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# Exploring Contextual Swear Words: A Case Study on the Translation of *Goddamn* in *The Catcher in the Rye*

# Exploración de las palabrotas contextuales: Un estudio de caso sobre la traducción de *goddamn* en *The Catcher in the Rye*

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**Abstract:** This study undertakes a comprehensive analysis of the contextualised swear word *goddamn* in J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* and its translation into Turkish. This study aimed to examine how the usage of *goddamn* differs across abusive, casual, and cathartic settings in both the source and target texts, thereby shedding light on contextualised swearing in translation. The analysis revealed that *goddamn* was the most common swear word, accounting for 31.9% of all the swear words in the book. Interestingly, out of 251 sentences, *goddamn* was employed casually in 218 instances, suggesting that its usage goes beyond being a mere swear word and serves pragmatic functions. The translator employs various techniques to adeptly convey the pragmatic nuances of the term in the target text. Notably, the author, J. D. Salinger, predominantly employs *goddamn* in delexicalised and pragmatic contexts, refraining from its abusive usage. This decision underscores the author's intent to de-emphasise the word's profanity, highlighting its pragmatic utility. Similarly, the translator's choice to delexicalise *goddamn* in the Turkish rendition strengthens its pragmatic usage, aligning with the author's original intentions. In conclusion, this study illuminates the nuanced contextualization of swear words, particularly *goddamn*, in literary texts and their translations. This underscores the importance of considering cultural and pragmatic factors when effectively conveying the intended meaning across languages while preserving the essence of the source text.
**Keywords:** Swear words; *goddamn*; translation studies; contextualised swear words.
**Summary:** Introduction. Swear Words. Contextual Swear Words. Swearing as a Discourse in Teenage Communication in *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger. *Goddamn* as a Swear Word.

Translation of Swear Words for the Target Audience. Methods, Materials and Data Analysis. Results and Discussion. Concluding Remarks.

**Resumen:** En este estudio se ha llevado a cabo un análisis exhaustivo de la palabrota contextualizada *goddamn* en *The Catcher in the Rye* y su traducción al turco. El objetivo era examinar cómo difiere el uso de *goddamn* en contextos abusivos, casuales y catárticos, tanto en el texto de origen como en el de destino, arrojando así luz sobre las palabrotas contextualizadas en la traducción. El análisis reveló que *goddamn* era la palabrota más común, con un 31,9% del total de palabrotas del libro. Curiosamente, de 251 frases, *goddamn* se empleó de forma casual en 218 casos, lo que sugiere que su uso va más allá de una mera palabrota y cumple funciones pragmáticas. El traductor empleó varias técnicas para transmitir hábilmente los matices pragmáticos del término en el texto meta. En concreto, en seis casos, *goddamn* se utilizó en contextos catárticos, lo que llevó al traductor a adoptar una estrategia de traducción literal para preservar la esencia contextual. En los contextos abusivos, en 24 casos, el traductor tendió a suavizar el tono, posiblemente para llegar a un público más amplio. Esta preferencia por la suavización coincide con tendencias históricas en las que el uso pragmático y deslexicalizado de palabrotas como *goddamn* servía como recurso literario. En particular, el autor, J. D. Salinger, emplea *goddamn* predominantemente en contextos deslexicalizados y pragmáticos, absteniéndose de su uso abusivo. Esta decisión subraya la intención del autor de restar importancia a la profanidad de la palabra, destacando su utilidad pragmática. Del mismo modo, la decisión del traductor de deslexicalizar *goddamn* en la versión turca refuerza su uso pragmático, en consonancia con las intenciones originales del autor. En conclusión, el estudio ilustra la contextualización matizada de las palabrotas, en particular *goddamn*, en los textos literarios y sus traducciones. Subraya la importancia de tener en cuenta los factores culturales y pragmáticos a la hora de transmitir eficazmente el significado deseado a través de las lenguas, preservando al mismo tiempo la esencia del texto original.
**Palabras clave:** Palabrotas; *goddamn*; estudios de traducción; palabrotas contextualizadas.
**Sumario:** Introducción. Palabrotas. Palabrotas contextuales. Las palabrotas como discurso en la comunicación adolescente en el libro *The Catcher in the Rye* de J. D. Salinger. *Goddamn* como palabrota. Traducción de palabrotas para el público destinatario. Métodos, materiales y análisis de datos. Resultados y discusión. Conclusiones.

## INTRODUCTION

Swearing, a ubiquitous aspect of human culture, manifests in various forms and contexts, serving purposes ranging from venting frustration to expressing strong emotions, and even to producing comic effects by exaggerating emotions, subverting expectations, or adding a layer of irony and humour to everyday interactions. Swear words are rarely found in textbooks and are hardly included in formal education curricula, being regarded as taboo and offensive words (Jay, "The Utility") because of their denotative and literal meanings (Lafreniere et al. 908). Nevertheless, they serve various discourse functions in teenage conversations. In addition to their discourse devices, they serve to establish in-group membership and

maintain boundaries and social norms for language use (Rayson et al.; Stenström; Love and Stenström). Swearing is also used to communicate one's emotional state to an audience (Jay, "The Utility;" Jay and Janschewitz), although it includes varying degrees of profanity. However, the level of profanity is not equally offensive in all situations (Beers Fägersten, *Who's Swearing Now?*; Johnson and Lewis; Rieber et al.). The discussion of the offensive nature of these words is essential, as they have evolved into a form of emotive language commonly used by many teenagers in their daily social interactions. As with other words, the usage of swear words has evolved over centuries, both in meaning and connotation. Consequently, the perception of swear words has changed substantially, depending on the context in which they are used.

Scholarship on linguistic politeness and impoliteness has also emphasised the discursively negotiated feature of politeness as part of relational work negotiated in interaction (Brown and Levinson; Locher and Watts; Locher and Bousfield; Christie; Jary). Thus, swear words, in the context of impoliteness, may function as solidarity markers in casual contexts, aligning with positive politeness strategies, while in abusive contexts they constitute face-threatening acts. Translators, therefore, must navigate these pragmatic nuances to avoid unintended impoliteness or loss of interpersonal meaning. This relational perspective underscores that translation is not merely linguistic transfer but an act of interpersonal negotiation, where choices impact perceptions of power, distance, and social identity across cultures.

Swear words have become the focus of multidisciplinary studies, including linguistics, which encompasses semantics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, sociohistorical descriptive linguistics, psycholinguistics, and philosophy of language.[1] However, apart from a few influential works in Translation Studies (TS),[2] there is relatively little research on the intercultural translation of swear words, which remains unexplored in TS (Valdeón, "The Vulgarization Hypothesis" 1).

