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Being a Derry Girl is a fucking state of mind: How the subtitling of taboo language influences characterization in the series Derry Girls

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Being a Derry Girl is a fucking state of mind

How the subtitling of taboo language influences characterization in
the series *Derry Girls*

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of retention and non-retention of taboo language on the portrayal of characters' idiolects in the Dutch and German subtitles of the television series *Derry Girls*. An in-depth analysis of six episodes revealed that approximately 60% of taboo language was retained in both the Dutch and German subtitles. However, 40% of the taboo language was non-retained, raising important questions about the effects on the portrayal of characters' idiolects. Particularly, taboo language related to sexual activity (SA) was often not retained, significantly affecting characters like Michelle, whose speech is heavily marked by such language. Furthermore, the pragmatic functions of taboo words, such as the emphatic and social function, were frequently not retained, impacting the unique speech patterns of the characters. This study underscores the importance of considering both the semantic category and pragmatic function of taboo language in translation to maintain the integrity of character portrayal in subtitled media.

Keywords: *Taboo Language, Derry Girls, Pragmatic Function, Semantic Category, Subtitling, Idiolect, Sociolect, Regiolect*

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Abbreviations

A	Abusive Function
AVT	Audiovisual Translation
C	Cathartic Function
CPS	Characters Per Second
D	Death/Disease Category
DE	Descriptive Function
DY	Dysphemism
E	Emphatic Function
EU	Euphemism
F	Four-Letter
I	Idiomatic Function
II	Intelligence/Inexperience Category
M	Mother/Family Category
MA	Maintenance
NIE	Northern Irish English
O	Omission
R	Religious Category
S	Scatological/Body Parts Category
SA	Sexual Activity Category
SDH	Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
SF	Social Function
SO	Sexual Organ Category
ST	Standardization
ST/C/L	Source Text/Culture/Language
TS	Translation Studies
TT/C/L	Target Text/Culture/Language

Introduction

How long does it take to defuse a fecking bomb? In 2018, one of the characters in the Northern Irish series *Derry Girls* uttered these memorable words. Thanks to the rapid developments and massive growth in audiovisual translation (henceforth AVT), Dutch and German viewers could watch the series with subtitles in their own mother tongues (Artegiani & Kapsaskis 2014: 419). In the Dutch subtitles this sentence was translated as *Hoelang duurt het een bom te ontmantelen?* ('How long does it take to defuse a bomb') and in the German subtitles, it was translated as *Wie lange dauert es, eine verdammte Bombe zu entschärfen?* ('How long does it take to defuse a fucking Bomb'). Subtitling is a specialized skill; besides dealing with numerous technical and spatiotemporal constraints, subtitlers must also consider culturally specific references, humor, and, the focus of this thesis, taboo language and the constraints attached to subtitling such language variety, all while trying to convey the overall meaning of what is being said on the screen (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2021: 37).

In these two translations of the English source text (henceforth ST), several differences can be observed compared to the original taboo language. For instance, the German subtitles retain the taboo word and its semantic category plus pragmatic function by translating *fecking* to *verdammte* ('fucking'), while the Dutch subtitle omits the word. One of the consequences of this could be that it may lead to characters losing some of their character distinctiveness. This thesis will explain and analyze these observations through a comparative analysis of the linguistic transfer of taboo language in subtitles, using the English ST version of *Derry Girls*, and its Dutch and German translations. The aim is to analyze what categories of taboo language have been used and how their function is transferred to the target texts (henceforth TTs).

Derry Girls is a British sitcom set in Derry¹, a city located in the Northwest of Northern Ireland, during the 1990s, amidst the final years of the political conflict known as the Troubles, the Northern-Irish conflict between unionists and nationalists. The series is written and created by Irish playwright and screenwriter Lisa McGee. The show follows the lives of four catholic teenage girls – Erin, Clare, Michelle, and Orla- from Derry, along with James, Michelle's English male cousin, who comes to live in Derry at the beginning of the first

¹ The official, yet controversial, name of the city is Londonderry. However, the Catholic citizens, including the characters of the series, call it Derry. To avoid ambiguity with the title of the TV series, the unofficial name was chosen for the purposes of this thesis.

season. They all attend Our Lady Immaculate College, a girls' catholic secondary school, where Sister Michael is Headmistress. *Derry Girls* stands out due to its unique sociopolitical setting, which serves as its backdrop and its wide array of characters from different generations, gender, profession and origin.

This thesis builds upon existing scholarly work on *Derry Girls*, which has primarily focused on aspects such as the (authenticity of the) accents, cultural references, and the politics within the series (i.e. Díaz-Sierra 2022; Dixon 2022). However, there has been limited analysis from a sociolinguistic and AVT perspective, particularly regarding the Dutch and German subtitles.

By examining the strategies used in translating taboo language in *Derry Girls* across different languages, this research aims to contribute to the field of AVT and provide insights into the complexities on translating taboo language across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. Given that German, English and Dutch are all Germanic languages, it will be interesting to compare the subtitle strategies used in Dutch and German translations of an English ST.

The main focus of this research is to examine how the subtitling of taboo language affects the portrayal of characters' regiolects, idiolects, and sociolects in the Dutch and German versions of the series *Derry Girls*. Important to take into account when researching this is:

1. What semantic categories and pragmatic functions of taboo language are present in the selected episodes of *Derry Girls*, and how differs their prevalence among English, Dutch, and German?
2. What translation strategies are used for subtitling taboo language in *Derry Girls* into Dutch and German, according to the combined typologies proposed by Xavier (2022) and Gao (2013)?
3. How are the regiolect, sociolect and idiolect portrayed in the series?
4. Is the taboo language of some characters retained less frequently than of others, and what is the effect of the non-retention of taboo language for the characters' regiolect, sociolect and idiolect is?

The posited hypotheses suggest that given the significant role of taboo language in the series, a higher taboo language retention rate than non-retention rate is expected in

the TTs. Semantic categories will be adjusted to those more common in the TTs, resulting in differences in frequency between the ST and the TTs. Additionally, spatiotemporal constraints inherent in subtitling are likely to cause certain semantic categories and pragmatic functions to be non-retained more often, as only the most plot-relevant information can be subtitled, with some categories being more essential to the plot than others. Finally, while the TTs are expected to consider the characters' regiolect, sociolect, and idiolect, the reduction of certain taboo language categories may impact the authenticity and depth of character portrayal.

To address the questions, the following two chapters will provide an overview of the relevant literature on taboo language, including its semantic categories and pragmatic functions, as well as the concepts regiolect, sociolect and idiolect. Subsequently, the methodological framework will be presented, providing a description of the analytical methods used. The taboo language in *Derry Girls* was defined using a combination of Xavier's (2022) and Gao (2013) taboo language subtitling strategies, Pinker's (2007) pragmatic functions typology and Ljung's (2011) semantic categories typology. The reason this study adopted a mixed method approach is due to the specificity of taboo language within subtitles. In Chapter four, an analysis of the dialogues, and a discussion of the findings will be presented. The concluding remarks will highlight the relevance of the results and suggest potential new areas for future research.

Theoretical Framework

1. Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the relevant literature and research in the realms of subtitling and language variety, including literature concerning regiolects, sociolects and idiolects and their manifestations within subtitling. The relevance of explaining these subjects lies in the fact that in this thesis the way the taboo language and dialectal forms present in the ST have been translated in the Dutch and German subtitles of six episodes of *Derry Girls*. Furthermore, it introduces AVT to contextualize where the subtitling of taboo language fits within the broader topic of AVT. By initially addressing broader topics like audiovisual translation, the focus is gradually narrowed down to the

specific translation phenomena under examination, allowing for a more focused exploration of the subject matter.

2. Audiovisual translation

AVT, as defined by Chaume (2020: 108) is characterized as a form of multimodal translation. It encompasses the translation of multimedia and multimodal texts across different communication channels, including auditory and visual elements. This subfield within Translation Studies (henceforth TS) deals with transferring meaning between languages and cultures within audiovisual contexts, where each sign carries its own semiotic identity (Ibid.; Ávila-Cabrera, 2023: 4). In other words, AVT is used to encompass all forms of translation involving media beyond solely written source and target texts.

AVT has evolved significantly over time, becoming one of the most prolific areas of research in the field of TS (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 1). Initially considered “inferior to (written) literary translation, most probably because of the lack of cultural prestige in audiovisual mass-media, compared to canonized literature” (Karamitroglou 1998: 10), AVT faced challenges such as being described as ‘constrained translation’ and ‘subordinate translation’, reflecting the focus on the restrictive interference of the various modes, given that “all the spatial and temporal limitations imposed by the medium itself [...], constrain the end result” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 3; Díaz Cintas 2020: 150-151).

However, around the mid-1990s, with the rise of digitization and the widespread distribution of audiovisual content, AVT began to gain scholarly recognition and ceased to be disregarded in academic and education circles (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 1). Gambier (2006: 95) highlighted its social and educational benefits, viewing it as a valuable asset for multilingual communication.

Regarding the classification of AVT, researchers frequently used various terms to describe similar phenomena, leading to a multitude of terminologies where identical terms may represent different concepts and vice versa. Chiaro (2008: 141) describes AVT as an umbrella term encompassing ‘media translation’, ‘multimedia translation’, ‘multimodal translation’, and ‘screen translation’. In addition to this, Karamitroglou (1998: 1) uses the terms ‘AVT’, ‘screen translation’ and ‘film translation’, but prefers AVT as “it emphasizes the audio-visual dimensions of the communicative mode”. Roman Jakobson (1959) introduced the concept of translation between semiotic systems, proposing three types: intralingual,

which occurs within a single language, interlingual, which takes place between two languages and intersemiotic translation, which involves translating between different semiotic modes (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 4). The focus of the current thesis, subtitling, may be the most well-known example of AVT. However, AVT comprises various other interlingual practices such as dubbing and song lyrics translation, as well as intralingual practices such as subtitling for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (henceforth SDH) and audio description for the visually impaired (Ávila-Cabrera 2023: 5).

2.1 Subtitling

In this chapter, an overview of subtitling technicalities, the different types of subtitling, and their restrictions will be provided, since subtitling is the focus of this thesis.

2.1.1 Subtitling technicalities

Díaz Cintas (2020: 150-151) outlines subtitling basics, portraying it as a translation practice preserving spoken and written words and images through written renditions primarily positioned at the screen's bottom. The “subtitles must appear in synchrony with the images and dialogue, provide a semantically adequate account of the SL dialogues, and remain displayed on screen long enough for the viewers to be able to read them” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2021: 9). The process of subtitling involves adhering to two fundamental principles: synchronization with the original dialogue and ensuring sufficient exposure time for comfortable reading (Ibid.: 107).

Subtitlers are required to adhere to guidelines, such as those provided by Netflix, the broadcaster responsible for airing *Derry Girls*. As detailed in their Dutch and German Timed Text Style Guides accessible on their website, the guidelines for the Dutch and German requirements stipulate a temporal parameter with a reading speed limit of 17 characters per second (henceforth cps), with a leading-in time of $\frac{1}{4}$ of a second (Netflix 2022). This rate depends on various factors, such as the speed of the dialogue on screen and the assumed reading speeds of the target audience to comfortably follow the subtitles, which depends on age, education and familiarity with subtitles (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2021: 107). The reading speed depends on various factors, such as how different media platforms may require different speeds, with TV often slower than cinema or digital platforms. For example, children's programs typically have slower reading speeds. Additionally, complex dialogues with cultural references and slang can further slow down reading. In series like *Derry Girls*,

cultural references and language variety can impact the ability to convey subtitles verbatim to the target audience.

The choice of cps rate is not arbitrary but is related to the six-second rule, which is based on empirical evidence indicating that a full two-line subtitle should be displayed on the screen for six seconds. This ensures an optimal balance between reading the subtitles comfortably while also being able to follow the on-screen events (Szarkowska & Bogucka 2019: 101-102). When calculated in cps, the six-second rule equates to approximately 10.5 cps with a maximum of 32 characters per line. However, in recent years, some subtitling style guides have started recommending higher cps, with more characters per line. For example, TED Talks, which has its own guidelines, maintains a cps rate of 22 with 42 characters per line (Ibid: 106). They still adhere to the six-second rule, but its early formulation has evolved from 32 to 42 characters per line. Consequently, while the maximum subtitle display time has remained approximately the same at around 6 seconds, the actual subtitle speed, or the reading speed required from viewers, has significantly increased. These guidelines do not make distinctions based on the type of series. Therefore, in the case of Netflix, besides adhering to a cps rate of 13 for children's programs, in contrast to the previously mentioned 17 cps rate for adults' programs, they do not distinguish between different types of series or movies in terms of their pacing or cultural specificity for interlingual subtitling in languages with alphabetic scripts (Netflix 2022). In other words, according to Netflix, their cps rate is suitable for a series like *Derry Girls*.

There are also rules about the duration for which subtitles can remain on the screen after the completion of an utterance, as well as the interval between two consecutive subtitles. This adherence to a synchronous semiotic channel dictates that subtitles should appear on the screen simultaneously with the onset of an utterance and disappear directly upon its conclusion (Gottlieb 2001 as cited in Nikolić 2019: 49).

Regarding the spatial dimension, the formal considerations include the length of subtitles, in the Netflix guideline limited to 2 lines with each line containing a maximum of 42 characters for Dutch and German subtitles. Additionally, factors such as font type, size, and color, as well as alignment (centered or left-aligned) and whether subtitles should consist of one or two lines, vary depending on the target language, country, etc. (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 85-88). Furthermore, one should avoid initiating subtitles before the dialogue begins, to prevent premature information delivery (Díaz Cintas 2020: 166). In conclusion,

subtitling inherently involves presenting condensed written text on-screen, serving as a succinct rendition in the target language (henceforth TL) of the audio content (Chiaro 2008: 148).

2.1.2 *Intralingual versus interlingual subtitling*

As previously discussed, from a linguistic perspective, a distinction is drawn between intralingual (or ‘vertical’) and interlingual translation (or ‘diagonal’) (Karamitroglou 1998: 5). In subtitling, intralingual translation occurs within a single language, while interlingual translation takes place between two languages (Díaz Cintas 2020: 163). Gottlieb’s (2004: 86) definition of interlingual subtitling involves “the rendering in a different language of verbal messages in filmic media, in the shape of one or more lines of written text presented on the screen in sync with the original written message”.

Intralingual subtitling is primarily employed to assist D/deaf people or hard-of-hearing individuals, commonly known as SDH, but its audience extends beyond this demographic. For instance, “hearing viewers also rely on SDH simply to support the viewing process” (Szarkowska 2020: 251).

There is a debate regarding whether SDH “should be rendered *verbatim* [...], in the form of a literal and faithful transcription of the dialogue list—or should be *edited* [...], condensed and simplified” (Szarkowska *et al.*, 2011: 363). As the primary focus in this thesis is on the Dutch and German subtitles of *Derry Girls*, in this thesis, the term subtitling refers to interlingual subtitling, unless specified otherwise.

2.1.3 *Subtitling restrictions*

Similar to the debate between verbatim and edited intralingual subtitling, there exists a comparable discussion in interlingual subtitling. Like other forms of translation, the aim of subtitlers is to provide a semantically accurate representation of the original dialogue, by trying to reach functional equivalence. The traditional aim of achieving equivalence between an ST and a TT in different languages is nowadays controversial, as there is little consensus as to what it entails precisely (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2021: 79).

However, as previously noted, the convergence of different semiotic modes in AVT presents unique challenges. Subtitlers must balance audio and visual elements within the

confines of technical guidelines, including spatiotemporal regulations which work in a restrictive manner (Xavier 2022: 93; Gottlieb 1992: 164).

One of these temporal constraints is tied to, as mentioned previously, the speed at which subtitles are presented, typically measured in cps. When the cps rates that are allowed are fewer than the utterances requiring subtitling, verbatim translation becomes impossible. This means reduction and condensation of written content are necessary. This typically happens during rapid delivery, requiring subtitlers to navigate difficulties when on-screen speakers speak too quickly for comfortable translation reading (Díaz Cintas 2020: 166). This adjustment is necessary to enable viewers to read subtitles while simultaneously visually following the unfolding scene, as both the “translated text and the original are delivered concurrently in time and space” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 76). Chiaro (2008: 150) sees the simultaneous viewing of various modes as advantageous since it enables audiences familiar with the original language to follow the spoken content while also being able to read parts they may not fully comprehend. Besides the temporal constraints faced by the subtitlers, there are also spatial limitations due to the restricted screen space available for subtitles, which results in a limitation of two lines and a central position (Díaz Cintas 2020: 152).

The previously mentioned term reduction is the fundamental subtitling editing strategy. Reduction can be partial (condensation) or total (omission) (Díaz Cintas 2020: 166; Gottlieb 1992: 164). Condensation involves a more concise rendering of the original, while omission omits part of the source message. According to Díaz Cintas & Remael (2021:148), reduction levels tend to vary across countries and languages, and depend on factors such as genre, context, and language variety. There are no fixed rules for reduction, but patterns can still be identified in subtitles, such as the ‘principle of relevance’, as introduced by Díaz Cintas & Remael (2021). This means that relevance depends on how connected or appropriate the language is within the context. In this thesis, this is interpreted as the plot-relevance of a word. The decision to include a word in the translation depends on balancing the effort needed for the viewer to understand the word and its significance to the film’s narrative (Ibid.). Translating every instance of the word *fuck* might seem redundant, but if it is relevant for characterizing a person, it may not be plot-relevant but is still important for understanding the overall meaning and purpose of an audiovisual product. This concept will be further explained in Chapter Three.

Other important subtitling editing strategies are mentioned by Antonini (2005: 213). According to him, effective subtitles necessitate the elimination, simplification, and adaptation of the spoken text. Elimination entails removing elements like hesitations, which do not alter the meaning of the original dialogue but only its form. Simplification involves refining the original syntax to improve the readability and understanding of subtitles. Adaptation includes the exclusion of features such as slang, dialect, and taboo language, which is pertinent to this study (Ibid.: 213-214).

Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021: 76) mention that the absence of audible lexical items in the subtitles, in other words the instances when the subtitles are not a verbatim copy of the audio, contribute to criticisms against subtitling. Their research suggests that shorter and less literal translation lead to the perception that the translator has overlooked certain words heard in the soundtrack, making the subtitle less trustworthy (Ibid.). Karamitroglou (as cited in Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 76) adds to this by saying:

Investigations in the psychology of viewing indicate that when such linguistic items are recognized by the viewers, the exact, literal, translationally equivalent items are expected to appear in the subtitles as well. This occurs because of the constant presence of an inherently operating checking mechanism in the brain of the viewers which raises the suspicions that the translation of the original text is not 'properly' or 'correctly' rendered in the subtitles, every time word-for-word translations for such items are not spotted.

Within interlingual subtitling, it is commonly acknowledged that condensing and reducing text from spoken dialogue to written subtitles is a necessary feat. However, the spatiotemporal restrictions often result in subtitlers omitting certain instances of multilingualism and language variation in the subtitles (Díaz Cintas 2020: 164-165). Subtitles are not created for individuals proficient in the source language but rather for those who require them to fully understand the content (Han & Wang 2014: 4). Therefore, for the intended audience, it is not possible to comprehend parts of the spoken text in another language if their focus is on the subtitles. This implies that even recognizable swear words should be subtitled, especially when they are spoken rapidly, as is often the case with the regiolect featured in *Derry Girls*. This notion is supported by Chiaro (2008: 151), whose

research demonstrates that individuals cannot read text as rapidly as they can listen to a conversation. It can be concluded that to fully grasp the content of the subtitles, there is insufficient time left to focus on listening to the audio.

Unfortunately, this selective omission, which mainly affects language variety in professional practices, carries the potential risk of negatively impacting the characterization of individuals. This issue will be explored in the following chapter.

3. Language variety

To analyze the subtitling of language variety in *Derry Girls*, it is essential to first conceptualize what language variety entails. The translation of taboo language and swear words, the representation of regiolects, idiolects or sociolects and humor adds an extra layer of complexity due to their high cultural specificity (Xavier 2022: 68). Accurately conveying meaning while maintaining cultural sensitivity requires careful navigation of cultural nuances, as emphasized by Gao (2013: 2311). The extent to which linguistic diversity can be reflected in subtitles depend on the previously mentioned spatiotemporal constraints, the instructions provided to the subtitler, and the socio-cultural context of the target audience for which the subtitled content is intended (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2021: 183).

3.1 Taboo Language

Despite its narrative relevance, research on the subtitling of taboo language was marginalized until the twenty-first century, primarily due to the traditional focus of TS on more conventional aspects of translation, such as linguistic accuracy and fidelity to the source text (Xavier 2022: 68). Aside from that, taboo language was deemed less relevant or even inappropriate for academic study. Current research, however, is extensive (e.g., Ávila-Cabrera 2023; Wajnryb, 2005; Xavier 2022; Nikolić 2019), but, according to Bednarek (2019: 30) there is little research on swear and taboo words in contemporary television series. She illustrates this by pointing out that while some studies touch upon taboo language, they often focus on older programs or rely on limited data.

Taboo language is prevalent in many contemporary audiovisual works since they "are scripted with the intention of representing spontaneous spoken language" (Parini 2013: 154). Subtitlers must consider their target audience regarding taboo language, as different target groups have different requirements (Stapleton 2010: 290). These differences may involve cultural attitudes towards swearing and taboo language, as well as factors such as the age, social norms, and expectations of the audience. For example, a younger audience might be more tolerant of explicit language than an older one, or certain cultures may find specific words more offensive than others.

3.1.1 *Classifying Taboo Language*

Classifying taboo language is challenging due to the multitude of definitions and classifications associated with the term. According to Wajnryb (2005: 17), this inconsistency in terminology poses problems, as "in order to explore foul language seriously, we need a metalanguage that is precise and consistent." Bednarek (2019: 30) agrees with this, noting that all these inconsistencies regarding the terminology pose challenges for comparative research. With various scholars offering different opinions on the classification of taboo language, Ávila-Cabrera presents a division between offensive and taboo language (Ávila-Cabrera 2023: 46). Offensive language encompasses abusive, expletive and invective terms, while taboo language encompasses topics such as death, drugs, race, gender, religion, sex and more (Ibid.). An example of this could be: *He's a shitty person* versus *you smell like shit*, with the first one being offensive, whilst the second example is regarded as taboo. Regarding their syntactic functions, taboo expressions can be part of lexicalized constructions (1), used as intensifiers before a noun, adjective, or adverb (2), or employed as standalone utterances (3) (Pinker 2008: 350).

According to Allan and Burrige (2006: 1), tabooed subjects can vary widely; they encompass language related to moral, censored and culture-related sensitive topics such as bodily functions, sex, diseases, death, religious manners, politics, and food, with taboo broadly defined as "a proscription of behavior that affects everyday life" (Allan & Burrige 2006: 1). Taboo is considered forbidden, or offensive based on context, with taboo words and morality considered interdependent (Ben Slamia 2020: 83). In this context, Wardhaugh (2000: 239) asserts that "taboo is the prohibition or avoidance in any society of behavior believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment, or shame." Linguistic taboos may be intentionally disregarded to attract attention, express contempt, provoke or mock authority (Ibid.). This highlights the dynamic nature of taboo language, as its purpose and acceptability can shift depending on context and intent; taboo language is not static. What was once considered "normal" may now be deemed taboo. For example, the transition from the Dutch taboo term *Zwarte Piet* ('Black Pete') to simply *Piet* ('Pete') illustrates this shift in societal norms.

A specific aspect within taboo language is the concept of euphemisms. Gao (2013: 2313) elucidates that euphemisms have been devised to mitigate the harshness associated with taboo words, offering alternative language to replace expressions considered too

unpleasant. While euphemisms serve to soften the impact of potentially language, they also reflect societal attitudes and cultural sensitivities. Given the severity of the consequences of breaking linguistic taboos, such as blasphemy and obscenity, which are still considered crimes in many jurisdictions, opting for a euphemism rather than a taboo word in certain contexts and cultures is the norm. Parini (2013: 150) supports Gao's findings by providing proof in their own study, stating that euphemism serves as a device to diminish the taboo associated with a word or expression. By substituting it with a less direct and harsh form, euphemism reduces awareness of its forbidden quality (Parini 2013: 150).

Another term within the concept of taboo language, swearing, is a linguistic practice rooted in taboo, encompassing expressions related to forbidden subjects (Wajnryb 2005: 178). Ljung (2011: 4) outlines four criteria for an utterance to be considered swearing: containing taboo words, having a non-literal meaning, qualifying as formulaic language, and serving as emotive language, reflecting or appearing to reflect the speaker's feelings and attitudes. However, Jay (2017: 153) challenges this assertion, suggesting that the terms 'taboo language' and 'swear words' can be used interchangeably to "describe the lexicon of offensive emotional language". Despite this difference in terminology, swear words, also known as expletives, curse words, profanity or by various other labels and definitions, are agreed by scholars to directly reference societal or cultural taboos and can be categorized into major groups, including religious, scatological, sexual, or bodily functions (Bednarek 2019: 30; Stapleton 2010: 289; Ljung 2011: 35). Briechle & Duran Eppler (2019: 391) add to this by asserting that "to qualify as swearing, a word or expression should be offensive, at least to some people in certain situations. To be offensive, swearing needs to target something that is prohibited or restricted by social or religious customs, i.e., taboos."

Scholars generally agree that obscene language is a constant element in most cultures, with every culture having its own taboos or realities refused by the members of society (Parini 2013: 149). According to Parini, sex is among the topics deemed taboo in Western societies, resulting in the potential mitigation of sexual references in audiovisual content. However, nowadays, taboo language is a common feature of many contemporary audiovisual products as they "are written with the purpose of representing spontaneous spoken language" (Parini 2013: 154).

In the aforementioned section, various terms and their distinctions have been examined and defined, including swear words, profanity, obscene language, expletives, curse

words, taboo words, and taboo language. As noted, there is no consistent definition, with scholars attributing their own meanings to this wide variety of terms. Bednarek (2019: 32) mentions that “profanity is too narrow, as it invokes words with religious origin, while swearing/cursing/expletives may only bring interjections like *shit!* to mind, and bad or taboo language are too broad.” Despite the multitude of research, the precise distinctions between these terms remain unclear. Keeping this in mind, in this study, the term ‘taboo language’ will serve as an umbrella term to encompass the broadest range of linguistic expressions, including all the aforementioned terms.

3.1.2 Semantic categories and pragmatic functions of taboo language

The aim of the preceding paragraphs was to outline the criteria necessary for identifying utterances as taboo language within this thesis. This lays the groundwork for developing a specific typology regarding the taboo language within *Derry Girls*.

According to Xavier (2022: 74-75), the “semantic fields of taboo are [...] often changed according to the norms of the target culture or linguistic conventions”. She provides several examples, such as substituting sex-related taboo language with religion-related language in subtitles. In English, a sex-related taboo phrase such as *fuck!* might be substituted with a religion-related one in Dutch, such as *verdomme!* (‘damn!’) or *godverdomme!* (‘Goddamn!’). This substitution retains the emotional intensity of the exclamation while shifting the taboo from a sexual context to a religious one, as religious swearing may be more common in that language and culture. This aspect involves the content of taboo language, which falls within the domain of semantics (Pinker 2007: 350).

There have been numerous attempts to categorize taboo language into distinct semantic groups. One frequently cited study is conducted by Ljung, who distinguishes five semantic functions of swearing through analysis of examples from various languages including English, German, Dutch, among others (Ljung 2011: 35-41). He also makes a distinction between different geographical areas, as swearing in for example Australia is different from swearing in Zambia, Northern Ireland and Japan. Each of these functions employs several taboo words representing one or several taboo themes. Ljung’s (2011) model demonstrates the common swearing themes among English, Dutch and German. While Ljung identifies common swearing themes across these languages it is important to note that the frequency of usage and the specific taboo themes employed may vary among

different socio-cultural groups and geographical regions. This variation will be further explored in section 3.2. Ljung's (2011) themes include:

1. The religious/supernatural theme (Ljung 2011: 37): Within Christian cultures, this theme includes both celestial swearing (*My God, Jesus/Christ*) and diabolic swearing (*go to hell, Devil*). Presently, this is considered a relatively mild form of swearing. In Germany, diabolic swearing is one of the most frequently used forms of swearing (using for example *Zum Teufel*, which translates to 'to the Devil') together with the next theme, scatological. Other German religious swear words include *Verdammt!* ('damn') and the euphemism *Herrgot* ('Jeez'). In the Netherlands, religious swearing includes examples such as *Godverdomme* ('God damn it') and *Jezus* ('Jesus'), and euphemisms such as *jeetje* and *jakkes* ('Gee') (Nübling & Vogel 2004: 23).
2. The scatological theme (Ljung 2011: 37-38): In English, this theme is related to excrement and the anus and comprises terms like *ass(hole), crap, fart, shit* and *piss*. Among these, *shit* is the most commonly used, appearing as an expletive interjection, *Shit!*, an expletive epithet, *He is a piece of shit*, or in combination with a verb, *I understood shit of what he just said*, as well as in expressions such as *she's a shitty singer*. According to Ljung (2011: 54), when asked to provide typical instances of swearing, German speakers often mention the scatological exclamations *Scheiße!* ('shit') and *Verdammt Scheiße!* Nübling & Vogel (2004: 19) support this notion by saying that scatological vocabulary like *Scheiße, Mist* ('dung/crap') and *Arsch* ('ass') remains productive and carries significant weight. Ghassempur (2011: 60) adds to this by stating that *scheiße* is used as the functional equivalent of *fuck*. Van Sterkenburg (2008: 113) contributes further by mentioning that *scheiße* is used as frequently by Germans as *fuck* is by the English. He adds that *Arschloch* ('asshole'), however, is a very severe insult, as is *Leck mich am Arsch* ('lick my ass/kiss my ass'), compared to *cunt* in English. In Dutch, scatological swearing is used less frequently than in German, but it is not non-existent (Nübling & Vogel 2004: 22). Very common is the English-derived *shit* or the

utterance *schijterd* ('coward', literally 'one who shits'), and phrases like *daar heb ik schijt aan* ('I don't give a shit about that').

3. The sex organ theme (Ljung 2011: 38-39): This theme includes terms such as *prick*, *dick*, *pussy*, and *cunt*, with *cunt* being the most taboo-laden among English swear words. These words for sex organs are often used in the context of derogatory nouns for people the speaker dislikes, as in *she's a real pussy*. Dutch draws largely on sexual taboo language, with examples such as *klootzak* ('scrotum'), *lul* ('dick'), and *kut* ('cunt') frequently used (Nübling & Vogel 2004: 21). In German, the sex organ theme is quite limited. There are some expressions such as *Schlappschwanz* ('limp dick') and *Wichser* ('wanker'), but overall, the sexual organ theme is much less utilized compared to Dutch.
4. The sexual activities theme (Ljung 2011: 39-41): This theme encompasses words related to sexual intercourse, such as *fuck*, which can take on various grammatical forms and is utilized in several popular expressions. Examples include the exclamation *fuck!* and the word *fucking*, which can function both as an adverb and an adjective. Additionally, idiomatic expressions such as *for fuck's sake*, *he knows fuck all about it* and *I don't give a fuck* are common. Apart from the word *fuck*, the English language includes sexual activity terms such as *cocksucker* and *wanker*. This theme is one of the most frequently used swearing constructions in the English language. Notably, according to Ljung (2011: 39) as with sexual organs, the German language does not incorporate sexual activity taboo words in their swearing. In the dataset, however, utterances such as *Wichsfresse!* which translates to 'spunk face!' were identified. As will be explored further in section 3.2, this relatively recent phenomenon occurs in the taboo language used by new generations. Additionally, according to Nübling & Vogel (2004: 25), women are insulted in Germany with terms like *Hure* and *Schlampe* ('whore').
5. The mother/family theme (Ljung 2011: 41): The mother theme encompasses all swearing that "attributes laxity and loose living to somebody's mother". While this theme is found in many languages, according to Ljung, English is distinctive as the sole Germanic language that utilizes it in swearing. Notable examples include *motherfucker*, *son of a bitch* and *bastard*. However, van

Sterkenburg (2008: 29), contradicts this assertion by offering multiple examples that prove the presence of mother-themed taboo language in Dutch, such as *je moeder is een hoer* ('your mother's a hoe'), even going so far as suggesting that they are used frequently. However, in the dataset, there were no instances found where the Dutch subtitles included utterances within the mother theme, whilst they were found in the English ST.

Furthermore, there are numerous instances where swear words encompass multiple themes, with the English language being known to combine the religious theme with multiple others. For instance, *fucking hell* combines both the religious and sexual activities theme.

A minor theme, in addition to the major swearing themes described above, is the theme disease. While minor in comparison to the 25 languages discussed in Ljung's typology of swearing, it is one of the major themes in the Dutch language. Examples include *tyfus* ('typhoid'), *krijg de pest* ('get the plague') and *tering(zooi)* ('tuberculosis (mess)') (Ljung 2011: 43). Van Sterkenburg (2008: 113) agrees with this observation, noting the uniqueness of the Dutch swearing references to illnesses and highlighting the much greater taboo regarding death and illness in other cultures compared to the Dutch, who use this specific language precisely because it is taboo, but not taboo enough anymore not to use. Another theme not addressed in Ljung's major swearing themes is the one related to intelligence and/or inexperience (van Sterkenburg 2008: 29). This incorporates examples such as *moron* and *retard* in English, *sukkel* ('fool') and *idiot* ('idiot') in Dutch, and *Depp* ('fool') and *Dummkopf* ('dumb head') in German.

A translator, however, typically won't translate a taboo phrase using the closest semantic equivalent in the target language. Instead, they will opt for a word or phrase that conveys a similar emotion and strength, reflecting the relationship between the speaker and listener in a similar way. Taboo language tends to carry strong emotional connotations, where its intended use, in other words its pragmatic function, holds more significance in context than its literal semantic meaning and the phrase's denotation (Xavier 2024: 5). There are various pragmatic functions associated with taboo language, with the literature providing several interesting interpretations. Pinker (2007: 350) distinguishes five pragmatic functions of swearing, where one taboo word and its derivatives can cater to all five functions.

1. Descriptive, e.g. *Let's fuck!*. In this case, *fuck* is used using the literal meaning of the verb, to describe the action.
2. Idiomatic, e.g. *I don't give a fuck!*. In this example, *fuck* has become a fixed expression conveying a lack of concern or interest, as part of an idiom.
3. Abusive, e.g. *Fuck you and your friends!*. This is used when there is an intention of hurting or intimidating someone or something.
4. Emphatic, e.g. *That's a fucking good movie!*. Here, *fucking* intensifies the adjective *good*, emphasizing the speaker's positive opinion about the movie.
5. Cathartic, e.g. *Fuck!*. *Fuck* is a common standalone word, which can express various emotions, such as frustration, anger, inconvenience, and surprise, without targeting something specific.

The social function of swearing, as a sixth pragmatic function, serves to express camaraderie in a friendly context. Ghassempur (2011: 56) notes that social swearing is used to “reinforce social bonds, to praise or humor the addressee, and occasionally a swearword can even become a term of endearment”, highlighting its purely phatic function. For example, a phrase such as *Jesus, girls, where did that time go?* is a prime example of common exclamations used in friendly contexts. The social function is a good example of the nuanced nature of taboo language. While such language may be accepted and even expected within certain social circles and contexts, it could be deemed inappropriate or offensive elsewhere, as taboo language is culturally and personally determined (Jay & Janschewitz 2008: 269). Moreover, the acceptability of taboo language among friends changes depending different countries and cultural contexts. To understand how the use of taboo language changes based on the situation, it is necessary to think about the characters, how they interact within and outside their regiolect and sociolect, and the culture and society they are in (Ibid.: 267). This will be explained further in section 3.2.

