



## Taboo Words Used By the Characters in *Murder Mystery 2* Movie

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**Abstract:** This analysis discussed the Taboo Words Used in *Murder Mystery 2* Movie. The objectives of this study are to identify and describe the types and the functions of taboo words used in *Murder Mystery 2* movie and to determine the most frequently used categories of the types and the functions of taboo words. Data were collected using note-taking and observation techniques. Mix method is used to categorize the types and functions of taboo words and determine their frequency. The results of discussion found seven types of taboo words with 175 occurrences taboo words. The most frequently used type is religious taboo (57.1%), predominantly involving the use of the word “god” with 82 occurrences, followed by scatological references and disgusting objects (21.1%), insulting references to perceived psychological, physical, and social deviations (11.4%), offensive slang (5.7%), sexual references (2.2%), animal names (1.7%), and ancestral allusions (0.5%). There are three functions of taboo words identified with 177 occurrences. The main function is to achieve personal outcomes (71.8%), primarily to intensify negative emotions, with 91 occurrences, followed by intensifying positive emotions and catharsis, each with 18 occurrences. Other functions include achieving interpersonal outcomes (17.5%), inconsequential outcomes (9.6%), and literal or denotative use (1.1%).

**Keywords:** Taboo Words, Type, Function, Movie

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is the process of exchanging information, ideas, thoughts, or feelings between individuals or groups that relies on unwritten social rules, where word choice reflects the speaker’s expression, cultural values, and societal norms. The expressive power of words is visible in media such as books, advertisements, and movies. Movies, in particular, often imitate social and cultural interactions authentically, including the use of taboo language to intensify characters’ emotions (Wene and Ena, 2020:6). Taboo words—rude, offensive, or culturally sensitive terms typically used in informal settings—reflect cultural norms, often avoided due to their perceived inappropriateness (Hashamdar, 2018:623). However, what is considered acceptable varies across societies, influenced by social perceptions of sensitivity and propriety (Jdetawy, 2019:27051).

The use of taboo words in movies can enhance emotional impact, build tension, or add humor. Such words strongly express characters' emotions and are often preferred over neutral language for their intensified effect (Rahmania and Munandar, 2021:33). As societal norms evolve, so does language, and thus the acceptance of certain taboo words has become more permissible over time. Movies, by frequently showcasing offensive language, contribute to the normalization and gradual desensitization of audiences to such expressions (Sapolsky and

Kaye, 2005:293). This cultural shift reflects how repeated exposure to taboo language in movies reduces the shock value, leading to broader acceptance and diminished offense associated with these words.

In this research, the American film *Murder Mystery 2* is selected to analyze its use of taboo words. This PG-13-rated movie reflects diverse American cultural elements and language expressions, including the use of strong language. A PG-13 rating permits some coarse language but limits excessive use, especially with sexual connotations, as the audience includes teenagers and young adults (Motion Picture Association, 2020:6). *Murder Mystery 2* was chosen for its blend of comedy, action, and mystery, offering insight into the type and impact of taboo words used in a film meant for a younger demographic (De Vries, 2023). The analysis will examine how these words reflect the cultural backdrop of the United States, which generally shows more relaxed attitudes toward offensive language. Studying taboo words in *Murder Mystery 2* offers insights into the relationship between language, authority, and social dynamics, enhancing understanding of what society deems offensive or inappropriate. Taboo words reveal complex social interactions and emotional expressions, and understanding their use sheds light on how they affect communication. Jay (2009:4) identified over 70 types of taboo words in America, mostly associated with sexual obscenity and profanity. This research also investigates the frequency and nature of taboo words in PG-13 films, noting that while less intense in offensive content, these films significantly influence young audiences and societal perceptions of language. Based on the background of the problems mentioned above, the problems can be formulated as follows:

- a. What are the types and the most frequent types of taboo words uttered by the characters in *Murder Mystery 2* movie?
- b. What are the functions of the most frequent functions of taboo words uttered by the characters in *Murder Mystery 2* movie?

According to the problem found, the aims to be achieved:

- a. To identify and describe the types the most frequent types of taboo words uttered by the characters in *Murder Mystery 2* movie.
- b. To identify and describe the function the most frequent functions of taboo words uttered by the characters in *Murder Mystery 2* movie.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are two international journals to support this study. The first international journal, "The Utility and Ubiquity of Taboo Words" by Jay (2009), delves into the prevalence and significance of taboo words across various languages and cultures. It underscores the necessity of a deeper understanding of swearing behaviour, investigating the functions and effects of taboo words as well as the social and psychological factors influencing their use. Employing qualitative descriptive analysis, Jay synthesizes data from diverse contexts, including college environments and legal discussions on verbal harassment, to elucidate how taboo language impacts society. The journal advocates for interdisciplinary research to gain a comprehensive insight into swearing behaviour, making it particularly relevant for the current study by shedding light on the diversity of taboo words within American culture.

