

**An Najah National University
Faculty of Graduate Studies**

**Constraints on Translating Taboo
Language in English Movies into Arabic**

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Dedication

*This humble work is dedicated to the most precious people in my
world,*

My parents,

Mrs. Hiyam Abu Zayed and Mr. Aqel Abdullah,

My two sisters,

Mariam and Sarah,

And my little brother,

Hamza,

For being such an inspiration and for their

unlimited love, care and passion.

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إقرار

أنا الموقع أدناه مقدم هذه الرسالة التي تحمل عنوان:

الضوابط المفروضة على ترجمة اللغة والألفاظ النابية
في الأفلام الانجليزية الى العربية

**Constraints on Translating Taboo
Language in English Movies into Arabic**

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Declaration

The work provided in this thesis, unless otherwise referenced, is the researcher's own work, and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree.

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Abstract

Movies translation became an international field where translators and subtitlers play a major role in translating and transferring culture from one language into another. This study sheds light on the constraints on translating taboo language in English movies into Arabic. It precisely discusses four main constraints which are: culture, religion, ideology and channel. The study also discusses what terms should or should not be considered as taboo in the Arab World by the Arab translator according to a fair argument drawn by the researcher; explained through many examples from movies. It also sheds light on the impact of certain unsuccessful translations of taboo terms on the Arab target audience.

This thesis is a qualitative study depending on descriptive approaches. The researcher follows the techniques of a qualitative study in collecting and analyzing data depending on a variety of authenticated resources such as, books, journals, interviews, a questionnaire, magazines, articles and movies to draw a fair argument and reach reasonable findings and conclusions. The researcher concludes that Arab translators should take into consideration the four main constraints when translating taboo

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language in English movies into Arabic. Moreover, unsuccessful translations of taboo language or using unpreferable translation methods to translate taboo language can mislead the Arab audience and conceal reality.

The researcher also provides a number of recommendations to help Arab translators avoid any misleading translations of taboo language and to respect the Arab target language culture at the same time.

Chapter One

Introduction

Introduction:

Translating movies became an important universal field where translators play a major role as agents to convey messages from one language into another. “Cinema has been one of the greatest influences in our modern life, and it is also a form of art. It is the combination of technology, business, entertainment and aesthetics; each and every one of these four has an important role in present day world and is also visible in the variation of its forms.” (Istiak: 2013, pp: 77)

Many recent works in translation studies have been interested in bringing the translator back into the picture. Whether this has taken into consideration the sociological context in which the practice of the translator is grounded or the historical circumstances in which activities of translators have evolved, there was an emphasis on translators as agents, as active presences in texts and cultures that they have shaped by which there are shaped. (Cronin: 2009)

TV shows and movies are never a matter of some people showing up on TV for nothing. Movies, for example, express language, history, culture, ideology, knowledge, beliefs, customs, religion, norms and so on. The process of movies’ translation and the role of movies’ translators has

developed and evolved since movies don't only represent languages, they represent different cultures and worlds.

There are many issues and complications that face translators in general and movie translators in particular. This study is concerned with one main problem which is translating *taboo language* in English movies into Arabic. According to Oxford dictionary, a taboo word means: "a word that many people consider offensive or shocking, for example because it refers to sex, the body or people's race." This is a problematic issue where many Arab translators and even the audience wonder what kind of procedures must be taken into consideration to deal with such a language. Or why should the translation of a *taboo* word be like this in the subtitles.

This study also focuses on the constraints that the Arab translator needs to take into consideration while translating *taboo language* in an English movie. There are certain important constraints such as culture, religion, norms, beliefs and ideology that the translator must take into account.

Besides, this study discusses what should and should not be considered as *taboo* when translating an English movie into Arabic. The researcher refers to what he calls *taboo act* which is totally different from a *taboo word* where the translator has nothing to do with the first one. The study also classifies a number of commonly used terms in movies to ascertain what should be considered as a *taboo* term.

Moreover, the researcher sheds light on the influence that unsuccessful or different translations of taboo words may have on the Arab target language audience. Certain unsuccessful translations of taboo terms in movies can be described as misleading, confusing or reality concealing.

Purpose of the Study:

The study aims to shed light on a main important issue that concerns movie translators in general and Arab movie translators in particular. The researcher is concerned with the issue of *taboo language* in English movies and its translation into Arabic. He defines what is meant by *taboo* according to certain resources and focuses on the constraints that face Arab translators when they translate such a language in English movies where they should be taken into consideration.

The study is also explains what should and should not be considered as a *taboo* term by Arab translators or translation institutions classifying a number of terms at the very end of the thesis. Moreover, the study discusses how different translations of *taboo* words and certain translation procedures for translating such type of language may affect the Arab target language audience.

Statement of the Problem:

Movie translators face a lot of problems while translating a movie from one language into another. In this study, the researcher sheds light the problem of translating taboo language in English movies into Arabic. There are different constraints on translating such a language that will be discussed later on in this research. The researcher also discusses what is considered as taboo language and what is not in the Arab culture. Arab translators may reach inappropriate, confusing and misleading translations of certain taboo terms and that is a problematic issue. Therefore, Arab translators need to take the constraints imposed on taboo language which are discussed in this study into consideration.

Research Questions:

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1- Why don't Arab movie translators translate taboo words literally from English into Arabic? What are the constraints on translating taboo language from English into Arabic in movies?
- 2- What should be considered as a "taboo word" when translating an English movie into Arabic? And what should not be?
- 3- How do different translations of taboo words influence the Arab target audience?

Significance of the Study:

The researcher sheds light on translating taboo language from English into Arabic in movies. He also discusses the constraints that need to be taken into consideration by the Arab translator when he translates such a language in order to reach an acceptable translation that fits the target language audience without offending them. These four constraints can affect the translation and the target language audience as well. In addition, the researcher sheds light on what shall be considered as a taboo term in Arabic according to a fair claim that he draws by providing certain examples. The translator may deal with a category of terms as taboo or use non preferable translation methods to translate such a language in a movie so the researcher points out what is considered as taboo language in Arabic. The researcher suggests some helpful procedures for Arab translators when translating taboo language in movies. There are different English, Iranian and Farsi studies that talked about translating taboo language in movies but none of them apply to the Arab status. This study is significant because:

- 1- Arab translators should be aware of dealing with taboo language properly to reach a correct acceptable translation by the Arab audience.
- 2- The researcher discusses the constraints imposed on translating taboo language in English movies to help the Arab translator in reaching a proper translation and let the Arab audience have an idea of what is going on behind the scenes and explain certain translations.

- 3- The researcher categorizes certain terms into “taboo” and “non taboo” to help the Arab translator during the process of translating taboo language in movies and which promotes cross cultural and mutual understanding.
- 4- The study goes against certain translation procedures (according to context of course) like the omission of the translation or certain words of speakers. It recommends other procedures that may help the Arab translator as well.
- 5- Different studies discuss taboo language and its translation in other cultures but none of them apply to the Arab World status which makes this study the first one to cover all constraints on translating taboo language in movies in the Arab world.

Limitations of the Study:

The study is limited to the translation of taboo words and certain terms in:

- 1- *My Suicide* movie, broadcasted by *MBC MAX Channel*.
- 2- *I Pronounce You Jack and Henry* movie, broadcasted by *Dubai One Channel*.
- 3- *Scream 2* movie, broadcasted by *Dubai One Channel*.
- 4- *Transformers 1* movie, broadcasted by *MBC 2 Channel*.
- 5- *CSI Miami* series, broadcasted by *Dubai One Channel*.
- 6- *Immortals* movie, broadcasted by *Play Movies Channel*.

- 7- *Cold in July* movie, broadcasted by an online movies' website *Anakebnet.com*.
- 8- *Zero Tolerance* movie, broadcasted by an online movies' website: *El7l.com*
- 9- *The Crazy Ones* series, broadcasted by *Dubai One Channel*.

This selection of movies is chosen from different known TV channels and websites. The list includes a variety of movies broadcasted by two of the most famous Arab channels in the Middle East (MBC&Dubai One), where translations (subtitles) in general and the translations of certain taboo terms in particular, deeply affect the target language audience. Moreover, the above listed movies are considered international so the researcher examines the similarities and differences in these movies' translations from one channel and institution into another. The researcher sheds light on different successful and unsuccessful translations and classifications of certain "taboo" terms in the above mentioned movies.

Definition of Terms:

SL: Source Language.

TL: Target Language.

Taboo Act: an act that is considered offensive and taboo in a certain culture.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Introduction:

This chapter overviews previous literature and studies related to the topic of the study. Since this study is a qualitative one based on current/previous studies and theories, it is important to shed the light on a review of literature discussing the areas that concern the researcher in this thesis. The investigation through theoretical findings and studies is important for future researching.

This review of literature covers the main aspects of the topic undertaken “Constraints on Translating Taboo Language in English Movies into Arabic” and what different studies and theories argue about.

This section is divided into the following sub-sections in which review of literature will be presented under two main headings:

- 1- Taboo language.
- 2- Constraints on Translating Taboo Language which are the following:
 - a- Culture as a constraint on translating taboo words in English movies.
 - b- Religion as a constraint on translating taboo words in English movies.

- c- Norms, beliefs and ideology as constraints on translating taboo words in movies.

The studies that dealt with the topic undertaken will be presented below.

This thesis is concerned with the issue of taboo language and its translation in movies so it's important to shed light on valuable previous theories and studies that discuss taboo language.

1- **Taboo Language:**

Gao (2013) claims there are different types of taboo language. She classifies taboo language into varieties such as:

- a- Bodily excretions.
- b- Death and disease.
- b- Sex.
- c- Four-letter words.
- d- Swear Words.
- e- Privacy.
- f- Discriminatory language which is divided into sexist and racist language.

Gao defines each category giving examples to illustrate her point about different varieties of taboo language.

A. Bodily Excretions:

In any language there are certain things that we must avoid mentioning. This applies to the words with such connotations as well. In English, the first of these that occur to people are words dealing with excretions according to Gao (2013).

