

THE ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIES IN TRANSLATING SWEAR WORDS IN *FREE GUY* MOVIE SUBTITLE

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the types of swear words and translation strategies used by translators in translating swear words in *Free Guy* movie. The data used in this research consists of subtitles from the movie in the form of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. The film can be accessed via Disney+Hotstar.com and was released in 2021. The research adopts a descriptive-qualitative methodology and employs Anderson and Trudgill's theory on swear word and Baker's theory on translation strategies. The results of the research indicate that a total of 85 swear words. The most frequent type of swear word is expletive swearing with 55 data (64.70%). The second most common type is abusive swearing with 15 data (17.64%). Auxiliary swearing has 9 data (10.58%), and the least frequent is humorous swearing with 6 data (7.05%). In terms of translation strategies, there are four strategies were identified. The most frequently used strategy is translation using a more neutral meaning with 34 data (40%). The second most common strategy is translation using common words with 25 data (29.41%). Translation by omission has 21 data (24.70%), and the least frequent strategy is paraphrasing using related words with 5 data (5.88%). The high occurrence of expletive swearing is attributed to the characters expressing their emotions or feelings rather than intending to intimidate, insult, or joke. The translation strategy using more neutral or less expressive words is often employed by translators when they encounter difficulties in translating the cultural context from the SL to the TL.

Keywords/Kata Kunci: *Free Guy* movie, translation strategies, types of swear word

INTRODUCTION

Translation is one of important skills in English study due to the connecting two languages. Basically, translation can be defined as the process of transferring words or text from one language to another language. The purpose of translation itself is to communicate the message contained in the original text or Source Language (SL) with the appropriate diversity in the new language or Target Language (TL). Translation becomes very crucial in many fields of life for example commerce, industry, and science. In the field of industry especially in entertainment industry like movie, it is said that translation brings much ease to their progress to promote their products. Due to so many movies have been released, the distributions of those products are not limited in a certain country. The companies compete to enhance their distributions to the international market therefore, the companies must provide subtitle to overcome language limitations in the international market.

Subtitle is related to the translation process as it is created to transfer conversation or dialogue in one language to another language in form of written text. For audiences, subtitles become important matter to overcome language limitations. Thus, they can understand the story of the movie well by reading the subtitle. However, some parts of translation in subtitles need to be considered. Not all words are relevant and translated directly as same as the meaning of the words. Some of words that are difficult to translate are culture-specific terms, idiom, swear words, and many more but in this researcher will focus only on swear words.

Swear words are often used by many people, especially among young people. Jay (2009) states that swear words are part of taboo words. Therefore, some people acknowledge swear words as a collocation but others argue that

swear words is disrespect act. Besides, some people used swear words to attack, offend, shock, even to entertain as humor depend on the context. Swear words are also used as humor or joke when people have known each other for a long time or intimate. According to Keith and Burridge (2006, p. 39) the apparent terms of swear words are used in good-humored means displaying friendship and affection to someone who are close each other. Some swear words like **fuck, damn, shit, motherfucker, asshole**, and etc. are often used as joke depending on context.

There are so many western movies released containing swear words. One of them is *Free Guy* movie released in 2021. *Free Guy* movie was among the top 10 highest-grossing Disney movies of 2021, grossing over \$300 million worldwide (<https://screenrant.com>). This movie was directed by Shawn Levy who is known for his comedy action genre movie, and one of them is *Free Guy*. This movie was chosen because it is an action comedy with parent guide (PG) is 13 (<https://www.imdb.com/>). PG 13 means there are some materials is not suitable for children under the age of 13 years old. It might contain language/swear words, violence, nudity, and sexually suggestive language. *Free Guy* does not contain nudity, but it does contain violence, sexually suggestive dialogue, and a lot of swear words.

Lack of understanding of swear words will lead a misinterpretation because sometimes it is difficult to find the equivalent terms of swear words from the SL to the TL standard, because these words contain cultural aspects related to the reasons, background of education, situation, and many others. Therefore, a translator needs some strategies in conveying the correct meaning of swear words in the movie. There are many kinds of strategies that can be used by translator in translating swear words. One of them is Mona Baker's theory of translation strategy (1992, p. 26-42).

The exposure of swear words in any media triggered people to used it in their daily life communication. The researchers chose *Free Guy* because the movie is categorized into parent guide (PG) 13 years old that contains many swear words, and has become one of Hollywood blockbuster movies. In classifying types of swear words, the researchers implemented Anderson and Trudgill theory on types of swearing. It is found that in translating swear words, the translator may face various difficulties to find the equivalent in TL. So, the researchers expect to find out the strategies, based on Baker's theory, that are implemented by the translator in translating the swear words in *Free Guy*.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed a descriptive qualitative method in analyzing the subject, the types of swear word and the translation strategies in translating the swear words. The data in this research is *Free Guy* movie subtitle in English-Indonesian in the form of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences that contains of swear words. The source of data is the media where the data was taken, a movie entitled *Free Guy* directed by Shwan Levy and released on 2021 in Disney+Hotstar. In conducting the research, the researchers used textual analysis method. Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009, p. 232) say that textual analysis involves the identification and interpretation of the language and symbol. The researchers focused on the language because the data are the conversation containing swear words, then classify, analyze, interpret, and drawing the conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Subheadings – Level 1

The researchers divided the data collection into two parts, namely types of swear word and translation strategies used in translating swear words.

