



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***A SEMANTICO-PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF AMATEUR SUBTITLING OF  
SWEARWORDS IN AMERICAN CRIME DRAMA MOVIES INTO ARABIC***

**ABED SHAHOOTH KHALAF**

**FBMK 2016 38**



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By

**ABED SHAHOOTH KHALAF**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**September 2016**

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## DEDICATION

*To:*

*My late mother,*

*My late father,*

*My brothers and sisters,*

*My family,*

*My wounded country.*



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**ABED SHAHOOTH KHALAF**

**September 2016**

**Chairman : Sabariah Md Rashid, PhD**  
**Faculty : Modern Languages and Communication**

This study seeks to investigate the translation orientation of amateur subtitlers when rendering swearwords in American crime drama movies into Arabic. It focuses on a semantico-pragmatic analysis of such words in the selected movies and their subtitles in Arabic. This study also aims to identify the adopted translation strategies with emphasis on the effect of deletion on the conveyance of the intended meaning of swearwords to the target recipients and the causes of deletion. The study addresses four research questions: 1. To what extent have the semantic fields of swearwords in the movie dialogues been retained in the Arabic subtitles and what causes the resulting shifts? 2. To what extent have the pragmatic functions of swearwords in these movies been preserved in the Arabic subtitles? 3. What are the translation strategies adopted by amateur subtitlers to transfer swearwords in these movies into Arabic? 4. How does the deletion of swearwords in the Arabic subtitles affect the conveyance of their intended meanings and what are its causes?

The data of the study comprise a corpus of the dialogue scripts of two American crime drama movies with high frequency of swearwords and their amateur subtitles in Arabic. The movie scripts and their subtitles formed a parallel corpus consisting of 73328 words. The content analysis method was used in extracting instances of swearwords using a concordancing software that searches for swearwords in context. The data were analyzed based on Allan and Burridge's (2006) and Ljung's (2011) models for semantic fields categorization and Wajnryb's (2005) model for categorizing pragmatic functions. In addition, the identification of translation strategies was based on Vermeer's (1978) *Skopostheorie*, and the types of meaning affected by the deletion of swearwords were determined using Leech's classification of types of meaning (1981).

The findings show a great variation in the semantic fields and incongruence of pragmatic functions between the swearwords in the source text compared to those in the subtitles, which resulted from the shift in the semantic fields of swearwords in the subtitles and inaccurate analysis by the subtitlers of the expressed pragmatic functions of such words in the movies. Besides, the subtitlers adopted certain target culture oriented translation strategies such as deletion, de-swearing, the use of deictic particles, ambiguity and

euphemisms and other source text oriented strategies such as changing non-swearwords to swearwords, overtranslation, literal translation and functional equivalence. Being the most dominant adopted strategy, deletion of swearwords has affected the conveyance of the various types of associative meaning, which seem to relate to the expression of speakers' inner feelings and their relationships with the addressees. The findings suggest that the translation orientation of amateur subtitlers has been influenced by the powerful sociocultural norms in the target culture, the subtitlers' low linguistic/pragmatic competence and their lack of translation training and expertise. Accordingly, self-censoring strategies as a means of conforming to the target recipients' expectations were adopted, rendering their translation orientation a target culture oriented.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**ANALISIS SEMANTIK-PRAGMATIK TERHADAP PENTERJEMAH SARI  
KATA BAGI UNGKAPAN MAKIAN DI DALAM DRAMA FILEM JENAYAH  
AMERIKA KE DALAM BAHASA ARAB**

Oleh

**ABED SHAHOOTH KHALAF**

**September 2016**

**Pengerusi : Sabariah Md Rashid, PhD**  
**Fakulti : Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi**

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidik orientasi penterjemah sari kata apabila menterjemah ungkapan makian di dalam drama filem jenayah Amerika ke dalam Bahasa Arab. Ia ditumpukan kepada analisis semantik-pragmatik bagi ungkapan-ungkapan tersebut di dalam filem-filem yang telah dipilih, dan sari kata filem-filem tersebut dalam bahasa Arab. Selain itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti strategi terjemahan yang telah digunakan, dengan tumpuan khusus terhadap kesan pengguguran dalam menyampaikan maksud ungkapan makian yang dicadangkan kepada khalayak sasaran. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menangani empat persoalan kajian: 1. Setakat manakah bidang semantik SWS dalam dialog filem telah dikekalkan dalam sari kata bahasa Arab dan apa yang menyebabkan perubahan terhasil? 2. Sejauh manakah fungsi pragmatic bagi ungkapan-ungkapan makian filem-filem tersebut dikekalkan dalam sari kata bahasa Arab? 3. Apakah strategi penterjemahan yang telah digunakan oleh penterjemah dalam menterjemah sari kata, bagi ungkapan makian dalam filem-filem yang dipilih ke dalam Bahasa Arab? Dan 4. Bagaimanakah penghapusan bersumpah perkataan dalam sari kata Bahasa Arab menjejaskan pemindahan makna yang dimaksudkan dan apakah sebab-sebab?

Data kajian ini terdiri daripada korpus dua skrip dialog filem jenayah Amerika yang mempunyai kekerapan ungkapan makian yang tinggi dan terjemahan amat sari kata dalam Bahasa Arab. Skrip-skrip filem dan sari kata diterjemah merupakan korpus selari yang terdiri daripada 73328 perkataan. Kaedah analisis kandungan telah digunakan bagi mendapatkan sampel-sampel ungkapan makian, dengan menggunakan perisian konkordan bagi mencari konteks yang mengandungi ungkapan makian. Data dianalisis berdasarkan kepada model Allan dan Burridge (2006), dan model Ljung (2011), dalam mengkategorikan konsep semantik, dan model Wajnryb (2005) untuk mengkategorikan fungsi-fungsi pragmatik. Di samping itu, identifikasi strategi penterjemahan adalah berdasarkan kepada teori Skopos oleh Vermeer (1978), dan jenis-jenis makna yang terjejas disebabkan oleh pengguguran ungkapan makian, telah ditentukan menggunakan model Leech (1981) dalam mengklasifikasikan kategori makna.

Dapatan kajian menunjukkan perbezaan besar dalam konsep semantik dan fungsi-fungsi pragmatik yang tidak kongruen di antara ungkapan-ungkapan makian dalam teks asal berbanding dengan ungkapan-ungkapan dalam sari kata. Ia berpunca daripada perubahan konsep semantik terhadap ungkapan-ungkapan makian dalam sari kata dan ketidaktepatan analisis oleh penulis sari kata terhadap fungsi-fungsi pragmatik yang dinyatakan bagi ungkapan-ungkapan didalam filem tersebut. Selain itu, penulis sari kata mengamalkan budaya berorientasikan strategi-strategi terjemahan yang tertentu seperti penguguran, tiada makian, penggunaan unsur-unsur dietik, kekaburan dan euphemisms, dan lain-lain startegi yang berorientasikan rujukan teks seperti menukarkan ungakapn-ungkapan bukan makian kepada makian, terlebih terjemahan, terjemahan literal dan kesetaraan fungsi. Strategi penguguran ungkapan-ungkapan makian adalah adaptasi startegi yang paling dominan dimana ianya memberi kesan kepada kategori makna yang berkait. Ianya seolah-olah berkait dengan ekspresi perasaan dalaman penutur, dan hubungan antara penutur dengan pentutur. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa orientasi terjemahan daripada subtitles amatir telah dipengaruhi oleh norma-norma sosiobudaya kuat dalam budaya sasaran, subtitles 'rendah linguistik kecekapan/pragmatik dan kekurangan mereka latihan terjemahan dan kepakaran. Oleh itu, mereka telah menggunakan pelbagai strategi dengan menapis sendiri untuk disesuaikan dengan jangkaan khalayak sasaran, justeru menjadikan tingkah laku terjemahan mereka berorientasikan tingkah laku budaya sasaran.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure to thank those who made this thesis a reality since it would never have become so without their help and support.

First of all, I would like to express my deep gratitude and indebtedness to my supervisor Dr. Sabariah Md Rashid, Head of the Department of English Language/Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, who helped extend my knowledge through her invaluable comments and questions and who definitely has enlightened me. Her wisdom and knowledge motivated and inspired me so much in finding solutions to the problems I encountered throughout the carrying out of this thesis. She was always willing to help and give the best suggestions that guided the development of this project. I do appreciate her good advice, encouragement and the patience she has had during the long journey of the PhD program.

I would say that I consider myself fortunate for having had the guidance of Dr. Sabariah for her instructions and advice that put me on the right track. I would like to thank her for presenting the ideal image of the very patient, noble-minded and sociable supervisor whose faith is always reflected in her words and deeds.

Secondly, I would like to thank the late Prof. Madya Dr. Muhammad Fauzi Jumingan, my first co-supervisor, for the generous efforts he exerted in shaping the initial steps of this thesis despite his severe illness. I pray to Almighty Allah to have mercy on his soul.