“In fact, except tears, all the words concerning bodily excretions are believed taboo. The earliest sayings of *move the bowels* and *pass water* are considered inelegant. And *defecate* and *urinate* seem to be the words used in hospitals. Thus some euphemisms find themselves in replacing them, such as answer the call of a nature, do one’s needs. We ask where the “*rest room* is, although we have no intention of having a rest. *Powder room*, *loo* and *john* are other ways to say *toilet*.

Indeed, it is impossible to explain what a *rest room* is for without the use of roundabout ways or baby talk. It’s *where you wash your hands* or *where you pee or poo*, which are already euphemisms. Here we see a semantic change involved as the expressions used often have little to do with the referents.” (Gao: 2013)

B. Death and Disease:

Gao argues that people’s fear of death leads to the fear of words with death or certain diseases connotations. “Many people believe words have great relations with what they symbolize, therefore *if anything should happen to me* means *when I die*. Instead of saying *die*, they use substitute

expressions such as *pass away*, *go to his reward*, *answer the call of God*, *go home*, *to have a better place*, *depart* and *go west*. Some serious diseases are also taboo topics. Cancer is said in a roundabout way as *Big C* or *terminally ill*. So it is with the disease of mental disorder and intelligence deficiency. Their euphemistic sayings may be *he is not all there*, *she is a little eccentric / a little confused*.” (Gao: 2013)

C. Sex:

According to Deng (1989, p.93), words having to do with anatomy and sex, and words even vaguely suggesting anatomical or sexual matters, have remarkable connotations, especially in American culture. For instance, ladies of the nineteenth century could not bring themselves to say *breast* or *leg*, not even of chicken, so that the terms *white meat* and *dark meat*” were substituted. It was thought inelegant to speak of *going to bed*, and *to retire* was used instead. In the United States, the sexual revolution of the 1960s began to make it a great change. English-speaking countries tend to be freer and more tolerant of this in recent years.

People, particularly younger ones, feel freer than they once did to talk about sex-related subjects, masturbation, impotence, sexual activities of various kinds and human sex organs are more likely to be talked or written about than they were 15 or 20 years ago. It is the same with China in present day. Thus to *make love*, to *have sex with*, etc., which are slightly “dressed-up” terms, are not all uncommon in writing now. (Gao: 2013)

D. Four-letter Words:

Gao states that people are more tolerant with such words like *fuck*, *tits*, *damn*, the so-called “four-letter words”. For instance, on the streets in London we could see the eye-catching shop name “FCUK”, which in fact is the abbreviation of “French Connection United Kingdom”.

In spite of the sexual revolution, these words are still considered improper in most conversations, even in written form. In 1963, Eric Partridge included *fuck* in his Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English. Despite his use of an asterisk for the vowel “u”, the result was a storm of complaints to schools, libraries, and the police. Even today, the book is not always available on the open shelves of public libraries. An even greater frenzy took place in 1959, when the unabridged edition of D. H. Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* was published, which contained several instances of the word. The edition was banned because of obscenity, and court cases followed. Later, the word quickly appeared in the daily press, and it has become widespread in the literary works. Despite the development of liberal attitudes, there is still a strong antagonism to the use of four-letter words in public speech; and they are still not always to be found in dictionaries.

E. Swear Words:

Taboo language can come in different forms and swearing is absolutely one of them. Gao argues that a remarkable variety of linguistic

forms can be considered as cursing and swearing. There are the complex and sophisticated expressions that may be found in religious, legal, and other formal contexts. At the same time, there are many daily examples of taboo language that express such emotions as hatred, frustration and surprise. The most common speech comprise single words or short phrases, conveying different levels of intensity and attracting different degrees of social approval.

English examples range from the mild such as *heck* and *dash*, to the harshest one, *fuck*. In these social contexts swearing can become a dominant linguistic feature, with sentences often containing taboo words. Sex, excretion, and supernatural power are the main sources of swear words. Half of them relate to words referring to body parts and functions that societies considered taboo, such as *ball* and other four-letter words. Another half deals with the names of gods, devils, etc. like *God*, *Dear Lord*, *By the holy sacrament*, *Heavens*, *Hell*...

F. Privacy:

One of the reasons behind taboo on questions about personal matters is that English-speaking people put a high value on privacy. English has a saying “A man’s home is his castle”, meaning a man’s home is sacred to him; no one should come in without permission. So is it also with his life, personal affairs and private concerns? To ask questions concerning one’s age, weight, income, marital status, politics, religion etc. would be

considered prying into individual's personal life, which is another form of invading a person's "castle" (Deng: 1989, p.96). "It's none of your business" may also reflect their value on privacy.

Basically, you should not ask the following questions to an English or an American. *How old are you? What's your income? What's your religion? Are you married? Where are you going? How much did you pay for that?* Compared with English language, privacy does not sound familiar to Chinese people. Deng (1989, p.96) summarized two reasons. One is because of the close living arrangements of the Chinese. Villagers with scores or hundreds or more families densely packed in a small area have been typical of the Chinese countryside for centuries, which is quite different from the individual houses—often with a sizeable surrounding yard or garden for each—that have been characteristic of Western countries until comparatively recent times. Another reason may be the communal spirit or spirit of brotherhood that has long prevailed among the Chinese. Close contact and certain amount of mutual dependence and mutual concern mean that one person's affairs are also very much the affairs of one family, one's neighbors, and even the larger community that one belongs to. (Gao: 2013)

G. Discriminatory Language:

In recent times, many people have a growing tendency to be sensitive to what is called sexist language and racist language.

Sexist language:

- 1- According to Gao, sexist language in its present day means language that is prejudiced against the female. Studies of sexism in the English language began by American women concerned with the effects of language on people's attitude towards women, which prejudice against women and in favor of men. In speech and writing, for example, a person or a baby of unknown sex is referred to as he rather than she; the person (even a woman) presiding a meeting is the chairman. The history of our world is the history of mankind, not woman kind (Deng: 1989, p.98). Those words that are "unmarked" usually refer to males.

If referring to female, additional marks will be put before or after it, for example, waiter—waitress, hero—heroine, doctor—woman doctor. There is a distinction between Mrs and Miss in both English and Chinese, which is not paralleled by a pair of titles showing whether or not a man is married. This implies unfairly that it is more important for a woman than for a man to show whether they are married, in spite of the introduction of Ms. in English, there is a tendency which involves words that are clearly restricted in one sex or the other, with female words tending to have less favorable meanings.

A class pair is *master* and *mistress*, where the male meaning is "good", and the female meaning is "bad"; specifically, a mistress is a

partner for extramarital sex. (Hudson, 2000, p.102) It reflects greater tolerance towards men in the sexual liberties.

- 2- Racist language Racism is the belief that some human races are inherently inferior to others. Racist language is that which shows a bias against certain racial or ethnic groups; it is the language that degrades or belittles them (Deng: 1989, p.100). In English language, much of the discrimination is against “black”, whether black people or black color. The color white generally stands for innocence, purity, cleanliness, chastity—all words with positive, pleasant connotations. On the other hand, the color black is associated with wickedness, evil, filth; e.g., blackguard, blacklist, black mark. A member of a family that others are ashamed of is called a black sheep, not a white sheep. Even a lie, if it is a white lie, is not so bad as an ordinary lie, or black lie. However, it is not just blacks who are called degrading names in the U.S. There are names for other racial or ethnic groups as well: Italians are called dagos; Jews—kikes; Poles—polacks; Chinese—chinks; Japanese—japs; etc. All of these are insulting names, reflecting strong racial prejudice (Deng: 1989, p.101).

Sometimes, one will hear racial remarks or “ethnic jokes”—jokes about the supposed stupidity or ignorance of certain groups. Such jokes may appear funny, but they are offensive nevertheless. In English, who are discriminated against most may be Dutch. In the seventeenth century,

Britain often fought with the Netherlands, so the word “Dutch” has derogatory sense in many of its usage, e.g., double Dutch, to go Dutch, to talk Dutch, Dutch widow. Even swear words could not do without “Dutch”, for example, “I’m a Dutch if ...”. Same thing also occurs to French and people of other nations. We have following saying, to take French leave, Chinese copy, Spanish athlete, Irish bull, Though the progress in some respects in the long river of history has been considerable, English still retains sexism and racism. You are never too careful to offend others without realizing it. What is more important is to keep up with the language and develop the sensitivity to the feelings of those who suffer from the prejudice. Understanding the social injustice is a guarantee against racist and sexist behavior.” (Gao: 2013).

Chaume (2004) talks about the process of translation within the field of movies and how movie or audiovisual text’s translators should be aware of translation theories and discourse analysis at the same time specially communication skills which help in understanding the context to produce better translations in general and good translations of taboo words in particular. "The approach with which I attempt to analyze the audiovisual text is based, therefore, on joining together Translation Theory, Discourse Analysis and, especially, Film Studies and Communication Studies, and from there to conclude that the linguistic code, despite its predominant role, is but one more code at play in the construction and later transfer of meaning in audiovisual texts. As I have intended to show throughout this

article, for the translator, knowledge of all the signifying codes present in the audiovisual texts is extremely relevant. Apart from the descriptive analysis of these codes, the translator should be particularly interested in the incidence of the different signifying codes within the linguistic one, since this is the only code that can be manipulated at all. A translation that does not take all the codes into account can be seen only as a partial translation.” (Chaume: 2004, pp.22)

2- Constraints on Translating Taboo Language:

Chaume (2004) sheds light on our main issue of this study which is the constraints that translators need to take into consideration while translating a movie. Since the study is concerned with translating taboo language which is considered an integral part of the whole process of translating a movie, agreeing on certain constraints that face movie translators is worth mentioning.

Chaume states “Leaving apart the articles published in *Babel* in 1960, which inaugurate research in audiovisual translation, the first articles about audiovisual texts from a translation studies perspective centered their attention on those specific aspects of the texts that differentiate them from other types of texts. These were research papers that proposed a methodological approach based on the constraints which the translator faces when trying to transfer the information from an audiovisual text into

another language. It is worth mentioning, in this context, the pioneering works of Titford (1982) and Mayoral, Kelly, and Gallardo (1988).

