

## TABOO FOR TABOO STRATEGY IN INDONESIAN-ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF TABOO WORDS IN INANG MOVIE SUBTITLES

Muhamad Saiful Mukminin<sup>1</sup>, Ahmad Abdul Muhhit<sup>2</sup>, Aqeel Ahmed<sup>3</sup>

*Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia<sup>1,2</sup>,*

*University of Baghdad, Baghdad, Iraq<sup>3</sup>*

muhamadsaifulmukminin@mail.ugm.ac.id<sup>1</sup>, ahmadabdulmuhhit@mail.ugm.ac.id<sup>2</sup>,  
aqeelhmedfqwef@gmail.com<sup>3</sup>

### Article History

Received:  
February 17, 2025  
Revised:  
March 21, 2025  
Accepted:  
April 10, 2025  
Published:  
April 15, 2025



### Abstract

The present research aims to explore and describe the translation strategies of taboo words in the subtitles of the movie *Inang*, available on the Netflix platform. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the study focuses on analysing Indonesian taboo words translated into English, identifying the strategies applied, and investigating how subtitling can either preserve or alter their intensity and meaning in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural adaptation. The research data was obtained from the film *Inang* on Netflix by recording the use of taboo words in the Indonesian subtitles along with their English translations. Data collection involved identifying 23 taboo words or phrases and recording their corresponding timestamps. The collected data was analysed using interactive data analysis model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis revealed two types of the taboo-for-taboo strategy: the first is the taboo for taboo strategy that maintains the same level of taboo as the source language, maintaining its intensity. While the second is the taboo for taboo strategy with a lower level of taboo compared to the source language. In conclusion, the study shows that the taboo-for-taboo strategy in *Inang* allows for a balanced adaptation of offensive expressions. This study contributes to the field of audiovisual translation by highlighting how subtitling strategies affect the preservation or modification of taboo expressions in cross-cultural contexts.

**Keywords:** *Translation, Taboo Words, Taboo for Taboo Strategy, Inang*

### Introduction

In the translation process, the presence of taboo words poses a unique challenge for translators due to differences in cultural and social norms between the source and target languages (Allan & Burrige, 2006; Ávila-Cabrera, 2023; Nguyen, 2024; Muallim et al., 2023; Munawir, 2021). Taboo words are terms considered inappropriate or sensitive in a society, usually related to sexuality, religion, death, or profanity (Allan, 2018). In translation, particularly from Indonesian to English, the strategies used to handle taboo words vary widely depending on the context and communicative purpose. Therefore, research on translation strategies for taboo words, especially in films, is essential to understand how meaning and cultural nuances are preserved or adapted in the target language (Abdulhadi & Hamza, 2023; Abu-Rayyash et al., 2023; Al-Yasin & Rabab'ah, 2019; Fouladi & Hashemi, 2025; Haider et al., 2023).

Films, as a medium of cross-cultural communication (Long, 2023), often contain taboo words that reflect characterization and the social realities of a particular society. One Indonesian film that features the use of taboo words is *Inang*, a horror film that incorporates elements of tradition, belief, and social realities within society. *Inang* is a 2022 Indonesian horror thriller film directed by Fajar Nugros. The film stars Naysilla Mirdad, Dimas Anggara, Rukman Rosadi, and Lydia Kandou. In translating subtitles from Indonesian to English, translators face challenges in adjusting taboo words to retain their original meaning without causing misunderstandings for foreign audiences (Allan & Burrige, 2006). Therefore, selecting the right strategy is crucial in ensuring the success of translation in preserving or adapting the meaning of taboo words in the film.

Various strategies can be used in translating taboo words, one of which is the “*taboo for taboo*” approach, which involves replacing a taboo word in the source language with an equivalent taboo word in the target language (Almijrab, 2020). This strategy aims to maintain the pragmatic and emotional effects of taboo words in the film, allowing the target audience to experience a similar impact as the source language audience. However, implementing this strategy must be done with careful

consideration, given the differences in cultural norms and audience sensitivity toward taboo words in the target language.

Apart from the “*taboo for taboo*” strategy, translators may also use other strategies such as euphemism, omission, or paraphrasing to handle taboo words. Euphemism is used to replace taboo words with milder expressions that are more acceptable to the audience (Holder, 2008). Omission is applied when a taboo word is deemed to have no suitable equivalent or has the potential to cause misunderstandings in the target language (Allan, 2018). Meanwhile, paraphrasing allows translators to adapt the meaning of taboo words in a more descriptive manner, thereby conveying the intended message without directly using taboo words in the target language (Fouladi & Hashemi, 2025).

The choice of strategy in translating taboo words depends on various factors, including the target audience, film context, and cultural norms in the target language. In *Inang*, the translation of taboo words must consider character portrayal, the story’s atmosphere, and the emotional intensity intended for the audience. Errors in strategy implementation can lead to significant changes in meaning, reducing the dramatic or humorous effects intended in certain scenes. Therefore, studying translation strategies for taboo words in *Inang* is relevant to understanding how translators tackle linguistic and cultural challenges in film subtitles.

