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Investigating the Translators' Strategies in Subtitling and Dubbing of Taboos in American Drama Television Series The Big Little Lies (2019)

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Keywords

Dubbing, Subtitling, Taboo Words, Translation Strategies

Abstract

*One of the most difficult tasks that translators deal with when dubbing or subtitling an audiovisual product is translating offensive terms or expressions such as taboos. Translators must handle the translation of taboos with care, as their equivalents may be contrary to the religion and cultural norms of the target country. To that end, some strategies should be employed by translators to choose appropriate equivalents based on the cultural and religious norms of the target language. Thus, the current study aimed to investigate the strategies employed in subtitling and dubbing English taboos in seven episodes of one American television series using Davoodi's (2009) model. This was corpus-based research that has a qualitative-quantitative method with a comparative approach. To conduct the study, the American English drama crime TV series The Big Little Lies (2019) season two was chosen as the study corpus. 174 taboos, specifically Sh*t and F*k word, were found based on Sharifi and Darchinian's (2009) model in the above-mentioned TV series. Descriptive statistics have been run to examine the frequencies and percentages of implemented translation strategies in subtitling and dubbing the taboos. The results revealed that "Substitution", and "Censorship" were the commonly most frequently used strategies in Persian subtitled and dubbed versions of taboos. Moreover, the findings of the Chi-square test indicated that no significant difference was identified between the strategies of Iranian translators in subtitling and dubbing taboos. The findings of this research can be useful for subtitlers, dubbers, and translation students in Iran who specialize in translating English TV series.*

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الكلمات المفتاحية

الدبلجة،
الحاشية السينمائية،
الكلمات محرمة،
استراتيجيات الترجمة

الملخص

من أصعب المهام التي يتعامل معها المترجمون عند دبلجة أو الحاشية السينمائية منتج سمعي بصري إلى تَرْجَمَة المصطلحات أو التعبيرات المسيئة مثل المحرمات. يجب على المترجمين التعامل مع تَرْجَمَة المحرمات بحذر، حيث قد يتعارض ما يعادلها مع الدين والأعراف الثقافية للبلد المستهدف. ولهذه الغاية، ينبغي للمترجمين استخدام بعض الاستراتيجيات لاختيار المعادلات المناسبة بناءً على المعايير الثقافية والدينية للغة الهدف. وعلى هذا، هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى التحقيق في الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة في الحاشية السينمائية الأفلام والدبلجة للمحرمات الإنجليزية في سبع حلَقات من مسلسل تلفزيوني أمريكي واحد باستخدام نموذج داوودى (2009). كان هذا بحثًا قائمًا له منهج نوعي - كمي مع نهج مقارن. لإجراء الدراسة، تم اختيار المسلسل التلفزيوني الدرامي الأمريكي د بيگ ليتل لايز (2019) للموسم الثاني باعتباره مجموعة الدراسة. تم العثور على 174 من المحرمات، وتحديدًا كلمة ش*ت (القرف) و ف*ک (للعنة)، بناءً على نموذج شريفى و دارچينيان (2009) في المسلسل التلفزيوني المذكور أعلاه. تم إجراء الإحصاء الوصفي لفحص التكرارات والنسب المئوية لاستراتيجيات التَّرْجَمَةً المطبقة في الحاشية السينمائية الأفلام ودبلجة المحرمات. كشفت النتائج أن "الاستبدال" و "الرِّقابة" كانتا الاستراتيجيات الأكثر استخدامًا في النسخ الحاشية السينمائية والمدبلجة الفارسية. على تلك علاوة، أشارت نتائج اختبار كاى-سكوير إلى لا فرق كبير بين استراتيجيات المترجمين الإيرانيين في الحاشية السينمائية الأفلام والدبلجة المحرمات. يمكن أن تكون نتائج هذا البحث مفيدة للمترجمين والمدبلجين وطلاب التَّرْجَمَةً في إيران المتخصصين في تَرْجَمَة المسلسلات التلفزيونية الإنجليزية.

1. Introduction

The emergence of new technologies and the growing need for global communication have led to the rise in the popularity of audiovisual translation as a means of translating movies or TV programs' messages along with transferring cultural values across countries with diverse languages (Yuan, 2016). In today's globalized world, human communities are affected by audiovisual products and their translations. Audiovisual Translation enhances the comprehension of films or television shows for audiences of diverse cultures who are not proficient in the original language (Diaz-Cintas; 2001).

