

TRANSLATING TABOO SPEECH ACT IN THE *OMAR* SERIES: A PRAGMATIC AND TECHNIQUE-BASED ANALYSIS OF ARABIC-INDONESIAN SUBTITLES

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Abstract

Understanding the translation of taboo speech acts in audiovisual media is essential, particularly in contexts involving differing cultural norms and values. This study analyzes the translation strategies used to render taboo speech acts from Arabic into Indonesian in the *Omar* series. A descriptive qualitative approach was adopted using an embedded case study design. The data comprise 26 Arabic taboo utterances and their corresponding Indonesian subtitles. These utterances were categorized into nine types based on Jay's (2009) typology, with the most frequent being insults related to perceived psychological, physical, or social deviations (19.2%). The translation techniques were examined using Molina and Albir's (2002) framework, which revealed that reduction (25%) was the most applied strategy. A combination of single, double, and triple-technique applications was also observed across the dataset. These findings suggest that subtitles prioritize cultural acceptability over literal equivalence, employing strategies that mitigate potential offense while preserving the communicative intent of the source text.

Keywords: *Omar Series; taboo speech act; translation techniques*

1. Introduction

In many societies, certain utterances are deliberately avoided in public discourse—not because people are incapable of expressing them, but because such expressions violate social norms and may cause discomfort or offense. However, depending on the context, speakers may intentionally use these utterances to provoke or insult others (Hamidiyah et al., 2013).

Taboo speech acts are also commonly found in fictional works such as novels, films, and television series. Their use reflects an effort to realistically portray the dynamics of everyday interactions, including sensitive or offensive language. Translating these expressions presents significant challenges due to their strong cultural and emotional connotations. A poor translation may distort meaning and risk miscommunication or cultural insensitivity (Thawabteh et al., 2022). Therefore, translators must carefully preserve meaning and social context when rendering taboo expressions across languages.

The *Omar* series depicts the life of Caliph Umar bin Khattab from the pre-Islamic era (Jahiliya) through the early Islamic period (Fathurrohman et al., 2024). It contains numerous

examples of taboo speech acts. Since the series has been subtitled into various languages, including Indonesian, translation plays a vital role in mediating its message to a global audience with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

To deal with such cross-cultural translation challenges, translators often rely on ideological approaches like foreignization—retaining elements of the source culture—and domestication—adapting expressions to fit target cultural norms (Syihabuddin & Aryanti, 2023). These approaches are realized through specific translation techniques, determining how meaning and cultural nuance are conveyed.

This study focuses on the Indonesian subtitles of the *Omar* series, which offer a valuable case for examining how taboo speech acts are handled in translation. This study is significant as it explores how language and culture interact in translating a widely viewed historical drama across different cultural audiences.

This research investigates how taboo speech acts in the *Omar* series are translated from Arabic into Indonesian. It specifically addresses the following questions:

- 1.1 What types of taboo speech acts are most frequent in the *Omar* series?
- 1.2 What translation techniques are used to translate them into Indonesian?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

According to Allan and Burridge (2006), taboo speech acts in everyday use are expressed through language that is socially unacceptable and is often associated with sensitive topics such as sexuality, religion, and bodily functions. Similarly, Crystal (1999) defines taboo language as “words that people avoid using for fear of causing offense because they refer to actions, objects, or relationships that are widely considered embarrassing, disgusting, or harmful,” which implies that taboo utterances are offensive due to their reference to subjects deemed inappropriate or disturbing (Abdulaziz & Alsabbagh, 2023). Jay (2009) classifies taboos into nine categories: (1) sexual references; (2) profane or blasphemous; (3) scatological references and disgusting objects; (4) animal names; (5) ethnic, racial, and gender slurs; (6) insults targeting perceived psychological, physical, or social deviations; (7) ancestral allusions; (8) substandard vulgar terms; and (9) offensive slang

Speech acts cannot be separated from the context in which they are used. Hymes (1974), through the SPEAKING model, explains that speech events are influenced by the following components: Setting and Scene, Participants, Ends, Act Sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genres. In performing a speech act, politeness is crucial, as it helps preserve both the speaker’s and the hearer’s face or social image. Brown and Levinson (1987) define politeness as actions intended to prevent or mitigate face threatening acts (FTAs) that may harm the image of either party involved in a conversation. They propose five types of politeness strategies: bald on record, negative politeness, positive politeness, off record, and do not perform the FTA.

