A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF CULTURALLY SENSITIVE TERMS IN SUBTITLING HOLLYWOOD FILMS INTO ARABIC

By

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A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics

(Audiovisual Translation)

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Abstract

Film subtitling is considered one of the most effective means of achieving cultural exchange and communication between peoples, yet there are some linguistic and cultural challenges that hinder such exchange, including taboo language. Culturally sensitive terms, what will be referred to as taboo language in this thesis, is a common feature of popular films in Hollywood. Those films are produced in an open and liberal context, and when subtitling for a more conservative and closed society such as an Arabic society, taboo words pose a thorny challenge for subtitlers. Using a corpus of 90 Hollywood films released between 2000 and 2018, and applying insights from Descriptive Translation Studies (Toury, 1995, 2012) and the dichotomy of domestication and foreignization, this thesis investigates three main research questions: (1) What are the dominant taboo items, categories and functions in the English subtitles? (2) What are the predominant translation strategies used in the translation of taboo language? (3) What is the impact of taboo function on the use of translation strategies in the translation of the most frequent items and categories?

In order to answer the research questions above, a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the corpus is conducted, in which the researcher adopts a self-designed, parallel, aligned corpus of ninety films and their Arabic subtitles. A quantitative analysis is performed to compare the frequencies and distribution of taboo words, their categories, functions, and the translation strategies employed by the subtitlers of ninety films, with the aim of identifying similarities or differences in addition to identifying the impact of taboo functions on the use of subtitling strategies. Based on the quantitative analysis, a qualitative analysis is performed to identify any translational patterns in Arabic translations of taboo words and the possible reasons for subtitlers' choices. The results show that the majority of taboo words in the source text (ST) have been manipulated, domesticated and toned down to comply with the cultural and linguistic norms of the recipient culture. Also, it is found that Arabic religious

words are frequently used for the translation of English taboo words, as the five most common Arabic corresponding words belong to the religion category. In other words, many English taboo words that relate to particular semantic categories like sex, excrement and body parts, but also words from other categories, shift to the semantic category of religion in Arabic subtitles.

Keywords: taboo words, subtitling, audiovisual translation, subtitling strategies, English-Arabic subtitling.

Candidate Statement

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled “A Corpus-Based Descriptive Study of Taboo Language in Arabic Subtitles” 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: Yousef Sahari

Signature:

Acknowledgements

All praises to *God*, who has constantly given me the blessings, desire and ability to complete this work.

I am greatly indebted to my supervisor, Professor Jan-Louis Kruger, who has helped extend my knowledge through his boundless support, direction, patience, and professional, insightful comments. Without his consistent encouragement, prompt feedback, inspiration, and guidance, this study would not have been completed.

I am also thankful to my second supervisor, Dr Nick Wilson, for his valuable comments, suggestions, and constant support. I have also been fortunate to have Dr. Ashraf Abdel Fattah as an adjunct supervisor. I wish to thank him for his precious support, insightful comments, and vast knowledge that assisted me greatly.

Thanks also to Hayyan Alrosan and Ahmed Asiri, for their assistance in obtaining the data for this study and for their technical support.

My deepest love and gratitude go to my parents for their encouragement, everlasting love, and guidance throughout my entire life. Without their support, prayers, and encouragement, I would not have come this far. These thanks extend overseas to my brothers and sisters for their non-stop encouragement.

Last, but definitely not least, my sincere gratitude and love belongs to my amazing wife, Sabah, for her continuous support, care, patience, and unconditional love. My words are inadequate to thank her for the sacrifices she hasa made and for undertaking many tasks that were my responsibility. I thank you from the heart, my dear wife. I also thank my precious

children, Omar, Shahad and Noor, whose love, smiles, warm hugs, and kisses have been, for me, a source of happiness, hope, and determination.

List of Abbreviations

AVT	Audiovisual translation
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
ST	Source text
TT	Target text
SC	Source culture
TC	Target culture

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis investigates the ways that taboo words in ninety Hollywood movies are subtitled into Arabic. This chapter contains the aims of this study, the research questions, an explanation of subtitling in the Arabic context, and an outline of the thesis structure.

1.2 Overview of taboo language

language is the most effective tool for communication, enabling people to express thoughts, ideas and strong emotions. One of the linguistic tools used in expressing strong feelings and emotions is the use of taboo words which tend to be uttered in an informal register. Almost all languages and cultures use taboo language although its usage and level of offensiveness may vary significantly among languages and cultures and even within the same linguistic community. The usage of taboo words in its all various forms and purposes (such as swearing), can vary from person to person. However, taboo language is an inevitable element of language and many people use taboo words although they may deny doing so. Taboo words are an efficient and powerful means of expressing strong emotions such as anger, frustration, distress, amazement and joy. Taboo language tends to be highly emotive and is an efficient tool used to insult, amuse, shock and persuade the audience.

Despite the widespread usage of taboo language, academia has not given it due attention, particularly in recent times. Scholars such as McEnery and Xiao (2004), Hughes (1991) and Wajnryb (2005) criticised the lack of studies devoted to taboo language and its various forms and categories including profanities, swearing, racial expressions and so forth. Although some studies have been conducted on the topic of taboo words, these are surprisingly few compared to studies devoted to other linguistic issues. In terms of the English language, for instance, several significant studies have investigated the concept of taboo language, such as those of

Montagu (1967), Andersson and Trudgill (1990), Hughes (1998), Jay (2000), Beers Fägersten (2000), Bayard and Krishnayya (2001), Wajnryb (2005), Allan and Burridge (2006), McEnery (2006) and Ljung (2011), all of which have made great contributions to our understanding of this topic.

There is no doubt that people's use of taboo language has increased significantly in the modern era compared to the past. This might be attributed to several reasons, among which is the fact that researchers have only comparatively recently begun to document and study informal interactions in detail. Moreover, with the proliferation of the Internet, casual language use has become more apparent in the public domain. In her study, Fägersten (2012) found that swearing occurs more frequently in informal settings, making up about 0.14% to 12.7% of informal English conversations. Also, a quick look at the content of social media reveals an abundance of various types of taboo language used for insulting, cursing, expressing racism, and so on. Hence the importance of studying this linguistic phenomenon, particularly since it is increasingly appearing in comments posted on social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. This gives researchers the opportunity to study this issue from different perspectives. Also, as indicated by Fägersten (2017), taboo words have found their way into more printed materials, indicating people's greater acceptance of and more relaxed attitude towards taboo language, possibly due to less strict censorship which has become more tolerant and permissive over the years.

Similarly, films, especially Hollywood films, have witnessed a huge increase in the use of taboo words. Jay (1992) conducted a study on the inclusion of swearing in movies from 1939 to 1989 and concluded that the number of taboo words appearing on the screen had increased threefold over a period of 30 years. The films can be a reflection of our individual lives and indicate how people have an increased tolerance and acceptance of taboo words. Also, films are intended to represent reality.

Hollywood films are very popular in the Arab world although some of their contents such as taboo expressions may be culturally challenging for subtitlers. The cultural hurdles stem from having to transfer taboo items from an open culture, such as the American one, to a conservative Arab culture where the degree of acceptance of taboo words varies significantly.

Regarding linguistic differences and difficulties, Arabic and English have two different linguistic systems, which is one of the major problems facing subtitlers. The Arabic language is a Semitic language, while English has its roots in Germanic languages. These linguistic differences affect the way the translator deals with taboo words as the English language may use some of these taboo items idiomatically or in ways that are different from Arabic usage. Another linguistic challenge is that the taboo items in the English language are generally spoken and tend to be informal whereas, when subtitling into Arabic, the taboo item is transferred from spoken language to a written and formal form which is Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). This shift is a major challenge for subtitlers and many taboo words lose their strength and intended meanings when subtitled into a formal language form such as MSA.

MSA has evolved from the classical Arabic language used in the era of Islam. MSA is the official language in 22 Arab countries and is a very formal language used in both electronic and printed media, and in the domains of edcuation and law. Although MSA is the official language in Arab countries, it is generally not used as the mother tongue and it differs substantially from the spoken language used in everyday life (Kamusella, 2017). This is due to the diglossic nature of the Arabic language, which means that MSA is not associated with an informal register. The map below shows the countries where Arabic is the offical language.

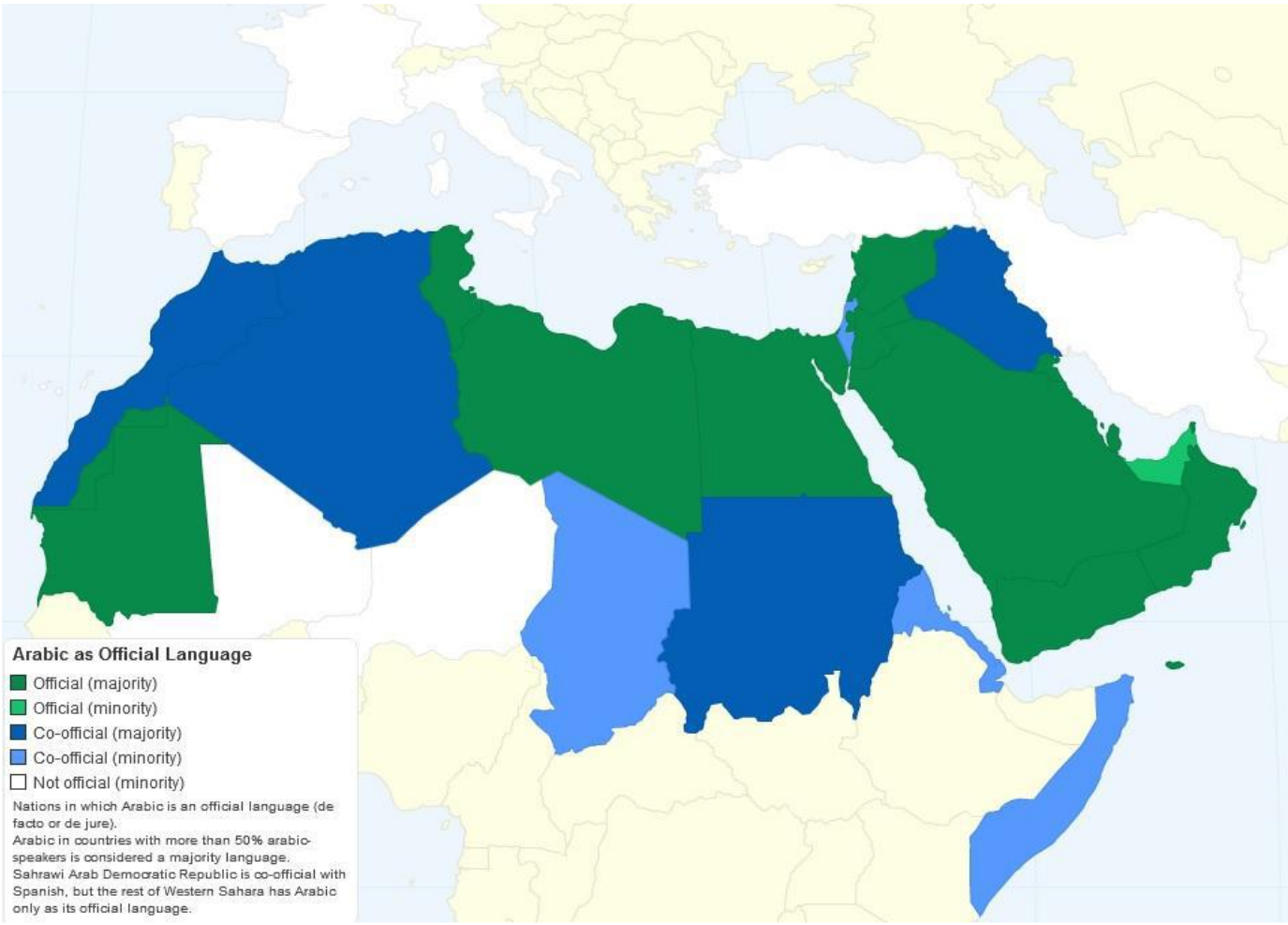


Figure 1: Arabic as official language (source ChartsBin website, 2020)

Arabic is among the first six official languages in the United Nations and the most prevalent Semitic language, spoken by more than 422 million people. It is the official language of 22 countries located in parts of Asia and Africa and it is a co-official language in 26 countries including Chad, Senegal and Somalia.

Despite the widespread use of the Arabic language, the study of taboos seems to be off limits, indicated by the lack of studies in this area. This, of course, is due to the very nature of taboo. Only a handful of brave researchers such as Alkadi (2010), Al-Adwan (2009), Al-Abdullah (2015), Qanbar (2011) , Khalaf and Rashid (2016), Al-Harthi (2015), Khalaf (2016, 2019) ,and Al-Yasin and Rabab'ah (2019) have dealt with this topic from various perspectives. The amount of research conducted on taboo language either in Arabic or from other languages

translated into Arabic is very limited. Al-Abdullah (2015), Qanbar (2011) and Al-Harthi (2015) point out that there is a severe shortage of studies that investigate the usage of taboo words in Arabs' daily conversations. Most of the studies of Arabic literature deal with taboo words from a religious perspective, but as yet no studies have investigated this issue in the Arabic context, unlike those concerning the English language such as the works of Montagu (1967) and McEnery (2006). Moreover, when dealing with taboo words translated from English into Arabic, only a very small number of case studies are available, so their findings cannot be generalised. Also, most of these studies ignore the taboo function, which is a very important aspect of translation that subtitlers take into account when handling taboo words.

1.3 The significance of the study

From the preliminary literature review, it is evident that there is very little published research on the translation of taboo language into many languages other than Arabic. More specifically, in regard to Hollywood movies which are efficient tools for cultural interaction between nations, the issue of how taboo words are translated in subtitles is a major issue that is worth investigating. However, several studies have dealt with the translation of taboo language in many European and Asian languages. For example ,Maria Fernández (2006), Soler Pardo (2011) Manchón (2013) in Spanish context, Pujol (2006) into Catalan , Lie (2013) into Norwegian langauge , Midjord (2013) who looked at the Danish context, and Nguyen (2015) who investigated Dutch translations, in addition to the works of Han and Wang (2014) and Yuan (2016) and He (2018) who study the translation of taboo langauge from English into Chines.

However, in the Arab world, audiovisual translation (henceforth AVT) has not received due attention, especially considering that subtitling is the most widely-used mode of AVT for foreign moves. Despite the popularity of subtitling in Arabic, it has been neglected by academics. Thawabteh (2011) and Gamal (2014) indicate that the number of studies in AVT

in the Arab world is unsatisfactory, and AVT is not offered as a course in Arabic-speaking universities. In the Arab world, there are many important aspects of AVT that have not been explored including its history, audio description, media accessibility, reception studies, eye-tracking, and voiceover. No studies have been conducted similar to those of Chaume (2004), Díaz Cintas (2004) Orero (2008), Díaz Cintas and Orero (2010), Matamala and Orero (2010), Kruger and Steyn (2014), Massidda (2015), Matamala and Orero (2014), and Jin (2018). Thus, it is anticipated that this study will contribute to the body of AVT knowledge, provide valuable insights for professionals in the AVT industry and the organisations responsible for overseeing the translations of AV materials regarding the issues and restrictions associated with the translation process.

In regard to the Arabic context, there is a severe shortage of studies that explore the concept of taboo language and how it is translated not only in AVT but also in other fields. In AVT, only a few studies (e.g. Alkadi (2010), Al-Adwan (2009), Khalaf and Rashid (2016), Eldalees, Al-Adwan, and Yahiaoui (2017), have investigated the way that taboo words are subtitled into Arabic. However, in these works, only one or two movies have been considered; hence, the limited amount of data means that results cannot be generalised. Also, the impact of the individual differences and preferences of subtitlers is very strong when the focus is on one or two films. Moreover, the studies conducted by Khalaf (2016, 2019) and Al-Yasin and Rabab'ah (2019), for example, focused on subtitles produced by fans, not by professional subtitlers. Such subtitles are typically not for broadcasting via TV and other major streaming platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime and iTunes. Also, the semantic classifications of taboo words in these studies tends to be broad and vague; thus, the classification of words and the strategies used by translators when dealing with taboo words cannot be determined accurately.

Another important reason for conducting this study is that the linguistic functions of taboo words have been neglected to a large extent in most of the Arabic studies that have investigated

the translation of taboo items. In other words, when taboo words are used to serve various functions such as insulting, cursing, idiomatic and emphatic functions, such studies fail to give sufficient consideration to the translation of taboo words. However, when the taboo functions have been considered, their classification is vague and inadequate, with many omissions.

Therefore, to date, no study has investigated, in a comprehensive, systematic, and theoretically strong and sound manner, the subtitling of taboo words into Arabic. The corpus used for this study consists of 90 films Hollywood films released between 2000 and 2018, all of which have English subtitles and their Arabic counterparts. These feature films comprise nine genres: action, comedy, crime, horror, thriller, romance, drama, fantasy, and adventure. The approximate playing time for the corpus is about 165 hours, consisting of more than 86,0516 English words, and more than 61,2905 Arabic words. The total number of words in the corpus is around 1473421, making this among the largest AVT corpora in the world and the largest AVT corpus in Arabic. This study adopts a systematic framework based on DTS to: determine how the taboo words are subtitled into Arabic; discover the most common Arabic words used in subtitles as translations of these taboo items; and investigate whether taboo word categories and taboo word functions influence translators' choices of subtitling strategies when dealing with taboo words. The theoretical framework of this study is based on Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) (Toury, 2012) which enables the researcher to identify the ways that taboo words are transferred into Arabic in a parallel corpus of ninety films and their Arabic subtitles, and to determine whether subtitlers' linguistic choices are governed by the social norms of the target culture (TC).

1.4 The aim of the study

In view of the discussion above, three main research questions are formulated and addressed:

1. What are the dominant taboo items, categories and functions in the English subtitles?

2. What are the dominant translation strategies used in the translation of taboo language?
    a. Do these strategies tend to be SL-oriented or TL-oriented (domesticating or foreignising)?
3. What is the impact of taboo function on the use of translation strategies for the translation of the most frequently-occurring items and categories?

In order to answer these research questions, a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the corpus is conducted, in which the researcher makes use of a self-designed parallel, aligned corpus of ninety films and their Arabic subtitles. The details of the films selected for this study and the criteria determining their selection are presented in section (3.4).The taboo words in the English dialogue are systematically identified, and categorised based on their semantic classifications and linguistic functions. The semantic classifications of taboo words were based on Jay's (1992), McEnery's (2006) and Allan and Burridge's (2006) classifications, while the linguistic function of taboo items was implemented according to McEnery (2004 &2007). Subsequently, the subtitling strategies adopted by subtitlers when dealing with taboo items are identified and classified by using a modified model based on Pedersen (2011) and Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007). The patterns in relation to the use of specific subtitling strategies of taboo words are investigated across and within the ninety films by means of quantitative and qualitative analysis. This study positions itself within the theoretical framework of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) proposed by Toury (2012). DTS allows researchers to examine the relationship between subtitling strategies[1] and the norms of the TC.

[1] In this study , the terms 'translation strategies' and 'subtitling strategies' will be used interchangeably.

To fulfil the research objectives and address the research questions, a structure is adopted that is appropriate to time and space considerations. The section below summarises the contents of each chapter, thereby giving an overview of the thesis structure.

1.5 The structure of this study

This thesis consists of five chapters. In chapter 1, an overview is given of the concept of taboo language and its wide usage in daily life and in Hollywood films. Then, the Arabic counterparts of the taboo words are discussed, followed by this researcher's motivation for conducting this study.

Chapter 2 begins with a discussion of the taboo concept in general, and then narrows to taboo words, in particular their types and semantic and functional classifications. The usage of taboo words in the media and in subtitling is examined together with the way that euphemisms are used to deal with those taboo words. The discussion then moves to AVT with particular reference to subtitling, its definitions, types, and strategies. This is followed by an overview of subtitling in the Arab world and a review of the main studies that have been conducted on the subtitling of taboo language. This chapter concludes with an explanation of the theoretical foundations of this study which include DTS, translation norms, domestication and foreignisation and the subtitling strategies considered by scholars in previous studies. The strategies most relevant to this study are presented and explained.

Chapter 3 contains an outline of the methodology adopted to answer the research questions. The chapter begins with an overview of the definitions, types and usage of corpora in translation studies. Then the process of choosing and compiling a corpus for this study is explained. Lastly, a detailed account is given of the data extraction and analysis process comprising both quantitative and qualitative approaches to answer the research questions.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of this study in four main sections. In the first section, a quantitative overview is given of the nature and frequency of taboo words, their semantic

categories, linguistic functions, and the most common Arabic words that are used for the translation of these items and their semantic categories. The focus of the second section is on the subtitling strategies used for different taboo words across the entire corpus and within different semantic categories to determine whether there is any correlation between categories of taboo words and the strategies adopted for subtitling. In the third section, a detailed account is given of the distribution of taboo functions and subtitling strategies used for each taboo word when performing various functions in order to identify the impact of taboo functions on the use of subtitling strategies and to discover how subtitlers deal with taboo words and provide possible explanations for any noticeable trends in subtitling strategies for different categories and functions of each taboo item, and attempt to link these to the existing research. The fourth section contains a summary of the findings and the possible reasons for subtitlers' linguistic choices.

Chapter 5 recapitulates the primary aims of this study, the methodological steps followed, and the findings obtained. Also, the recommendations in regard to other relevant issues meriting future investigation will be provided.

1.6 Summary

In this chapter, a brief account of taboo language and the situation in regard to subtitling in Arabic-speaking countries is provided. The objectives of the study and the research questions have been stated. Against this background, the next chapter provides a critical review of the types, categories, and functions of taboo language, subtitling in the Arab World, subtitling strategies, descriptive translation studies, and the notions of domestication and foreignization.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Taboo language

Due to the digital revolution and other technological developments, people have access to audio-visual material produced by different cultures. Among such products are Hollywood movies which are considered to be a popular and effective means of establishing cultural exchange and representations. Despite the importance of films in introducing cultures to others, some cultural and linguistic issues need to be taken into account when subtitling into different languages. One of these is taboo language which often poses a substantial challenge, especially when subtitling between two different cultures such as Arabic and American. The attitudes of Arabic and American cultures towards taboo language are quite different for religious, cultural and sociopolitical reasons. Therefore, subtitlers are obliged to pay careful attention to these differences.

Despite the importance of taboo language as a linguistic phenomenon, academia has not given it the attention it deserves (McEnery and Xiao, 2004; Wajnryb, 2005; Jay, 2000). Its significance arises from its broad and daily usage as a means of efficiently expressing different and strong feelings, and its influence in attracting people's attention. Beers Fägersten (2012) notes that in informal English conversation, swearing, which is one part of the large domain of taboo language, can make up 0.14% to 12.7% of English dialogue. Hughes (1991) points out that there is a reluctance among researchers to explore taboo language and discuss it openly in academia. In the following paragraphs, we begin the discussion by shedding some light on swearing as a starting point to investigating the taboo concept and its historical and cultural dimensions. Then we provide several definitions of taboo language and its classifications in addition to discussing how the euphemism and dysphemism are closely related to taboo language.

2.1.1 Swearing as taboo

The concept of taboo words and their various terms have been investigated in different studies and from various perspectives, generating a number of definitions of 'taboo language'. Synonyms such as 'bad language', 'swearing', 'obscene language', 'foul language' and the like have been used interchangeably in the literature to refer to the same concept. Scholars such as Montagu (1967), Hughes (1991), Veltman (1998), McEnery (2006) and Fägersten (2012) state that swearing is a blanket term that has been used in previous studies as a synonym for taboo language, bad language, and obscene language to name but a few; swearing is a primary form of taboo language and the most commonly investigated. Hence, this discussion begins with an introduction to the concept of swearing as a point of departure, preparatory to exploring taboo language in its wider sense along with its definitions and taxonomies.

Swearing, from the lexicographical perspective, is defined in The Oxford English Dictionary as "To utter a form of oath lightly or irreverently, as a mere intensive, or an expression of anger, vexation, or other strong feeling; to use the Divine or other sacred name, or some phrase implying it, profanely in affirmation or imprecation; to utter a profane oath, or use profane language habitually; more widely, to use bad language" (The Oxford English Dictionary: online). The Collins Cobuild Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines swearing as follows: "If someone swears, they use language that is considered to be rude or offensive, usually because they are angry" (Collins Cobuild Advanced Learner's Dictionary, online).

It is evident that the two dictionaries define the term swearing differently as the Collins Cobuild Advanced Learner's Dictionary definition is limited to the offensiveness and rudeness of swearing and ties it to anger. On the other hand, The Oxford English Dictionary gives more details about swearing, its form, function, and themes. Just as dictionaries differ in their definitions, so too do academics in the field who have different points of view about swearing and its definition (Ljung, 2011). As a result, many different terms have been used in the

literature to refer to the same concept. For instance, the terms ‘dirty words’ (Jay, 1980), ‘bad language’ (McEnery, 2006), ‘emotionally charged language’ (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007), ‘foul language’ (Azzaro, 2005), ‘rude language’ (Hughes, 2006), ‘strong language’ (Lung, 1998) as well as ‘expletives’ and ‘off-colour language’ have been used to refer to the same concept. This terminological confusion is an indication of the academic neglect of the field of bad language as noted by Kidman (1993), Jay (2000), Wajnryb (2005) and Ghassempur (2009).

In the same vein, Wajnryb (2005, p.15) points out that the confusion about studying swearing can be attributed to two factors: the first one is in regard to the word that normally “constitutes” swearing, while the second is related to the way we “refer” to swearing. She elaborated on this by stating that “there are more swearing functions to perform than there are swear words to use” (ibid), which is an indication that there are more circumstances where the same taboo words can be uttered in different contexts and thus may have a different meaning and construe strong feelings due to these different contexts. The second factor relates to the meta-language of swearing. In Jay’s work, the terms ‘cursing’, ‘dirty words’, ‘taboo words’, ‘offensive speech’, ‘swearing’, and ‘emotional speech’ are used synonymously (2000, p.10).

Many studies have attempted to investigate the characteristics of swear words and taboo words. Jay (2000) points out that swearing is used to express various strong emotions such as anger, surprise and frustration, and thus affects the hearer either positively or negatively. According to Taylor (1976), the majority of swear words are used in a nonliteral sense and are intended as insults. Andersson and Trudgill (1990, p.53) established three criteria for what constitutes swearing: (a) it refers to something that is taboo and/or stigmatised in the culture; (b) it should not be interpreted literally; and (c) it can be used to express strong emotions and attitudes. Ljung (2011) added a fourth criterion by stating that swearing is formulaic language. In other words, swearing has rigid lexical and syntactic constraints; thus, there are ready-made phrases that consist of several words which tend to be retrieved from memory when used, not

created on the spot. For example, the invective “Go to hell” cannot be converted to the negative form “Don’t go to hell” as swearing has the quality of fixedness (Ljung, 2001, p.19).

On the other hand, scholars such as McEnery (2006), Hughes (2006), and Pinker (2007) disagree with the notion that swearing is limited to a nonliteral meaning as there are some words that can be used in their literal sense and can be considered as swearing. Hughes (2006) argues that as long as such words belong to taboo items, they are considered swearing, irrespective of their literal or nonliteral usage and whether or not these words are spoken to express strong emotions. Consequently, the controversy regarding the term ‘swearing’ applies to other synonyms. Veltman (1998) indicates that a large number of terms used in the domain of bad language can cover only certain aspects of this phenomenon, and most of these terms, including swearing, fail to cover adequately the domain of bad language as a whole; thus, different names have been used in different studies to refer to the same concept. He elaborated, stating that people who try to designate the area do so either with an extreme lack of confidence or by indulging in ‘massive over-generalisation or over-specification’ (Veltman, 1998, p.302). Consequently, more than 20 different terms are used synonymously in the field of bad language. For example, terms such as ‘swear words’, ‘filthy words’, ‘rude words/language’, ‘taboo words/language, foul words/language, offensive words/language’, and ‘obscene words’ to name just a few, have been used interchangeably in the literature reporting previous studies (ibid, p.302). The terms ‘offensive words’, ‘bad words’, ‘dirty words’, ‘rude language’ and ‘foul language’ will be used interchangeably throughout this study. On the other hand, the words ‘profanity’ and ‘blasphemy’ will be used synonymously as both terms refer to insults related to religious concepts.

Despite the ongoing debate about whether or not swearing is confined to the nonliteral use of words, almost all definitions of swearing found in the literature agree that swearing belongs to taboo areas. Accordingly, this study will focus on the concept of taboo language/words for

two reasons. Firstly, taboo language is broader and more general than swearing as the concept of taboo language covers the most common aspects of life such as sex, culture, religion, food, diseases, death and other features (see taxonomies of taboo words for more details), and taboo words include all 'bad' words regardless of their intended usage. In other words, all 'bad' words will be considered whether they are used literally or non-literally.

Secondly, there are different perceptions of and attitudes to taboo language since most taboos are culturally determined, and each culture has its own taboos. Hence, some expressions might be seen as acceptable in one culture, but are taboo in other cultures. For instance, words related to pork products, alcoholic beverages, and sexual affairs outside marriages are viewed as distasteful and are religiously and socially unacceptable in some Islamic cultures, whereas this is not the case in American culture. Therefore, taboo language is an appropriate term for this study as it takes the cross-cultural elements into account. Under this term, any terms belonging to the taboo area in both American and Arab culture will be investigated whether or not such words are considered to be swearing.

Having discussed the concept of swearing, its definitions and its relation to taboo language, the subsequent part of this chapter will be dedicated to the concept of taboo, its definition, and taxonomies.

2.1.2 The concept of taboo

According to Steiner (2004), the term 'taboo' originated from Polynesian languages, derived from the root word *tabu* in Tongan and *kapu* in Hawaiian (2004). Allan and Burridge (2006) point out that Captain Cook was to the first be recorded as having used 'taboo' in his log journal to describe the customs that were deemed taboo (tabu) by Atui and Tahitian communities. Captain Cook indicated in his journal that taboo (tabu) in these societies was not confined to religious traditions but extended to include many aspects of life In Polynesian cultures, it was considered taboo, for instance, to allow women to eat together with men. After Cook's death,

James King continued to use the term ‘taboo’ in the journal and it was introduced to European languages at the end of the 18th century (Allan and Burridge, 2006). Hughes (2006:.462) argues that taboo language refers to any words or deeds that are considered “unmentionable” because they are either “ineffably sacred” or “unspeakably vile”.

Steiner (2004) points out that in the Polynesian language, the meaning of the word taboo is prohibited and sacred. From a lexicographical perspective, sacredness and prohibition are implied in the definition of the term taboo. The term ‘taboo’ is defined in the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2010) as follows“(1) a taboo subject, word, activity, etc. is one that people avoid because it is extremely offensive or embarrassing; (2) not accepted as socially correct; (3) too holy or evil to be touched or used”.

According to Allan and Burridge (2006: 40), taboo language “refers to language that is a breach of etiquette because it contains so-called ‘dirty words’”. They point out that taboos come from the social restrictions on the behaviour of individuals that may cause offensiveness, discomfort or harm to other members of a given society. Similarly, McEnery indicates that any word that causes offence in a polite setting is what he calls “bad language” (McEnery, 2006, p.2).

In the Arabic language, the word ‘taboo’ is defined by the Almaany Arabic Dictionary (online[2]) as “محرم” (forbidden). This word in the Arabic language has religious connotations and is generally used in religious and legal discourse. Dictionaries such as Wahba’s An-Nafees (2000), Karmi’s Al-Mughni Al-Akbar (1997), Al-Mawrid, and the Oxford English-Arabic Dictionary define the term as محظور (اجتماعياً), i.e. (socially) prohibited or banned. This word is probably more general and hence weaker than the word محرم (forbidden) as it is not limited to religious contexts. From a semiotic perspective, Alaskari (1997) attempts to distinguish

[2] https://www.almaany.com/en/dict/ar-en/taboo/

between the word محرم (forbidden) and the word محظور (banned). The latter implies that someone bans something and so it becomes banned regardless of whether the banned item is good, neutral or bad. For instance, a ruler may impose restrictions on foreign goods for political or economic reasons. While the word محرم (forbidden) is related to awfulness and distastefulness and hence not all that is محظور (banned) is forbidden but all that is forbidden is banned (Alaskari, 1997). Hence, it can be seen that the word "محرم" (forbidden) is not confined to religious contexts although it has strong religious connotations and overtones. The religious origin and overtone give the word a strongly negative value. This can be seen when the word محرم (forbidden) is used to emphasise and intensify the prohibition of an act. Moreover, since the sense of sacredness is a powerful component of the definition of taboo, the word محرم (forbidden) would seem to be a more adequate equivalent.

In the Arab world, most of the studies concerned with taboo words have investigated this concept from a religious perspective, while the linguistic aspects of this issue have been largely neglected. Consequently, most of the discussions in the literature concern condemnations of using taboo language. Many religious texts either in the Qur'an or prophetic traditions or by Islamic scholars have agreed on the prohibition of using taboo words such as cursing, profanity and other types of taboo language., the prophetic tradition, which is a main source of Islamic teachings, contains many sayings by Prophet Mohammed about the prohibition of cursing and insulting. One of these sayings is لَيْسَ المؤْمِنُ بِالطَّعَّانِ وَلَا اللَّعَّانِ وَلَا الفَاحِشِ وَلَا البَذِيءِ [The believer is neither a defamer nor a curser nor outrageous nor obscene] (Al-Bukhari, Hadith 312). In the same vein, Abdullah bin 'Amr states: The Messenger of Allah said: "It is among the greatest of sins that a man should curse his parents." They said: "O Messenger of Allah! Does a man curse his parents?" He said: "Yes. He verbally abuses the father of a man, who in turn, verbally abuses his father, and he (retaliates and) curses his mother, so he curses his mother" (at-Tirmidhi, 1902, p.6).

Such statements explain how religion and taboo words are closely related not only in Arabic and Islamic culture but also in many other cultural contexts. Pinker (2007a: 339) states that "the historical root of swearing in English and many other languages is, oddly enough, religion". Similarly, Hughes (2006: 362) points out that some synonyms of 'swearing' such as 'obscenity' 'blasphemy' and 'profanity' are closely connected with the religious domain. This can be seen in the Arabic context where most of the discussions on taboo language are conducted from the religious perspective and centre on why and how taboo words are forbidden and condemned in Islamic culture.

However, from the linguistic perspective, the concept of taboo has been ignored largely in academia. Few studies have attempted to investigate the use of taboo words by Arabic speakers. Among those studies is that conducted by Al-Khatib (1995) who explored the connection between linguistic taboos and social context in Jordan and how cultural and social factors affect taboo words. He found that sexual and religious taboo words are more offensive than those in other categories such as scatology. Although, his study was among the earliest studies in the Arabic context, this researcher failed to support his findings and claims with any empirical evidence. Another study was conducted by Abdullah (2015) who investigated swearing in Kuwaiti society in two groups, male and female, to determine how members of each group use swear words. The study found that men and women swear differently in terms of frequency, swearing type, function and strength. However, both groups were similar in terms of the frequency of using some sexual terms and also in preferring words related to sex, animal abuse, and religion. The study concluded that swearing among friends is not considered offensive and taboo; rather, it is used as a means of expressing solidarity. Alharthy (2015) investigated the relationship between abusive swearing and the construction of gender identities. He compiled a corpus of two million words, extracted from YouTube comments written in Arabic. He found that men and women are constructed as having different identities. Men are primarily

represented as social actors who have the power and may abuse it in some fields such as politics and religion. However, women are constructed mainly as sexually moral, which is an essential part of female identity.

Although some concepts are considered taboo in many cultures, some cultures have their own particular taboos. In other words, the taboo concept is not universal even among Muslim societies, although religion- and sex-related taboos are common to most cultures. The cultural differences can affect the way taboo words are perceived in the sense that expressions that are acceptable in one culture but might be considered very offensive in others. In Hughes's work, Shakoor Rana, a Pakistani cricketer, points out that "Calling me a bastard may be excusable in England, but here people murder someone who calls another man a bastard" (1991, p.32). These different cultural perceptions of taboo expressions need to be borne in mind when subtitling from an open and liberal culture such as the American to a more conservative Arabic one, for instance.

In Arab cultures as in other conservative cultures, there are a number of taboo areas such as sex, religion, and politics that require caution and care when being discussed. Gamal (2008) points out that in Arabic versions of American movies, many sexual and religious references are eliminated. He adds that breaking any religious taboos and blaspheming against God, the prophets, holy books or any agreed-upon sacred pillars, can lead to severe punishments by law and, in some cases, execution. Many Arab writers and intellectuals in various Arab countries have been arrested for blasphemy. Although the punishments for blasphemy and profanity in Arab countries vary significantly, religion is central to Muslims' lives and is still a red line. One example of the strong significance of religion in the Arabic and Islamic world was seen when a Danish newspaper published 12 cartoons depicting Prophet Mohammed in humoristic

and satirical situations.[3] This resulted in violent demonstrations being held in many Muslim countries, in addition to instigating a boycott of Danish products. This violent reaction was triggered by mere cartoons, let alone, insulting words, demonstrating how religion is a very sensitive and critical issue in Arab culture. On the other hand, the Danish newspaper maintained that such cartoons were published on the grounds of freedom of speech. This illustrates how taboos can be perceived differently and the degree of offensiveness varies significantly between cultures such as Arabic and English.

Unlike religion, sex is one of the most common topics and yet is taboo not only in Arab culture, but in many other cultures as well. The extent to which people openly discuss sexual issues varies notably due to religious, social and political reasons. Talking publicly about sex and related topics such as sexual organs, homosexuality, sexual affairs outside marriage, incest, masturbation and so on is socially unacceptable in the Arab world and thus many different euphemistic expressions are used to avoid talking directly and openly about sex. Even discussions of sex by sexologists in sex education shows on Arabic TV channels are considered inappropriate by many viewers in Arab countries (CNN. online).[4] For example, Hebah Gotb, the first licensed sexologist in Egypt, was criticised by many clerics for discussing sexual matters in the media. On the other hand, she is seen by others as a conservative who is not brave enough to discuss sexual issues such as homosexuality, anal sex, and sex during women's menstruation, that are prohibited according to Islamic beliefs. Habib (2012: 88) asserts that "in the Middle East, discussion of sexuality, in general, has become heavily laden with secrecy and reticence, and depictions of homosexuality necessarily suffer from such rising conservatism".