Audiovisual Translation is a generic term equivalent to *Screen Translation* or *Media Translation* as opposed to written and oral translation, not only includes dubbing

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but also subtitling as the most accepted and popular categories- the other major type of AVT are voice-over, narration, free commentary, and partial dubbing (Chaume, 2013; Diaz Cintas & Anderman, 2009; Gambier et al., 2015). In this regard, subtitling means "supplementing the original voice soundtrack by adding written text on screen" and the dubbing is "replacing the original voice soundtrack with another in another language" (O'Connell, 2021, p. 169).

In this regard, one language and cultural feature that required careful attention in subtitling and dubbing audiovisual products is taboos. There is a noticeably growing use of taboo words written or spoken in TV shows or movies and subtitling and dubbing movies with specific terms such as taboo words into other languages could have a lasting impact on the language and culture of target audiences (Karamitroglou, 2000).

According to Hendal (2021), each country has different languages, and "any language is a mirror of the culture or the speakers' ways of practising taboo words" (p. 49). Taboos are some words and sentences in the source culture that can be used without any problem but they may be considered forbidden in the target culture, and the people of the target society might avoid using them (Sedighi & Najian Tabrizi, 2012). Khoshsaligheh et al. (2018) stated that each culture has its taboos that might not be recognized as taboo in other cultures. Sa'd, (2017) stated that taboo topics include sex-related issues, death, health, disease, politics, religion, possessions, talent, abilities, and family relations. People use taboo words to express their anger, disgust, social norm violation, and sexual connotation.

Taboos are names of prohibited things and activities that are associated mainly with customs and political authority which cannot be discussed in public. Sharifi and Darchinian (2009) also have made a list of taboo words that include sexuality, drugs and drinks, profanity, immorality, and politics. These words especially are challenging for translators because they know that the nature of taboo words differs from one culture to another and many factors come into play when determining what can be said and what cannot be said in a certain culture.

Dealing with taboo words, as cultural items, especially subtitling and dubbing, presents a considerable challenge to any translator (Sedighi & Najian Tabrizi, 2012; Van Steenlandt, 2015) since various cultures respond to taboos in a variety of ways, and the use of such words may be considered offensive. Therefore, in audiovisual translation, translators are always faced with the challenge of choosing the best strategy to reproduce the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the taboos, or of asking if they should be reproduced at all (Gholami & Rahbar, 2018). For instance, in some cases, translators eliminate taboo words for the advancement of the plot in a film, as they do not convey a denotational meaning (Wu, 2002). Nonetheless, if the translator were to transfer the offensive terms and expressions to the target culture, they would have a negative impact on the established social rules or norms of some countries (Sedighi & Najian Tabrizi, 2012). Hence, translators must be able to comprehend taboo words and apply strategies to bridge the gap between the cultures concerned (Dukate, 2007).

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Sedighi and Najian Tabrizi (2012) declared that the audiovisual translator should apply appropriate strategies to deal with such translation issues. According to Khoshsaligheh and Ameri (2016, p. 49) the translation of taboos, both in the film and in the book, must be based on specific strategies and models. In this regard, Davoodi (2009) has proposed four translation strategies for taboo words including (a) censorship, (b) substitution, (c) taboo for taboo, and (d) euphemism.

Consequently, identifying the types of strategies for translating taboo words in audiovisual products has become a research problem that recently received increasing attention among scholars. Despite the increasing interest in AVT research, only a few research has been conducted in the context of Iran to identify the various strategies applied for subtitling and dubbing taboos in movies.

To bridge this research gap in the literature, in the selected corpus of the study entitled *The Big Little Lies* (2019) season two, the taboo words were investigated using Sharifi and Darchinian's (2009) model. Afterward, the researchers tried to determine the translation strategies employed in subtitling and dubbing the taboos in the above-mentioned English television series based on Davoodi's (2009) model. Additionally, different types of strategies employed for dubbing and subtitling taboos were compared to find any significant differences. Based on the aim of this study, the following research questions were posed according to Davoodi's (2009) model:

- What were the most frequently used strategies by translators in subtitling the taboos from English to Persian in the selected television series?
- What were the most frequently used strategies by translators in dubbing the taboos from English to Persian in the selected television series?
- Is there any significant difference between the strategies employed by translators for subtitling and dubbing the taboos into Persian in the selected television series?