Within Pinker's (2007) taxonomy, sometimes there is an overlap of functions, as they share similarities. For instance, the phrase *you are fucking hilarious*, could be attributed to both the emphatic and social function. The taboo word *fucking* emphasizes the word *hilarious*, and in this context, it is unlikely this is being said without a friendly intention behind it, which means it also belongs to the social function. However, the difference within these functions lies in the fact that words can also be emphasized without it being said in a

friendly context. This brings us back to the essence of pragmatics, which is that categorizing taboo language depends on the context. If someone says, *you fucking bastard*, while the emphatic function remains, there is likely no social function behind it unless it is customary in certain circles to affectionately insult each other as *fucking bastard*. But again, it all depends on the context. For instance, according to Jay & Janschewitz (2008: 274), in certain indigenous communities in Australia, swearing at or in front of one's mother is not considered rude, a behavior that would be entirely unacceptable among middle-class Americans. These examples of culturally and geographical tied pragmatics of swearing are very useful when examining the subtitles of *Derry Girls*.

Some pragmatic functions are omitted more often than others. Han & Wang (2014: 1) indicate that taboo language serving as fillers in communication tends to be omitted in subtitles. This omission often stems from spatiotemporal constraints, but it also occurs because these fillers lack plot relevance. These non-plot-relevant taboo words oftentimes fall under the categories of emphatic and social function (Ibid.). An emphatic function for example, in the phrase *He looks fucking raging* (*Derry Girls*, S2:E3 9:30), where *fucking* intensifies the adjective *raging*, emphasizing the negative emotions. In the Dutch subtitles, this is translated as *Ze zijn woedend!* ('They are furious!'), omitting the taboo word *fucking*. In the German subtitles, it is translated as *Die rasen!* ('They are raging'), also omitting the taboo word. An example of a social function being omitted is *Christ, look at those smiles* (*Derry Girls*, S3:E5 25:12), where *Christ* serves no plot relevant function other than being a neutral exclamation among friends. In the Dutch subtitles, it is translated as *Moet je die glimlachen zien* ('Look at those smiles'), omitting the taboo word *Christ*. In the German subtitles, it is translated as *Seht euch das Lächeln an* ('Look at the smiles'), also omitting the taboo word.

In Baines (2015) article, the study of taboo language within its pragmatic context is explored. He analyzed films depicting characters from lower socio-economic groups who speak in a lower register and non-standard language, which include taboo language (Baines 2015: 432). Baines suggests that subtitlers leverage visual and linguistic cues, along with audience expectations and genre norms, to effectively omit taboo language, when necessary, without losing its pragmatic function. Baines found that extended sequences of taboo language often coincide with increased omission in translation, yet this does not necessarily hinder the audience's understanding of the scene's emotional impact. He emphasizes that

not all instances of taboo omission result in the same loss, as it depends on factors such as the word's meaning, its pragmatic function, and its role within the larger context of the scene (Baines 2015: 442). Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 192) elaborate on this by asserting that the intensity of each utterance should be evaluated based on its connotative rather than denotative meanings. Consequently, translating taboo language varies depending on the context, with their pragmatic significance subject to subjective interpretation.

To the best of the author's knowledge, there have not been any Dutch and German studies utilizing Pinker's pragmatic function as a classification for taboo language within drama series. Therefore, this thesis aims to contribute to the expanding body of research on taboo language by integrating the concept of pragmatic functions into its research.

3.1.3 Strategies of subtitling taboo language

As already mentioned, the translation of taboo language encounters similar challenges as subtitling in general, due to factors such as spatiotemporal restrictions. But also, the “formality of the written mode of the target text, [...] the redundancy of taboo words in audiovisual fiction, the shared act of watching a movie with others, industry guidelines or instructions, and the expectations of a very unspecific audience” pose difficulties (Xavier 2021: 68). In addition, translating taboo language also involves a shift in grammar and modification, thus imposing formal constraints. However, there are also specific qualities inherent to taboo language that complicate its translation. For example, taboo language is highly culture-specific, with different cultures having distinct taboos and taboo language. There exists a lack of semantic or functional correspondence between the ST and the TT (Parini 2013: 154).

Regarding editing strategies in relation to swearing, scholars in audiovisual translation initially proposed omitting or minimizing the subtitling of taboo language (Ibid.). Xavier (2021: 68) mentions that for instance, Ivarsson and Carroll (1998) advocate toning down “floods of obscenities,” while Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 195) observe that taboo words “are frequently softened or even omitted in subtitles, especially if space is limited”. One significant factor contributing to this is the widespread belief that taboo language appears more intense when written (as subtitles) rather than spoken (as dubbing). However, Briechle and Duran Eppler's (2019: 415) empirical study on the perception of swearwords in the AVT modes subtitling and dubbing, challenges this notion. Their study found no significant

difference in perception between the two modes. While various studies (such as Chiaro 2008; Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007; Gottlieb 1992) have suggested this, the researchers noted that until their study, it had not been empirically tested. These days, there is a more positive view regarding taboo language within subtitles. For example, Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 191) mention that “the translation of taboo words and invectives is crucial when they contribute to characterization or when they fulfill a thematic function in a film”. It is likely for this reason that Netflix instructs its subtitlers: “Dialogue must never be censored. Expletives should be rendered as faithfully as possible” (Netflix, 2022).

Regardless of possible spatiotemporal constraints or other circumstances, it is essential to initially assess the function of language variation in the audiovisual production: is this linguistic variation consistently used or is it limited to certain characters and situations (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 183)? For example, in *Derry Girls*, an Ulster dialect is intertwined with adolescent slang or sociolect—a blend of colloquial language and regional Northern Irish expressions. This will be explained further in the section regarding regiolect. In various scenes, the language employed by the main characters contrasts with the Ulster dialect spoken by their parents, who occasionally slip into their own taboo language, but mostly use fewer swear words. From this viewpoint, it is necessary to ensure that this contrast is effectively conveyed in translation (Baines 2015: 437). However, it is unlikely for any target language (henceforth TL) to possess identical equivalents for all linguistic variations, which poses a challenge across different dialects. The connotations of target cultures (henceforth TC) dialects differ from those of the source culture (henceforth SC) dialects they replace, with sometimes even unintended connotations of their own (Ibid.).

Considering the specificity of taboo language within subtitles, it is essential that the analysis methods employed in this thesis for examining the Dutch and German subtitles regarding the taboo language are tailored specifically to taboo language in subtitling, rather than using a more general taxonomy.

Hence, a combination of strategies will be employed in the analysis, namely omission, which is the deletion of a taboo word; standardization, where the taboo word is translated into a standard word (Xavier 2022:81); euphemism, which involves translating taboo words into more neutral words, but there is still an association with the original taboo language (Gao 2013: 2313; Xavier 2022: 81), and its opposite, dysphemism (Xavier 2022: 81), which encompasses instances where a standard word is translated into a taboo word.

118	The Girls, Michelle	Do you mean when you shacked up	-	-	Toen u ging hokken	-	-	-	Und hast mit der Friseur gevögelt	SA	DE	DY
119	The Girls, Michelle	with a slutty hairdresser, but then she dumped you?	SA	E	met die sletterige kapster die u toen heeft gedumpt?	SA	E	MA	die dich verließ?	-	-	O

Dysphemisms are typically employed to compensate a taboo word that has not been or will not be subtitled. In examples (118/119) above, this is evident in the German subtitles. The taboo language for sexual activity (SA) has been omitted in the second sentence *-slutty-*, while a taboo word for SA has been included in the first sentence (*gevögelt*, which translates to 'fucked').

Additionally, the combination of strategies involves maintenance (Xavier 2022: 82), where the taboo word in the ST is retained as a taboo word in the TT. Furthermore, as a subcategory of maintenance, it incorporates the identification of four-letter words, seeing how in Dutch, the religious theme has the tendency of being replaced by popular English four-letter words like *shit* and *fuck* (Gao 2013: 2311). Below there are examples of taboo utterance translated with each translation strategy in both Dutch and German.

Omission (O)

Example Dutch:

76	What the fuck is wrong with you?	Wat mankeert jou?	O
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Example German:

76	What the fuck is wrong with you?	Was hast du?	O
----	----------------------------------	---------------------	---

Standardization (ST)

Example Dutch:

123	OK, let's cut the crap, Dee.	Genoeg met die onzin , Dee.	ST
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Example German:

123	OK, let's cut the crap, Dee.	Zur Sache , Dee.	ST
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Euphemism (EU)

Example Dutch:

177	Jesus Christ!	Allemachtig.	EU
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Example German:

177	Jesus Christ!	Allmächtiger!	EU
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Dysphemism (DY)

Example Dutch:

190	She brought you a Coke and you just sat there and said sweet Fanny Adams. ²	En je zegt geen reet .	DY
-----	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------	----

Example German:

58	She could have given Joan Crawford a run for her money.	Dagegen war Joan Crawford ein Scheißdreck .	DY
----	---------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------	----

Maintenance (M)

Example Dutch:

² Some people would consider the idiom 'sweet Fanny Adams' to be taboo language, given its associations: a euphemism for 'sweet FA' ('sweet fuck all'), and the meaning of 'fanny' in Irish/UK English slang, even though the true origin of 'Fanny' in this euphemistic expression is a girl's name. However, seeing how this is the only example in the Dutch dataset of something that many people consider a standard word, it was decided to keep this example to explain the term 'dysphemism'. The historical context of the expression is explained in more detail on page 76.

174	Aye, 'cause that's why it wasn't believable, dickweed.	Daarom was het ongeloofwaardig, oen .	MA
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Example German:

174	Aye, 'cause that's why it wasn't believable, dickweed.	Deswegen glaubte es ja keiner, du Idiot .	MA
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Four-Letter (F)

Example Dutch:

21	The disco is shit!	De disco is shit .	F
----	--------------------	---------------------------	---

Example German:

There were no examples found in the dataset.

3.2 -Lect

This section will examine three different categories of language variety: geographical dialect, also known as 'regiolect'; sociolect, and idiolect (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 180). These -lects are among the multiple layers of the translation issues that are being researched in this study. In linguistic terms Hodson defines a dialect as "a combination of regional pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar" (Hodson 2017: 2). Ghassempur (2011: 54) discusses the challenges faced by translators when dealing with texts rich in language variety, particularly dialects. According to her, translators have various options, such as translating dialects into other dialects, which can be problematic due to the difficulty in selecting the appropriate target dialect and the risk of perpetuating stereotypes. Translating dialects into standard language results in significant loss of translation and may obscure the original meaning. The most viable solution appears to be translating dialects into a "supraregional colloquial language that is universally understood by the readers in the target language" (Ibid.).

As previously mentioned, the use of taboo language is affected by contextual, pragmatic functions. These include not only the topic of conversation, but also aspects such as the social and physical environment of the communication, as well as the relationship

between the speaker and listener, which includes factors such as gender, occupation, and status. Within these factors, each individual has their own distinct way of speaking. These different types of dialect will be further explored in the next paragraphs.

3.2.1 *Regiolect*

A regional dialect, sometimes referred to by the broader term gelect, but within the scope of this thesis as regiolect, due to the fact it concerns the regio Derry in this case, pertains to speakers living in a particular location (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 180). The regiolect that is spoken in *Derry Girls* is Northern Irish English (henceforth NIE) or Ulster English (Corrigan 2010: 1). The northern region of Ireland is commonly referred to as 'Ulster', a term that is nowadays loosely used to denote Northern Ireland (Hickey 2007: 85). Northern Ireland constitutes as part of the United Kingdom, formed through the partition of Ireland in 1921, comprising six counties and the three counties Donegal, Monaghan and Cavan belonging to the Republic of Ireland (Ibid.). Situated near the border with county Donegal, Derry is the second-largest city in Northern Ireland and the largest in county Derry. There is a linguistic evaluation from primarily Irish speaking in until the 17th century to predominantly English-speaking due to plantations and subsequent immigration waves (Hickey 2007: 95; Corrigan 2010: 19). Distinct speech regions such as Ulster Scots and South Ulster English emerged, each with their unique phonological characteristics. Additionally, the influence of faith as an ethnic marker in Derry is important, as the Catholic majority sets it apart from other urban areas in Northern Ireland. Scholars have examined whether the ethnic divide has resulted in linguistic differences between Catholic and Protestant populations, particularly in urban areas like Derry. The notion that Derry is influenced by the Scottish language is reinforced by McCafferty (2001: 11), who asserts that the city is situated at the boundary between two distinct linguistic regions, namely Mid-Ulster English and the other Ulster Scots.

As per Montini & Ranzato (2021: 1), certain fictional figures, similar to actual people, speak regiolect at home, while employing standard English when abroad or in the company of 'esteemed' individuals. Regarding taboo language, research has proven that the (Northern) Irish are prone to swearing, most often religious themed swearing, uttering expressions such as *Jesus!* (Walshe 2011: 129).

3.2.2 *Sociolect*

Dialect borders are not necessarily confined to geographical distinctions; they can also be of

social nature. Sociolect relates to demographic groups, such as gender, social class, and age, as well as individual's socio-economic status (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2021: 180).

According to Stapleton (2010: 291), taboo language is considered offensive and linked to a lower socio-economic status, leading individuals to avoid it for reasons of maintaining social reputation. Ljung (2011: 63-64) agrees with this assertion by noting that swearing is generally regarded unfavorably and often linked with individuals of lower social status, providing an example of someone swearing like a trooper/sailor. However, paradoxically, these very associations contribute to the use of taboo language as a means of asserting identity, particularly among teenagers and males from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Stapleton 2010: 291). These groups perceive it as conveying a form of hidden status, with its element of skill and wordplay often leading to admiration directed at proficient swearers (Ljung 2011: 64). Schweinberger (2018: 3-4) notes that taboo language occurs within different age groups and gender: “swearing is socially stratified along dimensions of age, gender, and social class”, where teenagers and young adults are most prone to using taboo language, and the elderly (people over 60) least. According to Nicolau & Sukamto (2014: 72), the use of taboo language is not exclusively associated with uneducated or lower-social class individuals; it is prevalent across all cultures and social boundaries, irrespective of gender. However, they note differences in swearing patterns due to the biological distinction between men and women. Moreover, gender differences in speech can be attributed to power imbalances, with men typically holding more power in patriarchal societies (Ibid.). In line with this, Ljung (2011: 93) contends that women tend to use milder language compared to men, who often prioritize establishing status in conversations. According to van Sterkenburg, in an interview with de Moor (2008: par. 2), women swear as much as men, particularly the younger generation, but the context varies. Men tend to use strong language in social situations, considering it a form of macho behavior, while women swear more out of frustration, especially when alone. In group settings, women swear less frequently.

Ghassempur (2011: 56) mentions that the working-class Irish sociolect – which is what most characters in *Derry Girls* belong to- involves frequent swearing, primarily having a purely phatic function. She notes that the language in the Irish novel *The Commitments* consists of slang, which is not just a matter of language register, but part of “their language, their mother tongue and they strongly identify with it” (Ghassempur 2011: 52). Sometimes people within such sociolects are unable to articulate their thoughts without using the word

fuck because it holds such fundamental importance in their language (Ibid.).

As mentioned earlier, four-letter words such as *shit* and *damn*, are becoming increasingly popular. According to van Sterkenburg, in an interview with de Moor (2008: par. 4), even individuals aged 25 to 50 in the Netherlands now consider these words to be part of the standard vocabulary. This trend of anglicization has extended to the older generation as well, with some seventy-year-olds now using words like *shit* to express their emotions (Ibid.).

Regarding German sociolect, Nübling & Vogel (2004: 19) mention an emerging trend of sexual themes among German youth today, providing the example *Schlappschwanz*, which translates to ‘limp dick’. This aligns with the previously mentioned term *Wichsfresse!* from the dataset, which was a sexual themed utterance by a teenager and subtitled in German with a sexual themed taboo word. According to them, this trend may be influenced by the Anglo-Saxon world (Ibid.).

3.2.3 *Idiolect*

Idiolect refers to an individual’s unique style, including linguistic mannerisms and idiosyncrasies; it encompasses all aspects of a person’s speech, including their distinctive way of using language that sets them apart from others (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2021: 179). When applied to language, Short (as quoted by Díaz Cintas and Remael 2021: 179) suggests that any person’s consistent linguistic behavior “could be said to constitute a style, whether it is spoken or written, or whether the language producer is deemed a literary figure or not”. When considering idiolect in relation to taboo language, Jay (1999: 107) suggests that swearing is an integral aspect of someone’s personality, where you can hear a speaker’s personality through their style of cursing. Moreover, within a sociolect, variations can also emerge. For instance, focusing on a specific sociolect group within *Derry Girls*, comprised of the characters Erin, Orla, Michelle, and Clare, it becomes clear that each member has distinct swearing patters. When focusing on Clare for example, she is portrayed as intelligent and studious, often attempting to thwart her friends’ wild schemes. In terms of language use, she typically maintains a polite demeanor, except when under pressure or stressed, at which point she may resort to taboo language. This nuance forms a crucial part of her idiolect, and from this perspective, it becomes imperative that such contrasts are accurately conveyed in the Dutch and German subtitles to ensure consistency in characterization (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2021: 183). Therefore, it can be concluded that the subtling of taboo language is crucial when it contributes to characterization.

Methodology

1. Materials

Derry Girls is produced by Hat Trick Productions and broadcasted on Netflix for international streaming. The availability of *Derry Girls* on Netflix with Dutch and German subtitles, along with the frequent use of taboo language in the episodes, offers ample material for analysis. For this analysis, the ST audio was used instead of the English intralingual subtitles, as it cannot be guaranteed that the subtitles accurately reflect the dialogue verbatim due to previously mentioned constraints.

Derry Girls comprises 3 seasons, with season 1 and 2 each consisting of 6 episodes and season 3 comprising 7. Each episode has a duration of approximately 20 minutes.

