

Taboo censorship: strategy for translating taboo expressions in Indonesian–Arabic subtitles of *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*

Muhamad Saiful Mukminin ^① , Muhammad Habibie Alfath ^②, Aninda Ayu Sitorismi ^③,
Farrah Chaiya Mas ^④, Eman Ibrahim Mohammed Abubaker ^⑤

^{①②③} Master of Linguistics, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

^④ Master of Middle Eastern Cultural Studies, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

^⑤ Linguistics Department, University of Khartoum, Sudan



muhamadsaifulmukminin@mail.ugm.ac.id

Abstract

Taboo expressions in language are often considered inappropriate because they may violate norms of politeness and certain cultural values. In the context of audiovisual translation, particularly film subtitling, taboo expressions are frequently not translated explicitly. This practice is known as the taboo censorship strategy. This study aims to examine the forms of taboo expressions, the application of taboo censorship strategies, and the factors underlying their use in the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*. The study adopts a qualitative approach using descriptive, comparative, and interpretative methods. The data consist of taboo expressions found in the dialogue of the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* along with their translations in Arabic subtitles. Data were collected through viewing and note-taking techniques and were analyzed using an interactive data analysis model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that the subtitle translator of *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* employed taboo censorship strategies in translating various types of taboo expressions, including those related to animals, mental disorders, and sexual organs and acts. The application of this strategy is influenced by differences in politeness norms between the source and target cultures, the need to soften expressions through euphemism, and the technical constraints of subtitling, which require messages to be conveyed concisely and clearly. Thus, the translator functions as a cultural mediator who seeks to balance fidelity to the source text with social and cultural acceptability for the target audience.

Keywords

taboo expressions, censorship, translation, subtitle

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Introduction

Humans are beings endowed with emotions as an inherent part of their psychological and social experience (Dixon, 2023; Elias, 1987). These emotions may take the form of anger, disappointment, fear, happiness, or disgust, which in certain situations demand expression (Ortony, 2022). The release of these emotions is carried out through various expressive mechanisms, both verbal and nonverbal (Israelashvili & Fischer, 2022). One verbal mechanism that frequently emerges is the use of taboo expressions. Taboo expressions are used to convey emotions in a strong, spontaneous, and intense manner, especially under conditions of emotional pressure (Manor & Tenenbaum, 2025; Widiastuti et al., 2025). In linguistic studies, taboo expressions have various types of referents. These referents generally include sexual organs, sexual activities, bodily excretions, mental subnormality or derangement, supernatural beings, religion, as well as insults referring to animals or family members (Allan & Burrige, 2006; Wardhaugh, 2006). Each type of referent reflects the values, norms, and boundaries of propriety within a particular culture. Therefore, beyond functioning as a means of emotional expression, taboo expressions also serve as a reflection of the social and cultural constructions of their speakers.

Taboo expressions are one of the distinctive features that function as markers of culture and social identity (Brodersen, 2019; Hashamdar & Rafi, 2018). Their existence is closely related to the values, norms, and boundaries of propriety that prevail within a particular culture. Because they are highly contextual and sensitive, taboo expressions are often difficult to translate into another language without causing shifts in meaning or cultural clashes (Almijrab, 2020; Crisafulli, 1997). Differences in perceptions of what is considered taboo between the source culture and the target culture constitute a major challenge in translation. In dealing with this difficulty, translators often choose not to translate taboo expressions directly. This choice is made to avoid impoliteness, reader rejection, or violations of cultural norms in the target text. Therefore, translators apply a censorship strategy, namely by omitting, softening, or eliminating taboo expressions from the translated text.

The application of the censorship strategy to taboo language can be observed in the Arabic subtitle translation of the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*. *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* is a drama-thriller film directed by Joko Anwar, released on 17 April 2025. The story is set in Indonesia in the year 2027 and portrays a chaotic social condition marked by widespread discrimination, hatred, and violence. This context shows that the film features various taboo expressions used by the characters to vent emotions, build conflict, and represent certain social realities. However, in the Arabic subtitle version, several of these taboo expressions do not appear explicitly. Expressions that are considered harsh, vulgar, or in violation of norms of propriety in the source language are omitted or not translated at all. This choice indicates the influence of cultural and religious considerations in the target language, which imposes stricter boundaries on the use of taboo language.