[1] For a multidisciplinary overview of swearing, see, for example, Goddard, Jay and Janschewitz, and Norrick.

[2] For an overview of swearing in TS, see, for example, Díaz-Pérez ("Translating Swear Words), Díaz Cintas and Remael, Guillot, Santaemilia ("The Translation"), Valdeón ("Swearing;" "The Vulgarization Hypothesis;" "Schemata;" "The (Ab)use"), and Santaemilia ("The Danger(s)").

Within this relatively small body of research, previous studies on the translation of expletives have reported disparate findings, especially regarding the strategies employed to translate swear words to convey pragmatic force. Translators adopt a range of strategies when translating swear words. While certain strands of research strongly argue that translators—particularly in specific contexts—tend to increase the number of swear words in the target text (TT) (Valdeón, "Swearing;" Valdeón, "The Vulgarization Hypothesis"), other seminal scholars take the opposite view, maintaining that translators more commonly omit or attenuate the impact of swear words for various reasons across different language pairs (Giampieri; Díaz-Pérez, "Translating Swear Words").

Regardless of the strategies employed, the primary aim of translators is to convey the pragmatic implications of the original (Pardo 130). This study aims to identify the pragmatic and interpersonal functions of one of the most commonly used swear words, *goddamn*, and scrutinise how its functions are transferred from one culture to another through translation, especially in teenage speech. While some studies have stated that the swear word *damn* and its related lexemes have lost their swearing force (Montagu; McEnery) and are listed at the bottom of the offensive list (McEnery), I believe that they are indispensable for pragmatic implications and should be transferred into another language using certain translation strategies. Thus, I have chosen *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger) as a primary text, as it provides fertile ground for exploring teenage language and profanity. The teenage protagonist Holden uses the word *goddamn* (or "goddam" in Holden's usage) 251 times on different occasions. This study investigates the contextual uses of the particular swear word in teenage dialogue in *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger) and how these functions are translated and contextualised in Turkish. Considering the issues outlined above, the study addresses the following main research question:

> How is the contextualised use of *goddamn* in *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger) rendered into Turkish across abusive, casual, and cathartic contexts through translation?

To answer the research question, three hypotheses were formed as follows:

1. There is no statistically significant difference between the source text (ST) and the TT in the frequency of the casual use of *goddamn*.
2. There is no statistically significant difference between the ST and TT in the frequency of the cathartic use of *goddamn*.
3. There is no statistically significant difference between the ST and TT in the frequency of the abusive use of *goddamn*.

This study employs a mixed qualitative-quantitative methodology to examine the contextualised use and translation of swear words, with a particular focus on the term *goddamn* in *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger) and its Turkish translation. Adopting a coupled-pairs analysis approach, the ST and TT are systematically compared to identify translational shifts in meaning, pragmatic force, and contextual function. All instances of *goddamn* are extracted, coded, and categorised according to their pragmatic contexts—abusive, casual, and cathartic—drawing on established classifications in swearing research.

## 1. SWEAR WORDS

As the use of swear words varies across different speech levels and geographical locations (Dewaele), their definition is subjective and problematic (Valdeón, "The Vulgarization Hypothesis;" McEnery; O'Driscoll) and tends to differ across cultures, languages (Valdeón, "Swearing"), and age groups. Swearing and swear words can be categorised under the term "taboo language" which can be described as the "transgress[ion] of polite social norms" (O'Driscoll 40). They are deemed as offensive, inappropriate, objectionable, or unacceptable in any given social context (Stapleton et al.). When defining swear words, researchers mainly focus on their offensive nature; however, not every offensive word is categorised as a swear word. Ljung presents four primary criteria for utterances to be classified as swear words (1) they contain taboo words; (2) these taboo words are used non-literally; (3) they are expressed in formulaic language; and (4) they are used with emotive language (Ljung). Similar to Ljung, Andersson and Trudgill suggest that swear words refer to: (1) something taboo or stigmatised; (2) words that cannot be interpreted literally; and (3) language loaded with emotive words that convey the speaker's feelings and attitudes towards a person or

situation (195). By definition, this makes it a controversial activity (Debray 145).

Some researchers emphasise the solidarity-promoting features of swearing,[3] while others emphasise its offensive nature (G. Hughes; S. E. Hughes; Montagu) and associated swear words with strong emotional connotations, including the potential for vulgarity, obscenity, profanity, cursing, and blasphemy. G. Hughes and S. E. Hughes connect swearing to the breach of social taboos related to topics such as sex, religion, and the body. McEnery discusses the offensive nature of swearing and other blasphemous, homophobic, racist, and sexist language (2). Stapleton discusses offensive swearing in connection with social or cultural taboos such as sex or bodily functions (289). Stapleton categorises swearing into three areas: (1) excretory/scatological, i.e. referring to bodily parts linked to these functions (e.g., *shit*, *ass*, *arse*); (2) sexual, i.e. referring to sexual intercourse or genitalia (e.g., *fuck*, *dick*, *pussy*, *cunt*, *prick*, *wank*); and (3) profane, that is, religious or blasphemous matters (e.g., *damn*, *goddamn*, *for Christ's sake*) (290).

Based on the definitions of the studies cited above, the concept of swear words encompasses a wide range of expressions, from taboo words with sexual and religious implications to offensive expressions that may lead to stigma in communication. As swear words are culturally specific, and this article focuses on an English ST, it is useful to note McEnery's categorisation of English swear words (Table 1) according to their degree of offensiveness (McEnery 30).

[3] See, for example, Beers Fägersten and Stapleton, Daly et al., Stapleton et al., and Stapleton for discussions of the solidarity-promoting features of swearing.

Table 1. McEnery's scale of offence in the case of English swear words

| Severity Level | Terms |
|---|---|
| Very mild | bird, bloody, crap, damn, goddamn, hell, hussy, idiot, pig, pillock, sod, son-of-a-bitch, tart |
| Mild | arse, balls, bitch, bugger, Christ, cow, dickhead, git, Jesus, jew, moron, pissed off, screw, shit, slag, slut, sod, tit, tits, tosser |
| Moderate | arsehole, bastard, bollocks, gay, nigger, piss, paki, poofter, prick, shag, spastic, twat, wanker, whore |
| Strong | fuck |
| Very strong | cunt, motherfucker |

The examples above clearly and primarily associate swear words with their level of offensiveness, vulgarity, and literal meanings, while ignoring the multifunctionality of swear words. However, swear words are multidimensional, and their vulgarity and offensiveness must be contextualised.