Research on the translation of taboo words has been conducted by several researchers. Lestari and Sutrisno (2023) identify translation strategies and their implications in translating taboo words while maintaining cultural conformity and moral standards, using data from the *Big Little Lies* series. Dewi et al. (2022) identify the types of taboo words and the translation strategies used in translating Christina Lauren’s *Beautiful Bastard* from English into Indonesian. Zagood et al. (2022) analyze Alnabhan’s (2019) Arabic translation (*Fanul-Lamubalati*) of Manson’s (2016) *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*ck* to identify the strategies used in translating taboo words and expressions. Orang’i (2022) explores the translation of taboo words in health care texts from English source texts into Swahili. Samir and Hashemizadeh (2023) identify the strategies used by Iranian translators in dubbing and subtitling the

F\*k words as taboos in American English-drama crime television series. Most existing studies identify strategies but do not deeply analyze how translation choices affect the intensity and perception of taboo words in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural contexts. This research investigates how subtitling either preserves or alters taboo intensity, contributing to sociolinguistic and pragmatic studies in audiovisual translation.

This study aims to analyze the use of the “taboo for taboo” strategy in translating Indonesian taboo words into English in the subtitles of the *Inang* movie. While previous research has explored various strategies for translating taboo words, few studies specifically focus on the effectiveness of the “taboo for taboo” approach in preserving the pragmatic and cultural impact of the source language. This research fills the gap by examining how this strategy is applied in the context of Indonesian-English translation and assessing its implications for audience reception. With the rise of streaming platforms like Netflix, Indonesian films are reaching international audiences. Understanding how taboo words are translated helps ensure accurate cultural representation and prevents misinterpretations that could alter the film’s intended tone and impact. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the horror-thriller genre, where taboo words contribute significantly to character portrayal and emotional intensity (Allan & Burrige, 2006). By analyzing the translation choices made in *Inang*, this study provides insights into the challenges translators face in maintaining linguistic and cultural equivalence. The findings of this research are expected to benefit translators, linguists, and film subtitle practitioners by offering a deeper understanding of how taboo words can be effectively translated without losing their intended impact. Thus, this research focuses on two main questions. First, it identifies the variations in the translation of taboo words in the English subtitles of the film *Inang*. Second, it analyzes how the *taboo-for-taboo* strategy is applied in translating taboo words from Indonesian into English.

## Method

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at exploring and describing the translation strategies of taboo words in the subtitles of the movie *Inang* available on the Netflix platform. This approach was chosen because it provides an in-

depth understanding of the context, meaning, and impact of translating taboo words in the process of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural adaptation. This study focuses on analysing taboo words translated into English, identifying the translation strategies applied, and exploring how subtitling can maintain or alter the intensity and meaning of these words. The research data was obtained by monitoring the film *Inang* on the Netflix platform, which provides subtitles in both Indonesian and English. The data collected consists of taboo words or phrases in Indonesian along with their English translations, which are then analysed to observe the translation strategies employed.

Data collection was conducted by watching the film *Inang* on the Netflix platform while noting every use of taboo words or phrases that appeared in the subtitles. Each identified taboo word or phrase was recorded along with its corresponding timestamp. The collected data was then analysed using the interactive data analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). In this model, data analysis is carried out through three main steps: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher filters and organizes the relevant data, then arranges it based on categories of taboo words and their translations. Next, the data is presented in the form of a table, including the timestamp, the taboo words in Indonesian, and their English translations. In the final stage, conclusions are drawn by interpreting the analysis results to understand the strategies used in translating taboo words and their impact on the target audience. The research findings will be presented in a narrative form that explains the key findings and analysis of the translation strategies employed.

The data used in this research consists of 23 taboo words. These words were identified from the subtitles of the movie *Inang* available on the Netflix platform, and they represent various types of taboo expressions used in the Indonesian language. Each word was examined in terms of its translation into English. The data can be seen in the Table 1:

Table 1. Translation Results of the Taboo Word in *Inang*

No	Duration	SL (Indonesian)	TL (English)
1	01:53:02	Anjing	Bastard
2	01:52:39	Brengsek	Asshole

3	01:51:47	Anjing	Fuck
4	01:50:51	Anjing	Fuck you
5	01:50:32	Goblok	Fuck you
6	01:50:18	Brengsek	Asshole
7	01:50:08	Anjing	Bitch
8	01:49:57	Brengsek	Jerk
9	01:44:26	Anjing	Fucking pervert
10	01:41:11	Anjing	Pervert
11	01:37:57	Anjing	Fuck
12	01:19:33	Orang gila	Crazy fool
13	01:19:22	Anjing	Motherfucker
14	01:19:20	Goblok	Idiot
15	01:05:45	Anjing	Fuck me
16	01:05:42	Gila	Nuts
17	01:00:10	Anjing	Damn you
18	00:58:47	Bego	Stupid
19	00:57:38	Anjing	Stupid
20	00:57:23	Anjing	Shit
21	00:55:22	Anjing	Shit
22	00:52:28	Anjing	Fuck
23	00:42:09	Anjing	You douche

## Results

The *taboo for taboo* strategy in translating *Inang* into English involves transforming the source language expressions into their target language equivalents while preserving the original meaning. The intended message remains clear to readers since the translation does not undergo softening or censorship. Translators often replace taboo words in the source language with different terms in the target language that, although semantically distinct, still carry a similar impact on the target audience. Based on the findings, there are two types of *taboo for taboo* strategies. The first is the *taboo for taboo* strategy that maintains the same level of taboo as the source language, while the second is the *taboo for taboo* strategy with a lower level of taboo compared to the source language.