The research area of taboo expression translation covers several aspects. First, studies focusing on taboo translation strategies. Zagood et al. (2022) analyzed strategies for translating taboo words and expressions from English into Arabic in Alnabhan's translation of Manson's *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a Fck**. Orang'i (2022) examined strategies used in translating taboo words in health-related texts from English into Swahili. Samir & Hashemizadeh (2023) identified the strategies employed by Iranian translators in translating the taboo word "F*k" in the subtitles and dubbing of the TV series *Big Little Lies* into Persian. Abdelaal & Al Sarhani (2021) analyzed the strategies used to translate taboo words and expressions from English into Arabic in the film *Training Day*. Second, studies adopting a euphemistic approach. Hassan et al. (2024) analyzed the use of euphemism in translating taboo expressions in the TV series *Friends*. Lestari & Sutrisno (2023) identified taboo translation strategies involving euphemism in *Big Little Lies*. Taghian

(2021) examined the translation of euphemism and dysphemism in the Qur'an, particularly in verses related to sexual taboos. Third, studies on taboo-for-taboo translation. Ngaliyah & Cholsy (2024) analyzed the "taboo for taboo" strategy and the factors influencing the translation of taboo words in the novel *Where There's Smoke* into Indonesian. Mukminin et al. (2025) examined the use of the "taboo for taboo" strategy in translating taboo expressions from Indonesian into English in the subtitles of the film *Inang*.

Previous studies have generally focused on identifying and classifying strategies for translating taboo expressions, such as euphemism, taboo-for-taboo, or lexical substitution, across various media including novels, nonfiction texts, TV series, and films. In addition, most of these studies emphasize data in which taboo expressions are still retained in the target text, albeit in a softened form. In contrast to such research, the present study highlights an extreme case of the complete omission of taboo expressions through the use of a censorship strategy in Arabic subtitles, with Indonesian as the source language—an area that has received relatively little scholarly attention. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on censorship as a strategic choice in translating taboo expressions. The main research questions are: (1) how taboo expressions in the source language are treated in Arabic subtitles, and (2) the reasons translators choose to apply a censorship strategy. This study is expected to enrich audiovisual translation studies and contribute critical insights into the use of censorship strategies in translating taboo expressions and their impact on meaning, emotional expression, and cultural representation in film.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative approach because it focuses on meaning, context, and linguistic phenomena in the translation of taboo expressions. A descriptive method is employed to explain the forms, functions, and characteristics of taboo expressions appearing in film dialogue. In addition, a comparative method is applied to compare the Indonesian source text (ST) with the Arabic target text (TT) in the form of subtitles, in order to identify differences in the treatment of taboo expressions. An interpretative method is used to describe and interpret the factors underlying the application of censorship strategies.

The data consist of excerpts from Indonesian-language dialogues containing taboo expressions along with their translations in Arabic subtitles. The data source is the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*, which is streamed on the Prime Video platform. Data collection is carried out by carefully watching the film and noting dialogues that contain taboo expressions and their subtitle equivalents. The collected data are then analyzed using an interactive data analysis model. The data reduction stage involves selecting and classifying relevant data according to the research focus. Next, the data are systematically presented through descriptions and comparisons of the ST and TT. The ST and TT is complemented by a literal English translation to help readers understand the meaning of the data. The final stage involves drawing conclusions to formulate findings and identify patterns of censorship.

Results

This section presents a detailed account of the research findings regarding the classification and analysis of taboo expressions appearing in the dialogue of the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*. The discussion focuses on three main types of taboo expressions based on their referents, namely those referring to animals, mental subnormality or derangement, and sexual organs and acts. Each type of taboo expression is analyzed to examine its linguistic form in the Indonesian source text and how it is treated in the Arabic subtitles. In addition, this section highlights the

translation patterns employed, particularly the tendency to omit or obscure taboo expressions through the use of censorship strategies.

Taboo Expressions with Animal Referents

This type of taboo expression uses animal names to refer to or mock human beings. Simply put, such taboo expressions employ language that equates humans with animals. As a result, their meaning becomes demeaning, insulting, or impolite, since humans are positioned as equal to or even lower than animals.