This latter work clearly points out the fundamental constraints that operate during the process of translation of audiovisual texts. Zabalbeascoa's model (1993) adds another dimension and contributes the idea of translation priorities (from a functional perspective), presenting a position that balances the position based on constraints. (Chaume: 2014)

a- Culture as a Constraint on Translating Taboo Language in Movies:

In order to understand the concept of culture and its relationship with the process of translation, it is important to shed light on several definitions of culture according to well known theorists, such as Newmark (1988), Toury (1978) and other respectful theorists such as Lotman (1978), Vermeer (1989), Bassnett (1980) and Nida (1964) who claimed that there is such a strong relationship between culture and translation and both can't be separated. All definitions shall be discussed later on in this thesis (see chapter four: Culture).

Vossoughi (2013) argues that translators should be careful when they translate taboo words where it should be acceptable by the target language audience culture.

“Regarding the initial norms, translators try to produce acceptable translations of taboo words that fit into the target language and its culture. It seems that the translation of a taboo term can be a successful translation

when it fits the target language taking into consideration different constraints on translating such a language.” (Vossoughi: 2013).

Davoodi (2007) argues that culture and the process of translation can't be separated. Translators should be aware of the culture and context when they translate taboo terms. “The role of culture in translation is inevitable. To translate taboo terms, euphemisms, metaphors, idioms, proverbs..., observing the cultures of both source and target languages is necessary. One thing should not be *forgotten*; to translate all above mentioned issues accurately, the translation should be done in the context. For instance; when a woman says *she is going to powder her nose*, or a man uses some phrases such as; *drain the lizard* and *see a man about a dog* both of them mean they are off to pee”. (Metachat, 2007 cited in Davoodi, 2007). [...]

[...] At last, translating the cultural terms is not such an easy task. It needs sever study and a complete knowledge and accuracy on the culture of both source and target languages. This paper is just a brief introduction on the translation of taboos and euphemisms." (Davoodi: 2007).

Pardo (2013) explains how translators face a lot of troubles in translating a movie since they should pay attention to cultural elements in order to please their audience (the target language audience) specially when translating taboo words taking the censorship in the linguistic transference of Quentin Tarantino's (Swear) Words as an example.

“Translating a text and, moreover, translating an audiovisual text is a difficult task that has no definite solutions, but different opinions or approaches. One of the difficulties that the translator usually finds is the introduction of cultural elements to the translating concept since it is in such situations when adaptation comes into play, and it is at these moments that the translator faces the predicament of trying to please the entire audience and distributors, a task not easy to achieve.”

Pardo also argues that a translator's job is to convey the original intended meaning and message from one language into another avoiding misunderstandings and cultural prejudices to seek naturalness. However, the translator's interference in certain translations especially taboo language may cause a problem.

"It is undeniable that the translator's point of view may constitute a problem when translating a text since it is difficult to remain unbiased when using certain words or expressions. This is the case with swearwords or bad language in general and is one of the additional factors, but not the only one, in Reservoir Dogs". (Pardo: 2013).

b- Norms, Beliefs, and Ideology as Constraints on Translating Taboo Language:

It is important to mention that there are differences and clashes between ideologies (Middle Eastern and Western Ideologies for example)

in order to have a good understanding of the constraints that face Arab translators when they translate taboo words from English into Arabic.

Cunico and Munday (2007) argue there are certain ideological differences between different cultures or “Ideological clashes”. Therefore, the translator must have a wider understanding of ideological clashes to reach a natural appropriate translation of a context.

Chung-Ling (2010) argues that ideologies play a major role in the process of translation where he emphasizes how translators think and act under ideological norms.

“By observing and analyzing literature translation within the ideological framework, this research emphasizes how translators think and act under ideological norms in the receptor society.

Only few translators will select strategies out of their free will and personal preferences. In conclusion, by comparing and analyzing strategies of translating cultural references in different periods of time, this research has given full consideration to the impact of ideology on translation. Literary translation does merit an ideological examination and this supports the thesis that ideology, one of the variables, has governed the translator's choice of strategy and the overall translation performance.” (Chung-ling: 2010).

Hitti (1924) argues there are certain differences between Arab and Western Ideology. He illustrates the point providing several valuable

examples since he is considered as one of the first accounts in the US who is fully aware of the different ideologies. Hitti's examples and observations should be taken into consideration in order to fully understand the main gaps between the Arab ideology and the Western ideology.

Nisbett (2003) also provides fair illustrations and analysis of different ideological back grounds between Arabs and Westerners. He explains his claim through finding answers for certain questions related to the concept of ideology where their answers differ from one culture and group of people into another.

Summary:

The studies consulted dealt with the issue of taboo terms in general from cultural and ideological backgrounds. It seems that all of them covered taboo language respectively but it differs from one culture into another. This study covers all cultural perspectives (constraints) and it seems it is the only study that examined constraints on translating taboo language in the Arab World. The study also sheds light on what is taboo in this culture and what is not in others and that will promote cross cultural and mutual understanding without being offensive or insulting at the same time.

Chapter Three

Methodology

This study sheds light on two main problematic issues that may face Arab translators when they translate taboo language in English movies into Arabic. First, the constraints imposed on translating such a language in movies in order to reach an appropriate, clear and decent Arabic translation. Second, the issue of considering certain terms as taboo in Arabic. Therefore, the study discusses and analyses the raised question which is simply: What shall be considered as a taboo word in Arabic? The researcher is totally immersed in the research seeking adequate analysis to explain his point of view.

This research is qualitative; it is based on theories and previous/current studies of literature. The researcher uses and applies the techniques of qualitative research to collect data. The researcher makes interviews with university academics, clergy men, TV channels' representatives and officials. The researcher also refers to books and different documents that talk about the subject; he refers to different resources and references such as movies, books, articles, journals, interviews and magazines. In addition, the researcher distributes a questionnaire to 83 of Applied Linguistics and Translation M.A. program students and academics/English Department at An-Najah National University and translation B.A. students and university academics/English Department and English Language Center at the Arab

American University to analyze data and reach suitable findings. The questions were prepared by the researcher for the sake of this study and were given to a number of specialists in the English Department at An-Najah University where all items were approved.

Data collected is analyzed using the descriptive and analytical approach later on. The researcher explains the four main constraints (Culture, Religion, Norms, Beliefs, Ideology and TV Channel or Institution) on translating taboo language in English movies into Arabic and analyzed data through drawing a fair argument and claim based on many references and examples from movies and language. The researcher also compares different translations of different TV channels (MBC2, MBC Max, Dubai One and Play Movies) to look for similarities and differences between them especially when discussing the second main issue of this study which is the consideration of certain terms as taboo in the Arab World. The researcher relies on different examples of translations from a variety of movies to reach to fair findings and conclusions.

The researcher also discusses the analysis in details based on what he has reached and draws a fair point of view concerning the topic of the study. He provides certain recommendations for Arab translators to take into consideration during the process of translating taboo language.

Movie translators and subtitlers should be aware of certain constraints when translating English taboo language into Arabic and make

a fair decision to consider terms as taboo in Arabic and to know on what bases. These two mentioned above issues are the concerns of the researcher and this study.

Chapter Four

Analysis of the Data

Introduction:

This chapter starts with defining the term *taboo* and giving a glance on the history of the term as well. It presents the four main constraints which are imposed on translating taboo language in English movies into Arabic. First, culture which is the most important aspect that needs to be taken into account as a constraint on translating taboo language. It is like an umbrella that covers all other constraints. Second, religion which is a sacred holy reference for Arabs and a part of the culture that can't be ignored or avoided during the process of translating taboo words. Third, norms, beliefs and ideology which differ from one culture or language into another. Fourth, the channel or the institution itself which imposes certain instructions and constraints on taboo language translation in movies and TV shows. The translator must take these four constraints into consideration in order to reach an appropriate, clear, honest and direct translation of that type of language which is unacceptable to the target language audience.

All problems and obstacles that face Arab translators when translating an English movie into Arabic language are considered as problematic issues in translation such as deciding the best translation

procedure, cultural misunderstanding, translating idioms, expressions, slang language and finding good equivalents, etc.

These above mentioned obstacles and many others can be seen as general problems that face translators in translating any piece of text not only a movie. Therefore, the researcher sheds light on one important problem that concerns translators in general and movie translators in particular which is translating taboo language since it's more of a spoken language that the audience can hear in a movie rather than a written language that readers can find in a book.

“The English word *taboo* derives from the Tongan *tabu*, which came to notice towards the end of eighteenth century. According to Radcliffe-Brown: In the languages of Polynesia the word means simply 'to forbid', 'forbidden', and can be applied to any sort of prohibition. A rule of etiquette, an order issued by a chief, an injunction to children not to meddle with the possessions of their elders, may all be expressed by the use of the word *tabu*.” (Brown, R 1939 cited in Allan, K and Burridge, K: 2006).

According to Oxford dictionary, a taboo word means: “a word that many people consider offensive or shocking, for example because it refers to sex, the body or people's race.” Although there is a taboo language in every single country all around the world that people share and use with each other, it is still considered a “bad” and “unacceptable” type of

language. May Arab translators translate English taboo words literally into Arabic? Are there constraints on translating such type of a language?

An article in a 2009 issue of Polish Cinematographic Magazine Film was dedicated to this question. As the author says "But why do most of the channels censor their programs? They do it, because of regulations and potential punishment, because of "their respect for the viewer." He also added "written swearwords are harsher than spoken swearwords." (Zawada: 2008).

Since the researcher is concerned with translating English movies into Arabic, it is very important to discuss the major constraints that face Arab translators when they translate taboo language in an English movie into Arabic.

1- Culture:

Most of the constraints are derived from one main concept called *culture*. Newmark defines culture as "the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression" (1988:94) and according to Toury, "translation is a kind of activity which inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions"(1978:200). In other words, culture is an important aspect that can't be ignored in the process of translation and the translator must understand the culture in order to be able to understand the language and vice versa. According to Lotman "no language can exist unless it is

steeped in the context of culture; and no culture can exist which does not have at its centre, the structure of natural language” (1978:211-32). Vermeer also states that "language is a part of culture” (1989:222) and Nida says “differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure” (1964:130). Bassnett (1980: 13-14) adds and states that language is “the heart within the body of culture” and Akbari (2013) claims that a good translator should be familiar with the culture and the social settings of the source and target language speakers. He should also be aware of the different styles of speaking and social norms of both languages. Hatim and Mason (1990) state the social context in translating a text is a more important variable than its genre. Translation process takes a place in a socio-cultural context.