Table 2. Translation Results of the *Taboo for Taboo* Strategy with the Same Level of Taboo as the Source Language

Duration	SL (Indonesian)	TL (English)
01:53:02	Anjing	Bastard
01:52:39	Brengsek	Asshole
01:51:47	Anjing	Fuck
01:50:51	Anjing	Fuck you
01:50:32	Goblok	Fuck you
01:50:18	Brengsek	Asshole
01:50:08	Anjing	Bitch
01:49:57	Brengsek	Jerk
01:44:26	Anjing	Fucking pervert
01:41:11	Anjing	Pervert
01:37:57	Anjing	Fuck
01:19:22	Anjing	Motherfucker
01:19:20	Goblok	Idiot
01:05:45	Anjing	Fuck me
01:00:10	Anjing	Damn you
00:57:38	Anjing	Stupid
00:57:23	Anjing	Shit
00:55:22	Anjing	Shit
00:52:28	Anjing	Fuck
00:42:09	Anjing	You douche

Table 2 shows the translation results of the *taboo for taboo* strategy, where the level of taboo in the target language (TL) matches that of the source language (SL). In this strategy, words and expressions with strong offensive or vulgar meanings in Indonesian are translated into equivalent English terms that maintain the same intensity of taboo. For instance, the Indonesian term *anjing* (dog) is translated into various English swear words such as *bastard*, *fuck*, *bitch*, and *motherfucker*. Similarly, *brengsek* becomes *asshole*, and *goblok* is translated as *idiot*. These translations ensure that the strong emotional impact and level of offense are preserved, allowing the audience to experience the same level of shock or anger as intended in the original text. This strategy is particularly effective in maintaining the tone and emotional intensity of the dialogue in the target language while keeping the authenticity of the original expressions intact.

### ***The Word "Anjing" Translated as "Shit"***

In the subtitles of the film *Inang*, the word "anjing" is frequently translated as "shit" in English. This strategy falls under the *taboo for taboo* category with contextual adjustments, where a taboo word in the SL is replaced with a taboo word in the target language TL that has a similar level of intensity but does not always retain the same meaning of direct insult. In Indonesian, "anjing" is used as a swear word to express anger, insult, or surprise (Isnawan, 2021). Meanwhile, in English, "shit" is more commonly used as an expression of frustration toward a situation rather than a direct insult to someone (Fägersten, 2012). In certain contexts, this translation is quite appropriate, especially if "anjing" is uttered as a spontaneous reaction to an event. However, if "anjing" is intended as an insult toward someone, "shit" may not be the most accurate choice, and alternatives like "bastard" or "asshole" might be more suitable. For instance, in scenes where "anjing" is translated as "shit" at 00:57:23 and 00:55:22, it is likely used as an expression of annoyance toward a situation rather than a direct insult. Therefore, while this translation is fairly accurate, it still depends on the context within the film.

### ***The Word "Anjing" Translated as "Fuck" (Fuck, Fuck You, Fuck Me)***

In the subtitles of the film *Inang*, the word "anjing" is frequently translated as "fuck" in various forms such as "fuck," "fuck you," and "fuck me." This translation follows the *taboo for taboo* strategy, maintaining a similar level of taboo between the SL and the TL. In Indonesian, "anjing" is a swear word used to express anger, annoyance, or insult toward someone (Ramadani, 2021). Meanwhile, in English, the word "fuck" serves a similar function but has a broader range of meanings. When "anjing" is translated as "fuck," such as at 1:51:47, 1:37:57 and 00:52:28, the context is likely a strong expression of anger or frustration. In the case of "anjing" being translated as "fuck you" (1:50:51), there is a direct insult toward someone, aligning with the use of "anjing" in Indonesian as an aggressive exclamation. As for "fuck me" (1:05:45), this phrase is typically used to express shock or frustration in unexpected situations, which in Indonesian can be comparable to the spontaneous exclamation "anjing!" in reaction to something surprising or upsetting.