Each episode of *Derry Girls* tells its own story and can be watched independently, as they all have relatively closed endings. Sometimes they may have an open ending, as it adds to the humor knowing that there will not be a follow-up. The overarching theme of the series revolves around the events of The Troubles, starting with a bomb on the Craigavon bridge in early 1990s Derry and concluding with the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. While many references to The Troubles are completely fictional, the show incorporates real elements from the era, as the series integrates real-life events and media representations, whether through characters' direct involvement in historical events or their portrayal in the media. Throughout the series, real-life videos of The Troubles are integrated. Primarily, The Troubles serve as a backdrop to the characters' lives rather than being the main focus. The violence that engulfed Northern Ireland during this period is not treated lightly; instead, it is portrayed as just one aspect of their reality, alongside the characters' typical (teenage) issues.

As there is no overarching storyline, and the focus lies on the taboo language within the selected episodes and not on the content of the series itself, it was decided not to provide a summary of the series and the six selected episodes.

2. Method

Netflix was used to obtain both the English ST and the Dutch and German subtitles. Subsequently, the instances of taboo language were identified and organized into a table

manually, with their corresponding categories and functions in English, Dutch and German. For the latter two languages, the translation strategy employed was also documented within the table. A schematic representation of the table can be found in Table 1 below. The filled in table, with all the data of the six selected episodes, can be found in Appendix A. The numbers of the examples in the Results and Discussion chapter correspond with their place in Appendix A.

Nr.	Group	English ST	Category	Function	Dutch TT	Category	Function	TS	German TT	Category	Function
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Table 1 Schematic representation of the table

The following section explains how the terms in each column in this table were classified. The characters were divided based on their sociolect, considering factors such as generation and gender, given their shared background of being from the same social class and city, with the exception of the *Religious People* group and the *not-from-Derry* group. This resulted in the following groups, as depicted in Table 2:

Group:	The Girls	The Original Girls	The Elderly	Religious People	Not-from- Derry	Others
Characters:	Orla McCool, Clare Devlin, Michelle Mallon and Erin Quinn	Aunt Sarah, Geraldine Devlin, Deirdre Mallon and Ma Mary Quinn	Uncle Colm, Granda Joe, Jim the Neighbor	Sister Michael, Sister Declan, Father Peter	Pa Gerry (he is from Navan, Ireland, not Derry), James Maguire (he is from England, not Derry), Cousin Rob (he is from Canada, not Derry)	-

Table 2 Sociolect groups

Each group forms its own sociolect, with *the Girls* representing four teenage girls who have grown up together in Derry and known each other for all their life,

while *the Original Girls* depict the mothers of *the Girls*, belonging to a sociolect of middle-aged women who grew up in Derry. Literature has shown that women swear as frequently as men, especially the younger generation, but middle-aged women tend to swear more out of frustration, particularly when alone, and less in group settings. *The Elderly* group represents the older generation, coincidentally this sociolect consists solely of men. Research indicates that individuals above the age of 60 swear less frequently. Cultural attitudes towards swearing among the elderly vary. Therefore, an analysis was conducted to determine if there were differences between *the Elderly* sociolect and others in terms of the frequency that taboo language have been depicted in the Dutch and German subtitles.

The *Religious People* group comprises characters with religious jobs. Typically, religious individuals avoid using taboo language, especially terms considered sacrilegious. Hence, it was analyzed how any taboo language in their dialogue was translated in the Dutch and German subtitles. The characters that are not from Derry are also grouped together, as they did not grow up in Derry and may perceive taboo language differently compared to those within the same regiolect. However, they do not form a sociolect, as they are all from different regions and belong to different age groups. Lastly, the *others* group comprises characters who used taboo language in the selected episodes but do not belong to any of the aforementioned sociolects. These characters had very minor roles with limited background information and dialogue.

As mentioned in section 3.1.1 of the Theoretical Framework, Ljung's (2011) model of semantic categories was used for the analysis. However, an additional category, focusing on intelligence and/or inexperience, was added, as mentioned in van Sterkenburg's (2008) book. To streamline the categories, it was decided to include body parts within the scatological theme alongside bodily excretions, given their association with the human body. Similarly, in the Disease category, utterances concerning *death* were added. This category also encompasses mental illnesses, distinguishing them from taboo language related to low intelligence, which is categorized under Intelligence/Inexperience, as mental illnesses are distinctly different from low intelligence. Table 3 below provides an example of each category, with the corresponding taboo language from the three languages. As can be seen in the English Intelligence/Inexperience category, certain taboo language instances may fall into multiple categories. In this case *thick as shit* also belongs to the Scatological category. In such cases, both categories were added to the example.

Category	English example	Dutch example	German example
Religious/Supernatural (R)	For the love of God, don't forget your waterproof trousers.	Mijn God	Oh, mein Gott
Scatological/Body Parts (S)	I am going to ram that so far up your arse! / You're a mouth, that's what you are.	Ze boeit me geen reet./Je bent vooral een mond.	Die Disko ist Scheiße! /Du hast eine große Klappe, das ist alles.
Sex Organ (SO)	It's an all-girls school, dick face.	Kom op dan, ballemans. Stel je jezelf nog voor?	Sprich für dich selbst, Zuckertitte.
Sexual Activities (SA)	Oh, look, your boring fucking diary sent her to sleep.	Misschien is hij haar vrijer.	Eine Schlampe, unser Kathy, hat ihn schön betrogen.
Mother/Family (M)	Our carriage awaits, motherfuckers.	Zie je die trut daar?	Orange Bastarde!
Death/Disease (D)	Why has everyone gone absolutely mental?	Daar hebben we ons scheel aan betaald.	Vielleicht können wir ihn zu Tode erschrecken,
Intelligence/Inexperience (II)	They're all thick as shit.	Dit is een meisjesschool, oen.	Ja, sie ist 'ne Pfeife/ Du solltest vernünftiger werden.

Table 3 Examples Semantic Categories

Every taboo word found in the Dutch and German subtitles was categorized based on semantic category, pragmatic function and translation strategy, with the exception of the taboo words categorized under the translation strategies standardization and omission. Utterances categorized under the standardization translation strategy were not assigned a semantic category, as they did not contain taboo language. However, they were classified

based on pragmatic function, as standardized taboo words can still convey the intended meaning of the speaker within a sentence. Utterances classified under the omission translation strategy were not assigned a category, nor a function. The following examples will explain the differences. Table 4 on page 40 provides the meanings of the abbreviations used in the examples.

244	The Original Girls, Deirdre	Sorry I'm late Sister, couldn't get over the bridge. This bloody bomb.	R	E	Sorry dat ik laat ben. Ik kon de brug niet over. Die rotbom.	D	E	MA	Entschuldigen Sie. Ich konnte nicht über die Brücke. Die verfluchte Bombe!	R	E	MA
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In the example (244), the taboo word *bloody* was retained in both the Dutch and German subtitles, with the same function, as *rot* ('rotten') and *verfluchte* ('cursed') both emphasized the word *bomb* and count as taboo language, within the categories Death/Disease and Religious/Supernatural. However, in the next example (246), only the German subtitles

246	Others, male	How long does it take to defuse a fucking bomb?	SA	E	Hoelang duurt het een bom te ontmantelen?	-	-	O	Wie lange dauert es, eine verdamnte Bombe zu entschärfen?	R	E	MA
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preserved both the taboo language and the function. In the Dutch example, there was no emphasis on the word *bomb*, whilst in the German example, *verdamnte* ('damned') emphasized *Bombe* ('bomb'). Therefore, when an example was categorized under the translation strategy *omission*, it was not assigned a category, nor a function.

14	The Original Girls, Deirdre	Christ, but these Americans are so argumentative	R	C	Jemig, maar Amerikanen zijn zo twistziek	R	C	EU	Echt, diese Amerikaner sind so streitsüchtig	-	C	ST
----	-----------------------------	--------------------------------------------------	---	---	------------------------------------------	---	---	----	----------------------------------------------	---	---	----

In the example (14), the Dutch subtitles euphemized the taboo word *Christ* to *Jemig*, which translates to 'Geez', retaining the cathartic function and religious category, albeit in a milder version. The German *Echt*, which translates to 'Really', retains the cathartic function, but has no longer a taboo association attached to it, so does not fall under a semantic category.

270	The Girls, Michelle	It's fucking tiny.	SA	E	Noord-Ierland is superklein op de kaart.	-	E	ST	Nordirland ist auf der Karte total klein.	-	E	ST
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In the last example, number 270, neither language retained the taboo language, so they were not categorized based on semantic category. However, the pragmatic function, was maintained. The function of *fucking* was to emphasize the size of Northern Ireland, indicating that it is very small. In both the Dutch and German subtitles, this emphasize was retained, as *super* translates to 'super' and *total* translates to 'very'. Therefore, when an example was categorized under the translation strategy standardization, it was not assigned a category, but it was categorized based on function. This nuance in categorization underscores the importance of classifying taboo language not only based on semantic category but also on pragmatic function. Even without an utterance containing explicit semantic taboo language, it can still convey the intended meaning of the speaker.

As depicted in Table 4 below, Ljung's (2011) semantic categories were abbreviated, which resulted in for example the Religious/Supernatural theme being assigned the codename "R". Similarly, Pinker's (2007) pragmatic functions and the sixth Social Function were abbreviated, with the Descriptive function, for instance, coded as "DE". Finally, the combination of Gao (2013) and Xavier's (2022) taboo language subtitling taxonomies was abbreviated, with omission, for example, coded as "O".

Category	Function	Translation Strategy Taboo Language
Religious/Supernatural = R	Descriptive = DE	Maintenance = MA
Scatological/Body Parts = S	Idiomatic = I	Omission = O
Sex Organ = SO	Abusive = A	Euphemism = EU
Sexual Activities = SA	Emphatic = E	Dysphemism = DY

Mother/Family = M	Cathartic = C	Standardization = ST
Death/Disease = D	Social Function = SF	Four-Letter = F
Intelligence/Inexperience = II		
No taboo utterance in English ST (so a DY in the TT(s) = -		

Table 4 Abbreviations

After each taboo utterance had been classified in the Word table, the results were transferred to an Excel table, which displayed both the raw numbers and percentages of taboo language occurrences across the six episodes. This included the frequency of each semantic category across the three languages, including instances where no semantic category was present due to the omission or standardization of the taboo language. In a second table, the frequency of each pragmatic function in each language was determined, and the percentages were calculated. This analysis answered the sub-question “What semantic categories and pragmatic functions of taboo language are present in the selected episodes of *Derry Girls*, and how does their prevalence differ among English, Dutch, and German?” This comprehensive approach aimed to ascertain whether certain characters had significantly less taboo language subtitled compared to the English ST, elucidating whether the idiolects of the characters were conveyed in the Dutch and German subtitles. The analysis looked at the translation strategies employed on both an idiolect and sociolect level, calculating percentages to discern the proportion of each group and individual translated according to each strategy, which answered the sub-question “What translation strategies are used for subtitled taboo language in *Derry Girls* into Dutch and German, according to the combined typologies proposed by Xavier (2022) and Gao (2013)”. Subsequently, these groups were combined to observe overall percentages per language.

Furthermore, the study explored potential differences within sociolects, investigating whether specific characters were subtitled differently within their respective groups, and whether that differentiated with regards to their specific character tendencies, in other

words, the way their idiolect differentiates from their sociolect group. This answered the sub-question “How are regiolect, sociolect and idiolect portrayed in the series”.

Lastly, an assessment was made on whether the distinctive regiolect of Derry, characterized by frequent use of taboo language, was accurately depicted in the subtitles, and whether the characters not born or having grown up in the Derry region also used such language or were chastised when doing so. Throughout this analysis, particular attention was given to whether specific semantic categories or pragmatic functions were more frequently omitted, shedding light on whether certain functions, such as the social or emphatic function, were translated less frequently due to their lesser significance to the plot and their emphasis on friendly contexts. This answered the sub-question “Is the taboo language of some characters retained less frequently than of others, and what is the effect of the non-retention of taboo language for the characters’ regiolect, sociolect and idiolect.”

Results and Discussion

1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results and a discussion of the study on taboo language within the Dutch and German subtitles of the series *Derry Girls*. This analysis aims to answer the following question: How does the subtitling of taboo language affect the portrayal of characters’ regiolects, idiolects, and sociolects in the Dutch and German versions of the series *Derry Girls*?

The chapter is divided into four sections: the findings for the translation strategies in the Dutch and German subtitles of *Derry Girls*, the findings for the semantic categories in *Derry Girls*, the findings for the pragmatic functions in *Derry Girls*, and the influence of these three aspects on the characters’ portrayal considering their regiolect, sociolect, and idiolect.

2. Translation Strategies

In the six episodes of *Derry Girls* selected for analysis, a total of 306 taboo words were found in the English ST. Around 49 percent of the taboo language was maintained in both the Dutch and German TT. In the Dutch subtitles, the maintenance translation strategy occurred 150 times out of 307, and in the German subtitles, it occurred 150 times out of 309, as shown in

Tables 5 and 6, with the detailed numbers available in Appendix B.

The discrepancy in the numbers -307 for Dutch and 309 for German- is attributed to the German subtitles containing two more dysphemisms compared to the one dysphemism in the Dutch subtitles, resulting in an additional three taboo words compared to the English ST.

Category	Amount	Percentage
Maintenance	150/307	48.86%
Omission	77/307	25.08%
Euphemism	32/307	10.42%
Dysphemism	1/307	0.33%
Standardization	45/307	14.66%
Four-Letter Words	2/307	0.65%
Total	307/307	100.00%

Table 5 Dutch Translation Strategies Total

Category	Amount	Percentage
Maintenance	150/309	48.54%
Omission	74/309	23.95%
Euphemism	36/309	11.65%
Dysphemism	3/309	0.97%
Standardization	46/309	14.89%
Four-Letter Words	0/309	0.00%
Total	309/309	100.00%

Table 6 German Translation Strategies Total

However, these percentages of 49 only take into consideration the instances the taboo language were categorized under the maintenance category. To better understand this categorization, a distinction between instances where taboo language is present in some form and those where it is completely absent must be made. The former distinction includes maintenance, dysphemism, four-letter words, and euphemism, while the latter consists of omission and standardization.

Euphemism and standardization present unique challenges within this framework. While both approaches involve altering the original taboo language, they do so in different ways. Euphemism retains a connection to the original taboo word by using a milder substitute term with similar connotations or associations. On the other hand, standardization involves translating the taboo language into a neutral or non-taboo word, thereby intentionally severing any direct link to the original taboo expression.

In example 16, this difference in usage of euphemism versus standardization can be clearly observed. The original English phrase, *Christ, but these Americans are so argumentative*, contains taboo language that falls within the religious category (*Christ*). In the Dutch translation, this taboo language is euphemized with the milder term *Jemig*

(‘Geez’), which maintains the religious association but softens the impact of the expression. This choice reflects a conscious decision to retain some connection to the original taboo word while toning down its intensity. On the other hand, in the German translation, the taboo language is completely removed through standardization. The word *Christ* is translated simply as *Echt* which translates to ‘Really’. This approach replaces the taboo word with a neutral term, eliminating any religious connotation and thereby effectively standardizing the expression. Both translations kept the pragmatic cathartic function.

16.	The Original Girls, Deirdre	Christ, but these Americans are so argumentative.	R	C	Jemig, maar Amerikanen zijn zo twistziek.	R	C	EU	Echt, diese Amerikaner sind so streitsüchtig.	-	C
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In conclusion, dysphemisms, four-letters words, and euphemisms should be added to the maintenance percentage to encompass all instances where some form of taboo language was conveyed in the subtitles, from now on called the ‘retained’ group. When combined, this totals to 189 out of 309 instances (61%) in the German subtitles and 185 out of 307 instances (60%) in the Dutch subtitles. The remaining 120 out of 309 (39%) in the German subtitles and 122 out of 307 (40%) in the Dutch subtitles consist of the added totals of omission and standardization, from now on called the ‘non-retained’ group. Table 13 below shows the percentages of how much taboo language has been retained and not retained. Additionally, it shows how many times taboo language within each semantic category occurred in the ST and TTs.

Language	S	R	SO	SA	M	D	II	D/SO	Standardization	Omission	Total
English	43 (14.05%)	110 (35.95%)	14 (4.58%)	89 (29.08%)	22 (7.19%)	19 (6.21%)	9 (2.94%)	x	x	x	306
Dutch	19 (6.51%)	71 (22.80%)	31 (10.75%)	21 (6.84%)	2 (0.65%)	24 (7.82%)	17 (5.54%)	1 (0.33%)	45 (15.31%)	77 (24.10%)	307
German	45 (15.53%)	70 (22.98%)	2 (0.65%)	26 (8.41%)	12 (3.88%)	16 (5.18%)	18 (5.83%)	x	46 (14.89%)	74 (23.62%)	309

Table 7 Semantic Categories Totals

3. Semantic Categories

In the English ST, the most frequently used semantic category is religious (R), accounting for 110 out of 306 instances (35,95%), closely followed by sexual activity (SA) with 89 out of 306 instances (29,08%). In the Dutch TT, the most frequently used semantic category is religious (R), with 70 out of 307 instances (22,80%), followed by sex organ (SO), with 33 out of 307 instances (10,75%). Similarly, in the German TT, the most frequent category is religious (R), with 71 out of 309 (22,98%), followed by scatological (S), with 48 out of 309 instances (15,53%) which aligns with the literature regarding common taboo language categories in Dutch and German. As religious swearing is considered a relatively mild form of taboo language, it is not unusual for it to have been retained in both the TTs, nor is it surprising to see such a high frequency in the ST. Moreover, the literature indicates that religious-themed swearing is commonly used in the regiolect spoken in Derry (Walshe 2011: 129).