A translated utterance is considered meaningful if the hearer understands its intended meaning and communicative purpose; thus, comprehension of meaning and intent is an essential element (Al-Farisi, 2015). Translation does not merely involve converting words from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL) in a literal way. Translation scholars such as Newmark (1988), Catford (1965), and Larson (1998) agree that translation is a complex process that requires the translator to preserve the meaning and intent of the

original text while rendering it in a different language. Similarly, Jumatulaini (2020) emphasizes that a translator must prioritize meaning over form to ensure communicative effectiveness.

Translating taboo speech acts requires extra attention because they are closely tied to cultural values and audience sensitivity (Olimat et al., 2023). Choosing the appropriate translation techniques enables translators to transfer meaning accurately without offending the sociocultural norms of the target language (Amelia et al., 2023).

Several translation scholars have proposed views on the strategies or techniques used in translation processes. Newmark (1988) defines translation strategies as specific micro-level techniques that focus on particular linguistic elements in the source text. Meanwhile, Molina and Albir (2002) explain that translation techniques are a set of procedures used to analyze and classify how equivalents are found from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL). These techniques are applied to smaller language units, such as words, phrases, clauses, or sentences. Molina and Albir (2002) proposed 18 translation techniques, namely adaptation, amplification, borrowing, calque, compensation, description, discursive creation, established equivalence, generalization, linguistic amplification, linguistic compression, literal translation, modulation, particularization, reduction, substitution, transposition, and variation. The appropriate selection of techniques helps balance meaning, form, and cultural context.

2.2 Previous Research

Several previous studies have addressed taboo language and its translation, including those by Pratama (2016), Ariani (2020), and Olimat et al. (2023). Most of these studies focus on analyzing translation techniques and assessing the quality of taboo word translation in the subtitles of films such as *Ted*, *The Help*, *No Hard Feelings*, *Before I Fall*, and *Al-Rawabi School for Girls*. The language pairs involved vary, primarily English–Indonesian and Arabic–English.

While these studies offer valuable insights, there remains a gap worth exploring. Few have examined the translation of taboo utterances from Arabic to Indonesian, particularly in historical dramas such as the *Omar* series. This study fills that gap by analyzing taboo speech acts and the translation techniques used in the Indonesian subtitles of the *Omar* series, thereby offering new perspectives in audiovisual translation and enriching the literature on Arabic–Indonesian taboo translation.

3. Research Method

This study aimed to identify the various types of taboo speech acts in the *Omar* series and to explore the translation strategies applied in its subtitles. The method used in this research was descriptive qualitative with an embedded case study design.

The data sources were obtained from the dialogues and subtitles of episodes 1 to 10 of the *Omar* series, accessed from the Qatar Television and Islambul TV YouTube channels. The data were purposively selected, and only utterances containing taboo speech acts were included. This study was limited to data from 10 episodes, which may not fully represent all possible types of taboo speech acts or translation techniques found in the series.

The data collection technique employed was the observation, recording, and note-taking method, as explained by Mahsun (2017). This method was chosen because the data

were obtained by carefully observing, recording, and documenting the use of language, specifically taboo speech acts spoken by the characters in the series.

Once the data were collected, analysis was conducted using two approaches. First, the distributional method with the Immediate Constituent Analysis technique was used to classify taboo speech acts based on Jay's (2009) theory, viewed from micro-level linguistic units such as words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. Second, the identity method with the basic determinant element sorting technique was applied to filter the data. This was followed by pragmatic sorting techniques to identify the context of the taboo speech acts using Hymes' (1987) SPEAKING theory, which was linked to Brown and Levinson's (1974) politeness theory. Lastly, the referential technique was used to analyze the translation techniques used in the subtitles based on the classification proposed by Molina and Albir (2002).

