function of the word is humorous. The humorous type can be exemplified:

1) *Matamu obat iki wangi!* (LA/HUM/M7)

Context: There are two man that jokes about a souvenir that smell goods.

The word is humorous in the sense that the speaker wants to convey it to interlocutor. The sentence also shows friendships.

2) *nyosor ae koyok meri* (LA/HUM/M65)

Context: Joko says the joke to the satay seller.

Joko's joke above has a humorous intention that he wants to convey to the satay seller. The use of cursing term 'koyok meri' here serves to accommodate the emphasis of the humorous intention in the context of his speech and there is no intention at all to attack the subject in his joke

3.2 Translation Technique

In this part, the researcher analyses the techniques that used by the translator with the translation techniques theory by Molina & Albir (2002) with consist of 18 techniques. The result of this research shows that the translator applies 5 different techniques to translate cursing terms in the subtitle of source language into target language. The techniques are amplification, adaptation, Established equivalent, reduction, and variation.

Table 2. Translation techniques

No.	Translation techniques	Frequency
1.	Adaptation	6
2.	Variation	6
3.	Reduction	5
4.	Established equivalent	5
5.	Amplification	4
	Amount	26

.2.1 Adaptation

The use of adaptation focuses on finding the cursing term equivalents by looking at the cultural elements in source language and target language. In daily use, the adaptation technique is usually used to

translate proverbs (Molina & Albir, 2002). A word in a language may cannot be translated due to the different culture. The adaptation in this research for example,

SL: *Jancok!* (LA/EX/M9)

TL: Shit!

The cursing term, “*Jancok!*” in English culture can be used to express the feelings of anger and upset. By using the adaptation technique, the translator transfers the word “*Jancok!*” into “shit!” that has similar function to those in the source language.

3.2.2 Variation

Variation is a translation technique used to translate the paralinguistic elements, language style, social dialect present in the target. The variation can also be used to change the text without changing the meaning. This technique is not limited to the originally form. The Variation in this research for example,

SL: *cok ngglani cok!* (LA/AU/M57)

TL: you are disgusting!

From the text above, we can see that the word is translated to social dialect in the target language.

3.2.3 Reduction

This technique is used by the translator to condense the information contained in the source language expression in order to produce more compact translation of the target language expression. The use of this technique can be seen in the following example,

SL: yo isin due lanangan kek kon, **gak due pendirian blas, cok!**

TL: I can't have a boyfriend like you, **such a push over!**

Based on the example above, translator chose to eliminate the cursing term “*cok!*” that exist in the source language. It happens because the cursing terms does not have equivalent meaning in the target language.

3.2.4 Established Equivalent

This translation technique emphasizes the familiarity or reasonableness of translation in the target language. The use of this technique can be seen in the following example,

SL: *kon iku gendeng yo jok!* (LA/EX/M75)

TL: you are **crazy**, jok!

The word “*gendeng*” is cursing term in Javanese language that used to demonize someone. Translator decides to use the word ‘*crazy*’ because it is commonly used by English users and have the equivalent meaning with the source language.

3.2.5 Amplification

A translation technique which involves the addition of a little extra information in the target language, but does not change the message of the source language. The use of this technique can be seen in the following example,

SL: *Lambene!* (LA/EX/M2)

TL: Watch your mouth!

From the text above, we can see that the translator adds some extra information as the verb “watch” to make it easier to the viewers understand the meaning of words in the source language.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal several key insights into the translation of cursing terms in the English subtitles of *Lara Ati*. The study categorized cursing terms based on Andersson and Trudgill's (1990) classification, identifying four types: expletive, abusive, auxiliary, and humorous. Among these, expletives were the most frequently used type, with 14 instances, suggesting that cursing in *Lara Ati* is primarily used to express emotions such as frustration, anger, or surprise rather than to directly insult others. This aligns with Ljung's (2011) assertion that swearing often serves expressive rather than aggressive functions.

The study also analyzed the translation techniques used to render these cursing terms into English, using Molina and Albir's (2002) framework. Five translation techniques were identified: adaptation, variation, reduction, established equivalent, and amplification. Adaptation and variation were the most frequently used techniques, each appearing six times, followed by reduction and established equivalent with five occurrences each, and amplification with four occurrences. The dominance of adaptation suggests that translators prioritize cultural equivalence over direct translation. For instance, the Javanese term *jancok* was translated into English as "shit," preserving the expressive function rather than a literal meaning.

The frequent use of reduction also highlights a tendency to omit cursing terms when they lack a suitable equivalent in the target language. This strategy, often employed in abusive cursing terms, helps maintain the flow of dialogue while minimizing potential offense. Similarly, variation allowed translators to adjust expressions to better align with the target audience's linguistic expectations and norms.

An important observation is that translation choices are influenced not only by linguistic factors but also by cultural considerations. The findings support Mounadil (2023) and Slamia (2020), who argue that translation strategies for profanities vary due to cultural perceptions of taboo words. This study contributes to existing literature by providing insights into the translation of Javanese cursing terms, a language with unique cultural and linguistic characteristics. Unlike previous studies that primarily examined English-to-Indonesian translation, this study sheds light on how Javanese cursing terms are rendered in English subtitles, revealing challenges in maintaining cultural nuances.

4. Conclusion

In this research, the researcher finds 26 data that contain cursing terms in "Lara ati" movie. From the whole data, there are 4 type of cursing functions, namely Expletive, Abusive, Auxilliary, and Humorous. In this research, the researcher finds that expletive is the most widely used type of cursing term function as much as 14, followed by abusive and auxiliary with each 5 data, the last is humorous with 2 data. The researcher also found 5 translation techniques used by the translator to translate the cursing terms, which are amplification, adaptation, Established equivalent, reduction, and variation. Overall, the translator mostly uses adaptation and amplification with 6 data each techniques, followed by Reduction and Established equivalent with 5 data each technique and the last is amplification with 4 data. The adaptation mostly found in expletives function. For abusive Type, the translator often use reduction technique to translate the cursing term. While to translate the auxiliary cursing terms the translator mostly use variation technique. And to translate the humorous cursing terms the translator use both amplification and established equivalent.

The conclusions obtained from this study is this study can be used as a reference by other researchers who want to develop linguistic studies on the topic of translation techniques and cursing terms. In the realm of cursing terms, further research can be done by adding other cursing domain such as gender tendency, age, or location of the speaker. In the realm of translation, further research can be done by adding elements of translation quality.

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