### ***The Word "Anjing" Translated as "Motherfucker"***

In the subtitles of the film *Inang*, the word "anjing" is translated as "motherfucker" in certain instances, such as at 1:19:22. This translation follows the *taboo for taboo* strategy while maintaining a high level of offensiveness in both the SL and the TL. In Indonesian, "anjing" is commonly used as a strong insult directed at someone, expressing intense anger or contempt. Meanwhile, in English, "motherfucker" is an extremely offensive term used to insult or degrade someone (Al-Azzawi & Al-Ghizzy, 2022), often carrying a stronger and more vulgar connotation than "anjing." The choice to translate "anjing" as "motherfucker" suggests that the context involves a highly aggressive or confrontational situation where the speaker intends to deliver a powerful insult. While "anjing" can sometimes be used in a more casual or even joking manner in Indonesian, "motherfucker" in English is almost always perceived as deeply offensive and hostile. This difference in connotation means that while the translation maintains the taboo nature of the term, it might amplify the intensity of the insult in the target language.

### ***The Word "Anjing" Translated as "Bastard"***

In *Inang's* subtitles, "anjing" is translated as "bastard" in certain scenes, such as at 1:19:20. This translation follows the *taboo for taboo* strategy, maintaining a similar degree of offensiveness between the original language (SL) and the target language (TL). In Indonesian, the term "anjing" is often used as a strong insult to express anger or contempt toward someone, while in English, "bastard" is also a derogatory term that targets an individual's character, implying a flaw or immorality (Fauziati et al., 2022), which makes it a fitting translation for "anjing" in certain contexts. When "anjing" is rendered as "bastard," it usually occurs in moments where the speaker is voicing intense disapproval or criticism. Though both terms are offensive, "bastard" is a more direct and harsh insult in English, often questioning someone's moral standing. This makes it an appropriate choice in scenes where the speaker's anger is meant to be particularly cutting.

### ***The Word "Anjing" Translated as "Bitch"***

In the subtitles of *Inang*, the word “anjing” is translated as “bitch” in certain instances, such as when directed at a person in a derogatory manner. This translation follows the *taboo for taboo* strategy, maintaining a similar level of offensiveness in both the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). In Indonesian, “anjing” is frequently used as an insult to express strong disapproval, anger, or frustration toward someone. In English, “bitch” carries a similar connotation but is often specifically used to insult someone’s character, typically targeting a woman in a derogatory manner (Felmlee et al., 2020), though it can be used more generally as well. When “anjing” is translated as “bitch,” it indicates a highly offensive comment, often used to express deep resentment or anger toward someone. While both “anjing” and “bitch” are insulting terms, the latter can have a more gendered implication, especially in English. The choice to translate “anjing” as “bitch” suggests that the speaker intends to demean the person’s character in a very personal way. The use of “bitch” in this context can be seen as reflecting the aggressiveness or hostility behind the speaker’s words.

### ***The Word “Anjing” Translated as “Pervert” and “Fucking Pervert”***

In the subtitles of *Inang*, the word “anjing” is translated as “pervert” and “fucking pervert” in some instances, such as at 1:44:26 and 1:53:02. This translation follows the *taboo for taboo* strategy, aiming to preserve a similar level of offensiveness between the SL and the TL. In Indonesian, “anjing” is a strong insult often used to express intense anger or disgust, while in English, “pervert” refers to someone whose behavior is morally or sexually deviant (De Block & Adriaens, 2013), and when intensified with “fucking,” it becomes a harsher, more derogatory insult. When “anjing” is translated as “pervert,” the context often involves strong condemnation of a person’s actions or behavior. This translation is fitting when the speaker is expressing disgust or disapproval of someone’s character, particularly in situations involving inappropriate behavior. The use of “fucking pervert,” on the other hand, adds an extra layer of intensity, emphasizing the speaker’s outrage or frustration with the individual’s behavior. This intensified form mirrors the aggressive tone of “anjing” in Indonesian, suggesting the speaker’s heightened emotional reaction. Both “pervert” and “fucking

pervert” in English convey a similar level of offense as “anjing” in Indonesian, particularly when used to insult someone’s character.

### ***The Word “Anjing” Translated as “Damn You”***

In the subtitles of *Inang*, the word “anjing” is translated as “damn you” in certain scenes, such as at 1:00:10. This translation follows the *taboo for taboo* strategy, maintaining a similar level of offensiveness between the SL and the TL. In Indonesian, “anjing” is commonly used as a harsh insult to express strong anger, frustration, or disapproval towards someone. In English, “damn you” is a potent expression of frustration or anger, typically aimed at wishing harm or expressing intense disapproval toward the person it is directed at. When “anjing” is translated as “damn you,” it conveys the speaker's deep dissatisfaction or anger towards someone or something. This translation is effective in contexts where the character is expressing frustration or cursing at someone, but without necessarily intending a direct, personal insult as strong as other derogatory terms like “bastard” or “bitch.” While both “anjing” and “damn you” share an expression of emotional intensity, “damn you” in English carries a slightly less aggressive tone compared to other direct insults, making it a suitable choice when the speaker is frustrated but not necessarily aiming to insult someone's character in a more personal way.