[3] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4693292.stm

[4] http://edition.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/meast/04/25/muslim.sextalk/index.html

However, that does not mean that Arabs do not swear and use taboo words. Taboo words and sexual talk, for instance, are common among friends and in informal settings. As mentioned earlier, in the context of Arabic, there are no empirical studies that explore why taboo language has become obvious and popular, or when taboo words are used. However, thanks to social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and other applications, it is evident that a huge volume of swearing, obscenities, and expressions of racial hatred are being used on such platforms. Social media channels allow people to speak freely and express their feelings in an unprecedented way. In the past, such language would not have been acceptable to authorities as it violates norms and morals and thus would not pass the strict censorship of Arab states.

Despite the fact that topics related to sex and religion are taboo in most cultures, how such issues and other taboos have shifted from one generation to the next is unknown and difficult to trace as noted by Freud (1950) and Montagu (1967). In a similar vein, Jay (2009;154) points out that "why certain acts or words are defined as taboo is not always clear". It is outside the scope of this study to investigate why specific acts or words have become taboos. However, shedding some light on the areas and classifications of taboo language will contribute to improving our understanding of taboo words. In the ensuing paragraphs, an account of major taxonomies of taboo words found in the literature will be discussed.

2.1.3 Taxonomies of taboo words

Many scholars have attempted to systematise and categorise taboo words by proposing different taxonomies. Although the proposed classifications vary remarkably, there are some overlaps. However, most of the taxonomies found in the literature have been specifically established for the study of swear words, not taboo words. For example, we have the pragmatic classification of swearing proposed by Jay, 2000; Mateo and Yus, 2000; Wajnryb, 2005; and Andersson and Trudgill (1990). Other classifications that focus mainly on the semantic domain

of swearing expressions are those devised by Pinker (2007) and Ljung (2011). Also, McEnery (2006) suggested a typology for swear words based on morphosyntactic characteristics. On the other hand, Stenström (1992) proposed a classification based on the interaction between interlocutors. As evident, most of the classifications were designed for swear words and are pragmatically oriented.

Consequently, the classifications in the following paragraphs will be confined to taboo words in general. One of the first taxonomies was that proposed by Allan and Burridge (2006), which classifies taboo words into five categories.

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 hunting and fishing)
4. Naming, addressing, touching and viewing persons and sacred beings, objects and places.
5. Food gathering, preparation and consumption

This classification covers many semantic domains to which taboo words belong. However, there are other areas not indicated in this classification. For instance, racial insults and insults related to mental and physical disabilities are not addressed. Thus, this typology is not complete and comprehensive although it covers the main areas to which taboo words belong.

Jay (2009) elaborates on Allan and Burridge's classification and provides us with a more detailed taxonomy of taboo words. He notes that although the number of taboo words is countless, the areas to which these words belong are limited. According to Jay (2009, p.154), taboo words can be classified into eight categories, namely: (1) sexual references; (2) profane or blasphemous utterances; (3) scatological referents and disgusting objects; (4) ethnic-racial-gender slurs; (5) insulting references to perceived psychological, physical, or social deviations; (6) ancestral allusions; (7) substandard vulgar terms; and (8) offensive slang. However,

semantic domains such as death and narcotics are ignored in this typology. For example, consumption of any types of narcotics is forbidden by religion unless for medical purposes. In many Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Indonesia, the ultimate punishment for smuggling narcotics is execution depending on the type and quantity of the drug. The absence of concepts such as death and narcotics in Jay's typology makes this classification inadequate to accommodate all types of taboo words; thus, other supplementary typologies need to be adopted for this study.

Azzaro (2005) attempts to differentiate between bad language and insulting words. He classifies bad language as religious, sexual and scatological. He divides the religious category into profanity and blasphemy. As far as the classification of insults is concerned, he proposes a taxonomy comprised of four parts: mental, sexual, scatological and physical. However, neither classification clarifies the difference between insults and bad language. For example, the religious aspects were placed under the section of bad language, not insults, but blasphemous words are insults as they are targeted at an addressee. Also, this classification fails to cover other taboos related to food, ethnic and racial slurs, death and diseases, and narcotics.

Andersson (1985 quoted in Karjalainen, 2002) proposes a semantic classification where taboo words in Western cultures are categorised under seven areas, namely: (1) sexual organs, sexual relations; (2) religion, church; (3) excrement; (4) death; (5) physical or mental disability; (6) prostitution; and (7) narcotics, crime (1985, p.79). Some of these categories related to sex, religion and physical and mental and scatological words are similar to the classifications proposed by Jay (2009) and Allan and Burridge (2006). However, taboo words related to prostitution, narcotics, and crime have been added to this taxonomy.

McEnery (2006) in his definition of bad language adds the category of homophobia to other categories such as blasphemy, swearing and racist language. He argues that in many English-speaking societies, homophobic insults are regarded as offensive.

It is quite apparent that there are some overlaps between categories under which relevant scholars list taboo words. Also, adapting and depending on one classification of taboo language will not serve the purpose of this study as there are many essential categories of taboo words that would be excluded. Therefore, this study will adopt a combination of the taxonomies proposed by Jay (2009), McEnery (2006), Allan and Burridge (2006) and Andersson (1985). The combined classification consists of 12 categories:

1. sex-related terms
2. religious terms
3. excrement/human waste
4. incest
5. physical or mental disability
6. racism
7. animals
8. homophobia
9. body parts
10. narcotics/crime
11. prostitution
12. death/disease

This model has been adopted in several previous studies, such as those of Soler Pardo (2011) and Nguyen (2015) that dealt with different types of taboo words.

Having discussed and presented a semantic classification of taboo language, it is of vital importance to consider the function of taboo words as this factor determines the subtitling

strategies used for Arabic subtitles. In other words, although taboo words that belong to the same semantic classification have similar characteristics and themes (e.g. a sexual theme), the linguistic function must be considered when subtitling. For example, the way the taboo words are treated when they are used in English dialogue in their literal sense or for emphasis, may not be the same when they are used as a cursing expletive directed at someone. This assumption is tested when we study the impact of the function of taboo words on the choice of subtitling strategies.

2.1.4 Taboo functions

There are many classifications of taboo functions in the literature. Most of these taxonomies, such as those devised by Andersson and Trudgill (1990), Jay (2000), Mateo and Yus (2000), Wajnryb (2005), Ljung (2011) and Bednarek (2019), focus mainly on the swearing function, not on taboo words, and are therefore inappropriate for the purposes of this study. That is to say, taboo language is a more general term that includes swearing and other functions as well. McEnery (2006, p.2) indicates that "swearing is one example of bad language". Another important reason for excluding the proposed typologies is that they are applied to small data sets or a limited number of case studies, so it would be very difficult and impractical to adopt such classifications for a large number of taboo words. Also, in such classifications, swearing functions cannot be identified without having a wide context of occurrences and in many cases, there is a need to watch the scene in which the taboo item has occurred to identify its function, which requires a multimodal corpus. For example, functions such as social distance and solidarity as suggested in Bednarek (2019) cannot be identified without watching a large selection of scenes which requires a huge effort that is not suitable for large corpora. Therefore, many of these classifications are not applicable and appropriate for this study. After conducting a pilot study on most of these classifications, McEnery's sixteen classification categories (2006, p.32) were found to be the most suitable for this study. They are:

(1) Predicative negative adjective: ‘The film is *shit*

(2) Adverbial booster: *Fucking* marvellous, *fucking* awful

(3) Cursing expletive: *Fuck* you/me/him/it

(4) Destinational usage: *Fuck*’ off!, He *fucked* off

(5) Emphatic adverb: He *fucking* did it

(6) Figurative extension of literal meaning: To *fuck* about

(7) General expletive: (Oh) *Fuck*!

(8) Idiomatic set phrase: *Fuck* all, give a *fuck*

(9) Literal usage denoting taboo referent: We *fucked*

(10) Imagery based on literal meaning: Kick the *shit* out of

(11) Premodifying intensifying negative adjective: The *fucking* idiot

(12) Pronominal form with undefined referent: Got *shit* to do

(13) Personal insult referring to identified entity: You *fuck*. That *fuck*

(14) Reclaimed usage – no negative intent: Niggers, or Niggaz as used by African American rappers

(15) Religious oath used for emphasis: By *God*!

(16) Unclassifiable function

McEnery and Xiao (2004) made a slight adjustment to the aforementioned classification to deal specifically with the word *fuck* and its derivatives. Since *fuck* is the most frequent word in the corpus of this study, representing about 35% of the total occurrences of taboo words in the corpus (in addition to the extensive use of the word *fuck* which occurs in many forms and functions more than any other taboo word in the corpus), the adjusted version was adopted for the annotation of the linguistic functions of this word. The updated and adjusted taxonomy has been adopted in several studies, such as that of Christie (2013) and Johnson (2019) when analysing the word *fuck*. The updating of the sixteen function categories saw them combined

to produce nine categories. For example, the adverbial booster function was combined with the emphatic intensifier function as both are used for emphasis. McEnery and Xiao (2004) indicate that the only difference between the two aforementioned categories is the part of speech of the word following *fucking*. Also, the category of the figurative extension of the literal use of the word *fuck* is combined with the idiomatic usage. For example, the phrase *fuck about* can be used in both categories, but when dealing with the word *fuck* it is classified as having an idiomatic function. Another adjustment took place in regard to the premodifying negative adjective function and the emphatic intensifier function because of the difficulties of differentiating between these categories when it comes to the use of the word *fuck* in order to avoid the subjectivity in the annotation. For example, in this sentence: *it is only a fucking Sunday task*, it is debatable whether the word *fuck* functions as an emphatic intensifier or as a premodifying negative adjective. Also, another adjustment was made with the destinational use of taboo words being combined with the idiomatic function as it appears less frequently and only appears in the phrase *fuck off* which can be an idiom as well, similar to other idiomatic uses of the word *fuck* such as *give a fuck*. However, these functions are combined only when the word *fuck* is used. It is worth mentioning that the modified classification is used specifically when annotating the word *fuck*, while for the other taboo words in this study, McEnery's (2006) full classification is used to accommodate other taboo words.

There are many reasons for adopting McEnery's taxonomies. First, it is a comprehensive classification that is widely used in academia as a reference for the functions of taboo words. It offers a detailed account of each function and, at the same time, it is a user-friendly model to adopt. Ljung (2011) points out that McEnery's model was designed and developed based on a large, detailed study of the spoken language in the British National Corpus. The second reason is that this model is not confined to swearing, but to 'bad language' words as McEnery calls them. He indicates that swearing is one type of bad language. The same applies to taboo words,

which is a broad term that includes swearing. Hence, given the nature of the data, McEnery's model suits the purpose of the present study. The third reason is the wide adoption and implementation of this model as it has been used in many studies that dealt with taboo words, such as that of Thelwall (2008), and found to be effective. Also, the model was developed based on the British National Corpus (BNC), which contains more than one billion words. McEnery's classification model was based on a corpus-driven approach which means the examples of taboo words have not been adjusted to fit any predefined functions. Furthermore, this taxonomy takes the morphological and functional dimensions of the taboo words into account when identifying the functions, which is not the case in most of the aforementioned classifications. For example, the pronominal form function and idiomatic function are considered in McEnery's model, and these have an impact on the way subtitling strategies are used in Arabic subtitles as discussed in section 4.4.1-9.

However, although McEnery's model is the most comprehensive and suitable for this study, it has several shortcomings. For example, it can be argued that there are overlaps between some functions such as the idiomatic function and the figurative extension of literal use. For example, the phrase *fuck around* can be a figurative extension while being idiomatic at the same time. Moreover, McEnery's system operates at the morphosyntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels, which is why it is sometimes difficult to apply.

Having discussed the concept of taboos, taboo language, its definition and classifications, the following sections will examine the taboo words which tend to appear more frequently in certain contexts such as the media in its various forms. Additionally, the popularity and controversy regarding the use of profanities in both printed and audio-visual media will be discussed.

2.2 Taboo in the media

Undoubtedly, the appearance of taboo language in its various forms and names such as obscene words, profanity, and swearing in the media has increased to unprecedented levels to the extent that taboo words may not be regarded as taboo anymore. Jay (1992) conducted a study on the inclusion of swearing in movies from 1939 to 1989 and concluded that the number of taboo words appearing on the screen had increased threefold over a period of 30 years. Also, Dufrene and Lehman (2002) point out that there has been a significant increase in the use of taboo words not only in Hollywood movies, but also in the lives of Americans. Similarly, according to a report published by Associated Press (2006), approximately 75% of Americans stated that they hear more taboo words now than in the past years. Moreover, the same report indicated that 50% of Americans perceive taboo words to be a common phenomenon in American society. The same applies to other linguistic and cultural contexts. In a study conducted by Fägersten (2017), the word *fuck* has begun to appear in printed media, and could be ascribed to the hegemony and influence of the English language on the Swedish language, since English taboo words have become acceptable in the Swedish context. The spread of profanity is not limited to adult discourse; it has also infiltrated children's programs although these are supposed to pass through a rigid and strict filter before being broadcast. However, Marianne (2017) points out that stakeholders have become more permissive in their acceptance of taboo words in programs intended for Danish children. All this is an indication of the popularity of taboo words not only among specific age groups, but among societies as a whole, and within the media and printed books, to name but a few. Although the extent to which taboo words are deemed acceptable to societies and cultures is relatively different, taboo language is still a phenomenon in almost all languages and cultures, necessitating a more detailed and comprehensive investigation of this phenomenon in different contexts.

The appearance of taboo language and its popularity in both print and audiovisual media has been a vigorously debated issue. Those who advocate that obscene words should be allowed to appear in movies and other forms of media, believe that movies should reflect reality and the way that people speak, which may include the frequent use of various swear words. Thus, numerous films have achieved astonishing success for several reasons, one of which is that they are a realistic reflection of people and the language they use in their daily conversations. For example, according to Soler Pardo (2011), one of the reasons for the unqualified success of *Pulp Fiction* (1994) is the plethora of swear words in the film.

Other advocates of allowing taboo words in movies believe that movies are rated and classified according to their content; hence, if the rating is not appropriate for a particular audience, they can simply not watch it. Díaz Cintas (2001b) points out that movie ratings give audiences some idea of the content and the extent to which a movie will contain offensive words. These ratings are more effective and efficient than merely imposing restrictions on the linguistic content of movies. However, some scholars such as Jay (1992) consider the rating system as a form of censorship as it prevents specific age groups from watching certain movies and such films will be shown only in certain cinemas.

Conversely, many governmental and non-governmental organisations have stressed the importance of imposing rigid restrictions on offensive language in Hollywood movies since families should have the right to watch content that is free of taboo words. Bushman and Cantor (2003) note that young adults and children tend to imitate what they hear and see on the screen. Also, young adult audiences are one of the primary targets of filmmakers (Smith, 2005). Thus, the content and language of movies should be appropriate for the age group of the targeted audience. If such debate and controversy around the usage of taboo language in the media took place in the American culture which tends to be more open and liberal than Arab cultures, then it is highly likely that taboo words will be omitted or considerably toned down in an Arabic

context which is controlled by rigid religious and cultural teachings and values. An understanding of the differences between the two cultures can help us to understand the reasons for the various and apparently excessive forms of censorship. In a previous study, for example, Sahari, (2017) found that due to social and religious reasons, around two-thirds of swear words have been censored and omitted from the Arabic subtitles of the film *Pulp Fiction* (Tarantino, 1994). The same applies to Persian studies such as those by Khoshsaligheh, Ameri and Mehdizadkhani (2017) and Saeed, Nemati, and Fumani (2020) where many taboo words are censored due to cultural and ideological reasons.

In the Arabic context, there seems to be an increase in the use of taboo words in non-translated Arabic movies and TV series. However, to date, no empirical studies have investigated the usage and frequency of taboo words in Arabic movies. Neither has the dichromic change of taboo words been studied in Arabic movies or in daily spoken conversations. However, a comparison between two films banned in different periods of time can show how the content of Arabic movies now tend to be more controversial and contain more taboo issues. For example, a film titled أبي فوق الشجرة [My Father is on the tree] was banned in 1969 for its sexual content. These days, this film would be acceptable given that more recent films contain far more profanity than the earlier ones. Discussions of such topics appear in newspapers and online forums but when it comes to academia, there has been little research on taboo words and how social, cultural and political norms regarding taboo words have changed since the advent of TV in Arab countries as noted by Al-Harthi (2015) and Bayoumi (2018).

Another possible reason for the increase in the usage of offensive words in films can be attributed to Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and other social media platforms. These platforms allow people to speak freely in a context where free speech is limited in most Arab countries. Also, those channels allow people to be anonymous which encourages some people to use words that they may not be able to say in the real world. Due to the increase of this

linguistic phenomenon, researchers such as Qasmiyah and Qraybi (2016) and Al-Harthi (2015) attempted to shed some light on how taboo words are used in YouTube comments and Twitter. The findings of these recent studies indicate that the usage of different forms of taboo language is increasing and has become a phenomenon worth investigating.

Having discussed obscene language in the media, the following subsection will be dedicated to euphemism and censorship as these are firmly related to taboo language and both are considered effective as a means of dealing with taboo language, particularly in subtitling from one language into another. More precisely, when Hollywood movies contain a large number of swear words, subtitlers will often have two options, either to euphemise or to censor the taboo items. Consequently, the notion of euphemism and dysphemism will be examined first, followed by a discussion of censorship.

2.3 Euphemism

A euphemism is a global concept that exists in almost every language and culture and is strongly related to society and culture. In each society, there are certain words that are deemed inappropriate, taboo, offensive or unclean by its members. In order to avoid such varieties of language, people resort to euphemisms which enable speakers to talk about taboo subjects and unsettling topics indirectly and implicitly. Therefore, it is a useful and frequently applied rhetorical device that tones down otherwise blunt, harsh or offensive expressions. Burchfield, the former editor of The Oxford English Dictionary argues that "a language without euphemisms would be a defective instrument of communication" (cited in Eschholz et al., 2000, p.512).

From the lexicographical perspective, most dictionaries agree on the Greek origin of the word euphemism. Enright (1986, p.32) states that euphemism means "fortunate speech". From the etymological point of view, McArthur (1992, p.387) explains that the word originated from the word *euphemismos*. The first part of the word is *eu* which means 'good and well', while

the root ‘phemi’ means ‘speaking’. Thus, the combination of the root words yields “speaking well”.

The topic of euphemism has been theorised from different perspectives, resulting in several definitions of this concept (Foster, 1966; Enright, 1986, Warren, 1992; Greene, 2000; Huang, 2005, Al-Adwan, 2009, Albarakati, 2011). For instance, Allan and Burridge (1991: 221) point out that “A euphemism is used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression, in order to avoid possible loss of face either one’s own face or, through giving offence, that of the audience, or of some third party”. According to their definition, the use of euphemisms is a politeness strategy which the speaker applies to avoid a sensitive and embarrassing topic while at the same time conveying the intended message. Agyekum also defines euphemisms as “a shield against the offensive nature of taboo expressions” (2002: 372). In the same vein, Nida (1982;89) defines euphemisms as words that “are consciously substituted for others which are taboo, either positively or negatively”.

From the definitions above, it is evident that euphemisms and taboo language are intricately interrelated. In other words, our speech is a reflection of our attitude towards taboo topics. This means that when words are related to taboo items, new words need to be invented to avoid the consequences; these words are euphemisms. Consequently, the use of euphemisms is a technique that allows us to talk about various taboo topics without losing face or causing embarrassment or offence, while at the same time conveying the intended message.

Many researchers have established classifications of euphemisms. One such classification was proposed by Gomis (1997) who categorised euphemisms into two types: conscious euphemism and unconscious euphemism. In the conscious euphemism, interlocutors are aware of using the euphemism and realise that it is used to avoid talking about something embarrassing. When sex-related topics are discussed, people tend to use euphemistic expressions consciously. For example, the phrase ‘sleep with someone’ is a euphemistic

expression for having a sexual encounter. Another form of conscious euphemism can be seen in the media when some letters are omitted from specific words such as f**k.

On the other hand, an unconscious euphemism is one that is uttered without its euphemistic sense being noticed (Gomis,1997). The word 'cemetery' means 'sleeping place' in Latin, and it is used instead of the word 'graveyard'. In other words, there are some euphemistic words that were used in the past and developed over time to the extent that they are not often recognised as euphemisms. In Arabic subtitles, for example, the word يعاشر (which literally means cohabit with, but it has a sexual connotation in Arabic)[5] is commonly used for the words *fuck* and *sex* when used in their literal sense. Such euphemised versions are common in Islamic literature, and consequently, some subtitlers may be influenced by such words and use them subconsciously when subtitling.

Rawson (1981) classifies euphemisms under three categories. The first one is used to hide something awful and dreadful in many cultures. Death, spirits, and disease are prominent examples of this type of euphemism. For instance, the word 'cancer' is euphemised as *al-khabith* meaning 'malignant'. Similarly, the 'big C' is used in English to refer to cancer. The second type of euphemism refers to concepts that are deemed shameful and taboo by members of a given society such as sex and body waste. The third category of euphemism is used in war situations (ibid). For instance, during the civil wars that took place in many Arab countries such as Syria and Yemen, words such as 'martyr' are commonly used to indicate that they have sacrificed their lives for a worthwhile cause. Therefore, a euphemism is an effective device to hide reality, especially in war times. In the same vein, Abrantes (2005) argues that euphemisms

[5] It is worth noting that it is difficult to provide exhaustive glosses or one single gloss that captures all possible senses of English or Arabic taboo expressions in their various functions and contexts, every time those expressions are referred to in the text or figures/tables. By convention, a prototypical gloss is provided for ease of reference but it does not by any means capture all possible senses/functions. After all, it is in the nature of all those taboo expressions to be underspecified for meaning and function and the provision of a single gloss would erroneously suggest otherwise.

are used with three types of taboos: fear-based topics (disease and death); politeness-based topics (insults); and shame-based topics (sex and body waste).

Tal (2003) presents a classification based on the psychological effect of euphemisms. He notes that euphemisms can be classified into two groups: amplifying and minifying. The latter makes interlocutors feel more important than the actual reality, while the former is intended to reinforce strong feelings such as dislike or hatred.

The other type of euphemism is the negative euphemism, which Rawson (1983, p.2) calls 'defensive euphemism'. The function of negative euphemism is to diminish and deflate euphemised words. Rawson (1983, p.2) notes that negative euphemism is an old phenomenon used in some ancient cultures such as Greek, Roman, and Egyptian, in which negative euphemism was employed commonly to substitute names of gods, Satan and death. Consequently, in Greek culture the word 'Furies' became 'Eumenides' (The Kind Ones). Also, in many cultures, it is prohibited to utter the name of God; thus, religious Jews say 'Adonai'.

On the other hand, dysphemism is defined by the Collins English Dictionary as the "substitution of a derogatory or offensive word or phrase for an innocuous one". Allan and Burridge (1991, p.221) offer a more detailed definition where a dysphemism is "an expression with connotations that are offensive either about the denotatum or to the audience, or both, and it is substituted for a neutral or euphemistic expression for just that reason". Thus, a dysphemism has the opposite meaning of a euphemism as noted by Gomis (1997). It is used as a pejorative expression intended to despise, criticise or ridicule others. It can be seen very commonly in political contexts where each party attempts to denigrate opposing parties. For example, the word 'shitter' is a dysphemistic version of the word 'toilet'.

2.4 Censorship

Censorship is one of the most effective tools that authorities use to control the content that the audience can watch. It has been a central issue in the field of translation studies. The application

of censorship varies significantly from one country to another due to political, social and religious reasons. Censorship is not confined to dictatorial and totalitarian regimes - the more tolerant and democratic countries may also exercise different forms of censorship. For instance, during times of war and crisis, many facts are manipulated, distorted and/or censored for political, social, and/or economic interests.

It is necessary here to clarify exactly what is meant by censorship. According to Billiani (2007, p.3)., censorship is a "form of manipulative rewriting of discourses by one agent or structure over another agent or structure, aiming at filtering the stream of information from one source to another" Another more comprehensive and relevant definition proposed by Allan and Burridge relates censorship to taboos. They define censorship as:

> The censoring of language is the proscription of language expressions that are taboo for the censor at a given time, in contexts which are specified or specifiable because those proscribed language expressions are condemned for being subversive of the good of some specified, specifiable or contextually identifiable community (Allan and Burridge, 2006: 27)

From the definitions above, it can be clearly inferred that taboos and censorship are closely related, and that taboos change over time due to social, political, or economic factors. Thus, the time and the place in which taboo language is used can be an essential factor for the censor in determining which words to censor and which to allow.

Jay (1992) points out that there has been an increase in the use of censorship in Hollywood movies after the 1950s due to obscene and violent content. In the Arab world, censorship, either of local or foreign works, is strictly enforced; thus, censorship plays a central role in controlling foreign translated and subtitled works. A countless number of foreign translated books have been banned due to their political, sexual or religious content. For instance, for political

reasons, George Orwell's novel, *1984,* was banned from appearing at the Kuwait Book Fair 2009, and in several other countries.[6]

Similarly, in Egypt, the police arrested a man for being in possession of this novel. The same stricture applies to audio-visual materials such as movies and TV series. In Dubai, about 45 minutes were cut and censored from the movie *The Wolf of Wall Street* (Scorsese, 2013) due to its portrayal of sex, drugs, profanity and blasphemous language.[7] Such censorship undoubtedly will affect the plot and sequences of the story and, hence, the profit of the film in the Arabic market. This occurred in the United Arab Emirates and Egypt which are supposedly more liberal and open than other conservative Arab nations such as Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen and Oman.

Censorship has been studied and investigated from different perspectives, with various classifications of this global phenomenon being proposed. One of the most comprehensive and obvious classifications is that proposed by Hoggart (2001, p.123). In this classification, censorship is categorised into four groups: governmental censorship, commercial related censorship, censorship imposed by religious and moral authorities, and self-censorship. The first type is the censorship imposed by governments and politicians in power. The second type of censorship is applied by commercial organisations that dictate what is said and published, and tends to be in the form of deletions rather than additions. The third type of censorship is that done for moral reasons, often by the guardians of morality. This type is not confined only to religious societies; a more secular one might exercise such forms of censorship. Profanity and obscenity are often subject to censorship for reasons of morality. The fourth type,

[6] https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/01/world/middleeast/kuwait-ban-books.html

[7] https://torontosun.com/2014/01/15/censored-wolf-of-wall-street-confuses-dubai-audiences/wcm/dd2edbdf-c51b-421f-8374-a30d343335ff#:~:text=Wolf%20of%20Wall%20Street%2C%20the,many%20filmgoers%20confused%20and%20bewildered.

according to Hoggart (2001, p.123), is self-censorship where the translator, editor or publisher voluntarily censor certain parts of their work. He points out that self-censorship is more complicated than state or official censorship as it is intricately involved in the psychology and the mind of translators; therefore, it is challenging to determine whether instances of censoring are due to self-censorship or to externally-imposed censorship. For this reason, Bourdieu calls self-censorship the "invisible censorship" (Bourdieu, 1998: 15).

Self-censorship takes place during translation when translators determine what is or is not acceptable to translate. Translators may feel that they have a moral and social responsibility to protect the audience from what they might deem offensive or dangerous or not socially acceptable. Self-censorship can differ from one subtitler to another even within the same society as their attitude towards the SC and what might be unacceptable to some subtitlers might not be so to others. Sahari (2017), in his study, compared the prosubbings and the fansubbing of the film *Pulp Fiction* in relation to swear words, and found that there is no significant difference between the two Arabic versions although there is no official censorship imposed on fansubbing. That is to say, liberal-minded translators may deal with the ST differently from more conservative translators. Even though the ideology of translators in closed and conservative societies needs to conform to the norms, values, and rules of the society, translators' ideologies and attitudes still influence the final translated product. However, Ben Ari (2010) argues that both self-censorship and state censorship produce the same results.

Ben Ari (2010) indicates that in closed societies, self-censorship is more common and effective than in more democratic and open nations. This aligns with Sahari's findings (2017) where a comparison was made of fan-produced subtitles (fansubs) and professionally-produced subtitles (prosubs) regarding the translation of swear words. The findings indicated that even though there is no official and formal censorship imposed on fansubbing, self-censorship by

subtitlers was a primary reason for the deletion of more than two-thirds of swearing instances. Thus, translators chose to adhere to the ideology, norms, and values of their societies. Robinson (1996) notes that translators draw red lines in their minds and censor taboos in order to comply with the norms and values of their society. In the same vein, according to Brownlie (2007), the function of self-censorship is to avoid criticism, censorship and receive approval from authorities to publish their works. Further, she stated that self-censorship can occur either consciously or subconsciously as the social norms occupy a central position in an individual's mind.

It is worth noting that the rigid censorship imposed on audio-visual materials and self-censorship adopted voluntarily will affect either consciously or unconsciously the strategies applied by translators and subtitlers. That, in turn, will distort the translated foreign works. Translators will find themselves obliged to adopt specific translation strategies in order to adhere to the norms and regulations of their governments so that their work can see the light.

Díaz Cintas (2018) indicates that in totalitarian countries, the ideology of translators, editors and directors must be aligned with the mainstream ideology of political regimes. In other words, the translators' ideology is less important and influential in closed societies as state censorship is imposed firmly. Such restrictions put translators in the situation where they have no other options but to translate in a way that reinforces the ideological uniformity of political and religious motives of oppressive regimes, regardless of attempts to be faithful to the ST and culture, and the desire of the translator who wishes to retain the elements of STs adequately. Yahiaoui (2014) points out that many dubbed programs were rejected by some other agents such as producers and channels owners and, thus, translators have to retranslate some excerpts in order to comply with the cultural and ideological mainstream.

According to Green (1990), the main reason for all forms of censorship is the fear of others. In other words, when governments consider foreign works that represent a threat and could be

harmful to them, then such works will be partially or entirely censored or amended. In the same vein, Dias Cintas (2018) states that governments use different and misleading terms to justify the act of censorship, terms such as 'nationalism' and 'patriotism'. Consequently, when the content of foreign works clashes with a political, social or religious agenda, such works will often end up being censored.

Scandura (2004) mentions three types of censorship that are used in subtitling: (1) changing the title, (2) changing the plot, and (3) toning down the offensive language. The first one relates to changing the name of the movie or program when it is not acceptable to the TC. For instance, the film *Sex and the City*, was banned in the UAE for cultural reasons because the word 'sex' appeared in the title.[8] The title can be used for marketing and communicative purposes when it is not attractive enough to the target audience and such amendments are often done by editors and TV companies (Scandura, 2004). With the second type of censorship, the movie's plot is changed when the content clashes with cultural, political and ideological norms. Yahiaoui (2014) points out that in addition to changing the characters' names in *The Simpsons* (the American animated sitcom), several excerpts have been manipulated and some parts deleted altogether; consequently, this affects the success of the Arabic version of the program compared to the original version. As mentioned previously, about a third of *The Wolf of Wall Street* (Scorsese, 2013) was deleted due to obscene, drug-related and violent content. Such censorship will definitely have a negative effect not only on the plot of the movie, but also on its reception and success. According to Scandura (2004), the third type of subtitling censorship is when taboo and offensive words are toned down. Since different cultures perceive offensive and obscene words differently and the extent to which societies can accept taboo language varies significantly, obscenity and profanity are censored and euphemised in Arabic subtitled versions. Another factor contributing to the censorship of offensive language is the shift from

[8] https://www.investigativeproject.org/2235/top-10-movies-banned-in-the-middle-east

spoken dialogue to written form. As noted by Ivarsson and Carroll (1998), taboo words are perceived to be harsher, obscener, and more offensive when they appear in written form than in a spoken form. In other words, it is more acceptable to hear offensive words than to see them on the screen.

The shift from spoken to written form leads subtitlers to censor or tone down taboo items. This shift means that several characteristics of spoken dialogue such as non-standard dialects will probably be missing from subtitles. Moreover, some taboo words belong to non-standard language and the slang register which, in turn, pose major challenges for Arab subtitlers who use formal and high register language, i.e., MSA. According to Linder (2000), slang and colloquial expressions tend to be neutralised in translation. Also, constraints of space and time may account for the elimination from subtitles of some features of spoken language.

Having outlined censorship, self-censorship and types of censorship imposed on subtitled materials, in the ensuing section, we discuss audio-visual translation with its main modes and constraints.

2.5 Audiovisual translation

2.5.1 A brief introduction

With the advent of the digital revolution, the demand for audiovisual translation (AVT) has increased significantly in recent years. For instance, a large number of films, TV shows, DVDs, video games and YouTube contents are produced in English, and AVT makes these contents available to foreign audiences. This growth has established AVT as a useful tool for facilitating cultural exchange and representation irrespective of national borders. Baker (2001) indicates that AVT has become a dynamic discipline in translation studies as a result of heavy and increasing demand.

In the context of interlingual translation, voiceover, dubbing and subtitling are the three most prominent modes of AVT. Voiceover is a process whereby the volume of the original

speaker is lowered to the point where the original voice cannot be heard, which allows a narrator to read the translation and interpret what the original speaker is saying (Gottlieb, 2001: 244). Dubbing is the process of replacing the original sounds with the target language sounds, following as closely as possible the timing, phrasing and lip movement (Luyken and Herbst, 1991: 31). As subtitling is the main topic of this study, the following sections will be dedicated to defining subtitling and discussing its constraints and typology.

2.5.2 Subtitling, its definition and its constraints

As this study is concerned with interlingual subtitling, Gambier's definition is appropriate: "moving from the oral dialogue to one/two written lines and from one language to another". (2003: 172). Another, more detailed definition of subtitling was offered by Luyken et al. (1991: 31):

> Condensed written translations of original dialogue which appear as lines of text, usually positioned towards the foot of the screen. Subtitles appear and disappear to coincide in time with the corresponding portion of the original dialogue and are almost always added to the screen image at a later date as a post-production activity.

In terms of its features, subtitling is unlike written translation in that it has technical characteristics that subtitlers need to deal with and translate accordingly. For instance, each subtitle appearing on the screen has only a limited space and time. Many AVT scholars such as Delabastita (1989) and Schwarz (2002) explain that three technical factors need to be considered when subtitling, namely, the space available for each subtitle, the number of lines allowed, and the number of characters in each line. These rigid and medium-bound restrictions constitute a significant challenge for subtitlers and often entail a considerable reduction of words and redundant semantic load. The temporal and spatial factors associated with subtitling

are of great importance as they affect the readability and quality of subtitles (Cintas and Remael, 2007). In the same vein, Kruger describes the unique features of subtitling as follows:

> The difference between the skills required for subtitling and those required for translation, editing or interpreting, lies in the very technical aspects of subtitling. Subtitling requires all the skills that other modes require in terms of text analysis, subject expertise, language, awareness of context, quality control and so forth, but it also requires that the subtitler be able to apply these skills within very rigid constraints of time and space, while adhering to specific conventions of quantity and form. Mastering and applying these skills take a long time (Kruger, 2008: 82).

Another factor that distinguishes subtitling from other forms of translation is the various semiotic channels through which the meaning is formed and conveyed. Delabastita (1989) states that multiple visual and audio signs and channels in AV content can have an impact on the way such contents are translated into other languages. According to Gottlieb (2001), subtitling has four semiotic channels: verbal auditory (dialogue, lyrics and paraverbal elements), non-verbal auditory (natural sound, background music and sound effects), verbal-visual (subtitles, display and any writings in the film) and non-verbal-visual (montage, composition of image, movement and editing, actors, scene, costumes etc). It is crucial that subtitlers take all these channels into account to achieve successful communication. Despite the perception by many professional subtitlers that polysemiotic channels act as constraints, in some cases they are essential and helpful tools enabling subtitlers to understand the intended meaning of speakers, particularly when the dialogue is ambiguous.

The temporal factor is another technical constraint imposed on subtitling. The temporal factor relates to the amount of time needed for each subtitle to remain on the screen. According to the Code of Good Practice, '"the duration of all subtitles within a production must adhere to a regular viewer reading rhythm; this is because viewers' comprehension and enjoyment of

subtitles is closely related to their reading speed'" Ivarsson and Carroll (1998: 157-159). Studies such as Y'dewalle et al. (1987) indicate that the minimum duration for a subtitle is one second, while the maximum is six seconds. Therefore, many subtitling service providers tend to apply what is known as the 'six-second rule' so that the viewers have ample time to read the subtitles in a relaxed and comfortable way without missing the visual information. This rule is now an established standard in the subtitling industry. According to Karamitroglou (1998), the average reader can read from 150 to 180 words per minute. That means about 15 words in a full two-line subtitle in six seconds. Scholars such as d'Ydewalle et al. (1987) and Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) maintain that the six-second rule is an adequate and effective way of giving the viewers sufficient time to read the subtitles easily, comfortably, and with full comprehension. However, Szarkowska and Bogucka (2019) conducted an eye-tracking study to determine whether six seconds is adequate for viewers and found that viewers looked at the subtitles only for about 30% of the subtitle display time and viewers with high proficiency in the language of the soundtrack tend to spend less time looking at subtitles compared to those with a basic knowledge of the language. In a similar study, Szarkowska and Gerber-Morón (2018) found that subtitles remaining longer on the screen would result in viewers re-reading them which in turn will decrease their enjoyment of the film, although this finding is rather controversial since uncommon or low frequency words as well as taboo words will undoubtedly attract more attention and will often be reread.