Thirdly, I would like to give my sincere thanks to Dr. Mohammed Sukki Bin Othman, my second co-supervisor, for his support and heartfelt encouragement which helped me complete this thesis.

I would also like to acknowledge the debt I owe to the various colleagues who provided assistance and encouragement during the carrying out of this thesis, particularly Assist. Prof. Majeed M. Mudhin from Essex University for providing me with references and the participants who generously volunteered to take part in the interview and to answer the verification sheets in Malaysia and abroad. My deep thanks also go to the experts Prof. Dr. Zeydan Khalaf Omar, Associate Prof. Dr. Hazim Hakoosh Muarich, Assist. Prof. Dr. Inad Muttlib Sayer, Prof. Rafi Mahmood Hussein, Dr. Francisco Pertas Dumanig and Dr. Kais A. Kadhim who validated the interview and verification sheets.

My biggest thanks go to my family for their patience, encouragement and for supporting me all along.

Finally, my thanks go to everyone who has supported me during the writing of this thesis and made the dream of the PhD a reality.

I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 9 September 2016 to conduct the final examination of Abed Shahooth Khalaf on his thesis entitled "A Semantico-Pragmatic Analysis of Amateur Subtitling of Swearwords in American Crime Drama Movies into Arabic" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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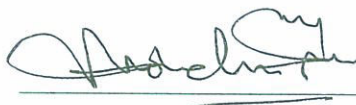
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|       |                                 |
|-------|---------------------------------|
| ST    | Source Text                     |
| TT    | Target Text                     |
| SL    | Source Language                 |
| TL    | Target Language                 |
| SC    | Source Culture                  |
| TC    | Target Culture                  |
| MSA   | Modern Standard Arabic          |
| TSs   | Translation Studies             |
| DTSs  | Descriptive Translation Studies |
| SW(s) | Swearword(s)                    |

## SYMBOLS OF TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM

### Key to symbols used in the transliteration system

(Adopted from Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (2008).

#### A. Consonants

| Arabic Letters | Roman Letters | Arabic Letters | Roman Letters |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| ا              | -             | ط              | t             |
| ب              | b             | ظ              | z             |
| ت              | t             | ع              | '             |
| ث              | th            | غ              | gh            |
| ج              | j             | ف              | f             |
| ح              | h             | ق              | q             |
| خ              | kh            | ك              | k             |
| د              | d             | ل              | l             |
| ذ              | dh            | م              | m             |
| ر              | r             | ن              | n             |
| ز              | z             | و              | w             |
| س              | s             | ه              | h             |
| ش              | sh            | ء              | '             |
| ص              | s             | ي              | y             |
| ض              | ḍ             | ة              | ah*           |

\*Transliterated as 'at' in the context of a combination of two words.

#### B. Vowels

| Short |   | Long |   | Diphthong |    |
|-------|---|------|---|-----------|----|
| ا     | a | آ    | ā | اي        | ay |
| ي     | i | ي    | ī | او        | aw |
| و     | u | و    | ū |           |    |



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Translation as an interlingual and intercultural communication process implies the transference of meaning from one language to another. However, although this view of translation is shared by several scholars, it is a simplistic view which usually associates translation with bilingualism (House, 1986). For instance, Pérez-González and Susam-Saraeva (2012) argue that "bilingualism is co-extensive with the capacity to translate" (p. 150). In addition, Harris (1977) speaks of 'natural competency' in translation which enables any person with knowledge of two linguistic systems to be able to practice translation. However, this is a superficial portrayal of the translation phenomenon since the message in the source text (hereafter referred to as ST) should undergo a socio-pragmatic contextual analysis before being transferred to the target language/culture (hereafter referred to as TL/TC), i.e. the recontextualization of the translated text within a new hosting environment. The significance of this analysis is based on the notion that a great deal of meaning of a text is negotiated within its socio-linguistic and cultural environment. Taking this into consideration, the translation process becomes so complex that some aspects in language texture are perceived as untranslatable particularly those highly sensitive and culture specific elements such as idioms, taboo language, slang and puns. Such problematic elements for translators are referred to as 'translation crisis points' (Pedersen, 2005, p. 1). The peculiarity of these and similar elements is that, being highly pertinent to a specific culture and linguistic system, they defy smooth interlingual/intercultural transference.

The problems arising from the transference of 'crisis points' were approached from different perspectives in an attempt to propose strategies to overcome them. However, due to cultural and linguistic mismatches between language systems which make optimal equivalence in handling 'crisis points' impossible, the emphasis of scholars was shifted towards achieving communicative/functional effects on the target recipients (Nida, 1964; Newmark, 1988). For instance, emphasizing this communicative effect, Newmark (1988, p. 39) argues that "[c]ommunicative translation attempts to produce on its reader an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original." This newly emerging approach represents a turning point in terms of the priority given to the TL recipients though at the expense of fidelity to the ST.

However, achieving a similar effect on the target recipients is impaired by linguistic and cultural barriers that might deem the translator's attempt a failure. In this regard, there is consensus that linguistic barriers are more or less manageable by restructuring in the TL, i.e., transposition or the use of other translation strategies including paraphrasing, definition, among others. The most resisting barrier is the cultural aspect. And under the umbrella of culture comes the religious, traditional, historical, ideological differences which are deeply rooted in the behavior and way of thinking of the language community in such a way that violating these concepts becomes rather risky. This is stressed by Nida

(2000) who rightly argues that “differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure.” (p. 130). Such complications stem from the cultural norms and conventions translators should abide by when carrying out any interlingual communication acts. The impact of cultural norms on translational practices encouraged Nord (1997) to argue that “[t]ranslating means comparing cultures.” (p. 34).

As whether translators should abide by the SC or TC norms, translation theorists were divided into two main camps; those who are ST-oriented (e.g. Nord, 1997; Catford 1965) and those who are TT-oriented (e.g. Holmes, 2000; Hatim & Mason 1997; Chesterman, 1997; Toury 1995; Venuti, 1995; Nida, 1964). The orientation whether to the ST or TT is more acute if the translator deals with two very remote cultures. Depending on the entrusted commission, the translator can be faithful to the ST (foreignization), hence, “bringing the target audience to the source text” (Venuti, 1995, p. 18). But the translation outcome resulting from this strategy may conflate with the norms in the receptor culture. In other words, the translation might be rejected on the basis of the recipients' evaluation in regard to the dominating cultural norms in their community. On the other hand, if the translator considers only acceptability in the TC, s/he exhibits less fidelity to the ST (domestication), “bringing the source text close to the target audience” (Venuti, 1995, p. 20). This is the reason for accusing translators of being betrayers though their role in mediating between cultures/languages cannot be ignored (Nornes, 1999). In the words of Bell (1991, p. 6), “[s]omething is always ‘lost’ (or, might one suggest, ‘gained’?) in the [translation] process and translators can find themselves being accused of reproducing only part of the original and so ‘betraying’ the author’s intentions.”

The strength of recipients’ expectancy norms becomes more active in the transference of any of the ‘translation crisis points’ particularly those that the TC puts strong restrictions on. In this regard, a special reference should be made to the treatment of swearwords (hereafter referred to as SWs) in interlingual transference from open to conservative cultures. It is well documented that each community applies sanctions on certain linguistic behaviors and social constructs and considers breaching such sanctions taboo as it causes offense.

The degree of offense increases when the culturally stigmatized linguistic behaviors are exposed in public domains such as television programs, cinematic and filmic productions. In such platforms, the (in)visibility of the translator Venuti (1995) highlights finds its explicit expression when rendering audiovisual productions containing SWs or expressions. The translator’s visibility becomes clearer in AVT modes, particularly subtitling, where the viewers are exposed to both the original film dialogue and the added subtitles. Such an environment provides viewers with a good opportunity to evaluate the subtitling translator's performance without acknowledging the constraints of the medium.

## **1.2 Audiovisual Translation**

Audiovisual translation (hereafter referred to as AVT) is rather an inclusive term referring to all cinematic, filmic and TV modes of translation that imply the utilization of both the



acoustic and visual channels of communication in conveying meaning to the target audiences (Delabastita, 1989). According to Diaz-Cintas and Remael (2007, p. 12), the term "AVT was used to encapsulate different translation practices used in the audiovisual media – cinema, television, VHS – in which there is a transfer from a source to a target language, which involves some form of interaction with sound and images." Hence, subtitling, dubbing, voice-over, surtitling, narration and commentary are all types of AVT since they all meet the requirements of transfer embodied in this definition. However, each of these translation modes is characterized by certain physical, technical and linguistic constraints and they all display certain affinity with the technological developments in means of communication deployed for their broadcasting.

