

## INTRODUCTION

Humans as social creatures always use language as a means of communication. The communication that exists between the speaker and the interlocutor is not only active but also sometimes due to several factors, the words are also negative. Swearing is an example of speech that has a bad tone. Words with minimal emotional value, like swearing, are perceived by many as filthy. Often seen as improper language, swear words also known as profanity have some functions in communication, such as fostering social relationships or expressing intense emotions. Swearing and taboo words are powerful linguistic tools that convey intense emotions and enhance the impact of speech. Beyond their expressive force, they also serve important social functions by fostering solidarity, bonding within groups, and strengthening interpersonal connections (Jay, 2009).

Furthermore, swear and taboo expressions employed to build communication or closeness are usually widely used among teenagers. These words rarely really use to curse, but sometimes to build a friendly relationship or just as a joke. With that being said, these words are a means of liberation from all unpleasant forms and situations, although we do not deny the fact that using swearing pragmatically expresses praise, surprise, and creates a friendly conversational atmosphere.

Swear and taboo words are not at all like most other tongue rules, mankind learns these expressions without truly learning or being taught inside the classroom. In society, revoltingness is presently and after that depicted as lingo anticipating to irritate other people. According to Ljung (1984, as cited in Mattsson, 2006) and Andersson (2004, as cited in Mattsson, 2006), swear words are derived from taboo subjects, used

to convey strong emotions such as anger or surprise, and often perceived as hostile, uncivilized, and disgraceful in social contexts.

According to Lafreniere et al. (2022), offensive language like swearing and taboo words consist of using unpleasant words aimed at insulting and denouncing the object of the insult. This point is also reinforced with the statement of Abdelaal and Sarhan (2021), both depicted that an outburst is a word used to express anger, betrayal, or surprise. According to Ullmann (2012), swearing serves an emotive function, expressing not only negative feelings (fear, anger, delicacy) but also more complex emotional nuances. Taboo words, on the other hand, are words that a society deems inappropriate or offensive. The usage is often restricted due to cultural norms and sensitivities. A comprehensive study by Bowers et al. (2024) across multiple languages and countries found that taboo words are generally characterized by extremely low valence (i.e., they evoke negative emotions) and high arousal, indicating their strong emotional impact.

At some point, swear words often overlap with taboo words, as they both involve expressions that are socially sensitive. However, not all swear words are taboo, and vice versa. The context in which these words are used plays an important role in determining their appropriateness and impact. The appropriateness of swear and taboo words depends on factors such as the social setting, the relationship between speakers, cultural norms, and the medium of communication. For example, a word that is acceptable in casual conversation among friends may be considered offensive in a formal setting or public broadcast. Similarly, what is considered taboo in one culture might be less sensitive in another, so translators or speakers need to gauge the social acceptability of certain expressions.

In the meantime, the impact of these words relates to the emotional or communicative effect they produce. Swear and taboo words can intensify emotions, convey anger, frustration, or defiance, and create emphasis or dramatic effect in dialogue. In media like films or music, their impact also includes realism and authenticity, helping the audience understand the characters' feelings and social context. Overuse or misuse, however, can alienate audiences, reduce clarity, or cause offense, which is why careful consideration of both appropriateness and impact is crucial in translation and communication. Candra and Megandari (2019) analyzed the use of swear words in the film "Fist Fight" and found that characters employed both strong and weak swear words depending on the situation, highlighting the contextual nature of these expressions.

Compared to English, which is used for more liberal purposes, the Indonesian language's restrictions on swear words underscore the society's and culture's preferences for maintaining decorum in social interactions. This is what happens in movies especially streaming platforms, such as Netflix, HBO, Disney + Hotstars have been widely used by people around the globe in which a lot of characters use swear words in their conversations or dialogues quite often (Sembiring, 2019).