It is also important to mention that there is intimate relationship between language and culture where language expresses cultural reality. “Language is the principle means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways. The words people utter refer to common experience. They express facts, ideas or events that are communicable because they refer to a stock of knowledge about the world that other people share. Words also reflect their authors' attitudes and beliefs, their point of view, that are also those of others. In both cases, language expresses cultural reality.” (Kramsch, 1998)

Claire Kramsch in her book, *Language and Culture* 1998, also added that “community members create experience through language where they give meaning to it through the medium they decide to communicate with one another so language embodies cultural reality”. To put it differently, what considers this word or that one as taboo is culture itself. The users of language within a certain culture play a major role in giving it a meaning. The middle finger is just a part of the body and pointing to something using it is never an offensive sign until culture and the users of language decided it to be! The word "cripple" was never a pushy disrespectful word, in fact it is mentioned in the Bible translations where Jesus healed the cripple, until culture and users of language decided it to be! The word "black" refers to a color so wherever you see a black thing you say: It's black! This is a black tree; black table, black shirt but never a black man since culture and other constraints decided it's discriminatory and racist!

James Harbeck argues that taboo terms are cultural specific and it's the users of language who decide it to be. “Devil! Cancer-sufferer! Chalice of tabernacle! The reason I can say this is because I am writing in English, not Finnish, Dutch, or Québécois French. You might think that the definition of ‘bad’ words would be similar around the world. You wouldn’t be entirely right. Strong language – swearing, profanity, whatever you want to call it – is special” (Harbeck, 2015)

There are universal taboo terms where all people agree on and there is cultural specific taboo language where it differs from one language into

another AND from one culture into another. This explains why we see such differences between English and Arabic taboo language and how culture can be considered as the main constraint that face translators when translating such a language from one language into another.

Culture is like an umbrella that covers different concepts which are considered as constraints that face translators in translating taboo words from English into Arabic which are:

2- Religion:

Religion is something confidential and sacred in the Middle Eastern culture. Arabs take religion as a reference for every single thing in life whether it's social, educational, legal, political or religious.

For Arabs in the Middle East, Islam, Christianity and Judaism are religions and references at the same time to judge whether a behavior or an act is allowed or forbidden, polite or impolite. Since the researcher talks about translating taboo language from English into Arabic, then the translator should consider religion as one main constraint.

As it has been mentioned above, a taboo word is considered as a shameful offensive word so basically religion doesn't allow it or at least it's inappropriate in religion. It is also important to mention that Islam is the dominant religion in almost all the Middle Easterner countries and the Arab World.

The study sheds light on how religion views taboo language as well.

(Yousef: 2007) a Sheikh and an instructor at the Islamic Culture Department in Al-Khartoum University says that Allah ordered people to be good to each other and speak nicely to each other and to observe what comes out of their tongues. Moreover, Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) encouraged people to be good and to speak kindly to each other avoiding harmful or dirty language.

"فالمؤمن طاهر الجنان عف اللسان؛ ليس بفاحش ولا بذيء؛ قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم «: ليس المؤمن بالطعان ولا اللعان ولا الفاحش ولا البذيء» وأخبرنا أن شر الناس من تركه الناس اتقاء فحشه، وأخبرنا أن الحياء من الإيمان والإيمان في الجنة، والبذاء من الجفاء والجفاء في النار، وأنه ما من شيء أثقل في ميزان المؤمن يوم القيامة من خلق حسن، وأن الله يبغض الفاحش البذيء. وقد أمرنا ربنا جل جلاله بأن نقول للناس حسنا، وأن نظهر السنة من البذاء والفحش، وفي صفة نبينا صلى الله عليه وسلم في التوراة { ليس بفظ ولا غليظ ولا سخاب في الأسواق ولا يجزي السيئة بالسيئة، ولكن يعفو ويصفح } فعلى المسلم أن يتقي كل كلمة قدعة خبيثة تذهب مروءته وتنفر الناس من لقيه؛ وقد قال سبحانه { إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ. } أما حديثك في نفسك الذي لا تسمعه أذنك فإن الله تعالى لا يؤاخذك به، وقد قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم «: إن الله تعالى عفا لأمتي عما حدثت به نفسها ما لم تتكلم أو تفعل» والله تعالى أعلم.

In an interview with the acting chairman of Preaching, Guidance and Holy Quran Department in Salfit city, he said "Islam is the religion of

perfection and prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the last prophet and there is no way taboo language is considered appropriate or beloved in Islam.” Sheikh Abu Nasser also provided certain verses (Ayat) and prophets’ sayings (Ahadith) from the Holy Quran and Sunnah describing Muhammads’ behavior and advising and ordering Muslims to be nice, polite and their speech should be appropriate:

اعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم، بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم:

(وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَى خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ). (سورة القلم، الآية: 4).

“And thou (standest) on an exalted standard of character”

Chapter(Surah) 68 The Pen - Al-Qalam: Verse 3

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِنْ نِسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْأَسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ (الحجرات: آية 11) .

“O you who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: It may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): Nor let some women laugh at others: It may be that the (latter are better than the (former): Nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other, nor call each other by (offensive) nicknames: Ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness, (to be used of one) after he has believed: And those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong.”

Chapter (Surah)9 The private apartments سورة الحجرات - Al-Hujraat: Verse 11

{وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا} [البقرة: من الآية 83]

“And speak fair to the people”

Chapter (Surah) 2 The Cow سورة البقرة - Al-Baqara: Verse 83

{وَقُلْ لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ} [الإسراء: من الآية 53]

“Say to My servants that they should (only) say those things that are best”

Chapter (Surah) 17 The night journey سورة الإسراء - Al-Isra: Verse 53

{وَلَا تَنْهَرُهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا} [الإسراء: من الآية 23]

“Say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor”

Chapter (Surah) 17 The night journey سورة الإسراء - Al-Isra: Verse 23

{وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ} [الضحى: 10]

“Nor repulse the petitioner (unheard)”

Chapter (Surah) 93 The morning hours سورة الضحى - Ad-Dhuha: Verse 10

{وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا} [الفرقان: من الآية 63]

“And when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace!"”

Chapter (Surah) 25 The Standard سورة الفرقان - Al-Furqan: Verse 63

These verses from the Holy Quran show how Allah orders Muslims to sound appropriate when they speak and to avoid harsh rude language. They also carry the same message for different contexts and situations. For example, Muslims should speak nicely with the parents, beggars, ignorants and so on. Moreover from the Sunah:

عن عبد الله بن عمرو رضي الله عنهما قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "خياركم أحسنكم أخلاقاً، ولم يكن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فاحشاً ولا متفحشاً". (رواه الترمذي 1975).

عن أنس بن مالك رضي الله عنه قال: "لم يكن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم سباباً ولا فحاشاً ولا لعاناً؛ كان يقول لأحدنا عند المعتبة: ما له ترب جبينه؟!". (رواه البخاري 6031).

وعن عائشة: "أن رجلاً استأذن على النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، فلما رآه قال: بئس أخو العشيرة، وبئس ابن العشيرة. فلما جلس تطلق النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم في وجهه وانبسط إليه، فلما انطلق الرجل قالت له عائشة: يا رسول الله حين رأيت الرجل قلت له: كذا وكذا، ثم تطلّقت في وجهه وانبسطت إليه! فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: يا عائشة؛ متى عهدتني فحاشاً؟! إن شرّ الناس عند الله منزلة يوم القيامة من تركه الناس اتقاء شره". (رواه البخاري 6032، ومسلم 2591).

((عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا أَنَّ يَهُودَ أَتَوْا النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالُوا: السَّأَمَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَقَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ: عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَعَنَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ، قَالَ: مَهْلًا يَا عَائِشَةُ عَلَيْكَ بِالرَّفْقِ وَإِيَّاكَ وَالْعُنفَ وَالْفُحْشَ قَالَتْ: أَوَلَمْ تَسْمَعْ مَا قَالُوا، قَالَ: أَوَلَمْ تَسْمَعِي مَا قُلْتُ رَدَدْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ فَيُسْتَجَابُ لِي فِيهِمْ وَلَا يُسْتَجَابُ لَهُمْ فِيَّ)).

وعن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه، أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: " أتدرون ما المفلس؟ قالوا: المفلس فينا يا رسول الله من لا درهم له ولا متاع، قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم:

"الْمُفْلِسُ مِنْ أُمَّتِي مَنْ يَأْتِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِصَلَاتِهِ وَصِيَامِهِ وَزَكَاتِهِ، وَيَأْتِي قَدْ شَتَمَ هَذَا، وَقَذَفَ هَذَا، وَأَكَلَ مَالَ هَذَا، وَسَفَكَ دَمَ هَذَا، وَضَرَبَ هَذَا، فَيَفْتَعِدُ فَيَقْتَصُ هَذَا مِنْ حَسَنَاتِهِ، وَهَذَا مِنْ حَسَنَاتِهِ، فَإِنْ فَنِيَتْ حَسَنَاتُهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُقْتَصَّ مَا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْخَطَايَا، أُخِذَ مِنْ خَطَايَاهُمْ فَطُرِحَ عَلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ طُرِحَ فِي النَّارِ" [أخرجه مسلم واللفظ للترمذي، وقال : حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ.

There are certain verses from the Bible as well that show how important to speak nicely, to be polite and to avoid harmful taboo language, for example:

⁷"Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain."

Exodus 20:7 King James Version

³³"Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.' ³⁴But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; ³⁵or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. ³⁶And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. ³⁷All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one."

Matthew 5:33-37 New International Version (NIV)

In Turah, there are certain verses that talk about avoiding using harsh words in general. In fact there is a verse where the punishment for using offensive language with parents is killing!

“وَمَنْ شَتَمَ أَبَاهُ أَوْ أُمَّهُ يُقْتَلُ قَتْلًا.”

سفر الخروج 21:17

¹⁷ “Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.”