With the widespread of means of communication worldwide and the proliferation of satellite channels, a tremendous increase in the demand on AVT can be observed nowadays (Diaz-Cintas, 2012; Folaron, 2010). These channels broadcast for 24 hours and need to import foreign TV programs and movies to cope with this broadcasting routine since local audiovisual productions are not sufficient. Accordingly, different TV programs that suit the preferences of all age groups of viewers should be imported. All types of entertainments, sport, video games, sitcoms, soap operas, documentaries, scientific as well as news programs, which come in foreign languages and need to be translated, are imported on daily basis. This new scenario has led to the emergence of several types of AVT modes to suit each of these genres, such as live subtitling, audio description, audio-subtitling, conference interpreting, and translation for the mass media which in turn encompasses film translation, TV shows and video game localization among others (Diaz-Cintas, 2012; Fernández-Costales, 2012; Pérez-González (2012a). The focus of scholarly work on each of these types of AVT has assigned AVT a central status within Translation Studies (hereafter referred to as TSs) within a period of only two decades (Remael, 2010).

Due to the sophistication of the apparatus used in carrying out the translation act in each of the AVT modes, the emergence of technical, physical and linguistic problems becomes inevitable. These problems that are usually associated with AVT or multimedia translation (Gambier, 2003), (also known as film translation, screen translation, constrained translation, and language transfer, (Snell-Hornby, 2006; Karamitroglou, 2000; Mayoral, Kelly, and Gallardo, 1988; Luyken, Herbst, Langham-Brown, Reid, & Spinhof, 1991; Titford, 1982) have attracted the attention of researchers since the 1980s. However, the complexity and multimodality, and hence intra-semiotic nature of the field made some scholars and translation theorists skeptical about the viability of this type of language transfer. Their stance stems from the fact that the role of the translator in such a field is impinged on by the presence of other sign systems characteristic of each audiovisual modality. For instance, Catford (1965, p. 53) claims that "[t]ranslation between media is *impossible* (i.e., one cannot 'translate' from the *spoken* to the *written* form of a text or vice versa)." (Italics in the original). What Catford implies is the difficulty inherited in AVT of finding compatibility between the spoken (phonological) dialogue of the movie and the imposed (graphological) subtitles; each accomplishing communication through different channels.

This state of affairs reflects a hesitation on the part of some translation scholars to consider AVT as a discipline that has to be explored within the realm of TSs. Contrariwise, Hatim

and Mason (1990) call for a view of translation that recognizes all modes of AVT on the basis of the communicative acts they perform. According to these authors, it is rather unhelpful to restrict translation to certain genres, but to make it more comprehensive to “include such diverse activities as film subtitling and dubbing”. (p. 2). In addition, Baker and Malmkjær (2001, p. 277) believe that “Translation Studies’ is now understood to refer to the academic discipline concerned with the study of translation at large, including . . . DUBBING and SUBTITLING.” (Block capitals in original). Moreover, pioneering figures of the Polysystem Theory strongly support the idea that this theory can be fairly applied to the cinema, not only to literature (Lambert, 1998; Catrysse, 1992; Delabastita, 1990).

As stated above, the interest in this field comes from the wide and fast spread of means of entertainment worldwide and the interdependence between AVT practices and technological developments. By now, people can have access to means of entertainment which also are used for other teaching and learning purposes (Etemadi, 2012; Diaz-Cintas & Cruz, 2008; Pavese & Perego, 2008; Araujo, 2008). Since these facilities are usually produced in English (being the world lingua franca), the need for translation into the community’s native language becomes necessary.

With the easy use of new subtitling software freely available on the Internet, subtitling, as a type of AVT, has become a booming industry in the age of globalization. With globalization and the digital revolution, people can watch subtitled productions anytime and everywhere. As a result, the language barriers have almost disappeared (Hunter, Lobato, Richardson, & Thomas, 2013). With the advance of modern technology, the art of subtitling has witnessed tremendous changes. For instance, it has become possible for the individual person to shift to watch the subtitles of every movie with the use of the teletext. S/he can access the subtitles of whatever movies s/he wants to watch by navigating Internet domains. Furthermore, the invention of the DVD technology represents a revolution in cinematography due to its huge storage capacity. A DVD can store more than 32 subtitles in different languages and dubbed versions in 8 languages. Such platforms have bridged the gap between consumers of media productions and brought them very close to the production process to the extent that viewers have begun to take a role in this process, an environment leading to the emergence of amateur subtitling.

### **1.3 Amateur Subtitling**

A noticeable move that goes hand in hand with the previously mentioned changes in the AVT scenario is the formation of certain groups of fans or amateur translators (fansubbers) who have established particular logs and websites to carry out the subtitling of movies into their respective languages. According to Diaz-Cintas and Sánchez (2006), fansubbing originated in Japan in the 1980s referring to a “subtitled version of a Japanese anime program” (p. 37). Despite concerns about legality, “the popularity of fansubbing has grown exponentially, with an ever-increasing number of people creating their amateur subtitles” (ibid, p. 44). The act of movie subtitling done by nonprofessional translators was described as “amateur subtitling” by Bogucki (2009). On the other hand, Sajna (2013, p.3) makes a distinction between ‘fansubbers’ and ‘funsubbers or funtranslators’. For this

author, it is important to differentiate between the two as 'fansubbers' alone aspire to be professional.

It can be argued that the existence of the fansubbing fandom is associated with the great developments in the world of today, the most important of which is the significant progress in the means of communication and the invention of user friendly and cheap means of communication such as the Internet. For instance, with the availability of free of charge subtitling software, Japanese anime fans started producing subtitles for such programs in other languages for other eager anime fans and disseminating them on the Internet. This same idea has attracted the attention of other fans in other domains and "other language combinations and genres, including films" (Díaz-Cintas & Sánchez, 2006, p. 45). Hence, according to Lee (2011), fansubtitling became common in "US films and TV shows" and "South Korean, Chinese and Taiwanese films and TV drama series . . ." (p. 1132). The fans or amateur subtitling translators voluntarily carry out the task of subtitling movies to the eager movie fans who cannot stand the delay of the official release of their favorite movies. This motivation has led scholars such as Fernández-Costales (2012, p. 9) to describe this subtitling situation as "the practice of subtitling audiovisual material by fans for fans." However, although this phenomenon is getting momentum and fan translators nowadays represent a rivalry to professional translators, it "seems to have passed unnoticed to the academic community and there are very few studies about this new type of audiovisual translation . . . , with most referring to it only superficially" (Díaz-Cintas & Sánchez, 2006, p. 38).

Reasons behind the paucity of academic interest in this type of Internet translation can be attributed to the dubious or illegal nature of the work done by amateur subtitlers who usually are anonymous figures using nicknames and sharing pirate subtitling files of foreign movies. This illegality is ascribed to the fact that pirating subtitling files is considered an act of copyright and intellectual property infringement (Jewitt & Yar, 2013; Leonard, 2005). In addition, amateur subtitlers do not normally adhere to common professional subtitling norms. Moreover, what distinguishes them from professional subtitlers is their revolt against the interventionist norms and conventions (Gambier, 2009). Hence, while professional subtitlers adopt the 'domestication' approach when conveying the ST content, amateur subtitlers adopt the 'foreignization' approach. Moreover, professional subtitlers attempt to facilitate the target recipients' understanding, through removing or diluting foreign cultural specificities and nuances. Amateur subtitlers, on the other hand, are driven by their desire to satisfy their peer fans' needs for experiencing the foreign cultural peculiarities. Being themselves fans of foreign movies, amateur subtitlers are familiar with other fans' preferences. Thus, they try to keep cultural peculiarities in the ST intact in the TT. In this manner, they attempt to bring the target audience to the ST (Venuti, 1995). To achieve this aim, they adopt the word-for-word strategy of translation which necessitates that much of the information in the ST be retained in the subtitles (Gambier, 2009). To compensate for the lack of space on the small TV screen, amateur subtitlers break the golden rule of length concerning the number of lines per subtitle or the number of characters per line. This orientation renders amateur subtitlers to be more creative than their professional peers (Fernández-Costales, 2012; Díaz-Cintas, 2005).

Besides, the amateur fandom utilizes the immediate contact the Internet provides to foster interaction between subtitling producers, distributors and viewers. This is usually expressed in the form of feedback subtitlers get from viewers, which represents a sustaining factor for this community of practice and helps subtitlers respond to their viewers' needs (Edfeldt, Fjordevik & Inose, 2006). Through their feedbacks, users utilizing amateur subtitles express their "indebtedness" and "gratitude" which "motivate the translator to keep contributing." (Švelch, 2013, p. 308).

Another very important distinctive feature of amateur subtitling is that, while professional subtitles are profit driven and provided only for celebrity movies, amateur subtitles are provided on free basis for almost all movies regardless of economic gains. Moreover, while professional subtitling is geographically restricted, amateur subtitling is internationally available. Thus, it is no exaggeration to say that amateur subtitlers provide subtitles for movies on demand (Lee, 2011).