The spatial constraints relate to the maximum number of lines allowed per subtitle. According to the Code of Good Practice (Ivarsson and Carroll, 1998), it is recommended that for interlingual subtitling, each subtitle should not exceed two lines. In bilingual subtitles, each subtitle can have up to four lines, with two lines per language. However, there are some exceptions to the two-line subtitle rule, as in the case of multilingual countries and when subtitling for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The temporal and spatial factors associated with subtitles mean that the task of subtitling is not confined to translating the text from one language into another. Rather, subtitlers have to deal with those technical constraints that in many cases force them to reduce the number of words and prevent them from using the number of words they may deem necessary. Because such reductions are often unavoidable, the constraints faced by subtitlers need careful consideration in order for meaning to be conveyed successfully. To achieve this, a Code of Good Subtitling Practice has been established. Ivarsson and Carroll (1998) maintain that the Code of Good Subtitling Practice is meant to serve as general guidelines and principles for subtitlers in order to improve the quality of subtitles. Similarly, Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) noted that the Code of Good Practice is debatable and is not meant to be imposed on the practice of subtitling in any country, but rather to establish the fundamentals for good subtitles. When considering the code of good subtitling practices, three factors need to be born in mind: spatial dimension, temporal dimension, and punctuation and other conventions (Cintas and Remael, 2007).

It is worth mentioning that the normal reading speed of viewers and the level of words used in the subtitles play a crucial role in the way subtitles appear on the screen. In other words, subtitlers might need to bear in mind the target audience and the genre of the film, and whether the primary target audience is adults or children. Hence, the lexical choices made by subtitlers need to take these factors into account in order to ensure the viewers' engagement with, and their enjoyment and comprehension of, the films. However, in the Arabic context, the case might be more complicated as a high percentage of Arab viewers are illiterate, particularly in terms of the female audience (Hammud and Jarrar, 2017). Hence, the average presentation rate of 180 words per minute advocated by previous studies may not fully apply to some Arab countries where illiteracy is dominant. However, in Arabic-speaking countries, there is no study yet that investigated the technical aspects of subtitling standards and conventions, with

the exception of Al-Adwan (2019) who examined the subtitling conventions in ten movies aired on two TV channels, namely MBC2 and Dubai One. He found that there is no consistency in these two TV channels in following technical norms of subtitling and he points out that there are no published guidelines for subtitling conventions in Arab world that are available to the public.

2.6 Subtitling in the Arab world

AVT is still in its infancy in the Arab world and has not received the requisite attention compared to other European countries. Only a small number of researchers such as Gamal (2008 & 2019) and Aladwan (2019) have tackled the issues emerging in the AVT industry. The cinema was introduced to Arab countries only in mid-1940 as noted by Gamal (2008). Moreover, TV did not reach the Arab world until the mid-1960s, whereas, many European and Asian countries had TV in the 1940s. This time gap may have adversely affected the establishment of the AVT industry and profession in the Arabic context. Even in academia, of the hundreds of universities across the Arab world, only two of them offer AVT courses to students, one of which was launched recently in 2014. On the other hand, in UK universities alone, there are more than fifteen postgraduate programs that offer audiovisual translation courses. As such it can be seen that there is a huge gap between the attention given to AVT in the Anglosphere and in the Arab world. It is almost inconceivable that, given the political, cultural and geographical importance of Arab countries, AVT has been given such scant attention. Also, from a linguistic perspective, the Arabic language is spoken in more than 26 countries and is one of the five most popular languages in the world. Nevertheless, the AVT industry remains largely ignored in many parts of the Arab region.

With the advent of satellite, more than 1400 TV channels have become available to Arab viewers across the world compared to around 30 channels in the early 1990s.[9] This growth has gradually made AVT an essential element of many Arabic channels, creating competition between them to broadcast programs that attract a wider audience; moreover, this competition has extended to the importing of foreign programs, mainly American AV products. This, in turn, has significantly increased the demand for subtitling since a large number of Arab channels are dedicated to American programs, films and so forth.

It is worth mentioning that, in the Arab world, discussions concerning AVT are somewhat complex since most of the 26 Arab countries located across Africa and Asia have a long history of colonisation by France, the UK and Turkey. Hence, some Arab countries are relatively different socially, culturally and politically; thus, generalisations about Arab countries cannot easily be made despite their having several similarities. However, among the Arab states, Egypt is considered to be somewhat of a pioneer due to its long history in cinema, and its influence on other Arab states (Yahiaoui, 2014).

In Egypt, as in almost all Arab countries, subtitling rather than dubbing is the preferred option. Several previous studies have investigated this preference for subtitling by some countries. Paolinelli (1994) pointed out that there are several reasons for subtitling being a preferred option of some languages and cultures, one of which is that the cost of subtitling is nine times less than the cost of dubbing. Another reason is the positive attitude of the target audience and decision-makers towards the foreign language and culture which in turn makes subtitling the preferred choice as it maintains the foreign elements in the films. In the Arabic context, the case is different in that subtitling is more common than any other forms of AVT such as dubbing, particularly for Hollywood films and American TV shows although, as Gamal

[9] https://arabic.cnn.com/arab-satellite-channel-statistics

(2008) stated, this is not the result of the positive attitudes and perception of Arab viewers. He indicates that subtitling is preferred for American films in order to protect the local Arabic film industry and prevent competition between Arabic films and Hollywood films as the latter uses more advanced technology and dubbing would adversely affect the popularity of Arabic films and its market. However, Gamal's paper suffers from an over-reliance on self-report methodology and such claims are not based on empirical study. His claims are contradicted by the fact that dubbing is commonly used for children's programs and some TV soaps.

Although authorities in Arab countries realise the importance of translation in general and AVT in particular, they have not given AVT the attention it deserves. AVT is an essential part in communication with other nations, particularly in this digital world. When a successful communication is established, numerous economic and cultural benefits can be achieved. However, translation is largely ignored to the extent that many sites which have been categorised by Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as being of historical significance do not have information and marketing content in the English language, let alone in other languages; nor has relevant audiovisual material been produced in foreign languages. These shortcomings of translation activities extend to the AVT industry, thereby impeding cultural exchange, which is one of the main aims of translation.

When discussing the history of AVT in the Arabic context, one should mention Anis Obeid whose name appeared on almost every subtitled film for more than four decades not only in Egypt but in many other Arab countries (Gamal., 2008). His efforts and influence in regard to AVT in the Arab world are apparent and remain to this day. Many critics criticised him for resorting to formal Arabic register and using many archaic words as the equivalent for English swear words.[10] Obeid's style and influence can be noticed in many Arabic subtitles, even the

[10] http://www.ahram.org.eg/News/131694/153/443926/%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D8%A3%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%AF-

recent ones when the word تباً [may evil befall (someone) you] appears often on Arabic screens as an equivalent for swear words such as *shit* and *fuck*. Many previous studies such as Alkadi (2010), Khalaf and Md Rashid (2016) and Sahari (2017) found that many taboo words are subtitled in Arabic using ancient terms that are no longer used by Arabs.

2.7 Previous studies on subtitling taboo words

The translation of taboo language in subtitling and in general has not received the attention it warrants, particularly in regard to some languages such as Arabic. Only a few case studies have been conducted on translations of taboo words. This can be due to the sensitivity and the nature of taboos as a distasteful awful topic to be studied in the academia. Hughes (1991) points out that taboo language for many people is not an acceptable topic to be discussed publicly. In this section, a general overview of previous studies on the translation of taboo words will be presented, first in the literary field and then in the context of AVT.

Most of the previous studies conducted on the translation of literary works have examined translations from English to other European languages, and vice versa. The study undertaken by Sidiropoulou (1998) examined the translation of swear words into Greek in three different contexts: news report, theatre and prose. Also, Karjalainen (2002) compared two Swedish translations of *The Catcher in the Rye* to find out how swearing expressions were translated. The study included a quantitative analysis of swearing; the researcher found that about half of the swear words in the English version had been omitted from the two Swedish translations.

In the Norwegian context, Greenall (2008) compared a translated version and a subtitled version of *The Commitments* (Roddy Doyle, 1987) to identify how swearing is translated and subtitled in both versions respectively. He found that in the translated novel, the number of

%D8%B5%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%8A-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%A9.aspx

swear words is much greater than in the subtitled version. He argues that the main reason for this reduction in the subtitled film is the time constraint which limits subtitlers' choices.

Horton (1998) and Ghassempur (2009) investigated the translation of obscene words into the German language. The first researcher took three novels written by Roddy Doyle, namely *The Commitments* (1987), *The Snapper* (1990), and *The Van* (1991). He found that in the German version, the number of offensive words is less than in the original version. In the same vein, Ghassempur (2009) conducted a study to explore how swearing and its functions in *The Commitments* (1987) are translated into German. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were implemented to find out the frequency and distribution of swear words in both the German translation and the original version. Also, the translation patterns used in dealing with swearing instances and their functions were identified. Both Horton (1998) and Ghassempur (2009) concluded that the translated German version contained fewer taboo words than did the English one, and the absence of an equivalent term for the word *fuck* in the German language was a problematic and thorny challenge for translators.

Another case study was carried out by Teperi (2015) who explored the reasons for the omission of offensive words in the Finnish translation of *Moab Is My Washpot* written by Stephen Fry. Also, the researcher conducted interviews with the translator who explained his choices when rendering taboo words.There are a number of studies that deal with dubbing and subtitling of taboo words in various European languages. In the Spanish context, a study was conducted by Maria Fernández (2006) in which she compared the Spanish dubbed version of the American film, *South Park* (Parker, 1999). She criticised the 'foreignising' approach adopted in the dubbed version as it contained several colloquial expressions borrowed from the English language, which in turn affect the fluency of the film. In the same vein, the film *Pulp Fiction* (Tarantino, 1994) was taken as a case study to investigate the difference in swearing behaviour in English and Spanish languages, and how linguistic and cultural factors accounted

for the absence of offensive expressions in the dubbed Spanish version. Fernández argues that there are cases where there is no equivalent on either a semantic or stylistic level and in such cases, compensation is recommended as a translation strategy.

Pujol (2006) took the film *Dusk till Dawn* (Rodriguez, 1996) as a case study to analyse how the word *fuck* and its various forms are handled when dubbing into the Catalan language. Through this quantitative study, he found that most of the swear words in the film belong to two semantic domains, namely sex and scatology. Among other translation strategies, omission was the most prevalent strategy used in the dubbed Catalan version. At the doctoral level, Pardo conducted a study on eight films directed and written by Quentin Tarantino in order to investigate the dubbing of taboo words in the Spanish language. She covers many types of taboo words pertaining to different semantic fields such as sex, religion, racism, incest, body waste, and animal-related insults. Among the thirteen different categories of taboo words, the sex-related insults are the most common type used in Tarantino's films. Pardo indicates that about half of the obscene words have been eliminated from the Spanish versions. Still discussing the subtitling of swear words in the Spanish context, Ávila-Cabrera (2014) investigated the manners in which taboo words are subtitled into the Spanish language in three of Tarantino's films, namely, *Reservoir Dogs* (1992), *Pulp Fiction* (1994) and *Inglourious Basterds* (2009). Also, the researcher considered the diachronic aspects of taboo language in the subtitling of films and how people and TV channels become tolerant and accepting of taboo words. Additionally, the impact of technical subtitling restrictions such as time and space limitation on subtitling offensive words has been investigated to determine whether the omission of taboo words is due to cultural and ideological reasons, or merely as a result of temporal-spatial constraints. In his study, he found that more than 60% of taboo words have been maintained in the Spanish version, while omission was adopted due to technical considerations of subtitling in about 12% of the total cases.

Manchón (2013) carried out a corpus of study to explore how obscene words are handled by professional subtitlers and amateur subtitlers translating into the Spanish language. The study was intended to discover whether there are significant differences in the ways that obscene words are treated, and whether or not the intensity of such words is maintained in the subtitled version. He found that, in fan subtitling, the frequency and intensity of taboo words are higher in subtitles produced by fans.

Also, Lie (2013) conducted a corpus-based study consisting of 15 films, aimed at investigating how swearing with its semantic, syntactic and pragmatic function is subtitled into the Norwegian language. He found that in the Norwegian subtitled versions, semantic, syntactic and pragmatic functions have not been maintained, and around one-third of obscene expressions have been eliminated. He notes that the primary reason for such reduction in the Norwegian version is the absence of local equivalents in the target language.

In the Asian context, Chen (2004) analysed how obscene words in Hollywood films are subtitled into Putonghua and found that most of the American swear words were omitted in the Putonghua version. He indicated that ideological, cultural and sensorial factors are the main reasons for such a huge reduction. Another Asian corpus-based study was conducted by Han and Wang (2014) who investigated how swear words in *The Family* (2011) are subtitled into Chinese and whether the function and frequency of swearing expressions are the same in Chinese subtitled versions. They found that although a large number of swear words are omitted or toned down, the subtitler was able to achieve successful communication.

Nguyen (2015) took the film *Reservoir Dogs* (Tarantino, 1992) as a case study to examine the way that swear words are subtitled into Dutch. The aim of this study was to determine whether the linguistic function of the swear words was preserved in the Dutch version. The researcher adopted semantic and pragmatic taxonomies to determine the influence of the Dutch

language and target on the translation of taboo items; it was found that swear words tended to be euphemised and toned down for cultural reasons.

From the studies mentioned above, it is evident that most of the studies dealt with swear words translated from English into various European languages such as Dutch, Norwegian, Finnish but mainly Spanish. In the ensuing section, the subtitling of taboo language in the Arabic context will be discussed.

Despite the fact that several studies have dealt with different linguistic issues in the field of AVT in the Arabic context, such as those of (Zitawi, 1995, 2003; 2004; Gamal, 2007, 2008a, 2013b, 2014; Maluf, 2005; Mazid 2006; Alkadi, 2010; Al-Adwan 2009,2015; Yahiaoui, 2014), the issue of taboo language translation remains largely ignored. Only small-scale studies have dealt with one or two forms of taboo language, mainly swearing. Among those studies is that conducted by Al-Adwan (2009) who investigated how euphemism strategies are used to deal with sexual and religious references and distasteful topics such as death and diseases. Eleven episodes of the American TV series, *Friends,* were selected to discover how different euphemism strategies are applied in Arabic subtitles. Although Al-Adwan's study was among the first of several essential studies that focused on taboo words, this study was limited to eleven episodes of *Friends,* which might not be a large enough sample to enable generalisations about the way subtitlers deal with taboo words. Also, this study was limited to only one genre, the TV sitcom; other film genres were excluded from this study. Moreover, this study did not investigate the translation strategies used, and different categories of taboo words are not included. Also, the categories of taboo language adopted in this study were vague to some extent and lacked a systematic approach; for example, the category named 'distasteful topics' was far too broad.

In a doctoral study conducted by Alkadi (2010), he investigates how swear words are problematic when subtitling into Arabic along with other constraints such as linguistic, cultural

and technical factors that affect the way in which swear words are tackled. He took the film titled *London to Brighton* (Williams, 2006) as the primary source of data, in addition to interviews with subtitlers to discover how they deal with swear words, the problems encountered when subtitling swear words, and possible solutions that might be recommended. However, this study was concerned mainly with one type of taboo - swear words - and thus, Alkadi's study failed to cover other types of taboo words such as the names of body parts, gay-related terms and insults related to people with mental and physical disabilities. Also, such a small-scale study impedes the generalizability of the findings as one film is not adequate for the exploration of linguistic phenomena such as taboo language.

As indicated by the previous studies conducted in the Arabic context, only one film or a season from a TV series were used as primary sources of data. Such small studies lack generalizability and are not broad enough to yield reliable information as many different contextual factors in films could affect the reliability and generalizability of a particular study. For instance, the ideology of the subtitler can determine the specific approach taken when subtitling taboo words, and this may differ from one subtitler to another and from one film to another. Therefore, it is difficult to make claims with confidence about subtitling trends and what is happening on Arabic screens regarding the treatment of taboo language. Also, most of the previous studies on Arabic subtitling failed to cover all categories of taboo words and were limited to swearing expressions. Hence, other vital types of taboo words have been ignored. Moreover, the individual differences between subtitlers were neglected in most, if not all, studies that dealt with swearing and taboo words.

To date, no large-scale, comprehensive, systematic, and theoretically cogent studies have been conducted to explore the way in which taboo language is translated in Arabic subtitles. For this study, a corpus of ninety American films with their Arabic subtitles was compiled and examined in order to gain a comprehensive view and understanding of how various taboo

words, categories and functions are dealt with in Arabic subtitles. In addition, this study explores whether there are general trends and patterns in the translation choices made by Arabic subtitlers.

From a theoretical perspective, it appears that little attention has been given to the motivations behind the selection of particular translation strategies for taboo words in English movies, between subtitlers and different genres. DTS, as a theoretical framework that allows the investigation of possible contextual factors that determine the selection of translation strategy at the textual level, has not been widely used in this research area.

Methodologically, qualitative procedures and case studies tend to be adopted to investigate the translation strategies used in dealing with taboo words in Arabic translation. However, corpus-based methods have not been used widely in the context translation and, more specifically, subtitling into Arabic, nor in investigating taboo words. Therefore, a corpus-based approach can be beneficial for descriptive empirical studies such as this study as a corpus can provide researchers with significant, actual and real-life data which enable them to make generalisations and objective statements, rather than depending largely on researchers' own perception, intuition and subjectivity.

Hence, this study makes a major contribution to research on the subtitling of Hollywood films by combining the target-oriented theoretical and methodological approaches of DTS, and applying these within the framework of corpus-based methods, with the aim of investigating the above research questions.

In this section, the main studies conducted previously on the subtitling and dubbing of offensive language into different European languages are discussed. In addition to the linguistic and cultural aspects covered by those studies, we discuss several issues that have been neglected by previous researchers. Also, this section explains the lack of studies on taboo language in Hollywood films in the Arabic context, and identifies the gap in the literature.

Moreover, we show how this study differs from previous studies and how it will contribute to the field of AVT in the Arab world. We now discuss the theoretical underpinnings of this study, mainly DTS, Translation norms and domestication and foreignisation.

2.8 Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS)

DTS was first introduced by Homes (1972/2000). He pointed out that there are three types of DTS research: function-oriented, process-oriented, and product-oriented. The first one is related to the function of translated text within the target context, whereas the process-oriented approach is mainly about the cognitive processes and activities occurring in the translators' mind when translating. On the other hand, a product-oriented approach involves studying proper translation, or different translations of the same text.

DTS was developed further in Toury's works (1995/2012) in which he notes that the position of translated works in the target context has a strong impact on the use of translation strategies. For a systematic target-oriented methodology, Munday summarises the three phases of Toury's methodology as follows:

> Situate the text within the target culture system, looking at its significance or acceptability. Compare the ST and the TT for shifts, identifying relationships between 'coupled pairs' of ST and TT segments, and attempting generalisations about the underlying concept of translation. Draw implications for decision-making in future translating. (Munday 2001, p.112).

The main aim of DTS is to explore the relationships between the function, product and process of the translated texts with prior identification of the purpose of the study. In Toury's opinion (1995: 29), translations are "facts of target cultures; on occasion facts of a special status, sometimes even constituting identifiable (sub) systems of their own, but of the target culture in any event". This means that translations are not only a representation of the TC, but are texts in their own right. In other words, translations not only represent the norms, values

and attitudes, of the receiving culture but will also influence and bring about changes in the target system. Toury states that:

> The likelihood of causing changes in the receiving system beyond the mere introduction of the TT itself stems from the fact that, while translations are indeed intended to cater for the needs of a TC, they also tend to deviate from its sanctioned patterns, on one level or another, not least because of the postulate of retaining invariant at least some features of the ST which seems to be part of any culture-internal notion of translation (ibid.: 28).

This means that translators may not only alter the ST to suit and abide by the norms of the target language and culture, but they may also keep some elements of the source language and culture and consequently deviate from the patterns and norms of the TC. Toury stresses the need for studying the regularities of translational behaviour by examining not only a collection of isolated and randomly-selected examples, but also a large body of purposefully selected materials. Toury names those regularities of translational behaviour as norms which enable researchers to identify the recurrent patterns of translational practices. Before examining Toury's concept of norms, it is worth noting the way DTS will be used in this study. In this study, the aforementioned three-stage methodology will be adopted for a corpus of ninety films released between 2000 and 2018. First, we identify the Arabic subtitles in the ninety films, second, a comparative analysis of the English dialogue and the Arabic subtitles will be conducted with particular focus on taboo words. Third, the regularities of translational patterns and behaviours are identified, which in turn will make it possible to make generalisations about the translational norms and draw implications for future translation work.

In the following section, the concept of translation norms which is Toury proposed his DTS model in 1995 and revolutionised the dominant prescriptive studies of the time. The DTS approach attempts to incorporate universals, laws and norms of translation and generally a theory of translation through corpus analysis and comparative study of parallel texts.

2.8.1 Translation Norms

The concept of translation norms is an extension of DTS which aims to explore universals, laws and norms of translation. That is often done through comparative analysis between source and TTs, in this study, it will be conducted through a a parallel corpus of ninety films and their Arabic subtitles. Translation norms was presented by Toury (1995&2012) as a methodological approach to exploring how norms and rules play an essential role in determining translation behaviours. Toury defines the concept of norms as follows:

> The translation of general values or ideas shared by a community – as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate – into performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to particular situations, specifying what is prescribed and forbidden as well as what is tolerated and permitted in a certain behavioural dimension. (Toury, 2012: 63).

The importance of norms stems from the pivotal role that they play in determining what type of equivalents are chosen in translations, as noted by Toury (1995). Every society has norms and constraints that may be cultural, social or linguistic. Translation norms can operate in all kinds of translations and at all stages of translation activities. Consequently, norms can be reflected in the translation, and when the translation as a product is analysed, researchers can make a generalisation about the decision-making and translation processes. These norms are often passed from one generation to another through socialisation and education. Toury (ibid) pointed out that there is a variation between the norms regarding the strength and effectiveness of controlling translation activities. Toury (ibid) argued that there are two sources for reconstruction of translation norms, namely textual and extra-textual norms The former relates to an examination of the translated text which gives an explanation of "regularities of behaviour", whereas the textual sources concern statements that might be made by translators, reviewers, publishers or any other agents involved in the act of translation. However, Toury

(2012) pointed out that such statements can be subject to incompleteness and partiality; hence, he recommends that they be avoided.

According to Toury (2012, p.61), there are three types of norms that operate at different phases of translation. The first type is the initial norm which relates to the concept of whether the translator's choices conform to the norms of source language and culture or to the norms of the target language. Based on the initial norms, the translation can be considered adequate if it adheres to the norms of the source language and culture. Conversely, if the translation adheres to the target language and culture, then it is acceptable.

In this study, the identification of translation strategies used in Arabic subtitles will determine whether translators adopt a source or target-oriented approach. However, Toury (ibid) indicated that the translation cannot be completely source-oriented or completely target-oriented as there is a shift between the two main poles, namely adequate and acceptable translation, stating that "the occurrence of shifts has long been acknowledged as a true universal of translation" (Toury:.75). Nevertheless, the type and frequency of translation strategies adopted by subtitlers will reveal the extent to which Arabic subtitles are source or target-oriented.

The second type of norm according to Toury (2012:58-9) is the preliminary norm, which concerns the translation policy and the directness of translation. The former refers to factors and regulations that determine the section of works for translation in a given time and into a given language and culture. The latter depends on whether the translation is done through an intermediate language or directly from one language into another. In the case of the Hollywood movies selected for this study, all have been subtitled from English into Arabic without involving an intermediate language.

The third type of norm, according to Toury (2012) is the operational norm, of which there are two kinds: matricial norms and textual-linguistic norms. Both norms operate during the

process of translation. Matricial norms concern the completeness of the TT, which may include the addition of passages or footnotes, relocation or omission of passages, and segmentation of texts. On the other hand, textual-linguistic norms relate to the lexical and stylistic features of the TT. In this study, operational norms are not applicable to the subtitling context as there is no addition of footnotes or relocation of the texts in the films selected. However, there might be some cases of additions in subtitles produced by fans (fansubbing), such as the addition of pop-up glosses in Japanese anime, for instance. Since the films selected are official DVDs, such additions are not applicable to our case studies.

2.9 Domestication and foreignisation

The concept of domestication and foreignisation was introduced by the American scholar Lawrence Venuti (1995), with the aim of identifying the orientation of the translation. According to this concept, the translation can be either source-oriented or target-oriented, and different translation strategies are applied within these two broad continua. Domestication is defined by Munday (2012: 218) as "translating in a transparent, fluent, invisible style to minimise the foreignness of the target text" (2012: 218). This means that domestication is a target-oriented translation approach whereby the target readers may not recognise the text is a translation as the norms of the target language are not violated, and the translation is easily readable. On the other hand, foreignisation is a source-oriented translation approach whereby translators retain the cultural and linguistic elements of the source language. Klaudy (2012, p.40) elaborated on this by stating that:

> Domestication means translation strategies which result in transparent, natural-sounding, fluent TL style, minimise the strangeness of TT by the removal of SL realia, and require less effort on the part of the receptor. Foreignisation means using translation strategies which retain the foreign flavour of the original. Foreignisation, which results in a nonfluent

style, deliberate breaking of TL conventions and retention of SL realia in the TL text, requires more effort on the part of the receptor.

According to Venuti (1998), foreignisation and domestication can be adopted at the macro and micro levels. The macro-level involves the process of selecting a text for translation, while the micro-level refers to the actual methods used for translating texts. Venuti (2008, p.16) states that when translators adopt a domestication approach, they attempt "bringing the author home" and they became invisible; with the foreignisation approach, translators aim at "sending the reader abroad". Nathalie Ramière (2007, p.84) points out that there are several synonymic names that have been used in the literature to refer to the concept of domestication and foreignisation. For example, the terms 'assimilation', 'target-culture bias', 'self', 'naturalisation' and 'covert' are used to refer to domestication, while terms such as exoticism, other, source-culture bias, and overt translations have been used to refer to foreignisation.

The domestication approach has some merits as it allows the translations to be read fluently, especially for works that are intended for entertainment, such as films and literature in general. This approach helps to ensure commercial success in the TC, and it will help to avoid the rigid censorship in the Arab world, for instance. The translated texts tend to be examined and inspected carefully before they are given the green light for publication. If the texts were not domesticated, the translations would not be available in many countries which in turn would affect the success of the works. Another factor which favours the option of domesticating the text is the cultural differences between the source and target languages in which some words may be seen as normal in the source but very offensive and taboo in the target. Consequently, the domestication approach will help translators to comply with the cultural norms of the target systems.

Conversely, foreignisation is an effective and useful way of introducing foreign elements to the target language through translations. Venuti believes that foreignisation makes the

translation “the site where a different culture emerges, where a reader gets a glimpse of a culture other” (1995: 306). Venuti (1995) notes that adopting a foreignising approach between two cultures whose prevailing norms and values are different would establish a connection between them. He advocates the foreignising approach as it “is highly desirable [as a way] to restrain the ethnocentric violence of translation” (1995, p.20).

In the present study, the concept of domestication and foreignisation will be applied to identify the extent to which taboo words in the Arabic subtitles are source or target-oriented. That is to say, this concept will deal with translations of taboo language in a broad and general sense, while Pedersen’s (2011) and Díaz Cintas’s and Remael’s (2007) model of subtitling strategies will be implemented to provide a detailed account of the subtitling strategies used with each instance of taboo words in the corpus. A review of the major classifications of translation strategies will be provided in the ensuing section.

2.10 Subtitling strategies

At this point, it seems appropriate to define what is meant by ‘translation strategies’. Chesterman (1997, p.89) defines translation strategies as "goal-oriented and problem-centred procedures based on the choices the translator has made from among several alternatives". Similarly, Lörscher (1991, p.76) points out that translation strategy can be defined 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”.

From these definitions, it is evident that translators might adopt translation strategies unconsciously during the translation process. Such strategies significantly affect the quality and the perception of translation. Hence, on the one hand, specific translation strategies can contribute significantly to the presentation and preservation of the meaning of the ST. On the other hand, some translation strategies can manipulate and diminish the SC in order to adhere to the norms and conventions of the TC.

Translation strategies have been discussed extensively, resulting in many classifications proposed by researchers such as Vinay and Darbelnet (1958, 2002), Ivir (1987), Newmark (1988), Darbelnet (1995), Leppihalme (1994, 2001, 2011), Chesterman (1997), Marco (2018), to name but a few. The same applies to AVT, where scholars such as Gottlieb (1994, 2009), Nedergaard Larsen (1993), Díaz Cintas (2003), Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) have proposed different subtitling taxonomies to deal with different issues, mainly culture-specific items in different European languages.

The taxonomies of translation strategies found in the literature have much in common as most were based on generic translation taxonomies such as Darbelnet (1958, 2002) and Newmark, (1988) and subtitling typologies such as Gottlieb (1994). Consequently, strategies such as borrowing, omission, addition, and direct translation are common strategies seen in almost all previous typologies. Moreover, in many cases, models have similar definitions of translation strategies, although the terminology is different. In other words, different terms are given to the same concept such as retention, direct transfer, loan, and transfer in Pedersen (2011), Leppihalme (2001, 2011), Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) and Nedergaard Larsen (1993) respectively.

In order to determine which classification of translation strategies is more suitable for this study, the main classifications found in the literature need to be reviewed and examined. There are some common shortcomings in these models that affect their applicability and appropriateness for the purposes of this study. For example, Vinay and Darbelnet's taxonomy, despite its influence on other later classifications, was primarily based on syntactic features which can be applied to languages that belong to the same language family. This is not the case with Arabic and English languages, which have different linguistic systems and origins. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, this classification is purely taxonomic rather than theory-driven. In the same vein, Chesterman offers a very detailed typology which, although

thorough, is too detailed and difficult to apply to the corpus of this study. Chesterman's classification contains three main categories, syntactic translation strategies, semantic translation strategies and pragmatic translation strategies. Under each category, there are ten sub-translation strategies which in total make up 30 translation strategies. Consequently, it would be complicated to apply this typology in this study as many of the translation strategies proposed in Chesterman's classification are not relevant to rendering taboo words into Arabic. For instance, the strategies under syntactic categories are not applicable or very relevant to Arabic and English as both belong to very different syntactic, morphological systems. Besides, there is a degree of overlap between the strategies proposed such as literal translation, which Chesterman considers a syntactic strategy and such labelling can be "arguably misleading"; as noted by Pedersen (2007), literal translation is related to changes in form. Another reason for excluding Chesterman's classification and some other classifications devised primarily for written translation, is that such classifications don't fit the nature of subtitling and this is why other scholars in the field of AVT such as Pedersen (2007) suggest classifications specifically for AVT. In other words, subtitlers are constrained by rigid time and space restrictions in addition to other factors that need to be considered when subtitling. Among these factors are the nature of the movies, the reading speed of the audience, the age of the target audience, and the prior knowledge of viewers. Moreover, subtitlers are obliged to bear in mind the synchrony of the movie's content. Therefore, the strategies available to subtitlers are limited compared to the translators of written texts. Gottlieb (1994) notes that in the subtitling context, translation strategies such as condensation and transcription are employed more commonly by subtitlers than by translators of written text. Therefore, many of the previous taxonomies are not applicable to the corpus of this study because it does not consider the nature of subtitling.

Moreover, the majority of classifications of translation strategies are proposed mainly for culture-specific names in printed translation which have some unique features; thus, certain

types of translation strategies are used primarily to tackle specific types of culture-specific items. For instance, Newmark's taxonomy which consists of 18 translation strategies was proposed primarily for national institutional names. Similarly, Leppihalme's classifications (1994, 2001) were developed and elaborated to tackle the issue of translating proper names and allusions which can consist of relatively long phrases and is therefore not applicable to the corpus of our study. Also, Marco (2018) proposed a typology of translation strategies for food-related terms and thus a strategy like loan, which exists in almost all previous typologies, has not been used to deal with taboo words between English and Arabic language. This is due to the fact that the Arabic and English languages have very different origins and linguistic systems; hence, it is unlikely that this strategy would be applied as the subtitle would only confuse an Arab audience. Moreover, the nature of taboo words which are used to express strong emotions makes the use of strategies such as loan and retention rare if not impossible, unlike culture-specific items for instance. The absence of these strategies with taboo words has been noticed in several studies such as Yuan (2016) in Chinese, Al-Harthi (2016), and Khoshsaligheh, Ameri and Mehdizadkhani (2017) in the Persian language.

Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) devised a classification of nine translation strategies used mainly for cultural-specific references in the subtitling context. These strategies are loan, calque, explicitation through either (generalisation or specification), substitution, transposition, lexical creation, compensation, omission and addition. Despite the popularity of this classification and its extensive usage in many academic studies, many strategies in this classification are not appropriate for the data and the nature of this study. For instance, the loan strategy is not suitable for taboo words; nor is it suitable for subtitling from English and Arabic, both of which have very different syntactic and morphological systems. Also, explicitation in this classification is divided into two subcategories, namely generalisation and specifications as if they are the same. However, in Pedersen's (2011) typology, these are placed in separate

categories, and generalisation is classified as a target-oriented approach, while specification is more inclined to the source language and culture, i.e. a source-oriented approach. For the purposes of this study, it is essential to make this distinction as the choices available to subtitlers when dealing with taboo words will be investigated and categorised as either source- or target-oriented strategies. Also, substitution as a strategy is defined as a form of explicitation, and is used for temporal reasons in the subtitling context. However, the corpus of this study showed that the word counts of the Arabic subtitles are consistently found to be lower than their English counterparts. Moreover, the lexical creation strategy can be used often with culture-specific references, not with taboo words; the same applies to compensation which does not suit the nature of this corpus-based study, and a pre-determined list of taboo words will identify the same. In other words, this study will investigate how certain taboo words are subtitled and, thus, if subtitlers use compensation in another part of the subtitles, it will be difficult to identify this strategy.

Another recent typology of translation strategies is that proposed by Pedersen (2011, p.77-97) in which Pedersen suggests a taxonomy of seven translation strategies that are intended, in particular, for the subtitling of culture-specific references or what Pedersen calls Extralinguistic Cultural References (ECRs). Among the seven translation strategies, two have further subdivisions. The strategies are retention, specification, direct translation, generalisation, substitution, omission and official equivalent. He grouped the strategies into two categories, namely, source-oriented strategies and target-oriented strategies. The first three translation strategies belong to a source-oriented approach while generalisation, substitution and omission are target-oriented strategies. Pedersen (ibid) defines the various translation strategies in his typology as follows:

Retention: This is where the element of ECR is retained unchanged without making any modifications to the target language. According to Pedersen (ibid), retention is the most source-oriented of strategies. This strategy is often used with proper names.

Specification: This strategy requires retaining ECR in its non-translated form by adding more information to the ECR in the TT and making it more specific than the source language. The specification strategy can be implemented in two ways, namely by completion or addition such as adding someone's first name or completing an official name.

Direct Translation: With this strategy, the semantic load of ECR remains unchanged, and thus no changes or additions take place. According to Pedersen (2011), this strategy is not often used for translating proper names; however, it is used in some cases to translate companies' names. This strategy is divided into two subcategories, calque and shifted. The former is equivalent to loan translation where the translation process is conducted morpheme for morpheme. This type of subcategory does not apply to the present study as English and Arabic have different syntactic and morphological systems. Direct translation refers to literal translation proposed in Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958, 2000) classification. Therefore, in this study, the term direct translation will be used to mean shifted direct translation to avoid any confusion.

Generalisation: This entails producing a reference in the TT that is more general than the ECR in the ST. This strategy is divided into two subcategories, namely superordinate terms or paraphrase. Superordinate term is used for example when the word orange is translated into fruit. On the other hand, using paraphrase refers to the replacement of source item by a phrase which tends to be longer, synonymic and less specific than the source item. Pedersen (ibid) adds that paraphrase strategies involve a removal of the source item but keeping its sense.

Substitution: This strategy is divided into two subcategories, which is cultural substitution and situational substitution. The former refers to the replacement of an ECR with another ECR

either from the source language or from the target language. The latter refers to the concept where every sense of the source item is removed and replaced by another phrase that fists the situation, irrespective of the sense of the source item. Pedersen (2011, p.95) considers it "quasi-omission strategy".

Omission: In this strategy, the ECR in the source language is not produced at all in the target language.

Official equivalent: This strategy according to Pedersen (ibid) is categorised neither as a source-oriented strategy nor as a target-oriented one as it is not a linguistic choice but more an administrative decision. For instance, when subtitlers convert measurements such as feet to metres, they are complying with the target system.

After an extensive review of the typologies of translation strategies proposed for subtitling, the recent model offered by Pedersen (2011) appears to be the most appropriate for this study. Firstly, it is recent and was based on previous generic models such as Nedergaard Larsen (1993), Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007), and Leppihalme (1994) and thus it includes the basic translation strategies agreed on in previous classifications. Secondly, it is more applicable to the data of our study than any other classifications as examples will show in the ensuing sections. Thirdly, Pedersen's (2011) typology was based mainly on semantic categories, which perfectly serve the purpose of this study since taboo words in this study are also classified semantically. The fourth reason for adopting Pedersen's classification is the lack of overlap between the different translation strategies, and thus it is more systematic than any other classifications. Another reason is that the size of the corpus of this study is similar to Pedersen's corpus on which his classification of translation strategies was tested and examined. This is essential as Gottlieb (2009) argued that typologies of translation strategies need to reflect the size of the corpus. Besides, this model is not confined to cultural-specific names but can cover many linguistic issues and can be elaborated further to serve different purposes of studies as

noted by Pedersen (2011). Moreover, Pedersen's classification has two main categories, i.e. source-oriented and target-oriented approaches, although various terms are used such as domestication and foreignisation in Venuti (1995), semantic and communicative in Newmark (1988), adequate and acceptable in Toury (1995), to name but a few. Consequently, this classification is useful for our study as it will reveal the extent to which Arabic subtitlers adopt either a source-oriented or target-oriented approach. Gottlieb (2009) points out that in the field of human science, taxonomies tend to be arbitrary, but are successful if they meet three requirements: (1) the ability to accommodate different categories of the findings, (2) the categories in taxonomies need to reflect the differences in the findings, and (3) taxonomies should be a reflection of the size of the data in a particular study. In order to determine whether Pedersen's typology meets the three conditions presented by Gottlieb (2009), a pilot study was conducted, and it was found that Pedersen's classifications are effective and comprehensive, although it has some shortcomings, as illustrated by examples presented in the following paragraphs. Before proceeding to examples taken from the corpus of this study, we provide definitions of the translation strategies proposed in Pedersen's typology.

