

**A Diachronic Corpus-Based Study of Taboo Language in Literary
Translation from English into Arabic**

By

Khalid Mater M. Asiri

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Department of Linguistics

Macquarie University

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Abstract

The present study is a quantitative as well as a qualitative corpus-based investigation of the Arabic translation of taboo language in three English novels, published in Arabic by well-known publishers in the Middle East in 1987, 1999 and 2010. The novels are *Lady Chatterley's lover* by D. H. Lawrence (1960) translated as عشيق الليدي تشاترلي *'ashyq al-laydy tshātrly* by Hana Aboud (1999), *The garden of Eden* by Ernest Hemingway (1986) translated as جنة عدن *jnat 'adn* by Al Sharif Khatier (1987) and *Sex and the city* (2000 version) by Candace Bushnell translated as بنات المدينة *bnāt al-mdīnāh* by Abid Ismael (2010). The main research questions investigated in the study are: (1) What strategies are used for the translation of taboo language across the three novels investigated in this study, and are there any notable similarities and differences over time? (2) Is there any correspondence between particular translation strategies and different categories of taboo language, and do these correspondences show similarities or differences across the three novels and the timespan investigated? (3) Based on the above, how may social changes in the receiving system be seen to condition translation choices?

Corpus data are extracted from the source text of the English novels as well as the corresponding Arabic translated versions. A quantitative analysis is performed to set up a comparison of frequencies and distribution of taboo words, their categories, and the translation strategies employed by translators of the three novels, aiming at quantifying similarities or differences. The framework adopted for the analysis is based in the paradigm of Descriptive Translation Studies and uses Toury's (1995) coupled-pairs method. The findings show that translation by a more general word is a predominant strategy, especially when translating sex-related items. However, there is a gradual growth in adopting literal translation strategies across the period included in this study which is explained by language change, and a change in social norms. Furthermore, a notable tendency to transliterate in the older translation is found which reflects translators' individual differences in terms of their awareness of the target language vocabulary.

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Statement of candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled “A Diachronic Corpus-Based Study of Taboo Language in Literary Translation from English into Arabic” has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Name: Khalid Asiri

MQ ID: XXXXXXXXXX Signature:

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study focuses in particular on literary translation from English to Arabic and uses a corpus-based diachronic method to investigate how taboo language and topics are handled in translation over a period of approximately 20 years from 1987 to 2010, spanning a time of considerable change in many Arabic countries. Despite its pervasiveness, taboo language is a dimension of language use that has been comparably understudied in many languages, especially in terms of its use in literary texts. More specifically, as literary translation is a major vehicle for the process of cultural interaction between nations, the topic of how taboo language is handled in the translation of literary texts is one that might be anticipated to have garnered wide attention – and yet very little research has been done in this area, particularly in translation from English to Arabic. While there are some studies on the translation of taboo terms from English literary texts to different languages, such as Sidiropoulou (1998) into Greek, Karjalainen (2002) into Swedish, Kizeweter (2005) into Polish, Horton (1998) and Ghassempur (2009) into German, and Teperi (2015) into Finnish, in the Arabic context there are only a handful of case studies, such as Al-Khatib (1995), Bhais (2011), Mansour (2012), Abbas (2015) and Ghounane and Rabahi (2017).

To date, no large-scale studies have been performed to investigate the way in which taboo words are treated in the translation of English literary texts into Arabic in a comprehensive, systematic, and theoretically cogent manner. This study first develops a systematic framework for investigating how certain categories of taboo items are transferred from English literary texts to Arabic. This framework is used to empirically investigate the strategies adopted to transfer taboo items from English to Arabic in a parallel corpus of three Arabic translations of English novels, and to reflect on whether the choice of strategies is influenced by social changes over time, as predicted by Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) (see Toury, 1995).

1.2 Research questions

This study aims to answer three main research questions:

1. What strategies are used for the translation of taboo language across the three novels investigated in this study, and are there any notable similarities and differences over time?

2. Is there any correspondence between particular translation strategies and different categories of taboo language, and do these correspondences show similarities or differences across the three novels and the timespan investigated?
3. Based on the above, how may social changes in the receiving system be seen to condition translation choices?

To answer these questions, a quantitative as well as a qualitative corpus analysis is carried out. The study makes use of a self-designed parallel, aligned corpus of three English novels and their Arabic translations. The novels are *Lady Chatterley's lover* by D. H. Lawrence (1960) translated as عشيق الليدي تشاترلي *'ashyq al-laydy tshātrly*¹ by Hana Aboud (1999), *The garden of Eden* by Ernest Hemingway (1986) translated as جنة عدن *jnat 'adn* by Al Sharif Khatier (1987) and *Sex and the city* (2000 version) by Candace Bushnell translated as بنات المدينة *bnāt al-mdīnāh* by Abid Ismael (2010). These novels were selected because they span a publication period of approximately 20 years (for the Arabic translations), cover different kinds of taboo topics, and were available in digitised format. Using this corpus, taboo items in the English source texts are systematically identified and categorised, the translation strategies used in the target texts are classified (using a modified model based on Newmark, 1981 and Baker, 2011), and the trends in relation to the use of particular strategies for particular categories of taboo items are investigated within and across the three novels using frequency analysis, cross-tabulation, and qualitative analysis. The study is carried out within the conceptual and theoretical framework of DTS, as proposed by Toury (1995), which posits a close relationship between the selection of translation strategies and the norms of the receiving culture. In this study, it is assumed that changes in the social context of the receiving culture are likely to be reflected in changes in translation strategies deemed as appropriate for particular kinds of taboo items.

1.3 The structure of this study

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 explores a review of the existing literature on taboo language in general and the translation of taboo language in particular. It is divided into six major components following the introduction. Section 2.2 is focused on the concept of taboo in general as well as the linguistic manifestations of taboo in particular with references to different definitions

¹ ALA-LC Romanization system is adopted for transliteration.

proposed in previous studies. Section 2.3 revolves around the classifications and functions of taboo language, providing a detailed account of taxonomies of taboo language proposed by previous researchers. Section 2.4 concentrates on the concept of taboo language across different cultures and over time, with a detailed account of how the concept of taboo language evolves over time as a process of language change and is different across cultures. Subsequently, Section 2.5 presents a review of previous studies on the translation of taboo language in literary texts, compared with studies on the treatment of taboo language in audiovisual translation (AVT). AVT, often used in the context of filmic narrative, provides a worthwhile comparison with written fictional texts in respect of how taboo language is treated, since it highlights how different constraints and audience expectations affect the translation of taboo language. This section sheds light on the limited number of existing studies focusing on the translation of taboo language in literary texts. The last two sections (Section 2.6 and 2.7) focus on the theoretical construct of translation strategies, which is of key importance in this study, and provide a brief overview of the relationship between translation strategies and target-culture expectations and norms, as proposed by Toury (1995) within the framework of DTS.

Chapter 3 presents the methodological steps adopted to answer the three research questions set out in Section 1.2. A detailed account is given in Section 3.2.1 of how the corpus used in the study was compiled and processed. Section 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 provide details of how the data were extracted and analysed quantitatively as well as qualitatively to address the research questions of the study.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study, in four different sections. Firstly, Section 4.2 and 4.3 provide a general overview of the contexts of each novel in addition to a general overview of the nature of the taboo items extracted from the three novels, their distribution across various categories, and the distribution of the strategies adopted to transfer taboo items into Arabic in the three novels. Section 4.4 presents a detailed quantitative analysis of each individual novel, focusing on the categories of taboo items in the particular novel, and the strategies most commonly used for translating these different categories of taboo items. The last section (Section 4.5) provides some explanations for noticeable trends in the use of various translation strategies for different categories of taboo items, and link these to the context of the receiving culture for each novel, as well as existing research.

Finally, Chapter 5 concludes the study by summarising the findings of this study and highlighting the further questions worth investigating in this area.

Chapter 2: Taboo language and literary translation

2.1 Introduction

Globalisation has led to a dramatic increase in the rate and volume of cultural exchange and diffusion across the world, conditioned by a complex web of often asymmetric power relations. Literary texts are one form of cultural exchange, and with the mass production of particularly popular literary works across the globe, translated novels become one important gateway for cultural exchange: “Despite all the difficulties, communication and exchange between different nations still go on, and a great number of literary works have been translated to entertain readers from different cultures” (Chen, 2019, p. 140). The complexities of cultural exchange through literary translation has been the focus of a variety of studies; however, one aspect that remains relatively understudied in the context of literary translation is the matter of taboo language and the varying perceptions of taboo in different cultures. This study focuses in particular on literary translation from English to Arabic, and uses a corpus-based diachronic method to investigate how taboo language and topics are handled in translation over a period of approximately 20 years.

In this chapter, the concept of taboo will be explored, with the ultimate aim of formulating a general definition of taboo language. First, it is important to differentiate between taboo as a general concept, which may include actions, behaviours, language, and more; and the notion of taboo as a linguistic phenomenon. The first part of this chapter (Section 2.2.1) is devoted to the general concept of taboo, and provides a brief historical exploration of taboo. The second part (Section 2.2.2) focuses on taboo language, particularly in terms of its definition, its main characteristics, and major studies that have been carried out on taboo language. Section 2.3 focuses on various taxonomies developed for the classification of taboo language. Following that, Section 2.4 is devoted to the notion of taboo across cultures and time and how this concept is different from one culture to another. This leads to the discussion in Section 2.5 of taboo in translation, and previous studies on the translation of taboo language in literary texts. Finally, the last two sections (Section 2.6 and 2.7) shed light on the concept of translation strategies as well as the theoretical framework of DTS that informs this study’s understanding of the relation between translation strategies and the context of translation.

2.2 Defining taboo language

2.2.1 Taboo and human society

The concept of *taboo*, as described in the *Cambridge Dictionary* (1995) refers to any act or word that is avoided for religious or social reasons. Taboo exists wherever and whenever human civilizations have existed, and taboo as a concept has deep roots in history. Freud claims that “it is generally supposed that taboo is older than gods and dates back to a period before any kind of religion existed” (1950, p. 18), highlighting the fact that taboo is closely tied to culturally specific and socially sanctioned ideas of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and speech. The notion of “appropriateness” is closely tied to the avoidance of embarrassment, harm or shame. According to Wardhaugh (2000, p. 234), “taboo is the prohibition or avoidance in any society of behaviour believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment, or shame”. Similarly, Allan and Burridge (2006) state that “[t]aboos arise out of social constraints on the individual’s behaviour where it can cause discomfort, harm or injury”.

Linguists from different cultures hold different views on the origin of the word and concept of taboo. For instance, the Chinese linguist Shi (2006, p. 166) in his reference to the concept of taboo in China argues that “the history of this word can be dated back to the Han Dynasty, which lasted from 206 B.C. to 220 A.D”. Wang (2007, p. 2) suggests that “the synonym 忌讳 *bihui* ‘avoidance’ is much older and is believed to have been first recorded during the Zhou Dynasty, which was in power from 1046 B.C. until 256 B.C.” (as cited by Yuan, 2016). According to Steiner (2004, p. 33), “the word *taboo* derives from Polynesian languages and the most common root for the word *taboo* is *tapu*, although *kapu* and *tabu* are two other different forms from Hawaiian and Tongan respectively”. In Europe, the word *taboo* came into use around the end of the eighteenth century, when Captain Cook first discovered and depicted taboo customs in his log journal by using the word *taboo* (or *tabu*) (Allan and Burridge 2006, p. 3). Steiner (2004, p. 22) explains further that “the word *taboo* appeared first in one of Cook’s important passages to describe some atypical custom of the islanders of Atui”.

During the Medieval Islamic era, the concept of taboo was typically framed as a sensitive issue that may hurt the honour of a human being and bring shame. The concept of taboo, in itself, is so sensitive

that it is often not even explicitly named. Al th‘albi a well-known Islamic Arabic linguist who lived during the eleventh century does not use a distinct term for the concept of taboo. He portrays it instead vaguely as “things that, when mentioned, are socially discouraged and harmful, and articulating them inflicts shame and compromises one’s honour” (as cited by Naaman, 2013, p. 474). Even though Arabs were not precise in terms of defining taboo, the existence of the concept in general was the reason behind formulating a new writing technique during the medieval Islamic era called “kinäya” which means that Arabic language users applied censorship that led to the creation of euphemisms to avoid using taboo words. The concept of euphemism will be discussed in more depth in Section 2.2.2.

Steiner (2004, p. 33) proposes that the core meaning of taboo is the intertwined meanings of “prohibited” and “sacred”, from which other meanings originated. Based on this, Steiner suggests that

[t]aboo is a single, not an “undifferentiated”, concept. The distinction between prohibition and sacredness is artificially introduced by us and has no bearing on the concept we are discussing. [...] The meaning must be found in the situation, in the manifold simultaneous overlapping and divergent usages of the word (2004, p. 34).

Freud (1950, p. 18) is in broad agreement with this notion, claiming that there is no counterpart term for the word “taboo” in Western languages, as a result of the fact that the Polynesian term for taboo does not distinguish between sacredness and prohibition, and no European language has words which can express prohibition and sacredness simultaneously.

In my view, the main concentration of the concept of taboo revolves around these two notions, prohibition and sacredness. This is clearly suggested in the definition of the term in the *Cambridge Dictionary* mentioned above. Most definitions of taboo agree that taboo can be anything that is not accepted socially and can cause offence, often connected to religion. Taboo as a general concept is very broad, including both actions and language. Languages can be seen as the concrete and physical representation of ideas and beliefs. Therefore, taboo language is derived from the general concept of taboo. This linguistic form of taboo is the main focus of this study, and is discussed in more detail in the following section.

2.2.2 Taboo language

As suggested above, taboo applies to both actions and objects considered inappropriate or offensive themselves, and language about these actions and objects. When it comes to defining taboo language, there is considerable terminological confusion, which makes it difficult to formulate a clear-cut definition for taboo language (Kidman, 1993) – even though most people would find it relatively easy to identify instances of taboo language (Ljung, 2011). One of the main reasons for this confusion is the different synonyms used to represent taboo words, including “rude language” (Hughes, 2006), “dirty language” (Jay, 1980), “strong language” (Lung, 1998), “bad language” (McEnery, 2006), “foul language” (Wajnryb, 2005), forbidden language, and many others.

In general, taboo words, or, taboo language “refers to language that is a breach of etiquette because it contains so-called “dirty words” (Allan and Burrige, 2006, p. 40). This statement acknowledges that dirty words violate the socio-linguistic conventions of a society, and it corresponds with Douglas’s (1966, p. 7) point of view, when he considers that “our idea of dirt is compounded of two things, care for hygiene and respect for conventions”.

Closely related to the concept of taboo is that of euphemism. According to Allan and Burrige (2006, p. 31) euphemisms “are words or phrases used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression. They avoid possible loss of face by the speaker, and also the hearer or some third party”. In this case, euphemisms function to save people’s face and still give them the chance to talk about taboo topics without embarrassing the speaker or resulting in an unwelcome emotional reaction. Euphemisms and taboo words thus go hand in hand. Euphemism appears to be a universal phenomenon, as discussed by McDonald (1988, p. vi), who points out that “euphemism is not a peculiarly English phenomenon. Indeed, euphemism is used extensively throughout the world, and has been throughout recorded history”.