However, amateur subtitlers are said to be of low linguistic and pragmatic competence (La Forge & Tonin, 2014; Bogucki, 2009). They practice film subtitling as a sort of fun or hobby (Luczaj, Holy-Luczaj & Cwiek-Rogalska, 2014; Lee, 2011) they share with movie fans through the easy and cheap access to the Internet. As is well-known, taking subtitling as a mere hobby is not enough to cater for the perplexities of such a process represented by the cultural and linguistic disparities between the SL and the TL. It is well-documented that the decision making process in subtitling is influenced by the linguistic and pragmatic knowledge of the languages involved in addition to knowledge of both cultures (Mwihaki, 2004). A lack of cultural, linguistic and/or pragmatic competence surely leaves undesirable consequences on the subtitler's performance.

Another distinctive feature of amateur subtitling is the lack of censorship or editing on the subtitles combined with a lack of expertise and formal training in translation skills, which can lead to encountering problems during the subtitling process (Pérez-González, 2012b). In such a situation, the role of translation expertise and formal training cannot be underestimated particularly when addressing cumbersome situations within the limited space and time available for an audiovisual subtitler. Under intensive formal translation training, potential subtitlers are exposed to numerous difficult translation situations whereby they are informed of suitable techniques to overcome these situations. The lack of censorship, on the other hand, may jeopardize the quality of the amateur subtitlers' performance as it allows for typo, grammatical and stylistic mistakes to creep into the products.

In addition, the procedure followed by amateur subtitlers has some bearing on their performance. Unlike professional subtitling where each aspect of the subtitling activity is carried out by a specialist, the amateur subtitler undertakes almost all these activities by him/herself. Under such a production condition, the amateur subtitling outcomes become vulnerable to exhibit certain weaknesses.



It is noteworthy to mention, however, that translation scholars have raised their awareness about this growing phenomenon (Sajna 2013; Pérez-González & Susam-Saraeva, 2012; Fernández-Costales, 2012; Orrego-Carmona, 2012, 2013, 2014; Bogucki, 2009; Pérez-González, 2007a, 2007b, 2012a, 2012b; Díaz-Cintas & Sánchez, 2006; Díaz-Cintas, 2005; O'Hagan, 2005, among others). For example, Orrego-Carmona (2012) strongly affirms that "scholarly attention within Translation Studies is rapidly increasing and studies on non-professional subtitling have mushroomed in the last five years." (p. 7). Moreover, Orrego-Carmona (2013, p. 130) conceives non-professional subtitling as "a highly active front for translation activity in the world." This increasing attention to the non-professional subtitling phenomenon is evident from the international conferences held on it. Not only this, but experts such as Pérez-González and Susam-Saraeva (2012, p. 158) encouraged other scholars and translators in the field to take advantage from the non-professional interlingual activities, otherwise, they "will lose valuable opportunities for enhancing their scholarly knowledge, and translators and interpreters will miss valuable opportunities for professional growth."

As for the incentive they get, Bogucki (2009) argues that amateur subtitlers join the Internet subtitling community because they have the desire "to make a contribution in an area of particular interest and to popularize it in other countries, making it accessible to a broader range of viewers/readers who belong to different linguistic communities." (p. 49). In addition, Pérez-González (2012a) talks about the concept of 'infotainment' coming from undertaking amateur subtitling whereby translators gain information in addition to entertainment. However, this desire is usually impinged on by the mismatches between languages.

When it comes to translating from English into Arabic, the task of the amateur subtitler is complicated by the fact that subtitling into Arabic adopts Modern Standard Arabic (hereafter referred to as MSA) whereas the type of language used in movies is usually the colloquial English variety. This situation entails that features of the colloquial everyday variety of English, such as the use of SWs, pose a difficulty for the Arab subtitlers in their search for counterparts in MSA for such words; usually colloquial Arabic is spoken not written. The tendency to opt for MSA SWs is justified on the basis that these words are more 'prestigious' and are of less emotive overtones than their colloquial counterparts (Al-Khatib, 1995). The previously discussed problems emerge as natural side effects of the "overt" nature of subtitling because it does not rule out the original dialogue. Thus, viewers have the ability to compare the subtitles with what the actors say and subjective judgments are made accordingly (Gottlieb, 2005).

#### **1.4 Statement of the Problem**

The use of SWs is considered offensive and, therefore, disapproved by many people particularly if used in public spheres such as the mass media. The offense of SWs stems from the fact that they are usually related to tabooed domains in the community (especially sex organs and activities, body functions and religion) whose mention is regarded as an act of impoliteness. The tabooed nature of SWs renders them more powerful and, consequently, their exposure in movies or TV programs, for example, becomes insulting to the viewers who may feel resentful, upset or annoyed.

It is argued that the offense of SWs increases in the process of subtitling foreign movies to other speech communities. This hypothesis is based on two main factors. The first is that these words "seem to have a stronger effect in writing than in speech, especially if they are translated literally." (Ivarsson & Carroll, 1998, p. 126). This is true because of the greater cognitive processing of reading and hearing these words and the reinforcement from the image and facial expressions and body movements of the actors. The second is the fact that cultures differ in their tolerance of offensive language. That is to say, what might be considered a normal use of the emotion laden word in the SC may cause offense to the recipients in the TC. This relates to the active norms and traditions which may be different amongst cultures.

When approaching the subtitling of SWs in English movies, an increase in the number of such words in these movies is noticeable (Cressman, Callister, Robinson, & Near, 2009). These movies usually depict the way native speakers manipulate their language when they converse with each other for certain pragmatic, group membership or solidarity purposes. In other words, they reflect the type of spontaneous language people use when they are in the street, i.e. whether they are angry, happy or frustrated (diamesic dimension of language) (Parini, 2013). Handling this increased number of SWs represents a problem to subtitlers due to the perceived offense of these words as well as the known spatial, temporal and physical constraints of subtitling.

During the past three decades, a growing scholarly interest was directed towards tackling problems of subtitling. Among the widely discussed problems in this type of AVT were the treatment of SWs and other features of the oral use of language in everyday interactions such as puns, humor, discourse markers and cultural specific references (Santaemilia, 2008; Karjalainen, 2002; Lung, 1998; Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993, among other). The emphasis on such linguistic elements stems from the fact that, because they are characteristics of the oral use of language, they become difficult to be retained intact in the change to the written mode due to the above mentioned constraints.

When it comes to the treatment of SWs, the highly debated issue is whether such words should be translated at all or toned down to reduce their obscenity (Bucaria, 2009; Hjort, 2009; Diaz-Cintas & Remael, 2007). Those who support the omission of SWs in subtitling justify this on the basis that such words are not of important content value and can be deleted to provide more space to other significant segments. Moreover, the feedback from the image on the screen can help convey the intended act of swearing. Those who are against deleting or toning down SWs, on the other hand, believe that such a strategy may bring more prominence to these words as viewers with reasonable command of the movie's language would question the discrepancy between what they read in the subtitles and what they hear actors saying. In addition, SWs are intentionally used in the movie to depict a sketch of the persons using them, their idiolects, type of relationship or the social status they maintain, i.e., the diastratic dimension of language (Parini, 2013).

However, reviewing the studies addressing the amateur subtitling of SWs shows that the attention of scholars was focused on either the strategies adopted in subtitling such words or on comparing the performance of professional and nonprofessional subtitlers in this

regard. For instance, Tian (2011) argued that Chinese amateur subtitlers tended to self-censor SWs when subtitling American TV shows by replacing such words with random typographical symbols or with a neutral alerting phrase or eliminating them altogether. A study by García-Manchón (2013) which compared the amateur and professional subtitling of SWs in English movies into Spanish revealed that omission was the overriding strategy of subtitling adopted by professional and amateur subtitlers. However, professional subtitlers deleted more SWs than amateur subtitlers. Likewise, Massidda (2012) found that whilst the DVD subtitlers toned down most of the SWs in the subtitling of English movies into Italian, the amateur subtitlers retained them intact.

As for the available literature on the subtitling of SWs in English movies into Arabic, it contains scattering references to the way such words were treated in the process of subtitling and the Arab audiences' reaction towards the use of such words in the mass media. For example, Khuddro (2000) argued that religiously and sexually charged references in foreign films should be ignored or edited before being displayed to the Arab audiences in subtitled movies or TV shows. Moreover, Mazid (2006) suggested that English SWs in movies can be deleted when subtitled into Arabic because such words are common in the Arab community and viewers can grasp the intended swearing act from the feedback in the image on the screen. In addition, Gamal (2008) emphasized the role of censorship on English movies before subtitling into Arabic where all suggestive and objectionable offensive references should be deleted. Reiterating this emphasis, Alkadi (2010) found that Arab viewers are less tolerant of SWs even when such words are softened in the subtitles of English movies.