Swear words themselves are not merely spoken by the figures but also conveyed through subtitling in the movies. Within the swear and taboo words themselves, there are certain classifications that help the translator to identify the meaning in the target text. The classification of the language of offense and taboo is, thus, important in the approach to the understanding of the social, cultural, and emotional implications of such expressions. Cabrera (2023) elaborates on a detailed taxonomy of these words, classifying them into offensive language and taboo language, each having

subcategories. These categories are, in fact, very useful for the analysis of how such language is used in various contexts, more so in audiovisual media.

### 1. Offensive Language

Offensive language was defined as words or sets of words used to insult or degrade, and emotionally charged words. These are the words used to denigrate others or express extreme emotions and frustration. In this particular point, Cabrera (2023) defines the subcategories of offensive language by citing Wajnryb's research:

- 1) Abusive swear words: These are words or phrases with a serious derogatory or insulting connotation. Examples include:
  - a) Cursing: Cursing invokes the aid of a higher being. It is more ritualistic and deliberately articulated and it does not involve the use of foul language. For instance, "Goddamn you!" is categorized as an abusive swear word – cursing because it deliberately calls on a higher power (God) to invoke harm, making it both ritualistic and supernatural (Wajnryb, 2005, in Cabrera, 2023).
  - b) Derogatory Tone: Language that emphasizes disdain, as seen in the phrase "I'm sick of fucking hearing it." In this case, the use of "fucking" adds emotional intensity and expresses strong disdain, aligning with Wajnryb's (2005) idea that swear words can emphasize contempt or frustration.
  - c) Insults: Terms aimed directly at offending someone, such as "A real fucking animal" because it uses the swearword "fucking" to intensify a dehumanizing label "animal", directly targeting someone to offend and degrade them, which fits Wajnryb's (2005) thought of swearing used to insult a person.
  - d) Oaths: Formal promises used to intensify emotional expression, for instance, "I swear on my mother's eternal soul." The example is classified into oaths

because it uses a formal, emotionally charged promise to emphasize seriousness or intensity, aligning with Wajnryb's (2005) view of oaths as metaphoric curses that carry deep emotional weight.

- 2) Expletives: Expletives are exclamatory swear words or swear phrases uttered in emotional situations to express anger, frustration, joy, surprise, and the like (Wajnryb, 2005), e.g. "Holy shit!" because it is conveyed to show strong emotion like surprise or frustration, not to insult anyone, just to let out what the speaker feels in that moment, exactly like Wajnryb (2005) says about expletives.
- 3) Invective: a subtle version of an insult used in a formal context (Wajnryb, 2005). It can be said to constitute an insult rather than a swear word, inasmuch as it tends to avoid the use of standard terms resorting to irony, wit and wordplay. For example, "It's the one job basically any woman can get" is categorized as an invective because it's a subtle and indirect insult that uses irony to look down on women without using harsh or offensive words, just like Wajnryb (2005) explains about invectives being polite but disrespectful.

## 2. Taboo Language

Taboo language is an utterance that violates the social norms through speaking of subjects that are forbidden or taboo. The words are indicative of culture based on perception of what is offensive or vulgar. Cabrera (2023), has identified the following subcategories:

- 1) Profane/Blasphemous Terms: These involve showing disrespect to sacred beings, such as "Jesus Christ".
- 2) Animal Name Terms: Insults to persons, labeling them as animals, including the term "bitch" and "pig".

- 3) Ethnic, Racial, and Gender Slurs: Language that attacks a person's identity, such as the phrase “like a bunch of fucking niggers.”
- 4) Psychological or Physical Conditions: Words that mock a person's condition, such as “He went crazy.”
- 5) Sexual and Body Part References: Explicit sexuality, such as “big dicks.”
- 6) Urination and Scatology: Words referring to body functions, such as “I gotta take a squirt.”
- 7) Filth: Words that relate to degradation, such as “You shit in your pants and dive in and swim.”
- 8) Drugs and Alcohol: Phrases related to drug use, such as “I wasn’t gonna be Joe the Pot Man.”
- 9) Violence: Words that imply threat or injury, such as “I’m gonna fucking blow you away.”
- 10) Death and Killing: Words related to death, such as “He was gonna blow you to hell.”