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Dubbing

Dubbing could simply be defined as replacing the original audio track with another one in a different target language (Chaume, 2013). According to Roch–Murat, (2022) and Loghin (2018) dubbing is the type of AVT that keeps the purpose of source dialogue and replaces the soundtrack of the film with a new soundtrack in the other language. Yahiaoui et al. (2020) argued that dubbing "is more open to manipulation because the ST (source text) is absent from the target text" (p. 309). Furthermore, Ivarsson and Carroll (1998) argued that "dubbing is the preferable option for countries with strong senses of nationalism, where it is believed that the national language should be protected and supported. They further elaborated that large speaking communities prefer dubbing" (p. 3). Moreover, nations considering themselves culturally self-sufficient prefer dubbing probably because, in these countries, knowledge of a foreign language is not a basic

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condition of survival (Schjoldager et al., 2010). It is worth mentioning that, Iran is a dubbing country that preferred dubbing, subtitles, and voice-over on national television.

2.2. Subtitling

According to Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997, p. 161), subtitling is “the process of providing synchronized captions for film and television dialogue.” Subtitling is a process that entails technically transferring an SL movie or audiovisual media to a TL movie or audiovisual media, synchronized with the original verbal message (Gottlieb, 2004). O’Connell (2007) declared that subtitling is “supplementing the original voice soundtrack by adding written text on-screen” (p. 169).

Subtitling is defined by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2014, p. 8) as “a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally on the lower part of the screen, that endeavors to recount the original dialogue of the speakers as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image.” Ahmad Mohammad Salhab (2017) declared that “subtitling deals with the position of subtitles on the screen and synchrony with an image. Therefore, it pays considerable attention to additional components including screen images, soundtracks, subtitles position and time” (p. 37).

Subtitling consists of “incorporating a written text (subtitles) in the TL on the screen where an original version of the film is shown, such that subtitles coincide approximately with the screen actor’s dialogue” (Chaume, 2019). Subtitling has its advantages and disadvantages. One advantage of subtitling is far less expensive than dubbing (Loghin, 2018). Danan (2004) showed that the main disadvantage of subtitling is the fact that the audience focuses its attention on the text and often loses other important movie elements, like the movie set or the moves of the characters.

2.3. Types of Taboos

Almost every society has a set of taboos that act as a broad umbrella under which different words or topics are considered prohibited in public. The word taboo "in the study of translation and English language refers to words that people consider commonplace and should be used with caution in speech" (Suzani, 2014, p. 63). Fromkin, et al., (2013) believe that “taboo has a strong cultural component representing particular customs and the way people view their society” (p.112).

Ghazi and Sadati (2018, p. 48) quoted that “Taboo words’ roots and origin are in culture, customs, history, religion, local conditions, cultural background, and even geography of a nation, and the author reflects the authenticity of his or her language in these works.” According to Hendal (2021, p. 48) “Taboos are associated with cultures and societies; thus, they vary by country.” “Taboos are governed by nations’ cultural and societal guides, which are based on agreed-upon expectations and rules. Such taboos considerably affect people’s lives, behaviour, clothes, food, and choices” (Fershtman et al., 2011, p. 48; Wardhaugh, 2006).

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Allan and Burridge (2006) expressed taboo words are forbidden words, dirty words, or strong language. Taboo words are marked by emotionality, vulgarity, and offensiveness. They are used to express strong emotions and display negative attitudes towards a particular person or situation (Berūkštienė, 2014). These taboo subjects include bodily functions about sex and excretion, the private parts, illnesses and death, words believed to be blasphemy, income, salary, age of ladies, etc. (Gao, 2013, p. 2310). In this respect, there are various categories of taboos (Allan & Burridge, 2006; Gao, 2013; Mirza Suzani, 2014). For instance, Fershtman et al. (2011, p. 48) classified taboos into several categories.

The first category includes the restrictions on sexual behaviors, such as incest, animal and human sex, adult-child sex, and necrophilia. The second category includes dietary-related restrictions, like nonhalal and nonkosher foods for Muslims and Jews, beef for Hindus, and cannibalism for many people and societies. The third category included offensive and appalling actions, including some bodily functions. Based on Sharifi and Darchinian's (2009) model taboo words are classified into the following categories including:

- Private relations between men and women, whether legitimate or illegitimate, and related words; such as kissing, having sex, hugging, betraying, and the like ;
- Free premarital girl-boy relationship; like a boyfriend, girlfriend, and things like that;
- Naming the sexual organs and related words;
- Using the name of anything or any action related to alcohol and drugs;
- Impolite expressions, i.e., curses, swears;
- Calling features of immoral actions and behaviors like thieving, etc.
- Expressing religious, doctrinal, and philosophical issues and beliefs that conflict with the beliefs of the translator community;
- Expressing some political issues that somehow threaten the interests of the society or cause instability in the society, as well as attributing some characteristics to the key jobs of the society, such as the presidency.