To date, although much work was done on subtitling into Arabic in general and on the subtitling of SWs in particular, the studies tended to be confined to professional subtitling. The amateur subtitling of such words, however, remained a neglected area of research although it is gaining momentum nowadays as evidenced by the increasing number of researches carried out in this field (Orrego-Carmona, (2014), (2015); Švelch, (2013). This state of affairs is a natural outcome of the underestimated status of the amateur phenomenon in the Arab World, a fact which was raised earlier by Gamal (2008, p. 10) who since that time argued that "fan subtitling in Egypt has not been examined" though there are numerous "websites with forums dedicated to subtitling Japanese anime and other foreign films." Surprisingly, since then no serious efforts have been directed to this type of AVT and its incurring problems.

In addition, although the previously cited studies tackled problems and strategies of subtitling SWs in foreign movies into Arabic, very little was said about the changes of the semantic fields of SWs in the ST and TT or the factors inducing these changes. Besides, the incongruity of the expressed pragmatic functions of SWs in the subtitles in comparison with the movie dialogue was very scarcely touched upon. More importantly, whether the deletion of SWs impairs the conveyance of the intended meaning of such words to the recipients passed unnoticed by most of the authors. Authors were confined to suggest deletion as the main strategy for handling SWs without considering the directors' intention behind employing such words in the movies they produce (Han & Wang, 2014; Wang, 2013; Ljung, 2009).

Therefore, it is timely that more studies be conducted to describe the translational behavior of this newly established Internet fansubbing phenomenon on the subtitling of SWs in English movies into Arabic. Such studies can benefit from corpora available free online to descriptively and empirically address this phenomenon so that sound generalizations can be made. The adoption of this descriptive and empirical approach in handling SWs in the amateur subtitling would represent a revolt against the prescriptive orientation characteristic of the majority of previous studies.

Accordingly, the present study attempts to fill this gap in the literature by carrying out a comprehensive analysis of the translational behaviors of amateur subtitlers when addressing SWs in English movies into Arabic. It adopts a descriptive approach based on the analysis of a corpus comprising the scripts of certain popular American crime drama movies with very high occurrences of SWs and their subtitled versions in Arabic. In focusing on the amateur subtitlers' performance, the study examines their translation patterns when encountering translation 'crisis points', particularly the treatment of emotionally charged words and the most recurrent subtitling strategies adopted.

Essentially, the study attempts an analysis of the incurred changes in the semantic fields of SWs in the subtitles compared to those in the movie dialogues and the factors inducing these changes. Furthermore, it carries out an in-depth analysis of the mismatches in the pragmatic functions of SWs in the selected movies and their Arabic subtitles. The analysis of the uses of SWs within their depicted socio-cultural context is helpful in identifying the pragmatic functions intended by speakers in uttering them to decide the translation strategy accordingly. The recommendation to delete or tone down SWs should not be based on subjective speculations and hasty generalizations of the target audiences' expectations. It should rather be based on the evaluation of the purpose or function each of these words is used for and the relationship between interlocutors exchanging the swearing acts.

### **1.5 Why Study Swearwords**

Although the use of SWs is discredited and seen as improper or a sign of bad manner, the act of swearing is thought to be a universal phenomenon because almost all languages exhibit instances of swearing in certain contexts (Ghassempur, 2009; Montagu, 1967). This assumption is supported by Montagu (1967, p. 2) who affirms that although "[I]t is the general understanding that it is improper to swear, yet there continue to be a vast number of swearers." On this basis, one is tempted to argue that since swearing is usually associated with the expression of various types of emotions, it is as omnipresent in language as these emotions are. Indeed, there seems to be as many SWs as suitable for describing the person's sudden or inner feelings. A person may express dismay, frustration, surprise, happiness, anger; may scorn or insult with the use of SWs. In fact, for some authors, although SWs represent something that causes offense and are unacceptable in the majority of situations, in other situations "they may be the appropriate thing to say." (Fernandez-Dobao, 2006). This reflects how significant the role swearing plays in human language, their behavior and community. Therefore, in order to complete the research in all linguistic aspects of language, swearing should be studied as it is as important as any other aspects of language.



The necessity to study swearing stems from the fact that it is employed for certain purposes within each community of practice and its use cannot be arbitrary or asymmetrical. Rather, it is triggered as a response to certain social, psychological or linguistic purposes. As a social need, it is an identity marker to signal group membership. Psychologically speaking, swearing is said to relieve frustration and pain in addition to representing a reaction to anger or rage. For example, when a person hits his/her hand with a hammer, his/her first choice from his/her linguistic repertoire would be a SW to release pain. Hence, swearing is a relieving mechanism and it helps restore emotional balance. In addition, for Stenström, Andersen and Hasund (2002) swearing is a manifestation of 'independence' and 'forcefulness'. From the linguistic perspective, Jay (2000, p. 259) believes that those who resort to swearing suffer from "impoverished lexicon and laziness." Thus, when they are under pressure, SWs are the only words they have at their disposal. A similar notion is supported by Andersson and Trudgill (1990) who perceive "swearing as a personal weakness—your vocabulary is so small that you have to use these 'easy' and 'lazy' words." (p. 63). Likewise, Stenström et al. (2002, p.77) argue that swearing reflects "lack of education and linguistic poverty".

Scholars focusing on swearing testify that it is akin to the informal spontaneous everyday use of language (diasemic dimension). In addition, the recurrent use of swearing acts is idiosyncratic of a person's mannerism. This implies that the use of SWs can reflect the educational level, social class and sociolectal traits of that person (diastatic dimension). Normally, a person who excessively uses SWs is associated with low level of education and inferior social class (McEnery, 2006; Jay, 1992).

In movie production, directors exploit this notion for characterization purposes of members within groups of gangs, criminals, drug dealers, friends at school, factory community and so forth where swearing is used to foster solidarity, power, expression of endearment or to create laughter (Allan & Burrige, 2006; Culpeper, 2005). Hence, the use of SWs becomes purposeful within such groups and it is meant to perform certain speech acts. Understanding the pragmatic function of such speech acts requires a thorough analysis of the sociocultural context of situation in which the speech act occurs, the relationship between interlocutors, and the intention of the speaker and his/her tone of voice. This is mandatory in movie subtitling so as viewers can formulate a similar characterization to that intended in the movie.

What this implies is that caution should be taken when undertaking the intercultural transfer of SWs during the subtitling process to ensure that the intended meaning is accurately rendered. This argument stems from the nature of swearing and the way different cultures perceive its use in public. Though with variant degrees, almost all people envisage swearing as being disgusting because of the nature of the feelings it provokes and the taboo nature of the things it is associated with. According to Allan and Burrige (2006, p. 1), "[T]aboos arise out of social constraints on the individual's behavior where it can cause discomfort, harm or injury." These constraints usually decide what is appropriate or not in a particular situation so as to avoid being offensive. Violating these constraints is usually perceived as an impolite act.

With this in mind, direct or literal translation can be risky on the basis that the final product may seem to trigger impoliteness in the receptor culture. Moreover, fidelity to the ST should first be weighed against acceptability according to the recipients' expectations and the degree of comprehension they gain from the translation. This hypothesis finds sound expression when subtitling English SWs.

Unlike other problematic issues in intercultural transfer including culture specific references, English SWs entertain certain peculiar characteristics. First, they are common worldwide. Consequently, however translators try to hide them, their familiar pronunciation to the audiences uncovers them (Mazid, 2006). Second, the feedback from the images on the screen reinforces the resonance of SWs uttered by actors in the movie. A corollary of this is that subtitlers may overcome puns, humor or jokes particularly if they are aware of the audience's level of competency in English, but they cannot easily overcome the overwhelming use of English SWs.

## **1.6 Why American Crime Drama Movies**

The selection of movies from the American crime drama genre is justified on the basis that the characters in these movies use a lot of SWs that reflect various pragmatic functions. As further explained in chapter 3, these movies depict the life of low social class people such as drug dealers, murderers, gangs and mafia people whose discourse is characterized by heavy reliance on SWs and other taboo language features when they come in confrontations with the police or members from other groups. This discourse which is rich in usage of SWs is exploited by movie directors to present an accurate portrayal of the idiosyncratic style characteristic of the characters in these movies. Its intent is to give the audiences an exact depiction of the way such characters converse with each other or express their inner feelings.

## **1.7 Objectives of the Study**

This study is conducted on the amateur subtitling of SWs in American crime drama movies into Arabic. The general aim of the study is to carry out a semantico-pragmatic analysis of the amateur subtitling of SWs in such movies into Arabic and the translation strategies adopted by these subtitlers in this interlingual/intercultural transference process. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Identify shifts in the semantic fields of SWs in the Arabic subtitles of the selected movies and the possible causes of these shifts.
2. Identify changes in the pragmatic functions of SWs in the subtitles in comparison with those in the movies.
3. Identify the translation strategies used by amateur translators when subtitling SWs in the selected corpus into Arabic.
4. Examine how the deletion of SWs in the Arabic subtitles affects the conveyance of the intended meaning of such words and identify the causes of deletion.