Exodus 21:17

In summary, and after over viewing verses from religion and speaking to clergy men, all three divine religions: Islam, Christianity and Judaism advocate avoiding harmful, offensive and inappropriate language. The three religions call people to respect each other and speak kindly and nicely. Therefore, religion is one important constraint imposed on translating taboo language since it is a reference for the vast majority of Arabs to depend on.

3- Norms, Beliefs and Ideology:

The process of translation can never be separated from ideology. Both depend on each other in order to transfer the whole clear image from one language or culture into another. “Translation cannot be separated from ideology. The core reason is that ideology is often coded in the linguistic expression (Purtenen, 1998), so translation that engages in a transfer from

one language into another language is selected as an effective tool of ideological operation." (Ling: 2010).

Lopez and Caro (2014) argue that "Ideology is indeed a most elusive concept. As in the case of the term equivalence, it is an everyday concept familiar to most laypeople, one of those terms that pervades our daily discussions but escapes an easy definition. Every ordinary citizen will probably recognize the term and be happy to use it without a hint of hesitation. But when asked what they really understand by ideology, they will most likely provide very different answers. Some may relate it to their political stance; others may use it to define their value-systems and worldviews; a few others may find it fervently tied up with their religious beliefs. The term is associated to sets of beliefs, assumptions, and values and this makes it, indeed, highly controversial".

Despite the fact that there are Easterners and Westerners who may share the same hobbies, eat same dishes, wear same clothes and speak same languages, there is still a big gap between East and West. Rudyard Kipling, the English poet and writer, says "'OH, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet, till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat.'" If some Americans eat Lebanese Tabula and a group of Arabs have burger for dinner that doesn't mean both cultures are the same. "There are significant differences between Eastern and Western cultures and philosophies. The social structures, attitudes of individuals and groups, philosophies, and many other characteristics are observably different

between East and West" (Sheedy: 2011). Nisbett (2003) provides a thorough analysis of these differences. Some of the main differences are summarized in the table below.

Certain differences between Eastern and Western ideologies.

Expression	East	West
Sense of self	Weak	Strong
Sense of interdependence (group)	Strong	Weak
Attitude and focus	Holistic	Analytical and detailed
Life control	The world is complex and we have poor control over events.	The world operates by rules and can be analyzed and controlled
Universal God?	No, there is a universal truth	Yes
Visual attention	Background	Foreground

Since Culture can be simply defined as a group of people who share the same language, norms, origins, geographical area, traditions and ideology, it's very important to shed the light on norms, traditions and ideology as constraints that face translators when they translate taboo language into Arabic.

East and West share different norms, habits and traditions where the translator should be aware of both cultures he/she is dealing with. Translating a movie is never a process of translating word by word rather than translating a whole culture with suitable equivalents that fit the target language and has the same effect on the TL audience as the source language has on the SL audience.

Philip K. Hitti, a well-known American academic of Syro-Lebanese origins who taught many years at Princeton University where he established one of America's first programs in the Middle Eastern studies, draws a comparison between the Easterner and the Westerner in his book *America in the Eyes of an Easterner, Or Eight Years in the United States* (1924). He says "The Easterner imagines paradise as a place of rest for the righteous where they will retire from work, enjoy the quietness and serenity of the place, and the most they will do is pray and sing hymns. As for the American, if he is at all as religious as the Easterner, he will imagine paradise as a place of work and noise, full of offices and establishments, where there is an assigned job for everyone, and everyone has to work and work hard, nonstop." (Hitti, P. 1924 cited in Abdel-Malek, K. 2000)

Hitti concludes the differences between the Easterner and Westerner ideology as the following "the Easterner is an idealist; a romantic; his main concern is with the afterlife and his salvation in the afterlife. The American, on the other hand, is a mentalist, a pragmatist; his main concern is with this world and with how to improve it. For this reason, the Easterner has become the world's teacher of literature (or good manners) and its spiritual master. The American, on the other hand, has become the master of the world's land and the commander of the seas."

Philip Hitti also draws an example to show the differences between both ideologies and ways of thinking "were the American to stand and watch the waters that separate Brooklyn from the rest of New York, he

would think of building a bridge on which trains and cars can pass, carrying people and goods from one side to another. But were the Easterner to stand and watch the same waters, he would probably compose a poem. Were the American to watch Niagara Falls, he would think of how to convert the water power into electric power with which the adjacent towns would be lit and trains and cars be run. As for the Easterner, he would probably sing a traditional song in honor of the beautiful falls.” (Hitti, P. 1924 cited in Abdel-Malek, K. 2000).

It is also important to note that the previously mentioned examples and observations about Arab ideology were not meant to mock the Arab culture or state that Westerners and Americans are smarter than Arabs. It is just a fair explanation and illustration of how ideologies differ from one culture/language into another.

Translators in general and movie translators in particular should think of taboo language according to the standards of a certain culture and its ideology. A term like *mother fucker* or *pimp* is considered as a taboo term in English and Arabic, but the impact that this term has on both different cultures is different because of the ideology and beliefs. This taboo term may be used by some groups of people, teens and gangs in the West as matter of joke. Some Americans for example would greet each other saying: “Wus up mother fuckers” or” Hey mother fuckers” while you may get in a serious physical fight with most Arabs if you use that term for greeting or at all!

The translation of that term in formal Arabic "يا ابن العاهرة" or "يا ابن الشرموطه" in slang has a serious aggressive impact on Arab audience. It's not even accepted among friends, peers or in a family chat in the Arab culture. The words *dog*, *sheep* and *mouse* for example are never taboo in most contexts in Western cultures and ideologies. In fact, Westerners may feel happy and proud if they are referred to as dogs, sheep or mice. To call someone a *dog* in America for example means he is loyal and has a strong sense of smell. Calling someone a *mouse* there may indicate he knows everything since mice move from one place into another carrying all the news. Although the word *sheep* may have a negative connotation referring to being a follower, to call a little boy a sheep there may refer to him being fuzzy, cute or having soft skin or hair. However, these words are absolutely taboo and real insults in the Arab culture and ideology if they are used for humans. To call someone a dog is insulting in the Arab World and reflects that he is barking and he is an animal not a human being! Calling an Arab a sheep means he is a pussy or a coward and telling someone he is a mouse means he is little, stink, smelly and dirty.

James Harbeck, in his article, (*Mind Your Language! Swearing Around the World*) on BBC elaborates the idea giving other examples. "Animals can be dirty too, and are used in many insults, but animals are not normally near the morality-based social control structures, so they're not usually what we think of as swear words – except when they come from veiled references, as with Mandarin *guītóu* (turtle's head, standing in for

penis). Likewise, mental deficiency is widely looked down on, but while insults the equivalent of ‘idiot’ are common enough, it’s only in a culture such as Japanese that it makes one of the most popular ‘bad words’ (*baka*). Social control structures differ somewhat from country to country, but they are, after all, developed by the same human animal on the same planet. It’s the same magma bubbling up.” (Harbeck: 2015).

Briefly, the ideology of a certain culture and a group of people should be taken into consideration when translating movies from one language into another. The translations may not seem different since *dog*, *sheep* and *mouse* are normally translated into their Arabic equivalents, but these words in movies would have different impact on the target Arab audience when translated based on the differences of ideologies.

According to online dictionaries, ideology can be defined as “the body of doctrine, myth, belief, etc., that guides an individual, social movement, institution, class, or large group” or “a system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy.” Destutt de Tracy, a French philosopher, defined ideology as “systems of ideas, especially with the social, political or religious ideas shared by a social group of movement”. (Shahsavari and Naderi :2015)

Hawkins (2001) defined ideology as the source of human conflicts and regarded ideology as a phenomenon like language which humans are engaged with in their lifetime. Mason (1994 p.25) defined ideology as “a

set of beliefs and values which inform an individual's or institution's view of the world and assist their interpretation of events, facts, etc". Arabs translators should take cultural constraints into consideration when translating taboo language from English into Arabic where it will be accepted by the Arab target language audience.

4- Channel and Translation Institution:

The study have already discussed the main constraints that face Arab translators when they translate taboo language in English movies into Arabic which are culture, religion, norms, beliefs and ideology. Another constraint which should be taken into consideration by Arab translators and known by the Arab audience is the channel or the institution itself.

This constraint doesn't stand by itself since it is totally related to the previously discussed constraints where the channel or the translation institution imposes certain rules and instructions on the translator himself so the translation of taboo terms fit the Arab target language audience according to all mentioned constraints.

However, the channel and the translation institution are the ones who should be held responsible for all translations of taboo words in a movie. The study's intention is not to criticize the channel's translation rather than shedding the light on what goes behind the scenes within the process of translating taboo words in an English movie.

The channel itself has certain procedures where it imposes a kind of censorship on all its shows, programs and movies in general. The translation's institution also plays a main role in imposing certain rules and instructions on movies' translators themselves so the translation doesn't harm the Arab target language audience.

It is worth mentioning that these certain procedures, rules and instructions differ from one channel into another which affects the translation indeed. What may be forbidden or not allowed by one Arab channel may be absolutely fine for another and vice versa. For example, the translation of taboo language in movies like *Ted* or *I Pronounce You Jack and Henry* by *Dubai One* channel is different than the translation of *MBC 2* channel since *Dubai one* is considered more conservative while *MBC 2* is more open minded.

In an interview with the responsible person for censorship in *MBC* channels, he said "The channel and the translation institution in general are main constraints that translators must take into consideration when translating taboo language. The channel imposes a certain policy on the translation institution which also imposes certain instructions on the translators themselves. Besides, there is a strict censorship on movies and their translations by the channel itself. For example, a kissing scene – between a male and female- in a movie broadcasted by *MBC2* shall not be longer than three seconds. Moreover, no homosexual stories, kissing scenes or gestures are allowed."

He added “When it comes to taboo language, there are certain terms that are considered taboo by *MBC2* and *Dubai One* channels and their translation institutions such as: *fuck, bitch, whore, mother fucker, asshole, dick, faggot, gay, etc.* These terms are translated into Arabic in a very soft way, sometimes using euphemistic language, where their translations don’t harm the Arab target audience. The rest of taboo terms are translated according to the policy of the channel and the instructions of the translation institution without harming or offending the Arab audience.”