2.4. Translation Strategies Used for Taboos

Davoodi (2009) stated that there are four possibilities for the translation of taboo terms including a) the taboo term in L1 is not taboo in L2, so the translator will translate it directly. b) The taboo term in L1 is taboo in L2 too. c) The term which is not taboo in L1 is considered taboo in L2. In this respect, Davoodi (2009) proposes four strategies in rendering taboo including (a) censorship, (b) substitution, (c) taboo for taboo, and (d) euphemism. Lovihandrie, et al., (2018) also propose a model consisting of six strategies to translate taboos such as;

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- *Omission:* When faced with a taboo term in the translation, the first possible strategy a translator can choose is omission. This strategy is employed when the translator ignores the term and censors it as an additional term. The translator simply chooses to delete the taboo of the source text when rendering it into the target language (Chesterman, 1997). "According to many translators, it is best to opt for either substitution or euphemism, as it ensures that your translation will be accepted by the target audience" (Almijrab, 2020, p. 25). It could be because the words are too vulgar in the context of the target language.
- *Substitution:* One strategy for translating taboos is to substitute them with similar terms in TL which does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader (Baker, 1992). In this regard, instead of using taboo words, the translators use equivalences with a lower meaning. Example: the word F*k in the sentence "Oh, Jesus. Open the *fucking* door, Perry" is translated into "Khodaye man dare *lanate* ro baz kon Perry" in the target language. Here, the translator applies the appropriate interjection in the original text which tends to be less expressive and implicit than those in the original text.
- Taboo for taboo: The translators utilize this strategy when they are aware that some words are not acceptable in the target society and culture, but they want to translate them into taboo words in TL with the same expressive meaning and propositional meaning. "This is the most effective method but cannot always be used because taboos are often culturally derived and do not always have perfect translations" (Almijrab, 2020, p. 26). Example: the word f*k in the sentence "and I feel like a selfish *fuck*" is translated into "hes mikonam yek *patiyare* khodkhoham" in the target language. Here, the translator translated the word f*k into *patiyare*, since those words are taboo in both the source and target languages. Words like *patiyare* mean a woman who has a sexual relationship with a lot of men without feeling attached to them.
- *Borrowing:* It involves utilizing the same taboo word or expression in SL with minimal modifications to the rules of TL (Vinay & Darbelnet, 2000). An example of borrowing is the word orgasm translated into orgasm in Persian. The word orgasm according to Macmillan Dictionary means "the stage of sexual activity when sexual pleasure is strongest", while in Persian means "the moment of most intense pleasure in sexual intercourse". There is no change in the meaning except a change in the vowel and consonant sound of -a and -z into ˌə and -s in Persian, respectively.
- Translation by more general words: The translator finds an equivalent with a general meaning in TL to cover the specific meaning of taboos in SL. Example: the word *d**k* refers to men's sex and reproductive organ. It is a private part of a man's body that should not be said or heard in front of others, and the source language, it is considered a taboo word. This word is translated into *badan* in Persian. This translation is still too general, and it can make the reader of TT feel

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confused about which part the author is referring to. Therefore, to avoid this, the translators should seek out the equivalent of the word closest to the original.

- *Euphemism:* Euphemism refers to the substitution of pleasant and inoffensive terms in TL instead of one that is offensive in SL (AlShahwi, 2013). This strategy tries to keep the audience from being offended by using inoffensive terms. In other words, euphemism is a way to avoid using insulting expressions to protect the audience from offense (Hamidiyah, 2013; Linfoot-Ham, 2005; Putranti et al., 2017; Sinambela, 2010).

3. Method

3.1. Corpus of the Study

The current study used an American drama crime mystery television series titled *Big Little Lies* (2019) season two as a study corpus. This TV series was created and written by Liane Moriarty, David E. Kelley, and Matthew Tinker, premiered on HBO on June 23, 2019, in the United States (Los Angeles, California), and aired over seven episodes. *Big Little Lies* was nominated for the Golden Globe Awards for best drama series and best-supporting actress-Television. In this study, seven episodes of this TV series were analyzed, entitled *What Have They Done?* (episode 1), *Tell-Tale Hearts* (episode 2), *The End of the World* (episode 3), *She Knows* (episode 4), *Kill Me* (episode 5), *The Bad Mother* (episode 6), and *I Want to Know* (episode 7). In this regard, for further study, the Persian subtitles for seven episodes were downloaded from the "subscene" website (2023). In addition, the Persian dubbed version of the preceding TV series was obtained from "Aparat" (2023).