As pointed out, euphemisms can save the speakers and hearers’ face, a concept utilised in sociolinguistics as a reference to the reflection of the self-image in public, a key component of social interaction in all societies. As Allan and Burrige (2006, p. 33) suggest, “in virtually every utterance, a speaker needs to take care that what is said will maintain, enhance or affront a hearer’s face in just the way she intends, while at the same time maintaining or enhancing the speaker’s

own face (which can be achieved by being self-effacing)". To conclude, euphemisms are substitutions of taboo words where the major aim is to save someone's face, although one of the challenges is that not every taboo word has a euphemistic alternative.

From the above, it can be concluded that words are classified as being taboo and dirty because they break the conventions of a society; however, as Jay (2009, p. 154) states, "why certain acts or words are defined as taboo is not always clear". Taboo words are learnt through social interactions and conversations which contribute to the folk knowledge of taboo words (Jay, 2009, p. 153). Taboo language, in other words, is highly context dependent – not only across different sociohistorical contexts, but also within a particular society. As a result, certain words are considered sensitive and not to be said in certain circumstances, which may vary from one society to another, and one communicative context to another.

There has been an increasing interest in research on taboo language, although studies are comparably limited (see Allan and Burridge, 2006; Andersson and Trudgill, 1990; Bayard and Krishnayya, 2001; Beers Fägersten, 2000; Hughes, 1998; Jay, 2000; Ljung, 2011; McEnery, 2006; Montagu, 1967; Wajnryb, 2005). Montagu's (1967) *The anatomy of swearing* is one of the earliest studies in the area, offering a historical investigation of the origins of taboo and swearwords. It explores the psychological motivations behind this linguistic phenomenon, and analyses many individual swearwords and their origin and usage. However, the book offers limited investigation of the sociolinguistic and cultural contexts related to taboo and swearing. Hughes (1998), titled *Swearing: A social history of foul language, oaths and profanity in English* follows Montagu's (1967) approach, through a historical timeline of taboo words in English. He traces bad language through the linguistic history of English, starting from its Germanic heritage; moving to Middle English, the Reformation, the Renaissance influence, and the Victorian approach to taboo; before focusing on the "modern explosion" of bad language. This book demonstrates how the form and function of taboo language varies over time. The notion of a "modern explosion" of bad language will be discussed in more depth in Section 2.4.

The aim of McEnery's (2006) *Swearing in English: Bad language, purity and power from 1586 to the present* is to investigate in more detail words that are categorised as "bad" and to investigate the social processes that brought about connections between bad language and specific factors such

as age, education, sex or social class. He investigates how bad language has been used and viewed over the last 400 years in England and investigates how historical processes shape people's attitudes toward taboo language in modern English. He claims that the impetus for the "purification" of speech derives from social stratification in the early eighteenth centuries, when the working class had to distinguish themselves from the lower classes by "purifying" their speech. According to McEnery (2006), this resulted in the establishment of a "discourse of purity" as a discourse of power that forever stigmatised those who did not adhere to it.

In contrast to this historical approach, Allan and Burridge (2006) focus on the types of words and phrases that are seen as taboo and relate them to specific areas in life. Their book *Forbidden words* (2006) is an exploration of the origin of taboo words and how they affect our daily life. The book also discusses the notion of political correctness in language in addition to some strategies that are used by language speakers to be polite, which leads to the discussion of why we sometimes use or avoid taboos in daily conversation. While this book is considered a good introductory book about taboo words and strategies for polite speech in general, it focuses only on semantic issues and does not focus to a great degree on the different functions of taboo and swearwords in a society. Wajnryb (2005), in contrast, presents a detailed linguistic study of the concept of swearwords and the usage of individual swearwords and their function in English. In a separate chapter, she presents "a word-by-word in-depth analysis" of certain swearwords. The book also provides a good investigation of cultural and cross-cultural reasons for expressions of swearing.

Since this study is devoted to the translation of taboo words from English to Arabic, it is important to shed light on some studies of swearing in Arabic. While research in this area is limited, most studies regarding taboo in the Arabic context more broadly conclude that factors such as age, gender, social status and educational level have a great impact on the use of taboo words in Arabic societies, as is the case for other languages. For instance, Alotaibi (2015) investigates the awareness of euphemism by Kuwaiti native speakers of Arabic. He examines whether the age and educational level of Kuwaiti Arabic speakers play a role in their comprehension of euphemisms used in everyday conversations. His results suggest that Kuwaiti native speakers of Arabic generally have considerable awareness of euphemism. Age and educational level play an important role in respondents' use of euphemism. For example, results show that the educated participants,

especially holders of university degrees, avoid using offensive words and consider them inappropriate.

Ghounane (2014) investigates the use of taboo language and euphemism in the Algerian context. The research concludes that the attitudes of Algerian speakers are connected to certain sociocultural and psychological factors such as the social norms of the society and the social environment to which they are exposed in addition to their identity construction. It also demonstrates that Algerian people have developed a considerable amount of euphemistic substitutions for taboo words, which is a result of societal, psychological and cultural pressures. According to this study, Algerian people prefer discussing taboo topics in single-sex groups, mediated by age, which again highlights that age and gender play an important role in the use of taboo language in Arabic societies.

An important point that emerges from the discussion above is that there are various dimensions or areas of human experience that are subject to taboo. The following section considers in more detail possible classifications or taxonomies of taboo words.

2.3 Taboo words: classifications and functions

Each dirty word by nature is a multidimensional concept varying along dimensions such as: semantic meaning, degree of offensiveness, frequency of usage, social-physical constraint, and some idiosyncratic variables applied to each word as a function of each individual's experience with the word. [...] The ultimate decision of the dirtiness of words relies on the communication context itself, i.e., the speaker, the listener, the social-physical setting, and the topic of discussion. (Jay, 1977, p.235)

The above quote highlights that deciding whether a word is considered taboo is dependent on many variables. In literary texts, the focus of this study, the function of the taboo words does not only rely on the literal word, but forms part of the narrative functions of the text, in particular characterisation. This notion is also confirmed by Ben-Shahar (1994, p. 198) in his research on the translation of literary dialogue where he emphasises that

different kinds of vocatives, curses and exclamations [...], whose meaning closely depends on the situational context of the utterance, are liable to be translated as proper lexemes according to their dictionary meaning... In literary dialogue the referential functions of language play a minor role and non-referential dialogue elements cannot be identified by examining linguistic items in isolation.

It is therefore essential to concentrate on the actual function of the taboo words in the literary written text, which is subject to various factors that should be taken into account rather than classifying the taboo words based on their literal meaning. Many scholars like Mateo and Yus (2000), Wajnryb (2005), and Pinker (2007) stress that taboo words serve certain functions and cannot be interpreted outside of the context they belong to. This is no less true for taboo language in literary texts.

Various ways of categorising taboo language have been proposed. Some methods are restricted to the pragmatic effect of taboo (Jay, 2000; Mateo & Yus, 2000; Wajnryb, 2005), while some specifically concentrate on morphosyntax (McEnery, 2006). There are also some methods that rely on the semantics of taboo words (Ljung, 2011; Pinker, 2007) and others involve the participation framework (Stenström, 1992).

McEnery (2006) uses various terms as synonyms for taboo language, including “expletives”, “obscene language”, “strong language”, and “derogatory language”. McEnery mentions further categories that can come under the umbrella of bad language including blasphemy, racism-related language, sex-related language, homophobic terms, and cursing. As many did before him, in his book *Swearing in English: Bad language, purity, and power from 1586 to the present*, McEnery classifies bad words according to a scale of offence, from very mild to very strong. However, one limitation of McEnery’s approach is that it takes limited account of context, and, as has been pointed out above, the context in which a potentially taboo word appears is heavily responsible for making the same word more or less offensive than it appears in other contexts, based on many factors including social differences, level of education, and gender. For this reason, this study uses as starting point another classification proposed by Allan and Burridge (2006, p. 1) who classify taboo language based on semantic factors, identifying five categories of taboo language namely:

1. bodies and their effluvia (sweat, snot, faeces, menstrual fluid, etc.)

2. the organs and acts of sex, micturition and defecation
3. diseases, death, and killing (including fishing and hunting)
4. naming, addressing, touching and viewing persons and sacred beings, object and places
5. food gathering, preparation and consumption.

One of the shortcomings of the classification proposed by Allan and Burrige (2006) is that insulting terms and expressions which convey someone's stressful emotional status are not clearly and comprehensively discussed. However, Jay (1992) in his book *Cursing in America* presents an interesting discussion of bad language with special focus on insults where he categorises insults into "cursing, profanity, blasphemy, taboo, obscenity, vulgarity, and epithets" (Jay, 1992, p. 4). He also explores in depth what is called anger expressions. According to Jay, there are many types of these anger expressions that may, for instance, refer to race or ethnicity with the intension of causing verbal harm toward the listeners, including *pic*, *mick*, *nigger*, *wop*, *taco*. In addition, some of these anger expressions are based on sexual references where the speaker talks about being sexually violated with the intention of explaining that he/she does not get proper luck or is treated unfairly (*I was fucked over; we got fucked/screwed; he was just jerking us off*) (Jay, 1992, p. 78). Jay's classification is helpful for this study as it deals with a wide range of insults that are most likely to appear to some extent in literary texts, especially in dialogue. As is evident, Jay's classification for anger expressions overlaps with those proposed by Allan and Burrige (2006). This study aims to cover as many taboo-related topics as possible, and adopts a taxonomy created by combining selected categorisations by Jay (1992), McEnery (2006) and Allan and Burrige (2006), comprising ten categories, namely:

1. sex
2. body parts
3. excrement/human waste
4. religion
5. physical/mental disability
6. incest
7. homophobia
8. narcotics/crime
9. prostitution
10. cross-categorical.

This taxonomy is inclusive and can be adjusted to serve categorising taboo words that are most likely to appear in literary texts, the focus of this study. Also, this taxonomy takes account of the particular focus of this study, namely translation from English to Arabic. In the Arabic context, some words (or objects or activities) may be regarded as taboo (e.g., alcoholic drinks), while equivalent words, objects or activities would not necessarily be regarded so in English-speaking contexts.

In the light of the above discussion, transferring any of the above categories from one culture to another is considered a challenge to translators due to variable sensitivities to these issues in different cultures – which are also highly variable over time. Section 2.4 sheds light on the complexities of taboo across culture and time, before some previous studies that deal with the translation of taboo language are briefly discussed in Section 2.5.

2.4 Taboo across cultures and time

Due to cultural differences, people perceive taboos in different ways; some expressions might be acceptable in one culture but taboo in another. Allan and Burridge (2006) explain that different societies' view of taboos vary due to cultural, religious and social factors. In other words, some phrases and terms may be acceptable in one culture, but considered taboo and offensive in another culture. Allan and Burridge (2006, p. 11) also argue that “taboo refers to a proscription of behaviour for a specifiable community of one or more persons, at a specifiable time, in specifiable contexts”, that is, “a taboo applies to behaviour”. As already argued, linguistic behaviours play a significant role in the way human beings communicate and this behaviour is subject to and conditioned by the way taboo is understood in different cultures and communities. However, there are some topics which are considered taboo across cultures. Baker mentions that “sex, religion, and defecation are taboo subjects in many societies” (2011, p. 245). In this sense, Hughes (1998, xx) suggests that religious taboos are still widespread in societies. According to Hughes, that is the case in many religions such as Brahmanism, Judaism and Islam where the straight reference to the name of God is completely prohibited.

Wajnryb (2005, pp. 210-212) focuses on cross-linguistic differences in taboo language. He notes that curses are often culturally specific. For instance, Bosnian curses are more related to the family

as a whole or to some family members; it is often said to the cursed person “may your children play in an electrical circuit”. Dutch people often use curses based on bad health (as in “krijg de ziekte” which means “may you get a disease”). It is common that Norwegians curse each other by saying “fucking Norwegian whale killer”. For English people, the most hurtful insult can be “cunt”. All of these are examples of how each culture has unique methods for cursing, and how a curse in one culture may mean little in another. Such differences not only occur across languages, but even within; for example, differences in taboo language across varieties of English are well attested. For example, according to Hughes (2006, p. xxii), the use of “son of a bitch” is more of a feature in spoken American English than in British English. On the other hand, the word “bloody” was popular as “the great Australian adjective” as far back as 1894; whereas the word “whoreson” has always been a British term.

In the context of translation studies, such differences present a challenge for the translator, particularly if the source and target languages belong to very different cultures as is the case with Arabic and English. Nida (1998, p. 157) notes that “differences between cultures cause many more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure”.

The discussion of differences in taboo across cultures is closely interwoven with how taboo (language) changes over time. Language change is a natural phenomenon: all living languages are flexible, amongst others in acquiring new vocabulary, either by borrowing or coinage or any other process of word-formation. In addition, the semantic characteristics of words may change over time. In general, taboo language evolves over time: “what seems clear overall is that the notion of offensive language is a variable one, shifting over time, relative to domain (the workplace, broadcast media, literature, political discourse, polite conversation) and affected by social, historical, political, and commercial forces (Battistella, 2005, p. 83). Hughes (1998) discusses the notion of the modern explosion of taboo language and suggests that there was a dramatic and rapid change in the conventions of swearing in English from 1950 to 1970 influenced by the freedom of speech in the American constitution and the influence of Hollywood which, according to Hughes, “has become a dominant factor” in this rapid change (1998, p. 198).

In other words, some words may be considered taboo in one period of time but not in another, even within the same language and cultural boundaries. For instance, the word “gay” in the past was

used to refer to the state of being “happy and full of fun” and now it refers to “a man sexually attracted to people of the same sex” (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2005). These kinds of developments apply to a large number of words, as much as acts and topics: “In England today death is more of a taboo topic than sex, although the reverse was true fifty years ago” (Blake and Moorhead, 1993, p. 81). In this regard, Hughes (2006, p. 464) comments that in recent years “the use of sexual terms has increased whereas taboo words relating to religion are less frequently observed”. Hughes adds that even taboo words related to race have increased in frequency and are used more widely than before. Allan and Burridge (2006, p. 2) stress that such changes are often encouraged by the excessive censoring of taboo language, which results in the creation of new taboo words that substitute older words and expressions. Overall, as mentioned earlier, taboo language evolves continuously as older taboo words are discarded and new words take their place. Hughes (1998, xx) suggests that religious taboos are still widespread in many societies. This includes societies strongly influenced by Islamic teachings, where religion undoubtedly plays a role in shaping the creation and production of taboo language, along with many other factors.

The backbone of the educational system in many Arab countries is centered on the teachings of Islam. Religious education was a core factor in education systems where public schools in the late 1970s to 1980s were limited to Qur’anic schools known as “Kuttab” mostly in the Gulf countries and earlier than this in some parts of Syria, Iraq and Jordan. The main goal of the Kuttab was to instruct the fundamentals of Islam as revealed in the Qur’an. Family values as well as religious teachings were also part of the curriculum (Cook, 2011). Gutek (2004, p. 206) makes clear the link between culture and religion in this context: “The purpose of Islamic education in the early history of Islam resembles the purpose of education in conservatism where it emphasises the core values, cultural heritage, as well as parents and society’s responsibilities in transmitting the cultural heritage from generation to generation”. Given this context, it is not surprising that taboo language, swearing and abuse in the context of Arabic scholarship are mostly discussed from a religious point of view. For instance, the Islamic teachings derived from the revelation of the Qur’an about 1400 year ago have enforced societal condemnation of abusive language, which prohibit Muslims from swearing and define abusive language as a vice. For instance, “the Prophet was not one who would abuse others, say obscene words, or curse others” (Al-Bukhari, 1979, p. 36). Such teachings may lead to self-censorship of bad language in the mentioned societies, and religious teachings can thus be the explanation for the limited use of bad language in these societies, at least in public.