### ***The Word “Anjing” Translated as “Stupid”***

In the subtitles of *Inang*, the word “anjing” is translated as “stupid” in certain contexts, such as at 57:38. This translation follows the *taboo for taboo* strategy, though it represents a slight shift in the intensity of the insult between the SL and the TL. In Indonesian, “anjing” is a strong, offensive expletive used to express frustration or anger, often aimed at demeaning someone's character. In contrast, “stupid” in English is a less intense insult, generally referring to someone’s lack of intelligence rather than a direct attack on their character or moral integrity (Abdulhadi & Hamza, 2023). When “anjing” is translated as “stupid,” it appears that the intent behind the insult is to belittle or express contempt towards someone's actions or behavior, but with a somewhat softer tone than the original expletive. “Stupid” is still a derogatory term,

but it lacks the harshness and aggression associated with “anjing” in Indonesian. This translation could be seen as a way to temper the insult for an English-speaking audience, where “stupid” is less severe than “anjing,” but still conveys disdain.

### ***The Word “Anjing” Translated as “You Douche”***

In the subtitles of *Inang*, the word “anjing” is translated as “you douche” in a particular instance, such as at 42:09. This translation follows the *taboo for taboo* strategy, maintaining a comparable level of offensiveness between the SL and the TL, though with some nuanced differences in meaning. In Indonesian, “anjing” is a highly offensive curse word used to express strong anger or disdain, typically directed at someone's character. In English, “douche” is a derogatory term used to insult someone's behavior, often implying that the person is obnoxious, inconsiderate, or unpleasant, though it is less intense than other curses like “bastard” or “asshole.” When “anjing” is translated as “you douche,” the speaker's intent is likely to express frustration or disdain, but with a tone that is somewhat less severe than the original insult. “You douche” still carries a strong negative connotation, but it is typically aimed at someone's actions or demeanor rather than directly attacking their character in the way that “anjing” might in Indonesian.

### ***The Word “Bengsek” Translated as “Asshole”***

In the subtitles of *Inang*, the word “bengsek” is translated as “asshole” in certain instances, such as at 1:52:39 and 1:50:18. This translation follows the *taboo for taboo* strategy, maintaining a similar level of offensiveness between the SL and the TL. In Indonesian, “bengsek” is a strong derogatory term used to insult someone, often expressing anger, frustration, or disgust. It is typically aimed at a person's character or actions in a highly negative and demeaning way. In English, “asshole” serves a similar function as a vulgar insult directed at someone's personality or behavior (Holgate et al., 2018), usually to convey contempt or irritation. When “bengsek” is translated as “asshole,” the translation is contextually appropriate, as both terms are used to express disapproval and disdain towards someone, usually in a heated or confrontational manner. The translation retains the offensive and aggressive tone of

the original word, preserving the emotional intensity of the insult. "Asshole" in English carries the same weight as "brengsek" in Indonesian, making it a fitting choice when the speaker is directing their anger at someone's character or actions.

### ***The Word "Brengsek" Translated as "Jerk"***

In the subtitles of *Inang*, the word "brengsek" is translated as "jerk" in certain instances, such as at 1:49:57. This translation follows the *taboo for taboo* strategy but involves a slight shift in the intensity of the insult between the SL and the TL. In Indonesian, "brengsek" is a strong derogatory term used to express deep disdain or anger towards someone, typically aimed at their character or behavior in a very negative way. In English, "jerk" is also an insult, but it is less severe and carries a lighter tone than "brengsek." It is often used to describe someone who is unpleasant, rude, or inconsiderate, but it does not carry the same intensity as other harsher terms like "asshole" or "bastard." When "brengsek" is translated as "jerk," the intensity of the insult is toned down for the English-speaking audience. While both words serve to express frustration and disapproval, "jerk" is less aggressive and more socially acceptable than "brengsek." This translation might be employed to soften the impact of the insult, depending on the context and the character's intentions in the scene.

### ***The Word "Goblok" Translated as "Fuck You" and "Idiot"***

In the subtitles of *Inang*, the word "goblok" is translated into English as "fuck you" and "idiot" in different instances, such as at 1:19:20 (translated as "idiot") and at 1:50:32 (translated as "fuck you"). These translations represent the *taboo for taboo* strategy but with varying levels of intensity between the SL and the TL. In Indonesian, "goblok" is a derogatory term used to insult someone's intelligence or behavior, often implying that the person is foolish, incompetent, or extremely stupid. It carries a high level of offensiveness and is commonly used to express deep frustration or anger. The translation of "goblok" as "idiot" (1:19:20) is relatively mild in comparison. While "idiot" is still an insult, it is less severe than "goblok," which is more aggressive. "Idiot" in English carries a similar meaning, but it lacks the intense emotional charge and vulgarity of the original Indonesian term. On the other hand, when "goblok" is

translated as “fuck you” (1:50:32), the translation involves a significant shift. “Fuck you” is a much more direct and vulgar expression of anger or contempt, often used in a highly aggressive manner. This translation intensifies the insult, making it more confrontational and personal compared to the more neutral “idiot.” The use of “fuck you” suggests a heightened emotional reaction, aligning more with the intense frustration and hostility that “goblok” conveys in Indonesian.