Although the typology of subtitling strategies proposed by Pedersen (2011) is one of the most comprehensive and widely used typologies, it cannot be applied without modification for the purposes of this study, given the nature of taboo words. One of its shortcomings is in regard to the definitions of generalisation strategies in both its subsections. The definition of generalisation is vague at least as far as taboo words are concerned. For example, his definition of 'paraphrase' contains loose terms such as 'generally longer', 'more or less synonymic', 'the sense or relevant connotations are kept', 'reduction to sense', which does not constitute a practical definition. Also, when applying this strategy to the taboo words in the study, there was no consensus regarding its application due to the vague definition and the overlap between the two subsections of generalisation, namely subordinate term and paraphrase. Therefore, the

generalisation strategy, including subordinate term and paraphrase, was replaced by a strategy known as 'reformulation', proposed by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007). The main function of this strategy is to express an idea in a different and idiomatic way. They are many taboo words that are used in English for their idiomatic function, and when subtitling those taboo items into Arabic, it is often difficult to transfer the meaning of the idiomatic use of the taboo item and retain the taboo element and offensiveness in the Arabic subtitles. For example, the sentence, "I don't give a *shit*", tends to be subtitled into Arabic as "I don't care". This strategy replaces the generalisation strategy in Pedersen's classification. Based on that, the following strategies are considered in this study, accompanied by examples from the corpus.

Table 1: Subtitling strategies adopted in this study with definitions and examples.

Subtitling strategies	**Definition**	**Example**	**Arabic translation & Back translation**
Direct Translation	Direct Translation is used to render the taboo item without making any substantive change or adding any material. The only thing that gets changed using this strategy is the language; no semantic alteration is made. Direct translation retains both semantic meaning and taboo function.	*What the hell was that?*	ماذا كان هذا بحق الجحيم؟ [What was that for *hell*'s sake?]
Cultural *Substitution*	The taboo item is replaced by another word that is either a taboo or a negative word that conveys offence in polite conversations. This word can be either from the SC or the TC, and could be replaced by another word that is completely different. In this case, by means of substitution, the semantic meaning of the word is replaced by a word that retains its taboo function.	*fuck you, Sally.*	اللعنة عليك يا "سالي" [*Damn* you, sally]

Reformulation	This is used to express an idea in a different way, that is, a rephrasing of the ST. Reformulation retains the essential propositional meaning without any taboo element.	You won't find *shit*.	لن تجد شيئاً [you will not find anything]
Omission	The taboo item is not reproduced in any way in the TT. In the present study it simply means replacing taboo item with nothing.	What the *fuck* are you talking about?	؟ماذا تقول؟ [What are you saying?]
Specification	Specification is used to "make a reference more specific, by adding semantic features, rather than surface-structure linguistic material". This strategy has been adapted for this research so that specification ultimately makes a taboo item more specific than in the original, by adding semantic features to the translation, that are not present in the original dialogue.	I'm going to *fuck* you, and then you die!	- سأغتصبك ثم أقتلك! [I will rape you then kill you!]

2.11 Conclusion

In this chapter, we discussed the concept of taboo and its presence in many walks of life such as *sex*, religion, death and diseases and so forth. It also explains taboo as a linguistic phenomenon, presents its definitions, and discusses its gradually increasing presence in many dimensions of our lives and in the media in general and films in particular. Also discussed is the connection between euphemisms and taboo words and how the former are used to handle and tone down the offensiveness of taboo items especially when subtitling from a more liberal and open culture such as the American into a more closed and conservative one such as the Arab culture. Then the notion of censorship, its types and its application in dealing with AV contents and words that are deemed taboo culturally, ideologically, and religiously, are

discussed. Furthermore, the chapter explains subtitling, its types, its status in the Arab world, and the various studies that have investigated taboo language from different perspectives in many languages, including a few studies that focused on subtitling of taboo words in the Arabic context.

Theoretically speaking, it is obvious that the motivations and the reasons behind subtitlers' choices of subtitling strategies have been widely neglected when dealing with taboo language in Hollywood films, especially in the Arabic context. Therefore, this study adopts the theoretical framework of DTS, which allows researchers to explore the possible contextual factors which may impact the selection of subtitling strategies.

Furthermore, it can be observed from the previous literature that few studies deal with the concept of taboo language and its translations notably in Arabic context where only a few case studies have attempt to explore this linguistic phenomenon qualitatively. In those case studies, the data is usually acquired from only one or two films, which is not large enough to investigate such complex linguistic phenomena. Hence, the findings of those case studies are not generalisable as there are many contextual factors that may affect the validity of their results. For example, the ideology of the individual subtitler, the channels that will present a film, the time of subtitling and the genre of the film can all combine to influence subtitlers' language choices. In addition, the classifications of taboo words used in previous studies in Arabic context is often subjective and intuitive and vague, and the impact of taboo functions on the way subtitling strategies are used have not been investigated yet in a systematic, large-scale, and theoretically cogent manner.

The main aim of this study is to offer for the first time a large-scale comprehensive and systematic study of the translation of taboo words in Arabic subtitles. In the next chapter, the corpus of this study, its size, design and compilation, data extraction and analysis will be presented and explained. Also, the taboo words in this corpus will be examined quantitatively

and qualitatively, taking into account the semantic fields to which taboo words belong in addition to the words' linguistic functions. Moreover, we will investigate how subtitlers deal with taboo language in Arabic subtitles and to what extent it is possible to suggest possible reasons and explanations for their linguistic choices.

Chapter 3: Data and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this study, we analyse how taboo words in Hollywood movies are subtitled into Arabic, and to identify the translation strategies being employed. Based on a corpus of parallel English-Arabic subtitles, this study addresses the following research questions:

1.What are the dominant taboo items, categories and functions in the English subtitles?

2.What are the dominant translation strategies used in the translation of taboo language?

a. Do these strategies tend to be SL-oriented or TL-oriented (domesticating or foreignising)?

3. What is the impact of taboo function on the use of translation strategies in the translation of the most frequently-occurring items and categories?

This chapter sets out the methodological tools utilised and the steps taken to answer the research questions stated above. An overview of corpus-based translation studies and relevant definitions, and types will be given. Also, an account of corpus design and compilation, data extraction, analysis and classification will be provided.

Corpus, as a term, has been defined in several studies, generating many definitions. Yates (1996) defined corpus as a virtual set of oral or written texts selected by a researcher for the purpose of investigating particular issues. On the other hand, Zanettin defines corpus as a "collection of electronic texts assembled according to explicit design criteria", adding that a corpus is usually compiled with the goal of "representing a larger textual population" (2002, p.11). Hence, a corpus can provide researchers with a large volume of data, although in the past it has been extremely difficult to deal with this amount of data.

Baker (1993) indicates that corpus-based research in translation studies can be an essential tool for descriptive empirical studies. Most of the previous studies which adopted a corpus-based approach were mainly concerned either with investigating the universal features of

translation such as generalisation and explicitation, or studying the styles of individual translators. Baker (1995) points out that corpora are gradually taking their shape and their position in the field of translation studies. However, In the field of AVT in the Arabic context, to date, no study has conducted a corpus-based analysis to investigate translations of taboo language into Arabic with the exception of Khalaf and Rashid's (2016) study which was based on only one film, and the functions of taboo words were not investigated since the study was concerned only with semantic typology. To address this gap, this study established a parallel corpus of ninety Hollywood films and Arabic subtitles to explore taboo language and its corresponding Arabic translations, and to determine the impact of taboo functions on the selection of subtitling strategies.

Oakes and Ji (2012) argue that the use of quantitative and computational approaches in corpus-based translation studies would be a significant contribution to the field as this allows the interaction between theories and empirical results. This means that a qualitative and quantitative approach can be adopted collaboratively to address given research questions. In the same vein, Leech et al. (2009) point out that in corpus-based analysis, researchers can go back and forth between the corpus data and abstract formulations such as theories, hypotheses and generalisations to find evidence that either support or reject certain hypotheses. Therefore, a corpus-based approach allows a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis to be undertaken.

3.2 Usage of corpus in Translation

The field of translation studies is a multidisciplinary one that can benefit from many other disciplines such as psychology, cognitive science, film studies and literary and cultural studies, to name but a few. Among those disciplines is that of computer science which provides researchers with practical tools that can save a considerable amount of time and effort. With the advent of corpus software in linguistics and its related disciplines, researchers can access

and manage large volumes of data, enabling them to conduct complex analyses quickly, accurately and efficiently. Biber et al. (1998) point out that corpus software enables researchers to analyse a large number of texts, gives statistical reliability to their research, and prevents human subjectivity and bias in the analysis. Hence, the results can be considered reliable and consistent. In the same vein, by using the corpus, research findings would be valid and large enough for generalizability, which would not be possible without such an approach.

Corpus-based analysis can be beneficial for descriptive empirical studies such as this study as a corpus can offer significant, actual and real-life data that can be used for investigating certain linguistic and translational issues. Laviosa (2002) points out that a corpus can be very beneficial for three types of descriptive studies: process, product and function-oriented research, where this tool enables the exploration of both very detailed and extensive patterns. Laviosa adds that the use of corpora will prevent studies from becoming "speculations based on intuitive data or *a-priori* assumptions" (2002, p.16). Similarly, Olohan (2004) argues that, thanks to corpora, researchers can access real data about the actual behaviour of translators and what translations look like in real-life. Thus, Mair (2006) indicates that such analysis can yield results that can support or even challenge hypotheses that depend on theoretical perspectives.

The history of the corpus in the field of translation studies is often compared with that of other disciplines. In linguistics, for instance, researchers started to employ corpus-based approaches three decades earlier than in translation, as noted by (Olohan, 2004). According to Shen (2011), in translation studies, Mona Baker is commonly viewed as the first translation scholar to use corpus-based approaches to investigate several translation issues such as the translator's style and subjectivity. Since then, the use of corpus-based methods has become common as it provides methodologies and techniques that enable researchers to answer various research questions within the field of translation studies in its practical and theoretical branches.

Although corpus-based analysis allows researchers to conduct complex analyses of large volumes of text quickly and efficiently, some shortcomings and limitations need to be taken into account. Malmkjaer (1998) points out that any research that depends on statistical evidence and numbers may ignore some problematic issues and limit the creative usage of language. In other words, there might be some linguistic phenomena and translational cases that pure statistical analysis may not be able to identify. Hence, some features investigated in qualitative analysis cannot be easily automated and do not lend themselves readily to quantification due to limitations of current software. Moreover, there are subtle and salient translational patterns that require a close qualitative analysis to explore in depth the issues under investigation. Hasko elaborates on this by stating that:

> Qualitative corpus analysis is a methodology that has made a significant contribution to language studies by enabling researchers to access, highlight, and methodically explore attested linguistic phenomena that range from frequent to rare, simple to complex, and easily discernible to stretched over thousands of words. Fuelled by technological innovation, informed by the breadth of multimethod approaches, and built upon the successes of various subfields of linguistic research (2020, p.5)

Lindquist (2009) indicates that qualitative analysis is based on an interpretative approach and tends to be done by means of a comprehensive analysis of specific linguistic features. Similarly, Williams and Chesterman (2002) point out that a qualitative approach allows researchers to predict what may occur and what is possible.

Hence, this study adopts both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative phase is conducted by identifying frequency of English taboo words and their Arabic translations in both the English and Arabic subtitles. The qualitative investigation will be carried out by adopting the Toury "pair-group " (0) in which the taboo words in the ST will be compared with its counterpart in the TT to find out how subtitlers deal with taboo words, and

explain possible reasons behind their choices. Then, the findings derived from the quantitative and qualitative phases are compared.

3.3 Types

Before proceeding with a description of the various corpus types in more detail, it is necessary to differentiate between corpus-based and corpus-driven research. According to Teubert and Cermakova (2004: 57), corpus-based studies are used with topics that have been tested and examined by corpus evidence. On the other hand, corpus-driven research uses corpus as a methodology and a basis for investigating and detecting translational phenomena without prior expectations.

Various corpus classifications have been proposed in several studies such as Baker (1995), Laviosa (2002), and Rica (2012). The classification provided by Laviosa (2002), although not exhaustive, represents the most common types of corpora used in the field of translation studies.

The first type of corpus is based on how many languages(s) are used in the corpus; thus, the corpus can be monolingual, bilingual or multilingual. The first type is when only one language is used, the second types of corpus consists of two languages, while the third one has more than two languages.

The second type of corpus is parallel or comparable corpora. Parallel corpora consist of texts in one language and their translations in another language. On the other hand, comparable corpora consist of similar texts in different languages and this type is known as a bilingual or multilingual comparable corpus. A comparable corpus can also consist of texts from varieties of one language, i.e. a comparable monolingual corpus.

Also, the corpus can be composed of written or spoken forms, or a combination of both. In the first type, the corpora contain a collection of written texts, while the spoken one contains recorded spoken texts. This type also may contain texts written to be spoken. Another

classification is based on the time to which texts belong. In other words, the corpus can be synchronic if the texts are from a specific period, while the diachronic corpora contain texts that belong to a long period of time.

In translation studies, most of the research concerned with investigating linguistic issues across languages uses the parallel corpus. According to Zanettin (2012), a parallel corpus tends to be used to investigate the types of choices that translators make during the translation process, and to determine the extent to which the translated texts are similar to or different from the STs. This study uses bilingual, parallel and synchronic corpora.

Having discussed the corpus definitions, applications, types in translation studies and film genres, in the following sections, an account of the corpus design, compilation, data extraction and analysis methods used will be provided.

3.4 Corpus design and compilation

To compile the data required for this study, many challenges constrained the available options. Factors such as the availability of official DVD subtitles, the genres, films' popularity and date of release presented a daunting challenge. In order to overcome these obstacles, several criteria were established for compiling the data for this study. Movies were selected based on the criteria given below.

1. Genre: All films selected for this study were chosen based on Internet Movie Database's genre classifications. In other words, the corpus was constructed in a way that included most major film genres so that the corpus of this study is representative and not skewed to any particular genre.
2. Availability: Many DVD movies do not have Arabic subtitles, especially in Australia, and that limited the options available for this study. Even in the Middle East, the majority of subtitles are taken from fansubbing platforms such as Subscene, Movizland, Dardarkom, Cima4u and some other websites. Therefore, the availability of movies with official

subtitles presented a considerable challenge with regard to movie selection and building the corpus. In order to overcome this obstacle, in addition to DVDs, it was necessary to resort to various video streaming services such as Amazon Prime and Netflix. Also, several movies were rented or bought from the iTunes Store.

3. The number of films in each genre: Ten movies were selected for each genre in order to ensure the corpus was balanced across genres and not skewed to any particular genre.
4. Rating: The selected movies met a rating criterion. The rating was based on IMDB'S rating out of 10, had to be between 5 and above. This criterion ensures popularity and therefore mean that it would be more likely to be watched by viewers in Arabic-speaking countries.
5. Awards: The films selected for this study either won awards or were nominated for awards. This ensures the film popularity and success and therefore it is more likely to be watched by Arab viewers.
6. Date of release: All films chosen in this study were released between 2000 and 2018, which allows the study to control for the variable of language change.
7. Sequels and prequels: Only one film is selected when the movie has more than one part. This criterion was established to avoid choosing the same film, genre and theme and to make the data as representative and comprehensive as possible.

In regard to the study design, the main corpus was divided into nine sub-corpora, according to the film genres. This made it possible to search the genres to find the frequency of taboo words in each genre, and determine whether the genre has an impact on the subtitlers' choices of translation strategies.

In order to determine whether the ST is the film’s script or the English subtitles, a pilot study was conducted to discover whether there is a difference between the two English versions regarding taboo words. Five films were selected randomly and their taboo words were compared. From the pilot study, we found that the number of taboo words in both scripts and

English subtitles are the same. Moreover, we found that Arabic subtitles are closer to the English subtitles than to the dialogue. Several well-known Arabic subtitlers confirm this observation through personal experience, indicating that they depend on the English subtitles rather than on the dialogue when subtitling. However, this indication cannot be academically proven, and this idea has yet to be discussed in studies conducted on AVT in the Arabic context. For the reasons given above, the English subtitles were assumed to be the ST and included in the corpus.

Ninety feature films comprise the corpus for this study, each with English subtitles and their Arabic counterparts. All films are feature films that span nine genres: action, comedy, crime, horror, thriller, romance, drama, fantasy, and adventure. The approximate playtime for the corpus is about 165 hours, consisting of more than 860516 English words, and more than 612905 Arabic words. The total number of words in the corpus is around 1473421, making this among the largest corpora of this kind in the world and the largest AVT in Arabic language. The details of each film are shown in the Appendix.

3.5 Data extraction

The data collection for this study consisted of several stages. In the first stage, the English subtitles were extracted mainly from DVD, Amazon Prime, iTunes Store and Netflix. The second stage involved accessing and extracting the subtitles in plain text formats. This was done using software such as SmartRipper and SubRip to extract both Arabic and English subtitles. However, Arabic subtitles extracted in this fashion contain many errors as some Optical character recognition software cannot recognise Arabic characters accurately. Therefore, all subtitles had to be checked and corrected manually. After extracting and revising, English subtitles were divided into sentences to be the unit of investigation and then the Arabic subtitles were aligned with their counterparts. Then, the aligned sentences were converted to Excel and then uploaded to the software environment Sketch Engine for further analysis.

Sketch engine has been selected as the corpus analysis software because it is able to display Arabic texts in the appropriate right-to-left direction and correctly read Arabic script in UTF-8 and UTF-16 formats. Lemma is a feature in Sketch Engine that provides the root of a word with its various morphological forms under one lemma. For example, the lemma of words such as *fucker, fucked, fucking* is the word *fuck*. Then, a manual search was conducted on the extracted lemmatised word list for the ninety films to identify each taboo word and categorise it semantically.

The third stage involved identifying and classifying taboo words. To do this, a comprehensive, bottom-up method was used by compiling a frequency word list of English taboo words. The corpus was fed with several lists of the most common taboo words used in American TV, among which the list proposed by Jay (2009) and Sapolsky, Shafer, Kaye (2010). Afterwards, the identified taboo words were classified according to the twelve semantic categories proposed by Jay (1992), McEnery (2006) and Allan and Burridge (2006). These categories comprise twelve types of taboo words, namely: 1. Sex; 2. Body part(s); 3. Excrement/human waste; 4. Religion; 5. Physical/mental disability; 6. Incest; 7. Racism; 8. Animal; 9. Homophobia; 10. Narcotics/crime; 11. Prostitution; and 12. Death/disease. Also, the functions of taboo words will be identified by using McEnery's classification (2006) (0).

Before identifying the taboo words, the lemmas for each taboo item were searched using the concordance feature which gives the required context to determine whether or not the lemmas are taboo. At this stage, non-taboo items were removed from the dataset, for example the word balls in phrases like golf balls. Then, the identified taboo words were searched in the English ST and compared to their counterparts in Arabic subtitles to identify the subtitling strategies employed. The taxonomy of translation strategies proposed by Pedersen (2011) and Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) were slightly modified and adopted in this study to code the translation strategy used in each translation for each instance of a taboo word. For the

quantitative analysis, the data were exported to a spreadsheet. For each case of a taboo word, the lexical item in question, its frequency, its category and functions, and the strategy used to translate it were coded.

3.6 Corpus analysis

After collecting the data, we set up an Excel spreadsheet which included all taboo words in the corpus in addition to their raw and normalised frequency, their semantic and linguistic function, and the subtitling strategies used for each taboo item. Also, a cross-tabulation analysis was conducted to discover any relationship between subtitling strategies used and the semantic and function categories of taboo words. This quantitative analysis provided an overview of the data and the distribution of taboo words, their corresponding subtitling strategies, and their semantic and functional classifications. Due to the limited number of categories under each variable, the statistical power was too low to conduct regression analyses. A simple chi-square was performed for each cross-tabulation to test for significance, although the small number of data points render this relatively meaningless and it is not reported in the study. Based on the quantitative data obtained for the ninety films, a qualitative investigation was carried out to determine the possible reasons for salient cases and subtitlers' choices, and to identify any noticeable patterns in the use of specific subtitling strategies for different taboo functions and categories. The results of both the quantitative and qualitative analyses were compared with those of previous studies.

In order to obtain the data required for the analysis, the selected taboo items were searched using the concordance feature of the Sketch Engine. Both English and Arabic subtitles are presented in alignment, which allows the researcher to tag the subtitling strategies used in each instance. This is a corpus-based implementation of Toury's (1995/2012) couple-pairs method.

In this corpus, after the analysis of the nine subtitling strategies, five were applied when dealing with taboo words: direct translation, specification, cultural substitution, reformulation and omission.

The number of strategies identified in this study might be seen as small compared to those mentioned in other studies, especially those dealing with culture-specific items. However, due to the nature of taboo words, the source taboo is either transferred or absent in the target language. For these two groups, a couple of strategies are implemented. In the studies conducted by Han and Wang (2014), Sedighi and Najian (2012), and Khakshour and Modarresi, (2018) and Díaz-Pérez (2020), three to five translation strategies are adopted when dealing with taboo language. In this study, the five translation strategies used in Arabic subtitles are direct translation, specification, cultural substitution, reformulation and omission. These strategies can be classified into main two groups based on the presence or absence of taboo items in the Arabic subtitles. When the taboo words are translated into the Arabic subtitles, three strategies are used, namely direct translation , specification and cultural substitution. On the other hand, when reformulation and omission strategies are used, the taboo item is absent in the Arabic subtitles. Also, the five subtitling strategies adopted in this study are classified according to the two main concepts proposed by Venuti, i.e. domestication and foreignisation, as shown in Figure 2 below.

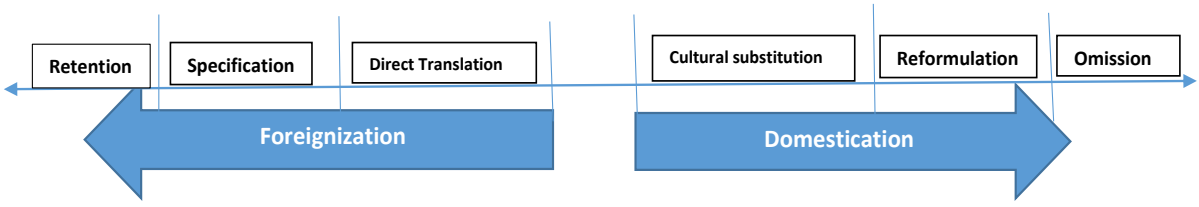


Figure 2: Domestication and foreignisation continuum of subtitling strategies

To maximise the validity of the classification and identification of the taboo functions and subtitling strategies, three Arabic-speaking PhD students of linguistics at Macquarie University were asked to randomly review and verify the accuracy of those classifications and identify and suggest any changes where necessary. Where there was disagreement, modifications were made when two out of three reviewers agreed on an alternative function or the subtitling strategy used.

After identifying the taboo words related to the twelve taboo categories, it was found that the number of taboo items in the corpus was too large to handle, particularly since the analysis was to be conducted for each taboo item and involved identifying its semantic category, its linguistic function, the subtitling strategies used for it, the corresponding Arabic word, and the Arabic semantic category. Moreover, the qualitative analysis entailed analysing the individual occurrence of each taboo word to identify any translational tendencies in subtitlers' linguistic choices and any less-than-obvious patterns worth investigating. Such an analysis of all the taboo words found in the corpus would exceed the scope of this study. Consequently, taboo words which occurred more than ninety times were analysed and studied. Although this cut-off point is relatively arbitrary, it means that only taboo words that appear at least an average of one time per film were investigated. The taboo words included in this study, and their frequency, are presented below in section 4.2.

After selecting the most common taboo words, only seven out of twelve taboo categories contained taboo words that appeared more than ninety times. The categories are sex, religion, body parts, excrement, mental disability, incest, and prostitution.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter described the methodological procedures followed in this study to answer the research questions of this study. It began with an overview of the use of corpus-based approaches in the field of translation studies and its advantages and shortcomings in conducting

quantitative and qualitative analyses. Then, an account of the procedures taken to compile and extract the data is presented, in addition to the way the data is analysed. The findings of these analyses are presented and discussed in chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results and discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the findings of this study. It starts with the most common taboo words and their frequencies in the English subtitles, and the semantic categories to which those words belong. This is followed by the overall frequencies of the Arabic equivalents of the English taboo words, their semantic categories, the predominant subtitling strategies used in the corpus of this study when translating taboo words into Arabic, and the frequencies of taboo word functions. Each taboo function is discussed individually to identify the taboo words used for each function, their Arabic equivalents, and the subtitling strategies used for each taboo item. A thorough analysis of each taboo function is presented. This includes the taboo words used for each of those functions, and the corresponding Arabic words used to translate the English taboo words. Moreover, any translational trends that may account for subtitlers' linguistic choices are identified.

In the following section, the types, the tokens and the taboo categories of English taboo words found in the corpus of this study will be provided.

4.2 Taboo words in English subtitles and their Arabic translations in Arabic subtitles

4.2.1 Taboo words and their categories

As discussed in the methodology chapter, the corpus comprising ninety feature films contains a total of 10641 taboo tokens, comprising 16 unique types. The raw frequency of each taboo item and its taboo category is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Frequency of taboo lemmas and their semantic categories

Row Labels	body parts	excrement	incest	mental disability	Prosti-tution	religion	sex	Grand Total
ass	492							492
asshole	194							194
balls	141							141
bitch					289			289
bullshit		164						164
damn						291		291
dick	274							274
fuck							3059	3059
God						1958		1958
goddamn						267		267
hell						423		423
Jesus /Christ						466		466
Motherfucking /er			144					144
sex							377	377
shit		1882						1882
stupid				220				220
Grand Total	**1101**	**2046**	**144**	**220**	**289**	**3405**	**3436**	**10641**

As Table 2 shows, taboo words in the sex category occur the most frequently (3436 times), with the word *fuck* appearing 3059 times and *sex* being used 377 times. This is followed closely by the religion category which comprises six words. Of a total of 3405 words, *God* occurs 1958 times, *Jesus /Christ* 466 times, *hell* 423 times, *damn* 291 times, and *goddamn* 267 times. Words in the excrement category rank third in terms of frequency (2046), with the word *shit* occurring 1882 times, and *bullshit* appearing 164 times. Words in the body part category are the fourth most frequently used (1101 times). This category consists of four taboo words: *ass*, *dick*, *asshole* and *balls*, occurring 492, 274,194 and 141 times respectively. Words in the other three categories, namely prostitution (*bitch* occurs 289 times), mental disability (*stupid* appears 220 times) and incest (*motherfucker* and *motherfucking* appear 144 times), do not exceed 300.

Clearly, there is a significant difference in terms of word frequency between the first three taboo categories and the last three, with the body part category standing in between.

However, when the aforementioned English taboo words are subtitled into Arabic, on many occasions the corresponding Arabic words that appear on the screen belong to different semantic categories. For example, the word *motherfucker* tends to be subtitled as لعين [damned]. Thus, the Arabic version belongs to a different semantic category, which is neither a sex nor an incest category, but a religious one. In this study, the Arabic equivalents of English taboo words are classified according to 11 categories as shown in the following Figure.

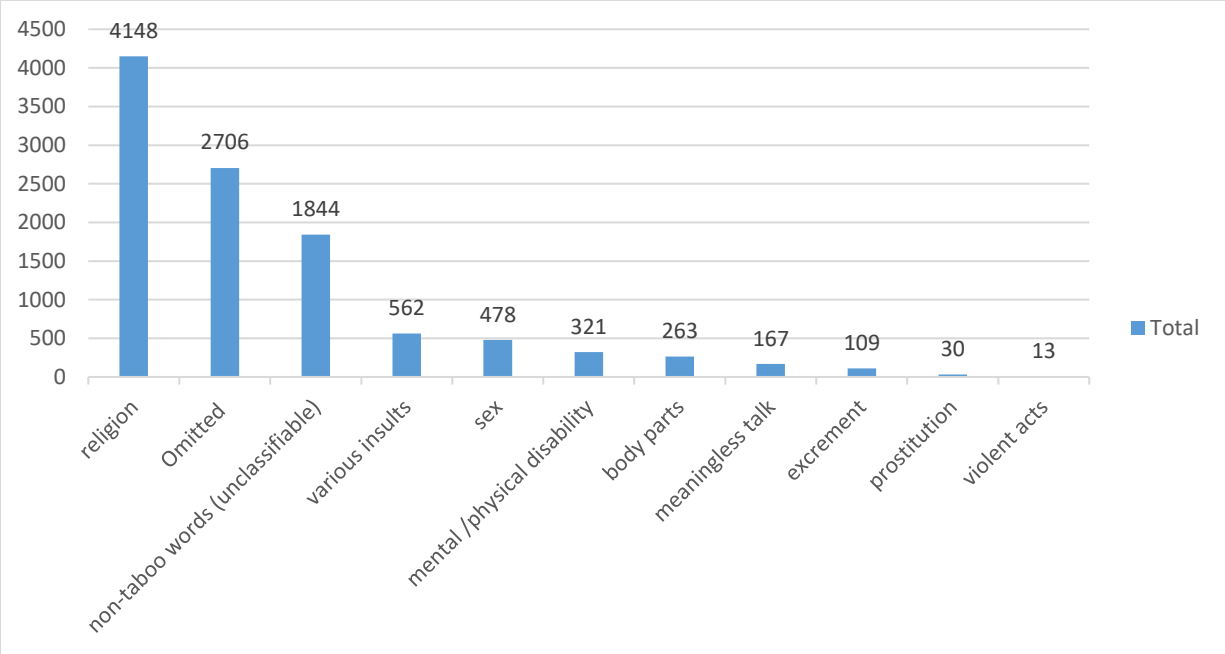


Figure 3: Categories of Arabic equivalents of English taboo words

As can be seen in Figure 3, the Arabic equivalents of English taboo words that belong to the religion category occur the most frequently (4148 times out of a total 10641), accounting for 39% of total choices adopted by subtitlers. The omission of English taboo items in the Arabic subtitles is the second most common choice, occurring 2706 times (25%). This is followed by non-taboo words which appear 1844 times (17%). Together, these three categories account for about 81% of the choices made by subtitlers. The fourth most common taboo category of Arabic subtitles comprises various insults that do not belong in any of the three aforementioned

categories. What these words have in common is that they are all intended as insults. For example, words such as سخيف [silly], وغد [scoundrel], and سيء [bad] are commonly used in Arabic subtitles as equivalents of English taboo words when used as curses or personal insults. Words in this category occur 562 times (5%). The fifth most frequent category is the *sex* category in the Arabic subtitles, where *sex*-related words occur 478 times, although the sex category in English subtitles is the most frequent taboo category in English subtitles with 3436 cases. In Arabic subtitles, words such as ممارسة الحب [make love], الجنس [sex] and يضاجع [sleep with] repeatedly occur as translations for *fuck* and *sex* when used in the literal sense. The sixth most common category is the mental and physical disability category of insults which occurs more frequently than its English counterpart, appearing 321 times compared to 220 in the English subtitles. This category comprises words such as أبله [idiot] غبي [stupid] and أحمق [fool]. Body parts, on the other hand, was the seventh most common taboo category, occurring 263 times in the Arabic subtitles of English taboo words, compared to 1101 times in the English subtitles. As evident, there is a huge difference between the number of words in this category and those in other categories in the English subtitles and their equivalents in Arabic subtitles. Words belonging to other categories, namely those of meaningless talk and excrement, prostitution and violent acts, appear fewer than 200 times.

Since there are significantly fewer words in the sex, excrement and body part taboo categories, and more in the religious category, it is worth investigating in depth the shifts that take place in these categories when subtitling English taboo words into Arabic. Table 3 below shows the extent to which English taboo categories shift into other categories when they are subtitled into Arabic.

Table 3: Taboo categories in English subtitles and their counterparts in Arabic subtitles

English subtitles		**Arabic subtitles**	
English taboo category	Category frequency	categories of Arabic equivalents	Frequency and percentage
sex	3436	Omitted	1496 (44%)
		religion	1049 (30%)
		sex	450 (13%)
		non-taboo words (unclassifiable)	359 (10%)
religion	3406	**religion**	2199 (65%)
		Omitted	826 (24%)
		non-taboo words (unclassifiable)	376(11%)
		various insults	3
excrement	2046	**religion**	821 (40%)
		non-taboo words (unclassifiable)	621 (30%)
		Omitted	229 (11%)
		meaningless talk	166 (8%)
body parts	1101	non-taboo words (unclassifiable)	441 (40%)
		body parts	263 (24%)
		various insults	140 (13%)
		mental /physical disability	115 (10%)
		Omitted	84 (8%)
		religion	22 (2%)
prostitution	289	various insults	160 (55%)
		non-taboo words (unclassifiable)	34 (12%)
		Omitted	31 (11%)
		prostitution	27 (9%)
		religion	23 (8%)
mental disability	220	mental /physical disability	155 (70%)
		various insults	47 (21%)
		Omitted	15 (7%)
		non-taboo words (unclassifiable)	3 (1%)

incest	144	various insults	67 (47%)
		religion	34 (24%)
		Omitted	25 (17%)
		non-taboo words (unclassifiable)	10 (7%)

As can be seen in Table 3 above, there is a significant shift in the semantic categories of English taboo words when subtitling into Arabic, with a predominance of religious words which rank first with English taboo words related to religious and excrement categories; ranking second are words in the sex- and incest-related categories. Starting with the most common category which is the *sex* category, it is obvious that of 3436 instances, omission is applied in 1469 cases (44%), replaced with Arabic religious words 1049 times (31%), and translated by non-taboo Arabic words 359 times (10%). Altogether, this means that about 85% of English taboo words related to *sex* no longer belong to the *sex* category when subtitled into Arabic. However, in only 450 (13%) cases do the Arabic equivalents remain in the sex category, most of these cases are used for literal sense.

The second most common category is the religious one, with words occurring 3406 times. These are rendered into Arabic religious words in 2199 (65%) cases. Although religious words are commonly used in spoken and written Arabic, these are omitted in 826 (24%) cases, while in 376 (11%) instances, they are translated into non-taboo words. On the other hand, when it comes to English taboo words related to excrement, Arabic religious words are used as the most common equivalents, appearing 821 (40%) times out of a total 2046; non-taboo Arabic equivalents are applied 621 (30%) times, omission 229 (11%) times, and direct translation 166 times (8%) with Arabic words related to the meaningless category. Hence, over 90% of excrement-related words are not subtitled into Arabic words belonging to this category. In Arabic subtitles, such words are omitted or translated using religious words or non-taboo words; these are the usual choices made by subtitlers when dealing with almost all taboo categories in the ST. Also, words in only three taboo categories in the English subtitles remain

in the same categories when subtitled into Arabic, namely the religious, body part and mental disability categories.

The huge decrease in the number of words in the sex, excrement and body-part taboo categories, and the frequent use of Arabic religious words as equivalents of English taboo words can be attributed to several factors. First, religious words are widely used in Arabs' daily spoken language as well as in written discourse (Harrell, Abu-Talib and Carroll, 2006). Morrow and Castleton (2007) note that it would be difficult to teach the Arabic language without including religious expressions. Consequently, when expressing strong emotions through general expletives, Arabic equivalents belonging to the religious domain are more idiomatic than using the word *shit* for instance. Moreover, religious words are more acceptable to Arab viewers than are the sex- or excrement-related words. Another factor is the language register used in Arabic subtitling which is MSA: a prestigious, formal and high register of language, which is used in educational contexts, news, media, legal system etc. The term register has been defined by Halliday as a functional variety of language (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014: 29). In other words, MSA is register-constrained in terms of taboo expressions, among other things. Furthermore, the shift from the spoken slangy and informal register of English taboo words to a written, formal and high register would entail toning down offensive words, which would be incongruous in such a formal register as MSA. Also, taboo words tend to be harsher and more offensive when they are in written rather than spoken form. Therefore, linguistic constraints such as the mandatory use of MSA, and the shift from spoken to written form, seem to have a significant impact on the way English taboo words are handled in Arabic subtitles. Besides the linguistic constraints, the cultural and social norms of the Arab culture require subtitlers to tone down the English taboo words so that such norms are not violated. All these factors combine to produce huge variations between words in the taboo categories in the English subtitles and their counterparts in Arabic subtitles, in addition to the

frequent use of readily available religious idiomatic expressions in MSA when dealing with various English taboo words.

The differences in linguistic norms and structures between English and Arabic is another significant factor that determines the way taboo words are used in both languages, which makes the use of words related to excrement in Arabic subtitles unidiomatic and awkward. For example, the word *shit* in English can be used as a general expletive directed at an object. However, this is not so in written Arabic though used commonly in spoken Arabic dialects. Hence, if the word *shit* is rendered by direct translation, the Arabic subtitle would be awkward, unidiomatic and pragmatically incorrect as excrement-related taboo terms are incongruous only in the MSA subtitling environment. Therefore, subtitlers use religious words such as اللعنة [damn] for the sake of idiomaticity and adherence to cultural norms. The same applies to contexts where the word *shit* is used to refer to an object. For example, *'I don't use this shit'* is subtitled into Arabic as *أنا لا استخدم هذا الدواء*[I don't use this medicine]. Here, the Arabic equivalent no longer belongs to the excrement category due to the structural differences between English and Arabic languages.

All in all, it is evident that there is a big variation between the frequencies of taboo categories in English and Arabic due to the syntactic and morphological difference between Arabic and English, cultural norms and conventions of the target language, and MSA which is the language used for Arabic subtitling because of its very formal and high register. These reasons influence the way subtitlers deal with taboo words, thus affecting the frequency of semantic categories in the Arabic subtitles. A detailed discussion of individual taboo words and their linguistic function is provided in sections 4.4.1 to 4.4.9.