## 2. CONTEXTUAL SWEAR WORDS

There are circumstances in which swear words are not considered offensive (Jay, *Cursing in America*; Kapoor; Seizer). Recent research has attributed communicative and pragmatic functions to swear words as a means of expressing emotion (Jay and Janschewitz). For example, Ljung describes swear words as "one of the many linguistic devices that speakers use to add extra emphasis to their speech, often in conjunction with other emphasis techniques such as stress, intonation, and tone of voice" (4–5). This emphasises that swear words are inherent and integral parts of languages and cultures.

Profanity is used in daily life. Its offensiveness is highly dependent on the context in which it is used. It fulfils essential communicative functions that other linguistic devices cannot achieve. The meaning of swear words is dynamic, and the function of the same swear words can vary depending on the context in which they are used in (Beers Fägersten, "A Sociolinguistic Analysis;" R. Chen; Jay and Janschewitz).

Several influential studies have highlighted the connotative meanings of swear words in various contexts, including the environment in which

they are used, pragmatics, gender, age, social status, and education, and culture (Allan; Jay, "The Utility;" Jay and Janschewitz; Karjalainen; Spinney). The level of offensiveness can be increased or decreased depending on the context in which the swear word is used. For example, the derogatory term *fucking* has a different emotional impact in the sentence: *the film was fucking good.* There is no doubt that the vulgarity and degree of offence of swear words are compounded and intensified when they are used denotatively (Jay, "The Utility;" Jay and Janschewitz; Kapoor; Rieber et al.). Furthermore, the level of offence is closely related to the relationship between the speaker and the listener. Stenström points out that in a casual context, a phrase like *hello to me, talk to me, you cunt* is not considered an insult when used between close friends.

Although swearing has historically been associated with vernacular discourse linked to working-class backgrounds, lower levels of education, particular socio-economic statuses (S. E. Hughes; McEnery; Love; Macafee; Mulac), and gendered patterns of language use (Romaine 155) in teenage speech it functions as a powerful pragmatic resource for establishing and reinforcing group identity, largely independent of socio-economic or educational background. This is exemplified in the discourse of Holden, the teenage main character in Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*.

## 3. Swearing as a Discourse in Teenage Communication in *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger

J. D. Salinger, the reclusive author of *The Catcher in the Rye*, deliberately avoided publicity and aligned himself with a long-standing American literary tradition of radical individualism and scepticism toward society. This tradition, evident in the works of Henry David Thoreau and Herman Melville and later echoed by figures such as Emily Dickinson, Thomas Pynchon, and Cormac McCarthy, is marked by a distrust of social institutions and a belief in the moral corruption of modern society. Within this context, *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger) attracted considerable attention upon its initial publication in the United States, as its critique of social hypocrisy and alienation resonated with a broader cultural and literary discourse that foregrounded individual resistance to conformity.

*The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger) was written during a transitional period when capitalism was beginning to emerge as the dominant value in human relations. Money-related concepts such as competitiveness, social

status, and non-detached relationships prevailed over human values. The time in which the book was written coincided with a period of "increasing individualism, in which the trauma of war and the US's shifting social, cultural, and political landscape left many feeling abandoned or betrayed by their country" (Kinane 118).

*The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger) is a narrative concerning a disillusioned teenager grappling with the hypocrisy of the adult world, while also struggling to come to terms with his brother's death. On the surface, it is a coming-of-age novel that explores the theme of quest within the context of literary interest. However, it has garnered interest due to its linguistic significance, as the language used by Holden embodies an authentic vernacular teenage language. In conservative circles, the book was harshly criticised as the 17-year-old protagonist questioned the "materialism and hypocrisy of adults" (Schmitz 1). Moreover, Holden's liberal and lavish use of swear words such as *turd, goddam, bastard, sonuvabitch, chrissake, fuck,* and *ass* angered certain circles so much that it was considered "dirty" (Rosen 558). As a result, the book was censored in libraries and removed from high school reading lists. These negative perspectives primarily overlook the fundamental fact that Holden's more vulgar language is used for emotional expression rather than as a tool for insults.

Holden, disillusioned by corrupted values, tries to cling to life by embracing his own set of values, with language being one of them. On many occasions, Holden uses swear words to communicate. He uses them to illustrate how people and the system are corrupted. Holden's use of profanity is viewed as an emotive form of expression rather than a tool for insult. His swear words, which are part of a vernacular that includes localism and social embeddedness (Coupland 284) and his non-standard ways of verbalising seem to serve natural, pragmatic, and interpersonal functions.

In the book, it is evident that Holden's language, a quintessential example of teenage speech, is an attempt to establish or be a part of a counterculture to the corrupted values of adults. For example, in many cultures, *fuck you* is considered the harshest insult, with the words *fuck* and *cunt* being considered the most offensive regardless of context.[4] However, the same term also refers to sexual intercourse, although its meaning has evolved, and it has become almost taboo. In the book, Holden attempts to

[4] See, for example, Christie (153); McEnery (35); and Stone et al. (53).

eliminate this phrase from Phoebe's school, which can be seen as an effort to demonstrate how adult language can disconnect human values and lead people to become hypocritical.

Although Holden Caulfield's language is often characterized as profane, his use of the word *fuck* is highly selective and context dependent. Rather than functioning as casual vulgarity, the term appears in moments of moral unease, most notably when Holden encounters it as graffiti in spaces associated with childhood, such as Phoebe's school and the Museum of Natural History. His distress stems not from the word's obscenity alone but from what it symbolizes: the intrusion of adult sexuality and phoniness into innocent domains. Holden's repeated attempts to erase the graffiti underscore both his protective impulse and his recognition of its futility. Consequently, *fuck* operates as a symbolic marker of threatened innocence, revealing Holden's ethical sensitivity rather than moral corruption. He also uses other swear words such as *for God's sake*, *goddamn*, *for heaven's sake*, *Jesus*, or *Jesus Christ* only when a strong expression is necessary. Holden's language is linguistically significant as it reflects teenage vernacular and colloquial speech, characterised by obscenity and sacrilege. However, the daring, obscene, and blasphemous features of Holden's language, create a comic effect (Costello).

Swearing may be common pragmatic resource in teenage discourse and is often employed to negotiate group identity; however, while expressions such as *you are such an irritable bitch*, *you stupid cow*, or *you cunt* are conventionally classified as highly offensive and are not typically regarded as normative forms of teenage language. However, when such expressions are deployed in specific, mutually recognised peer-group contexts, they may function as in-group markers rather than as abusive language and therefore do not necessarily cause offence among close friends (Stenström 119).