- | | | |
|-----|-----|---|
| (1) | ST: | Eh, mau ke mana lo, Anjing?
[Hey, where are you going, dog?] |
| | TT: | إلى أين تذهب؟
<i>Ilā ayna tadhhab?</i>
[Where are you going?] |
| (2) | ST: | Nggak lucu jokes lo, Anjing!
[Your joke is not funny, dog!] |
| | TT: | لم يكن ذلك مضحكاً!
<i>Lam yakun dhālika muḍḥikan!</i>
[That was not funny!] |
| (3) | ST: | Salah apa gua, Anjing!
[What did I do wrong, dog!] |
| | TT: | ما ذنبي؟
<i>Mā dhanbī?</i>
[What is my fault?] |
| (4) | ST: | Demi apa, Anjing?
[By what oath, dog?] |
| | TT: | حقاً؟
<i>ḥaqqan?</i>
[Seriously?] |
| (5) | ST: | Lo ngapain ajak gua, Anjing?
[What are you doing inviting me, dog?] |
| | TT: | أي هراء هذا؟
<i>Ayy harā' hādhā?</i>
[What is this nonsense?] |
| (6) | ST: | Ada kerusuhan, Anjing
[There's a riot, dog!] |
| | TT: | اندلعت اشتباكات!
<i>Indala 'at ishtibākāt!</i>
[Clashes have broken out!] |
| (7) | ST: | Diem, Anjing!
[Be quiet, dog!] |
| | TT: | اصمتاً
<i>Uṣmitan</i>
[Be quiet] |
| (8) | ST: | Tapi itu teman kita, Anjing!
[But he's our friend, dog!] |
| | TT: | كان صديقنا!
<i>Kāna ṣadiqanā!</i>
[He's our friend!] |

- (9) ST: Siapa itu, **Anjing**?
[Who is that, **dog**?]
TT: من ذاك؟
Man dhāka?
[Who is that?]
- (10) ST: Ini kelewatan, **Anjing**
[This is excessive, **dog**]
TT: هذا لا يجوز
Hādhā lā yajūz
[This is not allowed]
- (11) ST: Lo pada udah bunuh bapak gua, **Anjing**!
[You guys have already killed my father, **dog**!]
TT: لقد قتلتم أبي
Laqad qataltum abī
[You have killed my father]

Data excerpts (1) to (9) present taboo expressions with animal referents, specifically *anjing* ‘the dog’. The dog is a mammal commonly kept for guarding homes, hunting, and other purposes (Pacheco-Cobos & Winterhalder, 2021). In Indonesian culture, dogs are considered lowly, unclean animals and are often associated with negative connotations, especially in the context of insults (Anshari et al., 2025). This creates the perception that the degradation or humiliation of humans is equated with an animal, namely the dog. The dog functions as a symbol of abuse representing vile, reprehensible, or immoral traits. In the translation of these data excerpts, it is evident that the dog-related expressions were either not translated or subjected to censorship. As a result, the negative connotation and the representation of the animal as a taboo expression in the ST are not conveyed in the TT.

In addition to the word ‘*anjing*,’ in Indonesian speech communities, this word has several variants. This can be seen in the following data:

- (12) ST: Mereka temen deket, **anjir**
[They’re close friends, **dog**]
TT: لقد كانا صديقين مقربين
Laqad kānā ṣadīqayni muqarrabayn
[They were close friends]
- (13) ST: Salah satu babi lo tuh ngebukin orang gua, **anjir**
[One of your pigs punched my guy, **dog**]
TT: ثمة خنزير منكم أوسع صديقي ضرباً
Thamma khinzīrun minkum awsa ‘u ṣadīqī ḍarban
[One of your pigs beat my friend badly]
- (14) ST: Eh, **jing**! Liat. Si babi. Ngapain coba?
[Hey, **dog**! Look. That pig. What is he doing?]
TT: انظر، إنه الخنزير. ماذا يريد؟
Unzur, innahu al-khinzīr. mādhā yurīd?
[Look, it’s the pig. What does he want?]

In data (12) and (13), the word ‘*anjir*’ is found, which is a variant of the word *anjing*. This word is generally used to express surprise, amazement, or shock. Therefore, its insulting or offensive nuance is milder compared to the original word *anjing*. The use of *anjir* indicates a shift in meaning

from a taboo expression to a casual, everyday expression that is more acceptable in informal conversation (Yunanda et al., 2022). Meanwhile, in data (14), the word '*Jing*' appears, which is a shortened form of *anjing*. This word is typically used in slang to express spontaneous emotions such as annoyance, surprise, or frustration. In the translated data, both expressions were also not translated into the TT. In this case, the translator also chose to censor the words *anjir* and *jing* because they are still considered taboo in the TT.