Despite this general religious conservatism, in the last two decades, things have changed. Arabic countries, like many other nations, have been affected by globalisation and the boom of new technologies. According to Eltantawy and Wiest (2011, p. 126):

[t]here is evidence that these technologies have accelerated the dissemination of a heavily Western dominant global culture in the Arab world. One example of this is the continued use of Western languages in text messages and Twitter messages despite the introduction of the Arabic keyboard in 2000.

In an empirical study based in the United Arab Emirates and the Gulf Arab countries, Hills and Atkins (2013) have investigated the cultural identity of Arabs and westerners living in the Gulf countries. They point out that

the pattern of change towards the western model for all the groups sampled, but particularly including the Gulf Arabs, suggests that the identity deviations observed in our samples were sown before migration and represents a wider globalization, westernization or modernization process that may or may not be associated with longer term value changes (Hills & Atkins, 2013, p. 204).

They also mention that “Western media and commerce influences the thinking and behaviour of a large group in any nonwestern society with access to communication systems” (Hills and Atkins, 2013, p. 206). As a result of this adoption of influences from foreign cultures and languages, the concept of taboo language is likely to have undergone significant change in Arab countries. One major influential factor on Arabic societies in terms of language and culture is films and TV series, supported by the mass production of the American media industry, which are popular among Arab audiences. One important recent factor that has contributed to this change is Netflix launching its services in the Middle East in 2016. Since then, thousands of American TV shows and movies have been broadcast in the Arab world. Language usage has been influenced by this exposure. Since the access to such western media productions is becoming easier for Arab audiences, considerable growth and changes in the usage of taboo language may be expected, in both spoken and written language.

Despite its spread, especially on the Internet, bad language in Arabic “has been unduly neglected to the extent that it has rarely been studied as a linguistic phenomenon” (Abd el-Jawad, 2000, p.

220). There is, to the best of my knowledge, no study comparable to Montagu (1967/2001), Hughes (1998, 2006) or McEnery (2006) tracing the history of bad language in Arabic. The current study, in part, addresses this gap, by focusing on the translation of taboo language in literary texts from English to Arabic, over a period of approximately 20 years.

2.5 Previous research on the translation of taboo language in literary texts

Studies on the translation of taboo language in written texts is relatively limited, in comparison to studies of audiovisual translation (AVT), and specifically subtitling. The comparison between the translation of literary texts and AVT is meaningful, as AVT often happens in the context of filmic narrative, and swearing in both literary texts and in audiovisual texts are embedded in the representation of dialogue. In both cases, therefore, taboo language is embedded in the construction of a fictional world, but the written and the audiovisual modes impose very different constraints on the translation of taboo language.

To start with studies in AVT, Lie (2013) used a corpus-based method to investigate the translation of taboo terms from English into Norwegian in 15 films. The target language subtitles are compared with the actual dialogue to analyse semantic, syntactic and functional variables. This study concludes that almost 30% of the taboo items are eliminated in the subtitles. Chen (2004) studies the translation of taboo words in American English into Putonghua. He notes that most of the taboo terms in American movies are eliminated when subtitled into Putonghua. Furthermore, Han and Wang (2014) conducted a corpus-based investigation of the subtitling of English swearwords into Chinese in an Australian reality TV series named *The Family* (2011). The findings illustrate that the subtitled version is slightly different from the original regarding the frequency of swearwords as well as the different functions of swearwords.

In the Arabic context, Alkadi (2010) has investigated the challenges of subtitling swearwords in addition to two other categories of translation problem, namely dialect and humour. Regarding swearwords, he sheds light on the cultural and linguistic challenges when subtitling swearwords from English to Arabic. Alkadi uses the film *London to Brighton* (2006) as a case study. Furthermore, he interviews experienced subtitlers to examine the way they translate, the possible obstacles they encounter and the possible solutions to overcome them. He tries to examine the attitudes and the perception of Arabic recipients towards swearwords. One of the significant

shortcomings of this study is that all participants were Arabs living in UK, which may have had significant effects on participants' attitudes towards swearwords; it can be suggested that Arabs in Western countries might be heavily influenced by western cultures and therefore more tolerant of taboo language than their counterparts in Arabic countries. Moreover, the scope of this research was limited to only one film as a case study and thus the results cannot be generalised.

Another study, by Al-Adwan (2009), examines the way euphemisms are utilised in subtitling one season of the TV series *Friends*. Khalaf and Rashid (2016) analyse how swearwords are reduced, using a fansubbed version of *Alpha Dog* (2006) as a case study. Similarly, Eldalees, Al-Adwan, and Yahiaoui (2017) compare two sets of subtitles produced by two fansubbers in two different countries to determine the way euphemism is employed. Izwaini (2017a) examines the translation strategies adopted in translating taboo expressions in the Arabic subtitles of 23 English movies. His study covers six categories of taboo, such as religious taboo, sexual references, body parts, and alcohol and drugs, and he concludes that the Arabic subtitlers tend to tone down taboo expressions mostly by adopting generalisation, omission and substitution. The categories covered in this study resemble to some degree those adopted for the current study, discussed in Section 2.3. This is also the case with the predominant translation strategies found in both studies. In a related study, Izwaini (2017b), proposes that subtitlers in the Arab world are subject to censorship regulations which require them to carefully transfer religious, sexual and social taboos, where they tone them down by deletion techniques.

In comparison to research on AVT, research on the translation of taboo language in literary texts is very limited. Most of the studies conducted in this area deal with the translation of taboo language into different European languages; for example, Sidiropoulou (1998) into Greek, Karjalainen (2002) into Swedish, Kizeweter (2005) into Polish, Horton (1998) and Ghassempur (2009) into German, and Teperi (2015) into Finnish. In the Arabic context, there have been only a handful of studies specifically on the role of euphemisms in the translation of English novels. For instance, Ghounane and Rabahi (2017) investigate the frequency of sexual taboo words as well as euphemisms in both *Lady Chatterley's lover* by D.H. Lawrence (1960) and the Arabic novel *Laylet El Qadr* by Ben Jelloun (2000). This comparative study reveals an overuse of sexual taboo in both novels aligned with an overuse of euphemistic strategies to overcome the high frequency of sexual taboo words in both novels. This study is limited to only one category of taboo language, related

to sexuality, and focuses only on one translation strategy as a method for handling the overuse of sexual taboo words.

Al-Khatib (2010) examines linguistic taboos in Jordanian Arabic and adopts recent theoretical frameworks. He considers many processes, including the replacement and development of taboo words which are all subject to the cultural norms of the society. Abbas (2015) investigates the translation strategies adopted by Arab translators when transferring English texts in which religion is particularly topical. The study investigates the translation of Dan Brown's novel *Inferno*. Abbas concludes that strategies such as euphemism and self-censorship are adopted by Arab translators which are the result of the cultural and religious system in the target culture. He also suggests that translators are subject to pressures exercised by the translation agencies and institutes which to some extent are held accountable for shaping the translation strategies adopted by translators.

To date, no large-scale studies have been performed to investigate the way in which taboo words are treated in the translation of English literary texts into Arabic in a comprehensive, systematic, and theoretically cogent manner. In this study, a corpus of English novels with their Arabic translated texts will be used to allow for the development of a systematic understanding of how different categories of taboo language are transferred into Arabic. Moreover, this study will determine whether there are generic trends in translation choices in Arabic translated versions, while taking account of individual differences between translators. Furthermore, a diachronic dimension will be introduced in the study, to determine whether social changes over time impact the translation strategies used for taboo words.

Methodologically speaking, qualitative procedures and case studies are often used to investigate the translation strategies adopted for taboo language. Quantitative corpus-based methods, by contrast, have not been used extensively in investigating the translation of literary texts into Arabic; nor in investigating taboo words. Against this background, this study will contribute to existing knowledge on the translation of English novels into Arabic by combining the target-oriented theoretical and methodological approaches of DTS, and implementing these in the framework of corpus-based methods, with the intention to investigate the dominant translation strategies employed for different categories of taboo expressions embedded in English texts, to explore whether there are generic trends (over time) in translation choices in Arabic translation. The

following sections will briefly discuss the theoretical framework of DTS, together with the concept of translation strategies, which are key to the current study.

2.6 Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS)

The notion of DTS was first proposed by Holmes (1972/2000). He presents three classifications for research in DTS, namely product-oriented DTS, function-oriented DTS, and process-oriented DTS. Later, DTS was developed into a coherent theoretical framework by Toury (1995), who suggested that the translation strategies chosen by a translator are strongly conditioned by the position of translated works in the target culture. Toury proposes three methodological steps for DTS research: first, locating the text within the cultural boundaries of the target culture where its suitability and significance are evaluated; second, making an analytical comparison between the source text and the target text in terms of identifying connections between “coupled pairs” of the source text and the target text segments; and finally, creating generalisations about patterns and aspects that emerge from the preceding two steps.

Toury’s DTS revolves around the proposal that the translator’s choices of the strategies employed in his/her translation are shaped by the function of the translation in the receiving system. Therefore, the receiving system determines the range of appropriate linguistic structures for the translated text. In other words, translators do not make their decision altogether individualistically; instead, they are to some degree governed in their choices of strategies based on their understanding of the position and function of the text in the receiving culture. Consequently, as social conditions change over time, translators are expected to make different choices that are aligned with these social changes. As the current study deals with novels across a timespan of approximately 20 years, this methodological framework is an ideal vehicle for determining whether the position and function of the translated versions of the English novels in the target Arab cultures have an effect in shaping translation strategies for taboo language over time.

Within the context of this conceptual and methodological framework, it is important to shed light on the concept of translation strategies. The following section presents this concept as well as some models of translation strategies proposed by scholars. The classification of translation strategies used in this research is also outlined.

2.7 Translation strategies

There have been different definitions for the concept of “translation strategy”. For instance, Lörscher (1991, p. 76) defines a translation strategy as “a potentially conscious procedure for the solution of a problem with which an individual is faced when translating a text segment from one language into another”. Translation strategies may be both conscious and unconscious. Overall, the chosen strategy for translating a text reflects the translator’s understanding of the target text receivers.

There have been numerous classifications for translation strategies proposed by different researchers in the field of translation studies including Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/2000), Newmark (1988), Chesterman (1997), Levý (2000), Leppihalme (2001) and Baker (2011). Discussing these taxonomies in detail would exceed the scope of this study, and therefore the discussion this section focuses primarily on the modified model of translation strategies created by combining selected strategies proposed by Newmark (1988) and Baker (2011). This model consists of six strategies suitable for the data of this study, namely: transliteration, literal translation, translation by a more general word, translation by a more neutral/less expressive word, translation by cultural substitution and omission. The selection of this model derives from the fact that this study focuses on literary texts and more specifically on the translation strategies used for taboo items. This corresponds with Leppihalme’s (2011, p. 128) point that specific strategies are more likely preferred more often than others and that the genre of the original text is an influential and decisive factor in the choice of a given translation strategy.

According to Baker (2011), *translation by a more general word* is one of the most common strategies used for dealing with many instances of non-equivalence. She adds that this involves the use of “a general word (superordinate) to overcome a relative lack of specificity in the target language compared to the source language” (2011, p. 25). In the context of taboo language, this strategy takes a slightly different form and motivation, used to help the translator avoid using direct utterances for sensitive items. In this case, a more general word may also be a semantically related word. To illustrate this, Baker (2011) uses the example of *shampoo* the hair versus *wash* the hair. The word *shampoo* is a direct indication for the process of washing the hair specifically and not for any other part of the body. On the other hand, the word *wash* has a broader and more general

usage where it can refer to the act of washing, for example, different parts of the body in general, a car, or the dishes. Example (1) is extracted from the data used in this study and shows how this strategy is used in the context of taboo language.

(1)

ST:

His wife was pregnant, and he was so cute I fucked him and she found out.

TT:

كانت زوجته حاملا , و كان لذيذا جدا , و قد نامت معه , و اكتشفت هي الأمر

Gloss:

His wife was pregnant, he was so tasteful, and I slept with him, and she discovered that.

Sex and the city (2000), (doc#0 3.1.139)

Example (1) illustrates how the word *fuck* is translated as نامت *nāmāt* ‘sleep’. Adopting the word *sleep* is a general indication for the sexual act which transform the taboo word *fuck* into a less offensive general word for the target audience. This might also be considered as a euphemism.

A related strategy, *translation by a more neutral/less expressive word* is mentioned by Baker (2011) as a strategy that is useful to avoid mentioning words in certain contexts. In the context of translating taboo language, this requires adopting a word that is used in the same category but functions as a less expressive word which reduces the severity of the original taboo word in that context. For instance, instead of translating the word *bitch* as عاهرة *‘ahīr‘ah*, which is a direct taboo word in Arabic, referring to a woman who has sex in exchange for money or any other benefit, a less expressive word may be used, such as باغية *bāghīyāh*, a formal word used to refer to a woman who receives money in exchange for sex. Adopting such a word still refers to the same concept, but the intensity of the word is toned down. Such avoidance of using a direct equivalent in favour of a less intensely expressive word is likely to be seen as a particularly useful strategy for the translation of taboo items into Arabic, where some of the taboo is retained, but the shock value is reduced.

According to Baker (2011) *translation by cultural substitution* “involves replacing a culture-specific item or expression with a target-language item which does not have the same propositional meaning” (2011, p. 29). In the context of this study, translation by cultural substitution does not necessarily mean adaptation to the target culture, but may also refer to substitution with another cultural reference from the source culture, less offensive than the original item. Example (2) illustrates how this is applied.

(2)

ST:

Breasts touched the tip of the stirring, erect phallos, and caught the drop of moisture.

TT:

و سحبتة اليها حتى لامس صدرها المتارجح الوائب رأس السير جون توماس

Gloss:

She grabbed it toward her until the tempting John Thomas touched her breast.

The garden of Eden (1986), (doc#0 2.1.199)

In the above example, the word *phallos* is replaced with *John Thomas* السير جون توماس *syr jūn tūmās*, which is British slang for “penis” and so this replaces the offensive word with a British cultural substitute that is more oblique in its reference than *phallos*. This strategy suits the context of taboo language since it gives the translator a chance to maneuver and maintain the element of taboo, while reducing the degree of potential offence.

According to Baker (2011), *omission* requires a total elimination of the word in the target text. In the context of the translation of taboos, translators tend to eliminate taboo items that are totally unacceptable in the target culture.