## 4. *GODDAMN* AS A SWEAR WORD

Swear words have aesthetic, cultural, pragmatic, ideological, and religious implications. The translator may remove, weaken, strengthen, or soften the swear words (Santaemilia, "The Translation"). Swear words are highly context-sensitive rather than referential (Goddard) and thus should be studied within the scope of pragmatics. The implications of *Damn* and *Goddamn* can range from expletive to insulting, serving as emphatic

expressions. However, since *damn* does not contain an explicit religious reference like *goddamn*, it is often perceived as less overtly sacrilegious in many contemporary contexts.

*Goddamn* has been one of the most widely used swear words in the English language, despite it breaching one of the *Ten Commandments* in Christianity, which states that one should not take God's name in vain (G. Hughes 9). For some religious people, the expletive *goddamn* is offensive because it includes the name of God. However, historically, Christian countries used this term to refer to others with whom they were hostile with, for example., goddamn was mainly used by the French in reference to English people in the fifteenth century (G. Hughes 203).

As with other swear words, *goddamn* is related to the environment, pragmatics, gender, age, social status, education, and culture.

## 5. Translation of Swear Words for the Target Audience

In TS, the translation of swear words is often discussed in terms of the dichotomy between domestication and foreignization, a concept originally introduced by Schleiermacher and further explored by Berman and Venuti. In TS, several influential studies such as those of Díaz-Pérez, Díaz Cintas and Remael, Santaemilia, and Valdeón have addressed the translation of swear words, with a primary focus on audiovisual translation contexts. Crisafulli studied the translation of taboo language and concluded that neither a ST-based nor a TT-based approach could be adopted when translating non-standard language. Instead, an eclectic approach should be adopted. However, the socio-pragmatic meaning of swear words must be discussed in the context of translation. In *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger), the authenticity of Holden's language shapes his character. As pointed out by Costello, the authentic portrayal of teenage colloquial speech is the book's distinctive feature (172).

Translating American slang from the 1940s into modern language is an extremely difficult challenge for any translator to undertake. Neutralizing and sanitizing the style of the book would undoubtedly diminish its literary distinctiveness, given that Holden's vocabulary embodies his disturbed emotional state (Miller 130). Translating a novel filled with 1940s American slang and swear words for a 21st-century generation poses several challenges for any Turkish translator aiming to bring the book into the current time. There is little doubt that Salinger was highly skilled at capturing the speech patterns of 1940s teenagers, with

*goddamn* emerging as by far the most frequently used expression in Holden's idiolect.

The Turkish language has a variety of equivalents to *goddamn* that have the potential to replicate the effect for which Salinger aimed. Examples include *Allah kahretsin* (Goddamn it), *Kahrolası* (Goddamn it), *Allah'ın cezası* (God damn it), and *lanet olsun* (God damn it), all of which apply in abusive settings. These swear words are also used in casual and cathartic settings, where they serve as emphatic emphasizers, exemplified by the terms *son derece* (extremely), *tamamiyle* (utterly), and *felaket* (terrific). Therefore, it is essential for Turkish translators to understand the contextual uses of *goddamn* and convey its meaning appropriately.

## 6. METHODS, MATERIALS, AND DATA ANALYSIS

This study aims to assess and evaluate the contextual usage and appropriateness of swear words, particularly *goddamn*, in the dialogues of Holden, the protagonist of *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger) and its rendition into Turkish. As the study relies on a coupled pair analysis (Toury 115–30), I first analysed *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger) and its Turkish translation published by Yapı Kredi Publishing, a company renowned for producing high-quality publications in Turkey and abroad. Aside from their status as a notable publisher, another reason for choosing this particular publication centred on the fact that the translation is based on a version of the ST published by Penguin Books, enabling the analysis of coupled pairs. This particular edition of *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger) was translated by Coşkun Yerli in 1997,[5] with its 61st edition appearing in 2019, a testament to its success.

Before this current study, Neydim analysed the Turkish translation by Coşkun Yerli, focusing primarily on the translator's decisions in the translation process, particularly in terms of translation visibility. According to Neydim, Yerli uses a target-based translation approach, which increases the visibility of the translator.

In this study, I analyse the translation of Turkish swear words, particularly *goddamn*, both quantitatively and qualitatively, to understand how the translator contextualised them. This is achieved through a

[5] Before Yerli's translation, the work had already been translated into Turkish by Adnan Benk in 1967.

rigorous notation of all instances of *goddamn*, and categorisation of each instance according to McEnery's scale of offensiveness.

As Wajnryb points out, swearing can be categorised into three types: social connection, catharsis, and aggression. While the first two functions are related to annoyance and social categories, the third function, abusive swearing, has a negative valence and is interpersonally oriented, aiming to directly insult or offend. A comparable taxonomy is proposed by Allan and Burridge, who classify such expressions into four principal categories: social, abusive, stylistic, and expletive. Stapleton, like Wajnryb and Allan and Burridge, pinpoints the purposes of swearing as the following: expressing emotion, verbal emphasis, social bonding, and constructing identity. It can be noted that these functions are content- and context-dependant. In this study, Wajnryb's taxonomy is used as it is more suited for the purpose of the study. Thus, I have contextualised *goddamn* as: (a) *abusive swearing* directed to cause harm with antagonism, hatred, and physical violence (b) *casual swearing* directed at non-living objects, situations, experiences, or individuals with no intention to cause harm; and (c) cathartic, directed to express physical or emotional pain.[6] Some examples are provided below to clarify the scale used in this study.

(1) The film was *goddamn* good. (Casual)
(2) Ha-ha, you are a *goddamn* genius. (Casual)
(3) You are *goddamn* stupid. How did you not solve the problem? (Abusive)
(4) You are a *goddamn* whore. How dare you slap me? (Abusive)
(5) Oh, *goddamn* it! I missed the bus. (Cathartic)

Table 2 provides context for the *goddamn* swear word. I used the same scale for translating *goddamn*.

Table 2. Scale for contextual swear word

| Contexts in which *goddamn* is used |
|---|
| abusive ( ) |
| casual ( ) |
| cathartic ( ) |

[6] See, for example, Kapoor, Pinker, Stephens and Umland, and Stephens et al., for their work on cathartic, abusive and casual swearing.

In comparing the ST with its translation, each occurrence of *goddamn* was coded with an (X) according to whether it functioned in an abusive, casual, or cathartic context. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to analyse the data and derive the findings.