The second journal, "Taboo Words in Angry Mood: A Gender Study" by Hashamdar (2018), examines the intersection of gender, social identity, and the utilization of taboo language during states of anger. The study focuses on the frequency of taboo words among male and female participants, also considering how educational background affects their usage. Using a quantitative approach, the findings indicate that men, irrespective of social identity, tend to use more taboo words than women when expressing anger. Additionally, those with higher education levels use fewer taboo words compared to their less-educated counterparts. Despite its small sample size and focus on a narrow context, this journal provides significant insights into the interplay of social identity and educational influence on language use.

Three undergraduate theses further support the exploration of taboo words within specific contexts. The first undergraduate thesis entitled "An Analysis of Taboo Words in *Victoria and Abdul*" by Agustina (2022), investigates the types and functions of taboo language in a historical film featuring Islamic elements. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative method, the research categorizes 36 instances of taboo words into five types, revealing three main functions: expressing emotions, achieving specific goals, and conveying frustration. While this study offers a robust framework for understanding taboo words in film, it falls short in addressing the broader societal implications of such language.

The second thesis, "Taboo Words Used by Gary Vaynerchuk in Garyvee's Igty" by Rahmah (2021), explores the use of taboo language by the public figure Gary Vaynerchuk on Instagram. Through qualitative descriptive analysis, this research identifies various types of taboo words—obscenity, epithets, and profanity—and their functions, such as provocation, attention-seeking, and contempt. Interestingly, the study finds that taboo words, traditionally viewed as negative, can also carry positive meanings in certain contexts. However, its focus on

a single public figure and a specific social media platform may limit the generalizability of the findings.

Last, Adillah's (2022) thesis, "An Analysis of Taboo Words Uttered by Male and Female Characters in *Bad Boys for Life*," investigates the types and functions of taboo language used by characters in the film, with an emphasis on gender dynamics. The research identifies a total of 214 instances of taboo words, indicating that male characters use such language significantly more than their female counterparts. The study categorizes the functions of these words, including expressions of anger and surprise, but it could enhance its analysis by exploring the underlying reasons for the observed gender differences. Collectively, these journals and theses provide a comprehensive understanding of taboo language across various contexts, contributing valuable insights into their functions, societal implications, and the influences of factors such as gender and social identity. They serve as a strong foundation for the current study, informing the methodology and theoretical framework for analysing taboo words in film.

### **3. RESEARCH METHOD**

#### **Data Source**

The primary data for this study were sourced from Netflix's streaming of *Murder Mystery 2*, including all characters' uttered taboo words and the dialogue script provided via Netflix subtitles. Directed by Jeremy Garelick with a script by James Vanderbilt, this American action-comedy mystery film was released on March 31, 2023, as a sequel to the 2019 *Murder Mystery*. The movie ranked in Netflix's Weekly Global Top 3 with 22.25 million hours viewed. Featuring Adam Sandler, Jennifer Aniston, Mark Strong, Mélanie Laurent, Jodie Turner-Smith, and John Kani, it is a PG-13 film catering to audiences aged 13 and above.

#### **Method and Technique of Collecting Data**

In this research, a note-taking technique was used to systematically collect data from the movie through an observational approach. The process began with creating a structured table, including scene timestamps, utterances with taboo words, and the characters involved. Next, dialogues containing offensive language, along with listener responses and contextual details, were noted. Finally, these notes were carefully reviewed, with attention to character utterances, to validate the collected data.

### **Method and Technique of Analysing Data**

A combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis methods was used to examine and interpret the collected data. The qualitative approach involved identifying and categorizing types of taboo words in the collected dialogues, along with their contextual usage. Each word was analysed to understand its taboo nature and categorized accordingly. This analysis was organized into a table titled *Categorized Types of Taboo Words in Murder Mystery 2 movie*, which incorporated structured notes with columns for taboo types and quantities. Findings were entered into this table. Additionally, a second table, *Categorized Functions of Taboo Words in Murder Mystery 2 movie*, was created by adding columns for detailed function, sub-function, function, and quantity. Character emotions and intentions associated with these words were recorded to determine each word's function. Last, a quantitative analysis was used to filter, group, and categorize each instance of taboo language, allowing the frequency of these terms to be calculated.

### **Method and Technique of Presenting Data**

Formal and informal methods are used to present the findings. The formal method is used to show clearly the frequency of types, and functions or the motives of taboo words uttered by the characters in *Murder Mystery 2 movie* in a form of table. The table includes frequency data and the sum of quantities derived from the data analysis, along with percentage calculations. The findings are also presented in an informal method by elaborating the types of taboo words and functions of taboo words that is supported by the dialogue in each example data given. Due to the large amount of data collected, some examples of each type and function of taboo words are given. Lastly, findings were reported and conclusions were drawn.