## **1.8 Research Questions**

Based on the objectives above, the following research questions are formulated:

1. To what extent have the semantic fields of SWs in the movie dialogues been retained in the Arabic subtitles and what causes the resulting shifts?
2. To what extent have the pragmatic functions of SWs in these movies been preserved in the Arabic subtitles?
3. What are the translation strategies adopted by amateur subtitlers to transfer SWs in these movies into Arabic?
4. How does the deletion of SWs in the Arabic subtitles affect the conveyance of their intended meanings and what are its causes?

## **1.9 Scope of the Study**

The study included a corpus consisting of the scripts of two American crime drama movies with high occurrences of SWs and their Arabic amateur subtitles. SWs and expressions of all types such as those related to sex activities, religion, body functions, sex organs, and disabilities and abuses were identified and selected as the data for analysis. The focus on the American crime drama genre movies stems from the fact that the confrontational atmosphere in such types of movies stimulates characters to use different SWs for various pragmatic functions. The resulting abundance of SWs within the fast pace of the movie represents a challenge to amateur subtitlers in figuring out the intended meaning of each SW and adopting a suitable translation strategy.

With this in mind, the study focuses only on subtitling whereas other AVT types such as dubbing or voice over are not covered. This restriction is justified on the basis that each of these interlingual transferring modes has its own peculiarities, technical and linguistic constraints, which cannot be addressed in a single study. More importantly, within the fansubbing cyberspace, only subtitling can be carried out by amateur translators. That is to say, since dubbing requires recruiting a new crew of actors from the viewers' native language, it is more difficult and challenging to amateur subtitlers.

In addition, subtitling is the closest to translation proper of all AVT modes as it adopts writing the dialogue on the bottom of the screen. Therefore, viewers can read the subtitles and hear the characters speaking the movie dialogue simultaneously. Thus, it gives viewers the opportunity to compare between the two texts. Besides, subtitling lends itself to analysis easily in comparison to the other AVT types. Moreover, subtitling is the most common type of AVT in the Arab World (Ben Slamia, 2015; Gottlieb, 1992).

## **1.10 Significance of the Study**

As previously stated, reviewing the literature focusing on subtitling foreign movies into Arabic reveals that there is paucity in research concentrating on fansubbing AVT despite the momentum this phenomenon is getting nowadays. Hence, the significance of the study stems from the fact that it is one of a few studies dealing with subtitling foreign movies in the Arab World and may be the first to be exclusively devoted to tackle amateur subtitling

from English into Arabic. Thus, it attempts to direct the attention of scholars and academics to this area of research. Moreover, the significance stems from the focus on subtitling SWs in foreign movies into Arabic, a very sensitive issue in Arabic academia.

Besides, by focusing on subtitling as an AVT type which synchronizes the subtitles with the original soundtrack, the study can be of significance in language learning/teaching situations. The acquisition of new vocabulary including SWs can best be done through exposing learners to the use of such words in real life situations as depicted in the movies. The concurrency between sound track in the movie and the imposed subtitles in Arabic can help students be familiar with the functions of SWs. In addition, it can be of significance in supporting students to polish their pronunciation of such words.

Moreover, the study is of value to students of translation as it draws attention to the significance of the semantic, pragmatic and sociolinguistic parameters when handling meaning transfer from English into Arabic. Such parameters can play an important role in the meaning negotiation processes through highlighting the rapport of relationship between interlocutors' communication acts. This has certain implications on the subtitling of highly emotive elements in language especially when the transfer is from an open into a conservative culture. Only after a thorough analysis of the sociocultural overriding norms, the commissioned translation strategy can be indicated. When these elements are taken into account, it is hoped that the subtitlers' performance be improved.

More importantly, the study attempts to draw the attention of academic institutions in the Arab World to the importance of establishing departments that offer courses in AVT. The reality is that although there are many universities in each state in the Arab World that offer courses in English/Arabic translation, very few, if any, offer courses in AVT. When such courses are offered, training novice students of translation can benefit from the available free subtitling software in the Internet. Utilizing these facilities provides good opportunities for students to practice the real art of subtitling. Moreover, the feedback these students get from viewers can foster their subtitling expertise; hence they will be prepared to enter the translation competitive market.

### **1.11 Theoretical Framework**

An insightful reading of the formulated models to account for the interlingual subtitling phenomenon reveals that they are as multifarious and intriguing as the subtitling activity itself. To explicate, some of these models approached subtitling as an outcome of a complex relationship between the SC and the TC in terms of the international sociopolitical and economic status of each culture. Other models concentrated on the role of context in deciding the pragmatic functions of lexemes in the ST which should be maintained in the subtitles following certain compensatory techniques that conform to the spatial and temporal constraints of subtitling. Yet, other models focused on the problems emanating from the technical restrictions and the change from the spoken to the written mode as well as the strategies adopted in this transfer. In addition, the more linguistic oriented of these models has attempted to foreground the polysemiotic nature of subtitling to emphasize its complexity and diversification.

When it comes to the peculiarities of subtitling, Titford (1982) argues that the time and space limitations characteristic of this type of language transfer create three dimensions problematic to subtitlers. The first relates to the fact that subtitles are assimilated 'orally' not 'aurally' when the viewer reads subtitles using eye scan. Hence, the viewer's eyes should process 'visual information' coming from actions displayed on the screen and the written account of the movie dialogue in the subtitles. The former is called 'dynamic information' while the latter is 'static information'. In this case, the subtitler has to decide which of these sources of information should be given priority and select the translation strategy accordingly. If dynamic information is more significant, only very indispensable static information should be offered, "thus leaving the viewer's eye free to follow the more important dynamic "information" on the screen." (p. 113). On the other hand, if static information is fatal to the comprehension of the storyline, subtitles should be maximally exploited for that end as long as the space and time constraints allow. The second dimension relates to the principles of cohesion and coherence that should be maintained in the subtitled text. However, since subtitles should synchronize with visual information and due to the constraints of the medium, subtitles may be coherent but rarely cohesive. The third is the visual and linguistic dimension which induces two problems; the relation between the linguistic material (subtitles) and the visual information in the ST and the speed with which viewers can process the subtitles. Consequently, editing subtitles becomes necessary to facilitate the viewer's reading capacity.

In addition to Titford, Delabastita (1989) attempted to build a theoretical framework encompassing the norms of interlingual subtitling. According to Karamitroglou (2000, p. 103), Delabastita "is the only scholar to propose a methodology for the specific investigation of norms in audiovisual translation." Delabastita's approach provides a comprehensive view of AVT by dividing the 'translation relationship' involved into 'competence, norms and performance'. Competence refers to the translator's knowledge of the source and target linguistic systems, while performance is manifested in the interlingual communicative act. Norms, on the other hand, represent a regulatory apparatus for an acceptable shift from the ST to the TL. The model can be understood via accounting for a list of questions that allegedly guide the translator in his decision making process. The list of questions was summarized by Chaume (2002) and its focus can be reformulated as follows; the global social, political, economic status of the TC, the cultural relationships between the SC and the TC, the cultural constraints the TC imposes on the translator, the intentions of the client, the tradition the TC maintains in respect of type of text, degree of openness of the TC, the linguistic policy of the TC and whether the genre of the SC, the values it communicates, the rhetorical argumentation employed, the linguistic, stylistic and filmic models used, exist in the TC.

It is clear that Delabastita puts strong emphasis on the human involvement in the 'persona of the translator' in carrying out the subtitling act. A meticulous reading of the above implications of the model shows that the subtitling process cannot be successfully executed unless the extralinguistic factors surrounding it are thoroughly considered. However, the model does not touch upon the complexities emanating from the subtitling process. In this regard, Karamitroglou (2000) argues that the questions Delabastita asks "tend to fluctuate from general to specific and then to general. As a result, his study seems unfocussed and disoriented." (p. 104). Nevertheless, it can be argued that the issues presented in the model have close affinity to the concerns the subtitler bears in mind when



encountering such aspects in language transfer. They are important when carrying out research on very culturally remote language systems such as English and Arabic.

In this light, it is well-known that cultures differ in their tolerance of offensive language. As for the Arab Muslim culture, it is characterized as being conservative and intolerant of offensive language in comparison with the English culture. This is related to the teachings of Islam as well as the norms, traditions and customs of the Arab society.

It is interesting to note that the questions formulated in this model reckon Pym's (2008, p. 325) principle of the "communicative risk", where the translator's decisions may be encouraged or inhibited by the norms of the more authoritative of the language pair s/he is working with. The notion of the authoritative language renders the subtitler's translation behavior as showing fidelity either to the ST/L or the TT/L. On his part, Gottlieb (2009) conditions fidelity to the ST by the recipients' familiarity with the SL and the degree of hegemony this language entertains. Consequently, the more the subtitler is aware of his target audience's knowledge of the SL, the more his/her fidelity to the ST is warranted. However, the polysemiotic nature of the audiovisual material and the search for easy and smooth comprehension on the part of audiences can counterbalance this inclination.