In addition to the taboo term *dog* and its variants, there are also other types of animals used as references for taboo words. Consider the following data:

- (15) ST: Lepasin, **Bangsat!**
[Release (him), **bastard!**]
TT: دعوه وشأنه!
Da 'ūhu wa sha 'nahu!
[Leave him alone!]
- (16) ST: Lo nggak bilang-bilang, Anjing, **Bangsat!**
[You didn't tell me, dog, **bastard!**]
TT: لماذا لم تخبرني؟
Limādhā lam tukhbirnī?
[Why didn't you tell me?]

Data (15) and (16) present a variant of a taboo word referring to an animal, namely *bangsat*. According to the KBBI (*Official Dictionary of the Indonesian Language*), *bangsat* is a small animal categorized as a *kutu busuk* 'bedbug', or otherwise known as *kepinding*.¹ Lexically, this word refers to a disgusting creature. Therefore, when used to refer to a human, it carries connotations of insult and abuse. The use of the word *bangsat* in everyday conversation is quite common as a curse word, so sociolinguistically it is classified as a taboo term (Fadillah & Widyasuti, 2025; Juidah et al., 2024). In the context of the translation in these data, the word *bangsat* was not translated into the target text. The translator chose to omit this taboo meaning as a form of censorship strategy.

Taboo Expressions with Mental Subnormality or Derangement

Allan & Burridge (2006) categorize one form of taboo expression as mental subnormality or derangement. This refers to expressions that point to a person's mental condition considered abnormal or disturbed. Their use in language is often regarded as taboo because it targets and stigmatizes the individual. To observe the forms of such expressions, consider the following data:

- (17) ST: Cepetan ambil, **Goblok!**
[Grab it quickly, **idiot!**]
TT: أذهب وأحضره!
Adzhib wa achdhirhu!
[Go and get it!]
- (18) ST: Besok gua ada janji sama anak-anak. **Goblok.** Tolol.
[I've got plans with the guys tomorrow. **Idiot.** Stupid]
TT: لدي خطط غداً بالفعل
Ladayya khuṭaṭun ghadan bil-fi 'l
[I already have plans tomorrow]

¹ Cited from <https://kbbi.web.id/bangsats>

- (19) ST: Besok gua ada janji sama anak-anak. Goblok. **Tolol**.
[I've got plans with the guys tomorrow. Idiot. **Stupid**]
TT: لدي خطط غداً بالفعل
Ladayya khuṭaṭun ghadan bil-fi 'l
[I already have plans tomorrow]

Data (17) dan (18) show taboo expression of “goblok.” In the KBBI, *goblok* means very stupid.² The word *goblok* in Indonesian is used as an insult to refer to someone considered unintelligent. It has a negative connotation and is usually used in informal or coarse contexts (Nuraeni et al., 2022; Tis'ah, 2024). Similar to *goblok*, there is another variant used to refer to an unintelligent person, namely *tolol*. In data (19), the word *tolol* means very stupid or stubbornly ignorant.³ The word *tolol* sounds harsher than the word *bodoh* ‘stupid’ (Sasmita & Nugraha, 2025). *Bodoh* means slow to understand or having difficulty knowing something, whereas *tolol* carries a connotation of insulting and belittling the person it is directed at. Based on the translation data, it is evident that the taboo expressions *goblok* and *tolol* were not translated into the target text. This is because the translator applied a censorship strategy by omitting these taboo expressions in the target text.