Many of the semantic categories are fairly represented in the TT's subtitles. However, some stand out with significant differences when compared to the ST. For instance, the scatological category (S) in the Dutch TT (6.51%) is roughly halved compared to the English ST (14,05%). From Table 8, it can be observed that many of the taboo words within category S in the Dutch TT have been transferred to other categories (9 out of 43 to SO, 9 out of 43 to the other categories combined) indicating that they have been retained. Consequently, compared to other categories, S does not have an above-average non-retention rate. The same applies to category M. Although there are only two examples of this category found in the Dutch subtitles, 17 out of 22 instances have been changed from M to other categories and thus retained, with 12 out of 17 being transferred to the SO category. This observation is consistent with Ljung's theory that taboo language within the M semantic category is not commonly used in Dutch (Ljung 2011: 43).

Category	R	S	SO	SA	M	D	II	D+SO	Omitted	Standardized	Total
R	65	1				2	1		33	8	110
S	1	10	9			3	4	1	4	11	43
SO		2	10				2				14
SA	4	5	1	17		4	2		35	21	89

M		1	12	2	2					3	2	22
D						15	1				3	19
II			1				7				1	9
-		1										1
Total TT	70	20	33	19	2	24	17	1	74	47	307	

Table 8 Dutch Semantic Categories

Category	R	S	SO	SA	M	D	II	D+SO	Omitted	Standardized	Total ST
R	64	2					1		32	11	110
S	1	26	1	1		1	2		1	10	43
SO		4					6			4	14
SA	6	10	1	20			1		38	13	89
M		4		1	12		1		1	3	22
D						14	1		1	2	19
II							6			3	9
-		2		1							3
Total TT	71	48	2	23	12	15	18	0	74	46	309

Table 9 German Semantic Categories

The German data (see Table 7), shows that category SO is underrepresented. This aligns with the literature indicating that swearing within the SO and SA categories is almost nonexistent in German (Ljung 2011: 39). However, Table 9 shows that the SO category taboo language is retained within other categories; 6 out of 14 instances have been changed to category II (Intelligence/Inexperience) and 4 out of 14 to S, indicating that it is not significantly more not retained, as only 4 out of 14 are not retained.

There are two categories where above-average non-retention (more than 40% in the

Dutch subtitles and 39% in the German ones) can be observed in both TTs. The first is again category R. Although it has just been noted that there is a relatively high retention percentage within the two TTs compared to other categories and the ST, there is a significant amount of non-retention in absolute numbers. This is to be expected because, as previously mentioned, this is the largest category in terms of the amount of taboo language, so it is logical that there would be more non-retention there. However, it does mean that in the Dutch TT, 41 utterances are non-retained, while only five have been added, in this case from the SA category to R. This non-retention indicates that a lot of religious swearing has been lost in the Dutch subtitles. Similarly, in the German TT, there are 43 utterances that are not retained, with seven utterances transferred from another category to R. Again, this suggests that a significant amount of religious swearing has been lost, in the German subtitles.

The second category is SA (sexual activity), where the Dutch subtitles retained only 19 out of 307 (6,19%) instances of SA-related taboo language, compared to the 89 out of 306 (29,08%) instances in the ST, and the German subtitles retained only 23 out of 309 (8,41%) instances. However, the difference between this category and the previously mentioned ones is that within this category, there is a much higher non-retention rate. This means that in both languages, instead of the SA category being changed and retained into another category in the TTs, they have not been retained. In the Dutch subtitles, 56 out of 91 SA taboo utterances have not been retained, with only 21 examples of SA-categorized taboo language found in the subtitles. These consist of 19 examples that have been retained in the same SA category and two examples that have been changed from M to SA. In the German subtitles, 51 out of 89 utterances have not been retained, with 23 examples of SA-categorized taboo language found in the German subtitles. These consist of 20 examples that have been retained in the same SA category and three examples from different categories that have been changed to SA.

In conclusion, all semantic categories are represented in all three languages. Some categories have been changed to categories that are more common in the respective TLs, such as M in Dutch, which has been mostly changed to SO, and in German, SO has been changed to II and S. In both TL subtitles, a significant amount of religious swearing has been lost, but proportionally, this is not more non-retained than other categories. The only category where a really large difference can be found is the SA category. As this difference is significant, it was decided to examine the pragmatic functions to see if there were specific

functions that were highly not retained within the SA category, in order to identify any patterns of non-retention within certain functions.

1. Pragmatic Functions

First, in Table 10, it can be observed that all the previously established pragmatic functions of taboo language -abusive, cathartic, descriptive, emphatic, idiomatic, and social- were present in the ST. Among these, the most frequent functions were abusive (A) and cathartic (C), with emphatic (E) following closely behind.

As can be seen in Table 11, in the Dutch ST, functions A, C and DE are retained frequently compared to the TT, with only 9 out of 61 examples being non-retained in function A, 15 out of 71 in function C and 8 out of 40 in function DE. This means that the utterances of the taboo words expressed within the functions A, C, and DE were clearly conveyed in the Dutch TT.

However, within function E, only 16 examples have been retained, while 45 have not been retained. A minority of 14 out of 31 non-retained instances have been standardized, meaning that although the taboo language is no longer present, the utterance has retained its function.

Another interesting observation is the number of instances of functions SF and I that have been retained. Both of these functions have a higher amount of non-retained instances than retained ones (20 out of 36 for function I and 23 out of 38 for function SF). Similarly to function E, a smaller part of the non-retained instances has been standardized rather than omitted, indicating that the utterance kept its function.

Table 12 shows that in the German TT, something similar can be observed. Functions A, C and DE are frequently retained compared to the ST. However, functions E and SF are frequently not retained, with 18 instances retained and 43 non-retained for E, and 12 instances retained and 27 non-retained for SF. Within the non-retained instances, as was observed in the Dutch TT, a smaller part of instances was standardized (for function E 9 out of 34, and for function SF 2 out of 25) rather than omitted, indicating that the utterance kept

Pragmatic

Function	Amount	Percentage
DE	36	11.8%
SF	38	12.4%
I	43	14.1%
E	60	19.6%
C	61	19.9%
A	68	22.2%
Total	306	100%

Table 10 English Pragmatic Functions to

its function. Contrary to the Dutch TT, the I function in the German subtitles was retained more often than not, with 19 instances retained and 16 instances non-retained.

Pragmatic		
Function	Amount	Percentage
A retained	52	16.9%
A ST	6	2.0%
A O	3	1.0%
C retained	56	18.2%
C ST	6	2.0%
C O	9	2.9%
DE retained	32	10.4%
DE ST	7	2.3%
DE O	1	0.3%
E retained	16	5.2%
E ST	14	4.6%
E O	31	10.1%
I retained	16	5.2%
I ST	8	2.6%
I O	12	3.9%
SF retained	15	4.9%
SF ST	4	1.3%
ST O	19	6.2%
Total	307	100%

Table 12 Dutch Pragmatic Functions

Pragmatic		
Function	Amount	Percentage
A retained	51	16.5%
A ST	7	2.3%
A O		-
C retained	58	18.8%
C ST	6	1.9%
C O	9	2.9%
DE retained	31	10.0%
DE ST	9	2.9%
DE O	3	1.0%
E retained	18	5.8%
E ST	9	2.9%
E O	34	11.0%
I retained	19	6.1%
I ST	8	2.6%
I O	8	2.6%
SF retained	12	3.9%
SF ST	2	0.6%
ST O	25	8.1%
Total	309	100%

Table 11 German Pragmatic Functions

It can be concluded that the E, I and SF functions in the Dutch TT are non-retained more frequently than the other functions, as well as the E and SF functions in the German TT. This observation is consistent with Han & Wang's (2014) theory that the two functions E and SF are perceived as fillers, making them less plot-relevant and more likely to be non-retained. Additionally, the I function should be included in this theory based on the *Derry Girls* Dutch dataset.

Next, an investigation will be conducted to determine which functions were associated with the SA semantic category, the category that experienced the highest rate of non-retention. This investigation aims to identify whether there is a correlation between the most non-retained semantic category and the most non-retained pragmatic functions.

The relevance of this conclusion to the research question lies in the fact that such high amounts of non-retained taboo language impact the conveyance of a character's idiolect. When SA is deemed non-plot-relevant and combined with the E function, it is frequently not retained, indicating that this combination is viewed as the least plot-relevant and is thus more easily omitted in translation. For a character, this loss means that, aside from the function of SA, the specific intent of what is being said is unclear. The removal of taboo language from someone's idiolect, when said idiolect is characterized by a frequent usage of taboo language, significantly diminishes their characterization, stripping away a substantial part of their identity as conveyed through language.

Of the 91 SA taboo words found in the ST, 56 out of 91 instances are non-retained in the Dutch TT and 51 out of 91 are non-retained in the German TT. In the Dutch TT, the remaining 35 out of 91 instances are either retained in the same SA category (19 out of 91) or changed to another category but still remained taboo words (16 out of 91). Two swear words from the M category were changed to an SA swear word, making the total number of taboo language in the SA category in the Dutch TT 21 out of 307. Of the 56 non-retained SA taboo words, 36 out of 56 instances are from the E function, 6 out of 56 from the I function, 6 out of 56 from the SF function, 1 out of 56 from the C function, 3 out of 56 from the A function, and 4 out of 56 from the DE function.

In the German TT, from the remaining 40 out of 91 instances, 23 out of 40 are retained in the same SA category, and the other 17 out of 40 are changed to another category but still retained as taboo words. Three swearwords from other categories were changed to an SA swear word, making the total number of taboo language in the SA category in the German TT 26 out of 309. Of the 51 non-retained SA taboo words, 36 out of 51 instances are from the E function, 2 out of 51 from the I function, 4 out of 51 from the SF function, 2 out of 51 from the C function, 2 out of 51 from the A function, and 5 out of 51 from the DE function.

The E function is found 61 times in total in the Dutch TT, with 16 instances retained and 45 instances non-retained. This means that 36 out of 45 non-retained E functions fall

within the SA category. In the German TT, the E function is found 61 times, with 18 instances retained and 43 instances non-retained. This means that 36 out of 43 non-retained E functions fall within the SA category. This suggests that the E function within the SA category is seen as a not-plot-relevant filler in both TTs and is therefore often non-retained.

It is evident that the pragmatic function of a taboo word affects how it is typically translated in the target text. This suggests that the E, I and SF functions are structurally more likely to be non-retained. This aligns with Han & Wang's (2014) theory that these two functions are seen as fillers and are therefore considered less plot-relevant and more likely to be non-retained.

It can be concluded that an overall retention rate of roughly 60% for subtitled taboo language in both TTs indicates an effort to include the regiolect and sociolect of the characters in *Derry Girls*. However, the 40% non-retention raises the question of whether this affects the conveyance of a character's idiolect. The data shows a significant amount of SA taboo language being non-retained in both TTs. Additionally, many instances of E, I, and SF are not retained in the Dutch subtitles, while in the German subtitles, a high non-retention of E and SF can be observed. The purpose of this thesis is to determine if the non-retention of taboo language impacts the portrayal of a character's idiolect. The next section will focus on identifying which forms of taboo language individual characters use distinctively compared to their sociolect, to understand what characterizes their idiolect.

2. Sociolects and Idiolects

When examining the data to look at the sociolects and the differences within the sociolects, several things stand out. Michelle has by far the highest use of taboo language within her sociolect and among all characters. Granda Joe uses taboo language significantly more compared to the rest of the characters within his sociolect, while Sister Michael is the only one in her sociolect who uses any taboo language at all. Gerry has a relatively high non-retention rate in both languages, compared to the other characters. Additionally, in the Dutch subtitles, the average rate of non-retained taboo language within the group *Others Male* is significantly higher than in the other sociolects. Furthermore, one episode has been analyzed that effectively highlights the differences and similarities between two sociolects, specifically between *the Girls* and *the Original Girls*. The following section will explore these differences and similarities, comparing them with the quantitative data mentioned above to

determine if any conclusions can be drawn regarding the characters' regiolect, sociolect, and idiolect and the translation of taboo language in the German and Dutch subtitles of the series *Derry Girls*.

5.1 *The Girls*

The sociolect group *the Girls* consists of the teenagers Erin, Clare, Orla and Michelle. Erin is the ambitious one of the group, with a strong will. Clare is responsible and serious, often the voice of reason in the group. Orla is eccentric and has a unique sense of humor. Michelle is bold and often provocative in her language. In accordance with their sociolect, teenage girls in Derry tend to use taboo language within their speech. When looking at the four characters within the sociolect, their idiolect shines through. Erin, Clare and Orla swear a lot less compared to Michelle, and when they do, they mostly swear within the religious (R) and scatological (S) category. When comparing this to Michelle, a big difference can be observed. In terms of numbers, across the six episodes, Michelle has uttered a total of 95 taboo phrases, whereas the combined total for the other three girls amounts to a total of 39 utterances. Of Michelle's 95 taboo phrases, 55 belong to the sexual activity (SA) category, aligning with her portrayal as the 'wild' character with a keen interest in sex.

When looking at the Dutch and German TT data (Tables 13 and 14), it can be concluded that 51 out of 134 (38%) instances of taboo language within sociolect *the Girls* are not retained in the Dutch subtitles. In the German subtitles, this is the case for 53 out of 135 (39%) instances. These percentages almost completely align with the overall average of 60% retained and 40% non-retained in the Dutch subtitles, and 61% retained and 39% non-retained in the German subtitles. It can therefore be concluded that the taboo language within this sociolect is more subtitled compared to other sociolects. Now it will be looked at whether the non-retention of the taboo language alters the perception of the sociolect and specifically Michelle's idiolect, because she has the highest frequency of utterances, by looking at various examples from the data set.

Category	R	S	SO	SA	M	D	II	Omitted	Standardized	Total ST
R	20							6	1	27
S		6	3			1		2	4	17
SO		2	4				2			8
SA	2	4	1	14		1	2	22	12	58
M		1	6	1	2			2		12
D						6	1	1	1	9
II							3			3
-										0
Total TT	22	13	14	15	2	8	8	33	18	134

Table 13 Dutch the Girls Total Semantic Categories

Category	R	S	SO	SA	M	D	II	Omitted	Standardized	Total ST
R	20	1						4	2	27
S		8	1	1				2	5	17
SO		3					3	1	1	8
SA	2	4	1	16			1	24	10	58
M		2			8			1	1	12
D						7	1		1	9
II							2		1	3
-				1						1
Total TT	22	18	2	18	8	7	7	32	21	135

Table 14 German the Girls Total Semantic Categories

179	Not-from-Derry, James	Because sometimes I feel like I've gone through the fucking looking glass.	SA	E	Het voelt alsof ik achter de spiegel beland ben.	-	-	O	Denn manchmal habe ich das Gefühl, ich bin durch den Spiegel gegangen.	-	-	O
-	The Girls, Clare	Calm down, James.	-	-	Rustig, James.	-	-	-	Beruhig dich, James.	-	-	-
180	The Girls, Michelle	Aye, don't be such a dick, James.	SO	A	Wees niet zo'n eikel.	SO	A	MA	Sei nicht so ein Arsch, James.	S	A	MA

Michelle's cousin James is an interesting case, as he partly belongs to this sociolect. Although he is the only male, that is not why he does not seem to fit in completely. For example, he is consistently called a girl when someone addresses the group as a whole, and it is not made an issue that he attends an all-girls school and always hangs out with the girls. In that aspect he really is "one of the girls". Examples 179-180 and example 268 explain why James does not fully belong to sociolect *the Girls*.

The Girls use taboo language to distinguish between what 'true' Derry residents can say and what outsiders cannot, thus who can use the Derry regiolect and who cannot. When James, who is from England, lashes out and starts swearing with *fucking*, both Clare and Michelle tell him to calm down. However, in the Dutch and German subtitles, the taboo word *fucking* is not retained, even omitted, meaning that the pragmatic function was not conveyed either. In some situations, this may not be a problem, but in this case, it is a bit awkward that Clare and Michelle tell James to calm down, even though the Dutch and German viewers will not have read anything in the subtitles that indicates James saying something harsh enough to warrant the dressing downs.

Michelle uses taboo language herself by calling James a *dick*, but no one objects to her. The taboo word *dick* is subtitled in the Dutch and German TTs, respectively with *eikel* ('jerk') and *Arsch* ('asshole'), preserving the pragmatic A function. The result is that Michelle appears quite rude in the Dutch and German subtitles compared to James, which is in character for her, though in this specific situation, it was not intended to come off that way.

Therefore, while Michelle's taboo language is retained, which is appropriate considering her regiolect and idiolect, it ends up making her seem harsher than intended in this particular instance.

Additionally, *the Girls* are very protective of Derry as their hometown. When James asks *why is this place so mental?* (example 268), he is immediately reprimanded. This demonstrates that as an outsider, you absolutely cannot use taboo language to say negative things about Derry as a place to live. Michelle even goes so far as to suggest that James has anger management issues for insulting Derry. However, James is not the one who swears a lot, having only sworn nine times in the six selected episodes, while Michelle does use taboo language frequently (97 times), and even uses the word *fucking* while scolding James. To convey this contrast effectively in the subtitles, it is important to translate James's *mental* remark, as otherwise, it would be illogical why Michelle reacts so strongly. Both the Dutch and German subtitles did this, retaining both the D semantic category and the A pragmatic function, thereby conveying the exact thing that was meant by the ST.

The fact that Michelle says *fucking* while reprimanding James is ironic because it is hypocritical. But besides that, swearing using the SA category is also an important part of Michelle's idiolect. In both the German and Dutch subtitles however, the word *fucking* is omitted. This non-retention diminishes part of Michelle's idiolect, sociolect, and regiolect, by not conveying the difference in James using taboo language, which is not accepted, and Michelle using taboo language, which is accepted.

268	Not-from-Derry, James	Why is this place so mental?	D	A	Waarom is het hier zo geschift?	D	A	MA	Hier ist es so krank.	D	A	MA
269	The Girls, Michelle	That's enough, James. You have serious fucking anger management issues.	SA	E	Zo is het genoeg. Jij hebt problemen met woedecontrole, wist je dat?	-	-	O	Es reicht, James. Du hast ein echtes Aggressionsproblem.	-	-	O

The Girls all react very shocked that James dares insulting Derry. This shows that at this moment, he is not a real part of their sociolect, as they do not accept his criticism, the same they do not accept him swearing, as he is not from Derry, so he should not adopt the Derry regiolect with all its swearing.