To ensure the reliability of the data categorization process, a second researcher were involved. Inter-rater reliability was measured through a second researcher agreement, and any differences in classification were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached.

4. Results and Discussion

Speech acts often carry different meanings depending on their context. Context includes crucial information such as who is involved in the conversation, the topic being discussed, the situation and time of the communication, and the type of event in which it occurs. In this regard, Hymes (1974) explains the concept of speech events through the acronym SPEAKING, which helps to clarify how utterances arise and are interpreted within specific sociocultural contexts.

In the field of pragmatics, one important aspect that supports the occurrence of speech events is the speech act itself. According to Austin (1962), when someone says something, they are simultaneously acting. This means that language is understood as a tool for conveying information and as a means of doing something such as giving a command, offering criticism, or even insulting. In social interaction, this is closely linked to the principle of politeness. Brown and Levinson (1987) classify politeness into two types: positive politeness, which relates to the need to be accepted and appreciated (positive face), and negative politeness, which relates to an individual's need for autonomy and freedom (negative face).

The taboo speech acts identified in this study are classified into nine categories based on Jay's (2009) framework. Each category is analyzed in terms of its occurrences in the dialogue and the sociocultural context in which it appears. A summary of the types of taboo words, their frequency, and their percentage is presented in Table 1.

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Sexual references	3	11.5%
2	Profane or blasphemous	5	19.2%
3	Scatological reference and disgusting object	1	3.8%
4	Animal names	2	7.7%
5	Ethnic racial gender slurs	5	19.2%
6	Insulting reference to perceived psychological, physical, or social deviations	6	23%

7	Ancestral allusion	2	7.7%
8	Substandard vulgar terms	1	3.8%
9	Offensive slang	1	3.8%
Total		26	100%

Table 1. Categories of Taboo Speech Acts in the *Omar* Series

Table 1 presents the analysis results of the types of taboo expressions that appear in the *Omar* series. The frequency numbers in the table indicate how many times each type of taboo expression occurs, while the percentages show the proportion of each type to the total number of identified taboo expressions. This data helps to identify which types of taboo expressions are most frequently used in the series.

The analysis reveals that insults targeting psychological conditions, physical traits, or social statuses considered deviant represent the most common category of taboo speech acts found in this study, comprising six instances. This finding aligns with Sari (2020), who also found that a similar category was the most dominant form of taboo in her study, with 56 occurrences.

No	Translation Techniques	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Reduction	11	25%
2	Modulation	10	22.8%
3	Amplification	9	20.5%
4	Established Equivalent	3	6.8%
5	Literal	3	6.8%
6	Transposition	2	4.5%
7	Generalization	2	4.5%
8	Partikularization	2	4.5%
9	Adaptation	1	2.8%
10	Discursive Creation	1	2.8%
Total		44	100%

Table 2. Translation Techniques

Table 2 presents the results of the analysis of the translation techniques used in the subtitles of the *Omar* series. The frequency numbers indicate how often each technique is applied, while the percentages reflect the proportion of each technique relative to the total number of identified translation techniques. This data helps identify the most frequently used techniques in the series.

The analysis shows that reduction is the most frequently used technique by the translator, accounting for 25% of the data. Similarly, Pahamzah and Syariifah (2019) found that reduction was the most dominant technique in their study on subtitle translation, with a frequency of 26.67%. Molina and Albir (2002) define reduction as a translation technique that omits information items.

4.1 Sexual References

Sexual references are taboo speech acts related to sexual activity, sexuality, and sexual organs (Jay, 2009). An example of this is the use of the word *الفاحش* (*al-fāḥisy*), meaning “lewd” or “obscene,” as illustrated in the following example.

SL أيها الفاجر الفاحش البذئ

TL Dasar manusia kotor dan jahat! (You filthy and wicked human being!)

The participants in this dialogue are Abu Hudhaifah, Abu Hakam—better known as Abu Jahl—and the elders and leaders of Quraysh. The setting is Dar al-Nadwah, the meeting place of the Quraysh elders and leaders. This situation occurs when Abu Hudhaifah defends the Prophet Muhammad and Islam against public insults and attacks from the enemies of Allah. The “Participants” and “Setting and scene” of this speech event correspond to the proposed by Hymes (1974).