Taboo Expressions with Organs and Acts of Sex

Wardhaugh (2006) and Allan & Burridge (2006) categorize one type of taboo expression as the organs and acts of sex. This refers to expressions related to reproductive organs and sexual behaviors. Their use in language is considered sensitive or taboo because they involve private matters. In addition, this type of expression can cause discomfort or be offensive to the listener. To observe their forms, consider the following data:

- (20) ST: Eh, Anjing, kaki lo, **Ngentot!**
[Hey, dog, your foot, **fuck!**]
TT: يا هذا! أنزل قدمك! إنها قذرة!
Yā hādhā! anzil qadamaka! innahā qadhirah!
[Hey you! Take your foot down! It's dirty!]
- (21) ST: Mana lo, **Ngentot?** Guru babi!
[Where are you, **fuck?** Pig teacher!]
TT: أين أنت أيها المعلم الخنزير؟
Ayna anta ayyuhā al-mu 'allim al-khinzīr?
[Where are you, you pig teacher?]
- (22) ST: Bokap gua, kalo bener, gua nggak di sini, **ngentot!**
[My dad, if that's true, I wouldn't be here, **fuck!**]
TT: لو كان أبي رجلاً صالحاً لما انتهى بي الأمر إلى هنا
Law kāna abī rajulan ṣāliḥan lamā intahā bī al-amru ilā hunā
[If my father had been a righteous man, I wouldn't have ended up here]
- (23) ST: Ya, bukan berarti Sim harus mati di tangan sendiri! **Ngentot!**
[Yes, but that doesn't mean Sim has to die by his own hand! **Fuck!**]
TT: لكن هذا لا يعني أنه كان يستحق أن يُقتل على يد صديقه
Lākin hādhā lā ya 'nī annahu kāna yastaḥiqqu an yuqtala 'alā yadi ṣadīqihi
[But that doesn't mean he deserved to be killed by his friend]

² Cited from <https://kbbi.web.id/goblok>

³ Cited from <https://kbbi.web.id/tolol>

Data (20) to (23) present a taboo expression related to sexual activity, namely *ngentot*. The word *ngentot* has the root word *kentot*, which is an acronym of *kencan total* (total dating) (Ivansyah & Indrawati, 2022). However, over time, the word *kentot* or *ngentot* has undergone a shift in meaning toward a negative sense, referring to sexual intercourse or copulation (Ayun, 2023). Since *ngentot* has developed into a taboo expression, the translator chose not to translate it into the target text. This confirms the use of a censorship strategy in translating taboo expressions.

In addition to Acts of Sex, taboo expressions related to organs of sex were also found. These are words that refer to reproductive organs or body parts associated with sexual activity. Consider the following examples:

- (24) ST: Lo tahu dia kayak banci. **Kontrolnya** kecil.
[You know he's like a sissy. His **dick** is small]
TT: ألا تعلم أنه جبان؟ يفتقر إلى الرجولة
Alā ta 'lam annahu jabān? Yaftaqiru ilā al-rujūlah
[Don't you know he's a coward? He lacks manliness]
- (25) ST: Gua nggak pengen kayak bokap gua, **kontrol**!
[I don't want to be like my dad, **dick**!]
TT: لا أريد أن أكون مثل أبي الفاسد
Lā urīdu an akūna mithla abī al-fāsid
[I don't want to be like my corrupt father]

In data (24) and (25), a taboo expression related to organs of sex, namely *kontrol*, is presented. According to the KBBI, *kontrol* means the male genitalia.⁴ *Kontrol* is a taboo expression related to the male genitalia (Resticka & Nurdyanto, 2024). This word is considered coarse and offensive in everyday conversation because it refers to private and sensitive matters. In the translation, the expression *kontrol* was not translated. Instead, it was replaced with a more polite term. This reveals a censorship strategy aimed at omitting taboo expressions in the target text.

Discussion

In this study, the most frequently occurring taboo expression found in the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* is the word '*anjing*' which means 'dog'. As an animal term, '*anjing*' is commonly used in Indonesian culture to swear at or harshly mock someone. Its use functions as a means of expressing negative emotions such as anger, annoyance, or frustration, as well as a form of degrading the interlocutor's dignity. Several studies on taboo language indicate that '*anjing*' is one of the most productive and frequently used insults in both spoken and audiovisual discourse in Indonesia (Aisyah et al., 2024; Mahayana et al., 2025; Mukminin et al., 2025; Wiranda et al., 2024). Over time, the word '*anjing*' has undergone linguistic development, giving rise to lexical variants such as '*anjir*' or its shortened form '*jing*'. These variants reflect a shift in meaning and function, from a harsh insult to a milder emotional expression that is more acceptable in informal conversation. This phenomenon confirms that language is dynamic, contextual, and continuously evolving in response to the expressive needs of its speakers (Amelia et al., 2024; Indriani & Arsanti, 2024).