3.2. Procedure

To accomplish the objective of this investigation, seven episodes of the television series Big Little Lies (2019) season two were utilized as the corpus of the study. The first step was to watch the seven episodes of the TV series and identify the Persian equivalents of English taboos, specifically Sh*t and F*k words, in the subtitled and dubbed versions. In this drama, 174 F*k words were found and taken from the original language version (English) using Sharifi and Darchinian's (2009) model. After that, the translators' translation strategies for subtitling and dubbing identified taboos were determined utilizing Davoodi's (2009) mode. In addition, the corpus was analyzed to identify which types of Davoodi (2009) proposed strategies were more frequently employed in translating taboos in Persian subtitled and dubbed versions of this television series. The final step of this study involved comparing statistically the types of translation strategies used for dubbing and subtitling the taboos to find out if there were any significant differences between them.

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3.3. Data Analysis Method

The first and second survey questions were answered using SPSS, version 24, and descriptive statistical analysis was employed to analyze the percentage and frequency of strategies applied by translators in dubbing and subtitling taboo words. In the third research question, a Chi-square statistical procedure was run to examine if there were any differences between the various translation strategies used in subtitling and dubbing the taboos.

4. Results

4.1. Results of the First Research Question

Descriptive statistics (i.e., frequency and percentage) were employed to investigate how Iranian translators subtitle taboo words, especially Sh*t and F*k words, in the selected corpus. The data revealed that Iranian translators employed the “Substitution” strategy 147 times, or 84.5%, to subtitle the taboo words (Table 1). This strategy was the first strategy that translators frequently employed to subtitle taboo words. The least used strategy for subtitling taboo words was "Taboo for Taboo" with a frequency of 8 times and a percentage of 4.6%.

Table 1

Strategies Used by Iranian Translators for Subtitling F*K Words in the Big Little Lies TV Series

Subtitling Strategies	Frequency	Percent
Substitution	147	84.5
Euphemism	0	0.0
Censorship	19	10.9
Taboo	8	4.6
Total	174	100.0

It is worth noting that three strategies from Davoodi’s (2009) model were used in the Persian subtitled version of the TV series *Big Little Lies* season two (Table 1). Compared to other strategies for subtitling taboo words, the “Substitution” and “Censorship” strategies were used more frequently.

4.1.1 Substitution

The taboo words are forbidden in the Persian language and culture; thus the “Substitution” strategy was used more than other strategies by the Iranian translators to substitute the taboos with other terms which were not considered taboo in the Persian language.

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Table 2

Examples of Substitution Strategy in the Subtitled Version of the Big Little Lies TV Series

Episode	Source Text	Sub version
Episode1	Did she know about this **f*k** college plan?	از این برنامه دانشگاه به درک خبر داشت؟
Episode3	I **f*ked** up.	گند زدم.
Episode4	All my hopes and plans for Amabella have gone to **sh*t**.	گند زده شده به تمام نقشه هایی که برای آمابلا داشتم.
Episode6	- Okay. - **Sh*t.**	- باشه. - عوضی.

4.1.2 Censorship.

Davoodi (2009) declared that censorship of taboo words is the most straightforward approach to the translation of taboos. In the subtitled versions of the selected TV series, the utilization of "Censorship" by Iranian translators was the second most commonly employed strategy, with a frequency of 19 times and a percentage of 10.9% (Table 1).

Table 3. Examples of Censorship Strategy in the Subtitled Version of the Big Little Lies TV Series

Episode	Source Text	Sub version
Episode4	What the **f*k** is happening to her?	چه اتفاقی براش افتاد؟
Episode6	What the **f*k**!	ای وای!
Episode6	The **f*king** nanny?!	با اون پرستاره!
Episode7	We can't even know what the **f*k** that means.	اصلا نمی دونی که این یعنی چی؟

4.1.3 Taboo for Taboo

The results indicated that the Iranian translators for subtitling taboo words in the *Big Little Lies* TV series used the "Taboo for Taboo" strategy with a frequency of 8 and a percentage of 4.6%, which was the least-applied strategy (Table 1).