Having provided an overview of the taboo semantic categories in the English subtitles and their counterparts in Arabic subtitles, in the next section, the most frequent Arabic words that appear in Arabic subtitles as equivalents for the English taboo words will be presented.

4.2.2 The frequency of Arabic equivalents of English taboo words

Figure 4 below shows the most prevalent Arabic words used for the translation of taboo words in English subtitles throughout the corpus.

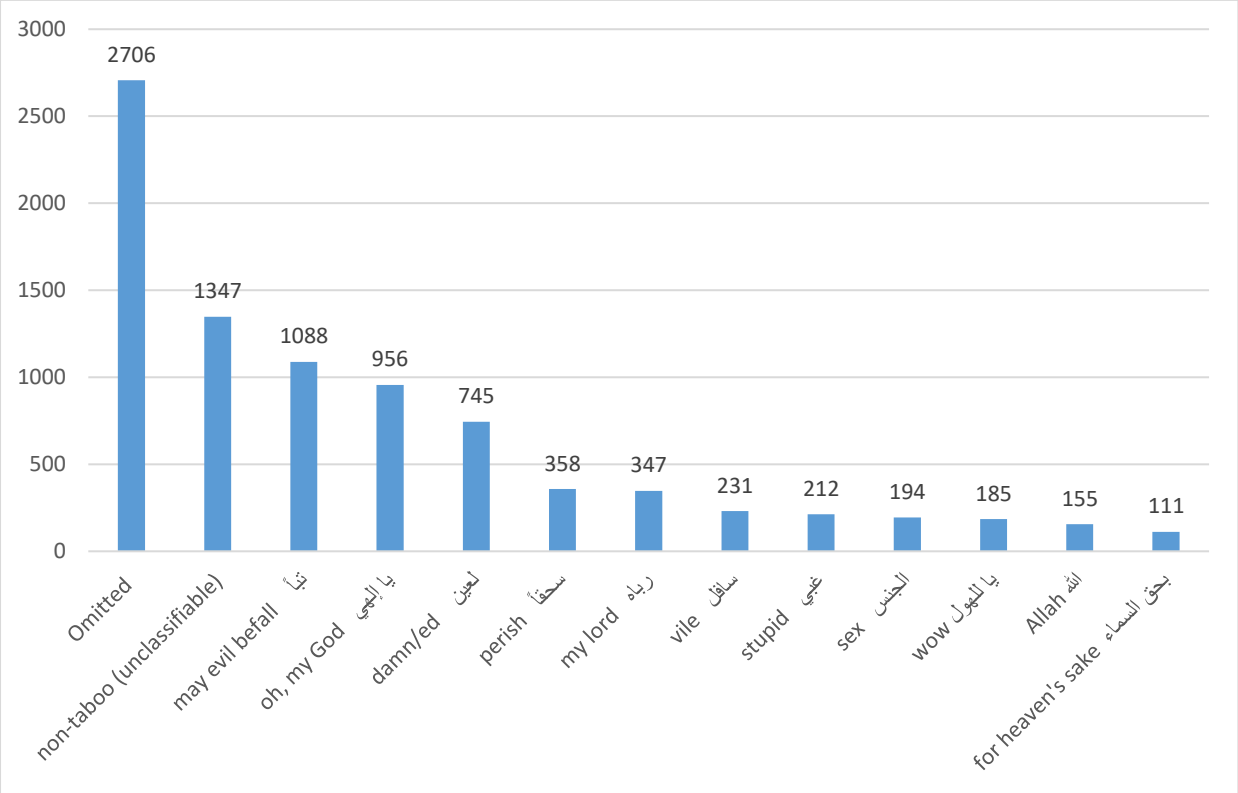


Figure 4: The most common Arabic equivalents of English taboo words

Figure 4 above shows the most frequent Arabic words used by subtitlers as equivalents for English taboo words. These words appear more than a hundred times in Arabic subtitles and, as can be seen, most of the Arabic equivalents belong to the religion domain. The foremost translation strategy adopted by subtitlers is that of omission, followed by the use of non-taboo words which cannot be classified under a category or even a specific group. Therefore, the first two options cannot be considered as equivalent words. However, they are included in this Figure to give a general idea about the omitted cases and the use of inoffensive words. Hence, the five most common Arabic equivalents used for translating English taboo words are related

to religion with the use of the word تبا[11] [may evil befall (someone)], يا إلهي [oh, my God], اللعنة أو اللعين [damned], and سحقا [may God alienate (someone) from His mercy], رباه [oh my lord] occurring 1088,956, 745 and 358 times respectively. Also, the two least common words in the religion category are the words الله [Allah], and بحق السماء [for heaven's sake] appearing in 155 and 111 cases respectively. Hence, of a total of eleven common Arabic equivalents, seven are religious terms. The remaining three words are سافل [vile], غبي [stupid] and الجنس [sex] which occur 231, 213 and 193 times, respectively. There are several other words that occur fewer than a hundred times, but the aim of this comparison is to give an overview of the most common Arabic equivalents used for English taboo words. Each taboo word and its Arabic equivalents will be discussed in more detail in sections 4.4.1 to 4.4.9.

When comparing the most frequent words in English and the Arabic subtitles, it can be seen that there is a huge difference in terms of frequency between the English words and their Arabic counterparts. For example, the word *fuck* in English subtitles was used 3059 times; however, the most frequent word in Arabic subtitles is the word تباً [may evil befall (someone)], used 1088 times. Also, the dominance of religious-related words in Arabic subtitles is evident when compared to the English taboo words which belong mainly to the *sex*, excrement and body part taboo categories. Another feature that can be observed from Figure 4 is the degree of offensiveness which varies remarkably between the English taboo words and their counterparts in Arabic subtitles. Hence, the taboo words that appear in Arabic subtitles are generally less offensive and more formal than the taboo words uttered in the English dialogue. This may be due to several factors, one of which is that religious words are commonly used in Arabic to express strong emotions such as anger, happiness, frustration etc. Cleft and Helani

[11] It is worth noting that it is difficult to provide exhaustive glosses or one single gloss that captures all possible senses of English or Arabic taboo expressions in their various functions and contexts, every time those expressions are referred to in the text or figures/tables. By convention, a prototypical gloss is provided for ease of reference but it does not by any means capture all possible senses/functions. After all, it is in the nature of all those taboo expressions to be underspecified for meaning and function and the provision of a single gloss would erroneously suggest otherwise.

(2010, p.358) note that “the widespread use of religious expressions in ordinary Arabic conversations, irrespective of the religious affiliation of the speaker has long been noted”. One of many examples is when the word *motherfucker* in English subtitles might be subtitled as اللعين [damned]. In the same vein, Harrell, Abu-Talib and Carroll (2006) note that Arabs in general tend to use a wide range of religions references in their everyday interactions. Moreover, Arabic sexual or body part-related taboo words are much more offensive, especially in MSA register commonly associated with polite society; thus, subtitlers tend to replace such English taboo words with religious words in Arabic subtitles in order to adhere to the Arabic linguistic and cultural norms.

Table 4: The use of the most Arabic equivalents for the English taboo words

Row Labels	***ass***	***ass-hole***	***balls***	***bitch***	***bull-shit***	***damn***	***dick***	***fuck***	***God***	***god-damn***	***hell***	***Jesus/ Christ***	***mother-fucking/er***	***shit***	***stupid***	**Grand Total**
تباً [may evil befall (someone)]	5	1	2	4		100	1	437	9	63	13	5	2	446		1088
يا إلهي [oh, my God]						1			811	1	1	138		4		956
لعين [damn/ed]	1	7	1	18	2	65	3	359		85	9	1	26	168		745
سحقاً [may God alienate (someone) from His mercy]			1	1	2	2		150	2	2	1		5	192		358
رباه [my lord]						1		1	225			119		1		347
سافل [vile]	3	44		101			6	32					42	3		231
غبي [stupid]	10	43		5			15	7					4	3	125	212
Grand Total	**19**	**95**	**4**	**129**	**4**	**169**	**25**	**986**	**1047**	**151**	**24**	**263**	**79**	**817**	**125**	**3937**

As shown in Table 4, the Arabic word most often used to translate English taboo words is the word تباً [may evil befall (someone)] which is used 1088 times, most frequently for the words *shit* (446 times) and *fuck* (437 times), making up about 41% and 41% respectively of its total use. The second most frequently used Arabic equivalent is the phrase يا إلهي [oh, my God], applied mainly with the English words *God* and *Jesus*/*Christ*, seen 811 and 138 times respectively, representing about 99% in total. The same applies to رباه [my lord], which is used with the word *God* and *Jesus*/*Christ* 225 and 119 times out of a total of 347. Another common Arabic equivalent is the word اللعنة أو اللعين [damn/ed], which subtitlers often use for the word *fuck* and *shit*, appearing 359 (48%) and 168 (23%) times respectively. Similarly, the word سحقاً [may God alienate (someone) from His mercy] is used for the word *shit* and *fuck* 192 (54%) and 150 (34%) times respectively. On the hand, the Arabic word سافل [vile] appears in 231 cases, 101 (44%) times with the word *bitch* 44 and 42 times with the words *asshole* and *motherfucker* respectively, altogether accounting for 37%. As shown in Table 4, the least commonly used Arabic word is the word غبي[stupid] which occurs 212 times. It is used primarily to translate the words *stupid* and *asshole*, occurring 125 (59%) and 43 (20%) times respectively.

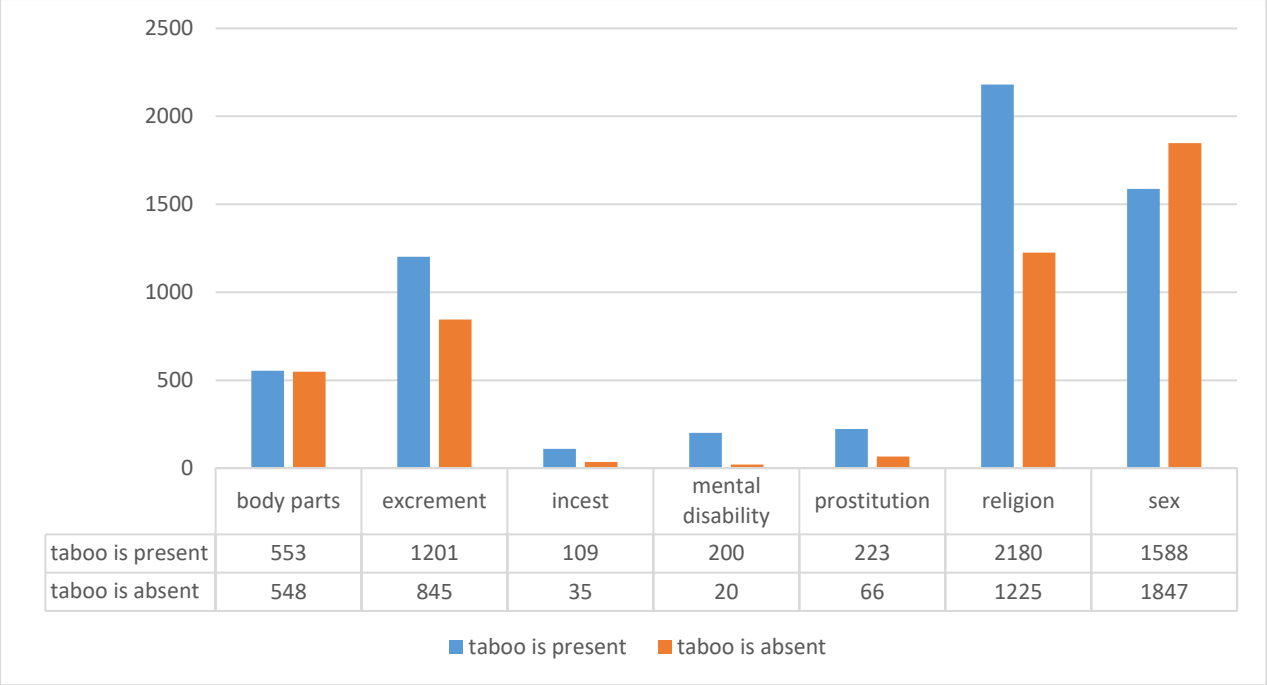
From the discussion above, it is clear that there is a shift from the sex and excrement categories to the religious one, which can be attributed to the acceptability and familiarity of religious terms in the Arabic language and culture, since religious references are commonly used to express strong emotions and subtitlers need to use formal words to adhere to the linguistic norms of MSA which is used in subtitling. Therefore, religious words are preferred options not only for subtitlers, but also for viewers as such Arabic equivalents are more acceptable than sex- or excrement-related words.. Díaz Cintas (2001) points out that sexual language and swearing will be accepted by target viewers if it conforms to their expectations.

Having given an overview of the common taboo words found in the corpus, the taboo categories, and the Arabic equivalents used in dealing with English taboo words, we now present an overview of the subtitling strategies used across the entire corpus.

4.3 Translation strategies used in the translation for taboo items

In this section, an overview of subtitling strategies used in this study is provided. First, we determine whether or not taboo items are present in Arabic subtitles, first individually and then in relation to the taboo category. The second part of this section presents the dominant subtitling strategies used when dealing with taboo words and how these strategies are applied to different taboo categories.

Before discussing the subtitling strategies in detail, it is important to identify whether or not there are taboo words in the English subtitles when subtitling them into Arabic and determine the extent to which English taboo words are transferred into taboo words in Arabic subtitles. The analysis of this study shows that English taboo words are either rendered in the corpus as taboo words, with or without modification, or as non-taboo words, or not accounted for altogether. Based on this, the findings are divided into two categories. The first one is when the taboo words are present in the TTs, which includes two subtitling strategies, namely direct translation and cultural substitution. On the other hand, when the taboo words are absent from Arabic subtitles, reformulation and omission strategies are applied. Figure 5 shows when the taboo is present and when it is absent in the taboo categories.



	body parts	excrement	incest	mental disability	prostitution	religion	sex
taboo is present	553	1201	109	200	223	2180	1588
taboo is absent	548	845	35	20	66	1225	1847

Figure 5: Taboo present vs taboo absent per category

As shown in Figure 5, the taboo presence in Arabic subtitles is more than the taboo absence for all taboo categories with the exception of the sex category where taboo words are present 1847 times (54%) compared to 1588 times (46%). In the religion category, the presence of taboo words is far greater in Arabic subtitles (2180 times), while the taboo words are absent in 1225 cases which is a high number considering the familiarity of religious terms in Arab culture. The possible reason for this absence will be discussed below in sections (4.4.1-9). However, the presence and the absence of taboo words in Arabic subtitles are quite similar with 553 cases for taboo presence and 548 cases for taboo absence. Although Figure 5 gives an overview of the presence and absence of taboo words in Arabic subtitles, a closer look is needed to identify each subtitling strategy and obtain a clear picture of the distribution and frequencies of subtitling strategies individually first and then based on the taboo category.

4.3.1 Dominant strategies

Five different subtitling strategies have been employed by subtitlers, one of which, specification, appears only once, while direct translation, cultural substitution, reformulation and omission appear more than 700 times. Below, first we show the distribution and frequencies of subtitling strategies across the entire corpus. Then, based on the taboo categories, we determine the relationship between taboo semantic categories and subtitling strategies; finally, we identify the subtitling strategies that are used for various taboo words. Figure 6 below gives an overview of the subtitling strategies adopted by subtitlers when translating taboo words into Arabic.

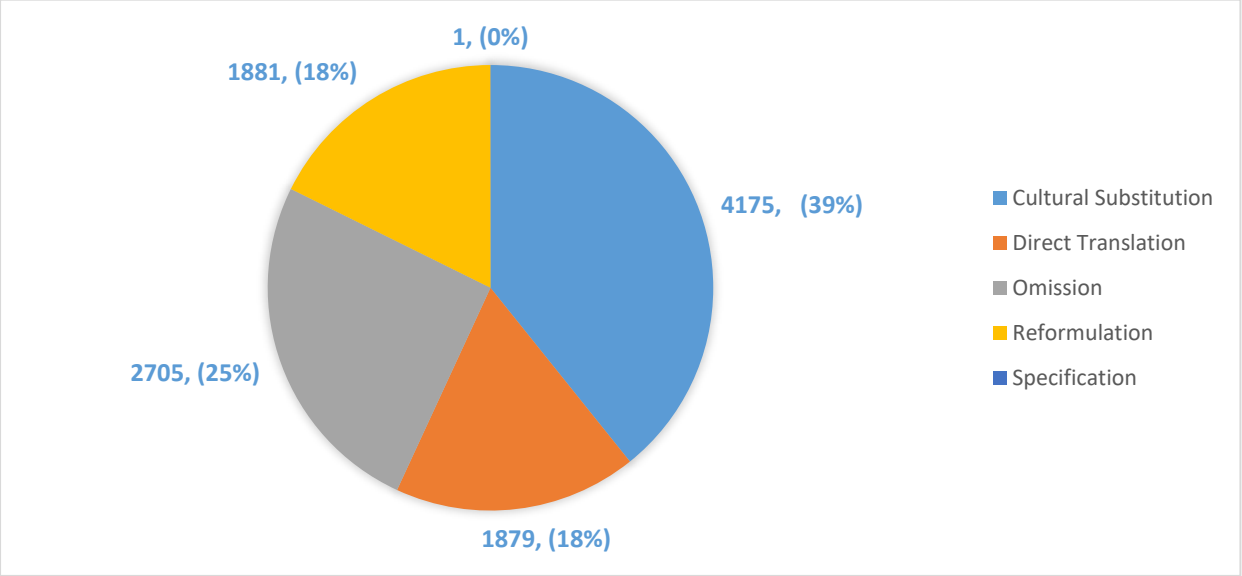


Figure 6: Subtitling strategies used across the entire corpus

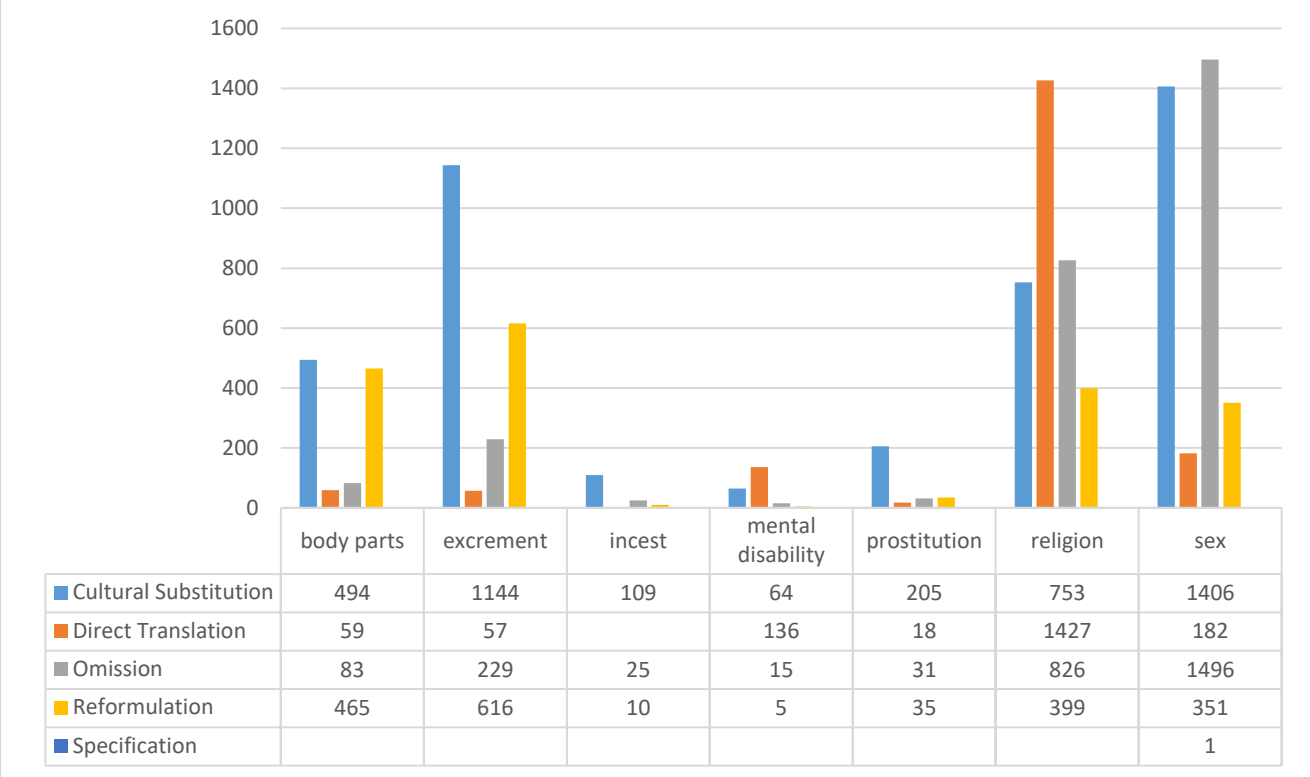
As shown in Figure 6, cultural substitution is the most commonly used strategy, having been applied 4175 (39%) times; this is followed by omission which is used in 2705 (25%) cases. Hence, omission and cultural substitution strategies account for about 71% of the subtitling strategies used across 90 films. This high percentage can be an indication of the ideological, cultural and linguistic constraints that determine the options available to subtitlers. Reformulation is the third most frequently used subtitling strategy (1881 times), followed

closely by direct translation (1879 times), each accounting for approximately 18% of the total number of taboo instances. On the other hand, the specification strategy was used once only.

The extent to which taboo words in the English subtitles are domesticated or foreignised is shown in Figure 6 above, where only 18% of the total instances of taboo words have been foreignised. Most of the foreignising is related to religious words that are used to almost the same extent in Arabic and English especially for the general expletive function. On the other hand, 82% of taboo words have been dealt with by applying domestication strategies. This is a clear indication that Arab culture does not tolerate taboo words, and subtitlers have to abide by the cultural, social and linguistic norms of the Arabic language. These show the general distribution of subtitling strategies across the entire corpus. In the following section, the frequency of those strategies per taboo categories will be provided.

4.3.2 Dominant strategies per category

Since the application of subtitling strategies is affected by the type of taboo words, and their semantic field, some taboo categories might be more sensitive and problematic for subtitlers than others. Hence, certain subtitling strategies tend to appear more frequently with some categories. Figure 7 below presents an overview of the frequency of taboo categories and the subtitling strategies used for each.



	body parts	excrement	incest	mental disability	prostitution	religion	sex
Cultural Substitution	494	1144	109	64	205	753	1406
Direct Translation	59	57		136	18	1427	182
Omission	83	229	25	15	31	826	1496
Reformulation	465	616	10	5	35	399	351
Specification							1

Figure 7: Subtitling strategies for taboo categories

As can be seen, omission is the most frequently used strategy for words in the sex category, and it is the only category where omission is the dominant strategy, having been applied 1496 (44%) times. In the religion category, omission ranks as the second most common strategy in 826 (24%) cases. Direct translation is the most frequent (1427 cases) strategy used for the religion category, representing about 42% of total use of this strategy. Another common strategy is the cultural substitution strategy which ranks either first or second as the most common strategy applied to all taboo categories with exception of religion. It is generally used for words in the *sex*, excrement, or body part taboo categories, occurring 1406, 1144 and 494 times, making up about 41%, 56% and 45%, respectively. Furthermore, with least frequent taboo categories such as prostitution and incest, cultural substitution is more commonly used with about 71% and 76% respectively of total use of strategies. On the other hand, the reformulation strategy is used mainly with excrement and body part categories, appearing 616

and 465 times, accounting for 30% and 42% respectively. It is applied relatively less frequently to the religion and *sex* categories, occurring 399 (12%) times and 351 (10%) times respectively.

However, it is worth noting that within one taboo category, there might be more than two taboo words, and these words have different functions and characteristics which need to be considered when discussing the overall subtitling strategies. For instance, the words *sex* and *fuck* both belong to the sex category. The word *fuck* can be used for more linguistic functions than the word *sex* in English; thus, these words are treated generally according to their linguistic function. For example, the word *fuck* can be used for idiomatic, pronominal' form with undefined referent, and emphatic intensifier functions. However, this is not the case for the word *sex* and thus, strategies like reformulation and cultural substitution are used commonly for the word *fuck*, while direct translation is used entirely for the word *sex* within the *sex* category. Consequently, it is of vital importance to account for the usage of subtitling strategies adopted when taboo words are used for various functions as subtitlers are likely to consider the functions of taboo words when subtitling and will choose the appropriate strategies accordingly. In other words, the functions of taboo words are more influential than the semantic categories to which taboo words belong when determining the subtitling strategies to be adopted. Therefore, the taboo functions and their impact on the use of subtitling strategies will be investigated in depth to identify any translational patterns in the Arabic subtitles of English taboo words, in addition to the possible reasons for and explanations of subtitlers' linguistic choices. In the following section, the frequency of taboo functions and the distributions of subtitling strategies according to taboo functions are presented.

4.4 Taboo functions and their subtitling strategies

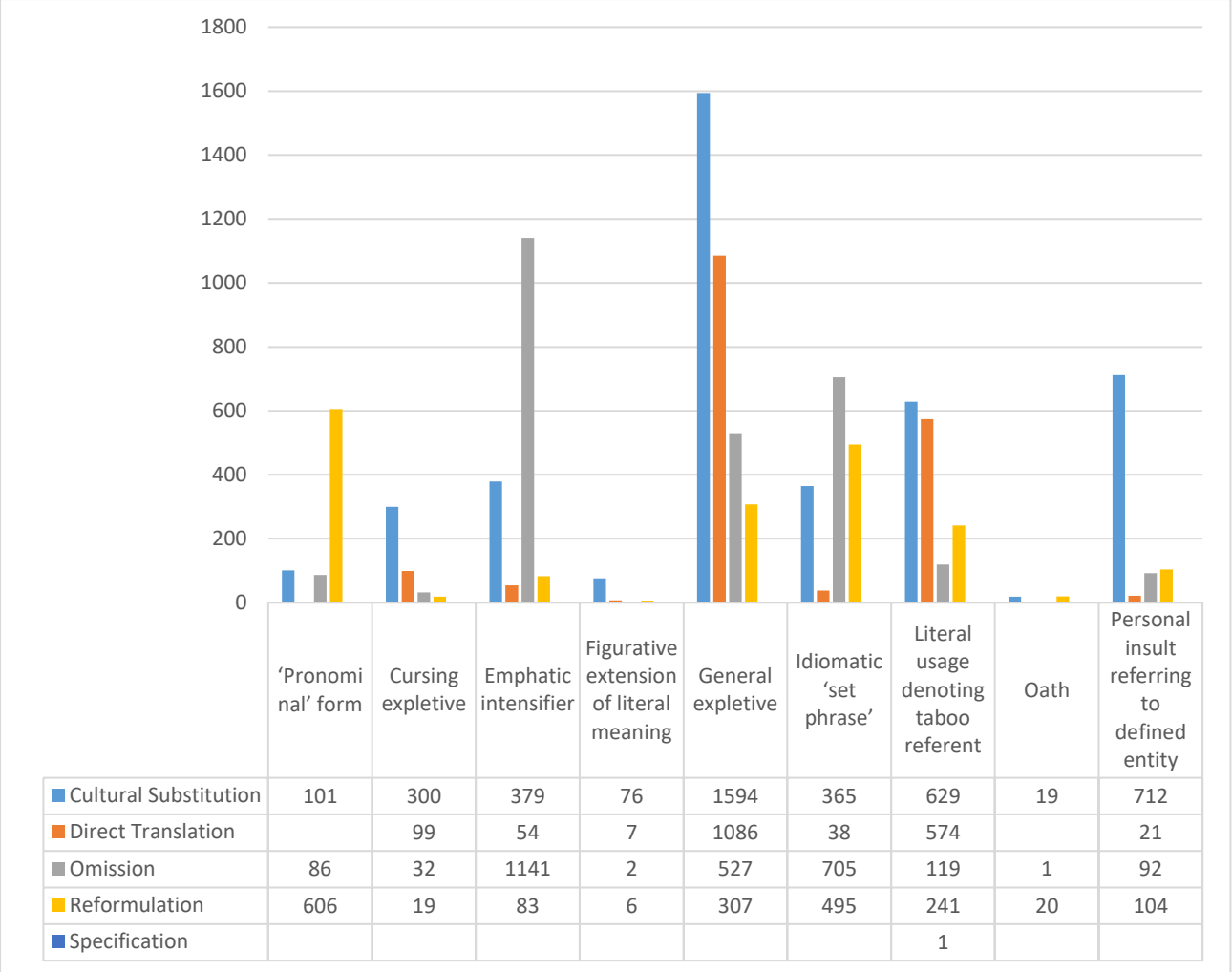
As discussed in the methodology chapter, the functions of taboo words are classified according to McEnery (2004, 2007). The definitions and examples of these functions are

provided in section 2.1.4. In this study, nine functions are identified. These functions and their frequencies are given below in Table 5.

Table 5: Frequency of taboo functions in the English corpus

General expletive	3514
Emphatic intensifier	1657
Idiomatic 'set phrase'	1603
Literal usage denoting taboo referent	1564
Personal insult referring to defined entity	929
'Pronominal' form with undefined referent	793
Cursing expletive	450
Figurative extension of literal meaning	91
Oath	40
Grand Total	**10641**

As Table 5 shows, taboo words in this corpus fall into nine categories of functions, among which the general expletives function is the most frequent, occurring 3514 times, and accounting for 33% of total use of taboo words. The emphatic intensifier and idiomatic functions rank second and third as the most common functions, occurring 1657 (16%) and 1603 (15%) times, respectively. These are followed by the literal usage function appearing 1564 (15%) times. Hence, more than 78% of taboo words are used to perform the first four functions. The remaining five functions appear fewer than 1000 times, of which the personal insults function is the highest with 929 instances, while the oath function is the least common function with only 40 instances. Figure 8 below shows the distribution of subtitling strategies for the nine taboo functions.



	'Pronominal' form	Cursing expletive	Emphatic intensifier	Figurative extension of literal meaning	General expletive	Idiomatic 'set phrase'	Literal usage denoting taboo referent	Oath	Personal insult referring to defined entity
Cultural Substitution	101	300	379	76	1594	365	629	19	712
Direct Translation		99	54	7	1086	38	574		21
Omission	86	32	1141	2	527	705	119	1	92
Reformulation	606	19	83	6	307	495	241	20	104
Specification							1		

Figure 8: Subtitling strategies for taboo words functions

In Figure 8, it is evident that cultural substitution is the most common strategy used for all taboo functions, but mainly with the general expletive function, personal insults and relatively less with the literal use of taboo words, with 1594 times (45%), 712 times (77%), and 629 times (40%), respectively. Direct translation, on the other hand, is used mainly with the general expletive function, and the literal use of taboo words appears 1086 and 574 times respectively, accounting for 31% and 37% respectively. Also, reformulation is used mainly with the pronominal form in 606 of the 793 cases, or 76%. Reformulation is also applied to the idiomatic function in 495 cases (31%) and to the general expletive function 307 (9%) times. Lastly, the omission strategy is mostly applied to the emphatic function, where omission is used 1141 out

of 1657 times, which makes up about 68%, followed by the idiomatic function which witnesses 705 cases (44%) and 527 cases with general expletive function, making up 15%.

As Figure 8 shows, there is a predominance of some strategies with some taboo functions. For instance, reformulation is preferred for the pronominal form function, omission for the empathic function, and cultural substitution for the personal insults function. Despite the strong correlation between subtitling strategies and taboo functions, many patterns appear in Arabic subtitles that merit closer investigation. Hence, individual taboo words require separate consideration to determine the reasons for subtitlers' choices of translation strategies. For example, a quantitative analysis of the emphatic intensifier function with the words *fuck*, *shit*, *goddamn*, *hell*, and *motherfucking*, reveals that cultural substitution is used 379 times, 359 of which are used with the word *fuck*, which makes up 95% of total use of cultural substitution for this function. Thus, this requires a detailed analysis of individual taboo words within these taboo functions to discover how various taboo words are treated compared to other taboo words with the same function; to identify recurrent translational behaviour in Arabic subtitles, and to provide possible explanations and reasons for subtitlers' linguistic choices. Therefore, it is essential to scrutinise each taboo word individually rather than obtaining a quantitative overview, as each individual taboo word has its own usage, function, and characteristics that require different treatment when subtitling into Arabic.

In the following sections, each taboo function is discussed, together with its frequency and the English taboo words used for each function. Also presented is the distribution of subtitling strategies used for rendering the functions of these English taboo words, in addition to the most common Arabic equivalents used for these functions. Furthermore, any translational patterns and trends that appear in Arabic subtitles will be discussed and the possible reasons for subtitlers' choices will be provided.

4.4.1 General expletive

The general expletive function is the most common function used in this corpus; it is seen 3522 times, and appears with eight English taboo words, namely *God, shit, fuck, Jesus*/*Christ, damn, goddamn, hell* and *balls*. As can be seen, of the nine words, six belong to the religion category. Table 6 below shows the distribution of this function for each taboo word and the translation strategies used for each taboo word with this emphatic function.

Table 6: Subtitling strategies used for taboo words used in general expletive function.

Row Labels	Cultural Substitution	Direct Translation	Omission	Reformulation	Grand Total
God	40	997	242	197	1476
Shit	801		123	34	958
Jesus /Christ	289	12	53	65	419
Fuck	296		78	6	380
damn	95	31	17	4	147
goddamn	62	46	13		121
Hell	11		1	1	13
Grand Total	**1594**	**1086**	**527**	**307**	**3514**

As shown in Table 6, the word *God* is most frequently used as a general expletive (1476 times), followed by the word *shit* (958 times). These two words account for 69% of the total words used for this function. For these taboo words, cultural substitution is favoured by subtitlers, appearing 1594 (45%) times, followed by direct translation used 1086 (31%) times, accounting for 76% of strategies. This is a clear indication that this function is used in English relatively similarly to the Arabic language, unlike other functions such as the idiomatic and pronominal form functions where the use of direct translation and cultural substitution is less common than the use of omission and reformulation. For the general expletive function, cultural substitution is used mainly with the word *shit* (801 times, about 50%), followed by the word *fuck* (296 times, 19%) and the word *Jesus*/*Christ* (209 times, 13%). However, the direct translation strategy is applied only in the case of religious words, mainly with the word *God*, appearing

997 out of 1086 times and making up 92%. Omission is the third most common strategy used for this function. It is applied 528 times: 242 (46%) times with the word *God* and 123 (23%) times with the word *shit*.

A comprehensive analysis needs to be conducted to determine the frequency of taboo words and to identify the main trends in subtitlers' linguistic choices, and their reasons for applying their chosen strategies. Therefore, one should begin with the most common Arabic equivalents used for taboo words in the English subtitles for the general expletive function. Table 7 below shows the six most common choices adopted by subtitlers when rendering English taboo words serving an expletive function into Arabic.

Table 7: The six most common Arabic equivalents used with English taboo words for the general expletives function

Row Labels	**يا إلهي oh, my *God***	**تباً may evil befall (someone)**	**Omitted**	**رباه my lord**	**لعين *damn*/ed**	**سحقاً may *God* alienate (someone) from His mercy**	**يا للهول oh my!**
damn		94	17		31	1	
Fuck		199	78		34	60	
God	784	7	242	209		2	178
Goddamn	1	58	13		46	1	
Hell	1	8	1			1	
Jesus /Christ	138	5	53	119	1		57
Shit	4	441	123	1	159	190	6
Grand Total	**928**	**812**	**527**	**329**	**271**	**255**	**241**

Table 7 shows that the Arabic equivalents belong to the religion category with the exception of the word يا للهول [oh my!]. This is a clear indication that for the general expletive function, subtitlers prefer to use Arabic religious words even with non-religious words such as *fuck* and *shit*. The most commonly occurring Arabic translation is إلهي [oh, my *god*] which is used 928 times, 784 times for the English word *God* and 138 times for *jesus*/*Christ*, making up 84% and

15%, respectively. Evidently, there is a predominance of religious words in the translations; on only four occasions is the word *shit* translated using a non-religious term.

The second most common Arabic equivalent is the word تباً [may evil befall (someone)], which is an outdated word and generally absent from spoken Arabic dialogue. However, it appears 812 times with all taboo words having this function. It is used mainly with the words, *shit* (441 times, 54%) and *fuck* (199 times, 24%). The third most frequently applied Arabic translation is رباه [my lord], which appears in 329 cases, 64% of which are for the word *God* and the remainder (36%) for the words *Jesus*/*Christ*. The word لعنة/لعين [damn/ed] was the fourth most prevalent word, occurring 271 times, 59% of which is used for the word *shit*, 18% with the word *goddamn*, and 13% for the word *fuck*. It is evident that the word لعنة/ لعين [damn/ed] as a translation for the word *shit* is subtitlers' preferred lexical option. The same applies to the word سحقاً [may God alienate (someone) from His mercy], which occurs 255 times, 190 of which are for the word *shit* (74%) and 60 times (23%) for the word *fuck*. Hence, in 97% of all instances of the word سحقاً [may *God* alienate (someone) from His mercy] is used for the words *shit* and *fuck* as a general expletive. On the other hand, the word يا للهول [oh my!] serves this function in 241 cases, 74% of which are for the word *God* and 24% with the word *Jesus*/*Christ*. As evident, the Arabic equivalents يا إلهي [oh, my *god*], رباه [my lord], and يا للهول[oh my!] are used in similar ways in that both are used primarily with the English words *God* and *Jesus*/*Christ*.

Tables 7 and 8 show that the word *God* is translated by means of direct translation in 68% of cases, while omission is used for the word *God* in 242 (16%) cases. One reason for deleting the word *God* can be attributed to the censorship imposed in some sexual or intimate scenes in which the word *God* is used to show various feelings such as surprise, joy and so forth. This would violate the cultural norms of the target audience and is considered unacceptable to Arab viewers; the whole scene would be censored so that the word *God* will not appear on the screen.