In addition to taboo expressions with animal referents, this study also identified other types of taboo expressions, namely Mental Subnormality or Derangement and Organs and Acts of Sex.

⁴ Cited from <https://kbbi.web.id/kontrol>

The category *Mental Subnormality or Derangement* is represented by words such as *goblok* and *tolol*, which are used to demean a person's intellectual capacity and function as forms of verbal insult. Meanwhile, the category *Organs and Acts of Sex* is realized through words such as *ngentot* and *kontrol*, which explicitly refer to sexual activities and reproductive organs. This classification aligns with the categorization of taboo language proposed by Wardhaugh (2006) and Allan & Burridge (2006), which identify mental disability and sexuality as primary domains of language taboo. These expressions are considered highly taboo and have the potential to offend norms of politeness, morality, and religious values within the target language culture.

The first factor causing taboo censorship is the difference in politeness norms between the source and target cultures. In Indonesian culture, the use of taboo words can appear in daily discourse, whether as expressions of anger, ridicule, or humor, although they are still considered rude. At the same time, swearing through taboo expressions has undergone a fairly significant transformation. Indonesians, in particular, have a tradition of avoiding explicit swearing, instead employing euphemisms rather than frontal or direct utterances. This tendency is influenced by several factors, including adaptation to film genres, the depiction of contemporary society, and the portrayal of aspects that are rarely exposed to the general public. Beyond these factors, in recent years the Indonesian language, through popular cultural works, has increasingly been associated with themes of sexuality and crime, both of which frequently employ taboo language.

In Arabic, the concept of *taboo* is not directly associated with body parts or profanity in the same way as in Indonesian. The Arabic language contains several lexemes that intrinsically express notions of cursing or condemnation, including *wailun* (وَيْلٌ), *tabban* (تَبَّ), *lamaza* (لَمَزَ), and *hamaza* (هَمَزَ), which denote *woe*, *perish*, *to mock*, and *to slander*, respectively, which belong to specific nominal and verbal categories. Body parts, in this context, do not function as taboo expressions themselves, but rather as targets of insult or ridicule, as reflected in general or more specific derogatory utterances. At the same time, in Arab culture, words referring to taboo topics are considered highly offensive and violate norms of politeness, morality, and religious values. This is as cited by Eid & Abdullah (2021, p. 413):

For instance, in the Arab countries, it is prohibited to use words related to sex organs or religion such as blasphemous words or any utterances damaging politeness, courtesy, good manners and etiquette rules of the society. Using animal names is also tabooed in the Arab world in general.

Aforementioned idea emphasizes that language is influenced by cultural and social norms, so taboo words can be considered violations of politeness and societal values. Therefore, translators use a censorship strategy by omitting taboo words in the translation. This is done to ensure that the translation remains culturally appropriate, accepted by the audience, and does not offend social or religious norms. This strategy demonstrates that the translator acts as a cultural mediator (Bedecker & Feinauer, 2006), adapting the original text to the sensitivities of the target audience.

The second factor is euphemism. Euphemism is an alternative expression that sounds pleasant or at least inoffensive, chosen by speakers or writers to avoid using the original expression when conveying a particular communicative intention on a given occasion (Burridge, 2012). Based on this understanding, the omission or censorship of taboo expressions can be considered a form of euphemism. Translators try to soften the language to align with the target culture's norms. Taboo expressions deemed offensive are omitted in subtitle translations. Although the essence of euphemism is to replace expressions with milder forms rather than remove them entirely, omission is still applied to ensure the translation is acceptable to the audience. As a result, the translation remains safe, polite, and consistent with the cultural and social values of the target community.

The third factor relates to subtitle effectiveness. Censorship is applied when taboo terms are not essential for understanding the text. According to Gottlieb's (1992) subtitle translation strategy, deletion, text considered less important can be omitted. In the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*, several taboo expressions were not translated because they were deemed non-essential. In addition, omitting words or expressions aims to keep subtitles effective and concise. According to Baker (2018), this falls under the omission strategy, as culturally bound taboo expressions are sometimes not crucial for the development of the text. If the meaning of a word or expression is not significant enough to justify distracting the viewer with lengthy explanations, translators can—and often do—omit its translation. Thus, censorship helps maintain subtitle effectiveness.