At one point later in the series, there is a shift, and James becomes part of the sociolect of *the Girls*. Examples (179-180) and (268-269) are from Season 1, Episode 5, and Season 2, Episode 3. However, in Season 2, Episode 6, James decided to leave Derry and return to England. The following exchange occurs:

James (17:49): This was always going to happen. This was never my real life, it was just something that got in the way of it.

[...]

James (18:41): Anyway, it's not like I belong here. I never did.

Michelle (18:43): That's not true. You're a Derry Girl now, James.

[...]

Michelle (18:48): It doesn't matter that you've got that stupid accent, or that your bits are different to my bits, because being a Derry Girl, well, it's a fucking state of mind. And you're one of us.

[...]

James (22:10): I am a Derry Girl!

However, after this, James does not adapt to the sociolect regarding a more frequent usage of taboo language, as all of the nine taboo utterances he has happen before this situation. This makes it part of James' idiolect that he does not use taboo language a lot, which is why, to maintain this idiolect in the subtitles, he should not be suddenly subtitled using a lot of taboo language. Accordingly, this does not happen in the Dutch and German subtitles.

Additionally, after this shift, no more instances of James being excluded as part of the Derry regiolect and *the Girls'* sociolect regarding taboo language have been found in the dataset.

In conclusion, initially, James was not part of the Derry regiolect or *the Girls'* sociolect,

and his limited use of taboo language highlights this distinction. Examples (179-180) and (268-269) show that the Dutch and German subtitles did not fully capture this aspect, by not subtitling the few taboo words he did say accordingly, affecting the portrayal of his idiolect and the group's sociolect. Later, when James is accepted as a Derry Girl, his idiolect, characterized by infrequent swearing, is maintained in the subtitles, aligning with his character development.

Name	MA	O	EU	DY	ST	F	Total ST
Erin	12 (60.00%)	1 (5.00%)	3 (15.00%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (15.00%)	1 (5.00%)	20
Clare	9 (69.23%)	4 (30.77%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	13
Orla	0 (0.00%)	1 (25.00%)	2 (50.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (25.00%)	0 (0.00%)	4
Michelle	46 (47.42%)	27 (27.84%)	10 (10.31%)	0 (0.00%)	14 (14.43%)	0 (0.00%)	97
	67	33	15	0	18	1	134
Total TT	(50%)	(24,63%)	(11,19%)	(0,00%)	(13,43%)	(0,75%)	

Table 15 Dutch the Girls Total Translation Strategies

Name	MA	O	EU	DY	ST	F	Total ST
Erin	12 (60%)	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (10%)	0 (0.00%)	20
Clare	9 (69.23%)	2 (15.38%)	2 (15.38%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	13
Orla	1 (25%)	1 (25%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (50%)	0 (0.00%)	4
Michelle	45 (45.92%)	28 (27.55%)	8 (8.16%)	1 (1.02%)	17 (17.35%)	0 (0.00%)	98
	67	32	14	1	21	0	135
Total TT	(49.63%)	(23.70%)	(10.37%)	(0.74%)	(15.56%)	(0.00%)	

Table 16 German the Girls Total Translation Strategies

Example 269 (*That's enough, James. You have serious **fucking** anger management issues.*) is also one of the instances where the combination of the SA category with function E is not retained. In section 4, it was established that this combination is the most frequently non-retained taboo language in both the Dutch and German subtitles. As mentioned, the character with by far the highest frequency of taboo utterances is Michelle, who tends to be a bit of a troublemaker. Michelle is more sexually active than the other girls and enjoys sharing her knowledge on the subject, often using sexual activity (SA) and scatological (S) related swearing. From the ST data (Tables 15 and 16), it is evident that Erin, Orla, and Clare use significantly less taboo language than Michelle in the ST. As teenage girls, it is common for them to swear, so this is part of their sociolect. Therefore, excessive swearing is part of Michelle's idiolect compared to the other characters within her sociolect. Additionally, the data shows that not only does Michelle swear significantly more, but she also does so predominantly in the category of Sexual Activity (SA) (55 out of 97 times), which is something Orla and Clare do not do, and Erin only does 3 out of 20 times.

If someone frequently uses SA language and this is often not retained, a significant part of their idiolect may not be conveyed, as the Dutch and German viewers will not know that that character swears a lot within the SA category. Of the 55 SA taboo words, 22 were omitted in the Dutch TT and 11 were standardized. As shown in Table 17, 16 out of the 22 omitted SA category taboo language had function E, and two out of the 11 standardized SA category taboo language had function E.

For the German subtitles, this amounts to 18 out of the 24 omitted with function E, and two out of nine standardized with function E, as shown in Table 18. It can thus be concluded that the character with the highest amount of taboo language in the six selected episodes of *Derry Girls*, swore frequently within the category and function combination that was rated as the most not-plot-relevant, with the highest non-retention rate. To put it into perspective, this data shows that there are quite a lot of examples where Michelle uses taboo words such as *fucking*, with a noun attached to it, that have not been retained. This influences the way the Dutch and German viewer interpret her character.

Now the question arises: how does non-retention in the full dataset affect viewers? Do they miss significant aspects of a character's idiolect due to the non-retention of taboo language? To address this, examples from the dataset will now be presented.

Category Dutch	E	I	SF	A	C	DE	Total
Omission	16	3	3	0	0	0	22
Standardization	2	0	1	3	1	4	11

Table 17 Dutch Michelle non-retained SA Category combined with Pragmatic Function

Category German	E	I	SF	A	C	DE	Total
Omission	18	2	3	0	1	0	24
Standardization	2	1	0	2	0	4	9

Table 18 German Michelle non-retained SA Category combined with Pragmatic Function

80	The Girls, Michelle	Oy! Wank features.	SA	A	Hé rukker!	SA	A	MA	Wichsfresse!	SA	A	MA
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Example 80 is a prime example of Michelle's idiolect, showcasing her distinctive use of catchphrases. With her catchphrases she distinguishes herself from her peers, thereby adding depth to her personality. She is prone to swearing and is also quite creative in her choice of swear words, as *wank features* is not a well-known expression or catchphrase.

In both the Dutch and German subtitles, *Hé rukker* ('Oy! Wanker!') and *Wichsfresse!* ('spunk face!') are translated in a manner that retains their original essence. They preserve the same meaning in English without being rendered into more neutral expressions, thus maintaining the abusive function for which Michelle used the expressions. As already established, the German language has not many SA taboo words, as it is not a category that is used frequently to swear with. There are some developments happening with younger generations, possibly influenced by American culture, starting to use SA related language, but as can be gathered from the data, only 20 out of 89 SA category taboo language has been retained in the SA category in the German subtitles, with a total of 26 SA categorized taboo words overall in the subtitles (see table 9). The fact that it was decided to retain Michelle's SA taboo word within the same category, means that it kept an important part of Michelle's idiolect intact, especially considering the fact that 14 out of 23 German SA category taboo language that was retained was said by Michelle, as can be found in Appendix B. In the Dutch

subtitles, 12 out of 15 retained SA category taboo language was spoken by Michelle, as can also be found in Appendix B.

A catchphrase that has not been retained well in the Dutch subtitles is *Fuck-a-doodle-doo* (Examples 93-94 and 141). The German subtitler chose to retain the ST in all three examples, thereby preserving the semantics and pragmatics, and by retaining the original English expression *fuck-a-doodle-doo* in the German subtitles, the subtitler effectively preserves Michelle's distinct way of speaking and maintains consistency with her character portrayal. This decision ensures that German-speaking viewers receive an authentic representation of Michelle's idiolect and the nuances of her language use.

However, the Dutch subtitler opted to localize the expression in example 93, by creating the neologism *halikedeehallo* (which could be translated to something like 'heydiddlyho'), thereby removing the taboo language component, which diminishes an important part of Michelle's idiolect. On the other hand, the choice to localize the expression to *halikedeehallo* demonstrates an attempt to convey the same playful tone while adapting it to a culturally relevant phrase in Dutch and turning it into a catchphrase that retains part of Michelle's idiolect. The pragmatic function was still conveyed, as the Dutch catchphrase retains its social function.

93	The Girls, Michelle	Fuck-a-doodle-doo.	SA	SF	Halikedeehallo.	-	SF	ST	"Fuck-a-doodle-do!"	SA	SF	MA
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94	The Girls, Michelle	You know your man, floppy hair, English, he's all, "Fuck-a-doodle this, fuck-a-doodle-that."	SA	DE	Kennen jullie die man? Met van dat vlashaar, Engels, kraamt allerlei onzin uit.	-	A	ST	Ihr kennt ihn doch? Wirres Haar, Engländer, sagt ständig „fuck-a-doodle-do.“	SA	DE	MA
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However, by removing the taboo language component, the impact of Michelle's original expression may be diluted, potentially altering the audience's perception of her character. While the localization may make the dialogue more accessible to Dutch-speaking viewers, it also raises questions about the extent to which Michelle's idiolect and personality are accurately portrayed in the translated version.

It has just been established that the Dutch *halikedeehallo* was used as a playful way of localizing *fuck-a-doodle-do* to Dutch to retain the social function. However, possibly due to spatiotemporal constraints, this neologism was not used in example 94. Instead, in the Dutch TT *fuck-a-doodle-do* was translated to *kraamt allerlei onzin uit* ('spouts all sorts of nonsense'), thereby changing the original DE function to an A function, which was not intended in the ST. By not being translated into a taboo word, the sentence also lost Michelle's idiolect regarding her frequent use of taboo language in combination with her catchphrases.

The last example featuring the *fuck-a-doodle-do* catchphrase has also been awkwardly translated in the Dutch subtitles. Example 141 shows that the catchphrase has been translated to *Godsamme* ('Goddamnit') in the Dutch TT. Although it was translated to a taboo word and the C pragmatic function was conveyed, the SA category was changed to the R category, thereby diminishing Michelle's usage of SA swearing in the Dutch subtitles. Additionally, it did not retain the catchphrase aspect of Michelle's idiolect.

216	The Girls, Michelle	Fuck me, not the Africans again.	SA	C	Klote, niet weer de Afrikanen.	SO	C	MA	Nicht schon wieder die Afrikaner.	-	-	O
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To stay with examples from Michelle's most frequent category, SA, it can be seen in example 216 that the Dutch translation retained the taboo language by shifting the category from SA to SO while keeping the function unchanged. This approach preserves Michelle's idiolect, including her tendency to frequently swear within the SA category. However, the German subtitles omitted the taboo language entirely. By consistently either changing SA to a different category or non-retaining it, it does not come across in the Dutch and German subtitles that Michelle frequently swears with the SA category.

5.2 *The Original Girls*

The sociolect group *the Original Girls* consists of the mothers of the sociolect group *the Girls*. These four women grew up together and all attended the same school, which is also the school their daughters attend. The group includes Mary (Erin's mother), who, like her daughter, is ambitious and has a strong will; Geraldine (Clare's mother), who is caring and serious like her daughter and shares her anxiety; Sarah (Orla's mother), who is as carefree and oblivious as her daughter, and very appearance-focused; and Deirdre (Michelle's mother), who is as opinionated as her daughter but more critical and cynical as an adult. Therefore, it can be concluded that the mothers serve as mirrors for their daughters, reflecting how they themselves were once young girls growing up in Derry. Despite their daughters living through a different part of the Troubles, they encounter many of the same experiences as they did. This includes the way their idiolect and sociolect manifest. A notable example of this is how the mothers attempt to speak in proper NIE, and scold other people for their taboo language usage, but occasionally revert to taboo language themselves.

Their specific idiolects and sociolects are also reflected in the data, which shows that in the six analyzed episodes, *the Original Girls* swore a total of 65 times in the ST, with Mary swearing the most at 32 times. Of the 65 taboo utterances, 39 (60%) are retained and 26 (40%) non-retained in the Dutch TT, and 40 (61%) retained with 26 (39%) non-retained in the German TT, as can be seen in Tables 19 and 20. These percentages completely align with the overall average of 60 % retained and 40% non-retained in the Dutch subtitles, and 61% retained and 39% non-retained in the German subtitles. It can therefore be concluded that the taboo language within this sociolect is more subtitled compared to other sociolects.

Name	MA	O	EU	DY	ST	F	Total ST
Mary	14 (43.75%)	6 (18.75%)	7 (21.88%)	0 (0.00%)	5 (15.63%)	0 (0.00%)	32
Geraldine	5 (55.56%)	3 (33.33%)	1 (11.11%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	9
Sarah	4 (33.33%)	4 (33.33%)	1 (8.33%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (25.00%)	0 (0.00%)	12
Deirdre	4 (33.33%)	3 (25.00%)	2 (16.67%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (16.67%)	1 (8.33%)	12
	27	16	11	0	10	1	
Total TT	(41.54%)	(24.62%)	(16.92%)	(0.00%)	(15.38%)	(1.54%)	65

Table 19 Dutch the Original Girls Translation Strategies

Name	MA	O	EU	DY	ST	F	Total ST
Mary	16 (50.00%)	11 (34.38%)	5 (15.63%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	32
Geraldine	4 (44.44%)	3 (33.33%)	2 (22.22%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	9
Sarah	5 (38.46%)	3 (23.08%)	1 (7.69%)	1 (7.69%)	3 (23.08%)	0 (0.00%)	13
Deirdre	6 (50.00%)	4 (33.33%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (16.67%)	0 (0.00%)	12
	31	21	8	1	5	0	
Total TT	(46.97%)	(31.82%)	(12.12%)	(1.52%)	(7.58%)	(0.00%)	66

Table 20 German the Original Girls Translation Strategies

5	The Original Girls, Mary	Jesus, there is a blast from the past, I had completely forgot about her.	R	SF	Jee, wat nostalgisch. Ik was haar helemaal vergeten.	R	SF	EU	Jetzt erinnere ich mich. Ich hatte sie völlig vergessen.	-	-	O
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As previously mentioned, one of the contradictions within this sociolect is that they try to speak proper NIE, but sometimes slip. Example 5 shows one of those moments, where Mary utters the taboo word *Jesus*. Since it is part of Mary's idiolect to occasionally swear, it is important that this is conveyed in the subtitles. The Dutch subtitles retained it, but the euphemism *Jee* ('Gee') reduces the impact. The German subtitles, however, did not retain the taboo word at all, choosing to omit it completely, thereby not preserving the SF pragmatic function as well, which was retained in the Dutch subtitles.

One thing that stands out in this sociolect is Geraldine. She, like her daughter Clare, is the one in the group who calls people out on their (swearing) behavior. She does this both in the present, saying *Language, you* (S3:E5 5:08), and in the past, saying *OK, well, that's definitely blasphemy, so...* (S3:E5 18:50) and *Can we have less of the blasphemy, please?* (S3:E5 19:06). This is a good example of Geraldine's idiolect, namely her preference for less swearing within a sociolect and regiolect that is very prone to swearing.

However, it also frequently happens that she deviates from this and swears herself. For instance, in the above example, she mentions blasphemy, yet in the scene before, she exclaims *Sweet and gentle Jesus*, which is also a form of blasphemy. This specific form of idiolect marks her personality, and therefore it is important that this comes across accurately in the subtitles. In example (23) *Sweet and gentle Jesus*, the category and function of the taboo language do not change in both TTs. This means the subtitles retained Geraldine's idiolect. The same can be said for example (12) *Oh, Jesus!*, which only further supports the authenticity of Geraldine's idiolect.

23	The Original Girls, Geraldine	Sweet and gentle Jesus.	R	I	Lieve hemel.	R	I	M	Du lieber Himmel.	R	I	M
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12	The Original Girls, Geraldine	Oh, Jesus!	R	C	Jezus.	R	C	MA	Oh, Jesus!	R	C	MA
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3	The Original Girls, Geraldine	Jesus, girls,	R	SF	Jezus, meiden,	R	SF	MA	Mädels,	-	-	O
4	The Original Girls, Geraldine	I'm ready to drop here. I haven't had a bite since 11.	D	DE	ik val nog dood. Ik heb sinds 11:00 niet gegeten.	D	I	MA	ich könnte umfallen. Hab seit 11 Uhr nichts gegessen.	D	DE	MA

However, in examples 3 and 4, something interesting happens. Geraldine's *Jesus* has been retained, having kept the same category and function in the Dutch subtitles, but has been omitted in the German subtitles. Additionally, according to the Cambridge Dictionary, *ready to drop* means 'to be extremely tired', which in the context of this scene related to Geraldine not eating due to trying to fit in her clothes, thus her feeling weak. The German subtitles maintain the same connotation by using *ich könnte umfallen*, which translates to 'I could fall over'. However, the Dutch subtitles modify it slightly by using *ik val nog dood*, which translates to 'I could drop dead', thus intensifying the original expression *ready to drop* to convey an even stronger sense of exaggeration. This means that there is a functional shift from descriptive language, as Geraldine describes the literal act of dropping, to idiomatic language, as *dood neervallen* is an idiomatic expression in Dutch, with no such shift between English and German.

What is especially interesting about the expression *Jesus, girls, I'm ready to drop here*,

is that it follows right after Geraldine tells her husband -who is the 'Others, male' in the example *language, you* (see example 2), after he swore with *bastard*, as if swearing with *Jesus* is such an intrinsic part of her vocabulary that it does not count as taboo language or blasphemy in her mind, even for someone whose idiolect is so inclined toward a more refined manner of speech.

2	Others, male	Does every bastard in Derry own this thing?	M	A	Heeft iedere eikel in Derry dat ding?	SO	A	MA	Hat jeder Depp in Derry den?	II	A	MA
-	The Original Girls, Geraldine	Language, you!	-	-	Let op je woorden.	-	-		Wortwahl, du!	-	-	

This reasoning implies a potential dichotomy between the usage of religious taboo language and non-religious taboo language, with the religiously based taboo language not being perceived as taboo language. This notion is confirmed by the data displayed in Table 21 and 22, which shows that 40 out of the 65 taboo utterances said by *the Original Girls* fall within the R category, more than any other category.