## **4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Type of Taboo Words**

The research applies Jay's (2009) theory, which builds upon Jay's (1992) theory by categorizing taboo language into nine types. These categories primarily encompass the semantic range of what is considered taboo in English. The categories are:

#### **a. Sexual Reference**

Sexual reference taboo words are expressions or terms that are considered offensive, vulgar, or inappropriate because they refer to sexual acts, body parts, or sexual behaviour. This type is intended to incite lust or depravity and are often deemed offensive or disgusting in society. Such terms are frequently used in legal contexts to describe language that is not

protected by free speech rights. In the United States, while free speech is broadly protected, there are legal limitations, particularly concerning language considered obscene due to its potential to cause harm or moral damage. Examples of sexual reference in America include words like "fuck," "cock," "cunt," "tits," and "blowjob."

b. Religious Taboos (Profane/Blasphemous)

Profanity involves taboo words related to religion and often implies a lack of respect for sacred matters, though this respect may be undermined indirectly. Such words are used either out of ignorance or indifference towards religious beliefs and are not intended to directly attack any particular faith. Instead, they are commonly used in everyday contexts as part of popular culture or humour. Examples of profanity include using religious figures' names casually, such as in the phrase "Jesus Christ, I'm hungry!" or using "Goddamn!" which combines the name of God with "damn," a curse implying condemnation or eternal punishment.

Blasphemy involves language that directly insults or challenges religious beliefs and doctrines, demonstrating disrespect and opposing religious authority. For example, statement such as "Jesus Christ was just a myth!" which serve as direct insults to a religious teaching, particularly within Christianity.

c. Scatological Referents and Disgusting Objects

Vulgar terms refer to human waste products or processes that are considered disgusting. This category includes language that is not regarded as highly offensive but is commonly used in everyday communication. Such terms are often seen as uncouth or rude. For examples are the word "shit" which have means the solid waste that is released from the bowels of a person, "crap" that have meaning such as "shit" but less offensive, and "douchebag" that originally a term for a type of syringe used for vaginal douching, it is now used as a derogatory term for someone considered unpleasant or obnoxious.

d. Animal Names

Animal names are not inherently taboo until these names are used to refer to people or things with the intention of insulting, belittling, or dehumanizing. This usage involves employing animal-related terms in a derogatory manner. The example are the word "bitch" referred to female dog and "ass" as another name of donkey.

e. Ethnic-Racial-Gender Slurs

Taboos are associated with derogatory terms targeting ethnicity, race, or gender. Ethnic, racial, and gender slurs are considered taboo because they perpetuate harm, reinforce systemic discrimination, and contribute to the marginalization of individuals based on their identity.

Examples of ethnic-racial-gender slurs terms include "nigger", This term is a historically ethnic slur term that used against Black people. It originated during the transatlantic slave trade and was used to dehumanize and oppress African Americans. Another example is "fag," which is a gender slur used against LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly gay men. It has been used to demean and insult based on sexual orientation. Additionally, "dago" is a racial slur used against people of Italian or Spanish descent to insult and marginalize these ethnic groups. Each of these terms reflects deep-seated prejudice and historical discrimination.

f. Insulting Reference to Perceived Psychological, Physical, or Social Deviations.

Insults based on perceived psychological, physical, or social deviations are considered highly offensive and taboo because they target individuals based on characteristics that are often beyond their control. These insults can cause significant emotional and psychological harm, perpetuate stigma, and contribute to a culture of discrimination and exclusion.

Examples of insults based on psychological deviations include terms like "retard" and "crazy." These words are used to demean individuals with intellectual or mental health conditions, perpetuating negative stereotypes and contributing to stigma and discrimination against those facing mental health challenges. Another term, "wimp," is used to insult someone perceived as weak, timid, or lacking in physical strength or courage. Insults based on social deviations target individuals based on their social status, perceived weakness, or interests, reinforcing harmful stereotypes and contributing to bullying and social exclusion. "Lard ass" is an example of a term used to insult someone by implying that they are overweight or physically unattractive. This term reflects physical deviations, targeting individuals based on their body size, physical abilities, or appearance. Such insults reinforce harmful stereotypes about body image and physical ability, contributing to body shaming and ableism.

g. Ancestral Allusions

These insults target individuals by making negative remarks about their family background, parentage, or lineage. The use of such terms can be deeply offensive and hurtful because they not only demean the individual but also indirectly attack their family or heritage. For example, the phrase "son of a bitch" uses the term "bitch," which originally means a female dog, as a derogatory reference to someone's mother. Another example is "bastard," which historically referred to a child born out of wedlock. In modern usage, it is used to insult someone by implying that they are illegitimate or morally corrupt.

h. Substandard Vulgar Terms

Substandard vulgar terms typically involve crude or offensive language related to bodily functions and are used to insult or demean someone's character. These terms are often employed in general contexts to belittle or criticize someone in a disrespectful manner.

For example, the term "fart face" combines a reference to a bodily function (fart) with a derogatory comment about a person's appearance (face), implying that the individual is unpleasant, annoying, or disgusting. Another example is "on the rag," a vulgar term referring to menstruation. This phrase is often used to insult or dismiss someone by linking their emotional behaviour to their menstrual cycle, thereby disrespecting and undermining their feelings. Such terms are characterized by their crude nature and the way they are used to convey disrespect or insult.

i. Offensive Slang

Slang refers to informal language used by specific groups, such as teenagers, musicians, athletes, and drug users, to facilitate communication and serve as a code for identifying group members. Slang vocabulary is characterized by its non-standard nature, including new words, arbitrary changes to existing words, and contrived expressions. Slang terms often simplify more complex concepts.