Table 1. Types of Swear Words

Types of Swear Word	Frequency	Percentage
Expletive Swearing (ES)	55	64.70%
Abusive Swearing (ABS)	15	17.64%
Humorous Swearing (HS)	6	7.05%
Auxiliary Swearing (AUXS)	9	10.58%
Total	85	100%

Table 1. points out four types of swearing i.e ES, ABS, HS, and AUXS. All the types uttered in the a few scenes in the movie. Based on the table it is shown, ES is the most dominant with the calculation of 55 data (64.70 %) data from 85 data. The second dominant is ABS with 15 data (17.64 %), AUXS with 9 data (10.58 %), the low frequent of data is HS with 6 data (7.05%).

Table 2. Translation Strategies Used in Translating Swear Words

Translation Strategies	Quantity	Percentage
Translation by more general word (TGW)	25	29.41%
Translation by more neutral/less expressive (TMN)	34	40%
Translation by paraphrasing using related word (TPR)	5	5.88%
Translation by omission (TO)	21	24.70%
Total	85	100%

Table 2 points out that TMN with 34 data (40%) takes the first position as strategy in translating the swear words. Then, the next strategy is followed by TGW with 25 data (29.41%) in the second position, the third position is TO with 21 data (24.70%). And the last position is TPR with 5 data (5.88%).

Types of Swear Word

1. Expletive Swearing (ES)

Expletive swearing is never addressed toward someone else, rather than expressing any feeling being experienced.

Guy : **Jeez**, that's good. (Datum 1)

Guy said "**Jeez**" when he just finished drinking a cup of coffee at his favorite coffee shop. In this context, Guy said "**Jeez**" to describe how amazed he was with the taste of the coffee he drank because the taste never changed. To support the idea, The word "**Jeez**" is a type of swearing that is uttered by someone to express their feelings (surprised, happiness, shock, frustration, annoying, or other feeling) or emotions but is not intended to offend or intimidate the interlocutor.

Mouser : **God!** Okay who did that? Who is doing that? (Datum 68)

In this scene, Mouser was under a lot of pressure from Antwan, the head of the game studio where he worked. He was told to solve the problems that occurred in the game that was to overcome the character Guy who was only an NPC but, unexpectedly, someone tried to help Guy escape from Mouser. This situation made Mouser uttered "**God!**" to express his emotions. Based on Ljung (2011, p. 22) the word "**God!**" is one of expletive interjection that generally to express surprised, pain, fear, anger, disappointment, and even joy. In addition, the word "**God!**" related to the religious term or profane or blasphemous. Based on Jay (2009, p. 155), the word "**God!**", "**Oh my God**" is considered as profane or blasphemous. It refers to the usage of religion words, but the real meaning is not to praise God itself and another meaning is to express feeling or emotion with God`s name.

2. Abusive Swearing (ABS)

Abusive swearing refers to abuse, intimidate, and insult other people. Commonly, the characteristic of this swearing is used name calling to insult, abuse, or intimidate toward someone.

Mouser : Hey, **40-years old virgin** get over here. (Datum 12)

In this scene, Mouser and Keys chased Guy. This happened after Guy stole the glasses belonging to one of the players in the video game *Free City*. Guy, who was originally just an NPC in *Free City*, suddenly turned into a player and it made the game chaotic. Mouser thought Guy was a hacker so Mouser and Keys tried to stop Guy by fighting him in the game. Mouser called Guy a "**40-year-old virgin**" in a derogatory tone. As described by Anderson and Trudgill (1990),

swearing that includes name calling is a feature of abusive swearing whose purpose is to abuse, insult, and intimidate someone.

Player 3 : Yo, **dumb ass** (Datum 34)

This scene took place at the bank where Guy worked. Player 3 was one of the Free City game players who came to rob the bank but Guy suddenly came to thwart the bank robbery. Player 3 insulted Guy by calling him "**dumb ass**" because he felt that Guy seemed to be a hero even though he was just an NPC and had no right to prohibit and prevent him from stealing. **Dumb ass** is categorized as abusive swearing because its use is intended to insult people by name calling

3. Humorous Swearing (HS)

Humorous swearing is not always abusive as it does not have to be emotional. HS is not directed toward someone as what ABS does. HS is usually used among two people or a group that has known for a long time or to entertain humor.