The *taboo for taboo* strategy also involves translating taboo words with a lower level of taboo than in the source language. This approach is often used to make the translation more culturally acceptable to the target audience while still conveying the intended meaning. By reducing the intensity of the taboo language, translators aim to balance the impact of the original expression without causing excessive offense. This strategy is commonly applied in contexts where direct translation might be considered too harsh or inappropriate for the target culture.

Table 3. Translation Results of the *Taboo for Taboo* Strategy with a Lower Level of Taboo than the Source Language

Duration	SL (Indonesian)	TL (English)
01:19:33	Orang gila	Crazy fool
01:05:42	Gila	Nuts
00:58:47	Bego	Stupid

Table 3 illustrates the translation results of the *taboo for taboo* strategy, where the level of taboo in the target language (TL) is lower than in the source language (SL). In this case, the Indonesian expressions with offensive or derogatory meanings are translated into English terms that have a milder impact. For example, *orang gila* (crazy person) is translated as *crazy fool*, which softens the original insult. Similarly, *gila* (crazy) is rendered as *nuts*, a less harsh term, and *bego* (stupid) becomes *stupid*, which is still insulting but not as severe as some other alternatives. This approach reduces the intensity of the offensive language, making it less likely to cause strong reactions in the target audience, while still conveying the general meaning of the original text. The strategy aims to balance the need for cultural sensitivity with the goal of maintaining the integrity of the message.

### ***The Phrase "Orang Gila" Translated as "Crazy Fool"***

In the subtitles of *Inang*, the phrase "orang gila" is translated as "crazy fool" at 1:19:33. This translation follows the *taboo for taboo* strategy, but with some modification in the intensity of the insult between the SL and the TL. In Indonesian, "orang gila" literally translates to "crazy person," with "gila" meaning crazy or insane. The term can be used both descriptively, referring to someone who has mental health issues, or as an insult, implying that someone is acting irrationally or out of control. In English, the translation of "orang gila" as "crazy fool" retains the offensive tone but adds the word "fool," which introduces an additional layer of mockery or ridicule. While "crazy" on its own conveys a similar meaning, adding "fool" intensifies the insult, suggesting not just irrationality, but also a lack of wisdom or sense. The term "crazy fool" is a somewhat milder insult than calling someone "crazy" or "insane," but it still carries a negative connotation, especially in its context as a derogatory remark. Thus, the translation of "orang gila" as "crazy fool" appropriately captures the intent behind the original phrase while adapting it to the cultural and linguistic expectations of the English-speaking audience.

### ***The Word "Gila" Translated as "Nuts"***

In the subtitles of *Inang*, the word "gila" is translated as "nuts" at 1:05:42. This translation reflects a *taboo for taboo* strategy but involves a shift in intensity between the SL and the TL. In Indonesian, "gila" means crazy or insane and can be used both descriptively and as an insult. It often carries a negative connotation, implying irrational behavior or a lack of control, and is commonly used to refer to someone who is acting in an absurd or erratic way. In English, "nuts" is a more informal, colloquial expression to describe someone as crazy, but it carries a somewhat lighter, less severe tone compared to the term "gila." While "nuts" does imply irrationality or eccentric behavior, it is often used in a less offensive or harsh manner than "gila." It can be used to describe someone acting strangely without the same level of insult or aggression that the Indonesian word might convey. By translating "gila" as "nuts," the subtitler softens the insult, potentially making it more suitable for a wider audience.

### ***The Word "Bego" Translated as "Stupid"***

In the subtitles of *Inang*, the word "bego" is translated as "stupid" at 58:47. This translation follows the *taboo for taboo* strategy, with a direct substitution of a taboo term in the SL for a corresponding taboo term in the TL. In Indonesian, "bego" is a derogatory term used to insult someone's intelligence, implying that they are foolish or slow-witted. It is often used in situations of frustration or anger to belittle someone's actions or decisions. In English, "stupid" serves as an equivalent term to "bego," carrying a similar connotation of foolishness or lack of intelligence. Both terms are used to express a strong disapproval of someone's behavior, and they can be hurtful when used in direct insult. While "stupid" is widely recognized in English as a general insult, it is less vulgar than other potential translations of "bego," such as more offensive expletives. The translation of "bego" as "stupid" accurately conveys the intended insult while maintaining the level of harshness appropriate for a broader audience.

### **Discussion**

The *taboo for taboo* strategy in translating taboo words in the subtitle of *Inang* aims to maintain an equivalent level of offensiveness between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). According to Gambier (2013) and Chiaro (2009), audiovisual translation must consider both linguistic and cultural aspects to preserve the impact of the original language. In *Inang*, words such as *anjing*, *brengsek*, and *goblok* are often translated as *fuck*, *bastard*, or *asshole* in English. These choices reflect an effort to retain the original utterance's emotional intensity and pragmatic effect. Allan (2018) also emphasize that taboo words serve specific social functions, such as expressing emotions or reinforcing group identity. By using the *taboo for taboo* strategy, translators ensure that the harsh or offensive meaning remains intact without diminishing the pragmatic impact. However, translators must also be careful to avoid semantic shifts that could alter how audiences perceive a character or situation in the film (Chaume, 2004).