This utterance constitutes an FTA that targets Abu Jahl’s positive face as the hearer. Abu Hudhaifah openly launches a verbal attack using the bald-on-record strategy in this context. Bald on record refers to direct, unmitigated speech acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987). This strategy is employed in urgent and emotionally charged situations, where the speaker does not attempt to preserve the hearer’s face but instead seeks to explicitly damage their public image. Therefore, this utterance represents a deliberate violation of politeness norms intended to strengthen the speaker’s stance and defense of values they consider.

In the utterance above, the translator applies a triplet procedure consisting of reduction, amplification, and linguistic compression to render the phrase “أيها الفاجر الفاحش البذئ.” The technique of reduction is seen in the omission of أيها. At the same time, amplification appears in adding the phrase “*Dasar manusia*” (you disgraceful human) in the translation, which does not explicitly appear in the SL. The phrase “أيها الفاجر الفاحش البذئ,” which means “*Durhaka, cabul, dan kotor*” (immoral, obscene, and vulgar), is translated as “*Kotor dan jahat*” (filthy and evil) using linguistic compression. This technique simplifies linguistic elements in the target language (Molina & Albir, 2002). The omission, addition, and condensation of elements aim to make the message easier to understand for the target audience while preserving the insult within the socio-cultural context of the Indonesian language.

4.2 Profane or Blasphemous

Profane or blasphemous are categories of taboo speech acts related to religious or spiritual aspects (Jay, 2009). Although similar, the two have fundamental differences. Profane refers to supernatural or sacred matters that are used disrespectfully in a worldly context, whereas blasphemous specifically refers to speech that insults God or something considered sacred (Sari, 2020). The following is an example.

SL قد قبحك الله

TL Semoga Tuhan mengutukmu! (May God curse you!)

This excerpt is spoken by Hindun binti 'Utbah to her biological brother, Abu Hudzaifah. Referring to Hymes (1974), the participants in this dialogue consist of Abu Hudzaifah, Hindun, and their extended family. The setting of the dialogue takes place in Abu Hudzaifah’s house. The situation occurs when Hindun catches Abu Hudzaifah performing prayer at his home as a form of practicing his newly embraced Islam. Hindun, who was still

rejecting Islam at the time, expressed her anger through emotionally charged curses, rejection, and shock at her brother's actions.

This utterance represents a form of FTA that attacks Abu Hudzaifah's negative face. Hindun does not attempt to preserve her brother's face; instead, she directly attacks him through an openly expressed curse. This reflects a bald on record strategy, in which the speaker conveys the message directly without any mitigation to protect the hearer's self-image (Brown & Levinson, 1987). This strategy is chosen due to the emotionally charged communication, anger, and strong ideological tension between the speaker and the hearer.

In the utterance above, referring to Molina and Albir (2002), the translator employs a couplet procedure consisting of reduction and modulation techniques to translate the phrase "قد قبحك الله". The reduction technique is seen in the omission of the word قد which functions as an aspectual or emphatic marker in Arabic but is not explicitly translated due to the lack of a functional equivalent in the TL. Meanwhile, the use of modulation is reflected in the change of perspective from the literal meaning "*Sungguh Allah telah menghinakanmu*" (Indeed, Allah has disgraced you) to "*Semoga Tuhan mengutukmu!*" (May God curse you!) This change shifts the meaning from a past statement to an explicit curse or wish to align with the context and conventional expressions in the Indonesian language.

4.3 Scatological Reference and Disgusting Object

Scatological references and disgusting objects are forms of taboo speech acts related to bodily excretions, smells, or other repulsive objects (Jay, 2009). For example, the mention of feces is in the following excerpt.

- SL والله لاهون عندي من الجعل على قمامة
 TL Demi Allah, sekumpulan kotoran kumbang lebih terhormat daripada dirimu!
 (By Allah, a pile of dung beetle filth is more honorable than you!)