Offensive slang refers to slang terms considered offensive due to their origins and meanings. Examples include "cluster fuck," which combines the highly explicit and vulgar term "fuck" with "cluster" (meaning a group or bunch). This term originated from military slang and has been adopted into broader usage to describe chaotic or disorganized situations. Another example is "tit run," where "tit" is a slang term for the breast, reducing a body part to a vulgar expression. "Tit run" is a colloquial phrase not found in formal or standard language and may not be universally recognized. It might be perceived as diminishing or trivializing serious issues. Additionally, "bennie" is a non-standard term referring to a stimulant pill.

These are the nine types of taboo words according to Jay's theory (2009). Jay also noted that the degree of offensiveness of taboo words can range from mildly offensive (e.g., "damn," "fart") to highly offensive (e.g., "cunt," "nigger"). The categories of taboo words are interrelated and cannot be entirely separated. Understanding these types of taboo words is crucial for navigating cultural and social sensitivities in communication.



## Function of Taboo Words

Taboo words are often defined by their offensive or negative outcomes. In certain contexts, this language can lead to negative, positive, or inconsequential outcomes. Thus, taboo words may strengthen relationships even though they violate general social norms, as long as the individuals involved share a similar understanding and acceptance. Additionally, such words can become inconsequential if used in casual conversational habits. Jay categorizes the purposes of employing taboo words into three categories as follows:

a. **Literal or Denotative uses**

Literal or denotative uses provides straightforward or explicit information. It uses objective meaning of a taboo word as defined in a dictionary, without any emotional or cultural connotations. For example, in the phrase "we fucked," the literal meaning involves a direct, explicit reference to a sexual act.

b. **Achieving Various Personal Outcomes**

Taboo words can be used to achieve a variety of personal outcomes, which may be positive, negative, or inconsequential.

1) **Emotional Release or Catharsis (Positive Outcome)**

Using taboo words like swearing can help release built-up tension or stress. When someone uses a taboo word in a moment of frustration or pain, it can provide a sense of immediate relief, making them feel better after the outburst. This emotional release is often referred to as catharsis.

2) **To Intensify Positive Emotions (Positive Outcome)**

Taboo words can be used to convey significant positive feelings such as joy and amazement. Just as taboo words can emphasize negative emotions, they can also amplify positive ones. For instance, swearing when something exciting happens, like winning a game or hearing great news, can intensify the feeling of joy or exhilaration. In some contexts, using strong language can be a way to celebrate success or an achievement. For example, someone might say, "We did it, hell yeah!" as an expression of triumph and shared joy.

3) **To Intensify Negative Emotions (Negative Outcome)**

Strong language can also be used to communicate strong negative emotions such as anger, frustration, anxiety, insecurity, sadness, shame, disappointment, low self-esteem, dissatisfaction, jealousy, and more as emotional outburst. Taboo words can amplify the intensity of those negative feelings rather than help release them.

Imagine someone stuck in heavy traffic, already feeling frustrated because they are running late for an important meeting. In this situation, they start swearing and using harsh language like, "Damn it! Traffic again! This highway is useless!"

Rather than feeling better after swearing, the speaker actually feels even more angry. The harsh words they use intensify their frustration, making them increasingly anxious about the possibility of being late. Each time they swear, their emotions escalate further, until they feel extremely stressed and unable to think clearly.

c. Achieving Various Interpersonal outcome

Taboo words can be used to achieve a variety of interpersonal outcomes, which may be positive, negative, or inconsequential.

1) To Promote Social Harmony and Cohesion (Positive Outcome)

According to Jay (2009:155), taboo words can foster positive social outcomes when used in contexts such as jokes and humour, social commentary, sex talk, storytelling, in-group slang, self-deprecation, or ironic sarcasm. These uses can enhance social bonds and create a sense of camaraderie among people.

2) To Insult Others (Negative Outcome)

Taboo words can also be used to insult or demean others, including name-calling and put-downs such as "asshole" and "bitch." This use of language aims to belittle or provoke negative feelings in others.

3) To Curse (Negative Outcome)

Cursing involves wishing harm upon someone. Jay (1992:2) suggests that when cursing is used, the speaker often intends for the wished harm to occur in the future. For example, "Eat shit and die!" is a curse intended to express strong hostility and a desire for negative outcomes.

d. Achieving Personal and Interpersonal Inconsequential Outcomes

Taboo words can also be used in ways that result in neither significant positive nor negative consequences. These are what we can call inconsequential outcomes. In these cases, the use of taboo language might not lead to any substantial emotional release, social bonding, or conflict but rather serves as a filler, habit, or an expression of mild irritation or surprise. For example, someone might casually use a mild expletive like "damn" or "hell" when they are slightly surprised or frustrated but without any real emotional intensity. In such cases, the word is used out of habit or routine, and it doesn't have a meaningful impact on the speaker's emotions or their relationships with others. The language doesn't foster a sense of camaraderie,

nor does it create conflict. It simply fills a gap in conversation or expresses a fleeting emotion. In this context, taboo words function more as verbal tics or expressions of minor emotions that neither escalate nor de-escalate situations. They are part of everyday language, often uttered without much thought, and do not significantly alter the course of interactions or internal states.