From a sociolinguistic perspective, translating taboo words requires an understanding of cultural norms in both languages. Hatim and Mason (2005) highlight

<https://doi.org/10.35905/inspiring.v8i1.13002>



that translators must consider register and context when selecting equivalent taboo expressions in the target language. In *Inang*, for instance, *anjing* is translated into various forms such as *fuck*, *bitch*, or *pervert*, depending on the context. When used as a spontaneous exclamation, translations like *shit* or *damn* may be more appropriate. However, when directed as an insult toward a person, choices such as *asshole* or *bastard* are more fitting. This aligns with Ruano (2018) research, which indicates that cultural differences influence how taboo words are understood and translated. In some cultures, insults involving animals may be more offensive than those related to sex or religion. Therefore, the *taboo for taboo* strategy must take cultural values into account to avoid altering the original intent of the film's dialogue (Alsharhan, 2020).

Beyond maintaining meaning equivalence, the *taboo for taboo* strategy also ensures readability and audience acceptance of subtitles. Baines (2015) argues that in audiovisual translation, subtitle readability is crucial in keeping audiences engaged. If the translator opts for a milder equivalent, the emotional intensity of the dialogue may be weakened; conversely, if the translation is too strong, it may cause cultural shock for audiences unfamiliar with such linguistic intensity. In *Inang*, translating *goblok* as *fuck you* or *idiot* demonstrates a consideration of both expressive force and readability for English-speaking audiences. Katan and Taibi (2021) study further suggests that translation strategies should facilitate smooth communication without disrupting the viewing experience. Thus, the *taboo for taboo* strategy in *Inang* illustrates how translators must balance preserving the original meaning, adapting to cultural norms, and ensuring the translation remains accessible to a global audience.

## Conclusion

This study aimed to analyse the translation of taboo language in the film *Inang*, focusing on the application of the *taboo-for-taboo* strategy in English subtitles. The findings reveal that this strategy is applied in two main forms. First, some translations retain the same level of taboo as the original expressions, ensuring that the emotional intensity and impact of the utterances remain intact. This approach is commonly used in contexts that demand strong expletives to express anger or frustration. Second, in some cases, the taboo language is softened in translation to align with cultural norms

and audience sensitivity in the target language. This approach allows translators to convey the original meaning without maintaining the same level of intensity. These findings suggest that the translation of taboo language in subtitles is influenced not only by linguistic factors but also by cultural and pragmatic considerations. Therefore, the *taboo-for-taboo* strategy in *Inang* reflects a nuanced balance between preserving the emotional impact of the source language and adapting expressions to cross-cultural audience expectations.

The implications of this study extend to both theoretical and practical aspects of audio-visual translation. Theoretically, it provides insight into how taboo language is translated in cross-cultural contexts, highlighting the significance of social and pragmatic factors in translation strategies. Practically, the findings can help translators develop more effective approaches to translating taboo language in subtitles, particularly for global streaming platforms such as Netflix. However, this study has limitations, including its focus on a single film, making the findings less generalizable to other films or genres. Additionally, it does not examine audience reception of taboo language translation, which could provide further insight into cultural acceptance of offensive language in subtitles. Future research could expand the scope by analyzing multiple films across different genres and investigating how audiences from various cultural backgrounds perceive the translation of taboo words. This would offer a deeper understanding of the impact of taboo language translation in cross-cultural communication.

## References

- Abdulhadi, S., & Hamza, H. A. A.-Z. (2023). A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Selected Taboo Words in English and Arabic. *Eastern Journal of Languages, Linguistics and Literatures*, 4(2), 115–133.
- Abu-Rayyash, H., Haider, A. S., & Al-Adwan, A. (2023). Strategies of translating swear words into Arabic: a case study of a parallel corpus of Netflix English-Arabic movie subtitles. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 10(1), 1–13.
- Al-Azzawi, Q. O., & Al-Ghizzy, M. J. D. (2022). A Linguistic Study of Offensive Language in Online Communication Chatgroups. *International Journal of Linguistics Studies*, 2(2), 170–175.