Another explanation for omitting the word *God* in Arabic subtitles is related to the different use of this word by the source and target languages. For example, when the word *God* is used in a context where there is no strong emotion or used with no real purpose such as the narration of a past event, subtitlers may decide that the word *God* is awkward and would adversely affect the idiomaticity of the conversation and the readability of subtitles. It could be argued that the word *God* is omitted by Arabic subtitlers to match the level of emotions in a particular scene.

The reformulation strategy is applied when dealing with the word *God* in English subtitles in 197 cases (13%). In 90% of these cases, the word يا للهول [oh my!] is used. The use of the reformulation strategy, particularly the word يا للهول [oh my!] can be linked to the type of emotion being expressed in the scene. In other words, when the word *God* is used to express positive feelings like admiration, or mild feelings, or with something that is considered trite, subtitlers do not use the Arabic equivalents of the word *God*. Therefore, the word يا للهول [oh my!] is used in about 178 times to express the intended feelings without mentioning the word *God*. The same applies to the words *Jesus*/*Christ* when the word يا للهول [oh my!] is used with them. That means subtitlers may feel that the use of the word *God* in such cases is not necessary and the word يا للهول [oh my!] can perform the same function.

The word *shit* is the second common word used with the general expletive function with 958 times. This function accounts about 51% of the total use of the word *shit*, making it the most frequently used function with the word *shit*. It is evident from Table 6 that subtitlers prefer the cultural substitution strategy when dealing with the word *shit* (801 times, 84%), followed by omission 123 times (13%), and reformulation 34 times (3%), while direct translation is not used at all with the word *shit*. When using cultural substitution, the Arabic equivalents don't belong to the excrement category, rather they are religious words. for example, the words تباً [may evil befall (someone)] is used as a translation of the word *shit* in 441 cases, which represent about 46% of total cases where the word *shit* is used as a general expletive. Another common

Arabic equivalent is the word سحقاً [may *God* alienate (someone) from His mercy] which is used 190 times for the word *shit* (20%), and the word لعنة /لعين [damn/ed] at 159 times (16%). These three words are used in 790 cases, accounting for 82 % of the total use of Arabic equivalents in Arabic subtitles used in dealing with the word *shit* when it is used as an expletive. For the remainder, omission is used for 13% of cases and 5% for various words that are used once or twice, among them religious words such as بحق الجحيم for hell's sake] and يالسماء [oh, sky]. This excessive use of religious words as equivalents for the word *shit* can be linked to the pragmatic and cultural differences between English and Arabic when using the word *shit* as a general expletive. Hence, it is replaced with religious words that Arabs tend to use for various linguistic functions, including the general expletive function. In other words, unlike the English language, excrement-related words are not used as general expletives in MSA, so *shit* is translated into a religious word.

Reformulation is used in 34 (3%) of cases where only the meaning is rendered in Arabic subtitles while the taboo sense is removed. Words such as حقاً [really], يالهول [oh my!], and جدياً[seriously] are used to translate the word *shit* when it is used as an expletive.

On the other hand, the direct translation strategy is not used at all with the word *shit* which is a very clear indication of the normative linguistic differences in using the word *shit* for the general expletive function. If the direct translation strategy is used with the word *shit*, it would sound awkward and unidiomatic for Arab viewers because this is not the way Arabs use taboo words as expletives particularly in the MSA register required for subtitling.

The same applies to the word *fuck* where direct translation is not employed at all in Arabic subtitles not only with the general expletive function, but with all other functions as well. There is no equivalent in MSA that can be used by subtitlers to render the meaning and the offensiveness of the word *fuck*. Furthermore, if there were an equivalent in MSA, its usage would be different from the way the word *fuck* is used in English. That is to say, the word *fuck*

is versatile and can be used to perform various functions, while there is no MSA lexical equivalent performing an analogous function to the word *fuck*. Therefore, subtitlers opt for religious words to keep the function and tone down the taboo load in the Arabic subtitles.

Another translational pattern that can be seen in Table 7 is that the Arabic word تبا [may evil befall (someone)] is used with the English words *damn*/*goddamn* which is not an accurate equivalent since the correct Arabic equivalent is available and used commonly in Arabic subtitles, i.e. the lexeme لعنة/لعين [*damn*/ed]. This word is used with the English words *shit*, *fuck*, but when it comes to the English words *damn*/*goddamn*, the word تبا [may evil befall (someone)] is used more often than the Arabic equivalent لعنة/لعين [*damn*/ed], appearing 94 and 58 times compared to 31 and 46 times with the word لعنة/لعين [*damn*/ed] when used with the English words *damn* and *goddamn*. This indicates an inconsistency in subtitlers' choices when dealing with some English words. They consider the word تبا [may evil befall (someone)] as a first and preferred option when dealing with taboo words to the extent that it might be used incorrectly. In other words, the phrase تبا [may evil befall (someone)] becomes a norm in Arabic subtitles and is used to serve various functions and to keep the taboo load in the Arabic subtitles regardless of its accuracy. Furthermore, this word is used with all English taboo words investigated in this study with the exception of only three words: *sex*, *bullshit* and *stupid*.

In conclusion, the predominance of the cultural substitution strategy used for the general expletive function can be linked to the fact that this function is common in English and Arabic but the words used for this function are different. That is to say, in Arabic subtitles, the religious words used as equivalents for various English taboo words are predominant even with sex- and excrement-related words such as *fuck* and *shit*. The predominance of religious words in Arabic subtitles can be attributed to the Arabic language and culture where Arabs often use religious words in their spoken daily conversations. Harrell, Abu-Talib and Carroll (2006) note that religious references and expressions are widely used in Arabic spoken language, especially

when expressing strong emotions. Such differences make cultural substitution the strategy most frequently applied to all taboo words having this function except for the word *God* where the direct translation strategy is preferred. Furthermore, the religious words used in Arabic subtitling are outdated and no longer used by Arabs in everyday speech; such words belong to an ancient, classic language and a very formal register. Such linguistic choices are due the fact that only MSA, a very formal register, may be used in Arabic subtitling; otherwise, there are some Arabic colloquial equivalents that belong to sex and excrement domain which can be as offensive as the English counterpart. This constrains subtitlers to adopt formal equivalents which, however, are no longer used by Arabs in their spoken language. For example, the words *shit* and *fuck* are subtitled into Arabic as تبا [may evil befall (someone)], لعنة/ لعين [damn/ed], and سحقاً [may God alienate (someone) from His mercy]. These linguistic limitations not only mitigate the offensiveness of the English taboo words, but also shift them from the sex and excrement domains to the religion category. Another consequence of using formal and religious words in Arabic subtitles is that any humour conveyed by the English taboo words is lost; this in turn would affect the success and the perception of such films.

4.4.2 Emphatic intensifier function

The emphatic intensifier function is the second most common function appearing in this corpus. It is seen 1657 times, appearing with five English taboo words, namely *fuck*, *goddamn*, *damn*, *hell*, motherfucking and *shit*. Table 8 below shows the distribution of this function for each taboo word and the translation strategies applied for each taboo word used for emphasis.

Table 8: Subtitling strategies used for taboo words in emphatic intensifier function

Row Labels	Cultural Substitution	Direct Translation	Omission	Refor-mulation	Grand Total
Fuck	359		938	38	1335
Motherfucking	9		8	2	19
Damn	8	20	76	8	112
Goddamn	2	34	92	6	134

Hell	1		22	25	48
Shit			5	4	9
Grand Total	**379**	**54**	**1141**	**83**	**1657**

As can be seen, the emphatic function is used mostly with the word *fuck*, occurring 1335 times out of 1657, accounting for 81% of total use of the emphatic function, followed by the words *goddamn* and *damn* occurring 129 (8%) and 112 times (7%), respectively. The remaining words are used for this function less than 50 times. It is evident that the omission strategy is by far the most predominant strategy used for all the five English taboo words, with 1141 instances of omission, accounting for 69% of the emphatic function. The word *fuck* is omitted the most (938 times), indicating that subtitlers prefer to omit the word *fuck* when it is used for emphatic function in about 70% of all instances of *fuck*. The second most common strategy adopted for the emphatic function is cultural substitution which is used 386 times, 366 (95%) of which are for the word *fuck*. Reformulation is the third most common strategy; it is applied 80 times, mainly for the words *fuck* and *hell*, 38 and 24 times respectively. Direct translation is the least common strategy used for this function, and is used only with two English taboo words, namely *goddamn* and *damn*, 32 and 20 times respectively, or 3% of total strategies used.

To investigate this function in depth with particular reference to the word *fuck* since it is the most common word used in the corpus in general and for the emphatic function in particular, and to examine how subtitlers deal with various English taboo words used for emphasis, a close analysis of the occurrences of those taboo words is needed to determine the possible reasons for subtitlers' linguistic choices.

The emphatic function is the most common function of the word *fuck*; it accounts for 44% of the total use of the word. This aligns with McEnery's study (2004) which found that the word *fuck* is used for the emphatic function more so than for any other functions. In this study, one of the most repeated patterns is seen in the use of omission when the word *fuck* is intended for emphasis. The high number of omissions can be attributed to the structural and syntactic

differences between the English and Arabic in the use of the word *fuck* to intensify the statement. In other words, in Arabic written language, sex-related words are generally not used to add emphasis to statements, at least in the corpus of this study. Hence, many subtitlers in the corpus chose to omit the word altogether as in this function. Another possible reason for the large number of omissions is that the excessive use of taboo words varies significantly between English and Arabic, as the former is witnessing a rapid increase in the use of taboo words in the media and movies as noted by Jay (1992) and Fägersten (2017). On the other hand, in the Arabic context, the linguistic and socio-cultural norms are still very conservative and such excessive use of taboo words would appear awkward, unnecessary and culturally inappropriate, considering the fact that the taboo words used for emphasis tend not to carry propositional meaning, resulting in a great number of omissions in the TT as noted by (Tveit, 2004). Although the taboo words used to add emphasis may not have a propositional meaning, they have a function in the ST which is not retained in the Arabic subtitles when the omission strategy is employed. This excessive use of the omission strategy in turn may have a negative impact on the characterisations of film character and the overall presentation of the film.in other words, the employment of taboo words in the films by directors, screenwriters is not arbitrary, rather it is used to serve various functions such as humour, and films stakeholders aim at forming a certain image of the films character through the use of taboo words. However, the excessive use of omission strategy would not maintain these characteristics in the Arabic subtitles. To put this succinctly, the film in the target language will not be presented in the way that producers, actors and stakeholders intended as the excessive use of taboo words in some films is one of the factors that ensures the success of a film as noted by Soler Pardo (2011). In the same vein, Hatim and Mason (1997) indicate that some speech features such as dialects and vernaculars would be lost in subtitling due to a shift from spoken to written form. Also, Díaz

Cintas (2001, p.65) points out that omitting and euphemising taboo words in subtitling would remove the characters' linguistic power to produce or convey shock or humour.

Moreover, the shift from English spoken language to the very formal MSA of subtitles results in a huge reduction of taboo words in Arabic subtitles therefore, it can be argued that the linguistic, cultural and register differences between MSA subtitles and spoken English scripts seem to be the main reasons for the omission of the majority of taboo words used for the emphatic function, not only with the word *fuck* but with other taboo words, namely the words *shit*, *damn*, *goddamn*, and motherfucking. Consequently, it is obvious that the use of omission with the emphatic function has become a translational trend in Arabic subtitles that subtitlers tend to follow.

On the other hand, there are 386 cases (23%) out of a total 1657 cases in which the cultural substitution strategy is used. Out of the total number, it was used 368 times with one word, namely the word *fuck*, accounting for 95% of the total use of cultural substitution. When this strategy is used, subtitlers tend to use religious words as Arabic equivalents for the English taboo words used for the emphatic function as shown in Table 9 bellow.

Table 9: The Arabic equivalents used in Emphatic intensifier function of English taboo words

Row Labels	**Omit-ted**	**لعين *damn*/ ed**	**non-taboo (unclassi-fiable)**	**تباً may evil befall (someone)**	**سحقاً may *God* alienate (someone) from His mercy**	**for بحق السماء heaven's sake**
damn	76	20	6	1		1
fuck	938	264	36	33	22	7
goddamn	92	34	5	1		1
hell	22		22	1		
motherfu cking	8	7	2	1		1
shit	5		4			
Grand Total	**1141**	**325**	**75**	**37**	**22**	**10**

As can be seen, all four of the most frequent Arabic equivalents belong to the religion category. In other words, cultural substitution whereby religious words are used for the emphatic function

is applied 86% of the time for the emphatic function. This indicates that subtitlers prefer to adopt religious words when dealing with various English taboo words as the following example shows.

Example No: 1

English subtitle: I'm gonna take that *fucking* coat.	
Arabic subtitle	English back translation
سآخذ ذلك المعطف اللعين	I'll take that **damned** coat.
Translation strategy: cultural substitution	

In this sentence, the word *fucking* has been replaced by the word اللعين [damned] in an attempt to transfer the offensiveness and maintain the negative evaluative function. Although the Arabic corresponding word is toned down and less obscene than the word *fucking*, it still retains the taboo load and the intended function in the Arabic subtitles. Therefore, subtitlers find that religious words are an effective tool for toning down the offensiveness of the taboo item and maintain its function. The Arabic equivalents which belong to the religion field are not only common with the emphatic function, but with other functions as well such as the general expletive and cursing expletive. A possible explanation for using religious words is that the language used for Arabic subtitling is very formal, which can be a challenge to subtitlers when faced with slang and colloquial *sex*-related words. Such linguistic constraints limit the options available to subtitlers. Moreover, religious words are common in Arabs' everyday conversations and can be more idiomatic than the sex-related ones.

To identify the reasons behind the use of cultural substitution with some instances of emphatic function of taboo words, a random sample of these utterances is examined. It is found that strong emotions in the scenes are expressed using a loud voice. In other words, where there are strong emotions such as anger, frustration etc. or the tone of the voice is high, the subtitlers

opt for a cultural substitution, mainly using the word لعين [damned] to match the level of emotion expressed in the film. That means the nature of subtitling where meaning is conveyed through the various polysemiotic channels such as the audio and visual elements, can have an impact on the subtitling strategies adopted when dealing with taboo words in Arabic subtitles.

However, when English taboo words are used to express mild emotions or positive feelings towards something, the omission strategy tends to be used, not only for the word *fuck*, but for all taboo words that have the empathic function. For example, a sentence such as *That was actually really fuckin' awesome* is subtitled as كان رائعاً [That was awesome]. Besides the intended feeling expressed in this sentence, the equivalent Arabic words that are usually applied for emphatic function (Table 10), namely لعين [damned], تباً [may evil befall (someone)], and سحقاً [may God alienate (someone) from His mercy] are not linguistically appropriate for utterances that are intended to convey positive or mild sentiments. The reason is that the Arabic equivalents are used for negative utterances such as expletives, curses, insults and so forth. Because they cannot be used in these instances, subtitlers opt for omission. Therefore, the differences between English and Arabic in the use of taboo words are a major reason for omitting the majority of emphatic cases.

While omission is the most common strategy, followed by cultural substitution and reformulation, the direct translation strategy is the least frequent strategy applied for the emphatic function and is used only for the words *goddamn* and *damn*, 32 and 20 times, respectively. These two words belong to the religion category and when subtitled into Arabic, their taboo load is retained and remains in the religion domain. This indicates that religious words are frequently used in Arabic language in general, and in subtitling taboo words in particular. However, even within the religion category, English taboo words used for emphatic functions are omitted in most cases, seen 92 (69%) times for the word *goddamn* and 76 (68%), times for the word *damn* compared to 34 and 20 cases of direct translation, which make up

about 25% and 18% respectively. This is a clear indication that the excessive use of omission for the emphatic function can be attributed to the cross-linguistic and cultural differences between English and Arabic in the way taboo words are used for emphasis. For example, the sentence “You're *damn* right it was, Mac” is subtitled as هذا صحيح ماك [That’s right, Mac]. The word *damn* is omitted in Arabic subtitles its English application is different from the way it is used in the Arabic written language. That is to say, it is not used with positive feelings and affirmative statements, and even if it were, it would be unidiomatic and awkward for Arab viewers. Therefore, omission rather than direct translation is generally used for religious English taboo words although religious expressions are generally used in Arabic subtitles and are popular options for subtitlers.

All in all, omission is by far the most frequent pattern seen in subtitlers’ handling of all taboo words with an emphatic function. It is used in 69% of cases, mainly for the word *fuck*. The extensive and excessive use of the omission strategy can be attributed to the syntactical, morphological, grammatical and normative differences between Arabic and English when using taboo words for emphasis, mainly *sex*-related words. For example, Arabic does not have a direct equivalent for the word *fuck* when it is used for emphasis in the MSA register, which explains the numerous omissions in Arabic subtitles. This aligns with the finding of Lie (2013),) and Al-Yasin and Rabab'ah (2019) where a high number of emphatic function taboo words are omitted in the TT. Also, the differences in the extent to which the two languages tolerate the excessive use of taboo words make subtitlers sacrifice the taboo item if it does not change the general meaning of the utterance. Additionally, the language register of Arabic subtitling is formal and does not allow the use of slang and colloquial taboo words, which consequently results in a toned-down version of English taboo words if not omitted.

Having discussed the taboo words used for the emphatic intensifier function, their frequency, Arabic equivalents, and the translational patterns in Arabic subtitles, in the following section, the idiomatic function of taboo words will be discussed.

4.4.3 Idiomatic 'set phrase'

The idiomatic function is the third most common function used in this corpus, occurring 1603 times and appearing with twelve out of sixteen English taboo words, namely *fuck, bullshit, hell, shit, ass, balls, sex, goddamn, damn, bitch and motherfucker*. Table 10 below shows the distribution of this function for each taboo word and the translation strategies used for each taboo serving the idiomatic function.

Table 10: Subtitling strategies used for taboo words in idiomatic function

Row Labels	**Cultural Substitution**	**Direct Translation**	**Omission**	**Refor-mulation**	**Grand Total**
fuck	147		427	240	814
bullshit	132		13	19	164
hell	60	37	236	12	345
shit	12		10	92	114
ass	6		9	83	98
balls	5		2	33	40
dick	3		2	10	15
sex		1			1
goddamn				1	1
damn			4	3	7
bitch			2	1	3
motherfucker				1	1
Grand Total	**365**	**38**	**705**	**495**	**1603**

As shown in Table 10, the omission strategy is by far the most common strategy that is applied to words with an idiomatic function, occurring 705 times, which makes up 44% of total use of strategies used for this function, followed by reformulation used 495 (31%) Times. This means that 75 % of taboo words having this function are either omitted or the general meaning is rendered without using any offensive Arabic words. This is probably due to the nature of

idioms which tend to be culturally rooted. Hence, translating such idioms is problematic especially into languages that do not belong to the same language family. For idioms, cultural substitution is applied 365 (23%) times. Direct translation strategy is used in only 38 cases, making up about 2%, most of which is for the word *hell* in 37 out of 38 cases. In the following paragraphs, a discussion about the most common taboo words will be provided to find any patterns in subtitlers' choices and to identify the reasons for their choices.

As can be seen in Table 10, the word *fuck* is the most common word with an idiomatic function, appearing 814 times (51%). For this function, the word *fuck* is omitted in 427 (52%) cases. The high number of omissions can be explained by the cross-cultural and linguistic differences between the English and Arabic languages. For example, phrases such as *what the fuck is that, who the fuck are you, get the fuck out, and shut the fuck up* largely tend to be omitted from Arabic subtitles. The reason for such a huge number of omissions can be linked to the differences in linguistic structures between English and Arabic which make the insertion of the taboo words in such sentences unidiomatic and awkward in Arabic subtitles. The same applies to the word *hell* when it is used in similar contexts such as *what the hell is that*? ; in these cases, the word has been omitted 236 (68%) times.

The second most common strategy applied to the word *fuck* when it is used idiomatically is reformulation which occurs 240 (29%) times. The most repeated sentences that are dealt with by reformulation strategies are sentences such as *Don't fuck this up, I don't give a fuck who your uncle is* , and *Lady, get the fuck off of me!* are subtitled respectively into Arabic as لا تفسد هذه الفرصة [don't ruin this opportunity], لا أبالي بمن هو عمك[I don't care who your uncle is], and أيتها السيدة ، ابتعدي عني[lady, get away from me].

In the examples above, no analogous taboo word is present in Arabic subtitles; rather the overall propositional meaning of the expression is rendered. In such cases, the cultural differences constrain subtitlers to opt for the reformulation strategy in order to produce

idiomatic and readable subtitles. If direct translation is used in such cases, the subtitles would be awkward and not clearly understood as the Arabic written language does not use taboo words in the same way as does the English. For example, there is no Arabic taboo word belonging to the sex domain and to the register of MSA that can be used idiomatically to retain the offensiveness and the meaning of the word *fuck* in Arabic subtitles. Therefore, subtitlers sacrifice the offensiveness and retain just the propositional meaning of the idiomatic expression without the offensive element.

Cultural substitution is another popular strategy, used in 147 of 814 cases, or 18%. In those cases, subtitlers attempt to keep the taboo load in Arabic subtitles and retain the intensification and the emotions uttered in English. This is done by resorting to religious words as shown below in Table 11.

Table 11: Arabic equivalent expressions used with cultural substitution strategy in idiomatic function

for heaven's sake بحق السماء	36
damn/ed لعين/اللعنة	25
for *hell*'s sake بحق الجحيم	25
may evil befall (someone) تباً	16
may *God* alienate (someone) from His mercy سحقاً	13
for Allah's sake بحق الله	11

As can be seen, all the most frequently applied Arabic equivalents for the word *fuck* when it is used idiomatically belong to the religion category. For example, when the word *fuck* is used in a sentence such as *what the fuck are you doing?* it is subtitled as *ماذا تفعلين بحق السماء*[what are you doing for heaven's sake?]. This shows that subtitlers tend to use the religious words listed in Table 11 above to maintain at least some sort of harshness and offensiveness, in addition to conveying the emotions expressed on the screen. This indicates a preference for using religious words in Arabic subtitles to express various emotions and perform various functions. However, there are some cases where the functions of taboo words in English subtitles are shifted to

another function. for example, the idiomatic function is shifted into cursing function in Arabic subtitles in sentences such as *I told you, I don't know who the fuck that is'* becomes' لا أعرف من هذا اللعين' [I don't know who is this damned person]. This shift can be explained by the cultural differences in the use of taboo words for the idiomatic function. In other words, when the word *fuck* is used for the idiomatic function, it is omitted in about 52% of cases. However, when subtitlers attempt to retain the offensiveness in Arabic subtitles, they either replace the word *fuck* with a religious word or shift the function due to cultural and structural differences between the two languages.

The word *hell* ranks as the second most common word used for the idiomatic function. It is used 345 times, which represents 22% of total use of idiomatic function. It is omitted in 236 (68%) cases, which is a high number considering the familiarity of the word *hell* in the target language and its usages in Arabic subtitling in general. However, the word *hell* is omitted when it occurs in a format such as *what/who/how the hell* …, which is similar to the word *fuck*. In such cases, the word *hell* is omitted partially due to the cultural differences between Arabic and English. In other words, subtitlers may feel that the word *hell* in English subtitles does not require direct translation as it does not carry any propositional meaning in the ST and the meaning can be conveyed without using it. This shows that there are different levels of acceptability of the excessive use of taboo words in American and Arab cultures. Hence, the high number of omissions although there is an available equivalent word in the MSA, unlike the word *fuck*, that can be used. Consequently, the frequent use of omission with the word *hell* can be considered as a translational trend as it occurs in about 68% of the total cases. However, for this word, subtitlers use cultural substitution 60 times (17% of cases). In these instances, the Arabic phrase بحق السماء [for heaven's sake] is used 46 times. Also, the direct translation strategy is used in 37 cases, translating the word as بحق الجحيم [for hell's sake]. As can be seen, the expression بحق[for the sake of] is added to Arabic subtitles to make the subtitles readable

and more idiomatic. That is to say, if the words *hell* and *fuck* are not omitted when used in question format such as 'what is the *hell*/the *fuck*', the phrase 'for the sake of ' needs to be included to make the subtitle idiomatic and readable. Díaz Cintas (2001) mentions that taboo words are accepted by target viewers if the translation complies with their norms and expectations. The third most frequent word used for this function is the word *bullshit*, used overall in 164 cases, out of which 132 (80%) are translated into Arabic by means of cultural substitution. In those cases, the Arabic equivalents used are هراء [nonsense] in 53 cases, ترهات [vain] 40 cases, سخيف [silly] 9 cases, and تفاهات [trifles] in 8 cases. As can be seen, due to the register and cultural differences, this taboo word is translated to describe a talk as rubbish or nonsense as a scatological metaphor is not used in MSA although it may be used in colloquial Arabic. Because of these differences, by using the aforementioned words, subtitlers are choosing negative words that are propositionally equivalent to those in the ST. This can be seen in the absence of the direct translation strategy which is not used at all with the word *bullshit*. Also, it is evident that the Arabic equivalents are by far less offensive than the word *bullshit*, but subtitlers must use formal words which are less offensive to comply with the MSA. On the other hand, the reformulation strategy is applied in 19 cases (12%) using words such as كذب[lying], and مزاح[kidding], while omission is adopted in 13 cases.

The fourth most commonly used word for this function is the word *shit* which is used in 114 cases, 92 of which are subtitled using the reformulation strategy, accounting for 81% of the total strategies used for the word *shit*. This high percentage indicates that when the word *shit* is used idiomatically, it poses a major challenge for subtitlers to the extent that they cannot render the offensiveness of the word in Arabic subtitles; rather, they just convey its general meaning. For example, sentences like 'I *don't give a shit'* and *'Are you shitting me?'* are repeated frequently for this function, and subtitled respectively into Arabic as لا أهتم لذلك [I don't care], and أتمزحان؟ [Are you kidding?]. This is clearly due to the cultural differences between

the two languages which determine the way that this word is used. In other words, the idiomatic use of taboo words is closely related to culture and, in the case of Arabic and English which belong to very different contexts and origins, the subtitling of taboo words becomes a daunting task for subtitlers if they attempt to be as close as possible to the ST. Furthermore, the high register of language used in Arabic subtitling, i.e. MSA, limits the lexical options available for subtitlers if the aim is to maintain the taboo item in Arabic subtitling.

The same applies to the word *ass* which appears with the idiomatic function in 98 cases, 85% of which are translated using the reformulation strategy. The word *ass* appears in phrases like *kick ass*, *pain in the ass* and *bust an ass*, and when translating into Arabic, the taboo word is not accounted for, and only its sense and general meaning is rendered. For example, *you kicked ass* is subtitled as تغلبت عليه [you defeated him], *You don't need the money or the pain in the ass* is translated into Arabic as *أنت لا تحتاج إلى المال ولا للإزعاج* [you don't need money or hassle] and *Your money, that thing that you bust your ass for* is rendered as *مالكم الذي تكدحون من أجله* [your money that you are working hard for]. It is evident that the cultural differences between the two languages when using taboo words make subtitlers sacrifice the offensiveness and render the general meaning of the taboo item to produce a readable and idiomatic subtitle as there is no way to keep the offensiveness of the word *ass* in Arabic subtitles when used idiomatically unless if jeopardising the readability and idiomaticity of the subtitle.

In the same vein and still in the context of body part taboo words, the word *balls* is used for this function 40 times, making it the sixth most frequent word. When the word *balls* is used in English subtitles, it is translated in 33 (83%) out of 40 cases using the reformulation strategy, which makes this strategy the most popular strategy used for all taboo words related to the body part category. The word *balls* is used idiomatically in English subtitles to mean 'courage' in sentences such as *I'm sure you got big balls*, which is subtitled into Arabic as *أنا متأكدة أنك تتمتع بالكثير من الجرأة [I am sure you have a lot of courage]*. The same applies to the word *dick*, which

is used 15 times in total; here, reformulation is used 10 (66%) times. In all those cases, only the general meaning of the word *dick* is translated while there is no trace of offensiveness in the Arabic subtitles.

All in all, the omission strategy is used in about 94% of the cases with two words, namely *fuck* and *hell*, which are used in similar format, i.e. wh*at the hell/the fuck*, which is the first translational pattern observed for this function. Apart from that, another pattern is the frequent use of the reformulation strategy, which is used as the most common strategy with all taboo words except for the word *bullshit*. When the reformulation strategy is applied, the taboo items do not appear in Arabic subtitles; only their overall meanings are rendered due to the cultural difference between English and Arabic that makes the use of taboo words different. The frequent usage of the reformulation strategy for this function is similar to the pronominal form function which will be discussed in section (4.4.6) which indicates clearly the impact of taboo functions on subtitling strategies chosen for dealing with taboo words in Arabic subtitles.

4.4.4 Literal usage denoting taboo referent

The literal usage function is among the third most common function, appearing 1458 times and comprising nine English taboo words, namely *God, shit*', *ass, fuck, Jesus*/*Christ, damn*, '*goddamn*, *hell, balls*, and *stupid*. Of the nine words, six belong to the religion category. Table 12 below shows the distribution of this function for each taboo word and the translation strategies used for each taboo word that has a literal function.

Table 12: Subtitling strategies used for taboo words for a literal function

Row Labels	Cultural Substitu-tion	Direct Transla-tion	Omiss-ion	Reformula-tion	Specifi-cation	Grand Total
God	151	184	54	53		442
dick	113	1	13	59		186
sex	110	177	5	27		319
fuck	89		5	20	1	115
ass	84		6	42		132
shit	20	54	2	4		80

asshole	9	1	1	6		17
balls	6	57	14	24		101
Jesus /Christ	3	35	7	2		47
hell	1	12	2	2		17
stupid		1				1
bitch				1		1
Grand Total	**586**	**522**	**109**	**240**	**1**	**1458**

Table 9 shows that the cultural substitution and direct translation strategies are those most commonly used when translating taboo words into their literal counterparts, occurring 586 and 522 times respectively. Cultural substitution represents about 40% of the total use of strategies used for literal function of taboo words, while direct translation accounts for 36%; in total, both strategies represent about 76%. The literal function is the only function for which direct translation is used frequently, clearly indicating the impact of the function on the translation strategies adopted by subtitlers. That is to say, the literal function of taboo words is different from the idiomatic function or the pronominal one where the linguistic structure and cultural differences between the two languages make subtitlers adopt strategies other than direct translation. For example, the direct translation strategy is used for the first time with the word *shit* which is the only function for which the word *shit* is subtitled by means of direct translation.

It is evident from Table 12 that the direct translation strategy is used mostly with religious words such as the words *God*, *Jesus*/*Christ* and *hell*. The high number of uses can be related to the fact that those religious terms are common in the two cultures and in the two religions although there are minor differences in the way these terms are used. The direct translation strategy is mostly used with the word *God* when it is used for the literal function. Although some researchers such as Murphy (2010) consider the word *God* as taboo only when it is used as a general expletive as in *oh, my God*, the case is not the same in Arabic and Muslim cultures

where even a literal and a normal use of the word *God* from a Hollywood/American perspective, can be very offensive in the TT if used in certain contexts. This can explain why there are about 12% for both omitted cases and for cases where the reformulation strategy is used. For example, when the word *God* is used in silly, joking and negative contexts, subtitlers tend to omit the word *God* in the Arabic subtitles. phrases such as *"Half human, half god; So says the bastard son of a god; War against the gods; your race, your country, your God; Flesh of a God; and I can make any man, woman, god, or beast do my bidding"* are omitted in the Arabic subtitles due to religious and cultural reasons. The word *God* must be used appropriately and judiciously in spoken and written Arabic text. The inappropriate use of this word might be considered as blasphemy in certain contexts and can lead to imprisonment or capital punishment depending on the extent to which Islamic norms have been violated. For example, in many cases in Arab countries, people were arrested on charges of blasphemy, although most of them are Muslims, and these expressions were spontaneous and were not intended to offend. However, due to the sensitivity of the subject and the reaction of people on social media, the government authorities take legal measures, including heavy financial fines and long prison terms and it may even result in the death penalty in some countries. For example, Arabic phrases such as الله مش فاضي لكل الوقت لإلنا [God is not free all the time for us], الجنة اللي تسكر بوجهي الباب عشان مو لابسة حجاب ما تشرفني [heaven closes the door in my face because I am not wearing a Hijab. I don't want it] and تكفين إذا رحتي إلى الجنة قولي حق الله يدخلني الجنة [please, if you go to heaven, tell God to allow me to enter heaven] are seen by many Muslims and Arabs as blasphemy and those who said them have been arrested[12]. This shows how religious concepts and norms are very sensitive in the Arabic context, so these concepts need to be treated carefully in conversation. Hence, reformulation strategies are used 53 times (12%), mainly by using either

[12] These examples are taken from three different newspaper, namely Okaz, Thenewkhalij, and Arabnn. See References list for more details.

the words يا للهول[oh my!], or a pronoun, or ambiguous words in order to avoid mentioning the word *God* in the Arabic subtitles. For instance, sentences such as *The gods need us, She's the reason I believe in God* and *It's like God's vagina* are subtitled respectively into Arabic as إنهم بحاجة إلينا [they need us], بسببها زاد أيماني [because of her my faith increased] and [smell like a vagina]. These examples show how the word *God* is dealt with in Arabic subtitles and how the literal uses of the word *God* in the English subtitles would shock Arab viewers and violate their religious norms even if the films involve Greek Mythology. Consequently, subtitlers either omit the word *God* in Arabic subtitles or use various other words to render the meaning without explicitly indicating the word *God*.

On the other hand, cultural substitution is used for the word *God* although the direct translation strategy is an available option for subtitlers. However, for linguistic reasons, subtitlers use Islamic religious terms when dealing with the word *God* in English subtitles such as the words الله [Allah] and القدير [the all-powerful] which are used 109 (25%) and 26 times respectively (6%), These words are synonyms for *God*, for which there are ninety nine names according to Islamic beliefs, and subtitlers use such terms to make subtitles linguistically idiomatic. For example, sentences such as *thank God* and *God bless you* are subtitled respectively asالحمد لله [thanks to Allah], and بارك الله فيك [may Allah bless you]. These terms are commonly used in spoken Arabic; thus, when subtitling such sentences, subtitlers opt for Arabic equivalents that are more familiar to Arabs. Hence, if words such as الإله [God] or الرب [Lord] are used with the above-mentioned sentence, it would be relatively acceptable and understood in Arabic contexts, but for the sake of idiomaticity and readability, subtitlers use the word الله [Allah] as it is commonly used in MSA register.

Another common use of direct translation is with the English word *sex*, used 177 times out of total of 319, making up 55%. The use of the word جنس [*sex*] has to some extent become popular and generally acceptable in Arabic media especially with the advent of TV satellite

channels where many shows discuss various *sex*-related issues such as *sex* education and *sex*-related diseases etc. Therefore, in over half of the cases, the word *sex* has been translated by means of direct translation since the Arabic equivalent is acceptable and widely used within the MSA register. That is different from the way the word *fuck* is subtitled into Arabic, as discussed in subsequent paragraphs. However, sex-related topics and words are still a sensitive matter and talking about sex entails using euphemisms and indirect ways to convey the intended message. This can be seen in the use of cultural substitution which was used with the word *sex* in 110 cases, representing about 34%. Subtitlers use terms such as ممارسة الحب [make love], يضاجع [sleep with] and يعاشر [cohabit with] to deal with the expression *to have sex with*. The Arabic equivalents chosen by subtitlers are softer and toned-down versions, suggesting that this word is still inappropriate for the screen. This reflects the conservative attitude towards the concept of sex in the Arab culture, expressed in written MSA, evident in the tendency to use euphemisms for this word in order to comply with the target cultural norms. The terms used to translate the word *sex* in Arabic subtitles not only belong to the formal register of the MSA, but also have wide and multiple meanings. Also, it is worth noting that the use of MSA in subtitling limits the lexical options available to subtitlers which in turn results in words that are formal and tend to be used in religious discourse or in polite contexts in general.

The reformulation strategy, on the other hand, is applied to the word *sex* in 27 cases, accounting for 8% of occasions where the word *sex* is replaced by either an ambiguous Arabic equivalent or a word that conveys a general meaning of the word *sex* without having any explicit sexual reference. For example, words such as المتعة [pleasure], قصة حب [love story], علاقة [relationship] and عاطفي [emotional] are used as euphemisms for *sex*. On the other hand, in their attempts to avoid using the word *sex*, some subtitlers distort the meaning by using a totally inappropriate equivalent. For example, subtitles like *We are gonna have sex in your car* and *Doug told me she had sex with a pilot or something* are subtitled respectively into Arabic

as سنثمل في سيارتك! [We will get drunk in your car] and أخبرني دوغ أنها واعدت رباناً أو ما شابه [Doug told me she dated with a captain or something like that]. Therefore, despite the wide use of the word *sex* within the MSA register, subtitlers use cultural substitution and reformation strategies in about 43% of total cases, which means the concept of sex is still taboo for some subtitlers even when talking about it more formally or politely.

Similarly, regardless of the register difference between the words *sex* and *fuck*, both have the same meaning, but the way the word *fuck* is translated in the Arabic subtitles is different from the word *sex*. The direct translation strategy is never applied to the word *fuck*. Instead, it is subtitled by means of cultural substitution 89 out of 115 times, making up about 77% of the total cases in Arabic subtitles. The words يضاجع [sleep with],يعاشر [cohabit with], الجنس [sex] are used 51, 29 and 7 times respectively to translate the word *fuck*. Such equivalents not only produce a toned down version of Arabic subtitles, but also adversely affect the message and feelings that actors are intending to convey. The main reason for using such formal words in the Arabic subtitles is the shift from spoken language to a very formal form of language such as the MSA, where only formal words with high register can be used in Arabic subtitling. On the other hand, reformulation is used in 20 cases (17%), where the meaning is completely distorted by using Arabic words such as مداعبة [caress], الإغواء [seduction],علاقة [relationship], واعدت [dated] andمغازله [flirting] so forth. For example, the word *fuck* in this sentence *Because in three days you will be fucking her, in another three you will dump her* is subtitled into Arabic as ستغازلها[you will be flirting with her in three days …]. These translations clearly indicate the sensitivity of sex-related words, and demonstrate subtitlers' attempts to soften or avoid the explicit indication of the *sex* act in accordance with the cultural and social norms of the target system. The use of reformulation strategy with the words *sex* and *fuck* become a necessity when associated with words such as sister, mother and wife as it is unsuitable for Arab and Islamic norms and values. In this regard, Abdel-Jawad emphasises that the woman, whether as a

mother, daughter, or a sister, represents the centre of the cultural heritage of honour, dignity, and modesty in her "chastity/virginity" (2000, p.227).