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Table 4. Examples of Taboo for Taboo Strategy in the Subtitled Version of the Big Little Lies TV Series

Episode	Source Text	Sub version
Episode2	You can't just assault somebody in the middle of a **f*king** public place.	نمی تونی وسط یه مکان عمومی آدم رو بگ**ی
Episode3	- Yeah, he's a **sh*t**. - Oh, my God.	- اره گ*ه دیگه - خدای من
Episode6	The other four are **f*ked**.	اون چهار نفر گ**دن
Episode7	Because I have a **f*king** career?	چون من یک کار تخمی دارم؟

4.1.4 Result for the Second Question

The second research question tries to determine the strategies of Iranian translators to dub taboo words, specifically Sh*t and F*k words, from English into Persian in the aforementioned television series. The data presented in Table 5 revealed that the "Substitution" strategy was the most commonly used strategy with a frequency of 137 times and a percentage of 78.7%. Additionally, the results showed that the translators in dubbing did not use the "Taboo for Taboo" strategy.

Table 5. Strategies Used by Iranian Translators for Dubbing F*K Words in the Big Little Lies TV Series

Dubbing Strategies	Frequency	Percent
Substitution	137	78.7
Euphemism	14	8.1
Censorship	23	13.2
Taboo for taboo	0	0.0
Total	174	100.0

Noteworthy, out of four strategies proposed by Davoodi (2009), three strategies were used in dubbing taboos. In a nutshell, in this analysis, the "Substitution" and "Censorship" strategies were employed more frequently than other strategies to dub the taboo words.

4.1.5 Substitution

Davoodi (2009) considered that one way of translating taboo words is by substitution. In the selected TV series, the "Substitution" strategy was the first applied strategy (Table 6). From the table below, the translator employed a substitution strategy to translate taboo words into Persian.

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Table 6. Examples of substitution strategy in the Persian dubbed version of the Big Little Lies TV series

Episode	Source Text	Dub version
Episode1	I don't care about **f*king** homeless people.	من به بی خانمان های کوفتی اهمیتی نمی دم
Episode2	You are a **f*king** incredible publicist.	تو یه روزنامه نگار کوفتی باورنکردنی هستی
Episode4	…all my dreams have gone to **sh*t**.	همه ای رویا هام به گند کشیده شد
Episode5	lawyers **f*k** things up often.	وکیلا اغلب گند می زنن به کارا

4.1.6 Censorship

In this phase of the study, the second most frequently employed strategy by translators was "Censorship" with a frequency of 23 times and a percentage of 13.2% (Table 5). From the table below, the translator opted to censor F*k words because they should not be said or heard in front of the public and it is considered a taboo word in the target language.

Table 7. Examples of Censorship Strategy in Persian Dubbed Version of Big Little Lies TV Series

Episode	Source Text	Dub version
Episode2	I noticed **sh*t**, and then I asked you to come.	من متوجه شدم که از شما خواستم بیای پس ...
Episode2	I think you know because you're **f*king** married to her.	چرا می دونی .....
Episode3	Hasn't been laid in 15 **f*king** years.	پونزده ساله که هیچ دوستی نداشته
Episode6	I don't wanna hear one **f*king** word	نمی خوم دیگه یک کلمه حرف بزنی

4.1.7 Euphemism

The results showed that the Iranian translators used the “Euphemism” strategy for dubbing taboo words with a frequency of 14 times and a percentage of 8.1 % as the third most used strategy (Table 5).

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Table 8. Examples of Euphemism Strategy in Persian Dubbed Version of Big Little Lies TV Series

Episode	Source Text	Dub version
Episode1	you probably don't wanna act weird and **sh*t** in public.	توی انظار رفتار های عجیب و غریب نداشته باش
Episode7	- Renata! **F*king** hell!	رنتا بس کن
Episode6	Shut the **fuck** up …	اون دهنت رو ببند
Episode3	- Oh, for **f*k's** sake...	شما رو به خدا...

4.1.8 Research Question Three

A Chi-square test was used to answer the third research question, which asked if there was any significant difference between the strategies applied by translators in subtitling and dubbing taboo words in *Big Little Lies* (2019) TV series. In particular, with $p < 0.05$, the researchers can say that there was no statistically significant difference between subtitling and dubbing strategies used by Iranian translators. The results of the current study showed that the chi-square statistic value was reported as 318.933 and the associated significance value was Sig = 0.000; The p-value was less than .05 (Table 9). Therefore, it can be inferred that there was no significant difference observed between the strategies used by Iranian translators to subtitle and dub taboo words.