Guy : It's like **Jesus** washed my tongue. (Datum 5)

Guy always started his morning activities by drinking coffee at his favorite coffee shop. He never missed it, so Guy was very familiar and friends with Missy who was the barista at the place. Guy said, "it's like **Jesus** washed my tongue" after drinking Missy's coffee while laughing. The word Jesus itself is one of the words used for swearing or falls into the category of religious swearing or considered as profane or blasphemous. However, in this context, the word **Jesus** is used to be funny, not to insult or intimidate the other person, because Guy and Missy are close friends.

Millie : Okay, well, enjoy your lifetime supply of **virginity**. (Datum 29)

In this scene, Guy and Millie were in Millie's gun safe (Millie's secret place). Guy was surprised to see so many weapons and asked Millie how to get that many weapons and his level up. Millie said, if he wanted to get a lot of weapons and level up then Guy must rob and behave badly towards people in Free City. However, Guy could not do this because he was a good person. Hearing Guy's words made Millie feel funny and teased Guy with the words "Okay, well, enjoy your lifetime supply of **virginity**" however, Guy was not offended at all because basically they were good friends and the words were only considered a joke.

4. Auxiliary (AUXS)

Auxiliary swearing is not directed to someone else. Besides, it is not uttered to complain about certain conditions. Emphasizing the intention is the only reason why people employ this swearing type. The terms such as "lazy speaking" and "non-emphatic way of speaking" are also frequently attached to this type of swearing. AUXS is not used to insult someone by using swear words.

Antwan : Yeah, a virus that's giving me **ass and bell cancer** at the same time. (Datum 55)

In this scene, there was an argument between Antwan and some of his employees including Keys and Mouser. Antwan was angry that Guy destroyed the game. Keys then said "he's gone viral" then Antwan replied to Keys' words "Yeah, a virus that's giving me **ass and bell cancer** at the same time". The words cursed by Antwan were not directed at Keys, Mouser or other employees. It is just used to substitute the case or problem he had faced during Guy's destruction of the game. It is expressed in a non-emphatic tone.

Buddy : I've been scared my whole **damn** life. (Datum 80)

This speech took place on the beach when Guy and Buddy were about to cross the bridge at sea that connects the city of *Free City* with the city of *Free Life*. However, Buddy fell behind and the bridge started to break. Buddy asked Guy to keep going and not to worry about him. Buddy said "I've been scared my whole **damn** life" in a non-emphatic tone. The word "**damn**" itself is not meant to insult or intimidate people; it is used to substitute the case of all his scary life that he faced during his whole life.

Based on the discussion, four types of swear words by Anderson and Trudgill (1990) are found in *Free Guy* movie, namely ES, ABS, HS, and AUXS. The dominant position of data found is types of ES which functions to express feeling or emotion. The characteristic of ES is always used interjection after the swear words for example **God!, holy hell!, shit!**. The second position is ABS which functions to intimidate, insult, and to mock toward someone. Characteristically, when people used ABS they always insert name-calling. The third position is AUXS, commonly this swearing called "lazy speaking" or "lazy swearing" because this swearing is always uttered with non-emphatic tone. And the last position is HS, which is commonly used to entertain humor between two or more people in a group which has known each other for long time or intimate.

Translation Strategies Used in Translating Swear Words

1. Translation by more General Word (TGW)

TGW is a common strategy for dealing with various non-equivalences, especially in propositional meaning.

SL : I'm just this **idiot** who's in the background

TL : *Aku hanya si **bodoh** yang ada dilatar belakang.* (Datum 48)

According to Urban Dictionary, "**idiot**" means a foolish or stupid person, that by the translator was translated into "**bodoh**". The Great Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) defined "**bodoh**" as *tidak lekas mengerti; tidak mudah tahu atau tidak dapat (mengerjakan dan sebagainya), tidak memiliki pengetahuan (pendidikan, pengalaman)*. Thus, the translators used TGW because they translated the swear words with the same meaning as the TL.

SL : God, those two where young and **dumb**

TL : *Astaga, mereka muda dan **bodoh**.* (Datum 17)

According to Urban Dictionary, "**dumb**" means someone who is not smart/intelligent or intentionally being stupid, which by the translator, was translated into "**bodoh**". The Great Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) defined "**bodoh**" as *tidak lekas mengerti; tidak mudah tahu atau tidak dapat (mengerjakan dan sebagainya), tidak memiliki pengetahuan (pendidikan, pengalaman)*. Thus, the translator used a more general word strategy because the translator translated the swear words with the same meaning as the TL.

2. Translation by more Neutral Word/Less Expressive (TMN)

TMN is used to reduce the adverse impression produced by the word in the SL due to its own negative connotations.