When it comes to the difficulties arising from the intriguing nature of interlingual subtitling, Hatim and Mason (1997) proposed a model which emphasizes the role of context in determining the pragmatic functions of utterances within the time and space constraints that make loss of information inevitable, and the shift from the spoken to the written mode. This shift results in difficulties that can be categorized into four kinds;

1. The shift from speech to writing entails that certain features characteristic of the spoken mode (dialect, intonation, code switching and style shifting, turn taking) cannot be easily conveyed in the written form in the TT.
2. The constrained medium used to communicate meaning; that is the space allocated at the bottom of the screen for the subtitles.
3. The resulting reduction of the ST obliges the translator to restore coherence in the TT to help readers get the intended meaning because the redundant elements assisting the SL viewers to comprehend the ST are lost in the subtitling process.
4. The requirement of matching the subtitles with the visual image, i.e. achieving synchronization between the subtitles and the moving image (pp. 65-66).

The model of Hatim and Mason (1997) meets with that of Brondeel (1994) in their emphasis on the technical problems incurred in the subtitling process though the latter's main focus is to ease the viewer's readability through the use of certain techniques including 'segmentation', 'reduction', 'reordering' or 'explanation' (p. 32). Brondeel believes that these techniques are necessary to reduce the cognitive efforts the viewer exerts in reading the subtitles, listening to the SL dialogue and watching the images on the screen. However, the two models diverge at the point where Brondeel's concentration

is on maintaining three levels of equivalence between the ST and the TT. First, the 'informative equivalence' which implies that 'all' information in the ST be transferred to the TL. Second, the 'semantic equivalence' which stresses the 'correct' conveyance of meaning from the ST to the target audience. Third, the 'communicative equivalence' which necessitates that the 'communicative dynamism' be maintained in the TT. Thus, Brondeel's model envisages a utopian picture of the complex interlingual subtitling phenomenon.

In the subject under study, keeping optimal equivalence between English and Arabic is difficult if not impossible within the 'communicative dynamism' due to the known cultural and linguistic differences between these two languages. Hatim and Mason's model, on the other hand, adopts a methodical/pragmatic orientation to account for the peculiarities of the subtitling phenomenon.

The previous accounts of some of the models addressing interlingual subtitling exhibit certain methodical unfoldings that have implications on the models addressing SWs regarding the way this type of language to be addressed. For example, Delabastita's (1989) emphasis on the cultural aspects and Hatim and Mason's (1997) focus on context and pragmatic function have some implications on the definition of SWs provided in Andersson and Trudgill's (1990) model which is summarized as follows. A SW is a type of language that:

1. Refers to something that is taboo and/or stigmatized in the culture;
2. Should not be interpreted literally;
3. Can be used to express strong emotions and attitudes (p. 53).

This is the definition of SWs that is adopted in this study. On the basis of this definition, what is to be considered a SW is culturally determined and its offensiveness should be pragmatically identified depending on the context of situation in which interlocutors are engaged. In line with this definition, Andersson and Trudgill (1990) classify swearing into; 'abusive swearing', 'expletives', 'humorous swearing' and 'auxiliary swearing'. While both abusive swearing and humorous swearing are directed at the addressee, only abusive swearing is intended to do harm; humorous swearing is used mainly to arouse banter. Expletives mainly express psychological emotions like anger, frustration, or happiness, and auxiliary swearing is idiosyncratic in an individual's speech (ibid, p. 61).

The distinction between the denotative/literal and connotative/metaphorical use of words is significant in assigning the swearing characteristic. Hence, in the expression of inner feelings, it is the connotative meaning the tabooed objects indicate that causes offense. However, for some linguists the stigmatized meaning of some SWs stems from their associations with the conceptual meaning of objects as perceived in the real world (Kidman, 1993).

This functional employment of SWs characterizes Wajnryb's (2005) model for categorizing uses of SWs. This author argues that SWs are used to express three main functions; cathartic, abusive and social. These three functions can be explained as follows:

1. Cathartic: this function of SWs comes in the form of a response to a sudden and (un)favorable event that impinges on the individual's course of actions. It usually expresses psychological emotions such as anger, pain, frustration and the like. Thus, it is normally directed at the speaker him/herself and the attendance of other people is not necessary, though it might be directed at other things causing the pain. It is considered a healthy behavior as it works to restore the individual's psychological equilibrium and lowers stress levels.
2. Abusive: it is the planned and venomous function of SWs which is mainly directed at others with the intent to insult. Hence, the attendance of a target is necessary, yet it is used as a verbal aggression to replace physical attack.
3. Social: it is interpersonal and used among homogeneous groups of speakers within the same speech community during periods when they feel at ease. Though directed at others, it is not venomous or intended to hurt. Rather the intent is social solidarity, banter and group membership. It commonly appears in informal interactions to kill the routine and cheer up speech. The social class, gender and age of interlocutors have certain influence on the use of social swearing (pp. 30-35).

These functions of SWs share interesting features. On the one hand, the cathartic group shares the non-venomous characteristic with the social group. On the other, the abusive group shares the necessity of having a target with the social group.

It is pertinent to point out that, in general, the majority of SWs are used in intense situations; in situations whereby conflicts and confrontations arise amongst interlocutors. This fact is further emphasized via the use of main SWs such as 'fucking' and 'bloody' as intensifiers that premodify other SWs to suit the speaker's intention for resorting to swearing. This account of the functions of SWs shows that they are not used for hedging because of the nature of such words, i.e., being obscene, dirty, vulgar and stigmatized (Ferklova, 2014).

Wajnryb's (2005) model is adopted in the analysis of SWs in the corpus into their pragmatic functions. The rationale behind using this model is that it is easy to apply, its categorization is broad yet more economical since it consists of only three categories, it takes into account the uses of SWs within their context of situation and its applicability is not confined to a particular language.

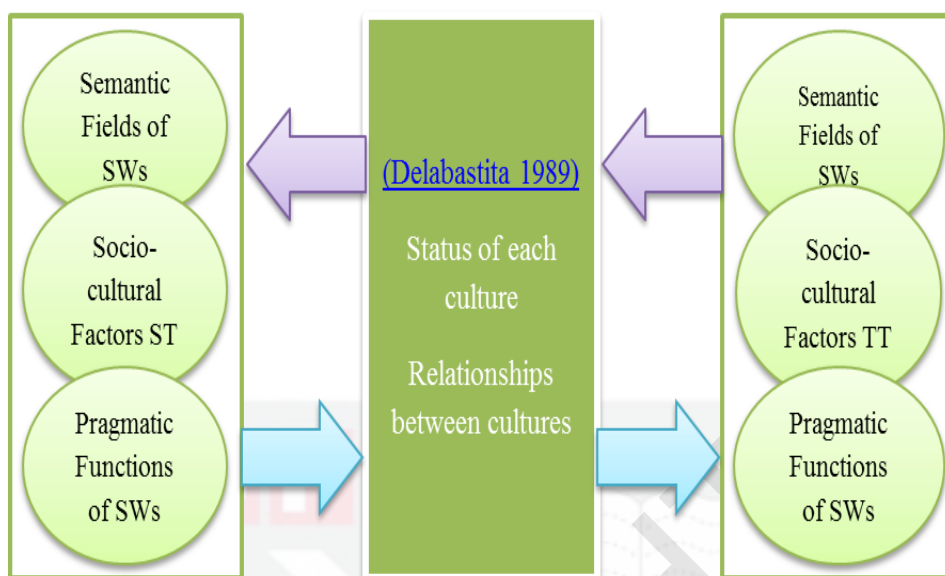
From a purely semantic perspective, Allan and Burridge (2006) presented a model that categorizes SWs into semantic fields. The authors gave a detailed account of the uses of discrete SWs and their role in face to face interaction. Furthermore, they made reference to the concepts of political correctness and politeness through their treatment of



euphemism, dysphemism and orthophemism. Their typology of SWs consists of five semantic fields namely: 1. Bodies and their effluvia (sweat, snot, faeces, menstrual fluid and so forth); 2. The organs and acts of sex, micturition and defecation; 3. Diseases, death, and killing (including fishing and hunting); 4. Naming, addressing, touching and viewing persons and sacred things, objects and places; 5. Food gathering, preparation and consumption. (p. 1). It is clear that the classification presented above is solely based on the semantic fields of SWs. It does not touch on the pragmatic functions or uses of SWs within their sociocultural context. However, based on its concentration on the semantic fields of SW, this model is used in assigning SWs in the corpus under study into their semantic fields.