Sumayyah binti Khayyat spoke to Abu Jahal about this dialogue. From the perspective of Hymes (1974), particularly the components of participant and setting and scene, the dialogue involves Abu Jahal, Sumayyah, her husband, and son, as well as fellow Muslims who were experiencing persecution. The situation takes place during the extreme torture of Sumayyah by the disbelievers of Quraysh in the scorching desert heat. This condition reflects an emotionally intense atmosphere, full of verbal resistance, anger, and insults hurled by a faithful woman toward a Quraysh figure who symbolized opposition to the Prophet's mission.

This utterance constitutes a strong FTA targeting Abu Jahal's positive face. The strategy employed by Sumayyah in this context falls under the bald on record category delivering the insult directly, where the speaker conveys the message explicitly without any mitigation to protect the hearer's self-image (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The utterance is explicitly intended to humiliate and undermine the hearer's position as a form of symbolic resistance. In the context of power relations, although socially Sumayyah was in a subordinate position, her moral strength and conviction made this utterance a bold and ideologically significant act of defiance.

In the utterance above, the translator uses the modulation technique, which involves shifting the perspective in translation to convey a meaning that is more comprehensible in the TL (Molina & Albir, 2002). The phrase “لا هوّن عندي” if translated literally, means “*Lebih hina dari diriku*” (More contemptible than me) derived from the verb هان - يهون (to be despised), in the form of *ism tafḍīl* (comparative form). However, in the TL, it is translated as “*Lebih terhormat daripada dirimu*” (More honorable than you), which is actually a conversion of meaning expressed ironically to insult, but with a reversed structure. This change in meaning structure through ironic strategy demonstrates a modulation process, allowing the emotional weight and insult to be effectively conveyed to the Indonesian audience.

4.4 Animal Names

Animal names refer to a type of taboo utterance that uses the names of animals to describe negative or irritating behavior (Jay, 2009). One example is comparing a person to a dog, as in the following case.

- SL ولكلب يسوق الغنم خير منك من أقربك
TL Dan sungguh anjing yang mengasuh kambing lebih baik darimu dan kerabatmu! (And indeed, a dog that herds sheep is better than you and your relatives!)

This utterance was delivered by Abu Jahal to Ibn Mas’ud as an insult to his allegiance with Abu Bakar, who had just converted to Islam and was considered to have a significant influence among the Quraysh community. The participants in this dialogue include Abu Bakar, Ibn Mas’ud, and Abu Jahal. The setting of this speech is the marketplace. The participant setting and scene components of this speech event refer to Hymes (1974). The use of an animal metaphor in this utterance is an effort to degrade the dignity of Ibn Mas’ud by comparing him to a creature viewed as lowly.

This utterance falls under the category of an FTA that directly attacks the positive face of Ibn Mas’ud. The strategy employed is bald on record, which involves delivering the message explicitly and harshly without any mitigation (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Abu Jahal made no effort to preserve the hearer’s face; instead, he deliberately demeaned him in public. This strategy reflects the speaker’s dominant and aggressive stance and the ideological and social conflict between the polytheists and the early followers of Islam.

The dialogue excerpt “ولكلب يسوق الغنم خير منك من أقربك” translated as “*Dan sungguh anjing yang mengasuh kambing lebih baik darimu dan kerabatmu*” (And indeed, a dog that herds sheep is better than you and your relatives!) demonstrates the use of couplet procedure, namely literal and modulation. This technique is applied because the translator preserves the lexical structure and meaning from the SL to the TL directly (Molina & Albir, 2002). For instance, “ولكلب” is translated as “*Dan sungguh anjing*” (And indeed, a dog), and “خير منك” literally also means “*Lebih baik darimu*” (Better than you). Meanwhile, the modulation technique is reflected in the translation of the phrase “يسوق الغنم,” which means “*Menggiring kambing*” (Herding sheep) but is translated as “*Mengasuh kambing*” (Herds sheep). This change shows a semantic shift that makes the translation more idiomatic and

acceptable in the TL culture, without reducing the offensive meaning contained in the sentence.