The findings on taboo censorship in the subtitles of the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* show that translators often use strategies such as omission, substitution, and euphemism. These strategies aim to adapt taboo expressions to cultural norms and audience sensitivities (Abdelaal & Al Sarhani, 2021; Samir & Hashemizadeh, 2023; Zagood et al., 2022). The use of euphemism has proven effective in softening taboo words so that they are acceptable to viewers without diminishing the main message (Hassan et al., 2024; Lestari & Sutrisno, 2023; Taghian, 2021). However, this study shows a different tendency compared to the taboo-for-taboo strategy, which preserves the original level of taboo from the source language, as found in previous studies (Mukminin et al., 2025; Ngaliyah & Cholsy, 2024). In this case, translators in *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* prioritize the omission of taboo expressions to align with cultural norms and audience comfort. This approach ensures that the subtitles remain communicative, easily understood, and consistent with the social values of the target audience.

Conclusion

This study concludes that translators in the subtitles of the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* employed taboo censorship strategies to handle various types of taboo expressions, including those referring to animals, mental disabilities, and sexual organs or acts. The omission of taboo words was applied to adapt the content to the politeness norms and cultural sensitivities of Arab audiences, ensuring that the subtitles remained acceptable and did not offend viewers. The main factors influencing this strategy include differences in politeness norms between the source and target cultures, the need for softening through euphemism, and the effectiveness of subtitles to keep the text concise and easily understood. The findings show that omitting taboo expressions allows the main message to be conveyed without diminishing meaning while maintaining audience comfort. Thus, translators act as cultural mediators, balancing fidelity to the source text with social and cultural acceptance in the target audience.

This study has several limitations. First, the data analyzed were limited to the subtitles of the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*, so the findings may not fully represent the translation of taboo expressions in other films or media. Second, the study focused only on taboo censorship strategies, leaving aspects such as the application of taboo for taboo or the influence of visual context on subtitle interpretation unanalyzed. Third, the study did not involve audience feedback as a measure of the effectiveness of the translation strategies, so viewers' perceptions of the omission or softening of taboo words remain unknown. For future research, it is recommended to broaden the scope by analyzing various film genres or audiovisual media to observe variations in taboo translation strategies. Additionally, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, including surveys or interviews with viewers, can provide deeper insights into strategy effectiveness and audience perception. Future studies could also explore the role of taboo for taboo and euphemism in different cross-cultural contexts.

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Author's Biography

Muhamad Saiful Mukminin is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Linguistics at Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. His research focuses on translation studies across multiple languages, including Arabic, English, Indonesian, and Javanese. In addition, he specializes in discourse analysis and general linguistics. With a strong interest in the complexities of language, he examines how cultural, social, and contextual factors influence translation practices and the interpretation of meaning within different linguistic frameworks.

Muhammad Habibie Alfath is a Master's student in Linguistics at Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. His studies focus on descriptive linguistics within Arabic, Indonesian, and Javanese. He holds a deeper interest in Arabic linguistics, particularly concerning the internal study of language spanning from the morphological to the semantic level. His academic work aims to systematically describe and analyze the structures and meanings inherent in these languages, with Arabic serving as his primary area of specialization and research inquiry.

Aninda Ayu Sitorismi is a master's student in the Linguistics Program at Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia. Her academic interests broadly encompass language and gender studies, sociopragmatics, and discourse analysis, with a focus on Indonesian and Arabic. Her research explores the relationship between language, social interaction, and cultural context, particularly in how meaning, identity, and social relations are constructed through discourse.

Farrah Chaiya Mas is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Middle Eastern Cultural Studies at Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Her research focuses on cultural studies, particularly in the Middle East. In addition, she specializes in cross-cultural and general geocultural studies. With a strong interest in cultural complexity, she researches how cultural, social, and political factors influence the culture of a region or area.

Eman Ibrahim Mohammed Abubaker is a lecturer in linguistics at the University of Khartoum, Sudan. Her academic interests include linguistics, phonetics, sociolinguistics, language diversity, and minority and endangered languages. Her research focuses on linguistic vulnerability, language identity, and multilingual contexts, with particular attention to Sudanese languages. She also has a research interest in translation studies, particularly audiovisual translation and the treatment of culturally sensitive and taboo expressions across languages. She is actively engaged in academic.