In addition, taking a cross-cultural linguistic perspective, Ljung, (2011) presents a more comprehensive typology of SWs. Unlike previous typologies, Ljung categorizes SWs on the basis of their functions and themes. The former are subdivided into stand-alone functions and slot fillers. Under the subcategory stand-alone, Ljung includes expletive interjections, oaths, curses, affirmation and contradiction, unfriendly suggestions, ritual insults and name calling. The slot fillers encompass; adverbial/adjectival intensifier, adjectives of dislike, emphasis, modal adverbials, anaphoric use of epithets and noun supports. Furthermore, Ljung includes another category 'replacive' to substitute for uses of SWs that more or less denote their literal meaning and cannot be covered in the other functional categories. As for themes, these represent various taboo areas SWs belong to. The major taboo areas included in his typology are; the religious/supernatural, scatological, sex organs, sex activities and mother (family) themes (p. 35). In addition to these major themes, Ljung suggested additional "minor themes" including 'animal', 'death', 'disease', and 'prostitution'. Ljung (2011) intends his typology to be globally applicable as it highlights both the functions and semantic fields of SWs in a number of languages. The categorization of SWs on the basis of their functions is helpful though the categories are not mutually exclusive. A consequence of this is that "one and the same expression may allude to more than one theme." (ibid, p. 36). However, the categorization of SWs into semantic fields as proposed in this model is modified and merged with that of Allan and Burrige (2006) to be used in the study as explained in chapter three.

Out of the various theories addressing swearing, four of them are incorporated in this study because they closely relate to answering its questions. These are Andersson and Trudgill (1990) for the definition of SWs, Allan and Burrige (2006) and Ljung (2011), for categorizing SWs into semantic fields and Wajnryb's (2005) for determining their pragmatic functions as Figure 1.1 illustrates.

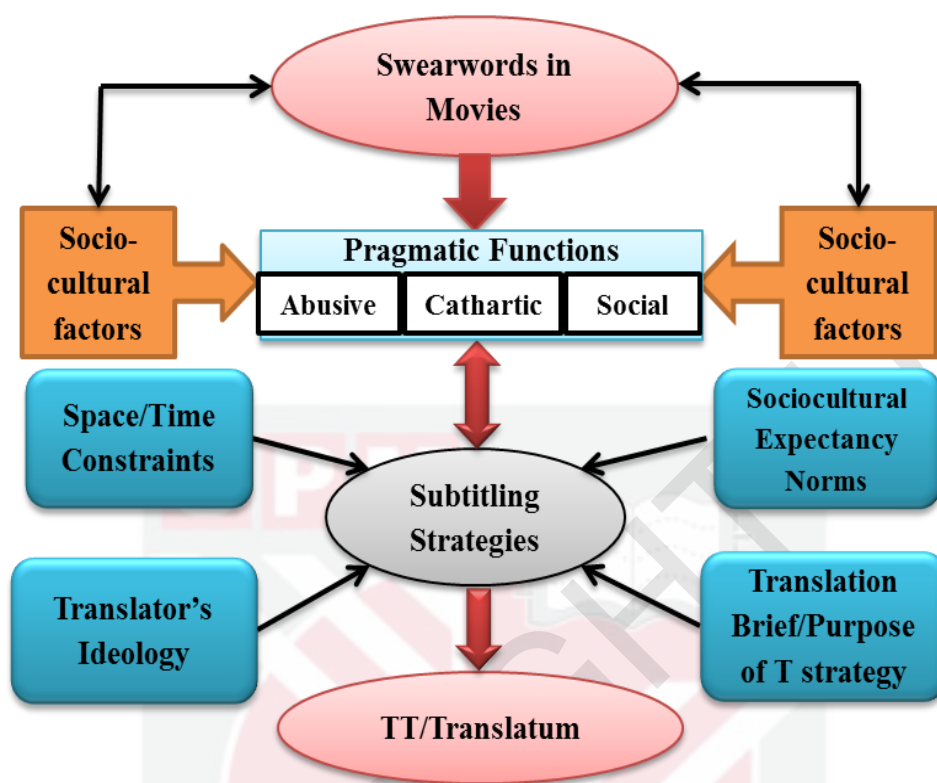


**Figure 1.1 : Theoretical framework**

As Figure 1.1 above shows, the semantic fields and pragmatic functions of SWs are determined in light of the sociocultural norms in each speech community. In the interlingual/intercultural subtitling, the degree of equivalence and tolerance in the selection of SWs depends on the several sociocultural and linguistic implications as formulated in Delabastita's (1989) model described above. The study conceives that subtitling SWs comes within a broad intercultural and interlingual transference activity. This activity is affected by the way each of the involved cultures perceives swearing in accordance with the dominating norms in that culture. Moreover, it is affected by the relationships between cultures and the status each of them entertains.

### **1.12 Conceptual Framework**

Conceiving swearing as a social construct shaped within a sociocultural setting and subtitling as an interlingual and intercultural act of communication, the conceptual framework of the study is represented by Figure 1.2 below.



**Figure 1.2 : Conceptual framework**

In movie subtitling, SWs from various semantic fields should be conceived as expressing certain pragmatic functions within the environment depicted in the movie. It is necessary that such functions are transferred to the target recipients. However, selecting a subtitling strategy is influenced by the target sociocultural and expectancy norms, translation brief, purpose of translation strategy, ideology of the translator and the time and space constraints.

### **1.13 Definition of Key Terms**

In this section, a definition of some technical terms is presented. The presented working definitions would familiarize the reader with these terms as a starting point to construe the main theoretical issues tackled in this study.

1. Amateur subtitling (also known as fansubbing): This term is a neologism for nonprofessional or fan-subtitling which refers to the subtitling of a foreign film or television program carried out by fans or amateur translators into a language other than that of the original.

2. Crime drama movies are movies which are mainly developed around the vicious actions of criminals or gangsters who carry out their actions outside the law, stealing and violently murdering others for personal monetary gains.
3. Pragmatic functions: These refer to the communicative functions a swearer intends to express via the use of SWs beyond their literal meaning such as abuses, anger, frustration, group membership and happiness, which are grouped into three main categories namely, abusive, cathartic and social according to Wajnryb's (2005) model.
4. Semantico-pragmatic analysis: This kind of analysis draws on the semantic properties of SWs such as coarseness, obscenity and vulgarity, which render them offensive and incite swearers to employ them for certain communicative purposes. It also describes SWs into the pragmatic functions they express in their particular sociocultural context.
5. Semantic fields: A semantic field of SWs represents a group of such words that belong together and relate to one hyponym. It describes the inter-relationship between such different words that form a complete lexical system such as sex activities, sex organs, body functions, incest, animals, and religious.
6. Swearwords: These are usually seen as taboo and/or offensive words of strong emotional associations especially used as an expression of a plethora of inner and social feelings beyond their literal meaning.
7. Translation strategies: A translation strategy is construed as a conscious procedure, technique or plan adopted to solve a problem incurred in the translation of a text or any of its segments (Loescher, 1991).

#### **1.14 Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Following this introduction, the literature review chapter presents an overview of what scholarly work has been written about translation equivalence, theories within the realm of TSs with special reference to Descriptive Translation Studies (hereafter referred to as DTSS) and norms of translation. Then, the main characteristics of interlingual subtitling are covered to familiarize the reader with the constraints of the medium that restrict the translator's choices when addressing the intercultural transference of SWs. The chapter also covers some aspects of the amateur subtitling phenomenon such as the subjects tackled by scholars including the work conditions of amateur subtitlers and the effect of these conditions on the quality of their performance, fansubbing as a social activity and the case studies on the subtitling of SWs by amateur subtitlers. The chapter introduces some pragmatic and semantic issues pertaining to the focus of the study including speech act theory, euphemism and dysphemism as well as types of meaning.

Chapter three discusses the methodology this thesis adopts to answer its research questions. It gives an account of the approach of the study, the criteria adopted in compiling the corpus of the study, characteristics of this corpus, the data collection

methods and data analysis. The data analysis stage has been divided into four main subsections each addressing a research question by introducing the model adopted to carry out the data analysis process as deemed suitable to answering that question.

Chapter four presents the findings of the research. It has been divided into four main sections each addressing the findings of analysis pertaining to a particular research question. Section one addresses the findings related to the shifts in the semantic fields of SWs in the Arabic subtitles in comparison to those in the movies and the probable causes of these shifts. Section two is devoted to a presentation of the findings pertaining to the changes of pragmatic functions of SWs in the subtitles compared to those expressed by English SWs in the movies. Section three presents the translation strategies adopted by the amateur subtitlers when transferring SWs into Arabic to give an indication of whether the subtitlers' orientation is SC-oriented or TC-oriented. Finally, section four discusses the findings in relation to the effect of deletion as the main translation strategy on the conveyance of the intended meaning of SWs to the target recipients and the probable causes of deletion.

Chapter five sums up the conclusions of the study by focusing on the major findings presented in relation to each of the research questions. The chapter also introduces the limitations of the study, its contributions to the field and recommendations for future directions.

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## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

- Khalaf, A. Sh., Sabariah Md Rashid, Md F. Jumingan and Md Suki Othman.(2014). Problems in amateur subtitling of English movies into Arabic. *Malaysian Journal of Languages and Linguistics* (3), 38-55.
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