The last two strategies, namely *literal translation* and *transliteration*, involve direct transfer of the original content as much as possible. The difference is that transliteration transfers the whole word from the original text and transcribes it all into the target text. According to Newmark (1988, p. 81) this suits the following contexts: “names of all living or dead people, geographical names, names of periodicals and newspapers, titles of untranslated literary works, plays, films; names of private

companies and institutions, names of public institutions; street names and addresses”. On the other hand, literal translation does not require the transcription of the same sound in the original text; instead, a direct reference to the item in the source text is made.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter contextualised the notion of taboo generally and more specifically as a linguistic phenomenon. It outlined taxonomies of taboo language and proposed translation strategies for transferring taboo items. Furthermore, it explored various studies covering different aspects of taboo language, including a few focused on literary translation. In the Arabic context, a limited number of studies have been conducted on this topic, and there is a clear need to investigate this area with a more comprehensive systematic approach. The following chapter provides a detailed account of the steps taken in answering the research questions of the study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the main research questions that emerge from the discussion of the existing literature in Chapter 2 (see Section 3.2), as well as the methodology adopted to answer the questions raised. Since this is a corpus-based study, this chapter will elaborate on the corpus collection (Section 3.3.1), the extraction and classification of the data (taboo words and their translation; Section 3.3.2), and the quantitative and qualitative analysis methods used (Section 3.3.3).

3.2 Research questions

Against the background of the discussion in Chapter 2, this study aims to answer three research questions:

1. What strategies are used for the translation of taboo language across the three novels investigated in this study, and are there any notable similarities and differences over time?
2. Is there any correspondence between particular translation strategies and different categories of taboo language, and do these correspondences show similarities or differences across the three novels and the timespan investigated?
3. Based on the above, how may social changes in the receiving system be seen to condition translation choices?

3.2 Methodology

In order to answer the research questions, the following methodological steps were followed:

1. Identify taboo words in the source texts of the selected novels.
2. Classify and group the taboo words in English according to the semantic classification adopted for this study (see Section 2.3).
3. Identify the translations of these taboo words in the Arabic translations.
4. Identify the strategies employed in the rendition of taboo words in the Arabic versions.
5. Identify the relationship between the type of taboo word, and the choice of translation strategy.

6. Determine similarities and differences in the translation strategies for categories of taboo language across the three novels, and across time.
7. Compare the results of quantitative and qualitative analyses to investigate how social changes may have affected the selection of translation strategies.

3.2.1 Corpus composition and compilation

A custom-built parallel, sentence-aligned corpus is used in this study, meaning that each sentence in the original text is linked to its counterpart in the target text and aligned in the form of two columns next to each other in a spreadsheet. The corpus is comprised of three English novels and their Arabic translations, spanning the period 1987 to 2010 for the publication of the Arabic texts. The novels are *Lady Chatterley's lover* by D. H. Lawrence (1960) translated as عشيق الليدي تشاترلي 'ashyq al-laydy tshātrly by Hana Aboud (1999),² *The garden of Eden* by Ernest Hemingway (1986) translated as جنة عدن jnat 'adn by Al Sharif Khatier (1987) and *Sex and the city* (2000 version) by Candace Bushnell translated as بنات المدينة bnāt al mdīnāh by Abid Ismael (2010).

These novels were selected since they contain numerous culturally controversial issues and taboos, which even resulted in their banning and censorship (see Section 4.2 for more detailed discussion). They contain issues related to bisexuality, affairs, erotica, sexual acts, drinking, and drug use which make them an ideal ground for investigating taboo-related issues in translation from English to Arabic.

There are some discrepancies in terms of genre in the corpus composition. While the novels by Hemingway and Lawrence are regarded as canonical literature, Bushnell's *Sex and the city* is popular literature. This imbalance results from the fact that this study has limited textual material to choose from, due to the publication regulation of translated novels in Arab countries. Likewise, as a consequence of differences in the subject matter of the three novels (see discussion in Section 4.2), different types of taboo material arise in the three novels. This matter is discussed further in the analysis presented in Chapter 4.

² While numerous (and older) translations of this novel are available such as عشيق الليدي تشاترلي 'ashyq al-laydy tshātrly by Ameen Al-Ayooty (1989), none of these were accessible in digital format, and thus could not be included in the study.

The English novels and their Arabic translations were downloaded in plain text format. The first step to creating a parallel corpus was to align the source texts and their target texts using Excel, before the parallel corpus was uploaded to Sketch Engine (Kilgariff, 2014). Sketch Engine is a web-based corpus tool offering ready-to-use corpora, and tools for subscribers to build, upload and install their own corpora. Sketch Engine offers tools such as the creation of wordlists and concordances, used in this study. What makes Sketch Engine the preferred corpus tool for this study is that it supports Arabic texts and aligns them with an acceptable degree of consistency. Furthermore, it is user friendly, allowing for access to data anytime and anywhere.

Figure 3.1 shows the composition of the corpus used in this study.

Language	Name	Words
Arabic	Lady Chatterly's Lover, Arabic	111,207
Arabic	Sex and the City, Arabic	72,865
Arabic	The Garden of Eden, Arabic	65,951
English	Lady Chatterly's Lover, English	118,540
English	Sex and the City, English	72,345
English	The Garden of Eden, English	66,740

Figure 3.1 Total word counts in each novel in both original and translated versions

3.2.2 Data extraction

A wordlist was created in Sketch Engine to identify English taboo words in the source texts. The identified taboo words were categorised according to the semantic categorisation proposed for this study, as discussed in Section 2.3. A lemmatised word list was created for each novel individually. A word list enumerates all the words (types) used in a corpus, together with their frequency (in number of tokens of each type). A lemmatised word list uses the lemma feature in Sketch Engine, which provides the root of a word and all its different forms under one lemma. For instance, words like *fuck*, *fucked*, *fucking* are all represented by the lemma FUCK. These lemmatised word lists for each novel were searched manually to identify any lemma relating to the ten categories of taboo item adopted for this study. After taboo item lemmas were identified in this way, a search for each

lemma using the concordance feature (which link each sentence in the source text with its counterpart in the target text alongside each other) generated a list of all instances of the searched lemma as well as its counterpart in the target language, with the contexts where these lemmas are found aligned. The concordances were, in the first instance, used to have a more careful look at the context to check if the word is a real taboo item. Irrelevant items were removed from the dataset. For instance, the word *bar* is not necessarily a place for drinking alcohol. It appears in some instances where it means a bar as a metal rod. Example (3a) and (3b) show this distinction.

(3)

(a) He stood up and walked into the bar and poured himself a whiskey.

The garden of Eden (1986), (doc# 1.1.168)

(b) There were only small windows with bars high up that gave onto a narrow street.

The garden of Eden (1986), (doc# page 1)

Another challenge in compiling the dataset is that, as discussed in Section 2.4, some items are taboo in one culture and not in others. For example, words such as *bar*, *whiskey*, or *kiss* may not be regarded as taboo in the context of the source culture; however, the fact that they may be so in the receiving culture requires balance in taking both source and target cultures into consideration.

In order to extract the data required for the analysis, the identified taboo words were searched in the English originals, using the concordancing feature in *Sketch Engine*. The Arabic translations are displayed alongside the original versions, and these aligned versions were used to tag the translation strategy employed in each case. This method is thus a corpus-based implementation of Toury's (1995) coupled-pairs method. The model of translation strategies set out in Section 2.7 was adopted to code the translation strategy used for each instance of a taboo word. The screengrab in Figure 3.2 illustrates how a concordance with an English search word and its parallel entries are aligned.

in Section 3.2.1, which precludes the use of inferential statistics. The following chapter presents the results of the study, and discusses the findings.

Chapter 4: Results and discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study, in four sections that culminate in a synthesised analysis of translation strategies used for taboo items in the three novels. Section 4.2 presents a general overview of the contexts of each novel, as background prior to moving further into the quantitative and qualitative analysis. Section 4.3 provides an overview of the findings regarding the nature of taboo items, and the kinds of strategies selected, for all three novels combined. This forms the background for the discussion in Section 4.4, which presents a quantitative analysis for each novel individually and discusses the frequencies and distributions of the categories of taboo items as well as the strategies adopted to transfer these into Arabic. Section 4.5 explores some explanations for noticeable trends in the use of various translation strategies for different categories of taboo items, and link these to existing research.

4.2 Background

This study is based on three novels, as discussed in Section 3.2.1. These novels deal with distinct subject matters, and each have a distinct original English-language publication context, and context in which the translations into Arabic were done, which affect both the nature of the taboo items in the texts, and the strategies chosen in translation. Given the close relationship between translation strategies, and the context of translation in the target culture (see Section 2.6), before proceeding with the data analysis, some further detailed discussion of the three novels in the corpus is provided. In this discussion, and in the remainder of the chapter, I view the chronology of the three novels in respect of their publication in Arabic translation, rather than in respect of their original English publication, given that it is likely that, diachronically speaking, it is the target-system position, rather than the source-system position, that will influence translation approaches and strategies.

4.2.1 *The garden of Eden*

The garden of Eden was written by the American novelist Ernest Hemingway, and was first published posthumously in 1986, almost a quarter of a century after his death. Hemingway had worked on the novel for approximately 15 years since 1946. It was first published by Scribner's,

New York in 1986, in a much abridged version from the extant manuscript version – a fact that has led to some controversy around the publication of the novel. The novel was translated into Arabic as *جنة عدن jnat 'adn* shortly after its original publication, by Al Sharif Khatier, and published by Dar Al Adab, Beirut, Lebanon in 1987. Beirut is often the location of publishing houses that publish books for Arab audiences on potentially sensitive subjects. Lebanon is a multicultural country consisting of different ethnicities and religious groups living in harmony, which creates an incomparable atmosphere of freedom in the Middle East. According to Rafei (2007), this results in Arab authors favoring Lebanese publishers for printing and publishing books on sex, politics and other sensitive topics. That might explain why two of the selected novels in the current study have been translated and published in Lebanon (the translations of *The garden of Eden* and *Sex and the city*).

This erotic novel explores the role of male-female relationships, as Hemingway pictures the married life of a young writer, David Bourne, and his wife Catherine, who met in Paris. It explores sexual experimentation, especially in subverting traditional gender roles where Catherine plays the aggressive part. The novel contains frequent references to sexuality, and the use of alcohol.

4.2.2 *Lady Chatterley's lover*

Lady Chatterley's lover was written by the British novelist D.H. Lawrence and first published privately in Italy 1928 and later in France in 1929. This novel was not published in England until 1960, by Penguin – which won an obscenity trial against the publication of the book on 2 November 1960. Between 1929 and 1959, this book was banned for obscenity in many countries, such as the USA, Canada and Australia. It is likely that it is this controversy that resulted in the fact that there was a considerable lag between the original publication, and the Arabic translation (with the first translation done in 1989). The Arabic translation used in this study was done by the female translator Hana Aboud as *تشاترلي عشيق الليدي 'ashyq al laydy tshātrly* and published by Ward Book House for Publishing and Distribution, Damascus, Syria. With some exceptions (e.g., the political system), many of the factors highlighted in Section 4.2.1 on the publishing context of Beirut also apply to Damascus. This may explain why *Lady*

Chatterley's lover was translated and published in Damascus, which is comparably open-minded in relation to some other Arab countries in the Middle East.

Lady Chatterley's lover is an erotic novel revolving around the male-female emotional and physical relationship. It begins with a handsome high-class man, Sir Clifford Chatterley, who is paralysed. This, along with the emotional distance between himself and his wife Lady Chatterley, leads her into an affair with a lower-class man, Oliver Mellors. Whether love alone can satisfy the male-female relationship or whether physical experience plays a greater role is a subject of great argument and conflicts in this novel. The novel was banned for its explicit depictions of sex, and its use of then highly stigmatised expletives.

4.2.3 *Sex and the city*

Sex and the city is a collection of essays by Candace Bushnell, all of which first appeared in *The New York Observer* from 1994 onwards. The first edition was published in 1997, but there have been many reprintings of this book. The edition used for this study was published in 2010.

The popularity of the TV series based on Bushnell's book, which ran from 1998 to 2004, is no doubt a factor that encouraged the first official Arabic translation of the book as بنات المدينة *bnāt al mdīnāh*, done by Abid Ismael and published by Dar Al Saqi, Beirut, Lebanon in 2010 – more than a decade after the original English publication, and approximately six years after the end of the TV series.

The book touches on subjects such as modern sexuality in addition to romance and love against uncommitted sexuality. It shows many instances of open-minded sexual trends as the characters in this book move between sex clubs and bars looking for new experiences.

4.3 Overview of taboo items across all three novels

Following the protocol outlined in Section 3.2.1, the corpus compiled of the three novels yields a total of 1,145 lemmatised taboo tokens, consisting of 69 unique types. The raw frequency of each taboo item lemma in the corpus is shown in Table 4.1.

Taboo item (type)	Total	Taboo item (type)	Total
kiss	166	phallo	6
sex	153	prostitution	6
bar	73	thigh	6
breast	66	bartender	5
fuck	62	bosom	5
wine	59	brandy	5
god	48	desire	5
whiskey	28	orgasm	5
shit	26	pussy	5
bitch	25	rouse	5
beer	24	waist	5
drunk	24	alcohol	4
damn	23	asshole	4
penis	22	bare	4
threesome	22	flesh	4
devil	18	haunch	4
drink	17	idiot	4
cocktail	15	Jesus	4
gay	15	quiver	4
drugs	12	slut	4
buttock	10	bullshit	3
absinthe	9	cocaine	3
lesbian	9	intimate	3
loin	9	marijuana	3
vodka	9	naked	3
affair	8	pleasure	3
champagne	8	sweat	3
arse	7	temptation	3
balls	7	tits	3
erect	7	vomit	3
intimacy	7	cigarette	2
physical	7	dick	2
condom	6	finger	2
cunt	6	harassing	2
passion	6		

Table 4.1 Taboo lemmas (type and token frequency in corpus), listed from most to least frequent

The taboo items investigated are distributed as shown in Table 4.2 across the 10 categories used in this study (see Section 2.3).

Category	Count of items
Sex	459
Narcotics/crime	300
Body parts	187
Religion	94
Excrement/human waste	34
Prostitution	31
Homophobia	24
Incest	8
Cross-categorical	4
Physical/mental disability	4
Total	1145

Table 4.2 Taboo items in each category, listed from most to least frequent

The categories of taboo items occurring most frequently across all three novels are Sex, Narcotics/Crime and Body Parts, as shown in Table 4.2. In the first category, Sex, the following lemmas emerged as most frequent across all three novels (raw frequencies in brackets): *kiss* (166), *sex* (153), *fuck* (62) and *threesome* (22). In the second category, Narcotics/Crime, the most frequent items are *bar* (73), *wine* (59), *whiskey* (28), *drunk* (24) and *beer* (24). It is worth mentioning that these alcoholic beverages are not necessarily regarded as taboo in all Arab communities. Finally, in the category Body Parts, the following words emerged as the most frequent: *breast* (66), *penis* (22) and *buttock* (10). As anticipated, not all ten categories adopted for this study are covered in all three novels, and the three novels demonstrate proportionally different distributions of the categories of taboo items. This is illustrated in more detail in Figure 1, which shows that, proportionally speaking, *Sex and the city* has more references to Sex than the other two novels, with *The garden of Eden* containing proportionally the fewest taboo items in this category. However, the latter novel contains proportionally by far the most references to Narcotics/Crime – which hardly occur in *Lady Chatterley's lover*, but are also common in *Sex and the city*. Body Parts are a common category of taboo item in *Lady Chatterley's lover*, but less so in the other two novels. Another notable difference is that taboo items relating to Religion are much more common in *Lady*

Chatterley's lover than in the other two novels. The differences in the distributions of categories of taboo items arise from the different subject matters these novels deal with.