Table 9. Results of the Chi-square Test

		Value	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Chi-Square Test	**Pearson Chi-Square**	318.933	.000

Nonetheless, the four strategies employed in dubbing and subtitling taboo words are shown in Table 10. The “Taboo for Taboo” strategy, which was employed 8 times in the Persian subtitled version of taboo words was not utilized in the Persian dubbed version of the TV (Table 10).

Table 10. Results of Comparison of the Third Question

Translation Strategies		Frequency	Percent
Dubbing Strategies	Substitution	137	78.7

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	Euphemism	14	8.1
	Censorship	23	13.2
	Taboo for Taboo	0	0.0
	Total	80	100.0
Subtitling Strategies	Substitution	147	84.5
	Euphemism	0	0.0
	Censorship	19	10.9
	Taboo for Taboo	8	4.6
	Total	174	100.0

5. Discussion

Iranian dubbers and subtitlers used the "substitution" strategy in 78.7% and 84.5% of the cases, respectively, to translate the taboo words as the first possible strategy. According to Baker (1992), substitution is "replacing a culture-specific item or expression with a target language item which does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader" (p. 31). Taboos in spoken or written form are forbidden in the Persian language and culture. Indeed, the English taboo words have been substituted by Iranian translators because Persian has a religious orientation, and most of the taboo words are banned in Islamic teachings. In this regard, the dubbers and subtitlers have substituted Persian equivalences that have lower a bad meaning instead of F*k words. Nevertheless, English and Persian represent two opposing cultural assumptions, and substituting one with the other involves an ideological loss due to the fact that the meaning does not necessarily derive from the word or its surroundings, but from its use in its cultural context.

House (1977), also stated that substituting SL taboos with other TL terms can distort the meaning and confuse the reader. This is because translators encounter communicative difficulties when the text begins with unshared assumptions about the purpose of communication. Samir and Ghiyasi Hashemizadeh (2023) in a similar study found that substitution strategy is the first employed strategy by Iranian translators for subtitling and dubbing F*k words in *The Big Littel Lies* (2017) television series season one.

Similarly, Lovihandrie et al. (2018) in their study found that substitution is among six strategies the Indonesian translators used for translating taboo words in a novel entitled *Bared to You*. In addition, Robati and Zand (2018) found that substitution (35.33%) was the most frequently applied strategy based on Davoodi's (2007) model for the translation

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of taboo terms in the novel *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. GJurchevska Atanasovska (2016) also concluded that subtitlers tend to use substitution strategies more. In other words, the translators render taboos in the original language into another equivalence in the target language that has a different meaning, yet still has the same impact on the audience.

The Iranian under study translators employed the "censorship" strategy in 13.2% and 10.9% of cases to dub and subtitle the taboo words, respectively, as the second possible strategy. It indicated that Iranian translators disregard the F*k words in the original version of the TV series and omitted them. In the same vein, Behzad and Salmani (2013) in their study investigated the strategies applied by translators in rendering taboos in the sentences of Saramago's Blindness. They concluded that censoring the taboo is the first and the simplest choice in the translation of taboo words. Alavi et al. (2013) also investigated the translation of taboos from English into Persian in dramas from a Skopos-based view. The research has shown that the most commonly employed strategy was "censorship". However, in some cases, a taboo term was a key term in the source text, and omitting it changed the meaning of the text (Almijrab, 2020). Thus, not only the subtitlers should not omit the taboo words but also, they have to resort either to substitution or euphemism in the target text (Almijrab, 2020).

In contrast, the findings showed that the "Taboo for taboo" strategy was not employed in the Persian dubbed version of the selected television series. It showed that translators in dubbing are aware that taboo words are unacceptable to most Iranian audiences and society, so they prefer not to translate them into taboo words in Persian. Samir and Ghiyasi Hashemizadeh (2023) also in their study found that the "Taboo for taboo" strategy was not employed in the Persian dubbed version of Big Little Lies (2017) Tv series. The results of Alavi et al.'s (2013) study also showed that the "taboo for taboo" strategy was the least used strategy for the translation of taboos from English into Persian in dramas from a skopos-based view.

Furthermore, although the Iranian translators applied the "Euphemism" strategy in 8.1% of cases to dub taboo words in the SL into euphemistic terms, it was not applied in the subtitled version of the TV series. The euphemism strategy is mostly employed in sensitive writings to uphold politeness. The translators employed a pleasant expression in TL instead of one that was offensive. Translators employ euphemisms to soften impolite discourses, conceal unruly concepts, hide offensive thoughts, or employ any form of speech such as metonymies, puns, and metaphors to replace taboo subjects.