## 5. DISCUSSION

### Types of Taboo Words Found in *Murder Mystery 2* Movie

This section discusses the taboo words featured in the *Murder Mystery 2* movie. A total of 174 instances of taboo words spoken by the characters were found and identified. According to Jay's idea, seven of the nine types of taboo words have been recognized. The data is divided into categories such as sexual references, religious taboos, scatological references, animal names, insults related to physical and psychological deviations, ancestral allusions, and offensive slang.

**Table 1** Types of Taboo Words in *Murder Mystery 2* Movie

| No | Types of Taboo Words                                      | Taboo Word     | Number of Utterance | Number of Type ( <i>f</i> ) | Formula $P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100$ | Percentage ( <i>P</i> %) |
|----|---|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1  | Sexual Reference  | Busting A Nut  | 2                   | 4                           | $\frac{4}{175} \times 100$           | 2,28571%                 |
|    |   | Dick           | 1                   |                             |                                      |                          |
|    |   | Fuck           | 1                   |                             |                                      |                          |
| 2  | Religious Taboo (Profane /Blasphemous)                    | Damn           | 2                   | 100                         | $\frac{100}{175} \times 100$         | 57,1429%                 |
|    |   | God            | 82                  |                             |                                      |                          |
|    |   | Goddamn        | 4                   |                             |                                      |                          |
|    |   | Hell           | 3                   |                             |                                      |                          |
|    |   | Holy           | 1                   |                             |                                      |                          |
|    |   | Jesus          | 7                   |                             |                                      |                          |
| 3  | Scatological Reference and Disgusting Objects             | Bullshit       | 2                   | 37                          | $\frac{37}{175} \times 100$          | 21,1429%                 |
|    |   | Crap           | 2                   |                             |                                      |                          |
|    |   | Shit           | 33                  |                             |                                      |                          |
| 4  | Animal Names  | Bitch          | 2                   | 3                           | $\frac{3}{175} \times 100$           | 1,71429%                 |
|    |   | Disgusting Pig | 1                   |                             |                                      |                          |
| 5  | Insulting Reference to Perceived Psychological Deviations | Doofus         | 1                   | 20                          | $\frac{20}{175} \times 100$          | 11,4286%                 |
|    |   | Idiot          | 1                   |                             |                                      |                          |

**TABOO WORDS USED BY THE CHARACTERS IN MURDER MYSTERY 2 MOVIE**

|                  |  |                      |            |            |                              |                 |
|------------------|--|----------------------|------------|------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
|                  | Insulting Reference to Perceived Physical Deviations | Fully Armed          | 2          |            |                              |                 |
|                  |  | Giant Hands          | 1          |            |                              |                 |
|                  |  | Orangutan Hands      | 1          |            |                              |                 |
|                  | Insulting Reference to Perceived Social Deviations   | Harpy                | 1          |            |                              |                 |
|                  |  | Creepy Little Friend | 1          |            |                              |                 |
|                  |  | Stupid Americans     | 1          |            |                              |                 |
|                  |  | Americans            | 1          |            |                              |                 |
|                  |  | Americans            | 1          |            |                              |                 |
|                  |  | Asshole              | 2          |            |                              |                 |
|                  |  | Buffoons             | 2          |            |                              |                 |
|                  |  | Gold Digger          | 1          |            |                              |                 |
|                  |  | Gold Digging         | 1          |            |                              |                 |
|                  |  | Janky-Ass Shit       | 1          |            |                              |                 |
|                  |  | Little Miss Minority | 1          |            |                              |                 |
| Monster          | 1  |                      |            |            |                              |                 |
| 6                | Ancestral Allusions                                  | Sick Bastard         | 1          | <b>1</b>   | $\frac{1}{175} \times 100$   | <b>0,57143%</b> |
| 7                | Offensive Slang                                      | A Can of Whoop Ass   | 1          | <b>10</b>  | $\frac{10}{175} \times 100$  | <b>5,71429%</b> |
|                  |  | Badass               | 1          |            |                              |                 |
|                  |  | Dog                  | 1          |            |                              |                 |
|                  |  | Murked               | 1          |            |                              |                 |
|                  |  | Sick-Ass             | 1          |            |                              |                 |
|                  |  | Sick-Ass             | 1          |            |                              |                 |
|                  |  | Smoked               | 1          |            |                              |                 |
|                  |  | Suck                 | 3          |            |                              |                 |
| <b>Total (n)</b> |  |                      | <b>175</b> | <b>175</b> | $\frac{175}{175} \times 100$ | <b>100%</b>     |

a. Sexual Reference

Data 1

1:26:03

*Maharajah: I need to see you two ballers out on the dance floor **busting a nut!***