Movie translators need to pay attention to all constraints in order to produce a suitable translation for the Arab audience. It is worth mentioning that it is not the duty of the translator alone but there are policies and instructions that are imposed on translators by the channel itself. “Believe it or not, even the owner of the *MBC* channels, *Al-Walid Bin Talal*, himself interferes in the process of translating movies sometimes!” said the responsible person of censorship in *MBC* Channels. He ended his interview saying, “Briefly, our crew in *MBC2* whether they work in the censorship or as translators, created their own maxim which says: don’t dress up the movies and don’t let them be naked!” In other words, what he is trying to say is *MBC2* Chanel holds the stick from the middle where it’s not extremely strict or extremely free but in between.

Conclusion:

There are four main constraints imposed on translating taboo language in English movies into Arabic. First, culture which is considered the umbrella that covers other constraints since taboo language differs from one culture into another. Second, the religion which is an absolute reference for almost all Arabs. Third, norms, beliefs and ideology which are three main concepts that the translator should be aware of in order to reach a coherent appropriate translation. Fourth, the channel and translation Institution which impose certain instructions on translating taboo language into Arabic. Therefore, Arab translators need to take these main constraints into consideration while translating taboo language in English movies into Arabic to reach a translation that fits Arabs.

Chapter Five

What is considered as Taboo Language in Arabic?

Introduction:

It's difficult to count all words in a language and categorize them into different classifications, because culture is wide with no boundaries. Taboo language differs from one culture into another.

If the word *fuck* is considered as taboo in the Middle Eastern culture (which is also considered taboo in the West BUT mainly for kids only- in terms of movies of course), the word *nigger* is an offensive taboo word in the Western culture. The researcher here tries to explain a fair point of view. As the researcher explained earlier, a taboo word is “a word that many people consider offensive or shocking, for example because it refers to sex, the body or people's race” according to Oxford dictionary.

Therefore, terms or phrases like *mother fucker*, *suck my dick*, *bitch*, *fuck you*, *cunt*, *pimp*, *moron*, *etc...* are considered harmful taboo words in the Middle Eastern culture where the translator needs to take the respected mentioned constraints into consideration in order to have a good respective translation that fits the Arab target language. But what if a word is considered as what the researcher refers to as "a taboo act" not a taboo word?

- The “F” Word: A Taboo?

It is important to discuss the term *fuck* in particular since it is somehow the most common “taboo” word known and recognized by the Arab audience especially in movies. The researcher here is trying to make a fair claim arguing that the translation of the term “fuck” should not always consider “fuck” as taboo. The term itself in English is taboo; however, the translation of term is not always a translation of a taboo word. What may consider certain terms as taboo or not is the context itself. Since this study is concerned with translating taboo language in English movies, the context and the intended meaning are what may consider all terms in general and the term *fuck* in particular as taboo or not. When some actor in a movie faces a lot of troubles or loses his pocket and shouts “Fuck!” it doesn’t really mean the literal meaning or the verb *fuck* which means “have sex”. Here, the word *fuck* according to this context is a synonym of other words like *damn* or *shit* or *gosh* which means he is complaining about something and not satisfied with it. Therefore, no wonder why Arab translators translate the word *fuck* in this particular context into “تبا” in movies. However, in other contexts that term fuck may really be abusive, insulting or harsh for the audience and doesn’t really mean *damn*. Having a couple on bed shouting “*let’s fuck*” doesn’t mean damn. When someone shouts “*I will fuck you and your father and I will spit on your grave!*” doesn’t mean damn either. Therefore, and in this particular context, the Arab translator needs to find the best equivalence of the term *fuck* in Arabic

with less harsh impact on the Arab audience and regarding the meaning intended by the speaker.

Steven Pinker, a Canadian-American cognitive scientist, linguist and psychologist says “In English, all the transitive verbs for sex are taboo. *John verbed Mary* is a transitive verb with a direct object, whether *John screwed Mary* or *John fucked Mary* both are taboo. There are polite terms in English like *John had sex with Mary* or *John made love to Mary* or *he went to bed with Mary*. These are intransitive verbs with a preposition.” Pinker also addresses the term *fuck* and some of its usages saying “fuck you” is a kind of a mysterious sentence. No one knows what it means. If you ask the people they will say “We don’t know!” Does fuck yourself mean get fucked? I am going to fuck you? And also it doesn’t fit the syntax of English. *Fuck yourself* is grammatical but *fuck you* is not. I think what happened is that in the transition from religious to sexual swearing and a lot of idioms that made sense on religious backgrounds, people just took out the religious word and put in a sexual word instead even if it made no sense! So *damn you* makes sense and means *May you be damned* لعنة الله عليك" but when people didn’t literally believe that you can send someone to hell, they needed a word with the same emotional punch. They took out *damn* and put in *fuck* and that’s why a lot of English idioms don’t make any sense like *close the fucking door* it’s not like the door is having sex! Just like *holy fuck* which makes no sense at all.” (Pinker: 2010).

- **Omission Procedure.**

In movies, a number of translators try to avoid or not to translate or conceal the meaning of terms like *sex*, *gays*, *virginity* etc. thinking that they are protecting their Arab target language audience by doing this. The researcher thinks that the previously mentioned examples can be considered as "taboo actions or beliefs" in the Middle Eastern culture not "taboo words".

It is a fact that Arab culture considers homosexuality, adultery and lesbians as wrong conditions that go against culture, religion, ideology and beliefs. However, the translator is not or at least should not be considered as a politician who imposes laws or a clergy man or a priest who judges behaviors. He is supposed to be a person who deals with language and culture; he is someone who is supposed to convey the clear suitable image and meaning from one language or culture into another.

The researcher thinks that if such words like *gay* or *virginity* have formal equivalents and translations that don't harm the target language culture or audience, then why not? Why do a number of translators try to avoid translating such terms in movies or translate them in a misleading, confusing and sometimes weird way?

The researcher provides few examples of both cases. First case, taboo words that need to be translated into a suitable respectful way that fit into the target language culture and ideology. Second case, "Taboo acts"

that need to be considered as non-taboo words when translating a movie since there is a formal equivalent that exists in the target language.

The researcher also gives examples of omission translation procedure that is used by some translating institutions or translators (the omission of the taboo word's translation). According to the examples that will be provided later on, deletion of a translation may mislead the audience or conceal the true meaning.

The researcher doesn't recommend that translators don't respect the constraints and translate taboo words literally than attempting to find a close equivalent to the taboo word in the target language instead of confusing the Arab audience by deleting or omitting the translation.

In a movie called *My Suicide* broadcasted by *MBC MAX*, which is a well-known Arab channel, the phrase *I am not the cunt, you are the cunt!* was translated into

"انا لست.... بل انت....."

where the word *cunt* was omitted and replaced by the dots and sometimes the audience can't find subtitles to read at all while two speakers in a movie are cursing or insulting each other.

The responsible person for censorship in *MBC Channels* adds "Whatever term the translator is suspicious about, delete it and move on so you are not in trouble or a matter of accusation later on!" which the

Asking the question why translators don't translate English taboo language literally into Arabic is like asking why do Arab movie channels cut off sex or kissing scenes in an English movie and both have the same answer which is cultural constraints.

Although Arabs have their own taboo language, it is unacceptable to be shown or heard on TV while it's mostly fine in the West unless it's not a children or family movie. There is a cultural gap between the Middle Eastern and the Western culture that we can't deny. What is absolutely legitimate in the West maybe absolutely forbidden in the Middle East. So how far the translator can go on adapting or using one-to-one equivalent when translating a movie and that's why translators have to respect these constraints and take them into consideration when translating from English into Arabic.

- **Translations of the Terms: Gay, Masturbation, God and Porn. Are They Protecting or Concealing?**

Moreover, translating words like *gay* or *virginity* into non sense in Arabic language and in a way that can confuse the audience while they have appropriate formal equivalences in Arabic language just because of the Arab ideology about both terms doesn't mean both terms are taboo words.

For example, in a movie called *Now I pronounce you Jack and Henry* for the actor Adam Sandler which was shown by Dubai One channel

which is another known Arabic channel, the term *gays* in the movie which was mentioned many times in the movie was translated into "المضطربون" "the confused or sick" in Arabic which doesn't make any sense at all.

The whole movie talks about how two straight male friends have the idea of pretending that he and his friend are homosexuals and sign a paper announcing they are a gay couple in order to get benefits from Gays Rights Union, to get money, and to find place of residence and so on since they are broke.

This weak translation can mislead the audience, If the viewer was an Arab who doesn't know English language and who is not familiar with the term *gay* or *homosexual* and he totally depends on the Arabic subtitles, he/she would be so confused. He/she would wonder why did those men assign a paper announcing they are "sick" according to the weak Arabic translation or why do Americans offer money or a place of residence to "sick confused" people instead of sending them to jail or a clinic?!

Again, the same term *gay* in *Scream 2* movie on the same channel, *Dubai One*, was translated into "منحرف" *pervert* which is even worse. The translator here translated a non-taboo word into a taboo word. The term *pervert* may refer to homosexuals in the West in certain contexts but still is a taboo word while *gay* is not. Moreover, a simple question shall arise here: On what bases did *Dubai One Channel* translate the term *gay* in one

movie into “المضطرب” “mentally abused/sick” and into “المنحرف” “pervert” in another movie? Isn’t there a certain standard for translating such terms?

Speaking of the term *gay* and back to the “unsuccessful” procedure of omission that the researcher discussed earlier (see pg. 53), another example of a misleading omission of the term’s translation occurred in *The Crazy Ones* TV series on *Dubai One* Channel. In one of the episodes, Sydney goes in a date with Dylan where all of her friends knew he was homosexual but they didn’t tell Sydney the truth. At the end of the episode and after showing a lot of scenes and translating a language between Dylan and other guys sending an obvious message to the Arab audience that the guy is homosexual (ex: body language, touching, using terms when he refers to men like flirting, kissing, hot, etc...), comes the scene where a friend of Sydney decides to confess and tell her the truth by literally saying “*Sidney, I want to tell you that Dylan is gay!*” and the channel cuts that part out jumping into another scene! *Dubai One* Channel allowed Sydney’s friend to say “Sydney, I want to tell you that Dylan is” and then cut the whole scene out without even a translation for the term *gay* jumping into another scene where Sydney starts crying about it and her friend comforts her! Now as an audience member, what kind of questions would you have in mind? In fact, it happened that the researcher himself watched that episode with his family. His mother just asked: What happened? Does Dylan have cancer so that’s why Sydney crying? And his father replied: No, Dylan is gay but the channel cut it out! What a stupid thing to do!