Cabrera (2023) explains that these categories help in understanding in detail the use of offensive and taboo language, especially in contexts like subtitling, where cultural and linguistic sensitivities must be balanced with the intent of the original dialogue. Understanding the detailed categories of offensive and taboo language is important when dealing with audiovisual translation because subtitling requires not only linguistic accuracy but also a sensitive approach to cultural nuances and audience reception.

The challenge lies in balancing the original dialogue’s intent, which is often laden with emotionally charged or culturally specific offensive language, with the

constraints and expectations of the target audience. This naturally leads the readers to consider the practice of subtitling itself, which involves transforming spoken and non-verbal elements into written text on-screen, and the particular difficulties this process presents when handling swear words and taboo expressions. In that particular point, subtitling refers to the practice of translating spoken dialogue, other verbal information, and non-verbal elements from audiovisual content into written text that appears on-screen. It serves to provide access for viewers who either do not speak the language of the content or have hearing impairments. According to Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021), subtitles are generally concise to fit the limited on- screen space and to synchronize with the film's pacing. They must remain visible long enough for the audience to read them while aligning with the visual and auditory elements of the content.

When it comes to handling swear and taboo words in subtitles, Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021) explain that this presents unique challenges. Swear and taboo words carry a lot of emotional charge across most languages and cultures. Handling these words usually present social and ethical situations, as well target language linguistic conventions. Swear words are another level of difficulty: subtitlers must weigh up the emotional richness and intensity given by swear words vs staying faithful to what was actually meant but at the same time making it fit for a new culture.

The decision on how to subtitle swear and taboo words is influenced by the distribution medium, target audience, and the social norms of the target culture. The distribution medium refers to the platform through which the content is delivered, such as cinema, television, streaming services, or DVD, each with different standards for language and censorship. These factors influence how offensive or taboo language is

adapted for subtitles. With that in mind, subtitlers decide to translate a phrase more or less forcefully in order to make up for other subtitling decisions in the same product. Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021) identify several translation strategies that are particularly relevant in subtitling, an audiovisual translation mode that faces unique challenges due to its spatial and temporal constraints. These strategies are designed to address linguistic, cultural, and technical issues, ensuring that the target language (TL) audience receives a comprehensible and meaningful experience while preserving the essence of the source language (SL). The strategies include loan, literal translation, calque, explicitation, substitution, transposition, lexical recreation, compensation, and omission.

1. Loan

The loan strategy is a direct incorporation of an SL term into the TL without modification. This approach is typically employed when the term lacks an equivalent in the TL or is universally recognized. For example, words such as “guerrilla,” “goulash,” and “cognac” are retained in subtitles because they are globally understood or culturally significant to the SL.

2. Literal Translation

Literal translation renders the SL text into the TL on a word-for-word basis while preserving grammatical structure. This strategy works effectively for expressions that do not rely on cultural nuances. For instance, the Spanish phrase “Día de los Muertos” is translated into English as “Day of the Dead,” maintaining fidelity to the original text while being accessible to the TL audience.

3. Calque

Calque is a specific type of literal translation in which an SL expression is



translated into the TL while retaining the original structure, potentially resulting in a foreign-sounding construction. An example of this is the translation of “Secretario de Estado” from Spanish into English as “Secretary of State,” which mirrors the SL structure while being comprehensible in the TL context.

#### 4. Explication

Explication involves providing additional information in the TL to clarify cultural or contextual references that might otherwise be ambiguous to the audience. For instance, in one Arabic subtitling example, the phrase “Hey buddy, you might want to keep your mouth shut” was translated as “Hey brother, you better close your mouth because of the insects,” reflecting both the visuals and the cultural context.

#### 5. Substitution

Substitution replaces an SL reference with a TL equivalent that aligns with the audience's cultural or contextual understanding. For example, the French reference “sauce hollandaise” might be substituted with “butter sauce” in Dutch subtitles to make the reference more relatable to the target audience.