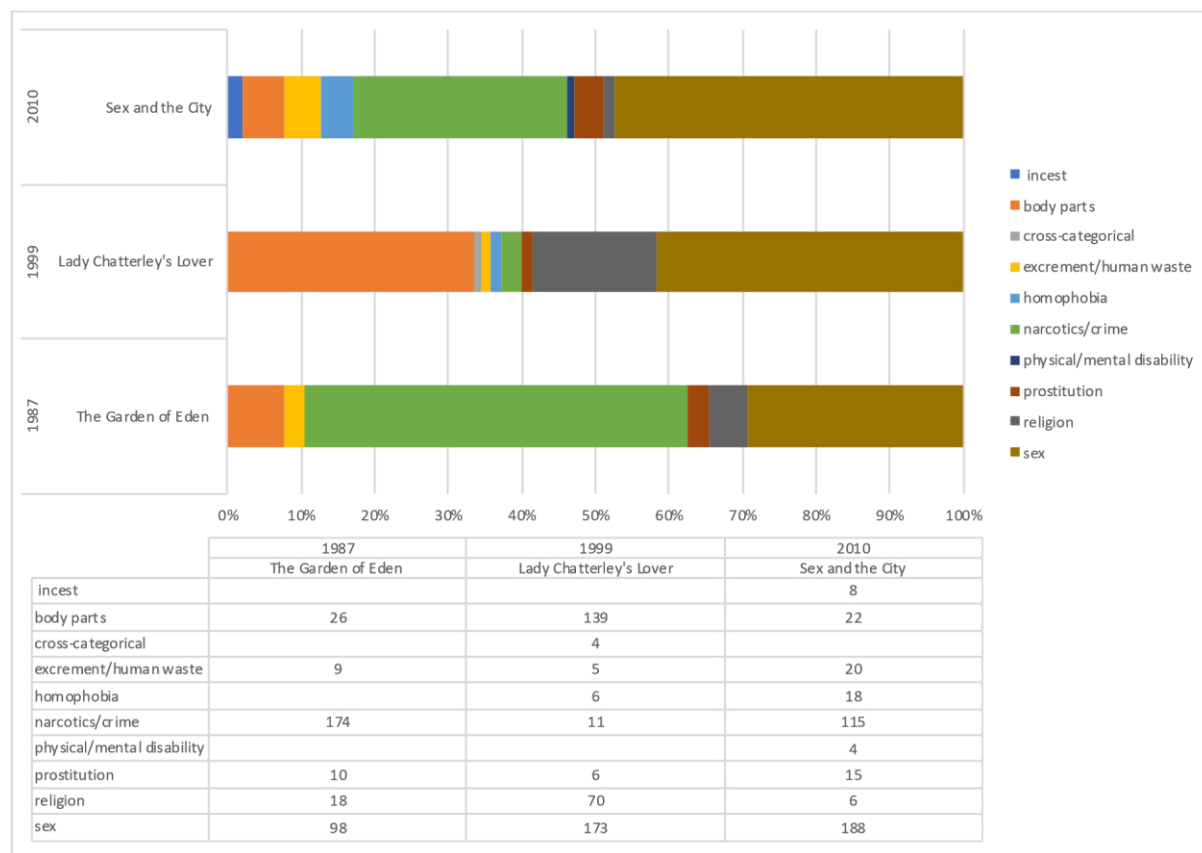


Figure 4.1 Proportional distribution of taboo items by category for each of the three novels in the corpus

Given these differences, this chapter first deals with each novel separately. Section 4.4 provides more detailed quantitative analysis of each novel, focusing in particular on the translation strategies used in each novel, for different types of taboo items. Section 4.5 draws together the individual discussions to determine whether there are observable trends across the three novels, and across time.

4.4 Quantitative analysis of each individual novel

4.4.1 *The garden of Eden*

(a) *Overview of taboo items*

The total number of taboo items in this novel is 335 items distributed over six taboo categories, as shown in Figure 4.1. Items in the category Narcotics/Crime make up most of this total (174),

with the category Sex accounting for 98 cases, followed by Body Parts (26). The remaining categories altogether account for a total of 37 taboo items.

In terms of the actual taboo items across the six taboo categories present in this novel, Table 4.3 shows the frequency of all items included in the analysis for *The garden of Eden*. In addition to the raw frequency of each taboo item, the normalised frequency per 1,000 words is also provided to allow for an equal basis of comparison across all three novels.³

Item	Body Parts	Human Waste	Narcotics/ Crime	Prostitution	Religion	Sex	Total (raw)	Total normalised (words)
kiss						87	87	1.30
bar			58				58	0.87
wine			38				38	0.57
whiskey			26				26	0.39
beer			22				22	0.33
breast	19						19	0.28
damn					14		14	0.21
fuck						11	11	0.16
bitch				10			10	0.15
absinthe			9				9	0.13
champagne			8				8	0.12
shit		6					6	0.10
bartender			5				5	0.07
brandy			5				5	0.07
bare	4						4	0.06
devil					4		4	0.06
drunk			3				3	0.04
naked	3						3	0.04
sweat		3					3	0.04

Table 4.3 Frequency and category of taboo item lemmas in *The garden of Eden*

³ *The garden of Eden* has a word count of 66,740 words.

The word *kiss* is the most frequent taboo item in this novel, with 87 occurrences and a frequency of 1.30 per 1,000 words. This particular word is categorised under Sex, taking into consideration the contexts in which these occurrences appear. The second most frequent taboo item is *bar* (58 occurrences, with a normalised frequency of 0.87 per 1,000 words). This item is categorised under Narcotics/Crime, based on the contexts in which it appears. In the same category, the third most frequent item is *wine* (38 occurrences, 0.57 occurrences per 1,000 words). A number of other alcoholic beverages occur in the novel: *whiskey*, *beer*, *champagne*, *absinthe*, and *brandy*. These items are closely connected to *bar*, and highlights that, apart from translating references to sexuality (mostly encoded in the item *kiss*, with *breast* (19, 0.28 per 1,000 words) and *fuck* (11, 0.16 per 1,000 words) also entering into this domain), references to drinking and alcohol pose a challenge for the Arabic translator of the novel.

Apart from the categories of Sex and Narcotics/Crime, the other categories have relatively low frequencies of representation, with a total of 63 items distributed among 13 remaining different words with low frequencies, including *shit*, *sweat*, *devil*, *bitch*, *bare* and *naked*.

(b) Translation strategies used in The garden of Eden

As far as translation strategies are concerned, Table 4.4 shows that transliteration and translation by a more general word are the most preferred strategies among the six strategies used by Al Sharif Khatier in the 1987 translation of the novel *جنة عدن jnat 'adn*, with literal translation also employed relatively frequently.

Strategy	Count
Transliteration	118
Translation by a more general word	97
Literal translation	60
Omission	32
Translation by a more neutral / less expressive word	25
Translation by cultural substitution	3

Table 4.4 Translation strategies used for taboo items in *The garden of Eden*

Figure 4.2 shows a more detailed breakdown of the findings, by cross-tabulating the translation strategy employed with the category of taboo item, showing the proportional preference for translation strategies for different categories of taboo items. Of the 174 items in the category Narcotics/Crime, 117 items are translated using transliteration. For instance, out of the 58 cases of the item *bar*, 53 items are transliterated in Arabic as *بار*. The same happens with the item *whiskey*, where out of the 26 times it is mentioned in the novel, it is transliterated into Arabic as *ويسكي* a total of 25 times, with the remaining case omitted in the translation. It can be argued that since such words have no exact counterpart in Arabic, the translator uses the transliterated form of the word as an Arabic counterpart.

In contrast, wine is a well-known ancient drink in some cultures, including the Arabic, before it was prohibited in Islam almost 1400 years ago. *Wine* has counterparts in Arabic, such as *خمر* *khmr*, an more general equivalent word for *wine* mostly used in literary and religious contexts, or *نبيذ* *nbīth*, a more specific equivalent word for wine which is mostly used in literary and classical Arabic contexts or in everyday life in some Arab countries. Whenever the translator finds such a counterpart, this is used instead of transliteration.

In *The garden of Eden* the word *wine* is mentioned 38 times, with the literal translation method used 34 times in selecting *نبيذ* *nbīth*, whereas in the remaining 4 cases omission is used.

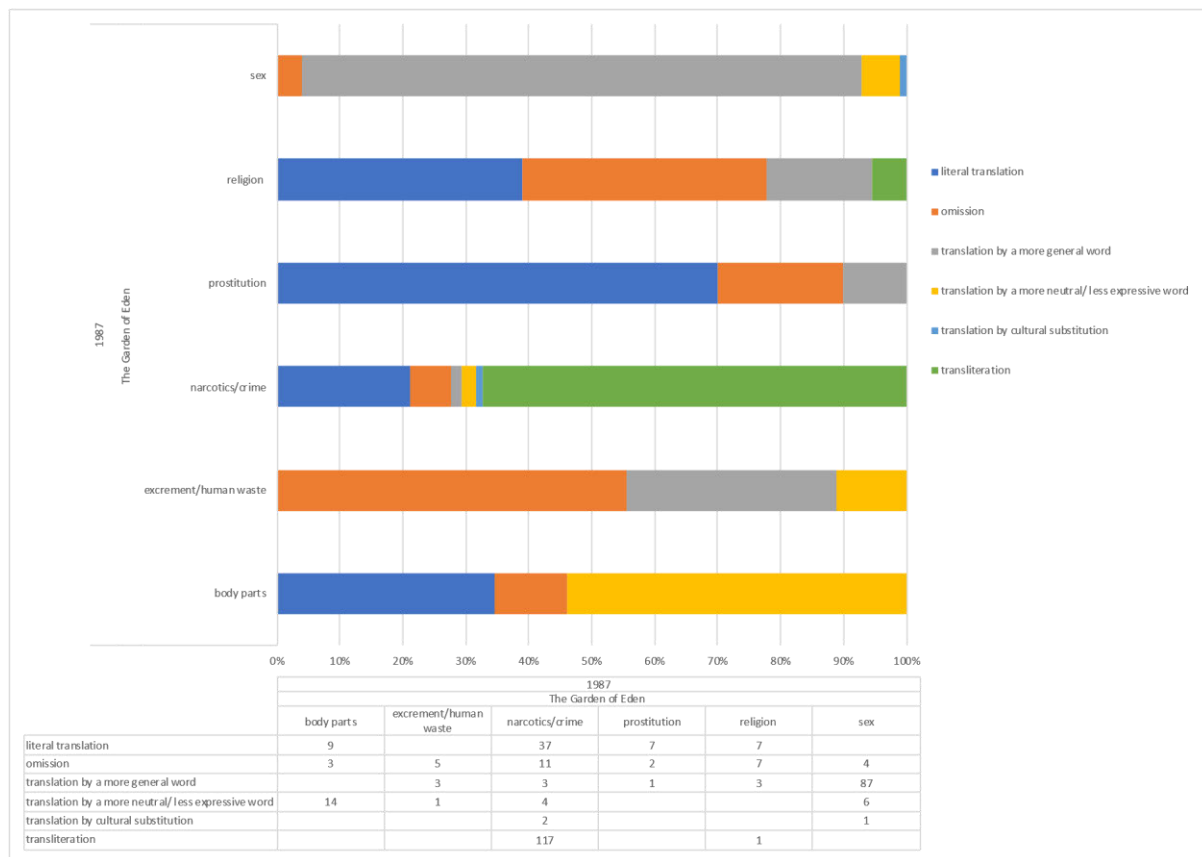


Figure 4.2 Proportional use of translation strategy by category of taboo item in *The garden of Eden*

Sex-related taboo items are the second most common category of taboo item in this novel, with the words *kiss* (87) and *fuck* (11) making up this category. The word *kiss* is consistently translated by generalisation, using the same word قبلة *qūblah*, ‘touching with the lips as a sign of respect or love’, which is a general word in Arabic and can be understood in different contexts. Example (4) demonstrates how the word *kiss* is treated within the context.

(4)

ST:

He felt her lovely breasts against his chest and kissed her on her dear mouth. He held her close and hard.

TT:

وضع الفتى ذراعيه حول الفتاة و احتضنها بشدة و أحس بنهديها الرائعين على صدره و قبّلها في فمها الحلو

Gloss:

The guy puts his arms around the girl and hugged her tight and felt her wonderful breasts on his chest and kissed her on her beautiful mouth

The garden of Eden (1986), (doc#0 1.1.11)

As is clear in Example 4, the context of the English original has more of a sexual sense while the word *kiss* is translated as قبل *gabl* which is a general word that can be used as a sign of respect for parents for instance.

Fuck is treated differently, in being either omitted or neutralised, and in one case literally translated. *Fuck* is either translated as مارس *mārs*, a neutralised way of describing sexual intercourse which literally means ‘practice’, or it is translated as تبا *tābn*, a more neutralised way for cursing someone mostly used in classical/formal Arabic. Example (5) illustrates the first instance of translating the word *fuck* as a sexual act.

(5)

ST:

Go and talk with her David. And if you want to fuck her then fuck her good for me.

TT:

و اذا كنت تريد ممارسة الحب معها فافعل ذلك جيدا من أجلي

Gloss:

And if you want to do love with her, do that perfectly for me.

The garden of Eden (1986), (doc#0 1.1.89)

As shown in Example (5), the context is a direct sexual one where *fuck* is meant to convey the act of sexual intercourse, while in the Arabic translation the word مارس *mārs* is neutralised and less expressive in terms of its sexual indication, as this word can be used to describe the act of practising many things, such as practising sports, practising a job or even practising for exams. Example (6) shows the word *fuck* translated as تبا *tābn*.

On the other hand, Example 8 illustrates the word *breasts* translated as ثدي *thādi*.

(8)

ST:

She touched the glass to the tips of each of her breasts so they came erect and then took a long sip.

TT:

و اخذت تلامس بالكوب حلمتي ثديها فانتصبنا , ثم تناولت رشفة طويلة

Gloss:

And she touched her nipples of her breast with the glass that erected, then took a long sip.

The garden of Eden (1986), (doc#0 1.1.111)

In Example 8, the context is an erotic one, and yet the word *breast* is translated as ثدي *thādi* which is a more neutralised word in this context.

Overall, there is a clear tendency by the translator of this novel to lean toward using transliteration (mostly with items in the category of Narcotics/Crime) as well as translation by a more general word (mostly with Sex-related items). This tendency might be governed by social norms since this translation was published more than 30 years ago, when Arabic societies were less lenient regarding alcohol. As a result, this translator preferred to transliterate words related to drinking and alcohol, hoping to hide the exact reflection of such words. As will be discussed in Section 4.5.1, Arabs as well as many other cultures do not tolerate sexual terms; which seems to prompt the translator of this novel to prefer translation by a more general word for items in the category of Sex.

4.4.2 *Lady Chatterley's lover*

(a) *Overview of taboo items*

As shown in Figure 4.1, three main categories of taboo items dominate in this novel, namely Sex, Body Parts, and Religion. This novel contains a total of 414 taboo items distributed over eight taboo categories. The category of Sex has the highest number of taboo items (173 items), followed by Body Parts (139) and Religion (70). The remaining five categories make up a total of 32 taboo items altogether.