## 7. Results and Discussion

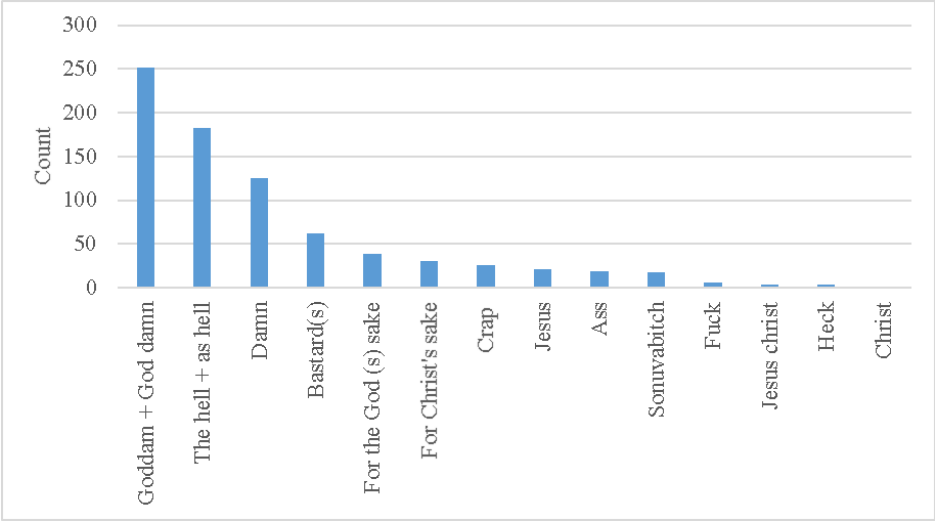
The English text consists of 26 sections, and the distribution of swear words is shown in Table 3 and Fig. 1. The most frequent swear word in *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger) is *Goddamn* or *God damn*, which accounts for 31.9% of the total swear words in the book, followed by *hell* or *as hell*, which accounts for 23.1%. The most severe word in English, *fuck*, has one of the lowest usage rates, with only six occurrences (0.8 %). These findings contradict those of other studies that have shown *fuck* to be the most prevalent swear word (Jay, "The Utility" 156). It has also been reported that the use of *fuck* is more frequently associated with male speech patterns[7] (Rayson et al. 136). These findings indicate that the protagonist, Holden, resorts mainly to mild or moderate swear words (McEnery; Thelwall) and his use of mild and strong swear words supports the notion that swearing functions primarily as a means of signalling in-group affiliation rather than as an intention to offend interlocutors (Stenström; Love and Stenström).

[7] See, for example, Díaz-Pérez ("Language and Identity;" "Translating Swear Words") for the rendition of this item from Spanish into English and vice versa in audiovisual translation; see also Leech et al. for word frequencies in written and spoken English.

Table 3. The distribution of swear words in *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger)

| Swear word | No. | % |
|---|---|---|
| Goddam + God damn | 251 | 31.9% |
| The hell + as hell | 182 | 23.1% |
| Damn | 125 | 15.9% |
| Bastard(s) | 62 | 7.9% |
| For the God(’s) sake | 39 | 4.9% |
| For Christ’s sake | 30 | 3.8% |
| Crap | 26 | 3.3% |
| Jesus | 21 | 2.7% |
| Ass | 19 | 2.4% |
| Sonuvabitch | 18 | 2.3% |
| Fuck | 6 | 0.8% |
| Jesus Christ | 4 | 0.5% |
| Heck | 4 | 0.5% |
| Christ | 1 | 0.1% |

Fig. 1. Frequency of swear words in *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger)




The data indicates that the protagonist, Holden, frequently employs swear words associated with religion, including *Goddam*, *Damn*, *hell* (as in “as hell”), *for God’s sake*, *for Christ’s sake*, *Christ*, and *Jesus Christ*, in

contrast to swear words with sexual connotations, such as *fuck* or *ass*. These findings suggest a significant dominance in the use of swear words with religious origins.

To analyse the occurrences of *goddamn* in both the original book and its translation, I conducted a cross-tabulation statistical analysis, a method commonly employed when analysing categorical variables. Additionally, a Chi-square test and Fisher's Exact test was performed to assess the statistical significance of the data in a cross-tabulation table, which is particularly applicable to categorical variables. In this analysis, I scrutinised and compared the usage of *goddamn* in casual, cathartic, and abusive contexts.

### 7.1 Goddamn in Casual Settings and Translation Solutions

Casual settings are defined here as settings in which the use of swearing is directed at non-living objects, situations, experiences, or at individuals with no intention to cause harm. Table 4 presents a comparison of the frequencies of the word *goddamn* in the (ST) and (TT). Hypothesis 1 was tested through Chi-square test, and the findings are provided in Table 4.

Table 4. Cross-tabulation table showing the casual use of *goddamn*

| | | | Casual settings in Turkish | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Yes | No | |
| Casual settings in English | Yes | Count | 154 | 64 | **218** |
| | | % | 70.6% | 29.4% | 100.0% |
| | No | Count | 3 | 30 | 33 |
| | | % | 9.1% | 90.9% | 100.0% |
| Total | | Count | **157** | 94 | 251 |
| | | % | 62.5% | 37.5% | 100.0% |
| Chi-square test $p < .001$ | | | | | |
| Fisher's Exact test $p < .001$ | | | | | |

The cross-tabulation analysis of the distribution of the term *goddamn* in the original text and its translation in the translated book provides intriguing insights into the cross-translation of this word. As shown in Table 4, the swear word *goddamn* is predominantly employed in casual

settings, constituting 218 out of 251 occurrences in the ST. This indicates that the use of the term *goddamn* serves a distinct function.

In contrast to the 218 instances in casual settings in the ST, the usage of *goddamn* in the TT drops to 157, revealing a reduction in the use of the term in casual contexts. Specifically in casual settings, *goddamn* was utilised in *both* the ST and the TT in 70.6% of instances, with the translator employing a variety of translation strategies to effectively convey the term's pragmatic function into Turkish, compared to 86.85% in the English ST. Hypothesis 1 was statistically rejected, as a significant difference was found between the ST and TT in the frequency of the casual use of *goddamn* ($p < .001$).

Digging into the nuances of the analysis, Table 5 provides an overview of the different translations and their frequency of use for the term *goddamn* in the TT within casual settings.

Table 5. The pragmatic rendition of *goddamn* in Turkish and their back translations

| | | Yes | No | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| words used to render the meaning of *goddamn* into Turkish | *acayip* (strange) | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | *çılgın* (crazy) | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | *çok haklısın* (you are right) | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | *deli gibi* (madly) | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | *felaket* (terrific) | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | *kıyak* (great) | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| | *lanet* (goddamn) | 147 | 15 | 162 |
| | *muhteşem* (magnificent) | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | omitted | 64 | 13 | 77 |
| | *pek de* (quite) | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | *salak* (silly) | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | Total | 218 | 33 | 251 |

As depicted in Table 5, the translator predominantly utilises *lanet*, with other words used infrequently, such as *acayip*, *çılgın*, *çok haklısın*, *deli gibi*, *felaket*, *kıyak*, *muhteşem*, *pek de*, and *salak* to convey the meaning of "goddamn" in casual settings. It is noteworthy that these Turkish words generally lack strong swearing connotations. Except *lanet*, the other terms can function as non-controversial adjectives to intensify meaning.