4.5 Ethnic Racial Gender Slurs

This category of taboo speech acts involves utterances that insult a person's ethnic, racial, or gender identity. Such expressions are often used to demean specific groups based on their racial background or gender (Jay, 2009). The following is an example.

SL أيها الخراب الأسود
TL Dasar budak hitam! (You enslaved Black person!)

According to Hymes' (1974) framework, the participants in this conversation are Umayyah bin Khalaf and Bilal bin Rabbah. The setting or speech event takes place in Bilal's room. This utterance was delivered by Umayyah bin Khalaf to his slave, Bilal bin Rabbah. The situation unfolds within the Quraysh social environment, which was highly opposed to Islam, at the moment when Umayyah found Bilal had converted to Islam and was praying to Allah. With an angry tone, Umayyah hurled an insult that degraded Bilal's race.

This utterance constitutes an FTA toward Bilal. The phrase "*Dasar budak hitam!*" (You enslaved Black person!) attacks Bilal's positive face, as it directly demeans his identity, dignity, and social standing as an individual. The use of the words "slave" and "black" is also a form of insult targeting racial identity and social status, publicly humiliating him. Furthermore, it also threatens his negative face, as it imposes an abusive situation on Bilal without giving him the space to resist or reject. This utterance is delivered bald on record (Brown & Levinson, 1987), reflecting power relations and racial hatred. It serves as an explicit representation of the oppression experienced by enslaved people in Quraysh society.

The translation technique used by the subtitle translator is discursive creation. Discursive creation provides temporary equivalents that cannot be predicted in advance (Molina & Albir, 2002). This is necessary when the source utterance is unexpected or out of context (Al Farisi, 2014). The phrase "*أيها الخراب الأسود*" if translated literally, means "*Wahai kehancuran hitam*" (O black ruin), which would be difficult to understand directly in the TL. Therefore, it was rendered as "*Dasar budak hitam!*" (You enslaved Black person!), to ensure the translation is creative and comprehensible to the TL audience. This expression conveys an explicit insult toward Bilal's racial and social status and can be understood by the target audience within a similar social context. The choice of this equivalent demonstrates the translator's creative freedom in preserving the pragmatic function of the source text, even if it means departing from its literal structure.

4.6 Insulting Reference to Perceived Psychological, Physical, or Social Deviations

Insulting reference to perceived psychological, physical, or social deviations a form of taboo speech acts often used to degrade someone's status (Jay, 2009). Such deviance can have harmful effects, reinforce systemic discrimination, and marginalize individuals solely based on their identities (Aulia et al., 2024). The following is an example.

SL أنت الصابئ العاق السفية
TL Kau yang bodoh, manusia durhaka! (You fool, you disobedient man!)

From the perspective of Hymes (1974), particularly the components of participant and setting and scene, the participants in this dialogue are Abu Jahal, Abu Hudzaifah, the elders, and the leaders of Quraysh. The setting of the speech event takes place at Darul Nadwah. This dialogue is spoken by Abu Jahal to Abu Hudzaifah after he discovered that Abu Hudzaifah, a noble member of Quraysh, had embraced Islam and defended the Prophet. The atmosphere is highly emotional and filled with condemnation.

This utterance is an FTA that attacks Abu Hudzaifah's positive face. The word "السفيه" (fool) directly degrades the interlocutor's intellect and identity, while "العاق" (undutiful or disobedient) attacks his familial honour and social ties, which are highly valued in Arab culture. Moreover, the term "الصابي" refers to one who has apostatized from ancestral religion—a serious accusation that, within the Quraysh context, constitutes a grave moral and ideological betrayal. This strategy is categorized by Brown and Levinson (1987) as bald on record since it is delivered directly and harshly, with the intent to shame and intimidate the hearer in public. It reflects power relations, ideological dominance, and tension rooted in the religious and political conflict between the Quraysh authorities and early Muslims.