You delete a translation of a term but you leave all that homosexual flirting scenes during the episode?!

The researcher is not defending or justifying the act of homosexuality rather than resisting an unclear translation that can mislead and conceal the meaning, not protecting or respecting the target audience culture.

The term *gay* is not considered as a taboo word but a taboo act in the Middle East. In fact, there is a formal standard equivalent for the term "gay" in Arabic which is "مثلي الجنس او شاذ جنسي" and it's used in different fields and texts such as the *Holy Quran* where *gays* was mentioned as "لوطيين". The whole plot of the movie is talking about "homosexuality" and the channel doesn't have a problem in showing the movie to the people but it does have a problem with the word *gay*. It doesn't make any sense at all.

Speaking of the term *gay* and its Arabic translation in movies, the translation of this term in *Scream* movie, broadcasted by *Dubai One* channel, is another example of an unfortunate translation. The translator translated the phrase "*I assume he is gay*" into "*I assume he is a pervert*" "اعتقد بأنه منحرف" which is like adding insult to injury from the perspective of the researcher. Here, the translator or the channel considered the term *gay* inappropriate and unjustified so it was translated into pervert which is worse. What the translator did was actually translating a non-taboo word

into a very insulting taboo word, *pervert* instead of having the formal Arabic equivalent of the term *gay* or at least being creative about it.

As the study argues, *gay* is not a taboo word but a matter of fact words like *faggot*, *freak*, *dick sucker* and *pervert* are deep insulting and rude taboo words in the English language.

Another example in *Transformers 1* movie which was broadcasted by MBC 2, an Arab movie channel, "*Danny, are you masturbating?*" was translated into "داني هل تستمتع بوقتك؟" "*Danny, are you having a good time? Are you having fun?*" which makes it worse of course.

The translator intended to make the term *masturbation*, which is considered as a bad, unhealthy and maybe unmanly habit that goes against religion somehow in the Middle Eastern culture, sounds more appropriate to the target language audience ignoring the fact that what he did was not mentioning the literal translation of the term *masturbation* to the Arab audience because he thought it's something offending but at the same time defending the whole act of "masturbation" by that concealing translation "having fun".

Moreover, the term "masturbation" is not considered as a taboo word in the Middle East, maybe the act but not the word, it's used in different fields specially medicine like the term *onanism* and it has a formal Arabic translation which is "استمناة".

In an interview with the official responsible for censorship in *MBC* Channels, and after asking him about this movie and this translation in specific, he replied back by a very strange and shocking answer saying “When did you watch the movie? I mean on what time? Yes, this is our translation of the term “masturbation” but maybe if you watch the movie at midnight it will be different!”

After asking the censorship responsible person for more explanation he replied, “Listen, maybe we translate masturbation into having fun or "يستمتع بوقته" for the Arab audience but if you watch the movie at a late time of the day where most Arab watchers are supposed to be sleeping, you may find the translation you are looking for! "استمناء"!”

Maybe this is not a direct point to the issue of the best and proper equivalent for the term *masturbation* in Arabic language, but the researcher wonders: does *MBC2* protect its Arab audience by one translation in the afternoon and let them sink in sins by another one at midnight? If *MBC2* rejects a certain translation of a taboo term, why show that translation on a late time of the day? This is just a matter of fooling the audience and messing with their heads. It does not even give *MBC2* a fair excuse to reject the literal translation of *masturbation* "استمناء" since it may be used at a late time of the day!

Another example, in one episode in *CSI MIAMI* TV series on *Dubai One*, the suspect replies to the police officer, "No, I didn't sleep with Miss.

Erica." That phrase was translated into "لا لم افعل لها شيئاً" "I didn't do anything to her" which changes the whole meaning. Yes, the translator tried to be smart not to mention the "sleeping" part to the Arab audience but he replaced it with "I didn't do anything to her" and that changes the whole dialogue. Saying, "No, I didn't sleep with her" shows that the speaker has no relationship with Miss. Erica (who was the victim) or at least they are just friends not lovers, while saying "I didn't do anything to her" is like justifying a crime he never made or accused of.

Even the word *God* is considered as a taboo word for some translators or institutions when translating a movie if it does not refer to the one and only mighty God or Allah.

In *The Immortals* movie, which was broadcasted by an Arab movie channel called *Play Movies*, the translator translated the word "Gods" in the phrase "*The Gods won't hear you*" "الن يسمعك الالهة" into "الن يسمعوك" into Arabic omitting the word itself and replacing it by a pronoun "*They won't hear you*" and "*Poseidon, the God of the seas*" into "بوسايدون ملك البحار" replacing the word *God* by *king* which is considered as a bad translation. First, replacing the word *Gods* by a pronoun means there is an omission of the translation because the pronoun *they* has no antecedent, so it's meaningless. Besides, *God* doesn't mean *king* so that wasn't even a close equivalent. Second, even if the translator wants to respect the culture of the Arab target audience where Arabs don't believe in polytheism and they

mainly believe in one mighty God, the target audience has the right to know what the movie is really talking about.

The word *God* is never a taboo word in Arabic language and Middle Eastern Culture and since the movie isn't an Arabic movie that use the term *God* in an inappropriate way that may offend Arab people, then why not translating and conveying the culture and beliefs of the movie? Most Arab schools and universities teach different literature courses about the Iliad, Greeks, Trojans and the twelve Gods of Olympus. Then why concealing the truth because of a wrong assumption that "God" should be translated into "king" to protect the target audiences' beliefs and ideologies while many Arabic books about the Iliad and the twelve Greek Gods were published such as "الالهة والأبطال في اليونان القديمة" for Nihardet, A.

One more example, in a movie called *Cold in July* in an online Arabic movies website called *Anakeb.com*, "Do you have some porn movies?" translated into "هل لديك بعض الأفلام الاجنبية؟" "Have you got some English movies" and this is considered as manipulation of text.

Conclusion:

Naturalness is the main goal of any translation process that all translators do their best to achieve. The translator's main role is to convey the intended meaning from one language into another regarding the existing culture of the target language audience. However, a misleading translation or a personal interference in translating texts in general and taboo language in particular may cause problems. The researcher classifies certain terms and provides certain examples from English movies to show how a misleading or an unsuccessful interference or translation of a taboo term can lead to a whole misunderstanding. If the term has a formal equivalence in the Arabic language then why the unsuccessful interference; if the term *gay* means *شاذ* in Arabic then why translate it into *pervert* or *sick*. The researcher also sheds light on what terms are considered taboo by some Arab channels which should not be taboo.

After discussing the examples above, there is a fair question that needs to be raised: May a wrong translation of taboo words affect or mislead the target language audience? The answer is: Yes, indeed.

Chapter Six

Discussion of the Findings

Introduction:

In this chapter, the researcher sheds the light on certain findings through his analysis of the data. He discusses the importance of such findings where translators need be aware of to promote the process of translating movies in general and taboo words in particular. Translators play a major role in translating movies because they don't deal with language only rather than conveying a whole culture taking into consideration what is suitable for the target language audience.

Discussion of the Findings:

It's a vital necessity for Arab translators to take "culture" as the first important constraint that may face them when translating English movies in general and English taboo words in particular into Arabic. Translators should understand the culture of the source language (which is English in this case) in order to come up with a proper translation that would fit the target language (Arabic) and its audience maintaining the same intention, message and culture of the source language.

As it was mentioned before in chapter four, culture is the umbrella that covers all other constraints especially in the field of translating movies. In other words, all other constraints (religion, norms, beliefs, ideologies,

and channel) are a part of culture and derived from it. Therefore, understanding the SL culture properly by the Arab translator will help him to:

- 1- Promote the translation where it fits the TL culture properly without affecting the SL culture or changing it.
- 2- Avoid undeliberate offence on the side of the receiver.
- 3- Avoid certain mistakes by translators such as changing the meaning, confusing the TL audience or concealing reality sometimes.

According to this study, it has been also clear that there are a variety of constraints that face Arab translators besides culture (or derived from culture) which are religion, norms, beliefs, ideology and translation institution. All four constraints are major problems that the translator should be aware of in order to have a proper decent translation at the end.

It is also worth mentioning that considering what a taboo term is and what is not in the Arab World is not haphazard. Translators shall not decide randomly what a taboo term is in English movies according to their own perspectives with respect. The researcher cannot deny that there are certain constraints that stop and sometimes forbid the translators from translating taboo terms literally so they won't harm the Arab audience. However, if an English term has its own formal Arabic equivalence and it is commonly used among Arabs then why do Arab translators consider it taboo? (See chapter four for more examples and further details).

According to a questionnaire that was distributed to 83 male and female of Applied Linguistics and Translation M.A. program students and academics-English Department at An-Najah National University and Translation students and academics- English department at the Arab American University, the results are as below:

Question	Yes Frequency	Yes Percentage	No Frequency	No Percentage
1- Are there constraints on translating taboo language in English movies into Arabic?	83	100%	0	0%
2- Do you think Arab translators should translate English taboo words literally – word by word- into Arabic?	4	4%	79	95%
3- Is omission –of a taboo word translation- a preferable procedure in translating English movies into Arabic?	18	21%	65	78%
4- As a translator, would you translate the term "gays" in an English movie into "confused people" "المضطربون" in Arabic?	3	3%	80	96%
5- As a translator, do you consider terms like "virginity" "sex" "homosexual" "lesbian" "sperm" as taboo language when translating an English movie into Arabic?	40	48%	43	51%

According to the results mentioned in the previous table, 100% of translation students and academics believe that there are different

constraints on translating English taboo language into Arabic. 95% believe that translators should respect those constraints and they should not translate taboo words literally into Arabic while only 5% believe in translating taboo words literally. 78% believe that deletion of a taboo word's translation is not a good choice while 21% was for it. 96% refused to translate the term *gays* into "المضطربون" while 3% was for it. 51% of them consider terms like *virginity* and *sperm* as taboo language when translating a movie while 40% deal with these terms normally using their formal equivalents in the target language.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion:

There are different constraints on translating taboo language in English movies into Arabic that the translator needs to take into consideration. This study is concerned with four main constraints which are:

- 1- Culture.
- 2- Religion.
- 3- Norms, Beliefs and Ideology.
- 4- Channel and Translation Institution.