Interestingly, the data also reveals that in 64 casual-context instances, the translator chooses not to render *goddamn*, leaving it untranslated. In 145 cases—which constitute the majority—the term is translated as *lanet*, a Turkish word meaning "deprived of God's blessing." In Turkish, *lanet* functions as a noun, adjective, or interjection and is used to describe something as terrible, unpleasant, or bad (Turkish Language Association Online Dictionary). Notably, both *goddamn* in English and *lanet* in Turkish carry a clear religious connotation.

In many instances, the translator adeptly endeavours to maintain the pragmatic function of this term by employing a diverse array of lexical items in the TT, as in (6):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (6) a. | *goddamn* autobiography | *lanet* özgeçmişimi |
| b. | *goddamn* house | *lanet* ev |
| c. | *goddamn* Cadillac | *lanet* Cadillac |
| d. | *goddamn* governor | *lanet* Vali |
| e. | *goddamn* surgeon | *lanet* cerrah |
| f. | *goddamn* religion | *lanet* din |

These instances illustrate that the translator employs *lanet* (goddamn) to re-contextualise the original text for Turkish readers in alignment with the expectations of the new audience. Holden, on numerous occasions, employs *goddamn* as a discourse tool to illustrate the corruption within both people and the system. Disillusioned by corrupted values, Holden endeavours to cling to life through his self-fashioned set of values, and language serves as a prominent component. Repeatedly, Holden utilises this swear word to articulate his frustration with the corrupt organised system or individuals.

Holden's profanity is viewed more as an emotive form of expression than an instrument of insult. Embedded in a vernacular that encompasses localism, social context (Coupland), and non-standard modes of expression (Wolfram and Schilling), Holden's swear words appear to serve natural, pragmatic, and interpersonal functions. His disdain for capitalism and the materialism associated with it is evident in his use of *goddamn* to express his aversion; terms like *Cadillac*, *governor*, *school*, and *professional life* symbolise capitalism, and Holden resorts to *goddamn* to convey his outright disgust.

As readers, we find ourselves more captivated than disturbed by the language Holden employs. *Goddamn* is utilised for emotive utterances

rather than as an instrument of insult. The results corroborate the hypothesis that under certain conditions, swear words like *goddamn* may not be perceived as offensive (Fairman; Jay, *Cursing in America*; Kapoor; Seizer). The findings, on a broader scale, suggest that swearing is more nuanced than merely being taboo or offensive (Hunt et al.).

In the TT, the translator conveys Holden's disillusionment by using *lanet*, preserving almost the same impact through a literal translation. However, in specific instances, the translator opts for a departure from literal translation, choosing instead to intensify the meaning by employing a variety of lexical items as translation solutions, as exemplified in (7).

| | |
|---|---|
| (7) a. *Goddamn* prince | *kıyak bir herif*[8] |
| b. *Goddamn* General | *muhteşem General* |
| c. Cries the g*oddamn* eyes | *deli gibi göz yaşı döken* |
| d. *Goddamn* long | *felaket uzun* |

As demonstrated above, the translator retains his "individual lexical choices" (Mason 23) in the TT. This involves the deliberate exclusion of the harsh tone associated with *goddamn*, leading to a sanitization or toning down of the original meaning in the TT. It is evident that, through these lexical choices, Holden's unrestrained animosity towards phonies has been somewhat subdued. The translator astutely captures Holden's essence by tempering the intensity of the expressions with a gentler and more subdued tone in the TT.

The interplay between context and swearing in the translation reflects Holden's emotional outbursts in the TT. As evidenced by the following examples, the translator, in 64 instances within casual settings, opts to omit *goddamn* altogether, resulting in a nuanced alteration of the linguistic landscape, as in (8).

| | |
|---|---|
| (8) a. *Goddamn* paper | *kağıdı*[9] |

[8] These expressions are back translated as follows:
- a great guy
- a Magnificent General
- cries madly
- terribly long

[9] These expressions are back translated as follows:
- the paper
- my light

| | |
|---|---|
| b. The *goddamn* light | *ışığımı* |
| c. *Goddamn* kid | *oğlum* |
| d. Cut my *goddam*n head off | *suratımı keseyim* |

While the specific reasons behind the omissions in these examples remain unclear, it is plausible that the translator identified pragmatic correspondences, leading to varied translation solutions for similar instances. This underscores the translator's discernible influence on the TT. Several studies, such as those by C. Chen, Santamaría Ciordia, Díaz-Pérez ("Translating Swear Words") and Díaz Cintas and Remael, have demonstrated that, as a means of sanitising the ST, translators often resort to omission and "de-swearing," particularly in sub-titled translations as a result of time and space constraints. However, in the translation of novels and short stories, where such limitations may not apply, the reasons for such omissions can differ significantly.

## 7.2 *Goddamn* in the Cathartic Setting and Translation Solutions

In defining "cathartic swearing," I contend that the pain or frustration experienced by people can lead to cathartic, and an evident by-product of this catharsis is the pronouncement of swear words. Consequently, these words can be viewed as response cries, serving as an adaptation, especially designed to convey the profound impact of the situation we find ourselves in (Vingerhoets et al. 291).

The examples in (9) illustrate how they are used in the TT:

| | |
|---|---|
| (9) a. God damn it | *Lanet olsun dedi*[10] |
| b. God damn | *Lanet olsun* |
| c. God damn | *Lanet olsun* |

In casual contexts, Holden most often uses *goddamn* as an adjective; however, in emotionally intense or cathartic moments, a morphological shift occurs, and the expression appears as *god damn.* In this separated

- my son
- let me cut my face

[10] These expressions are back translated as follows**:**

- He said goddamn it.
- God damn
- God damn

form, the swear word is typically used in highly charged situations to convey strong emotions such as shock, frustration, or anger.

The example in (10) from *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger) demonstrates this emphatic usage:

(10) "Now, shut up, Holden—God damn it—I'm warning you."

In terms of translation, the translator predominantly opts for a literal correspondence to render this swear word, aligning with the original text, particularly in most casual instances, as we saw in Tables 4 and 5. As depicted in Table 6, *goddamn* is used in 6 cases, with 5 instances in the TT and 1 case where it remains untranslated. Hypothesis 2 was tested through Chi-square test, and the findings are provided in Table 6.