The phrase "busting a nut" originates from the word "bust," which comes from "burst," and "nuts," which is slang for "testicles." The phrase "bust a nut" is used to mean "ejaculate." Because its original meaning is rooted in a sexual context, it remains categorized as a sexual reference. Over time, the phrase has also taken on the meaning of

being excited about something. In this context, the Maharajah invites Nick and Audrey to attend his wedding party and encouraging them to dance energetically at the party later.

b. Religious Taboos (Profane/Blasphemous)

Data 2

19:22

*Nick: **Goddamn!** Are you aiming for me or him?*

"Goddamn" originally begins as an invocation for God to curse someone or something to Hell for eternity, such as in the phrase "God, damn his/her..." or praying for someone to be cursed by God. This makes it taboo because it uses God's name for purposes that are not divine. Following its religious origins, "Goddamn" is a common form of religious profanity. Over time, it has lost much of its original meaning and is now used as an exclamatory expression to convey frustration, anger, surprise, or even amazement. In this context, Nick uses "Goddamn" to express his pain and negative emotion after being accidentally shot by Audrey, who was supposed to be shooting at their enemy but ended up hitting Nick instead.

c. Scatological Referents and Disgusting Objects

Data 3

00:33:58

*Audrey: **Bullshit!***

"Bullshit" terms often involve references to human or animal feces and are used to express anger or criticize something or someone. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word "bullshit" combines "bull" (the male of any bovine animal) and "shit" (excrement from the bowels). Therefore, the term retains its scatological roots. Melillo (2005) defines "bullshit" as an expression of strong emotional denial used to denote something as nonsense, false, foolish, or illogical. This expression is commonly used figuratively to describe something as a lie or to indicate disbelief or rejection of someone's statement or action. In this context, Audrey uses "Bullshit!" to convey strong disagreement toward Saira's statement that they don't kidnapped Maharaja. This choice of words emphasizes her scepticism and emotional intensity. If Audrey used a less offensive term, such as "I don't believe that," the expression would be much softer and less impactful.

d. Animal Names

Data 4

00:32:04

*Audrey: Get out of my face. **Disgusting pig.***

"Disgusting pig" is Animal Names taboo words category, particularly with the word "pig." The word "pig" refers to a domesticated or farm animal, often associated with dirtiness and gluttony. These characteristics form the basis of its use as an insult directed at a person who is unpleasant and difficult to deal with. In this context, Audrey uses it to describe Francisco. By calling him a "disgusting pig," Audrey implies that Francisco exhibits undesirable traits, such as being morally corrupt, by attempting to seduce Audrey and having intentions of engaging in inappropriate behaviour with her, despite her being married to Nick.

e. Insulting Reference to Perceived Psychological, Physical, or Social Deviations

Insulting Reference to Perceived Psychological Deviation

Data 5

00:52:01

*Kidnapper: Don't point, you **idiot!** Just casually walk in that direction.*

The term "idiot" originally had a clinical meaning, historically used to describe a person with a very low level of intellectual functioning. Calling someone an "idiot" is considered an insult because it implies that the person lacks intelligence, common sense, or the ability to think rationally, making it a reference to perceived psychological deficiency. It is intended to belittle and demean the person by suggesting they are mentally inferior. The kidnapper uses "idiot" to insult Nick, suggesting he is foolish or incompetent. This type of insult targets Nick's actions, specifically pointing out the kidnapper's van in a crowded place.

Insulting Reference to Perceived Physical Deviation

Data 6

01:21:55

*Maharajah: And, yo, my man is **fully armed.***

In this context, everyone is gathered for the preparations of Maharajah/Vik's wedding. Nick and Audrey are shocked when they see the Colonel, who has lost one of his arms. Vik then introduces his new bodyguard, Mr. Lou, to protect him "to the fullest," implying that the Colonel can no longer do so. The phrase "And yo, my man is fully armed"

isn't meant to refer to Mr. Lou being heavily armed, but is instead a joke about him having both arms, unlike the Colonel. The Colonel's visible frustration at this comment adds to the tension, making Vik's choice of words somewhat taboo. It shows a lack of sensitivity toward the Colonel's condition, turning his disability into the subject of a joke, which can be seen as disrespectful and inappropriate.

#### Insulting Reference to Perceived Social Deviation

##### Data 7

*01:10:26*

*Maharajah: Nick! This is some **janky-ass shit!***

The term "janky" refers to something run-down, of poor quality, or unreliable. It can also be used to describe someone considered undesirable in some way. Adding "ass" intensifies the expression, while "shit," a direct reference to feces, is generally considered dirty and unpleasant. The Maharajah yells to signal Nick about where he is being taken by his kidnappers. The Maharajah uses the phrase "janky ass shit" as an insult toward the people trying to kidnap him. By combining "janky ass shit," the Maharajah emphasizes how bad or evil the kidnappers are.