In terms of the actual taboo items across the six taboo categories present in this novel, Table 4.5 shows the frequency of all items included in the analysis for *Lady Chatterley's lover*. In addition to the raw frequency of each taboo item, the normalised frequency per 1,000 words is also provided to allow for an equal basis of comparison across all three novels.⁴

Item	Body parts	Cross-categorical	Waste	Homophobia	Narcotics/Crime	Prostitution	Religion	Sex	Total (raw)	,000 words
kiss								54	54	0.46
sex								47	47	0.40
God							42		42	0.35
breast	34								34	0.29
fuck								22	22	0.19
penis	22								22	0.19
devil							14		14	0.12
buttock	10								10	0.08
damn							9		9	0.08
loin	9								9	0.08
arse	7								7	0.06
balls	7								7	0.06
cocktail					7				7	0.06
erect	7								7	0.06
intimacy								7	7	0.06
physical								7	7	0.06

⁴ *Lady Chatterley's lover* has a word count of 118,450 words.

cunt	6								6	0.05
lesbian				6					6	0.05
passion								6	6	0.05
phallos	6								6	0.05
prostitution						6			6	0.05
shit			5				1		6	0.05
thigh	6								6	0.05
bosom	5								5	0.04
desire								5	5	0.04
orgasm								5	5	0.04
pussy	5								5	0.04
rouse								5	5	0.04
waist	5								5	0.04
bitch		4							4	0.03
flesh	4								4	0.03
haunch	4								4	0.03
Jesus							4		4	0.03
quiver								4	4	0.03
intimate								3	3	0.03
pleasure								3	3	0.03
temptation								3	3	0.03
affair								2	2	0.02
beer					2				2	0.02
cigarette					2				2	0.02
finger	2								2	0.02

Table 4.5 Frequency and category of taboo item lemmas in *Lady Chatterley's lover*

Table 4.5 shows that the most common taboo items in this novel are *kiss*, *sex*, *God*, *breast*, *fuck* and *penis*. This reflects the erotic focus of the novel, but there is also a clear religious dimension to taboo in this novel, not evident in the other two novels analysed (see also items like *devil*, *Jesus*, and *temptation*).

As the case with *The garden of Eden*, the word *kiss* is the first most frequent taboo item in this novel, with a total of 54 occurrences and a normalised frequency of 0.46 per 1,000 words (about one third as frequent per 1,000 words as is the case for *The garden of Eden*). This item is categorised as a sexual word based on the contexts in which it appears in this novel. The second most frequent taboo item is the word *sex* with a total of 47 occurrences and a normalised frequency of 0.40 per 1,000 words. The word *God* is the third most frequent item, with a total of 42 cases and a normalised frequency of 0.35 per 1,000 words. The context is considered when categorising this word as a religious taboo item. The remaining three words in the set of 6 most frequent taboo items are all connected to sexuality: *breast* (categorised under Body Parts, 34 cases with a normalised frequency of 0.20 per 1,000 words), *fuck* (categorised under Sex, 22 cases with a normalised frequency of 0.19 per 1,000 words) and *penis* (categorised under Body Parts, 22 cases with a normalised frequency of 0.19 per 1,000 words).

The remaining taboo items used in this novel are of relatively low frequency, but connect clearly to the sexual thematics of the novel, including *pleasure*, *temptation*, *erect*, *intimacy*, *orgasm* and *quiver* (in the category Sex), and *pussy*, *thigh*, *phallos*, *buttock*, *balls*, *flesh*, *loin* and *haunch* (in the category Body Parts).

(b) *Translation strategies used in Lady Chatterley's lover*

Table 4.6 shows the translation strategies used by Hana Aboud in her 1999 translation of *Lady Chatterley's lover*, عشيق الليدي تشاترلي 'ashyq al laydy tshātrly.

Strategy	Count
Translation by a more general word	228
Literal translation	89
Translation by a more neutral / less expressive word	38
Omission	37
Translation by cultural substitution	11
Transliteration	11

Table 4.6 Translation strategies used for taboo items in *Lady Chatterley's lover*.

Translation by a more general word is by far the preferred strategy of About (with 228 occurrences), while literal translation also occurs relatively frequently (89 cases).

Figure 4.3 shows a more detailed breakdown of the findings, by cross-tabulating the translation strategy employed with the category of taboo item, showing the proportional preference for translation strategies for different categories of taboo items in this novel.

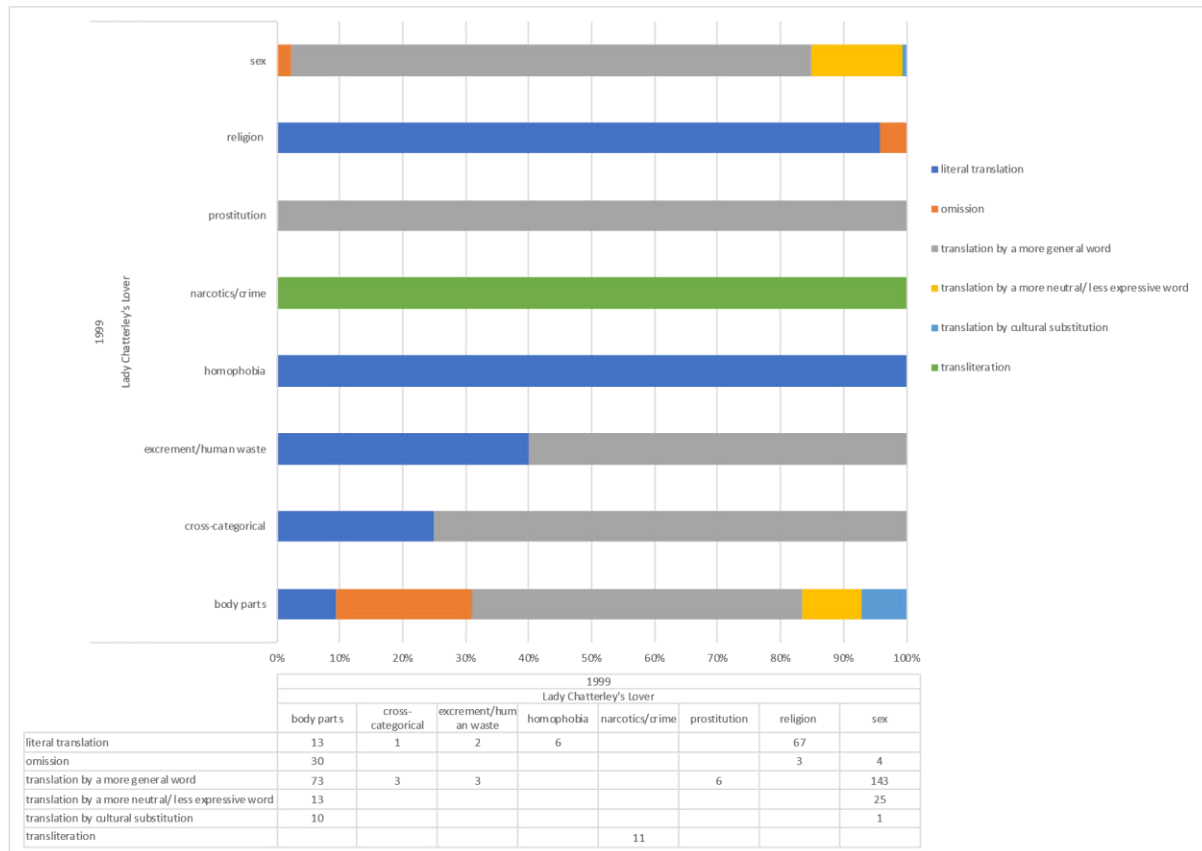


Figure 4.3 Proportional use of translation strategy by category of taboo item in *Lady Chatterley's lover*

Figure 4.3 shows that for the category of Sex, translation by a more generalised word is very strongly preferred – it is used 143 times out of the total of 173 sex-related words in this novel. *Kiss*, the most frequent word in this category, is used 54 times in this novel, and translated as قبل *gabl* ‘touching with the lips as a sign of respect or love’ in all cases, which is a general word in Arabic that does not necessarily have a directly sexual meaning. Example (9) illustrates this translation choice.

(9)

ST

She quickly kissed the soft penis that was beginning to stir again.

TT:

و بسرعة قبّلت جون توماس الناعم , الذي بدأ يثار مرة أخرى

Gloss:

Quickly, she kissed the soft John Thomas which is tempted again

Lady Chatterley's lover (1960), (doc#0 2.1.81)

As shown in Example (9), the word *kiss* appears in a direct sexual practice and yet is still translated as قبّل *gabl*, as is the case with the previous novel where this particular Arabic word would deliver a general meaning for the act of kissing that might be used in everyday polite interaction. Another example within the same category is the word *sex*, which is mentioned 47 times in this novel, and translated as الجنس *aljns* 46 times and omitted once. الجنس *aljns*, which can mean the gender of a creature or the animal or plant species as well as the sexual acts of humans or animals mostly used in scientific and more formal contexts is a general word in Arabic, which does not have an overt sexual meaning.

Example (10) illustrates the usage of the word *sex* within the context in both the English and the Arabic versions of this novel.

(10)

ST:

You can be as dirty as you like. In fact the more dirt you do on sex the better they like it.

TT:

تستطيعين أن تكوني قذرة كما تريدين , و الحقيقة كلما كنت قذرة انغمست في الجنس , و هذا مايفضلونه

Gloss:

You can be dirty as you wish, in fact, as much as you are dirtier, you got deeper into sex, that what they prefer.

Lady Chatterley's lover (1960), (doc#0 2.1.43)

The above example is a direct sexual context where the word *sex* is translated as الجنس *aljns* which does not reflect the same intensity of the meaning of this sexual act in the source text.

A third example within this category is the word *fuck*, which is mentioned 22 times, 10 of which are translated as نكح *nh*, which refers to the act of having sexual intercourse between a male and female derived from religious contexts and frequently repeated in the Holy Quran, which is another neutralised way of referring to the sexual act. Another translation for the word *fuck* is جامع *jāmā'a*, referring to sexual practice, mostly derived from Islamic jurisprudence and a more formal way of mentioning the act of sex. This word is used 7 times. The word مارس *mārs*, used excessively in *The garden of Eden*, is used here only once. This distinction in the word choices of the two translators may be the consequence of their cultural and religious background; however, unfortunately, known information about the two translators do not tell us much about their ideological orientation.

Example (11) and (12) demonstrate the translation of the word *fuck* using both نكح *nh* and جامع *jāmā'a*.

(11)

ST

I'd rather die than do any more cold-hearted fucking.

TT:

انا أفضل الموت على أن أقوم بأي نكاح بارد

Gloss:

I prefer death to having a cold intercourse.

Lady Chatterley's lover (1960), (doc#0 2.1.113)

Fuck is here clearly used to refer to a sexual act and is translated as نكاح *nkhāh*, which is a more neutralised word that fits into different contexts where it can also mean marriage.

(12)

ST:

We could be chaste together just as we can fuck together.

TT:

أن نكون عفيفين كما نكون متجامعين معا

Gloss:

To be chaste as we mate together.

Lady Chatterley's lover (1960), (doc#0 2.1.124)

In Example (12), the word *fuck* is used in a context of sexual reference while the translation, using the word جامع *jāmā'a*, does not reflect the direct meaning here with the same intensity.

This strategy is also commonly applied to items in the category of Body Parts (often used, as indicated above, in sexual contexts): the strategy is used 73 times out of 139 taboo items in this taboo category. For instance, the word *breast* is used 34 times, and translated in all cases as صدر *ṣḍr* a less expressive word for *breast* that has a wider meaning understood as the whole chest or that can be used figuratively, with no taboo connotations.

Another word in this category is *penis*, mentioned 22 times. This word is omitted 14 times when translated into Arabic and in 8 cases it is translated as قضيب *qdhīb*, a word for the male sexual organ mostly used in medical and scientific contexts. This Arabic word is thus a neutralised way for translating the word *penis*. Example (13) shows the word *penis* in the the context of this novel as well as the Arabic translation, clearly illustrating the neutralisation that takes place in using the more 'scientific' translation option.

(13)

ST:

She let herself go. She felt his penis risen against her with silent amazing force.

TT:

تركت نفسها تذهب . شعرت بقضيبي يقوم عليها بقوة صامتة مذهلة

Gloss:

She let herself go, she felt his penis erecting with silent amazing power.

Lady Chatterley's lover (1960), (doc#0 2.1.240)

A noticeable point in relation to the category of Body Parts is that a variety of translation strategies are used, compared to the other taboo categories where particular strategies dominate. The strategies commonly used for translating Body Part items include translation by a more general word, omission, literal translation and translation by cultural substitution. Translation by a more general word is adopted mostly with more “formal” words such as *breast*, *buttock*, *haunch* and *loin*. On the other hand, omission is adopted when translating cruder words such as *penis*, *pussy*, *balls*, and *cunt*.

Literal translation is the second most commonly used strategy used by Aboud (89 times). Strikingly, of the 89 times this particular strategy is used, in 66 cases it is being adopted to translate taboo items in the category Religion. For instance, the word *God* is mentioned 41 times in this novel, all of which are translated literally as الله *Allah* the most popular name for God in Arabic. This is a very direct reference to God in Arabic, and Example (14) shows this word in both the English and the Arabic context.

(14)

ST:

My God, Connie, all the bloody contriving.

TT:

ياالله . كوني . يال هذا التخطيط الدموي

Gloss:

O Allah, Connie, such a bloody planning.

Lady Chatterley's lover (1960), (doc#0 2.1.387)

On the other hand, the word *devil* is mentioned 14 times in this novel, and is translated as الشيطان

alshithān, the most popular name for Devil in Arabic, in all cases. This choice makes direct reference to the devil and has no further reference other than to the devil. The word *damn* is mentioned 9 times, translated as لعنة *l'anh*, which is a popular curse word in Arabic.

4.4.3 Sex and the city

(a) Overview of taboo items

This novel exhibits a total of 396 taboo items distributed over 9 taboo categories, as shown in Figure 4.1. Two main categories of taboo item dominate in this novel: Sex (188 items), and Narcotics/Crime (115 items). The remaining seven categories demonstrate far lower frequencies (from 4 to 22 items in each category).

Table 4.7 shows the frequency of all items included in the analysis for *Sex and the city*, distributed over the 9 taboo categories. In addition to the raw frequency of each taboo item, the normalised frequency per 1,000 words is also provided to allow for an equal basis of comparison across all three novels.⁵

Item	Incest	Body Parts	Waste	Homophobia	Narcotics/Crime	Physical/Mental disability	Prostitution	Religion	Sex	Total	Normalised
sex									106	106	1.47
fuck									29	29	0.40
kiss									25	25	0.35
threesome									22	22	0.30
drunk					21					21	0.29
wine					21					21	0.29
drink					17					17	0.23
bar					15					15	0.21
gay				15						15	0.21

⁵ *Sex and the city* has a word count of 72,345 words.

shit			14							14	0.19
breast		13								13	0.18
drugs					12					12	0.17
bitch							11			11	0.15
vodka					9					9	0.12
cocktail					8					8	0.11
affair	6									6	0.08
condom									6	6	0.08
God								6		6	0.08
alcohol					4					4	0.06
asshole		4								4	0.06
idiot						4				4	0.06
slut							4			4	0.06
bullshit			3							3	0.04
cocaine					3					3	0.04
lesbian				3						3	0.04
marijuana					3					3	0.04
tits		3								3	0.04
vomit			3							3	0.04
dick		2								2	0.03
harassing	2									2	0.03
whiskey					2					2	0.03

Table 4.7 Frequency and category of taboo item lemmas in *Sex and the city*

The following six taboo items are the most frequent items in this novel: *sex, fuck, kiss, threesome, wine and drunk* – all words that reflect the general focus of this novel on sex and a lifestyle involving parties and drinking.