Table 6. Cross-tabulation table showing the cathartic use of *goddamn*

| | | | Cathartic settings in Turkish | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Yes | No | |
| Cathartic settings in English | Yes | Count | 5 | 1 | 6 |
| | | % | 83.3% | 16.7% | 100.0% |
| | No | Count | 0 | 245 | 245 |
| | | % | 0.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Total | | Count | **5** | 246 | 251 |
| | | % | 2.0% | 98.0% | 100.0% |
| Chi-square Tests $p < .001$ | | | | | |
| Fisher's Exact Test $p < .001$ | | | | | |

The cross-tabulation indicates a statistically robust association between cathartic settings in the English ST and their representation in the Turkish TT. Hypothesis 2 was statistically rejected, as a significant difference was found between the ST and the TT in the frequency of the cathartic use of *goddamn* ($p < .001$).

### 7.3 *Goddamn* in Abusive Settings and Translation Solutions

References to abusive contexts in this study specifically allude to instances where *goddamn* is used to cause harm, or to express antagonism, hatred,

or physical violence. Within the context of the abusive use of *goddamn*, the data in Table 7 reveal that, in the original English text, there are 26 instances where *goddamn* is employed in abusive contexts. Hypothesis 3 was tested through Chi-square test, and the findings are provided in Table 7.

Table 7. *Goddamn* in abusive settings in the ST and TT

| | | | Abusive settings in Turkish | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Yes | No | |
| Abusive settings in English | Yes | Count | 12 | 14 | **26** |
| | | % | 46.2% | 53.8% | 100.0% |
| | No | Count | 0 | 225 | 225 |
| | | % | 0.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Total | | Count | **12** | 239 | 251 |
| | | % | 4.8% | 95.2% | 100.0% |
| Chi-square Tests $p < .001$ | | | | | |
| Fisher's Exact Test $p < .001$ | | | | | |

Table 7 illustrates that *goddamn* is used in 26 instances in the original text. However, in the TT, it is employed abusively in only 12 cases. This suggests that the translator tends to soften or sanitise the ST for the benefit of new readers. Hypothesis 3 was statistically rejected, as a significant difference was found between the ST and the TT in the frequency of the abusive use of *goddamn* ($p < 0.05$).

The examples of how the translator softens or sanitises the ST are provided below in (11).

(11) a. Split his *goddamn* throat open *Gırtlağına saplayacaktım*[11]
b. He had *goddamn* knees on my chest. *Göğsüme oturmuştu.*

These instances relate to a scene in the text that depicts a relentless and bloody fight between Holden and Stradlater. Holden's strong hatred towards Stradlater is conveyed through the use of *goddamn* as an adjective

[11] These expressions are back translated as follows**:**
- I was going to stab it into his throat.
- He sat on my chest.

in the ST. As readers, we are immersed in the intensity of this scene through the choice of words. However, in the TT, these instances have been omitted. While the reason behind this omission is not clear, the outcome is a neutralised text. The translator might have sought a strong pragmatic equivalence or applied a literal translation solution, as seen in previous cases. Nevertheless, it appears that the decision was made to omit them in the TT.

In the TT, in the 12 abusive cases, the translator seems to prefer using the Turkish word *lanet* to convey the meaning from the ST, as shown in (12).

(12) a. The whole goddam stupid bunch of them *lanet bir budala sürüsü*[12]
b. Goddam funeral *lanet cenaze törenime*

Holden despises the insincere condolences offered by people when his sister, Allie, passes away. He perceives these individuals as lacking genuine sorrow for his sister's death. In the TT, the translator strategically utilises the Turkish word *lanet*, finding a literal correspondence for the relevant portion in the ST. This approach minimises cross-cultural and cross-linguistic disparities between the ST and the TT.

Through a detailed categorization of *goddamn* in casual, cathartic, and abusive contexts, the analysis reveals a consistent pattern of lexical shifts, omissions, and pragmatic adaptations in the TT, which collectively point to the translator's conscious and nuanced mediation of language and culture.

A significant finding is the dominance of religiously rooted swear words in the ST, with *goddamn* emerging as the most frequent, accounting for nearly one-third of all instances. This pattern suggests that Holden's language, while laden with profanity, avoids most taboo sexual terms and instead leans heavily on culturally charged, yet relatively mild, religious expletives.

In translation, the Turkish version reflects both faithfulness and adaptation. The most common solution for rendering *goddamn* is the use of the word *lanet*, a religiously resonant term that echoes the ST's semantic

[12] These expressions are back translated as follows:
- Goddamn stupid bunch of them
- My goddamn funeral

and emotional weight. This lexical choice is particularly effective in preserving the religious connotation and pragmatic function of *goddamn*, maintaining the narrative's stylistic authenticity and Holden's voice. However, the translator also employs a range of creative equivalents (e.g., *felaket*, *kıyak*, *çılgın*, *muhteşem*), which, while lacking the swear word status of *goddamn*, serve to convey intensification or emotional emphasis, consistent with the tone of the ST.

The omission of 64 instances of *goddamn*, particularly in casual settings, is notable. These omissions may reflect deliberate translation strategies of neutralization or de-swearing, often employed to adapt culturally sensitive content or to align with target audience norms. The omission of swearing, particularly when not counterbalanced by an alternative expression of emotional intensity, may lead to a softening of Holden's character, ultimately reducing the authenticity of his rebellious and disaffected voice.

The Chi-square and Fisher's exact test results, all of which show significant values $p < .001$), further reinforce that the observed differences between the ST and TT—especially regarding the use of *goddamn* across various pragmatic contexts—are not incidental. In cathartic uses, the translator tends to preserve the original force of *goddamn* through literal renderings (*lanet olsun*), aligning well with the emotional salience of the source utterances. Here, the translation seems more faithful, preserving the emotive outburst function.

In abusive contexts, the tendency toward toning down or omitting *goddamn* altogether is again observed. Even in scenes of high emotional intensity or physical violence, such as the confrontation with Stradlater, the translator frequently chooses more neutral expressions. This results in a diminished impact in the TT, potentially affecting how readers interpret Holden's psychological state and emotional volatility. The substitution of *lanet* thus may partially neutralise Holden's rage, particularly in scenes where his language underscores emotional trauma or protest against societal hypocrisy.