The translation technique applied, referring to Molina and Albir (2002), is reduction and amplification. The sentence "أنت الصابي العاق السفيف" literally means "*Kau orang shabi' yang durhaka dan bodoh*" (You apostate who is disobedient and foolish!). The reduction technique is evident in the omission of the term "الصابي," which lexically refers to "*Kau yang bodoh, manusia durhaka*" (You fool, you disobedient man!), but was not explicitly transferred into the TL. In the target language, this element was omitted as it could cause confusion or be irrelevant in the audience's cultural context. The reduction technique is the word "human" in the phrase "manusia durhaka" does not have a direct word-for-word equivalent in ST's series of insulting adjectives/nouns.

4.7 Ancestral Allusion

Speech acts concerning ancestry involve derogatory remarks aimed at an individual by targeting their familial roots, heritage, or lineage (Aulia et al., 2024). Such utterances can be deeply insulting and emotionally damaging, as they not only demean the person addressed but also implicitly disparage their family. An example is provided below.

- SL ويل منك ، وويل لأُمك يا أبا حذيفة ، وويل لأبيك
TL Celakalah kau! Celakalah ibumu wahai abu hudzaifah! Celakalah bapakmu!
(Woe to you! Woe to your mother, O Abu Hudzaifah! Woe to your father!)

From the perspective of Hymes (1974), particularly the components of participant and setting and scene, this dialogue is spoken by Utbah bin Rabi'ah to his son, Abu Hudzaifah. The participants in this dialogue consist of Abu Hudzaifah, his father, and the extended family. The setting of the event takes place at Abu Hudzaifah's house. The situation occurs when Utbah finds his son performing congregational prayer led by Salim, a former slave who had been adopted by Abu Hudzaifah. In a tone full of anger, the father utters an insult intended to belittle his son.

This utterance constitutes an FTA that attacks both the positive and negative face of Abu Hudzaifah. His positive face is attacked through insults toward his life choices, while his negative face is disturbed by verbal pressure and control over his personal freedom.

Expressions such as “May your mother perish” and “May your father perish” further reinforce the insulting dimension by dragging family members into the target of ridicule. Referring to Brown and Levinson (1987), this strategy is categorized as bald on record, indicating the speaker’s intent to insult directly and frontally in an emotionally charged situation.

The translation technique used is reduction. Molina and Albir (2002) define reduction as a translation technique that omits items of information. Hartono (2017) also emphasizes that this technique allows translators to remove superfluous words. The sentence “ويل منك ، وويل لأبيك وويل لأُمك يا أبا حذيفة ، وويل لأبيك” literally translates to “*Celakalah darimu wahai Abu Huzaifah! dan celakalah ibumu! dan celakalah bapakmu!*” (Woe from you, And woe to your mother, O Abu Huzaifah! And woe to your father!) but was translated as “*Celakalah kau! celakalah ibumu wahai Abu Hudzaifah! celakalah bapakmu!*” (Woe to you! Woe to your mother, O Abu Hudzaifah! Woe to your father). The reduction is evident in the omission of the conjunction “و” (and), which is not translated.

4.8 Substandard Vulgar Terms

Speech acts related to substandard vulgar terms generally refer to coarse or offensive words associated with bodily functions, often used to insult or degrade someone’s character (Jay, 2009). These terms are commonly used in public contexts to humiliate or criticize someone impolitely, as illustrated in the example below.

BSu ما رأى بعين رأسه و لكن بعين جبنة

BSa Dia tidak melihat dengan mata kepalanya, melainkan dengan mata pengecutnya (He didn’t see with his own eyes but with the eyes of a coward)

Abu Lahab spoke this line of dialogue to Abdullah. Referring to Hymes (1974), the participants in this dialogue are Abu Lahab and Abdullah. The situation occurs when Abdullah displays a pessimistic attitude after observing the movement of the Muslims. In reality, however, he is actually on the opposing side, namely, the group of Muslims. Abu Lahab then mocks Abdullah by implying that he does not see with courage but with fear and cowardice. The phrase “*Dengan mata pengecutnya*” (The eyes of a coward) is a vulgar expression that mocks and degrades a person’s mental strength or bravery, placing it in the category of substandard vulgar terms.