SL : **O, My God**, now I'm saying it loud

TL : ***Astaga**, aku mengatakannya dengan keras.* (Datum 45)

The phrase "**O, My God**" is used as a swear word to express anger, annoyance, surprised, or frustration. In many cultures, using references to God as a curse or interjection to express emotions towards oneself or others is considered inappropriate. This prohibition is mentioned in Leviticus 24 in the Bible, "Uttering insults against God, He must die" (Allan & Burridge, 2006). In this particular case, the translator chose to translate "**O, My God**" from SL into "**astaga**" in TL. According to the kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id, "**astaga**" is a fragment from "**astaghfirullah**", an Arabic phrase that means 'may Allah forgive me'. It is commonly used as an exclamation of wonder or sadness. There is a noticeable difference in the expressive meaning between "**O, My God**" and its translation. In this datum, "**O, My God**" emphasizes Millie's frustration after knowing that Guy just an NPC. This expressive meaning could not get transferred in the target text with "**astaga**", and this translation changes and reduces or tones down the original meaning (Allan & Burridge, 1991). This strategy of translation called understatement. Despite the loss of expressive meaning, the translation can still be understood by the viewers because "**astaga**" in Indonesian language is often used as an exclamation when someone is surprised.

SL : Keys, you're a **goddamn** genius

TL : *Keys, kau **benar-benar** genius.* (Datum 36)

The translator used translation by a more neutral word strategy in translating this expression by replacing the swearing phrase with a neutral expression in the TL because the SL and the TL have different stylistic preferences. The swearing term "**goddamn**" was also used by the translators just for emphasize the word "**genius**" itself.

3. Translation by Paraphrase using Related Word (TPR)

TPR is used when the SL's idea is lexicalized in the TL but in a different form, and when the frequency with which a particular form is used in the SL is considerably greater than would be natural in the TL.

SL : Then stop defending him and help me **beat his ass**

TL : *Berhenti membela, bantu **lawan dia***. (Datum 21)

The phrase "**beat his ass**" has a similar meaning to "**go kick ass**" both of this phrase used to shoo away annoying people. (Urban Dictionary). The translator used translation by paraphrasing strategy by translating the phrase "**beat his ass**" into the clear explanation "*lawan dia*" in the target text.

SL : **What the hell**

TL : ***Apa-apaan***. (Datum 72)

According to *Urban Dictionary* the phrase "**what the hell**" used to reaction something that is strange/abnormal. The translator used translation by paraphrasing strategy by translating the phrase "**what the hell**" into the clear explanation "*apa-apaan*" in the TL. In the TL, the phrase "*apa-apaan*" has the same function with the SL.

4. Translation by Omission (TO)

Suppose the meaning expressed by a particular item or expression is not critical enough to justify distracting the reader with lengthy explanations. In that case, translators can often leave the word or expression phrase untranslated.

SL : No, Antwan, **what the hell** are you doing

TL : *Jangan, Antwan, **apa** yang kau lakukan?* (Datum 78)

The translators used the TO strategy in translating the swearing word by leaving the word "**hell**" in question untranslated because the word "**hell**" is used to emphasize the sentences.

SL : That security guard right was a **goddamn** hero

TL : ***Bahwa** petugas keamanan disana adalah **seorang pahlawan***. (Datum 80)

The translators used the TO strategy in translating the swearing word by leaving the word "**goddamn**" in question untranslated because the word "**goddamn**" is just to emphasize the word "**hero**".

Based on the discussion, eight strategies by Baker (1992), the translators applied four strategies in translating the swear words. TGW is commonly used by translator for dealing with various non-equivalences, especially in proportional meaning. TMN is commonly used by translator for make word more soft or less expressive so that the meaning more acceptable in the target text. TPR is commonly used by translator when the source language idea is lexicalized in the target language but in different form. TO is commonly used by translator when the particular item or expression is not critical enough to justify distracting the reader with lengthy explanation. TO is almost the same with deletion strategies.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis results, the data shows that the swear words types found in *Free Guy* movie can be identified into four types based on Anderson and Trudgill's theories. The types of swear word are ES, ABS, HS, and AUXS. Each types has their own function, ES is used to express feeling, ABS is used to intimidate, to insult, and to mock someone, HS is used to entertain humor, and AUXS is different with three types of swearing. AUXS usually used by people with nonemphatic tone or called lazy speaking. ES type has the highest position with 55 data (64.70%). ABS type is the second highest types with 15 data (17.64%), AUXS type with 9 data (10.58%). HS is the lowest type that found in *Free Guy* movie with 6 data (7.05%). ES type become the highest position because mostly, the characters in *Free Guy* movie

used that to express their feeling and emotion. The feeling that expressed by the characters are surprised, frustration, amazed, shock, and happiness. Therefore, ES mostly used because of it functions to express feeling and emotion. The most frequency of ES used are **oh my god, shit, damn, holy hell, and jeez.**

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