Furthermore, as seen in Table 12, body part taboo words are subtitled mainly by using cultural substitution and reformulation with the exception of the word *balls*. This indicates that it is an insensitive, unacceptable and embarrassing body part taboo word that is unacceptable in Arabic subtitling. Hence, the absence or rare use of the direct translation strategy which is not used at all for the word *ass*, while it appears once only with the words *dick* and *asshole*. In the following paragraphs, an account of how body-part taboo words are translated in the Arabic subtitles will be presented.

The word *dick* is used in its literal sense in 198 cases. Of these, cultural substitution is used 113 (61%) times, reformulation strategy 64 (32%) times, omission 13 times (7%), and direct translation only once. This is a very clear indication of subtitlers' preference for using cultural substitution when dealing with the word *dick*. In these instances, they tend to use two Arabic equivalents, namely the word عضو [organ] (79 times, 66%), and قضيب [penis (lit. rod)] (24 times, 20%), while other words such as the الجنس [*sex*] are used less than four times. Since the English word is offensive and embarrassing as a direct translation, subtitlers use a cultural substitution that is acceptable. Although the word عضو [organ] can refer to many other organs in the human body, it is understood that the word refers to the male genitalia. It is obvious that the Arabic words used as translations for the word *dick* are very formal and euphemistic. These terms are used to avoid the offensiveness of body-part taboo words in the target language, and to comply with the high and formal language register (MSA) required of Arabic subtitling. Another possible explanation for using the words عضو [organ (lit. rod)] and قضيب [penis (lit. rod)] is that subtitlers want the Arabic equivalent to have a general, ambiguous meaning to safeguard children or young adults from seeing this word in the Arabic subtitles. However, in some Arabic subtitles, more words are added to the Arabic word عضو [organ] such as 'male

organ', 'reproductive organ' or 'genital organ' to clarify its meaning and remove ambiguity. Nevertheless, both Arabic versions are still by far less offensive than the English one.

The reformulation strategy is used with the word *dick* in 32% of cases, where various inoffensive Arabic words are used as equivalents. For example, subtitlers use pronouns in 17 cases in order to avoid a direct and explicit reference to the word *dick*. For instance, the sentence *Can you please just cover the dick?* is subtitled as ؟ ايمكنك تغطيته [Can you cover it?]. Also, words such as جسد [body], الرجولة [manhood], and المداعبة [caress], are used 10, 6 and 5 times respectively as Arabic equivalents. These linguistic choices indicate the offensiveness of taboo words related to body parts and demonstrate how the ST is distorted in translation. Hence, despite the success of the reformulation strategy in removing the taboo sense of the word *dick*, in some cases it is inappropriate and produces ambiguity or nonsense. This in turn has an adverse effect on the Arab viewer's experience. Moreover, when subtitlers adopt such words, it may be at odds with what is actually appearing on the screen. For example, *Because Teddy ain't got no dick* is subtitled as لأن "تيدي" ليس لديه جسد [Because Teddy has no body]. This English sentence was spoken in a court of law and was followed by laughter. However, the Arabic translation was ambiguous and did not reflect the humour produced by the taboo word.

Similarly, the word *ass* is translated in Arabic subtitles usually by means of two strategies, namely cultural substitution and reformulation, applied 84 (64%) and 42 (32%) times out of total of 132 times, respectively. These two strategies represent 96% of the total subtitling strategies used for the word *ass*. When cultural substitution is used, subtitlers use the Arabic word مؤخرة [butt] 78 out of 84, which makes up about 93%. This word is a cultural substitution and it is used in general contexts to refer to the back of things such as trains, cars, troops and so forth. It is by far less offensive than its English counterpart. This word can be used in educational contexts and in the media as it is formal and generally acceptable among Arabs.

However, when reformulation is used for the word *ass*, subtitler use various words depending on the context to render the overall meaning without mentioning explicitly the word *ass*. Usually, subtitlers translate this word in one of three ways: by using pronouns, the whole body, or replacing the word *ass* with other body organs. For example, sentences such as She got a fat *ass*, too and I got glass in my *ass*" are subtitled as لديها جسد بدين [she has a fat body] and هناك زجاج في عيني [there is glass in my eye] respectively. That means that taboo words related to body parts are very offensive in Arabic subtitling and subtitlers tend to either using a cultural substitution or various other words to prevent the viewers from seeing such words, thereby adhering to the cultural norms of the recipient language. This may also be the reason for not using direct translation for body-part taboo words with the exception of the word *balls* which is treated differently in Arabic subtitles.

The word *balls* belongs to the body-part taboo category and it is the only word in this category to which direct translation is applied frequently, and cultural substitution is the least commonly used strategy. Of the 101 occurrences, it is subtitled by direct translation in 57 cases (56%), by reformulation 24 times (24%) and by the omission strategy 14 times (14%). When direct translation is used for the word *balls*, the Arabic word خصية [testicle] is applied, i.e. 57 times. It is evident that the Arabic equivalent is a very formal word that tends to be used in educational and medical discourse, as a result of the MSA used for Arabic subtitling. Therefore, subtitlers adopt a very formal word that fits the high register of MSA. The second possible reason for the high number of uses of direct translation strategy is that there are no other alternatives or synonyms that subtitlers can use as equivalents of the word *balls*, unlike the words *dick*, and *ass* for which several other words are available.

In conclusion, for the literal use of taboo words, the two main strategies used are cultural substitution and direct translation, which together account for 78% of total strategies used for this function. This is the only function for which direct translation is used more frequently than

for any other taboo functions although it ranks the second for this function. It is generally used with religious words. Furthermore, although the literal function of taboo words is not problematic as it is straightforward compared to other functions such as the idiomatic and pronominal form functions, where the cultural differences force subtitlers to render only the overall meaning of taboo items but not the taboo item itself, the use of cultural substitution is preferred. This is done to tone down the offensiveness of the taboo words in the English subtitles and to comply with the formal MSA register used for subtitling. On the other hand, the reformulation strategy accounts for about 16% of total use of subtitling strategies, where the taboo words are subtitled into vague and ambiguous words to eliminate the taboo element and render only the overall meaning.

Having discussed the occurrences of the taboo words with a literal function, their frequency, Arabic equivalents and the strategies employed by subtitlers to deal with them, the ensuing section discusses the personal insults function.

4.4.5 Personal insult referring to defined entity

The personal insult function ranks the fifth most frequent taboo function used in this corpus with 1148 times, occurring with nine English taboo words, namely *bitch, stupid, asshole, motherfucker, fuck, shit, dick, ass and goddamn*. Table 13 below shows the distribution of this function for each taboo word and the translation strategies applied to each taboo word used for this function.

Table 13: Subtitling strategies used for taboo words in personal insult function

Row Labels	Cultural Substitution	Direct Translation	Omission	Reformu-lation	Grand Total
Bitch	205	18	29	33	285
Stupid	64	135	15	5	219
Asshole	168		6	3	177
Motherfucker	100		17	7	124
Fuck	96		18	8	122
Shit	71		9	14	94
Dick	58		4	9	71

Ass	14		8	30	52
Goddamn		3	1		4
Grand Total	**776**	**156**	**107**	**109**	**1148**

As shown in Table 13 above, cultural substitution is predominantly used for the personal insults function, applied 776 times out of a total of 1148, making up 68% of the total subtitling strategies used for this function. The other three strategies, namely, direct translation, reformulation and omission, are used in 14%, 9% and 9% of cases, respectively. Cultural substitution is used frequently for all taboo words except for the words *stupid* and *ass.* The former is translated by direct translation 135 (62%) out of a total 219 times, while the latter is subtitled using reformulation in 30 of 52 (58%) cases.

Since cultural substitution is by far the most common strategy used for the personal insults function, it is essential to examine the Arabic equivalents most often used for taboo words having this function. This will give an idea about the nature and type of Arabic equivalents that are used in dealing with various English taboo words used as insults, and the extent to which the level of offensiveness of the English words are maintained in the Arabic subtitles. The following Table shows the twelve Arabic words that are most often used as equivalents, and their frequencies.

Table 14: The most common Arabic equivalents used as cultural substitutions for the personal insults function

Arabic equivalents	***ass***	***ass-hole***	***bitch***	***dick***	***fuck***	***Mother-fucker***	***shit***	***stupid***	**Grand total**
سافل vile	1	44	101	6	19	42	3		216
حقير contemptible	1	25	21	8	2	6	20	1	84
غبي *stupid*	3	43	5	15	3	4	3		76
لعين *damn*/ed	1	7	18	2	13	19	3		63
وغد scoundrel	1	17	11	10	4	15	2		60
أحمق fool	3	21		8	3	1	6	17	59
سخيف				1				42	43

silly									
تباً may evil befall (someone)		1	4		30	1	2		38
فاجر dissolute			20						20
سحقاً may *God* alienate (someone) from His mercy			1		11	5	2		19
قذر filthy			2	2			12		16
ساقطة fallen-woman			8			1	1		10

As Table 14 shows, the word سافل [vile] is by far the most common Arabic word used for this function, occurring 216 times: 101 times for the word *bitch*, 44 times for *asshole*, and 42 times for *motherfucker*. It is used for all taboo words except the word *stupid*, indicating that the level of offensiveness is relatively toned down in Arabic subtitles by using various insulting words that belong to a high and more formal register. For example, an offensive word such as *motherfucker* is subtitled as سافل [vile] and لعين [damned] and وغد [scoundrel], which loses its power and strength and even its humorous effect if this is the intended purpose. Those words are commonly used in Arabic subtitles not only for this function but for other functions as well, which means the words are repeated frequently and appear as translations of many English taboo words. For example, as this Table shows, the words حقير [contemptible], أحمق [fool] are used for all taboo words.

To obtain an overview of the most common taboo words in the English subtitles used for the purpose of insulting, we need to examine the nature of Arabic equivalents used for such words. The word *bitch*, which is the most common word used for this function, appears in 285 cases, and is translated as سافل/ة [vile] in 35% of these, and asحقير [contemptible] and فاجرة [dissolute] for 7% of each. Secondly, the word *asshole* is translated as سافل [vile] 44 times (25%), غبي [stupid] 43 times (25%), حقير [contemptible] in14% of cases and أحمق [fool] in 12% of total occurrences. The third most common word is *motherfucker*, which is subtitled in

34% of cases as سافل [vile], 15 % as لعين [damned], and 12 ٪ as وغد [scoundrel]. Similarly, the word *fuck* which appears 122 times, out of which is subtitled as تباً [may evil befall (someone)], 30 times, which accounts of 25% of cases, as سافل [vile] in about 16% and as لعين [damned] in 11% of cases. It is obvious that the Arabic equivalent تباً [may evil befall (someone)] frequently occurs with the word *fuck* not only for the insult function, but also with other functions as seen in previous sections. The same applies to the words *shit* and *dick*, both of which are translated by cultural substitution in about 76% and 82% of cases, respectively. Therefore, it is obvious that subtitlers prefer using corresponding Arabic words that are less offensive and more acceptable than the English ones. There are several reasons for this, among which is the cultural difference between the two languages in which taboo words are used differently. For instance, words such as *dick, fuck, motherfucker, asshole* and so forth, are not used in Arabic in the same way as in English; hence, direct translation would render the subtitles unidiomatic and often nonsensical. Thus, subtitlers opt for using insulting words that are very common in Arabic written language and are more acceptable than their English counterparts. This is also related to the cultural norms and conventions of the target language, which is more conservative than the American, and which entails toning down the severity and obscenity of the taboo words in the English dialogue. The rigid censorship imposed on audiovisual materials in the Arab world prevents frequently used taboo words, that might shock viewers and be unacceptable to them, from appearing on Arabic screens.

Moreover, the influence of MSA on the Arabic equivalent words used in translations of taboo words is evident in the subtitles. This means that although there are words that Arabs use in their spoken language that can be just as offensive as the taboo words in the ST, due to the use of MSA in Arabic subtitling, only formal words are permitted to be used. Hence, the Arabic subtitling tends to be artificial and not realistic or as powerful as the English dialogue or as the words Arabs use in their daily spoken language. In other words, the formal MSA language that

is most commonly used for subtitling is not used in everyday conversations. Rather, it is a formal language that is used in educational, law and media contexts and it has religious heritage. Therefore, the nature of MSA is not conducive to the use of taboo words, and it would be incongruous to use very offensive words within that register. Hatim and Mason (1997) argue that some linguistic features such as dialects and vernaculars will be lost in subtitling due to the shift in the medium.

To conclude, the predominance of the cultural substitution strategy is evident in the personal insults function. In more than two-thirds of total cases, English taboo words are translated by using less offensive Arabic words that are more acceptable and widely used in the written Arabic register. Also, the cultural differences between English and Arabic in the way taboo words are used is another significant reason for adopting the cultural substitution strategy, in addition to the constraint imposed by MSA whereby only formal language can be used for subtitles.

4.4.6 Pronominal form function

The pronominal form function ranked the sixth most common function identified in this corpus, occurring 844 times, representing about 8% of the total use of taboo words, and appearing only with three English taboo words: *shit*, *ass* and *fuck*. For this function, three subtitling strategies are used. Table 15 below shows the distribution of this function for each taboo word and the translation strategies used for each taboo word for this pronominal form function.

Table 15: Subtitling strategies used for taboo words in pronominal form function

Row Labels	**Cultural Substitution**	**Omission**	**Reformulation**	**Grand Total**
ass	9	15	160	184
dick			2	2
fuck	7	6	2	15
shit	85	65	442	592
Grand Total	**101**	**86**	**606**	**793**

As can be seen, for this function only three taboo words are used; *shit* appears 592 times (70%), *ass* 237 times (28%), which means 98% of the use of pronominal form function is for the words *shit* and *ass*, while the word *fuck* appears with this function in 15 cases (2%). The remaining taboo words in this study, that is, 14 taboo words out of 17, do not appear with the pronominal form function. Regarding the subtitling strategies, it is evident that reformulation is by far the most predominant strategy. It is used 645 (76%) times, including 441 times for the word *shit*. After reformulation, the next most commonly used strategy is cultural substitution used 105 (12%) times, most often for the word *shit* (86 times). The omission strategy appears 94 times (11%), 65 of which are used for the word *shit*.

Before investigating the occurrences of the English taboo words used for the pronominal form function, an overview is given of the most common Arabic equivalents that are used for this function as shown in Table 16 below.

Table 16: The most common Arabic equivalents used in pronominal form function

Row Labels	***ass***	***fuck***	***shit***	**Grand Total**
non-taboo (unclassifiable)	180	2	433	615
Omitted	23	6	65	94
هراء nonsense			34	34
القذارة filth			11	11
ترهات vain			11	11
لعين *damn*/ed		3	3	6

As can be seen in the table above, the vast majority of Arabic equivalents used for the pronominal function are not taboo and therefore do not belong to any taboo categories. They are used in 615 out of 844 cases, accounting for 73%, which indicates the predominance of reformulation strategy. The second most common choice of subtitlers is omission, which is applied to 94 cases. Hence, taboo items do not appear in Arabic subtitles in 84% of cases, either because they have been omitted or because of the particular Arabic equivalents adopted by

subtitlers. It is also evident the Arabic equivalents are by far less offensive than the English taboo words, namely the words *shit*, *ass* and *fuck*.

Since the pronominal form function appears more frequently with the words *shit* and *ass*, the occurrence of these two words is investigated to determine whether any pattern emerges in subtitlers' translations when they deal with the word *shit* in its pronominal form function.

The word *shit* overall is the third most common word in the corpus of this study, occurring 1882 times. This word is used to perform the pronominal form function in 592 cases, about (31%), making it the second most common function of the word *shit*. Regarding the subtitling strategy used for the word *shit* in its pronominal form function, reformulation is the most frequently used strategy, applied 441 out of 592 times, accounting for 75%.

The word *shit* in the corpus of this study is used in this pronominal form function to refer to many things including objects, items, drugs or facts, to name but a few, which means the word is versatile and can be used to convey various meanings. However, this is not the case in MSA as there is no equivalent word that can perform the same pragmatic function although the case is different in colloquial Arabic. Hence, it can be a challenging task for subtitlers to maintain the taboo sense in the Arabic subtitles and at the same time refer to the intended object mentioned in the film. This can be seen in the sentence below.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">English subtitles: There's not a lot in this world that I love, but the shit that I love, I don't trust with nobody.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Arabic subtitle</td><td>English back translation</td></tr>
<tr><td>لا أحب الكثير من الأشياء في هذا العالم، لكن الأشياء التي أحبها، لا أئتمن أحدا عليها</td><td>I don’t love a lot of things in this world, but the things I love, I don’t trust with nobody.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Translation strategy: reformulation</td></tr>
</table>

The word *shit* in the above example has been changed to ‘things’, which is a general referential word devoid of any evaluative or taboo element. The vague/non-specific function is retained albeit ‘sanitised’. Unlike the Arabic language, in English, the word *shit* can be used to refer to both concrete and abstract nouns. Hence, subtitlers have no choice but to remove the taboo items and render the general meaning. In these cases, the pragmatic difference between Arabic and English is the main reason for subtitlers choosing the reformulation strategy, which ensures that the Arabic subtitles are cohesive and idiomatic. Also, this is a reflection of the non-taboo words that are adopted in Arabic subtitles, in this case 433 times out of 615 as shown in Table 16. However, if direct translation is used, the rendering is likely to be awkward, confusing, and unidiomatic as well as unacceptable to Arab viewers. Such taboo items are out of place and the excessive use of taboo words in the same way as in English subtitles might be seen by many Arab viewers as unnecessary and unjustified.

However, subtitlers opt for cultural substitutions when dealing with the word *shit* when it is used for the pronominal form function in about 86 times (15%) of the total cases. it is found that subtitlers refer to the object the word *shit* is the English subtitles refers to and then adding an offensive word, mainly an adjective to maintain the offensiveness of the source item. For instance, sentences such as *You know, shit like that* is subtitled as “خدع لعينة كهذه” [damned tricks like that]. In such examples, subtitlers are more creative in maintaining the negative element in the Arabic subtitles by referring to the intended object in the scene of the film and adding the word ‘damned’ to maintain the taboo load in the Arabic subtitles. Although this can be an effective tool for maintaining the taboo load, it cannot be used to refer to all objects due to normative and structural differences between English and Arabic as the word *shit* can be used to refer to objects with no intended negative connotations. For example, the sentence *I love this science shit*! is subtitled into Arabic as أحب هذه التجارب العلمية! [I like these scientific experiments]. The subtitler replaces the referential taboo word with a general referential term

('things'). In such cases, subtitlers strip away offensive elements given the cultural constraints at work in the MSA medium.

The second most common taboo word used for the pronominal form function is the word *ass* which appears in 237 cases out of 492, accounting for 48% of this word's frequency. For this function, reformulation is the most common subtitling strategy, used 202 out of 237 times, or 85%.

The word *ass* in English is generally used as pronominal form, referring to the entire person, not to a specific body part. However, this is not the case in Arabic since the two languages belong to a very different linguistic system in which the word *ass* cannot be used in the same way as in English. Consequently, the reformulation strategy is usually applied which renders only the overall meaning without maintaining the offensiveness of the source taboo word. The following is one of many examples that occur repeatedly, and subtitlers often deal with such cases by using reformulation strategies.

English subtitles: You really saved my ***ass***.	
Arabic subtitle	English back translation
لقد أنقذتني من موقف عصيب	You saved me from a difficult situation
Translation strategy: reformulation	

In this and other examples, Arabic subtitlers tend to avoid using the word *ass* which might seem awkward and bizarre for Arab audiences when used for a comparable metonymic reference in MSA. The translation is free of taboo elements and only the overall meaning is rendered. Hence, we can conclude that the way people use taboo words in Arabic and English is different, and this affects subtitlers' choice of strategy when dealing with English taboo words. Although the reformulation strategy is very useful for rendering the general meaning,

it does not succeed in keeping the offensive element in the Arabic subtitles, which will affect the message that the film producer, actors, and so forth intend to convey. For example, taboo words are often used to create humour as noted by Andersson and Trudgill (1990), however, when the taboo elements are removed, the intended humour is not conveyed by the Arabic subtitle. Again, this is attributed to the limitations imposed by the need to use the formal MSA register. Therefore, these linguistic choices do not maintain the same level of offensiveness, obscenity or humour due to the shift in register.

Another common use of the word *ass* for the pronominal form function is when it is part of a compound adjective. For example, '*dumb-ass*' is used in 18 cases in the English subtitles and is subtitled into Arabic by means of either omission or reformulation. When the reformulation strategy is used, the overall meaning of the taboo word is rendered without any trace of the taboo item. Therefore, such sentences are subtitled into Arabic as " أحمق - ابله – غبي رجل/ [stupid – idiot –fool man]. This is an indication of the difference between Arabic and English in the grammatical, structural, normative and pragmatic levels.

In conclusion, it is evident that the pronominal form function poses a daunting challenge for subtitlers due to the difference in linguistic structure between English and Arabic in using taboo words for this function, which resulted in a high application of reformulation strategy in about 76 % cases. This indicates that subtitlers choose to render the general and overall meaning of the English taboo words without including the taboo items in the Arabic subtitles. Moreover, the mandatory use of MSA for subtitling limits the options available to subtitlers as the words they choose as equivalents for taboo words must be formal. Hence, cultural substitution is used in numerous cases in order to render toned-down versions of Arabic subtitles or versions where the taboo items are absent, and the reformulation strategy is used to retain only their general meaning.

Having discussed the occurrences of the taboo words within a pronominal form function in the corpus, their frequency, Arabic equivalents and the strategies employed by subtitlers to deal with them, the ensuing section discusses the cursing expletive function.

4.4.7 Cursing expletive function

The cursing expletive function is one of the three least common functions in this corpus, appearing 337 times and occurring with five English taboo words: *ass, damn, fuck, goddamn, and shit*. Table 17 below shows the distribution of this function per each taboo word and the translation strategies used for each taboo word having this function.

Table 17: Subtitling strategies used for taboo words in cursing expletive function

Row Labels	Cultural Substitution	Direct Translation	Omission	Reformulation	Total
ass	19		3	4	26
damn	6	14	5		25
fuck	249		19	10	278
goddamn	5	2			7
shit				1	1
Grand Total	**279**	**16**	**27**	**15**	**337**

As shown in the Table, the word *fuck* is by far the most common word in this corpus, appearing in 278 out of a total of 337 cases, which represents about 82% of total use of taboo words for the cursing expletive function. The words *ass* and *damn* rank the second and third, with 26 and 25 times respectively. For this function, it is evident that cultural substitution is by far the most commonly used translation strategy, applied 279 (83%) times, 249 times for the word *fuck* in cases. That means that 89% of total usages of cultural substitution is with the word *fuck*. Also, it is evident from the table that omission and reformulation strategies are not used frequently, which is an indication that the cursing expletive function is known and widely used in Arabic unlike other functions such as the pronominal form and idiomatic functions, although the way

taboo words are used for the cursing expletive function is different between English and Arabic as shown in Table 18 below.

Table 18: The most common Arabic equivalents used as cultural substitutions in personal insults function

Row Labels	***ass***	***damn***	***fuck***	***goddamn***	***shit***	**Grand Total**
تباً may evil befall (someone)	5	5	158	4		172
سحقاً may *God* alienate (someone) from His mercy		1	44	1		46
لعين *damn*/ed		14	20	2		36
Omitted	3	5	19			27
إلى الجحيم to the *hell*			13			13
non-taboo (unclassifiable)	4		8		1	13

As shown in the table, all the Arabic equivalents for the English taboo words used for the cursing function belong to the religion category, which again indicates subtitlers' preference for using Arabic religious words, not only for this function but with other functions as well (4.4.1). As seen in the Table, religious words are used 264 times, which represents about 95% of the total use of cultural substitution. Among those religious words, the phrase تباً [may evil befall (someone)] is the most frequent one, with used 172 times for all taboo words having this function, and mainly for word *fuck* (92%). The word سحقاً [may *God* alienate (someone) from His mercy] is the second most frequent word occurring 46 times, 44 times of which is for the word *fuck* too. While the third common Arabic word is لعين [damned], appearing in 36 cases and used for three words: *fuck, damn,* and *goddamn* with 20, 14 and 2 times respectively.

It is obvious from Table 18 above that the word *fuck*, more than any other English taboo word, is used for this function, appearing 278 times. When the word *fuck* appears in English subtitles in phrases such as *fuck it/him/you/ her*, subtitlers translate them into Arabic as a تباً [may evil befall (someone)] in 158 cases (57%), as سحقاً [may *God* alienate (someone) from His mercy] in 44 cases (16%), as لعين [damned] in 20 cases(7%), and as إلى الجحيم [to the *hell*]

13 times (5%). That means about 85% of Arabic equivalents used for the word *fuck* belong to a religious domain, indicating the popular use of religious words in Arab culture to express strong emotions conveyed by cursing. This can be seen from the cases where direct translation strategy is used,.i.e. with two religious words, namely *damn* and *goddamn*, which means that religious words in English subtitles can be translated by direct translation since they are used similarly to some extent in the Arabic language, not only for this function but for other functions as well as discussed in sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.4, unlike other taboo words such as *fuck*, *shit*, and *ass*, which have been shifted to Arabic religious words. Therefore, the cultural differences between English and Arabic mean that the use of taboo words is different, which makes subtitlers use culturally appropriate and idiomatically acceptable translations that are familiar to the target audience.

Apart from cultural differences, the use of formal and high register of language in Arabic subtitling is another linguistic constraint which force subtitlers to use equivalents within the formal MSA register. For example, Arabic equivalents such as تباً [may evil befall (someone)] and سحقاً [may *God* alienate (someone) from His mercy] are not heard in Arabs' daily spoken communication, as they are archaic and belong to very formal register. Therefore, the shift to MSA attenuates the severity of taboo words and limits the lexical options available to subtitlers.

In conclusion, it is obvious that the word *fuck* makes up the majority of times when it is used as a cursing expletive. A translational pattern observed for this function is the predominant use of the cultural substitution strategy when rendering English taboo words into Arabic in subtitles. Also, due to cultural differences, most of the words serving this function are translated using archaic Arabic religious words which are no longer used in spoken Arabic, but which nevertheless are aligned with the linguistic norms of the MSA.

4.4.8 Figurative extension of literal meaning

The figurative extension of the literal meaning is the second to last most common strategy evident in this corpus with 91 tokens, occurring in two forms, *shitty* and *sexy* which are based on the lemma *sex* and *shit*. Table 19 below shows the distribution of this function for each taboo word and the translation strategies used for each word having this function.

Table 19: Subtitling strategies used for taboo words in figurative extension of literal meaning

Row Labels	Cultural Substitution	Direct Translation	Omission	Reformulation	Total
sex	53	4			57
shit	23	3	2	6	34
Grand Total	**76**	**7**	**2**	**6**	**91**

As the table above shows, cultural substitution is the most frequently used strategy, applied in 76 out of a total of 91 cases, accounting for 84% of total use of strategies. This strategy is used mainly with the word *sex* (53 times), and is applied 23 times for the word *shit*, making up 93% and 68% respectively. It is evident that the reformulation and omission strategies are used only with the word *shit*, 6 and 2 times respectively, which might be an indication that the word *shitty* is far more offensive than the word *sexy*.

The predominance of cultural substitution is similar to the literal use function for which the cultural substitution strategy is the one most often used. This is because the literal translation of some taboo words is more offensive than using a figurative extension of the literal meaning as seen with the word *sex*. In other words, when the word *sex* is used to refer to the actual sex act, subtitlers tone down the English word with Arabic equivalents such as يمارس الحب [make love]. However, the word *sexy* is not problematic when subtitling into Arabic. Equivalents such as مثير [seductive],مثيرجنسياً [sexually seductive] and جذاب [attractive] are used 48, 5 and 4 times, respectively. The word *sexy* appears in sentences such as *You need to sit your little sexy ass down* which is subtitled into Arabic asعليك أن تجلس بقفاك المثير [you need to sit with your

seductive back]. The Arabic word chosen here can have various meanings, among which is the sexual one.

The same applies to the word *shitty* which appears 34 times, and for which subtitlers adopt Arabic equivalents such as مزري [miserable], مقرف [disgusting], سيء [bad],قذر [filthy], and لعين [damned], occurring 8 ,4, 3, 3, and 2 times, respectively. As can be seen from the Arabic translations of the words *sexy* and *shitty,* all the corresponding words chosen for the subtitles are formal and less obscene than the original ones, again showing the constraints imposed by having to use MSA for subtitles.

In conclusion, it is evident that the two words used for this function are not as offensive as when used for other functions, and cultural substitution is the most popular strategy applied in these cases. The Arabic equivalents for the words *shitty* and *sexy* belong to the formal MSA register. In the following paragraphs, the oath function, which is the last and least frequent taboo function, is discussed.

4.4.9 Oath

The oath function is the least common function, occurring 40 times and only with one word, *God*. Table 20 below shows the Arabic equivalents used for the word *God* and the subtitling strategies adopted for this function.

Table 20: Arabic equivalents and subtitling strategies used with the word God in Oath function.

Row Labels	Cultural Substitution	Omission	Grand Total
Omitted		21	21
الله Allah	19		19
Grand Total	**19**	**21**	**40**

As Table 20 shows, the word *God* is used for the oath function in 40 cases, omitted in 21 cases (52%) and translated it with the cultural substitution strategy in 19 (48%) cases where the word الله [Allah] is added to the oath to make it more specific. As can be seen in Table 20, subtitlers

either omit any reference to God and translate phrases such as *I swear to God* into Arabic as أقسم [I swear] without including the word *God*. Strictly speaking, the reason for such omission can be related to the fact that oaths in the Islamic culture should be accompanied specifically by the word الله [Allah], otherwise it goes against the Islamic beliefs at least in MSA, although in spoken Arabic some Arabs use different forms of swearing which are not necessarily in conformity with Sharia law, e.g. وحياة النبي [By the Prophet's life], and والمصحف [By the Quran]. If subtitlers use the word 'Allah' in the Arabic subtitles, the target viewers may wonder why when the speaker is not Muslim. Therefore, subtitlers omit the direct reference to the word *God* and instead render the overall meaning of the oath. For example, a sentence like *But, I swear to God, I didn't kill those people* is subtitled into Arabic as لكنني أقسم إنني لم أقتل هذين الشخصين [but I swear I did not kill those two people].

On the other hand, in about 48% of the cases, subtitlers use the word *Allah* in Arabic subtitles, regardless of whether or not it causes confusion, as their aim is to use idiomatic expressions that are familiar to Arabs. Although subtitlers can use words such as الإله [god], الألهة [deity], الرب [lords,], those words are not used commonly in the formal register with the word 'swear' in the Arabic language, only the word *Allah* is used. This might the reason why other synonyms for the word *God* are not used as they could refer to different gods in other religions. In other words, subtitlers are not willing to violate the religious and cultural norms of Arab viewers and therefore use the word الله[Allah].

In conclusion, two subtitling strategies tend to be used when translating words intended as oaths: omission and cultural substitution. Cultural substitution is used to translate the word *God* as الله [Allah] in order to comply with the religious and cultural norms of the target audience.

This section discussed the taboo functions, their frequencies, the taboo words used for these functions, how these taboo items are translated in Arabic subtitles, and the most common

Arabic equivalents used to translate these taboo items. The following section presents a summary of the overall findings of this study.

Having examined the occurrences of the most common taboo words in this corpus, their linguistic functions, their Arabic counterparts in the corpus, the subtitling strategies used for them, and having discussed the translational patterns that tend to appear in Arabic subtitles and the reasons behind subtitlers' choices, we summarise the main findings of this study in the following section.

4.5 Summary of findings

The corpus of this study was searched for the most common taboo words used in American TV from several lists, among which the lists proposed by Jay (2009) and Sapolsky, Shafer and Kaye (2010). Ninety films were examined to find every taboo word that appears more than ninety times in these films; sixteen taboo words meet this criterion, appearing 10641 times in total. They belong semantically to six categories whose frequencies vary significantly, and in which words in the sex, religion, excrement and body-parts categories are the most common ones with more than 1000 occurrences, while words in the incest, mental disability and prostitution categories appear fewer than 300 times. It was found that the most frequent taboo words in this corpus are used in English subtitles to perform nine different functions, among which four functions appear more than 1000 times, namely the general expletive function, emphatic function, idiomatic function and literal function. Functions such as personal insults, pronominal form, and cursing functions occur 929, 793 and 450 times respectively.

Across the entire corpus, the main subtitling strategies were identified, namely direct translation (18%), cultural substitution (39%), omission (25%), and reformulation (18%). Based on the overall distribution of the subtitling strategies used for dealing with taboo words in English subtitles, and based on Venuti's concept of domestication and foreignisation, it is clear that only about 18% of taboo words are foreignised, while domestication occurs in 82%

of total occurrences of taboo words. This gives a clear indication that taboo words are very sensitive and subtitlers comply with the linguistic and cultural norms of the target language. The strong preference for domesticating the taboo words in English subtitles by Arab subtitlers is not surprising considering the nature of taboo language and the cultural differences between Arabic and English which require subtitlers to produce an acceptable translation that adheres to the cultural norms and expectation of the target language. This corresponds to the concepts of initial norms proposed by Toury (2012) and discussed in section 2.8.1.

Many factors influence the way that Arab subtitlers deal with taboo words in Hollywood movies; these factors are interrelated and cannot be separated. In other words, there is usually no one reason for subtitlers' choices, but rather a combination of multiple reasons. For instance, cultural differences, social norms, linguistic constrains, taboo functions, the type of taboo word and its semantic category, all combine to make the translations of English taboo words problematic and result in Arabic subtitles that are attenuated and less offensive.

Cultural differences between English and Arabic in the utterance of taboo words are one of the main factors influencing subtitlers' choices. That is to say, the way certain taboo words are used in English is different from their usage in Arabic. For instance, the words *shit* and *fuck* in English are frequently used as expletives, but not so in Arabic. This explains why the cultural substitution strategy is the one most commonly applied to most of the taboo functions across the entire corpus.

Also, it is found that Arabic religious words are frequently used for the translation of English taboo words. For example, the five most common Arabic corresponding words belong to the religion category. Hence, many English taboo words that relate to sex, excrement, body parts, prostitution and so forth, shift to the semantic category of religion in Arabic subtitles as Arabs generally use religious words to express various emotions, evident in the way that subtitlers deal with English taboo words. For instance, in 34% and 43% of cases respectively,

the words *fuck* and *shit* in English subtitles are translated into Arabic religious words. Similarly, over 90% of excrement-related words in the English subtitles are subtitled into Arabic words that belong to various semantic categories other than the excrement category. Moreover, the acceptability of using excessively taboo words in both languages varies significantly, which is reflected in the way English taboo words are treated in Arabic subtitling. For example, when there are no strong emotions expressed on the screen, subtitlers tend to omit the taboo words in order to be more idiomatic and natural, as the use of such words in Arabic subtitles is deemed unnecessary. This finding confirms a number of studies such as those by Khoshsaligheh, Ameri and Mehdizadkhani (2017) and Saeed, Nemati, and Fumani (2020).

Furthermore, the semantic taboo category has a significant impact on the overall subtitling strategies. For instance, in 76% of cases, the direct translation strategy is used for the religion category, which is an indication of the familiarity of religious words to the two cultures. On the other hand, the omission strategy is used with sex-related words in about 44% of total cases. Insults in the mental disability category tend to be less offensive than those in any other category; thus, direct translation is the most common strategy which is a reflection of the weak offensiveness of these words in the Arabic language.

Additionally, the function of taboo words plays a significant role in subtitlers' choices of subtitling strategies. English uses taboo words for some functions that are unfamiliar in Arabic, which does not use such words in the same way. In these cases, subtitlers adopt words that are more natural but whose meanings are far removed from those of their English counterparts, or they omit the taboo item altogether. For instance, the idiomatic and pronominal functions tend to be more problematic than literal and general expletives functions; therefore, the reformulation strategy is used for taboo words having the pronominal form in 76% of total occurrences; for the idiomatic function, reformulation is used in 31%, and the omission strategy in about 44% of total occurrences of idiomatic function. In those cases, only the overall

meanings of the taboo items are rendered. The same applies to the emphatic function where two-thirds of taboo words are omitted in Arabic subtitles. These results are in agreement with those obtained by Kizeweter,(2005), Greenall (2008), Ghassempur (2009), Pujol (2006), Pardo (2011), Lie (2013) and Nguyen (2015), Yuan (2016), Ávila-Cabrera (2016, 2020), Khoshsaligheh, Ameri and Mehdizadkhani (2017), Al-Yasin and Rabab'ah (2019) and Debbas and Haider (2020). However, when the taboo function is used in English subtitles in a similar way to the Arabic, subtitling strategies are affected and used accordingly. For instance, the direct translation strategy is used 1086 times (31%) for the general expletive function. Hence, the extent to which the functions of taboo words are used similarly to or differently from Arabic, has a significant impact on the way taboo words are translated into Arabic subtitles. Also, it is observed that these functions of taboo words in English subtitles are not maintained; rather, they are shifted to other functions. For example, taboo words which serve the general expletive function can be subtitled into Arabic to serve a cursing function. An in-depth analysis of the extent to which the functions of taboo langauge are maintained or shifted when subtitling is beyond the scope of this study, but offers a possible avenue for further research.