##### f. Ancestral Allusion

##### Data 8

*01:16:41*

*Nick: \$10,000, you can have one night with her. I'm kidding, you **sick bastard.***

"Bastard" is an illegitimate child. This word is considered an ancestral allusion because the insult historically references the circumstances of a person's birth, specifically whether they were born to parents who were not legally married. Over time, the term evolved from its original legal and social meaning into a more general derogatory term used to insult someone's character or integrity, regardless of their family background. "Bastard" is used less frequently in its original sense and more as an insult. This word describes someone as an unpleasant or despicable person. In this context, when Francisco makes Audrey uncomfortable with his flirtatious remarks, Nick tries to handle the situation by making a dark joke. Nick calls Francisco a "sick bastard" to insult his negative behaviour.

g. Offensive Slang

Data 9

1:21:41

Nick: *If you and the Colonel are ever caught in a fight, my money's on the Colonel. He'd open a can of whoop ass with his, uh... with his good arm.*

A can of whoop ass is an expression that popular in American culture in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The term has been widely used by athletes and sports commentators to describe a reaction or performance that is very strong and dominant. Additionally, this expression often appears in movies and TV shows as part of dialogue that emphasizes intensity or aggression. "Open a can of whoop-ass" is offensive slang due to its vulgar connotations and aggressive implications of physical harm, which is usually implied as humour. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as the action or process of assaulting someone; it can refer to a sound beating or thrashing, or an overwhelming defeat. Nick uses this phrase humorously to express his opinion to Mr. Lou that the Colonel would likely win a fight against him, despite his injury.

**Functions of Taboo Words Found in *Murder Mystery 2* Movie**

A total of 174 taboo word expressions were analysed, resulting in the identification of 177 functions of these taboo expressions, categorized into four main functions and eight subfunctions based on Jay’s theory. The difference in the number of expressions and functions is due to some expressions serving two functions.

**Table 2.** Functions of Taboo Words in *Murder Mystery 2* Movie

| N<br>O | FUNCTIONS                        | SUB FUNCTIONS                          | Number<br>of<br>subfunc<br>tion | Num<br>ber<br>of<br>Func<br>tion<br>(f) | Formula<br>$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100$ | Perce<br>ntage<br>(P%) |
|--------|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---|---|------------------------|
| 1      | Literal or Denotative Use        |  | 2                               | 2                                       | $\frac{2}{177} \times 100$              | 1,1%                   |
| 2      | Achieving Personal Outcomes      | Catharsis                              | 18                              | 127                                     | $\frac{127}{177} \times 100$            | 71,8%                  |
|        |                                  | Intensify Positive Emotions            | 18                              |   |   |                        |
|        |                                  | Intensify Negative Emotions            | 91                              |   |   |                        |
| 3      | Achieving Interpersonal Outcomes | To Promote Social Harmony and Cohesion | 14                              | 31                                      |   | 17,5%                  |



|   |                          |                            |            |            |                   |      |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------|
|   |                          | To Insult Direct<br>Others | 17         |            | $\frac{31}{177}$  |      |
|   |                          | To Curse                   | 0          |            | $\times 100$      |      |
| 4 | Inconsequential Outcomes |                            | 17         | 17         | $\frac{17}{177}$  | 9,6% |
|   | <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>       |                            | <b>177</b> | <b>177</b> | $\frac{177}{177}$ | 100% |
|   |                          |                            |            |            | $\times 100$      |      |

The data is divided into four main functional categories: Literal or Denotative Use, Achieving Personal Outcomes, Achieving Interpersonal Outcomes, and Inconsequential Outcomes. Literal or Denotative Use accounts for 1.1% of the total, with two occurrences. Achieving Personal Outcomes makes up the largest category, representing 71.8% of the total with 127 occurrences. This category includes sub-functions such as catharsis with 18 occurrences, intensifying positive emotions with 18 occurrences, and intensifying negative emotions with 91 occurrences. Achieving Interpersonal Outcomes represents 17.5% of the total, with 31 occurrences. This category includes sub-functions such as promoting social harmony and cohesion with 14 occurrences and insulting direct others with 17 occurrences. There are no instances of taboo words used for cursing. Inconsequential Outcomes make up 9.6% of the total, with 17 occurrences. In conclusion, the most frequently used function of taboo words is for achieving personal outcomes, primarily to intensify emotions, while the least frequent function is literal or denotative use.

a. Taboo as Literal or Denotative uses

The first motive is the use of taboo words according to their literal meaning. Several characters use taboo language in alignment with its original meaning. Some of the expressions are as follows:

Data 1

00:14:49

*Nick: The flamingos got diapers on so they don't **crap** the lawn!*

Nick uses the word "crap" in its literal sense. In this scene, Nick arrives at Maharajah's private island. For the first time, he sees flamingos wearing diapers, which explains why the place is so clean. The word "crap" directly refers to feces. Nick uses the word "crap" as part of casual conversational habits, without any significant emotional tone. There is no reaction from those around him, including Audrey, when he uses the word. Therefore, this instance falls under the function of "inconsequential outcome."

b. Achieving Personal Outcomes

1) Catharsis

Data 2

0:39:10

*Countess Sekou: All right! All right! **Jesus! God!***

In this context, Countess Sekou ties up Nick and Audrey. Nick and Audrey, meanwhile, are busy debating their analysis of the Countess's involvement in the chaos they are facing while trying to complete their mission. During their argument, the Countess doesn't respond to their questions but instead utters the phrase above, expressing her frustration while maintaining her composure amidst the noise coming from Audrey and Nick. --- The second part regarding Claudette can stay the same: In this context, Claudette uses this term to refer to Audrey, who is mistakenly assumed to be the villain. The misdirected accusation adds an extra layer of offense, as Audrey is wrongfully labelled as something she is not, which only intensifies the emotional weight of the insult.

