

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Language is all around us: whatever people do when they come together, they talk. Language distinguishes humans from other creatures more than any other attribute. Language pertains to scientific, medical, and therapeutic fields; business; education, translation; formal systems, mathematics and logic; and law, argumentation, and practical reasoning. It also relates to language use and social issues in such areas as persuasion, gender, cultural diversity, and differences between political and social groups.

The term *taboo* was discovered by Captain James Cook. In 1777, Cook said that when any thing is forbidden to be eaten, or made use of, they say, that it is taboo (Wark, 2005: 2). Cook was in the Friendly Islands (now Tonga) at the time, so even though similar words occur in other Polynesian languages, the form *taboo* is borrowed from Tongan *tabu*. The Tongans used *tabu* as an adjective. Cook, besides inserting the word into English, also made it a noun referring to the prohibition and a verb that means, "to make someone or something taboo". From its origins in Polynesia, the word *taboo* has traveled as widely as Cook himself and is now used throughout the English speaking world.

One of the major topics in sociolinguistics is the study of language variation. Language variation is a variety of language as a set of linguistic items with similar social distribution (Hudson, 1980: 24). It means that language

variation occurs because of the existence of social divisions. Each social division uses its own variety of language. In society, social divisions between speakers such as age, socio-economic class or sex influence people's point of view toward language. It will be reflected in their language. There are often phonological, lexical, or syntactic differences in their speech although they live together. For instance, there are two words that have exactly the same meaning but are treated differently. Word *cunt* (English) is considered as taboo, while word *vagina* (Latin) is not, although they have the same meaning (Ohoiwutun, 2002: 95). Moreover, *vagina* becomes respectable anatomical term and appears in textbooks. In fact, many scientific terms are often derived from Latin that is rarely used in social intercourse. As a result, *vagina* is not considered as taboo. Furthermore, people from different social divisions have their own point of view toward such words, so that for one group word *cunt* is considered taboo, and for the other group, it is a colloquial word. For those who consider it as taboo avoid using such words, and for those who do not, use it in social intercourse.

Taboo terms include a large body of "curse" words and expressions. Typically, they refers to sexual act, epithets that are used to describe people of different religions, nationalities, and races, words and phrases that are used to refer negatively to members of the opposite sex and expressions which are used to degrade religious beliefs or symbols. Many people avoid using them because they believe that they are harmful or feel that they are offensive. Words associated with certain other topics may also be called taboo from time to time, while others, which at one time were taboo, are no longer considered as such.



Translation may be viewed as an interlingual communicative act in which at least three participants are involved: the sender or source (the author of the source-language message), the translator who acts in dual capacity – as the receptor of the source-language message and as the sender of the equivalent (target-language message), and the receptor of the target-language message (translation) (Shveitser, 2004: 1). Translation as an interlingual communicative act includes two phases; the first is communication between the sender and the translator and the second is communication between the translator and the receptor of the target-language message. In the first phase the translator acts as a source-language receptor that analyses the original message and extracts the information contained in it. In the second phase, the translator acts as a target-language sender that produces an equivalent message in the target language and redirects it to the target-language receptor.

In producing the target-language text, the translator changes linguistic form while meaning should remain unchanged. In fact, an equivalent should match the original in the plan of message. The message, produced by the translator, should be understood in the same way by both the source-language readers for whom it was originally intended and the target-language readers.

## **1.2 Reason of Choosing the Topic**

Actually, there are many literary works that discuss sex and state a large number of taboo terms. However, in fact, they are usually considered as taboo (e.g. *The Kamasutra* by Vetsyayana). Therefore, many people avoid observing

taboo terms especially translating them into their languages. In addition, translating taboo terms is not easy. It is quite complicated because it relates to many aspects, especially culture. The culture differences between source language and receptor language make such terms difficult to be observed. As a result, there are only few studies about taboo terms. Therefore, the researcher wants to analyze the translation of taboo terms in Candace Bushnell's *Sex and the City*.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problems**

In relation to the rendering of taboo terms, there are two problems to analyze, namely:

1. How are the taboo terms in Candace Bushnell's *Sex and the City* translated into Indonesian due to their meaning and dynamics?
2. What is the degree of fidelity of the translation of taboo terms in Candace Bushnell's *Sex and the City*?

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

In line with the statement of the problems, this research tries to answer the two questions stated above, namely:

1. To describe the way the taboo terms in Candace Bushnell's *Sex and the City* are translated into Indonesian due to their meaning and dynamics.
2. To determine the degree of fidelity of the translation of taboo terms in Candace Bushnell's *Sex and the City*.



### **1.5 Scope and Limitation**

It is important to limit the problems that are discussed in this research in order to get detailed information about the translation of taboo terms in Candace Bushnell's *Sex and the City*. Actually there are many kinds of translation such as literal translation, idiomatic translation, linguistic translation, and communicative translation. However, in fact, the researcher only focuses on idiomatic translation to observe the translation of taboo terms in Candace Bushnell's *Sex and the City* from English into Indonesian.

### **1.6 Benefit of the Research**

It is hoped that the result of this research may contribute something valuable for the readers, especially for other researchers to use it as a reference for further research on the translation of taboo terms from English into Indonesian. To be more specific, it is beneficial for the readers who are not familiar to such terms that they will have good understanding about them. Finally, hopefully, this study can help Indonesian readers to understand more about the content of the novel *Sex and the City* written by Candace Bushnell.

### **1.7 Source of the Data**

The researcher chooses the novel *Sex and the City* written by Candace Bushnell and its Indonesian translation translated by Amelia Listiani as source of the data in doing this research. The author states many taboo terms that are rarely

found in other novels or literary works. Furthermore, this novel is very popular and familiar all over the world, so that it is a valid source of the data.

### **1.8 Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of five chapters. The contents of each chapter are as follows:

#### **Chapter I**

This chapter is the introduction. It includes background of the study, reason of choosing the topic, statement of the problems, objectives of the study, scope and limitation, benefit of the research, source of the data, and organization of the research.

#### **Chapter II**

This chapter discusses the theories that are used to support the analysis. It includes the theories of translation, idiomatic translation, the concept of fidelity, taboo terms, meaning, and diction.

#### **Chapter III**

This chapter presents the method of research used as a guide in doing the analysis. It consists of research design, population, sample, technique of data collecting, and technique of data analysis.

#### **Chapter IV**

This chapter discusses the analysis of the data. The researcher describes the way the English taboo terms are translated into Indonesian due to their meaning and



dynamics. Then, the researcher determines the degree of fidelity of the translation of taboo terms.

#### Chapter V

This chapter states the conclusion drawn from the result of the analysis.