The word *sex* occurs 106 times, with a normalised frequency of 1.47 per 1,000 words – slightly more frequent than is the case in *The garden of Eden*. There is a considerable gap between the first and the second most frequent taboo item: *fuck* is mentioned only 29 times in the novel, with a normalised frequency of 0.4 per 1,000 words. The rest of the most frequent taboo items including *kiss, threesome, wine and drunk* have lower frequencies, as shown in Table 4.7. *Kiss*, as used in sexual contexts occurs 25 times, with a normalised frequency of 0.35 per 1,000 words. *Threesome* has a raw frequency of 22 and a normalised frequency of 0.3 per 1,000 words. The last two items, in the category Narcotics/Crimes, are *wine and drunk*. Both items record a raw frequency of 21 and a normalised frequency of 0.29 per 1,000 words.

The remaining 25 less frequent taboo items have a total frequency of 172 occurrences over the whole novel. These taboo items further reflect the focus on sexuality, as well as a lifestyle of drinking, drug use and parties, for example as in *slut, tits, lesbian, vodka, marijuana, cocaine, gay, dick, asshole and condom*.

(b) *Translation strategies used in Sex and the city*

In regard to the translation strategies adopted by Abid Ismael in 2010 in بنات المدينة *bnāt al mdīnāh* for transferring this novel from English to Arabic, six different translation strategies are utilised, as shown in Table 4.8.

Strategy	Count
Translation by a more general word	200
Literal translation	113
Omission	36
Transliteration	35
Translation by a more neutral / less expressive word	8
Translation by cultural substitution	4

Table 4.8 Translation strategies used for taboo items in *Sex and the city*

Among these six strategies, translation by a more general word is preferred by this translator, with literal translation also relatively frequently used. Omission and transliteration also occur at non-negligible rates.

Figure 4.4 shows a more detailed breakdown of the findings, by cross-tabulating the translation strategy employed with the category of taboo item, showing the proportional preference for translation strategies for different categories of taboo items in *Sex and the city*.



Figure 4.4 Proportional use of translation strategy by category of taboo item in *Sex and the city*

Figure 4.4 shows that translating by a more general word is very commonly used with sex-related items (136 times out of the 200 times this category of item occurs in the novel). For instance, the word *sex* occurs 106 times in the novel, and is translated as جنس *jns* 104 times. As mentioned in the analysis of the previous novel, جنس *jns* can mean the gender of a creature or the animal or plant species as well as the sexual acts of humans or animals mostly used in scientific and more formal contexts. This is a similar strategy as used in *Lady Chatterley's lover* (see Section 4.4.2). The two other times the word *sex* is mentioned is translated as ينام *ynām* 'sleep', which is a general word in Arabic that is mostly used to refer to the state of being asleep and rarely to refer to sexual

intercourse. Another word frequently translated by a more general word is *fuck*, which is mentioned 22 times in this novel and translated by a more general word 10 times. Words like مارس *mārs* ‘practice’ (used similarly in *The garden of Eden*; see Section 4.4.1) or ينام *ynām* ‘sleep’ also used to translate the word *sex* in this novel, are adopted by the translator of this novel when transferring the term *fuck* to Arabic. Example (15) illustrates the term *fuck* within the context of this novel, and its Arabic translation.

(15)

ST:

“She's fucked everybody,” Carrie said.

TT:

نامت مع الجميع", قالت كيري

Gloss:

She slept with all, Carrie said.

Sex and the city (2000), (doc#0 3.1.140)

In the above example, using the Arabic translation نامت *nāmāt*, the Arabic past tense of ينام *ynām* ‘sleep’ reduces the intensity of the word *fuck* and makes it more general.

In addition, a considerable number of uses of this strategy occurs in the category Narcotics/Crime, where it is used 27 times, as shown in Figure 4.4. For instance, the taboo item *drunk* is mentioned 21 times and translated as ثمل *thml* ‘the state of being drunk’, used mostly in literary contexts as a form of classical and formal Arabic. The word *drink* is mentioned 17 times to express the act of drinking alcoholic beverages and translated as يحتسي *yhtsī*, a literary way of referring to drinking, which can refer generally to sipping soup or any drink, not necessarily alcohol. All these Arabic items are more general in their meaning, and have varieties of general indications, where the word كأس *qās* can mean a glass of something (like water or anything else), or could mean glass as a substance.

Translation by a more general word is also widely used in this novel for translating homophobic items. For instance, the taboo item *gay* is mentioned 15 times, and all cases are translated as مثلي

mthlī ‘alike or similar’ which is a general word in Arabic and sometimes is used to indicate gay and lesbian relationships. Example (16) illustrates the use of this term in the context of this novel.

(16)

ST:

I'd find a very amusing gay man who can be entertaining on a hundred topics to take me out.

TT:

سأبحث عن رجل مثلي ممتع , يمكن أن يكون مسليا في الحديث , عن مئات المواضيع حين أخرج معه

Gloss:

I will search for a pleasing homosexual man who can be entertaining in conversation in hundreds of topics when we go out.

Sex and the city (2000), (doc#0 3.1.259)

As far as literal translation is concerned, this translation strategy is used 113 times over 7 taboo categories in this novel. It is mostly adopted for translating items in the category Narcotics/Crime where it is used 51 times within this specific category. For instance, the word *wine* is mentioned 21 times in this novel and translated 20 times as نبذ *nbīth* (the same equivalent used in *The garden of Eden*). It appears that both translators of these two novels belonging to distinct time periods adopt the same strategy and the same term when transferring the term *wine* to Arabic. This may support the argument in Section 4.4.1 where it was suggested that transliteration is preferred by translators when translating taboo items related to alcohol, unless there is an equivalent term, as is the case with the word *wine*.

The taboo item *bar* is mentioned 16 times in this novel and translated as حانة *hānh* 6 times, a literary word meaning a place for drinking alcohol. Also, the taboo item *drugs* is mentioned 12 times and translated as المخدرات *almūkhdīrāt*, a word directly referring to illegal substances used as narcotics, which likewise is a literal translation. This Arabic word might refer to medical substances, but in a different form, مخدر *mūkhdīr*, which refers to gases or the injection of drugs before surgical operations.

Literal translation is adopted when translating the taboo item *breast* which is mentioned 13 times in this novel. It is literally translated as نهـد *nhd*, a precise indication of the female breast, 10 times. This can be compared to *Lady Chatterley's lover* where the word *breast* is mentioned 34 times and all of them are translated using the more general word صدر *şdr*, a less expressive word for *breast* that has a wider meaning understood as the whole chest.

The literal translation strategy is also used for items in the category Sex, where this particular strategy is used 25 times. For instance, the word *threesome* is mentioned 22 times in this novel and all cases are translated as الجنس الثلاثي *aljīns althūlāthi* or العلاقة الثلاثية *al'alāqh althūlāthiyah*, which both deliver meanings related directly to sexual practices shared by three individuals.

All taboo items that come under the category Prostitution are translated using the literal translation strategy, except in one case where the omission strategy is adopted. For instance, the taboo item *bitch* is used 11 times and translated as عاهرة *'ahīr'ah*, which is a direct taboo word in Arabic, referring to a woman who has sex in exchange for money or any other benefit. The same is applied with the word *slut* which is mentioned 4 times and translated as داعر *dā'aīr* or عاهره *'ahīr'ah* which all are extremely taboo words in Arabic. Example (17) and (18) illustrate the usage of both *bitch* and *slut* within the context of this novel and their Arabic translation.

(17)

ST:

"I'm not a bitch," she said, looking around the restaurant.

TT:

انا لست عاهرة", قالت , ثم نظرت حول ها في ارجاء المطعم

Gloss:

I am not a bitch, she said, Then she looked around the restaurant.

Sex and the city (2000), (doc#0 3.1.387)

The above example shows how the word *bitch* is literally translated with almost the same intensity in the source text. The Arabic word عاهرة *'ahīr'ah* is an extremely taboo word referring to a woman who has sex in exchange for money and usually used as an insult.

(18)

ST

“You stupid slut,” and she went home with him.

TT:

ايتها العاهرة , الحمقاء " , ثم ذهبت معه الى المنزل

Gloss:

You stupid bitch, then she went with him home.

Sex and the city (2000), (doc#0 3.1.393)

Here again the word *slut* is translated into Arabic with a highly taboo equivalent which is عاهرة ‘*ahīr* ‘*ah*.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that both the omission and transliteration strategies are almost used equally. However, omission is used 35 times across 6 taboo categories, as shown in Figure 4.4, while transliteration is restricted to only two categories, including Narcotics/Crime and Sex with a total of 34 uses. With narcotics, for instance, taboo items such as *vodka*, *cocktail*, *whiskey*, *cocaine* and *marijuana* are all transliterated, with a total of 32 items inclusive.

Against the background of the detailed discussion of the three novels individually in Section 4.4.1, 4.4.2 and in 4.4.3, the next section aims to highlight noticeable trends shared in the three novels. The following section aims to shed light on possible common trends over the three novels in terms of the strategies adopted by the three translators.

4.5 Translation strategies: Trends over time?

This section focuses in more detail on a comparison of trends in translation strategies over time. It takes due account of the fact that translation strategies are clearly conditioned by different types of taboo items, and the preferences of the individual translators (as evident from the discussion in Section 4.4), but nevertheless also aims to investigate whether changes over time might be inferred that may be related to changes in the tolerance of the receiving culture for the use of taboo language, or the depiction of taboo activities.

The discussion in this section is based on Figure 4.5 and Figure 4.6, and focuses on each category of translation strategy individually.

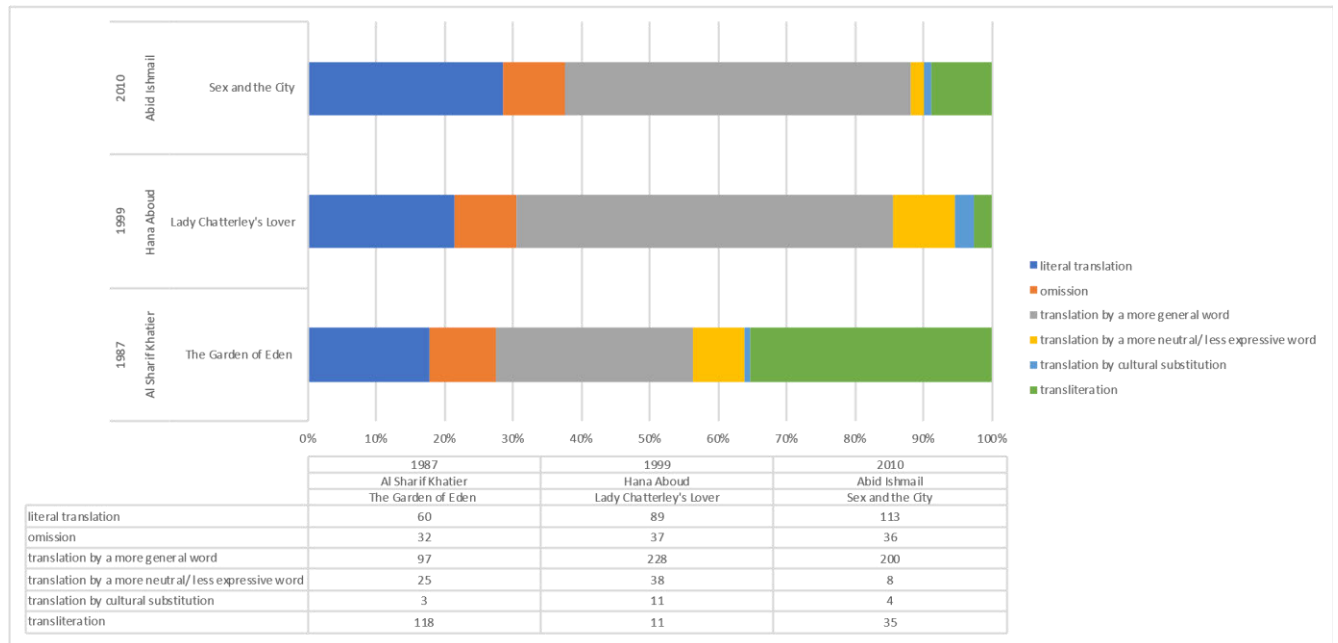


Figure 4.5 Proportional use of strategies by the three translators

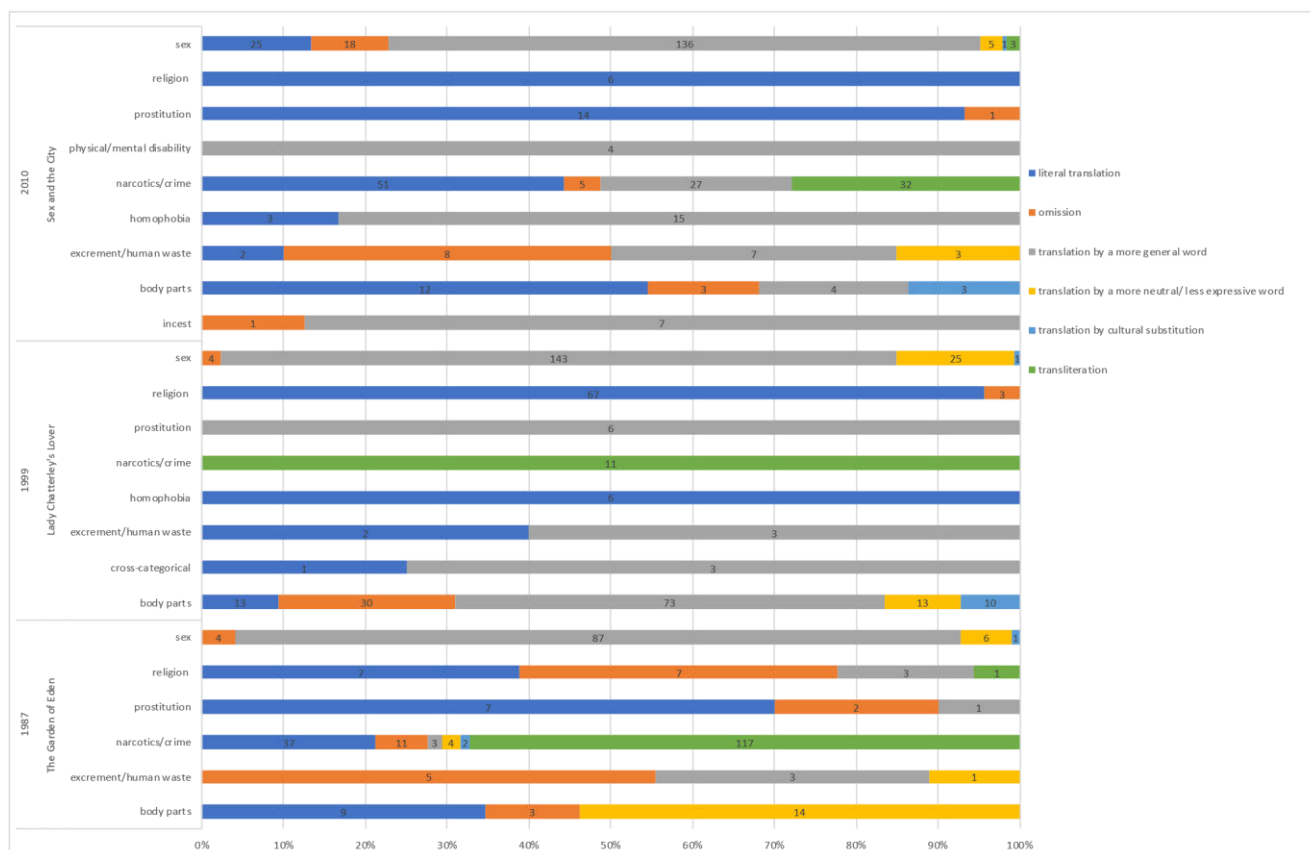


Figure 4.6 Proportional use of strategies by the three translators, crosstabulated with the category of taboo item

4.5.1 Translation by a more general word

Figure 4.5 shows that the use of translation by a more general word is predominant in *Lady Chatterley's lover* and *Sex and the city* – the two novels translated later in the time period under investigation. It is used 55% of the time in *Lady Chatterley's lover* (228/414 cases), and 51% of the time in *Sex and the city* (200/396 cases). In contrast, it is used less frequently in *The garden of Eden*, at just 29% of the time (97/335 cases).