Category	R	S	SO	SA	M	D	II	Omitted	Standardized	Total ST
R	22					2	1	12	3	40
S		3						1	4	8
SO			1							1
SA				3		2		2	2	9
M			2	1				1		4
D						2			1	3
II										0
-										0
Total TT	22	3	3	4	0	6	1	16	10	65

Table 21 Dutch the Original Girls Total Semantic Categories

Category	R	S	SO	SA	M	D	II	Omitted	Standardized	Total ST
R	18						1	18	3	40
S	1	5							2	8
SO							1			1
SA	1	2		4				2		9
M		1		1	2					4
D						2				3
II										0
-		1								1
Total TT	20	9	0	5	2	2	2	20	6	66

Table 22 German the Original Girls Total Semantic Categories

The next examples, (15, 211, 25, 239-240, 31, 178, 22 and 99) compare the way taboo language was subtitled in sociolect *the Girls*, with the way it was in sociolect *the Original Girls*, as season 3, episode 5 is a flashback episode where there is a constant switch between the 'leavers' party' when *the Original Girls* were their daughters' age and the Class of '77 School Reunion where they were their 'normal' ages. This dynamic is very interesting in terms of taboo language because the portrayals by the young *the Original Girls*-cast mirror and mimic *the Girls*' behavior, the way they talk -including their frequency of taboo language- and their facial expressions, with *the Girls* resembling them greatly while also mimicking *the Original Girls*' behavior as the viewer has come to know them in previous episodes. In terms of mirroring, they even depict Deirdre (Michelle's mother) having a cousin from outside of Derry with her, which is the same exact situation as Michelle with James, who is her cousin. Thus, they had Cousin Rob acting as the James to the mothers' Orla, Clare, Michelle, and Erin. The duo that is most mirrored regarding taboo language in the ST are Michelle and her mother Deirdre. This makes sense since Michelle is the character with the highest amount of taboo language, so it is logical that her mirrored mother variant would also use many taboo words. The following examples all depict the teenage version of Deirdre, not her adult version.

211	The Girls, Michelle	Everyone was shitting it about sending him to the boys' school.	S	I	Niemand durfde hem naar een jongensschool te sturen.	-	DE	ST	Keiner wollte ihn in die Jungenschule schicken.	-	DE	ST
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What stands out in examples 211 and 15, is that both Michelle and her mother Deirdre, when she was Michelle's age in the throwback episode, used the exact same expression *shitting* to explain why their cousins, Rob and James respectively, are with the girls instead of the boys, where they should be. In both instances, the word *shitting* has been standardized in both the Dutch and German subtitles, as this is a prime example of the idiolect of both Deirdre and her daughter Michelle.

15	The Original Girls, Deirdre	His family are visiting from America and they're shitting themselves about him maybe getting, I dunno, killed or something.	S	I	Zijn familie is op bezoek uit Amerika en is bang dat hij vermoord wordt of zo.	-	I	ST	Seine Familie ist aus Amerika da und macht sich ins Hemd, dass er gekillt wird oder so.	-	I	ST
----	-----------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---	---	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---	---	----	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---	---	----

25	The Original Girls, Deirdre	Americans are such fucking heathens!	SA	E	Amerikanen zijn zulke heidenen.	-	-	O	Amerikaner sind echt Heiden!	-	-	O
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239	The Girls, Michelle	That's English for you. Fucking	SA	E	Zo zijn Engelsen. Achterlijke	II	E	MA	Da habt ihr Euer Englisch!	-	-	O
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240	The Girls, Michelle	savages.	II	A	barbaren.	II	A	MA	Barbaren!	II	A	MA
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Examples 25, 239, and 240 show nearly the exact same thing said by Deirdre and Michelle. Deirdre's remark has not been retained in both the Dutch and German subtitles, so the E function has also not been retained. This means that the Dutch and German viewers will not see the emphasis on *heathens*. Michelle's remark has been partly retained in the Dutch subtitles; the taboo word *fucking* has been retained but has changed from category SA to category II (*achterlijke* translates to 'retarded'), thus diminishing the amount of SA the Dutch viewer will see. The E function has been retained, with its emphasis on *barbaren*, which translates to 'barbarians' or 'savages' and has been kept in the same category and function as the ST.

In the German subtitles, the *fucking* remark has been omitted, meaning that the emphasis on *Barbaren* ('barbarians' or 'savages'), a taboo word that has been retained, has been lost for the German viewer. This is another example where the combination of SA and E may be a filler in terms of plot-relevance but is significant in terms of idiolect.

31	The Original Girls, Geraldine	Will you see sense, Mary? For God's sake!	R	I	Luister naar je gezonde verstand.	-	-	O	Komm zur Vernunft, Mary!	-	-	O
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178	The Girls, Clare	Oh, my God, this day just goes from bad to worse.	R	C	Het gaat van kwaad tot erger.	-	-	O	O Gott, dieser Tag wird immer schlimmer!	R	C	MA
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The examples 31 and 178 illustrate the mirroring of Geraldine and her daughter Clare, both of whom display anxiety and tend to swear in moments of panic. The Dutch and German subtitles both omitted Geraldine's taboo language, meaning that the pragmatic function was not retained either. Clare's taboo language was not retained in the Dutch subtitles, but the German subtitles did retain it (*O Gott*, which translates to 'Oh God'). This inconsistency affects the viewers' perception of the characters' idiolect and the intended mirroring, especially in the Dutch version, compared to the ST.

22	The Original Girls, Mary	And a lot of absolute rides are gonna storm in here and snog the faces off us.	SA	DE	... en dan komen er geweldige stukken binnenstormen... die ons aflebben .	SA	DE	MA	Und viele Schnittchen stürmen hier herein und knutschen uns das Gesicht ab.	SA	DE	MA
----	--------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----	----	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----	----	----	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----	----	----

The last example regarding the mirroring of *the Girls* versus *the Original Girls* consist of the taboo languages uttered in examples 22 and 99. These examples show how Mary, and her daughter Erin are both interested in boys and talk in a descriptive manner about what they want to do or not do with those boys. This way of talking about sex-related topics is part of Mary's and Erin's idiolect, which is what makes these examples relevant. In both examples, the Dutch and German subtitles retained both the SA semantic category and the DE pragmatic function, thus fully conveying the intention of the ST. By retaining this, an important part of their idiolect is maintained as well, as the authenticity of their personalities is represented.

99	The Girls, Erin	We're not doing this to get off with Protestant boys, Mammy.	SA	DE	We doen dit niet om te kunnen seksen met protestante jongens.	SA	DE	M A	Wir wollen keinen Sex mit Protestantenjungs.	SA	DE	MA
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5.3 *The Elderly*

The sociolect *The Elderly* consists of Granda Joe, his brother-in-law Uncle Colm, and his neighbor Jim. Joe uttered the highest amount of taboo language, with 30 out of 33 instances. He has a gruff exterior, and makes blunt, unfiltered observations, often paired with taboo language. Joe has a lot of screentime and a larger role within the series than the other two men. Thus, looking at the data, the only conclusion that can really be drawn is that the use of taboo language is a significant part of Joe's idiolect. There is too little data from Colm and Jim to conclude that among older men, there might be less frequent use of taboo language overall. As can be seen in Tables 23 and 24, of the 33 taboo utterances, 25 out of 33 (75.8%) have been retained in both TTs. These percentages are significantly higher than the overall average of 60% retained and 40% non-retained in the Dutch subtitles, and 61% retained and 39% non-retained in the German subtitles. It can therefore be concluded that the taboo language within this sociolect, which of course contains mostly Joe's taboo language, is more subtitled compared to other sociolects. One of the possible reasons for this will be explained in the following section.

Category	R	S	SO	SA	M	D	II	Omitted	Standardized	Total ST
R	4	1						6	1	12
S		1	3				2			6
SO			3							3
SA										0
M			2						1	3
D						4				4
II			1				3			4
-		1								1
Total TT	4	3	9	0	0	4	5	6	2	33

Table 23 Dutch *the Elderly* Total Semantic Categories

Category	R	S	SO	SA	M	D	II	Omitted	Standardized	Total ST
R	6	1						4	1	12
S		5					1			6
SO							2		1	3
SA										0
M					2				1	3
D						4				4
II							3		1	4
-		1								1
Total TT	6	7	0	0	2	4	6	4	4	33

Table 24 German the Elderly Total Semantic Categories

Table 25 shows that not only does Joe use taboo language across various semantic categories, his choice of words is also very unique, with catchphrases like *tangerine toe*, and *shower of shites*. This usage of catchphrases is similar to Michelle, and just as with her, it can be concluded that these taboo catchphrases and his other taboo utterances are a part of Joe's idiolect. Therefore, it is interesting to see how these taboo catchphrases were subtitled in Dutch and German.

Joe		
English:	Dutch:	German:
Prat pack	Snert Pack ('Bunch of idiots')	Idiotenmeute ('Bunch of idiots')
Wee bastards	Kleine klootzak ('Little scrotum')	Bastarde ('Little bastards')
Arse	Reet (Ass)	Arsch ('Ass')
Bloody	-	-
Bloody	-	-
Mouth	Praatjesmaker ('Big mouth')	Halt die Klappe! ('Shut your mouth!')

You stupid bloody eejit	Stomme idioot! (‘Stupid idiot!’)	Du dummer Idiot. (‘Dumb idiot!’)
Jesus	Jezus (‘Jesus’)	Herrgott (‘Jesus’)
Christ	-	-
I’ll lay you to rest	Ik leg jou te ruste (‘I’ll lay you to rest’)	Ich lass dich ruhen (‘I’ll lay you to rest’)
Christ	Jemig (Gee)	Oh Gott (‘Oh God’)
Dose	Eikel (‘Glans’)	-
Tangerine toe	Oranje lul (‘Orange dick’)	Oranger Arsch (‘Orange ass’)
Orange bastards!	Oranje klootzakken! (‘Orange scrotum’)	Orange Bastarde! (‘Orange bastards!’)
Assholes	Klootzakken! (‘Scrotums!’)	Arschlöcher! (‘Assholes!’)
Shower of Shites	Stelletje lullo’s (‘Bunch of dicks’)	Scheißbande (‘Bunch of shits’)
Prick	Eikel (‘Glans’)	Idiot (‘Idiot’)
What the hell	-	-
Wuss	Slapjanus (‘limp slob’)	Schlappschwanz (flaccid penis)
Grow a set of balls	Krijg dan eens ballen (‘Grow some balls, then’)	-
Bloody tout	Vuile klikspaan (‘Dirty snitch’)	Verdammtter Spitzel (‘Dirty snitch’)
Jesus	Jezus (‘Jesus’)	Oh Gott (‘Jesus’)
Shite	Sukkel (‘Fool/struggler’)	Nichtsnutz (‘Good-for- nothing’)
God Almighty	Godallemachtig (‘God almighty’)	Grundgütiger (‘Good heavens’)

Bloody perverts	Stelletje viezeriken (‘Bunch of perverts’)	Scheiß Perverse (‘Shit perverts’)
For Christ’s sake	-	Herrgott! (‘Lord God!’)
Dirty English bastards	-	-
Pricks	Eikels (‘Glances’)	Idioten (‘Idiots’)
Simple Simon	Uilskuiken (‘Owlet’)	Idiot (‘Idiot’)
Sweet Fanny Adams	Je zegt geen reet (‘You don’t say ass’)	Scheiße (‘Shit’)

Table 25 Variation of Taboo Language uttered by Joe

As can be seen in Table 25, most of Joe’s unique taboo utterances have been retained and have been translated with a unique utterance in the TTs as well. Since many of them are one-liners and catchphrases, it makes sense that they were retained. This explains the higher percentage of retention.

165	The Elderly, Joe	Shower of shites!	S	A	Stelletje lullo’s.	SO	A	MA	Scheißbande!	S	A	MA
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Example 165 is a good example of such a catchphrase, featuring *shower of shites!* It demonstrates that, while the Dutch subtitles changed the semantic category from S to SO, they did retain the taboo language and the A function. The German subtitles retained both the S semantic category, as well as the A function. More importantly in this case is how the catchphrase, a part of Joe’s idiolect, was conveyed. The Dutch translation *stelletje lullo’s* equates to something like ‘bunch of morons’, yet *lullo* is a slang variant of *lul* (‘dick’), thus preserving its uniqueness without a literal translation of *shower of shites*. *Scheißbande* is a unique way of expressing something akin to ‘bunch of assholes’ in English, so in the German subtitles the catchphrase has been translated accordingly as well.

190	The Elderly, Joe	You just sat there and said sweet Fanny Adams.	SO	I	En je zegt geen reet.	S	I	MA	Und du sagst nicht mal „Scheiße“.	S	DE	MA
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191	The Girls, Michelle	Your granda said “fanny”.	SO	DE	Je opa zei ‘reet’.	S	DE	MA	Dein Opa sagt “Scheiße”.	S	DE	MA
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Examples 190 and 191 in show the difficulty of translating Joe’s unique speech and catchphrases. Firstly, it is evident that Michelle's remark, *your granda said 'fanny'*, doesn't carry the same weight, as the taboo connotation around *fanny* is much heavier than *reet* (which translates to ‘ass’) and *scheiße* (which translates to ‘shit’) in Dutch and German, according to Michelle. This is evident because Joe has used both *reet* and *scheiße* in other episodes, as can be seen in Table 25, and this did not elicit any comment. In the German case, Michelle was even present in the scene where Joe used *scheiße* and didn't react. What can be inferred from this is that it is perceived as unusual for Granda Joe to swear using a word like *fanny*. Up until that point, he had only used scatological, religious, mother-related, intelligence-related, and disease-related swearing, and in terms of sexual organs, he had only used male-specific words like *prick* and *balls*. Michelle's strong reaction to Joe saying *fanny* could be because it refers to a female sexual organ, which she perceives as more taboo. This heightened taboo is lost in the Dutch and German subtitles because Joe has sworn with *reet* and *scheiße* before, and he frequently uses scatological language in Dutch and German, which diminishes the impact within that specific category of swearing.

Furthermore, as elucidated in the theoretical framework, older individuals tend to swear less frequently, which could explain why Michelle highlights Granda Joe’s use of taboo language. However, as has already been established, Joe swears regularly, without eliciting any response or criticism, suggesting that such taboo language is accepted as inherent to his idiolect. This aligns with the fact that the Derry regiolect consists of a lot of taboo language, as outlined in the theoretical framework. Therefore, while Michelle's reaction may be influenced by societal norms regarding swearing among the older generation, her specific focus on Granda Joe's use of the term *fanny*, underscores a perceived deviation from the norm. Consequently, the absence of this nuance in the Dutch and German subtitles represents a missed opportunity to accurately convey Joe’s idiolect.

An additional layer to this is the historical context of the phrase “sweet Fanny Adams”. Fanny Adams, a young girl murdered in the UK in 1867, became a symbol of tragedy. Over time, the phrase “sweet Fanny Adams” evolved as slang, initially referring to mediocre

M											0
D						1					1
II											0
-											0
Total	4	0	0	0	0	1	0		0	2	7

Table 26 Dutch Religious People Sister Michael Semantic Categories

Category	R	S	SO	SA	M	D	II	Omitted	Standardized	Total ST
R	3							1	1	5
S										0
SO										0
SA	1									1
M										0
D						1				1
II										0
-										0
Total TT	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	7

Table 27 German Religious People Sister Michael Semantic Categories

As shown in the data, five out of seven instances (71%) were retained in both the Dutch and German subtitles. These percentages are significantly higher than the overall average of 60% retained and 40% non-retained in the Dutch subtitles, and 61% retained and 39% non-retained in the German subtitles. However, Sister Michael, who forms her own sociolect, has only uttered seven taboo instances, far fewer than the other sociolects. Thus, while the higher retention rates for her idiolect in the subtitles suggest a greater effort to maintain her character traits, the small sample size means this might not fully represent the general approach.

Nonetheless, the data indicates a relatively higher commitment to preserving her idiolect compared to the overall averages. One important aspect of Sister Michael’s character is the way she deals with taboo language. For instance, in example 185, she reprimands Michelle for offending a schoolmate while using taboo language. However, when Michelle

insults Father Peter, a colleague Sister Michael dislikes, by calling his ex-partner *slutty*, Sister Michael ignores the taboo language and only chastises Michelle for speaking out of turn (examples 118-119 show this interaction). This selective tolerance highlights Sister Michaels' approach to language, which is heavily context-dependent; she does not tolerate Michelle offending a classmate, but she turns a blind eye when it comes to insulting Father Peter. In the same vein, example 208 was uttered. Sister Michael heard that Father Peter came to

185	The Girls, Michelle	Big Mandy is her sister, she's half fucking gorilla.	SA	E	Haar zus Grote Mandy is verdomme 'n gorilla.	R	E	MA	Mandy ist ihre Schwester, ein verdammter Gorilla.	R	E	MA
-	Religious People, Sister Michael	That's enough, Miss Mallon.	-	-	Genoeg, Miss Mallon.	-	-	-	Genug, Frl. Mallon!	-	-	-

visit, which resulted in her exclaiming "Oh, for feck's sake", after which the situation with Michelle offending him happened. If the viewer understood that Sister Michael did not want Father Peter there, which the taboo language made clear, they would understand better why her reaction of Michelle offending Father Peter was the way it was. In conclusion, in order for the Dutch and German viewers to understand Sister Michael's character more, it is crucial that her idiolect is accurately subtitled.

208	Religious People, Sister Michael	Oh, for feck's sake.	SA	I	Dat ga je niet menen.	-	I	ST	Ach, verflixt noch mal.	R	I	MA
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5.5 Not-from-Derry

The sociolect *not-from-Derry* consists of Pa Gerry, Cousin James, and Cousin Rob. This sociolect is unconventional; the only common characteristic among these three men is that they were not born in Derry and therefore do not belong to the Derry regiolect.

Consequently, there are no distinct characteristics associated with the sociolect, only with their individual idiolects and their status as outsiders to the Derry regiolect.