Taken together, these strategies reveal a translational balancing act: on the one hand, the translator strives to maintain the authenticity of Holden's linguistic idiosyncrasies; while on the other, the translator navigates cultural sensitivities and reader expectations in the target language. The translator's individual lexical choices and selective omissions suggest a pragmatic domestication strategy, where the goal is

not merely linguistic equivalence, but functional and cultural relevance for Turkish readers.

## 8. Limitations and Future Directions

This study offers a comprehensive analysis of the contextualised use of the swear word *goddamn* in J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* and its Turkish translation by Coşkun Yerli. It investigates how the functions of *goddamn*—whether abusive, casual, or cathartic—shift across different contexts in both the source and target languages, thereby providing insight into the translation of contextualised swearing. However, the phenomenon has not been examined through the lens of linguistic politeness, which is understood as a discursively negotiated practice rather than a fixed property of utterances (Locher and Watts 9; Locher and Bousfield 3; Culpeper 71). Linguistic politeness itself constitutes a communicative message (Jary 1). It is viewed as a rational, regulated activity rooted in the human need to maintain smooth interaction (Sifianou 23; Watts 44). Politeness and impoliteness exist on a continuum shaped by participants' evaluations and contextual norms rather than by universal rules. Translating swear words therefore involves more than straightforward lexical substitution; it requires careful management of relational work and faces numerous concerns and challenges. For example, *goddamn* may function as a solidarity marker in casual contexts—aligning with positive politeness strategies—while in abusive contexts it becomes a face-threatening act. Translators must navigate such pragmatic nuances to avoid unintended impoliteness or the loss of interpersonal meaning. A relational approach to translation, conceptualised as rapport management, highlights how translational choices influence perceptions of power, distance, and social identity across cultures.

Nevertheless, the present study does not apply linguistic politeness theories to translation, leaving an opportunity for future research to incorporate discursive and stylistic analyses grounded in linguistic politeness frameworks, particularly Brown and Levinson's model, as literary texts may offer a rich site for exploring pragmatic phenomena in TS.

## 9. Concluding Remarks

When translating a novel such as *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger), which features 1940s American slang and swear words, any translator faces a challenging task of adapting the book for their contemporary readers. J. D. Salinger skilfully portrayed the essence of the 1940s through his teenage character, Holden, making it a challenge to maintain authenticity while ensuring relevance to contemporary audiences. This study conducted a comprehensive examination of the contextualised swear word "goddamn" in *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger) and its translation into Turkish. The contextualization of *goddamn* in abusive, casual, and cathartic settings in both the ST and the TT sheds light on how swearing patterns are adapted.

The study has observed that in teenage discourse, the swear word *goddamn* is predominantly employed in casual, abusive and cathartic contexts within the 1940s American slang tradition, suggesting its use as a form of emotional expression. This finding has shown that, in the past too, pragmatic and delexicalised usages of swear words such as *goddamn* were common.

Contrary to other research findings that identify *fuck* as the most common swear word (Jay, "The Utility" 156), *goddamn* accounts for 31.9% of the total swear words in the book, emerging as the most frequently used profanity. Among the 251 instances, 218 involve the use of *goddamn* in casual settings, indicating that it serves as more than an expletive, but rather a pragmatic device revealing Holden's disdain for organised corruption within the system. The translator deploys various translation solutions to convey the pragmatic discourse of the word.

Holden predominantly uses *goddamn* as an emotive utterance in casual settings, and the translator adeptly contextualises it in the TT through diverse translation strategies. Compared to the ST, the translator notably reduces the use of *goddamn* in casual instances, employing it in 154 cases in the TT. In cathartic settings, *goddamn* is employed six times, and the translator employs a literal translation strategy to re-contextualise these instances. In abusive contexts, *goddamn* appears 26 times in the ST, while the translator chooses to use it in just 12 cases in the TT. This pattern suggests a preference for toning down and sanitising the ST for new readers.

The study suggests that swear words primarily function to express one's emotional state rather than to insult. Serving as a mediator between the ST and the target audience, the translator effectively re-contextualises

*goddamn* in a new language, Turkish. In many instances, the pragmatic value of the 1940s American slang term *goddamn* has been preserved for today's modern Turkish readers.

The broader implication of this study is that swear words are far from universally translatable, as their meanings are deeply embedded in cultural, religious, and social matrices. The translator's choices inevitably reshape the affective tone and interpersonal dynamics of the narrative. These findings affirm prior research such as those by Jay and Janschewitz, McEnery et al., Debray, and Stapleton et al., suggesting that swearing is context-dependent and multidimensional, functioning not solely as a vehicle of offence, but also as a means of identity construction, emotional expression, and social positioning.

The study has sought an answer to the question: How is the contextualised use of *goddamn* in *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger) rendered into Turkish across abusive, casual, and cathartic contexts through translation? The findings have shown that the contextualised use of *goddamn* is rendered into Turkish through a combination of linguistic fidelity and cultural adaptation. In casual and cathartic contexts, the translator primarily used the words *lanet* and *lanet olsun* as the appropriate equivalents, enabling the religious and emotive functions of the original expression. The translator skilfully preserves Holden's frustration, irony and emotional intensity while aligning with the norms of Turkish linguistic and cultural expression. However, in some casual situations, *goddamn* was omitted or replaced with some milder Turkish equivalents such as *felaket*, *kıyak*, or *çılğın,* softening Holden's rebellious tone.

In abusive settings, the translator opts for toning down the profanity of the ST. By omitting or replacing *goddamn* with less offensive forms, the translation mitigates Holden's emotional outburst. This approach results in a more culturally acceptable yet less confrontational TT. The translation demonstrates a pragmatic domestication strategy, balancing the preservation of meaning and voice with the sociocultural expectations of Turkish readers. The results show that translating *goddamn* requires not only lexical equivalence, but also negotiation of the words' emotional and cultural resonance. This ultimately shapes how Holden's character and linguistic identity are reconstructed in the Turkish context.

The treatment of *goddamn* in *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger) and its Turkish translation reflects a complex interplay of fidelity, audience sensitivity, and pragmatic nuance. Translators, as cultural mediators, inevitably leave their imprint on the TT, shaping how characters are

perceived and how emotional resonance is achieved across linguistic borders. Furthermore, integrating insights from linguistic politeness theory underscores that translation is not merely linguistic transfer but an act of interpersonal negotiation. Swear words, as salient markers of stance and identity, require translators to balance fidelity with cultural appropriateness, mitigating potential impoliteness while preserving pragmatic force. This relational perspective aligns with current trends in interpersonal pragmatics, which stress the co-construction of meaning and the dynamic evaluation of (im)politeness in interaction. Future research may explore how relational work frameworks can inform translation strategies for taboo language, ensuring that affective and identity-related dimensions are maintained across languages.

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