#### 6. Transposition

Transposition adjusts a grammatical structure or cultural reference from the SL to make it more natural or relevant in the TL. For instance, the Spanish term “El Corte Inglés” (a department store) might be transposed into “John Lewis” for British audiences to provide a culturally equivalent reference.

#### 7. Lexical Recreation

Lexical recreation involves inventing a new term in the TL to replicate the

creativity or originality of the SL. For example, in a fantasy film, the made-up term “whompers” might be translated into Spanish as “zumbadores,” preserving the imaginative quality of the original text.

#### 8. Compensation

Compensation introduces omitted elements or effects elsewhere in the text to maintain the overall meaning or emotional impact of the SL. For example, when a pun cannot be translated directly, a different humorous element might be added in another part of the dialogue to preserve the intended tone.

#### 9. Omission

Omission involves deliberately excluding parts of the SL text that are deemed unnecessary, redundant, or untranslatable due to technical constraints. For instance, filler words such as “you know” or “like” are often omitted in subtitles because they do not contribute significantly to the meaning and occupy valuable space.

When contemplating the cultural norms surrounding swearing that differ between the English-speaking world and Indonesia, these strategies become essential. This issue is eloquently illustrated by three previous studies that investigate the translation of swear words in various movie subtitles.

The first study examines the translation of swear words in the Indonesian subtitles of the film *Shaft*. It is titled “An Analysis of Swearing Word Types and Translation Techniques in *Shaft* Movie Subtitles” (Amilia & Andini, 2022). Using a descriptive qualitative method, the researchers analyzed 61 swearing words using Pinker’s (2008) typology of swearing and Molina and Albir’s translation techniques.

They found that idiomatic swearing was the most frequent (42%), and the most commonly used translation technique was amplification (63%) in which details are given to preserve the meaning in a culturally appropriate way. Based on the study's findings, in order to preserve the translations' cultural acceptability, translators must take into account the cultural significance of swearing in the target language.

In a similar vein, the second one was entitled *The Analysis of Swearing Word Translation in Joker Movie Subtitle* (Hasibuan & Musfiroh, 2021). The research is about how swear words are translated in the Joker movie. There were 49 swear words found by the researchers and the most frequently used type of strong swear word was those that are for feelings of surprise or rage. It consequently implies that as indicated in the report, there is a need for translating swear words into culturally accepted terms with the same meaning but less objectionable in the target language. This report highlights cultural equivalency as the most common used technique (49%). The approach aligns with Newmark's theory that translation should prioritize the cultural context to maintain both the meaning and tone of the source text.

The third study, "Subtitling Strategies of Swear Words and Taboo Expressions in the Movie "Training Day"" (Abdelaal & Al Sarhani, 2021), depicts how swear words and taboo expressions were translated from English to Arabic in the Training Day movie. Using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, the researchers analyzed 40 instances of swearing, drawing on Pedersen's subtitling strategy framework and his FAR model for quality assessment. They found that euphemism and omission were the most commonly used strategies, aiming to make the subtitles acceptable to Arabic-speaking audiences with more conservative cultural norms. Although these strategies helped keep the translations culturally appropriate, the study

also highlighted a drawback: the softened translations sometimes did not fully capture the intensity of the original language, which could lead to a mismatch with the actors' body language and facial expressions.

This study differs from the previous three by offering a more extensive classification of swear and taboo words. The earlier studies focus on categorizing offensive language and identifying translation strategies, but this research goes further by utilizing Cabrera's typology to classify swear and taboo words into a broader range of categories. These categories include not only abusive swear words, expletives, and various taboo terms but also seven specific subcategories such as racial, ethnic, and gender slurs, as well as references to violence, death, and body parts. Through its detailed classification, the study delivers a more comprehensive analysis than previous works. By applying both Cabrera's typology and Cintas and Remael's framework, this study explores how translation strategies maintain cultural sensitivity and preserve the emotional intensity of the source language.

From these foundations, this present study aims to answer three research problems:

1. What swear and taboo words are found in Straight Outta Compton, and how can these words be classified?
2. How are these swear and taboo words translated into Indonesian?
3. Which translation strategies are used in the process?