Pa Gerry, originally from Navan, Republic of Ireland, is the father of Erin. He is occasionally negatively addressed by his father-in-law Joe due to his origin, as he comes from what is perceived as the free part of Ireland, carrying negative connotations within the not-so-free Derry. Gerry is characterized as friendly and caring, always striving to do his best for

118	The Girls, Michelle	Do you mean when you shacked up	-	-	Toen u ging hokken	-	-	MA	Und hast mit der Friseur gevoegelt	SA	DE	DY
119	The Girls, Michelle	with a slutty hairdresser, but then she dumped you?	SA	E	met die sletterige kapster die u toen heeft gedumt?	SA	E	MA	die dich verließ?	-	-	O
-	Religious People, Sister Michael	Miss Mallon, please. Raise your hand if you want to ask a question.	-	-	Miss Mallon, toe. Steek je hand op als je een vraag hebt.	-	-	-	Ms. Mallon, bitte. Melde dich, wenn du Fragen hast.	-	-	-

his family and those around him. However, he is not always treated kindly, which occasionally leads to Gerry using taboo language. This is an important part of his idiolect, which should be subtitled accordingly.

James is from England, and it is part of his idiolect that he does not swear often, only nine times in the six selected episodes. However, what is important to note about James is that he is the character within the series who is shunned most for not being from Derry. This has already been discussed in section 5.1, and it all starts with the fact that James could not attend the local Catholic boys' secondary school during the Troubles due to his English accent and British identity, as there was concern he would face bullying or worse.

The last character within this group is cousin Rob, who only appears in one episode, as the mirror of James. He does not use any taboo language, which is consistent with James's character, who did not use taboo language frequently either. He also faced hardships due to not being from Derry, as he was consistently referred to as American despite being from Canada.

In terms of data, Tables 28 and 29 show that this group has a total of 32 taboo utterances, 23 of which have been uttered by Gerry. With a total of 18 out of 32 (56.25%) in the Dutch subtitles and 17 out of 32 (53.13%) in the German subtitles, *the not-from-Derry* taboo language has been retained less than the overall average of 60% taboo language retained and 40% non-retained in the Dutch subtitles, and 61% retained and 39% non-retained in the German subtitles.

Name	MA	O	EU	DY	ST	F	Total ST
Gerry	11 (47.83%)	7 (30.43%)	2 (8.70%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (13.04%)	0 (0.00%)	23 (71.88%)
James	5 (55.56%)	3 (33.33%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (11.11%)	0 (0.00%)	9 (28.12%)
	16 (50.00%)	10 (31.25%)	2 (6.25%)	0 (0.00%)	4 (12.50%)	0 (0.00%)	32 (100%)

Table 28 Dutch *the not-from-Derry* Translation Strategies

Name	MA	O	EU	DY	ST	F	Total
Gerry	8 (34.78%)	6 (26.09%)	5 (21.74%)	0 (0.00%)	4 (17.39%)	0 (0.00%)	23 (71.88%)
James	3 (33.33%)	2 (22.22%)	1 (11.11%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (33.33%)	0 (0.00%)	9 (28.12%)
	11 (34.38%)	8 (25.00%)	6 (18.75%)	0 (0.00%)	7 (21.88%)	0 (0.00%)	32 (100%)

Table 29 German the not-from-Derry Translation Strategies

When further examining the data, it can be concluded that it is mostly Gerry's taboo utterances that are largely not retained, with 10 out of 23 instances in both the Dutch and German subtitles (see Table 28 and 29). As mentioned earlier, it is particularly important to consider the context in which Gerry expresses his taboo language. This is because he tends to do so when he reaches a point of frustration or feeling attacked, often expressing his frustration through cathartic swearing, using idiomatic expressions, or emphatically cursing while asserting himself. This is evident in the data shown in Tables 30 and 31, as out of his 23 utterances, he does so 5 times within the I function, 9 times within the C function, 1 time within the SF function, 4 times within the E function, 2 times within the DE function, and 2 times within the A function. This pattern is consistent across all three languages.

The functions E, I, and SF, as previously demonstrated, are often considered non-plot-relevant and thus treated as fillers, leading to their frequent non-retention in the target text due to spatiotemporal constraints. Of the 10 non-retained taboo utterances in the Dutch subtitles, eight fall within the E, I, and SF functions, and within the German subtitles, seven do, indicating that it may not always be clear to the Dutch viewer that Gerry is expressing frustration when he uses taboo language.

	MA	O	EU	DY	ST	F	Total ST
C	6		2		1		9
SF		1					1
E		4					4
DE	1				1		2
A	2						2
I	2	2			1		5
Total TT	11	7	2	0	3	0	23

Table 30 Dutch Gerry Pragmatic Functions

	MA	O	EU	DY	ST	F	Total ST
C	5		3		1		9
SF		1					1
E		4					4
DE		1			1		2
A	1		1				2
I	2	1	1		1		5
Total TT	8	7	5	0	3	0	23

Table 31 German Gerry Pragmatic Functions

Examples 65-67 illustrate one of those moments when Gerry reaches his limit in a situation and resorts to using taboo language. The Dutch subtitle *Hoe kan het dat we verdomme weer op dezelfde plek zijn? Hier waren we vijf uur geleden ook.* ('How the hell are we back in the same spot? We are back where we were five hours ago!') retains the taboo phrase *how the feck* by translating it to *verdomme* (which translates to 'damnit' or 'how the hell'), thus altering the semantic category, but preserving the taboo word and its original pragmatic function. However, the remainder of the taboo language is omitted, resulting in the absence of any further taboo language and the overall emphatic expression, failing to fully convey Gerry's level of frustration to the Dutch viewer.

Conversely, the German subtitles have entirely removed the taboo language, translating it to *Wieso sind wir wieder am selben Ort? Bin wieder am Ausgangspunkt!* ('Why are we back in the same place? I'm back at the starting point!') By translating it to *wieso* (which translates to 'why') the cathartic function was retained, but neither taboo language nor Gerry's aggravation is conveyed to the German audience. By not retaining this part of Gerry's idiolect, the Dutch and German viewer will miss part of his characterization.

65	Not-from-Derry, Gerry	How the feck are we back	SA	C	Hoe kan het dat we verdomme	R	C	MA	Wieso sind wir	-	C	ST
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66	Not- from- Derry, Gerry	in the same feckin' place?	SA	E	weer op dezelfde plek zijn?	-	-	O	wieder am selben Ort?	-	-	O
67	Not- from- Derry, Gerry	I'm back where I was five feckin' hours ago, Joe.	SA	E	Hier waren we vijf uur geleden ook!	-	-	O	Bin wieder am Ausgang spunkt!	-	-	O

5.6 Others

The group *Others* do not constitute a sociolect like most of the other defined groups. Characters categorized as *Others* lack sufficient prominence in the series to warrant their own sociolect, nor do they share any similarities with the other persons in the group. Drawing conclusions about this group is therefore challenging.

The Dutch subtitles exhibit a taboo language retention rate of 42% (15 out of 36), while the German subtitles maintain a retention rate of 55% (20 out of 36), as shown in Tables 32 and 33. These figures deviate from the overall average of 60% retention and 40% non-retention in the Dutch subtitles, and 61% retention and 39% non-retention in the German subtitles. The group *Others* is noteworthy for being the only category where such a significant discrepancy in retention rates between the Dutch and German TTs can be observed.

Name	MA	O	EU	DY	ST	F	Total ST
Others female	7 (50.00%)	2 (14.29%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	5 (35.71%)	0 (0.00%)	14 (38.89%)
Others male	6 (27.27%)	10 (45.45%)	2 (9.09%)	0 (0.00%)	4 (18.18%)	0 (0.00%)	22 (61.11%)
Total TT	13 (36.11%)	12 (33.33%)	2 (5.56%)	0 (0.00%)	9 (25.00%)	0 (0.00%)	36 (100%)

Table 32 Dutch Others Total Translation Strategies

Name	MA	O	EU	DY	ST	F	Total ST
Others female	6 (42.86%)	3 (21.43%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	5 (35.71%)	0 (0.00%)	14 (38.89%)
Others male	13 (59.09%)	5 (22.73%)	1 (4.55%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (13.64%)	0 (0.00%)	22 (61.11%)
Total TT	19 (52.78%)	8 (22.22%)	1 (2.78%)	0 (0.00%)	8 (22.22%)	0 (0.00%)	36 (100%)

Table 33 German Others Total Translation Strategies

What can be inferred from this data is that the discrepancy between the Dutch and German subtitles lies in the notably higher retention rate of taboo language in the *Others male* category in the German subtitles compared to the Dutch subtitles. Examples (202, 107-109) illustrate this substantial difference.

202	Others, male	Who the fuck's Kamal?	SA	I	Wie is Kamal nu weer?	-	-	ST	Wer zum Teufel ist Kamal?	R	I	MA
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107	Others, male	No, we fucking couldn't.	SA	E	Nee, dat kunnen we niet.	-	-	O	Vergiss es!	-	-	O
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108	Others, male	Jesus, check out Rain Wain.	R	SF	Kijk Rain Man hier eens.	-	-	O	Wow, ein kleiner <i>Rain Man</i> .	-	SF	ST
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109	Others, male	Little House on the fucking Prairie?	SA	E	... dat dit <i>Little House on the Prairie</i> is?	-	-	O	Auf unserer kleinen scheiß Farm?	S	E	MA
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The examples (202, 107-109) depicted are all taboo language uttered by the local shopkeeper, Dennis, who runs Dennis' Wee Shop, a frequent gathering spot for *the Girls*. He is roughly the same age as *the Original Girls*, possibly slightly younger. Dennis has a non-physical violent temperament, often kicking people out of his shop by yelling *Get out!*. Additionally, Dennis uses a lot of taboo language, mostly within the SA category, which is part of the Derry regiolect and often serves a purely phatic function. Dennis' speech patterns in *Derry Girls* perfectly align with his regiolect and sociolect, and his constant use of *fuck* and *Get out!* are important aspects of his idiolect, contributing significantly to his character portrayal. As seen in the provided examples, Dennis' use of taboo language is not retained in the Dutch subtitles, despite the integral role it plays in his characterization. For the Dutch viewer, there is no indication that Dennis uses any taboo language in his interactions with *the Girls*. Similarly, in the German subtitles, while two out of the five examples are retained, the remainder are also either omitted or standardized. This difference between the original dialogue and its translation reduces the viewer's comprehension of Dennis's idiolect and the cultural setting in which he exists.

Conclusion

1. Research questions and hypothesis

This thesis set out to examine the impact of the retention and non-retention of taboo language on the portrayal of characters' idiolects in the Dutch and German subtitles of the television series *Derry Girls*. Through a detailed analysis, several significant findings emerged. Prior to presenting the conclusion, this section will revisit the research questions that this study has aimed to answer. The main focus of this research was to examine how the subtitling of taboo language affects the portrayal of characters' regiolects, idiolects, and sociolects in the Dutch and German versions of the series *Derry Girls*. Important to take into account when researching this was:

1. What semantic categories and pragmatic functions of taboo language are present in the selected episodes of *Derry Girls*, and how their prevalence differs among English, Dutch, and German;

2. What translation strategies are used for subtitling taboo language in *Derry Girls* into Dutch and German, according to the combined typologies proposed by Xavier (2022) and Gao (2013);
3. How the regiolect, sociolect and idiolect are portrayed in the series;
4. Whether the taboo language of some characters is retained less frequently than that of others, and what the effect of the non-retention of taboo language is on the characters' regiolect, sociolect and idiolect.

The results indicate that within Xavier's (2022) and Gao's (2013) combined translation strategy typology, the translation strategy most commonly observed in the Dutch and German TTs was maintenance. Out of 307 taboo utterances in the Dutch subtitles, 150 were found to use this strategy, while 150 out of 309 taboo utterances were subtitled with this strategy in the German subtitles of the series *Derry Girls*.

The second most prevalent strategy for both languages was omission, with 77 out of 307 instances in the Dutch subtitles and 74 out of 309 instances in the German subtitles. The overall average for the subtitling of taboo language showed that 60% of taboo language was retained and 40% was not retained in the Dutch subtitles, while in the German subtitles, 61% was retained and 39% was not retained. Maintenance, euphemism, dysphemism, and four-letter words were categorized as part of the retained group, whereas omission and standardization were classified under the non-retained group. These percentages indicate that, overall, there was an effort made to retain the taboo language spoken by the characters in the series. These results align with the hypothesis, indicating a strong effort to retain the ST's taboo language. However, the roughly 40% non-retention rate raises questions regarding its impact on character portrayal.

The analysis revealed that certain categories of taboo language, particularly those related to sexual activity (SA), experienced the highest rates of non-retention. In both the Dutch and German TTs, a significant portion of SA taboo language was omitted, which implies that these terms are often considered less plot-relevant and are thus more readily excluded in the subtitling process. This omission significantly impacts characters whose idiolects are marked by frequent use of SA taboo language, such as Michelle. It can also be concluded, as was hypothesized, that semantic categories were switched to categories more frequently used in the TTs.

Furthermore, the E, I, and SF pragmatic functions were found to be more frequently non-retained in the Dutch subtitles. This was true for the E and SF functions in the German subtitles. These findings support Han & Wang's (2014) theory that E and SF functions are seen as fillers, making them less plot-relevant and more likely to be non-retained. The fact that the SA semantic category has the highest rate of non-retention indicates that the combination of SA with function E is seen as least plot-relevant, leading to easier non-retention in translation. High non-retention rates of taboo words lead to a significant loss of character portrayal, affecting the conveyance of a character's idiolect. In summary, the non-retention of certain pragmatic functions and the SA category results in a loss of character depiction, which is relevant to the research question as it affects how characters are perceived in translation. These results align with the hypothesis that the TTs would prioritize plot-relevant dialogue over taboo language important for the characterization.

The case of Michelle, a character known for her bold and provocative language, highlights the impact of non-retention on character portrayal. In the Dutch subtitles, 38% of the taboo language within Michelle's sociolect was non-retained, while in the German subtitles, the non-retention rate was 39%. This pattern suggests that her unique speech patterns, which are a significant part of her idiolect, are not fully conveyed in the TTs, potentially altering the audiences' perception of her character. This aligns with the hypothesis that the more nuanced idiolects are often compromised due to the constraints of subtitling.

In conclusion, the non-retention of taboo language in subtitles can significantly impact the portrayal of characters' idiolects, even though their sociolects are retained.

The research found no evidence that certain sociolects are subtitled less frequently in both the Dutch and German translations. For *the Girls* and *the Original Girls*, the subtitling retention rate is around the average. Sister Michael's subtitles shows a much higher taboo language retention rate, which is expected since she constitutes a sociolect by herself, leading to averages calculated from fewer instances. The subtitles of *the Elderly* also have a significantly higher percentage of taboo language retention, but this again results from smaller sample sizes compared to the two largest sociolect groups, *the Girls* and *the Original Girls*.

There does not seem to be much of a difference between the Dutch and German TTs; some semantic categories are used more frequently in Dutch (SO), some more in German (S),

but overall, about the same amount of taboo language is retained in both subtitles. Moreover, no big differences were found in the retention of the taboo language uttered within the different sociolects. The German subtitles had a few more euphemisms (36 compared to 32) and the Dutch a few more omissions (77 compared to 74), but overall, the translation strategies appeared to be similar for both languages. Additionally, the retention rate of pragmatic function in the Dutch and German subtitles was almost the same and for both languages it can be concluded that the combination SA semantic function with E pragmatic function was most frequently not retained, meaning that that combination resulted in the highest loss of characterization on a regiolect, sociolect and idiolect basis.

To answer the research question: the subtitling of taboo language affects the portrayal of characters' regiolects, idiolects, and sociolects in the Dutch and German versions of the series *Derry Girls*, as the decision between retention and non-retention is the decision between having the Dutch and German viewer fully grasp every character's characterization or not.

2. Limitations and recommendations

Although the findings provide new insights and support existing research on the Dutch and German subtitling of a drama series, this study does have its limitations. One key limitation is the inherent bias in categorization during subtitling analysis, as not all data can be neatly classified into predefined categories. Thus, overlapping categories did occur, same as taboo instances that could not be categorized in a perfectly fitted box. A solution to that could be to make even more boxes, but that also has its disadvantages. It should also be mentioned that it is no disaster that some data did not fit in the boxes, as it allowed for interesting data.

Additionally, this thesis does not distinguish between instances of taboo language that comprise an entire sentence, such as the single word *Jesus*, which has a higher likelihood of being retained, and instances where the taboo language is part of a longer sentence. In the latter cases, due to factors such as spatiotemporal constraints, it is more challenging to retain the taboo language.

The language use in the ST reflects the time period. However, the Dutch and German subtitles were created with consideration for the contemporary society and time frame. This means that the variations of taboo language present in the ST may not necessarily align with the variations of taboo language used in present times. Therefore, while the language use in

Derry Girls accurately reflects how people spoke in Derry during the 1990s, this does not imply that the taboo language in the Dutch and German subtitles is translated using taboo words that were common in the Netherlands and Germany during the 1990s.

Furthermore, this discrepancy makes it challenging to assess whether the level of taboo language aligns with how it was perceived in Northern Ireland during the 1990s and how it comes across in the Dutch and German subtitles. For instance, the word *fanny* had a significantly high taboo value, as evidenced by one of the teenage characters finding it amusing that an older man used this word. It was considered somewhat inappropriate. If such a word is translated into *kut* ('cunt') and *Fotze* ('cunt') in the Dutch and German subtitles, respectively, it becomes difficult to conclude whether these translations carry the same level of taboo. To determine this, a different type of research would be required, where people are asked to rank various types of swear words in different languages, thus identifying words that elicit similar levels of taboo.

Further research could explore strategies to better retain the nuances of characters' speech in subtitling, enhancing the viewer's experience and understanding of the ST. Moreover, this analysis focused on three Western languages, all belonging to the Germanic linguistic family tree. Exploring how other languages and cultures handled the subtitling of taboo language in *Derry Girls* would be interesting.

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