This utterance constitutes a threat to Abdullah’s negative face, as it implies he is seeing things with the eyes of a coward. Abu Lahab not only uses coarse and degrading language but also directly attacks the identity and dignity of the hearer. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the strategy used by Abu Lahab here is bald on record, aiming for a direct insult.

Literal translation was the method applied in rendering the text. The phrase “ما رأى بعين رأسه و لكن بعين جبنة” is translated as “*Dia tidak melihat dengan mata kepalanya, melainkan dengan mata pengecutnya*” (He didn’t see with his own eyes but with the eyes of a coward). The sentence in the TL retains the structure and meaning of the SL (Molina & Albir, 2002). It can thus be concluded that the translator chose the literal technique to maintain accuracy while conveying the original meaning.

4.9 Offensive Slang

Offensive slang refers to derogatory expressions or slang styles that carry offensive meanings and are categorized as part of taboo language, as they are often used to express group solidarity or convey emotions such as anger or ridicule (Jay, 2009). To clarify, the following is an example.

- SL تجمّر، تجمّر يا أبا علي، تجمّر كالنساء
TL Berkumpullah, berkumpullah wahai Bapak Ali, berkumpullah seperti Wanita!
(Gather, gather, O Abu Ali, gather like a woman)

Abu Jahal speaks this line of dialogue to Bapak Ali. According to Hymes (1974), the participants and setting and scene include Abu Jahal, Bapak Ali, and several Quraysh disbelievers in Mecca. The situation occurs when Bapak Ali refuses to go to war, and Abu Jahal mocks him with an utterance that equates him with women. This utterance is offensive because the word “النساء” (women), although referring to females, becomes taboo when used offensively against someone else (Fathurrohman, 2024). This is because women should be respected, not made objects of ridicule or insult.

This utterance represents a direct threat to Bapak Ali’s negative face. The negative face reflects an individual’s desire to act freely without imposition. By comparing him to a woman in a disparaging manner, Abu Jahal openly undermines Bapak Ali’s social identity and autonomy. Referring to Brown and Levinson (1987), the strategy used in this utterance is bald on record, intended to directly insult without any mitigation.

The translation technique for this utterance is the couplet procedure, namely literal translation and reduction. The phrase “تجمّر، تجمّر يا أبا علي، تجمّر كالنساء” is translated as “Berkumpullah, berkumpullah wahai Bapak Ali, berkumpullah seperti Wanita” (Gather, gather, O Abu Ali, gather like a woman). The *reduction* technique is applied by omitting the second-person *ḍamīr anta* (pronoun you) in the translation of “تجمّر,” which literally means “Berkumpullah kau” (Gather you). Meanwhile, the literal technique is applied as the translator retains the structure and lexical meaning of the source text without making structural changes or adding explanatory elements (Molina & Albir, 2002).

5. Conclusion

This study examined the translation of taboo speech acts in the subtitles of the *Omar* series from Arabic into Indonesian. Analysis of 26 instances of taboo expressions, categorized using Jay’s (2009) framework, revealed that the most dominant type was insults related to psychological, physical, or social deviance (19.2%). Regarding politeness strategy, characters in the series predominantly employed the bald on-record strategy of direct communication without attempting to mitigate face-threatening acts. Using Molina and Albir’s (2002) translation techniques, various procedures were identified and categorized as single, couplet, or triplet techniques. The most frequently used method was reduction, accounting for 25% of the data. This suggests that subtitlers tend to favor reduction to balance cultural sensitivity with fidelity to the source text.

These findings highlight the need for subtitling guidelines that respect local cultural norms without compromising source meaning. For scholars of cross-cultural pragmatics, this study provides insight into how Arabic taboo speech acts are transformed in the Indonesian context through specific linguistic and pragmatic strategies. Nevertheless, the study has

several limitations, including a relatively small dataset, focus on a single language pair, and restriction to taboo speech acts, which limits the generalizability of the findings across the broader field of audiovisual translation.

Future research could explore Indonesian audience reception towards these translation strategies, including acceptability, clarity, and emotional impact. Additionally, experimental studies on translator training may be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of pedagogical modules specifically focused on translating taboo language sensitively and accurately.

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