- Al-Yasin, N. F., & Rabab'ah, G. A. (2019). Arabic audiovisual translation of taboo words in American hip hop movies: A contrastive study. *Babel*, 65(2), 222–248.
- Allan, K. (2018). *The Oxford handbook of taboo words and language*. Oxford University Press.
- Allan, K., & Burridge, K. (2006). *Forbidden words: Taboo and the censoring of language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Almijrab, R. (2020). Strategies used in translating English taboo expressions into Arabic. *African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research*, 3(1), 22–30.
- Alsharhan, A. (2020). Netflix's No-censorship policy in subtitling taboo language from English into Arabic. *Journal of Audiovisual Translation*, 3(2), 7–28.
- Ávila-Cabrera, J. J. (2023). *The challenge of subtitling offensive and taboo language into Spanish: a theoretical and practical guide*. Channel View Publications.
- Baines, R. (2015). Subtitling taboo language: Using the cues of register and genre to affect audience experience? *Meta*, 60(3), 431–453.
- Chaume, F. (2004). Film studies and translation studies: Two disciplines at stake in audiovisual translation. *Meta*, 49(1), 12–24.
- Chiaro, D. (2009). Issues in audiovisual translation. In *The Routledge companion to translation studies* (pp. 155–179). Routledge.
- De Block, A., & Adriaens, P. R. (2013). Pathologizing Sexual Deviance: A History. *Journal of Sex Research*, 50(3–4), 276–298.
- Dewi, N., Puspani, I. A. M., & Mulyawan, I. W. (2022). Translation strategies of taboo words in Christina Lauren's "Beautiful Bastard" novel from English into Indonesian. *Udayana Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 6(2), 69–76.
- Fägersten, K. B. (2012). *Who's Swearing Now? The Social Aspects of Conversational Swearing*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Fauziati, E., Suharyanto, S., Syahrullah, A. S., Pradana, W. A., & Nurcholis, I. (2022). Hate language produced by Indonesian figures in social media: From philosophical perspectives. *Wisdom*, 25(3), 32–47.
- Felmlee, D., Inara Rodis, P., & Zhang, A. (2020). Sexist Slurs: Reinforcing Feminine Stereotypes Online. *Sex Roles*, 83(1), 16–28.
- Fouladi, P., & Hashemi, M. R. (2025). Cultural Adaptation in Dubbing of Video Games: The Case of Taboo Items in Persian. *Media and Intercultural Communication: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 3(1), 60–82.

- Gambier, Y. (2013). The position of audiovisual translation studies. In *The Routledge handbook of translation studies* (pp. 45–59). Routledge.
- Haider, A. S., Saideen, B., & Hussein, R. F. (2023). Subtitling taboo expressions from a conservative to a more liberal culture: The case of the Arab TV series Jinn. *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*, 16(4), 363–385.
- Hatim, B., & Mason, I. (2005). *The translator as communicator*. Routledge.
- Holder, R. W. (2008). *Dictionary of euphemisms*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Holgate, E., Cachola, I., Preotjiuc-Pietro, D., & Li, J. J. (2018). Why swear? analyzing and inferring the intentions of vulgar expressions. *Proceedings of the 2018 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing*, 4405–4414.
- Isnawan, F. (2021). Fenomena Penggunaan Kata Anjay Dalam Perspektif Kitab Undang–Undang Hukum Pidana Di Indonesia. *Jurnal Bedah Hukum*, 5(2), 138–158.
- Katan, D., & Taibi, M. (2021). *Translating cultures: An introduction for translators, interpreters and mediators*. Routledge.
- Lestari, R., & Sutrisno, A. (2023). Euphemism of taboo translation in the Big Little Lies Series. *Diglosia: Jurnal Kajian Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Pengajarannya*, 6(3), 711–722.
- Long, S. (2023). Communication Strategies of Film Language in Cross-cultural Context. *Art and Performance Letters*, 4(13), 94–102.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. California: Sage Publication.
- Muallim, M., Mujahidah, & Daulay, R. (2023). UNFOLDING TRANSLATION STRATEGY AND IDEOLOGY IN LITERARY WORK. *Inspiring: English Education Journal*, 6(1), 1–11.
- Munawir. (2021). The Source Of Error in Translation. *Inspiring: English Education Journal*, 4(2), 119–132.
- Nguyen, V. K. (2024). Unveiling Taboo Translations into Vietnamese: Subtitling Strategies in "The Shawshank Redemption." *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, 40(6), 29–48.
- Orang'i, D. O. (2022). Translating taboo words in health care texts from English into Swahili in Kenya. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, 40(2), 200–211.
- Ramadani, F. (2021). Ujaran Kebencian Netizen Indonesia dalam Kolom Komentar <https://doi.org/10.35905/inspiring.v8i1.13002>

Instagram Selebgram Indonesia: Sebuah Kajian Linguistik Forensik. *Aksara*, 22(1), 1–19.

Ruano, M. R. M. (2018). Issues in cultural translation: Sensitivity, politeness, taboo, censorship. In *The Routledge handbook of translation and culture* (pp. 258–278). Routledge.

Samir, A., & Hashemizadeh, A. G. (2023). Rendering Taboos in Subtitling and Dubbing: A Case Study of the Persian Translation of the American Drama Television Series. *Journal of Research in Techno-Based Language Education*, 3(1), 18–35.

Zagood, M. J., Almazrouei, A. H., Alnaqbi, M. S., & Almheiri, F. A. (2022). Translating Taboos: An Analysis of the Arabic Translation of Manson's 'The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\* ck.' In *Concepts, discourses, and translations* (pp. 299–323). Springer.