Culture is the main constraint on translating taboo language from English into Arabic in movies. It's like an umbrella that covers other aspects such as different ideologies, beliefs, norms, religions and traditions which are other respected constraints as well. Since different cultures are different worlds, the translator needs to respect the target audience culture by respecting the constraints on translating taboo words from English into Arabic.

Religion is one important constraint as well since taboo language is considered inappropriate in all religions. It is important to mention that

religion in the Middle East and for Arabs is a sacred reference and a way for living.

Different beliefs and ideologies between West and East should be taken into consideration as one important constraint on translating taboo language. Westerners and Easterners come from different ideological backgrounds where they may share few aspects but differ in many others.

The channel or the translation institution itself plays a major role in imposing certain procedures and translations for taboo words in movies. It is considered as one constraint that translators need to understand and pay attention to. It is worth mentioning that all of the constraints discussed above are related to culture in a way or another.

The study also discusses what shall/not be considered as taboo in Arabic according to the researcher's perspective providing reasonable examples and translations for different channels. Moreover, certain translations, interviews and a questioner helped the researcher to reach a valid reasonable point of view. Briefly, the translator needs to be aware of what, when and where to consider a term as taboo. As a result, this will lead to a clear, meaningful and suitable translation for the target language audience.

Recommendations:

- 1- The researcher recommends that translators read this research paper to know about different constraints that face translators when translating taboo terms from English into Arabic. This research will also help translators categorize different terms and choose some suitable translation procedures and avoid others when translating a movie into Arabic.
- 2- The researcher recommends that translators should respect the constraints that are made by each culture and take them into consideration while translating, but they also need to be loyal and honest to the text and find the appropriate equivalent that has the same effect on the target language audience as the source language text has on the source language audience.
- 3- The researcher recommends that translating taboo words literally from English into Arabic won't be a good decision for the translator to take since there are somehow restricted constraints on translating such a type of language that should be taken into consideration (in Arab culture of course).

Translating a taboo phrase like "*Fuck you*" in English into "ضجعت" in Arabic would be considered as a rude, weird and weak translation even if that was the true meaning and translation for the word.

In this case, the researcher suggests that the translator tries to make a balance between literal and non-literal translation for taboo English words according to the context. If the translator feels that the non-literal equivalent for the taboo word can conceal the audience or it plays a major role in the movie itself where not explaining the real meaning can lead to a misunderstanding, then the researcher suggests that he/she translate it literally with all respect to the cultural constraints.

For example, If someone in a movie used the idiom "*You are a pain in the ass*" where the word *ass* is considered as taboo, to tell the audience that a person is annoying, then the translator may translate that into "انت مصدر ازعاج" instead of the literal translation for the idiom because the translator could find an accepted smooth equivalent by the target language audience.

However, if the movie talks about a person who suffers from some pain and he said "*My ass hurts or I have pain in my ass*" that has nothing to do with the idiom because it's not an idiom anymore and even if the word *ass* is considered as a taboo word, the researcher suggests the translator translate it literally into "مؤخرتي تؤلمني" or it will conceal the real meaning and mislead the target audience.

- 4- The researcher also goes against the procedure of omission. In other words, the deletion of a translation or the disappearance of subtitles

or replacing the translation with black dots for example, in a movie called *My Suicide* broadcasted by *MBC Max* channel where two speakers insult each other using the taboo word "cunt" saying "you are a cunt!" "No you are a cunt" where it was translated into Arabic as "..... انت" "لا بل انت انت" where the translation was omitted. The researcher recommends that the deletion of the translation was not a good decision where the translator could find a close equivalent for the term *cunt* in Arabic such as "سافل" or "وضيع".

However, the procedure of omission may be accepted in certain cases where the translation of the taboo word will not change the intended meaning or add to the point. For example, a phrase like "Shut your fucking mouth" can be simply translated into "Shut your mouth" "اغلق فمك" in Arabic where there is no need to deal with the term "fucking" since it is not adding to the point.

- 5- Moreover, according to a questionnaire distributed by the researcher to a group of Applied Linguistics and Translation M.A. program students and academics/English Department at An-Najah National University and translation students and academics/English Department at the Arab American University, it seems that omission is a non preferable method when translating a movie where 78% of the sample was against omission of translation and 21% was for it.

The researcher also recommends that if the term is not used as a taboo word in a context or has formal equivalent in the target language, then it would be better for the translator to use that formal equivalent instead of creating a different, weird or uncommon translation for the word. For example, translating the term *gays* or *homosexuality* into "شواذ" or "شدود جنسي" since there is a formal suitable equivalent in Arabic instead of translating them into "المضطربون" or "الاضطراب والانفصام".

- 6- The table below categorizes a bunch of terms that translators deal with when translating a movie from English into Arabic. A group of terms need to be dealt with as taboo and the other group needs to be dealt with as normal terms that have formal equivalents in the target language where there is no need to create a different, weird, wrong and uncommon translation. The researcher suggests translations for those terms as below:

Taboo word	Translation	Non-taboo word	Translation
Fuck	تبا (حسب السياق)	Gay	شاذ/متلي جنس
Cunt	سافل/وضيع	Sperm	حيوان منوي
Bitch	عاهرة	Masturbation	استمناء
Asshole	مغفل/احمق	Penis	قضيب
Moron	مغفل/ساذج/عاهر	Sexual Intercourse	جماع
Pimp	سافل/رخيص	Virginity	العذرية
Faggot	شاذ	Homosexual	شاذ
Freak	غريب الاطوار/شاذ	Lesbian	سحاقية
Dick Head	احمق	Shemale (generally speaking- depends on context)	مخنثة
Queer	منحرف/ شاذ/غريب الاطوار		

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- e- Chapter (Surah) 17 The Night Journey/Al-Israa: verse 23.
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Appendixes

A hard copy of the questionnaire distributed for the study:

An-Najah National University.

English Language Department.

Applied Linguistics and Translation M.A. Program.



Research Topic: Constraints on Translating Taboo Language in English Movies into Arabic.

Researcher: Yahia Aqel.

Supervisor: Dr. Fayez Aqel.

Research Questionnaire

Sample: Applied Linguistics and Translation M.A. program students and academics/English Department at An-Najah National University. Translation students and academics/English Department and English Language Center at the Arab American University.

Question	Yes	No	Not Sure
Q1: Are there constraints on translating taboo language in English movies into Arabic?			
Q2: Do you think Arab translators should translate English taboo language literally (word for word) into Arabic?			
Q3: Is omission- of a taboo word translation- a preferable method in translating English movies into Arabic?			

Q4: Does the non-literal translation of an English taboo word mislead the Arab target audience?			
Q5: As a translator, would you translate the term “gays” in an English movie into “the confused/mentally ill” "المضطربون" in Arabic?			
Q6: As a translator, do you consider terms like “virginity, sex, homosexual, God, lesbian, sperm” as taboo language when you translate an English movie into Arabic?			
Q7: Can a wrong translation of a taboo term in English movies mislead the Arab target audience?			

All interviews used for this study are recorded and available upon request except for one interview with the responsible person for censorship in MBC Channels who refused to record the interview for privacy issues. Therefore, the researcher provides the person's full name, phone number and place of residence for the authentication of source and study.

Mr. Naem Radwan, a retired responsible person for the censorship in MBC Channels- UAE.

Phone number:00971506510323

جامعة النجاح الوطنية
كلية الدراسات العليا

الضوابط المفروضة على ترجمة اللغة والألفاظ النابية في الأفلام الانجليزية الى العربية

اعداد

يحيى عقل عبد الله عقل

اشراف

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د. أيمن نزال

قدمت هذه الأطروحة استكمالاً لمتطلبات درجة الماجستير في اللغويات التطبيقية
والترجمة، كلية الدراسات العليا، جامعة النجاح الوطنية، نابلس، فلسطين.

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الملخص

تتناقش الرسالة موضوع الضوابط المفروضة على ترجمة اللغة والألفاظ النابية في الأفلام الانجليزية الى العربية حيث ان هنالك أربعة ضوابط رئيسية مفروضة على ترجمة مثل هذه اللغة في الأفلام الا وهي الثقافة والدين والايديولوجيا (الفكر) والقناة أو المؤسسة، كما تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على معايير وتصنيف هذه الألفاظ فمتى يجب ان يعد اللفظ نابيا ومتى يكون لفظا عاديا في العالم العربي وما تأثير الترجمات المختلفة الغير موفقة لمثل هذه الألفاظ على المشاهد العربي؟ حيث يطرح الباحث نقاشه ووجهة نظره بناء على تحليل منطقي عادل مزود بأمثلة عديدة من الأفلام لتوثيق وتفصيل الموضوع. بعد البحث نوعيا يشمل عناصر البحث النوعي حيث يتبع الاسلوب الوصفي في جمع وتحليل البيانات استنادا على مصادر متنوعة وموثوقة كالكتب والصحف والمجلات والمقابلات والاستبيانات والأفلام لطرح وجهة نظر الباحث بطريقة موضوعية ونزيهة والتوصل لنتائج منطقية. يستنتج الباحث بأن على المترجم العربي أخذ الضوابط الاربعة بعين الاعتبار عند ترجمة مثل تلك اللغة في الأفلام الإنجليزية كما استنتج ايضا التأثير السلبي لبعض الترجمات الغير موفقة لبعض الألفاظ النابية على المشاهد العربي حيث يوصي الباحث بعدد من التوصيات لمساعدة المترجم العربي في الوصول إلى ترجمة جيدة لمثل هذه الألفاظ دون تشويش الحقيقة أو التأثير على المعنى الأصلي اخذا بعين الاعتبار الضوابط الاربعة واحترام الثقافة العربية المترجم لها.