Another essential issue is the shift from spoken language to written language. Taboo words tend to be more offensive when appearing in written form than in spoken form. However, this is different in the Arabic context, as the shift is not only from spoken to written language, but also to a formal and high register language that is used in literature, media, legal system and educational institutes and subtitling. This shift imposes linguistic constraints that force subtitlers to use only formal corresponding Arabic words that not only differ significantly from the original English words but even from the spoken Arabic language that is used in Arabs' daily communications. This can be seen in the three most common Arabic taboo words in Arabic subtitles, two of which are archaic words no longer used in spoken language. Moreover, even when taboo words are used literally in English subtitles, such as those related to the body

part category, the corresponding Arabic words are very formal ones that tend to be used only in medical texts. This results in the film losing many essential elements related to taboo language, such as the spontaneity of emotions, the humorous effects, the intended message of the film, and its characterisations, which are often produced by the use of taboo words. These elements are often lost because the corresponding Arabic words are less offensive and obscene than the English counterparts.

Furthermore, the cultural and social norms of the Arabic language differ significantly from the American ones; that is to say, Arab culture is more conservative than the American one, which affects the acceptability of taboo words in Arabic subtitles, and what one culture accepts, the other does not. For example, when the word 'God' is used literally but in a negative context – from an Islamic perspective – or in a context that is at odds with Islamic beliefs, subtitlers tend to adhere to the cultural and ideological conventions and to remove the taboo element in Arabic subtitles. The same applies when there is reference to an actual sex act. In these cases, subtitlers tend to take a roundabout way and avoid a direct reference to *sex* by using expressions such as 'dating', 'love story' and so forth. Consequently, the cultural and social norms of the target language play a vital role in mitigating the offensiveness of taboo references in Arabic subtitles.

The nature of AVT, where the meaning can be conveyed through multiple means such as the image, the facial expressions and movements, and the audio of the film, influences the choice of subtitling strategies. For example, when taboo words are used in a scene where the actor uses gestures, subtitlers may feel that a euphemistic expression is adequate as the meaning of the taboo word has already been indicated by the actor's gesture. This allows viewers to understand the intended message of the scene without having a taboo word in the Arabic subtitles. In the same vein, there are some scenes, mainly sexual ones, that are censored for cultural and religious reasons. Those scenes may contain taboo words, but since those scenes

are cut, there are no Arabic corresponding words in Arabic subtitles. In such cases, because the scenes have been cut, omission is not a lexical choice made by subtitlers.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The concept of taboo language is a sensitive and controversial issue in many cultures. Even though it serves different functions, can express a wide range of emotions, and is used by many in their daily communication, taboo language has yet to be studied extensively by academics, particularly in the context of Arabic subtitling.

Due to the prevalence of taboo words in the media in general and in Hollywood films in particular, it is a linguistic phenomenon that poses significant issues in terms of cross-cultural adaptation when these films are translated for contexts where taboo language is unacceptable and far from the norm. Also, due to the cultural differences, the way taboo words are used varies significantly, especially when the source and target languages belong to very different linguistic systems, as in the case of English and Arabic. Thus, the translation of taboo words is a daunting task in interlingual subtitling due to a combination of cultural, ideological and technical constraints. Moreover, the degree to which cultures tolerate taboo words varies significantly, so that an acceptable expression in one language might be offensive in another.

Furthermore, subtitling is different from all other types of translation as subtitling requires shifting the text from spoken to written form. In other words, the taboo words are uttered in slangy and informal register conversation, but when subtitling, taboo words are converted to written form where they tend to be harsher and more severe than in spoken form. This is more challenging in the case of Arabic, as the shift is not to a written form only, but to a formal and high register of Arabic, which is the MSA - the language used in the media (including subtitling), and in the education and legal spheres. The gap between spoken Arabic and the written Arabic register is wider than between written and spoken English. In other words, the formal register, i.e. MSA, is not considered as a mother tongue by any of the Arab countries as it is not spoken and used in Arabs' daily conversations. This means that Arabs in more than 22

Arab countries are used to their own variety of Arabic when speaking, not the MSA. The reason for adopting MSA in subtitling is that it is understood by Arabs regardless of their locations and the linguistic variety they used. However, the taboo words used in MSA tend to belong to the religious domain and formal register and be mostly a toned down version of the English counterparts and do not represent the reality of swearing in Arabic spoken language. Therefore, as long as the MSA is used, the taboo words in subtitling will not be as severe, obscene and offensive as the English taboo words. Thawabteh (2014: 15) describes the MSA as "a tool for euphemism". However, the case is not so in the English language as the taboo words are used widely in English written form such as subtitling. Therefore, subtitling taboo words into Arabic poses a significant challenge as subtitlers must comply with the socio-cultural and linguistic norms of Islamic countries.

Hence, this study adopts a systematic framework to determine how taboo words are subtitled into Arabic; discover the most common Arabic words used in subtitles as translations of these taboo items; and investigate whether taboo word categories and taboo word functions influence translators' choices of subtitling strategies when dealing with taboo words. The theoretical framework of this study is based on DTS which enables the researchers to identify the way taboo words are transferred into Arabic in a parallel corpus of ninety films and their Arabic subtitles, and to determine whether subtitlers' linguistic choices are governed by the social norms of the TC. This study was motivated by the fact that there is a dearth of studies that deal with taboo language in the Arabic language, and most of the literature pertaining to taboo words takes a religious perspective. Only a handful of studies have been concerned with Arabic subtitling, only partially investigating the translation of taboo language and basing their work on only one or two films. Therefore, their findings are not generalisable to a broader range of films and are perforce biased, since the self-reporting nature of interpretation has produced contradictory results. Moreover, these studies have largely neglected the role of taboo

functions, and the classifications of taboo words adopted in those cases studies are vague and generally overlapping.

5.2 Summary of the findings

This study has attempted to answer three main research questions. The first research question concerned the identification of the predominant taboo items, their categories and their functions in the English dialogue. The second research question informed the quantitative investigation of the most frequent subtitling strategies adopted for translating taboo words found in a corpus of ninety films. The third question determined the impact of taboo word functions on the translation strategies applied to the most frequently-occurring items and categories.

Regarding the findings for research question 1, this study found that there are 16 unique types of taboo words that appear more than ninety times in the ninety films with a total of 10641 instances of taboo words. The three most frequent words are *fuck*, *God*, and *shit*, which appear 3059, 1958, and 1882 respectively, altogether accounting for approximately 65% of total occurrences of taboo words in the corpus of this study. Apart from these three words, the remaining taboo words occur fewer than 500 times, such as *ass* (492), *Jesus*/*Christ* (466), *hell* (423), *sex* (377), *damn* (291), *bitch* (289), *dick* (274), *goddamn* (267), *stupid* (220), *asshole* (194), *bullshit* (161), *motherfucker* (144), and *balls* (141). With references to the semantic categories of English taboo words, seven categories were identified in this corpus. Of these, sex (3436), religion (3405), excrement (2046), and body parts (1101) are the most common taboo categories. Prostitution, mental disability and incest categories were the least common categories with 289, 220, and 144 instances. In the corpus of this study, taboo words are used to serve nine taboo functions which are: general expletive function (3514, emphatic intensifier function (1657), idiomatic function (1603), literal usage denoting taboo referent (1564), personal insult referring to defined entity (929), 'pronominal' form with undefined referent

(793), cursing expletive (450), figurative extension of literal meaning (91) and oath function (40).

Across the corpus comprising ninety films and 10642 examples, five subtitling strategies were identified: direct translation (18%), cultural substitution (39%), omission (25%), and reformulation (18%), while the specification strategy is used only once. It is evident from the subtitling strategies adopted that taboo words are a culturally sensitive issue and filtered heavily as only 18% of total cases are subtitled using direct translation, most of which are for religious words. Therefore, about 82% of taboo words in English dialogue are manipulated in Arabic subtitles and do not have the same level of offensiveness as the source taboo items. Based on Venuti's concept of domestication and foreignisation, taboo words in the English subtitles are domesticated in nearly 82% of total cases when subtitling into Arabic, while foreignisation is applied in the remaining 18%.

Cultural substitution is generally used for most of the taboo words, categories and functions, although mainly for sex- and excrement-related words, and for taboo words that have a general expletive function, personal insults function and literal use function. On the other hand, the omission strategy is used for sex-, religion- and excrement-related words, and for empathic, idiomatic and general expletive functions. The reformulation strategy whereby the taboo item is removed and only its general meaning is rendered, is used mainly for taboo words related to excrement, body parts and religion, and for words that serve primarily pronominal form and idiomatic functions. Lastly, direct translation is used mostly with English religious words and those with general expletive or literal functions.

It is also found that the most common Arabic words used to translate English taboo words belong to the religion category, although most are archaic words that are no longer used in Arabic spoken language. Hence, many sex- and excrement-related words in English dialogue are rendered as religious words in Arabic subtitles. For instance, 34% and 43% of taboo words

belonging to the *sex* and excrement categories respectively, have shifted to religious words in translation. Furthermore, the Arabic religious words used in translations of taboo words are used for almost all taboo words that belong to the categories of sex, excrement, body parts, prostitution, incest and so forth. Therefore, subtitlers prefer and choose religious words when dealing with English taboo words, which is a reflection of Arab culture and language where religious references are used for cursing, insulting, and expressing strong emotions.

In regard to the third research question of this study, it is found that the function of taboo words has a strong influence on the choice of subtitling strategies. In other words, the functions of taboo words are different in English and Arabic as each language belongs to a very different linguistic system and to different cultural contexts which in turn affects the choice of subtitling strategies. For example, the idiomatic and pronominal functions of taboo words are often seen in English dialogue, but in Arabic they are used differently and with different words. For this reason, many taboo words having these functions are either omitted totally or only the essential propositional meaning is retained without any taboo element. Hence, subtitlers use the reformulation strategy for taboo words having the pronominal form in more than three quarters of occurrences. For the idiomatic function, reformulation is employed in about a third while omission is used in less than the half of total cases. The same applies to the emphatic function where two-thirds of taboo words are omitted in Arabic subtitles. However, when there is a similarity between the two languages in the use of taboo words for a specific function, such as the cursing function expressed with religious words, subtitlers tend to use direct translation especially with the word *God*. As illustrated, the function of taboo words is a major determinant of the strategies used for Arabic subtitles, particularly in association with other factors.

The qualitative analysis of this study found that subtitlers adopt certain subtitling strategies and lexical choices for several reasons, all of which are interrelated, and subtitlers make choices based on multiple factors. One of the main reasons and explanations for using certain subtitling

strategies is the cultural and social norms of the Arabic language which differ significantly from those of American English. For instance, the Arab culture is more conservative, which affects the acceptability or otherwise of taboo words in Arabic subtitles, and what is acceptable in one culture, is not so in the other. For example, when the word *God* is used literally but in a negative context – from an Islamic perspective – or in a context not aligned with Islamic beliefs, subtitlers tend to adhere to the cultural and religious conventions and to remove the taboo element in the Arabic subtitles. The same applies when there are references to an actual *sex* act. In these cases, subtitlers tend to deal with them in a roundabout way and avoid a direct reference to *sex* by using expressions such as 'dating', 'love story' and so forth. Consequently, the cultural and social norms of the target language play a vital role in mitigating the offensiveness of taboo references in Arabic subtitles. Moreover, the acceptability of using taboo words excessively and gratuitously varies significantly, which is evident in the way English taboo words are treated in Arabic subtitling. For example, when no strong emotions are being expressed on the screen, but the English dialogue nevertheless contains taboo words, subtitlers tend to omit the taboo words in order to be more idiomatic and natural, as the use of such words is deemed unnecessary in Arabic subtitles and such subtitles would sound awkward.

Furthermore, the shift from spoken language to a very high and formal register of language such as the MSA, which is the language used for Arabic subtitling, is a major linguistic constraint that limits the lexical options available to subtitlers. Taboo words belong to a slangy, colloquial register and tend to be harsher and obscener when occurring in written form like subtitling, let alone if the language used in subtitling is very formal such as the MSA. This shift poses linguistic constraints that are a challenge for subtitlers if they are attempting to render a translation close to the ST. Therefore, this shift and the use of MSA forces subtitlers to use religious words, or less offensive, archaic words, or formal words which are not only different

from the English taboo words but also different from the taboo words used in spoken Arabic. As a result, many essential elements of the film conveyed through taboo language are lost, such as the strength of emotions and humorous effects, and the intended message of the film and its characterisations, since taboo words serve a specific function in the films. Thus, the success of the film and viewers' experience are placed at risk when 82% of taboo words have been manipulated.

The use of censorship for social, cultural and political reasons is very common in conservative cultures such as the Arabic, where scenes containing kissing, sexuality, nudity or language deemed blasphemous or inappropriate are cut. Such censorship affects negatively the subtitling of taboo words uttered in such scenes. The elimination or omission of taboo words in Arabic subtitles are done for censorial reasons: they have nothing to do with subtitlers; rather, the scenes have been censored by government authorities. In the same vein, the acceptability of excessive use of taboo words varies remarkably between English and Arabic, which forces subtitlers to omit some taboo words deemed unnecessary from an Arabic cultural perspective.

5.3 Avenues for further research

Since this study dealt with the subtitling of taboo language, future studies focusing on dubbing would be valuable, particularly in terms of determining whether or not the findings are similar to those of this study. The subtitling of taboo words could be compared with the dubbing of the same to determine which version tends to use source-oriented strategies and how the mode of AVT can affect the way taboo expressions are translated. Another research avenue could involve a corpus of Arabic Audiovisual contents translated into English to discover how Arabic taboo words are dealt with, and whether or not such study yields similar results. Another study could focus on investigating a corpus and determining how subtitlers and translators deal with taboo items and whether taboo words are translated differently in those modes. Also, this study could identify the impact of space and time constraints in subtitling as these are significant

factors that often determine how taboo words are subtitled compared to translated literary texts. Moreover, it would be interesting to investigate the role of censorship in these two modes of expression.

Since this study was conducted on a corpus of official subtitles, it would be interesting to investigate another corpus of unofficial subtitles provided by fans (fansubbings) to find out whether there are any significant differences in the way taboo words are translated. It is hypothesised in several studies such as Khoshsaligheh, Ameri and Mehdizadkhani (2018) that fansubbers do not comply with the cultural norms of the target language as they remain anonymous and no formal censorship is imposed on them. These factors should be taken into consideration when determining the way that taboo words are translated in Arabic subtitles.

One of the findings of this study is that the excessive use of omission in many cases is not justifiable as taboo words are uttered for a specific purpose and are often essential to the context and characterisation. Hence, when certain words are omitted in Arabic subtitles, the intended function of the taboo words is lost. The excessive use of omission not only has an adverse effect on the viewers' experience and their engagement with the movie, but also affects the success of the films in the Arab world.

The perception of subtitled materials is another area that merits investigation, and one that has been greatly under-researched. It would be interesting to determine how audiences receive certain imported AV products with particular reference to certain linguistic issues, among which is the way that taboo words are perceived and how Arab viewers react to the subtitling of taboo words. Such studies could be conducted from different perspectives using various means such as eye-tracking, a questionnaire survey, interviews, observations and so forth. Another possible strand of interesting research could involve a diachronic study of Arabic subtitling to investigate any tendencies in terms of accounting for taboo expressions in subtitling over time.

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Corpus

Source	Film	Year	Director(s)	Genre	British Board of Film Classification	Runtime (hh:mm)	IMDB Rating	Country	USA Box Office Revenue	Cumulative Worldwide Box Office Revenue	Number of Awards and Nominations	Production House
iTunes	Central Intelligence	2016	Rawson Marshall Thurber	Action, Comedy, Crime	12A	1:47	6.3	USA, China	$127,440,871	$217,196,811	2 wins and 8 nominations	New Line Cinema, Universal Pictures, RatPac-Dune Entertainment
iTunes	Ride Along	2014	Tim Story	Action, Comedy, Crime	12A	1:39	6.2	USA	$134,938,200	$153,997,819	1 win and 7 nominations	Universal Pictures, Relativity Media, Cube Vision
iTunes	Tower Heist	2011	Brett Ratner	Action, Comedy, Crime	12A	1:44	6.2	USA	$78,046,570	$152,930,623	0 wins and 3 nominations	Universal Pictures, Imagine Entertainment, Relativity Media
iTunes	Tower Heist	2013	Paul Feig	Action, Comedy, Crime	15	1:57	6.6	USA	$159,582,188	$229,930,771	7 wins and 16 nominations	Twentieth Century Fox, Chernin Entertainment, TSG Entertainment
iTunes	Spy	2015	Paul Feig	Action, Comedy, Crime	15	1:59	7	USA, UK, France, Hungary, Germany	$110,825,712	$236,400,000	6 wins and 29 nominations	Twentieth Century Fox, Chernin Entertainment, Feigco Entertainment

iTunes	CHIPS	2017	Dax Shepard	Action, Comedy, Crime	15	1:40	6	USA	$18,591,819	N/A	1 win and 1 nomination	Primate Pictures, RatPac-Dune Entertainment, Warner Bros.
iTunes	The Other Guys	2010	Adam McKay	Action, Comedy, Crime	12A	1:47	6.7	USA	$119,219,978	$170,432,927	3 wins and 15 nominations	Columbia Pictures, Gary Sanchez Productions, Mosaic
iTunes	The Departed	2008	David Gordon Green	Action, Comedy, Crime	15	1:51	7	USA	$87,341,380	$101,624,843	2 wins and 14 nominations	Columbia Pictures, Relativity Media, Apatow Productions
iTunes	Cellular	2012	Phil Lord, Christopher Miller	Action, Comedy, Crime	15	1:49	7.2	USA	$138,447,667	$201,585,328	11 wins and 20 nominations	Columbia Pictures, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), Relativity Media
iTunes	Baywatch	2017	Seth Gordon	Action, Comedy, Crime	15	1:56	5.6	UK, China, USA	$58,060,186	$177,856,751	3 wins and 11 nominations	Paramount Pictures, Uncharted, Shanghai Film Group
Netflix	Parker	2013	Taylor Hackford	Action, Crime, Thriller	15	1:58	6.2	USA	$17,616,641	$48,543,388	0 wins and 1 nomination	Incentive Filmed Entertainment, Sierra / Affinity, Alexander/ Mitchell Productions
Netflix	2 Fast 2 Furious	2003	John Singleton	Action, Crime, Thriller	15	1:47	5.9	USA, GERMANY	$127,154,901	$107,376,377	4 wins and 13 nominations	Universal Pictures, Original Film, Mikona Productions GmbH & Co. KG
Netflix	Takers	2010	John Luessenhop	Action, Crime, Thriller	12A	1:47	6.2	USA	$57,744,720	$69,055,695	2 wins and 6 nominations	Screen Gems, Rainforest Films, Grand Hustle Entertainment,

												Overbrook Entertainment
iTunes	Sleepless	2017	Baran bo Odar	Action, Crime, Thriller	15	1:35	5.6	USA	$20,757,977	$17,413,596	0 wins and 1 nomination	FilmNation Entertainment, Open Road Films (II), Riverstone Pictures
iTunes	The Italian Job	2003	F. Gary Gray	Action, Crime, Thriller	12	1:51	7	USA, France, UK, Italy	$106,128,601	$176,070,171	8 wins and 7 nominations	Paramount Pictures, De Line Pictures, Working Title Films
DVD	Cellular	2004	David R. Ellis	Action, Crime, Thriller	15	1:34	6.5	USA, Germany	$32,003,620	$56,422,687	0 wins and 2 nominations	New Line Cinema, Electric Entertainment, LFG Filmproduktions & Company
iTunes	The Equalizer 2	2018	Antoine Fuqua	Action, Crime, Thriller	15	2:01	6.7	USA	$102,084,362	$124,229,992	1 win and 4 nominations	Columbia Pictures, Escape Artists, Fuqua Films
iTunes	John Wick	2014	Chad Stahelski, David Leitch	Action, Crime, Thriller	15	1:41	7.4	China, USA	$43,037,835	$130,888,901	5 wins and 8 nominations	Summit Entertainment, Thunder Road Pictures, 87Eleven
iTunes	Jack Reacher	2012	Christopher McQuarrie	Action, Crime, Thriller	12A	2:10	7	USA	$80,070,736	$218,340,595	1 win and 5 nominations	Paramount Pictures, Skydance Media, Mutual Film Company
DVD	RocknRolla	2008	Guy Ritchie	Action, Crime, Thriller	15	1:54	7.3	UK, USA, France	$5,694,401	$25,739,015	1 win and 5 nominations	Warner Bros., Dark Castle Entertainment, Toff Guy Films

iTunes	Death at a Funeral	2010	Neil LaBute	Comedy	15	1:32	5.7	USA	$42,739,347	N/A	0 wins and 6 nominations	Screen Gems, Sidney Kimmel Entertainment, Wonderful Films
DVD	That's My Boy	2012	Sean Anders	Comedy	15	1:56	5.6	USA	$36,931,089	$58,058,367	5 wins and 10 nominations	Columbia Pictures, Happy Madison Productions, Relativity Media
iTunes	Step Brothers	2008	Adam McKay	Comedy	15	1:38	6.9	USA	$100,468,793	$128,107,642	3 wins and 2 nominations	Columbia Pictures, Relativity Media, Apatow Productions
DVD	The Hangover	2009	Todd Phillips	Comedy	15	1:40	7.7	USA, Germany	$277,322,503	$467,483,912	13 wins and 25 nominations	Warner Bros., Legendary Entertainment, Green Hat Films
iTunes	Blockers	2018	Kay Cannon	Comedy	15	1:42	6.2	USA	$59,839,515	$93,665,491	0 wins and 6 nominations	Point Grey Pictures, DMG Entertainment, Good Universe
iTunes	Nightcrawler	2007	Greg Mottola	Comedy	15	1:53	7.6	USA	$121,463,226	$169,871,719	11 wins and 24 nominations	Columbia Pictures, Apatow Productions
iTunes	Night School	2014	Nicholas Stoller	Comedy	15	1:37	6.3	USA	$150,157,400	$268,157,400	6 wins and 11 nominations	Good Universe, Point Grey Pictures
iTunes	Night School	2018	Malcolm D. Lee	Comedy	12A	1:51	5.6	USA	$77,339,130	$102,982,380	0 wins and 4 nominations	Hartbeat Productions, Perfect World Pictures, Universal Pictures

iTunes	RocknRolla	2015	Seth MacFarlane	Comedy	15	1:55	6.3	USA	$81,476,385	$215,863,606	3 wins and 4 nominations	Universal Pictures, Media Rights Capital (MRC), Fuzzy Door Productions
DVD	Anger management	2003	Peter Segal	Comedy	15	1:46	6.2	USA	$135,645,823	$195,745,823	2 wins and 5 nominations	Revolution Studios, Happy Madison Productions, Anger Management LLC
Netflix	Just Go with It	2011	Dennis Dugan	Comedy, Romance	12A	1:57	6.4	USA	$103,028,109	$214,945,591	5 wins and 11 nominations	Columbia Pictures, Happy Madison Productions
Netflix	Just Friends	2005	Roger Kumble	Comedy, Romance	12A	1:36	6.2	Germany, USA, Canada	$32,619,671	$50,817,508	0 wins and 3 nominations	Inferno Distribution, Cinerenta Medienbeteiligungs KG, BenderSpink
iTunes	Friends with Benefits	2011	Will Gluck	Comedy, Romance	15	1:49	6.6	USA	$55,802,754	$149,542,245	1 win and 5 nominations	Screen Gems, Castle Rock Entertainment, Zucker Productions
iTunes	She's Out of My League	2010	Jim Field Smith	Comedy, Romance	15	1:44	6.4	USA	$31,584,722	N/A	0 wins and 1 nomination	DreamWorks, Mosaic
Netflix	The 40-Year-Old Virgin	2005	Judd Apatow	Comedy, Romance	15	1:56	7.1	USA	$109,449,237	$177,378,645	10 wins and 19 nominations	Universal Pictures, Apatow Productions
iTunes	I Feel Pretty	2018	Abby Kohn, Marc Silverstein	Comedy, Romance	12A	1:50	5.5	China, USA	$48,795,601	$88,426,082	0 wins and 5 nominations	Huayi Brothers Pictures, Voltage Pictures, Wonderland Sound and Vision

Netflix	The Ugly Truth	2009	Robert Luketic	Comedy, Romance	15	1:36	6.5	USA	$88,915,214	$205,298,907	3 wins and 5 nominations	Columbia Pictures, Lakeshore Entertainment, Relativity Media
iTunes	Bridesmaids	2011	Paul Feig	Comedy, Romance	15	2:05	6.8	USA	$169,106,725	$288,383,523	25 wins and 71 nominations	Universal Pictures, Relativity Media, Apatow Productions
iTunes	What's Your Number	2011	Mark Mylod	Comedy, Romance	15	1:46	6.1	USA	$14,008,193	N/A	1 win and 0 nominations	Regency Enterprises, New Regency Pictures, Contrafilm
Netflix	The Holiday	2006	Nancy Meyers	Comedy, Romance	12A	2:18	6.9	USA	$63,224,849	$205,135,324	2 wins and 11 nominations	Columbia Pictures, Universal Pictures, Relativity Media
DVD	The Lincoln Lawyer	2011	Brad Furman	Crime, Drama, Thriller	15	1:58	7.3	USA	$58,009,200	$87,145,086	0 wins and 1 nomination	Lionsgate, Lakeshore Entertainment, Sidney Kimmel Entertainment
DVD	Law Abiding Citizen	2009	F. Gary Gray	Crime, Drama, Thriller	18	1:49	7.4	USA	$73,343,413	$126,690,726	3 wins and 5 nominations	G-BASE, The Film Department, Warp Films
iTunes	The Departed	2006	Martin Scorsese	Crime, Drama, Thriller	18	2:31	8.3	USA	$132,384,315	$289,847,354	98 wins and 139 nominations	Warner Bros., Plan B Entertainment, Initial Entertainment Group (IEG)
iTunes	Money Monster	2016	Jodie Foster	Crime, Drama, Thriller	15	1:38	6.5	USA	$41,012,075	$92,766,958	0 wins and 2 nominations	TriStar Pictures, LStar Capital, Smokehouse Pictures

iTunes	No Country for Old Men	2007	Ethan Coen, Joel Coen	Crime, Drama, Thriller	15	2:02	8.2	USA	$74,283,625	$171,627,166	163 wins and 134 nominations	Paramount Vantage, Miramax, Scott Rudin Productions
iTunes	The Counselor	2013	Ridley Scott	Crime, Drama, Thriller	18	1:57	5.3	UK, USA	$16,973,715	$71,009,334	5 wins and 3 nominations	Fox 2000 Pictures, Scott Free Productions, Nick Wechsler Productions
iTunes	Collateral	2004	Michael Mann	Crime, Drama, Thriller	15	2:00	7.5	USA	$101,005,703	$217,764,291	23 wins and 70 nominations	Paramount Pictures, DreamWorks, Parkes+MacDonald Image Nation
DVD	Nightcrawler	2014	Dan Gilroy	Crime, Drama, Thriller	15	1:57	7.9	USA	$32,381,218	$50,334,418	43 wins and 121 nominations	Bold Films, Nightcrawler, Sierra / Affinity
iTunes	The Mule	2018	Clint Eastwood	Crime, Drama, Thriller	15	1:56	7.1	USA	$103,804,407	$171,304,407	0 wins and 2 nominations	Warner Bros., Imperative Entertainment, Bron Creative
iTunes	Widows	2018	Steve McQueen	Crime, Drama, Thriller	15	2:09	7	UK, USA	$42,402,632	N/A	14 wins and 75 nominations	Regency Enterprises, See-Saw Films, Film4
Netflix	Clash of the Titans	2010	Louis Leterrier	Action, Adventure, Fantasy	12A	1:46	5.8	USA, UK, Australia	$163,214,888	$493,214,993	4 wins and 12 nominations	Warner Bros., Legendary Entertainment, Thunder Road Pictures
Netflix	Conan the Barbarian	2011	Marcus Nispel	Action, Adventure, Fantasy	15	1:53	5.2	USA	$21,295,021	$63,356,133	0 wins and 2 nominations	Lionsgate, Millennium Films,

												Cinema Vehicle Services
iTunes	Gods of Egypt	2016	Alex Proyas	Action, Adventure, Fantasy	12A	2:07	5.4	USA, Australia, China	$31,153,464	$150,680,864	2 wins and 14 nominations	Pyramania, Summit Entertainment, Mystery Clock Cinema
iTunes	Hercules	2014	Brett Ratner	Action, Adventure, Fantasy	12A	1:38	6	USA, Hungary	$72,688,614	$244,819,862	0 wins and 2 nominations	Paramount Pictures, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), Flynn Picture Company
iTunes	Lara Croft Tomb Raider	2001	Simon West	Action, Adventure, Fantasy	15	1:40	5.8	USA, UK, Japan, Germany	$131,144,183	$274,703,340	4 wins and 17 nominations	Paramount Pictures, Mutual Film Company, BBC Films
DVD	Seventh Son	2014	Sergei Bodrov	Action, Adventure, Fantasy	12A	1:42	5.5	USA, UK, Canada, China	$17,223,265	$114,178,613	2 wins and 1 nomination	Beijing Skywheel Entertainment Co., China Film, Legendary Entertainment
DVD	Solomon Kane	2009	M. J. Bassett	Action, Adventure, Fantasy	15	1:44	6.1	Czech Republic, UK, France	N/A	$19,439,975	1 win and 1 nomination	Davis-Films, Czech Anglo Productions, Wandering Star Pictures
iTunes	The Last Witch Hunter	2015	Breck Eisner	Action, Adventure, Fantasy	12A	1:46	6	USA, China, Canada	$27,367,660	$146,936,910	0 wins and 1 nomination	Summit Entertainment, TIK Films, Mark Canton Productions
Netflix	Van Helsing	2004	Stephen Sommers	Action, Adventure, Fantasy	12A	2:11	6.1	USA, Czech Republic, Romania	$120,177,084	$300,257,475	3 wins and 21 nominations	Universal Pictures, The Sommers Company, Stillking Films

Netflix	Warcraft	2016	Duncan Jones	Action, Adventure, Fantasy	12A	2:03	6.8	China, Canada, Japan, USA	$47,365,290	$433,677,183	2 wins and 3 nominations	Legendary Entertainment, Universal Pictures, Atlas Entertainment
iTunes	Annabelle	2014	John R. Leonetti	Horror, Mystery, Thriller	15	1:39	5.4	USA	$84,273,813	$256,873,813	3 wins and 7 nominations	New Line Cinema, RatPac-Dune Entertainment, Atomic Monster
Netflix	Friday the 13th	2009	Marcus Nispel	Horror, Mystery, Thriller	18	1:37	5.6	USA	$65,002,019	$91,379,051	2 wins and 4 nominations	New Line Cinema, Paramount Pictures, Platinum Dunes
Netflix	Get Out	2017	Jordan Peele	Horror, Mystery, Thriller	15	1:44	7.7	USA, Japan	$176,040,665	$255,457,364	148 wins and 194 nominations	Universal Pictures, Blumhouse Productions, QC Entertainment
iTunes	Gothika	2003	Mathieu Kassovitz	Horror, Mystery, Thriller	15	1:38	5.8	USA, France, Canada, Spain	$59,694,580	$81,896,744	3 wins and 7 nominations	Columbia Pictures, Warner Bros., Dark Castle Entertainment
iTunes	Insidious Chapter 3	2015	Leigh Whannell	Horror, Mystery, Thriller	15	1:37	6.1	Canada, UK, USA	$52,218,558	$120,678,444	3 wins and 10 nominations	Gramercy Pictures (I), Entertainment One, Blumhouse Productions
DVD	Orphan	2009	Jaume Collet-Serra	Horror, Mystery, Thriller	15	2:03	7	USA, Canada, Germany	$41,596,251	$78,769,428	1 win and 7 nominations	Dark Castle Entertainment, Appian Way, Studio Babelsberg Motion Pictures

DVD	Sinister	2012	Scott Derrickson	Horror, Mystery, Thriller	15	1:50	6.8	USA, UK	$48,086,903	$87,727,807	3 wins and 13 nominations	Alliance Films, IM Global, Blumhouse Productions
iTunes	The Conjuring	2013	James Wan	Horror, Mystery, Thriller	15	1:52	7.5	USA	$137,400,141	$318,000,141	15 wins and 22 nominations	New Line Cinema, The Safran Company, Evergreen Media Group
iTunes	The Nun	2018	Corin Hardy	Horror, Mystery, Thriller	15	1:36	5.4	USA	$117,443,149	$360,045,963	1 win and 1 nomination	Atomic Monster, New Line Cinema, The Safran Company
DVD	The Others	2001	Alejandro Amenábar	Horror, Mystery, Thriller	12	1:41	7.6	Spain, USA, France, Italy	$96,522,687	$209,947,037	29 wins and 52 nominations	Cruise/Wagner Productions, Sogecine, Las Producciones del Escorpión
Amazon Prime Video	2012	2009	Roland Emmerich	Action, Adventure, Sci-Fi	12A	2:38	5.8	USA	$166,112,167	$769,679,473	5 wins and 21 nominations	Columbia Pictures, Centropolis Entertainment, Farewell Productions
iTunes	Bumblebee	2018	Travis Knight	Action, Adventure, Sci-Fi	PG	1:54	6.9	China, USA	$127,195,589	$467,705,125	0 wins and 9 nominations	Hasbro, Tencent Pictures, Di Bonaventura Pictures
iTunes	Independence Day: Resurgence	2016	Roland Emmerich	Action, Adventure, Sci-Fi	12A	2:00	5.2	USA	$103,144,286	$389,681,935	3 wins and 16 nominations	Twentieth Century Fox, TSG Entertainment, Centropolis Entertainment

DVD	John Carter	2012	Andrew Stanton	Action, Adventure, Sci-Fi	12A	2:12	6.6	USA	$73,078,100	$284,139,100	2 wins and 8 nominations	Walt Disney Pictures, BOT VFX
Amazon Prime Video	Jumper	2008	Doug Liman	Action, Adventure, Sci-Fi	12A	1:28	6.1	USA, Canada	$80,172,128	$222,231,186	2 wins and 4 nominations	Twentieth Century Fox, Regency Enterprises, New Regency Pictures
Netflix	Jurassic World	2015	Colin Trevorrow	Action, Adventure, Sci-Fi	12A	2:04	7	USA	$652,270,625	$1,671,713,208	15 wins and 57 nominations	Universal Pictures, Amblin Entertainment, Legendary Entertainment
Amazon Prime Video	Oblivion	2013	Joseph Kosinski	Action, Adventure, Sci-Fi	12A	2:04	7	USA	$89,021,735	$286,168,572	0 wins and 14 nominations	Universal Pictures, Relativity Media, Monolith Pictures (III)
iTunes	Rampage	2018	Brad Peyton	Action, Adventure, Sci-Fi	12A	1:47	6.1	USA	$99,345,950	$426,245,950	0 wins and 7 nominations	New Line Cinema, ASAP Entertainment, Wrigley Pictures
iTunes	The Day After Tomorrow	2004	Roland Emmerich	Action, Adventure, Sci-Fi	12A	2:04	6.4	USA	$186,740,799	$544,272,402	6 wins and 12 nominations	Twentieth Century Fox, Centropolis Entertainment, Lions Gate Films
Netflix	The Incredible Hulk	2008	Louis Leterrier	Action, Adventure, Sci-Fi	12A	1:52	6.7	USA	$134,518,390	$263,427,551	1 win and 8 nominations	Universal Pictures, Marvel Enterprises, Marvel Studios
Netflix	A Thousand Words	2012	Brian Robbins	Comedy, Drama	12A	1:31	5.9	USA	$18,438,149	N/A	0 wins and 3 nominations	DreamWorks, Saturn Films, Work After Midnight Films

iTunes	Burnt	2015	John Wells	Comedy, Drama	15	1:41	6.6	USA, UK	$13,650,738	N/A	6 wins and 1 nomination	3 Arts Entertainment, Double Feature Films, PeaPie Films
iTunes	Eighth.Grade	2018	Bo Burnham	Comedy, Drama	15	1:33	7.5	USA	$13,539,709	N/A	53 wins and 77 nominations	A24, IAC Films
iTunes	Instant Family	2018	Sean Anders	Comedy, Drama	12A	1:58	7.4	USA	$67,363,237	$81,025,217	0 wins and 7 nominations	Closest to the Hole Productions, Leverage Entertainment, Paramount Pictures
iTunes	Lady Bird	2017	Greta Gerwig	Comedy, Drama	15	1:34	7.4	USA	$48,958,273	$70,758,273	115 wins and 218 nominations	IAC Films, Scott Rudin Productions, Entertainment 360
iTunes	Orange County	2002	Jake Kasdan	Comedy, Drama	12A	1:22	6.2	USA	$41,032,915	N/A	0 wins and 3 nominations	Paramount Pictures, MTV Films, Scott Rudin Productions
Netflix	The Descendants	2011	Alexander Payne	Comedy, Drama	15	1:55	7.3	USA	$82,584,160	$177,243,185	67 wins and 142 nominations	Fox Searchlight Pictures, Ad Hominem Enterprises, Dune Entertainment
iTunes	The Devil Wears Prada	2006	David Frankel	Comedy, Drama	PG	1:49	6.9	USA, France	$124,740,460	$326,551,094	20 wins and 52 nominations	Fox 2000 Pictures, Dune Entertainment, Major Studio Partners
Netflix	Unfinished Business	2015	Ken Scott	Comedy, Drama	15	1:31	5.4	USA	$10,214,013	N/A	0 wins and 1 nomination	Regency Enterprises, New Regency

												Pictures, Escape Artists
Netflix	Young Adult	2011	Jason Reitman	Comedy, Drama	15	1:34	6.3	USA	$16,311,571	$22,939,027	3 wins and 32 nominations	Paramount Pictures, Denver and Delilah Productions, Indian Paintbrush