It is quite clear that all translators prefer this strategy when translating sex-related words, as shown in Figure 4.6. In *The garden of Eden*, out of the 97 times this strategy is used, 87 times is for translating taboo items in the category of Sex. In *Lady Chatterley's lover*, out of the 228 times this strategy is used, 144 cases are for the category of sex-related taboo items; in *Sex and the city*, similarly, out of the 200 times this strategy is used, 136 times are related to sexual items mentioned in this novel. The most likely explanation for this tendency by all translators to generalise when

transferring sexual content in literary works is connected to the norms of Arabic culture, which is sensitive when dealing with sex-related words – and appears to largely remain so over the time period investigated in this study. This is in line with Baker’s proposition that “sex, religion, and defecation are taboo subjects in many societies” (2011, p. 245). Furthermore, the findings of previous studies investigating the translation of taboo words from English to Arabic mentioned in Section 2.5, such as Khuddro (2000), Karjalainen (2002), Ghassempur (2009), Sahari (2017) and Ghounane and Rabahi (2017) echo this assumption. All these studies conclude that there is a significant degree of reduction in sensitive taboo items, including sexual taboo words, when translating them from English to Arabic. For instance, Khuddro (2000) in regard to subtitling sex-related words from English to Arabic mentions that taboo items are usually reduced in Arabic subtitles, since Arabic recipients do not tolerate sexual and religious references.

It may be argued that using standard Arabic when translating literary texts from English might form part of the reason for this considerable neutralisation of taboo items, since colloquial Arabic is more lenient with sexual taboo words compared to modern standard Arabic. Gamal (2012) indicates that only Modern Standard Arabic is permissible in translation in general, and other Arabic dialects are not appreciated. Nevertheless, the suggestion that it is the target culture norms that govern the translators’ choices when translating sexually taboo items corresponds with the ideas of Toury (1995) discussed in Section 2.6: he proposes that the receiving system determines the range of appropriate linguistic structures for the translated text. In sum, as sexual taboos are specifically sensitive in Arabic cultures, translators are expected to adhere to adopting strategies such as choosing general words that do not foreground sexual taboo.

4.5.2 Literal translation

In terms of the literal translation strategy, it is quite clear from Figure 4.5 that the use of this strategy has increased gradually over time, from 18% in *The garden of Eden* (60/335 cases), to 21% in *Lady Chatterley’s lover* (89/414 cases), to 29% in *Sex and the city* (113/396 cases).

Figure 4.6 shows the diversity of taboo categories in which literal translation is adopted in the three novels, with some tendency to specifically adopt his strategy with religious taboo items. It can be argued that this pattern emerges due to a change in language norms over time, as discussed in Section 2.4. It corresponds with the notion that taboo language evolves over time; as Battistella

(2005) suggests “what seems clear overall is that the notion of offensive language is a variable one, shifting over time and affected by social, historical, political, and commercial forces (2005, p. 83). The translation of certain taboo items with comparison between the older and the later novels clarify this pattern. For instance, while *breast* in *Lady Chatterley’s lover* is mostly translated as صدر *sdr* a less expressive word for *breast* that has a wider meaning understood as the whole chest, in *Sex and the city* نهد *nhd*, a precise indication of a woman’s breast is preferred (see discussion in Section 4.4.2 and 4.4.3).

4.5.3 Transliteration

It is obvious from Figure 4.5 that using transliteration is preferred in the older translation (*The garden of Eden*) and becomes notably less common in the two later translations. As shown in Figure 4.5 and Figure 4.6, in *The garden of Eden*, transliteration is utilised 118 times (or 35% of the time): 117 times for translating items in the category Narcotics/Crime, and once with a religious item. In *Lady Chatterley’s lover*, out of 414 taboo items, only 11 (3%) are translated using the transliteration strategy. However, all these cases are with items related to the category Narcotics/Crime, as is the case with the previous novel (although it should be noted that these items are much less frequent in *Lady Chatterley’s lover* than in *The garden of Eden*). For the last novel, *Sex and the city*, out of 396 taboo items, 35 items (9%) are translated using transliteration strategies. A total of 32 cases of this strategy are items related to Narcotics/Crime while the remaining 3 items are items in the category Sex.

While it thus seems that perhaps the move away from transliteration has less to do with a change over time, than with the frequency of particularly alcohol- and drug-related items in the novels, a comparison of proportional frequencies of strategies used in the category Narcotics/Crime in fact shows that the general tendency is accurate. The comparison between *The garden of Eden* (with 174 items in this category) and *Sex and the city* (with 115 items) is particularly instructive (*Lady Chatterley’s lover* has only 11 items, all of which are translated using transliteration). In *The garden of Eden*, 67% (117/174) of alcohol- and drug-related items are translated using transliteration; in *Sex and the city*, transliteration is used for only 28% (32/115 items), with the literal translation strategy becoming more dominant (44% of cases, or 51/115).

A more detailed look at the data of how similar alcohol-related taboo items are translated is instructive. For example, in *The garden of Eden* the word *bar* is mentioned 58 times (see Section 4.4.1), and with the exception of 5 cases, all these are transliterated. On the other hand, in *Sex and the city* the same word is mentioned 15 times and the preferred translation is حانة *hānh* ‘a place for drinking alcoholic beverages’, considered a literal translation of *bar*. This could reflect translators’ personal differences in terms of their level of education and awareness of standard Arabic word choices, as حانة *hānh* is a more classical term to refer to *bar* and suggests a high level of standard Arabic awareness. However, it may also indicate a shift in target-culture norms, as perceived by the translators. Lastly, the difference may also be the consequence of the fact that the former novel is considered canonical literature, whereas the latter is aimed at a broader audience.

4.5.4 Omission

As shown in Figure 4.5, omission is used 9% of the time in both *The garden of Eden* (32/335 cases) and *Sex and the city* (36/396 cases), and 8% of the time in *Lady Chatterley’s lover* (37/414 cases). It is quite surprising that the omission strategy is used comparatively less frequently, given the sensitivity of the taboo items within a conservative receiving culture. This finding also contradicts most previous studies on the translation of taboo items in AVT where studies such as Karjalainen (2002), Kizeweter (2005), Greenall (2008), Ghassempur (2009), Pujol (2006), Pardo (2011), Lie (2013) , Nguyen (2015) and Sahari (2017) conclude that almost 50% of the taboo items are completely eliminated when subtitled into Arabic. In the Arabic context, Athamneh and Zitawi (1999, p. 135) stress that omission is the most preferred strategy used by translators to remove taboo words from Arabic dubbed versions. They elaborate: “Such omissions do not fall under the category of errors; rather they reflect the translators’ conscious attempts to adapt the text in accordance with cultural, social, and marketing considerations.” A tentative conclusion arising from this study is therefore that, in the Arabic context, subtitlers have a greater tendency to omit taboo items than translators of literary texts. One simple explanation for that is that subtitlers realise that there are many factors responsible for delivering the content, beyond just the subtitles. These semiotic factors include the soundtrack of the original dialogue, the visualised scenes, and the body gestures of the actors/actresses. Subtitlers, of course, also work with spatial and temporal constraints that encourage omission. On the other hand, the translators of literary texts have only the text to deliver the adapted content. Eliminating the taboo items excessively may affect the authenticity of the translation, and may reflect a lack of faithfulness, which is regarded as more

important for culturally valued expressive texts like literary texts. Instead, adopting more lenient strategies, as shown in Section 4.5.1, 4.5.2, and 4.5.3, is preferred for the translation of literary texts, which try to toe the line between faithfulness to the artistic creation of the original author, and acceptability for the target audience.

Another possible explanation is that the popularity of broadcast media on screens in almost every home worldwide forces subtitlers to consider transferring the language to different audiences of different ages and in public places, whereas the audience for literary texts is usually limited to intellectuals and certain readers who might not be as intimidated and offended by offensive language as the broader audience of audiovisual material. Studies in the Arab world like Aman (1992), Al Qasimi (2011), Bendriss and Golkowska (2011) and Khoury and Duzgun (2009) have shown a decline in the reading habits of Arabs in the last few decades. Khoury and Duzgun (2009) assert that book reading in the Arab world is mainly limited to formal education settings. Therefore, literary translators have more opportunity to transfer taboo contents without omission since the potential audience for their translations is small and limited to a very particular group of readers.

4.5.5 Translation by a more neutral / less expressive word and translation by cultural substitution
Translation by a more neutral/ less expressive word is used 71 times across the three novels, 25 of which occur in *The garden of Eden*, and 38 in *Lady Chatterley's lover*. It is barely adopted in *Sex and the city*, occurring only 8 times. Due to the low frequency of this strategy, generalisations are not possible, but it is worth mentioning that this strategy is mostly associated with taboo items related to sex and body parts, especially in the older two novels. The lowest frequency among the six strategies identified in this study is for translation by cultural substitution, used only 18 times across the three novels. While this does not allow for the extraction of particular patterns of use, it does suggest either that in literary translation, faithfulness to the source text is so highly valued that cultural adaptation is not generally seen as an appropriate strategy, altering the expressive and creative content of the source text beyond what is deemed acceptable.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has shed light on the distribution of taboo items and the strategies adopted to translate them across the three novels selected for this study. The findings of this chapter show translation by a more general word is predominant, especially when translating sex-related items. This tendency is linked to Toury's (1995) ideas discussed in Section 2.6 as the social norms in the Arab world do not tolerate sexual terms, which limit translators in their choices. On the other hand, the gradual growth of adopting literal translation across the period included in this study is explained by the notion of language change, and a change in social norms. Furthermore, a notable tendency to transliterate in the older translation is found which reflects translators' individual differences in terms of their awareness of the target text vocabulary. Finally, compared to translating taboo items in AVT, omission in literary translation shows a very low frequency, which may be related to distinctions in the type of content as well as the receiving audience.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This study has focused on literary translation from English to Arabic, employing a corpus-based diachronic method to investigate how taboo language and topics are treated in three translated novels over a period of approximately 20 years. While taboo language is widespread and used on daily basis in different languages, this phenomenon has received comparably little scholarly attention. Given the highly culturally specific nature of taboo, the translation of taboo language is an area that requires further systematic and empirical investigation, particularly in English to Arabic translation. While there has been some interest in the translation of taboo in AVT, literary translation is relatively understudied.

Against this background, this study used a parallel, aligned corpus of three English novels with their Arabic translations, compiled to allow a systematic investigation of how different categories of taboo language are transferred into Arabic. The aim was to investigate whether there are generic trends in translation choices in Arabic translated versions, or whether these trends are simply the result of individual differences between translators. Furthermore, a diachronic dimension was introduced in the study, to determine whether social changes over time impact the translation strategies used for taboo words.

This chapter summarises the findings of the study (Section 5.2), and draws attention to further areas of research (Section 5.3).

5.2 Research findings

This study aimed to investigate translation strategies employed when translating taboo items in three English novels and their Arabic translations, namely *Lady Chatterley's lover* by D. H. Lawrence (1960) translated as عشيق الليدي تشاترلي *ashyq al laydy tshātrly* by Hana Aboud (1999), *The garden of Eden* by Ernest Hemingway (1986) translated as حديقة عدن *jnat 'adn* by Al Sharif Khatier (1987) and *Sex and the city* (2000 version) by Candace Bushnell translated as بنات المدينة *bnāt al mdīnāh* by Abid Ismael (2010). Of the six translation strategies distinguished in the model specified for this study three strategies are predominant across the three novels, namely translation

by a more general word, literal translation and transliteration. There is a clear tendency for translators to adopt the translation by a more general word strategy mostly with sex-related terms. The social norms in the receiving culture are most likely the motivation for this tendency. In regard to literal translation, which is the second most frequent strategy across the three novels, the notion of language change explains the noticeable growth of the employment of this strategy from the older to the most recent novel. At the same time, there is a noticeable decline in adopting transliteration in the translation of taboo items, when comparing the older novel to the later ones.

These findings have a number of broader implications. They demonstrate the complexity of motivations behind translation strategies: while changes in the norms of the receiving culture clearly do play a role in changes in patterns of strategies, there are also preferences associated with particular categories of taboo items, with the range of equivalents available in the target language, and with translators' individual style. Using a corpus-based method, such as this one, limits the certainty with which these different motivations can be disambiguated.

What is clear, however, is that there is considerable hybridity in the way in which the translation of taboo items is approached: It is not the case that, within a particular novel, a translator uses a particular strategy consistently. Translators are thus clearly attuned to the complexity of taboo in the receiving culture, and modulate their choice of strategy accordingly.

The systematic corpus approach adopted for this study facilitate detecting individual patterns adopted by the different translators and afford a clearer understanding of the hybridity in the translation strategies adopted by each translator. This limits subjectivity in determining how taboo terms are handled by an individual translator and reduces vagueness in generalising certain conclusions.

5.3 Limitations and avenues for further research

To the best of my knowledge, this study is the first to investigate taboo language in literary translation from English to Arabic using a corpus method with a diachronic dimension. Including a wider range of novels in the corpus would have given this study the opportunity to formulate more generalisable trends, which was not possible due to the limited time for building the corpus.

As it stands, this study cannot confidently infer diachronic trends, since a single novel represents each time period, which means that individual translator preferences may well be confounded with diachronic change. However, this study has mapped out a first attempt at a method to visualise the distribution of taboo categories, and linking these to the selection of particular translation strategies adopted when transferring taboo items from English literary texts to Arabic. While this study has not made use of any inferential statistics in the analysis (due to the limitations of the sample of texts), developing the statistical means for investigating the selection of translation strategies for different categories of taboo items is regarded as an important future avenue of investigation.

While this study has aimed to develop a more objective and quantifiable method for investigating translation choices in the context of taboo language in literary translation from English to Arabic, an element of subjectivity remains, both in the selection and classification of taboo items, and in the classification of translation strategies. As should be evident from the discussion in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, the degree of offence caused by a particular word, and the strategy used to translate it, are both to some degree open to interpretation. In future research, it will be important to use measures to infer these classifications with greater certainty, including the use of multiple raters, rather than just the researcher.

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