Samir and Ghiyasi Hashemizadeh (2023) and Sinambela (2010) stated that the use of euphemism is the best strategy for a translator to avoid expressing offensive or unfavorable expressions. Linfoot-ham (2005, p. 228) stated that "the need for euphemism is both social and emotional, as it allows discussion of 'touchy' or taboo subjects without enraging, outraging, or upsetting other people, and acts as a pressure valve whilst maintaining the appearance of civility". Linfoot-Ham (2005) said that euphemisms are

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meant to protect the audience from being an offense. It is also used to avoid impolite or insulting words.

Leech (1981, p. 53) asserts that "euphemism is the practice of referring to something offensive or delicate in terms that makes it sound more pleasant or becoming than it is". Nida (2000) refers to the euphemism as softening because this process reduces the emotional unpleasant effects of the words. Similarly, Behzad and Salmani (2013, p. 228) in their study found that most of "our translators tend more to use euphemism which is the substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression to replace one that offends or suggests something unpleasant".

The findings of comparison between strategies used in subtitled and dubbed versions of taboo words in the selected TV series indicated that two out of four types of strategies were similarly employed by Iranian dubbers and subtitlers entitled "substitution" and "censorship". However, the results revealed that the "Taboo for Taboo" strategy was just used in the subtitling of taboo words with a frequency of 8 times and a percentage of 4.6%. It revealed that the subtitlers in a few cases preferred to use this strategy to maintain the taboo expression contained in the SL and translate the taboo words into taboos in the Persian language. Therefore, not only do the Iranian audiences get the meaning of the taboo words but also comprehend the impression of the terms. However, according to Vinay and Darbelnet (2000), the "Taboo for Taboo" strategy is applied in languages that are culturally very close, employing this strategy in Persian subtitling seems often embarrassing to the Iranian Muslim audience because the Persian taboo words are forbidden according to the Islamic religion in Iran.

The results of this study are also consistent with those of GJurchevska Atanasovska (2016), who concluded that the "taboo for taboo" strategy was the first strategy used to translate taboo words in the Macedonian translation of short stories collection entitled *The Most Beautiful Woman in Town* and *What We Talk about When We Talk about*. Robati and Zand (2018) also in their study found that the second most frequently applied strategy for the translation of taboo terms in the novel *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* based on Davoodi's (2007) strategies was taboo for taboo (26%). Applying the "Taboo for taboo" strategy demonstrates the tendency of the translators to keep the impact of taboo words rather than censoring or euphemizing their force. Similarly, Bigdeloo's (2022) study indicated that the "Taboo for Taboo" strategy was the most commonly applied strategy to translate taboos in four translations of the book titled *The Catcher in the Rye* based on Lovihandrie et al., (2018) model.

6. Conclusion

When it comes to tackling taboo words, a translator takes into consideration the cultural and religious context of the target language and decides whether to translate the SL taboo with TL taboo or use substitution, euphemism, or censorship strategy. The study found that the translators under study employed two strategies to subtitle and dub the taboo words using Davoodi's (2009) model. The most prevalent strategy was the "Substitution"

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strategy, which was used in Persian subtitled and dubbed versions of *Big Little Lies* (2019) season two. “Substitution” was the prevalent strategy employed by Iranian translators when subtitling and dubbing taboos as they favoured equivalences with less offensive meaning in lieu of taboos. The use of taboos is considered prohibited in the culture of Iran, and the addressees negatively perceive them. In this regard, the translators replaced the taboos in SL with inoffensive terms in TL. Nonetheless, sometimes using this strategy misinterprets the message and conflates the Iranian audiences.

The findings revealed that the second most common strategy was "Censorship" to subtitle and dub taboos in *Big Little Lies* (2019) movies. It is believed that if the Iranian audience were to watch these series and heed those offensive words, they would likely imitate them. These taboo words are hard to translate into Iranian, so the translators chose to omit and censor them in dubbing or subtitling. Using this strategy would impact the SL message. Sometimes using the "Censorship" strategy would not convey what the authors meant or how the characters feel. This happens because removing or censoring the taboo words in the movie means something different from what they originally meant.

Additionally, the results indicated that the strategy of "Taboo for taboo" was not applied for dubbing taboo words, but it was the least commonly employed strategy for subtitling. It shows the translators' choice regarding the use of offensive terms, which is not acceptable to the majority of Iranian Muslim audiences. Therefore, by knowing the cultures and religions of the target audiences, they can protect them from some offense and render the taboo words or offensive terms into pleasant expressions in TL.

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