2) Intensifying Positive Emotion

Data 3

01:20:22 - 01:20:16

*Audrey : **Oh my God!***

*Nick : I mean, **Goddamn. Goddamn!***

*Audrey : Look at this! **Oh my God!***

In this scene, Nick and Audrey enter the villa provided by Maharajah on his private island. Both "Oh my God" and "Goddamn" are used by Nick and Audrey to express their amazement at the luxurious and beautiful surroundings. The use of these words serves to intensify their positive emotions of awe and excitement.

3) Intensifying Negative Emotion

Data 4

51:17

*Countess Sekou: **Stupid Americans.***

In this scene, Audrey and Nick enter the kidnappers' van, despite being briefed earlier not to do so during the money exchange for Maharajah. Countess Sekou and others are watching through CCTV and listening to their conversation via connected phones. Seeing Nick and Audrey ignore the briefing angers the Countess, and her frustration is emphasized by the phrase "Stupid Americans."

c. Achieving Interpersonal Outcomes

1) To promote Social Harmony

Data 5

00:55:07

*Audrey: See? Team **Buffoon** wins again!*

In this context, Nick and Audrey were insulted by the Countess and called them as “buffoons”. When Audrey and Nick succeed in their mission, Audrey used the term "Team Buffoons" as ironic sarcasm to flaunt the idea that they, supposedly incompetent or useless as detectives, managed to help in locating the kidnappers' hideout. This enhanced the solidarity between Audrey and Nick and boosted the confidence of others which means the taboo word is used to promote social harmony and cohesion.

2) To Insult Others

Data 6

01:16:41

*Nick: \$10,000, you can have one night with her. I'm kidding, you **sick bastard**.*

Francisco tries to flirt with Audrey, Nick's wife, right in front of him. Nick, maintaining his usual laid-back attitude, makes a joke to put Francisco down. "Sick bastard" is chosen to define Francisco's inappropriate behaviour. This term typically serves to embarrass Francisco or highlight his improper conduct. The expression damages trust and respect, creating distance between the two parties.

3) Inconsequential Outcomes

Data 7

1:19:30

*Audrey : I cannot believe this*

*Nick : We get our own iPhones!*

*Audrey : No way!*

*Nick : What did we give out at our wedding?*

*Audrey : Oh, flip-flops!*

*Nick : Flip-flops, and we gave out Advil or some shit?*

In this scene, Nick and Audrey are amazed by the wedding gift from Vik and Claudette. Audrey then becomes curious about what their wedding gift was. Nick explains that they gave flip-flops, Advil, or some "shit," referring to something he also forgets but is sure wasn't important or luxurious. The use of "shit" in this context doesn't affect the relationship between Nick and Audrey and has no impact on Nick's emotions. It's part of a

casual conversation to describe the unimportant thing they gave as a souvenir when they got married.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Movies play a powerful role in shaping perceptions and behaviors, as their depiction of language often mirrors or amplifies real-life communication patterns. This influence necessitates attention, as it not only entertains but also subtly molds social attitudes and norms, including those around the acceptability of taboo words. In *Murder Mystery 2*, characters use 175 taboo words, categorized into seven types based on Jay's theory. The most frequent type is religious taboo (57.1%), primarily involving God's name used as an exclamation. Scatological references, particularly "shit," account for 21.1%. Insults to perceived social deviations make up 11.5%, with 14 expressions in this category. Less frequent are offensive slang (5.7%), sexual references (2.3%), animal names (1.7%), and ancestral allusions (0.6%). Categories such as ethnic-racial-gender slurs and vulgar terms are not found. Taboo words serve specific functions, mainly to intensify emotions or create humor. Of the 177 functions identified, 71.2% are used for Achieving Personal Outcomes, especially to intensify both negative and positive emotions, followed by catharsis. Achieving Interpersonal Outcomes accounts for 18.1%, often to insult others or promote social cohesion, with no occurrences of cursing. Inconsequential uses represent 9.6%, while literal uses are the least frequent at 1.1%.

Additionally, analyzing the PG-13 movie *Murder Mystery 2* reveals that it contains minimal sexual references and lacks highly offensive taboo words, with commonly used terms like "oh my god" and "shit" aligning with Jay's analysis of American society's language norms. This limited usage reflects the film's age rating, which influences the language allowed within it. In contrast, films rated 17+ or 21+ might showcase a broader range of taboo words, potentially revealing a greater variety and intensity in both types and functions of taboo language. This suggests that age ratings not only determine accessibility but also shape the linguistic landscape of a movie, tailoring the intensity of expressions to fit societal expectations for different age groups.

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