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A Socio-Pragmatic Analysis of Taboo Expressions in Martin Scorsese's *Casino* (1995) Based on Culpeper's Impoliteness Theory

تحليل تداولي-اجتماعي للألفاظ المحظورة في فيلم كازينو (١٩٩٥) لمارتن سكورسيزي: دراسة في ضوء نظرية كولبير لعدم التأدب

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Abstract

This study analyzes the use of taboo expressions and their functions within a socio-pragmatic framework in Martin Scorsese's film *Casino*. The study uses Wardhaugh's classification of taboo words (2006) and adopts two different pragmatic theories: Culpeper's theory of impoliteness and Allan and Burridge's pragmatic theory of taboo. This study adopts a descriptive qualitative analysis. It analyzes the expressions used in four selected scenes. This study analyzes the taboo words in light of a few steps. It classifies the types of taboos, then examines their functions and the power of impoliteness strategies from a sociological and pragmatic angle. The study concludes that taboo terms are not necessarily impolite; rather, they are multifunctional expressions that serve a variety of purposes. Their usage is influenced by the social relationships between speakers, the context, gender, culture, and the speaker's intention. The study also finds a significant link between taboo expressions and the social interactions of characters, especially regarding authority and gender dynamics.

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الكلمات المفتاحية

الألفاظ المحظورة،

تصنيف ورد هو

(Wardhaugh)،

نظرية عدم التأدب،

نظرية آلان ويردج،

المنهج التداولي -

الاجتماعي.

تتناول هذه الدراسة تحليل استخدام الألفاظ المحظورة ووظائفها ضمن إطار تداولي-اجتماعي في فيلم Casino للمخرج Martin Scorsese. وتعتمد الدراسة تصنيف (2006) Ronald Wardhaugh للألفاظ المحظورة، كما تتبنى نظريتين تداوليتين هما: نظرية عدم التأدب لـ Jonathan Culpeper، والنظرية التداولية للألفاظ المحظورة لدى Keith Allan و Kate Burridge. وقد اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي النوعي في تحليل البيانات، حيث تناولت الألفاظ الواردة في أربع مشاهد مختارة من الفيلم. وتتم عملية التحليل من خلال عدة مراحل؛ إذ تبدأ بتصنيف أنواع الألفاظ المحظورة، ثم فحص وظائفها التداولية، وتحليل قوة استراتيجيات عدم التأدب التي تحققها من منظورين اجتماعي وتداولي. وتوصلت الدراسة إلى أن الألفاظ المحظورة ليست بالضرورة ألفاظاً غير مهذبة أو مسيئة، بل إنها تعبيرات متعددة الوظائف تؤدي أغراضاً مختلفة تبعاً للسياق الاستعمالي. كما أظهرت النتائج أن استخدام هذه الألفاظ يتأثر بطبيعة العلاقات الاجتماعية بين المتحدثين، والسياق التواصل، والجندر، والثقافة، فضلاً عن نية المتحدث. كذلك بينت الدراسة وجود علاقة وثيقة بين الألفاظ المحظورة والتفاعلات الاجتماعية للشخصيات، ولا سيما فيما يتعلق بعلاقات السلطة والفروق الجندرية، حيث تسهم هذه الألفاظ في التعبير عن الهيمنة والصراع وبناء العلاقات الاجتماعية داخل الخطاب السينمائي.

1. Introduction

Language is the basic means of communication humans use. So, it is vital for the person to know what to say and what not to say. There are certain subjects and contexts that must be avoided in spoken interaction. These are called taboos. Taboo language operates differently in films, particularly in crime films where its use is contextually necessary. The uses and meanings vary depending on culture and other factors. Taboo expressions have different categories and serve different functions. They are also related to impoliteness strategies. The socio-pragmatic functions of taboos and their connection to impoliteness have been explored only to a limited extent. Therefore, this study aims to examine the socio-pragmatic functions

of taboo expressions concerning impoliteness strategies within the selected film Casino. The present study also aims to examine whether taboo expressions serve single or multiple socio-pragmatic functions based on specific criteria, including contextual interaction, gender, and the power dynamics between speakers.

To investigate this linguistically, the study analyzes four different scenes from the film. Each scene was explained, and taboo words were examined in terms of types, functions, and relation to impoliteness theory. The study integrates three frameworks: Allan and Burridge's pragmatic theory, Wardhaugh's semantic classification of taboos, and Culpeper's impoliteness theory. The study reveals that taboo words do not always serve as offensive terms and convey negative

pragmatic functions. They are multifunctional expressions that fulfill a variety of functions. It also believes that there is a strong link between taboo expressions and characters' social interactions, notably in terms of authority and gender dynamics.

2. Taboo Language in Films

Characters' physical configurations in films are formed by clothes, movements, attitudes, gestures, screams, or facial responses. The use of taboo words, consequently, must be examined combined with the nonverbal features of films. This allows us to examine the adequacy of the forbidden word. On the one hand, it may imply a relationship between the taboo and the image (i.e., the criminal or the villain). When the context is formally defined, however, it may indicate a clash between taboo and image. For example, a situation in which a lawyer, doctor, or professor utters a prohibited word in a professional setting is unusual (Xavier, 2024:4). Slang, or informal language, is a form of in-group solidarity and thus an indicator of human communities with shared experiences, such as gang members (Allan and Burridge, 2006:70).

Trudgill argues that taboo subjects are certain topics that may be prohibited in one culture but advantageous in another. In this regard, he argues (2000: 18) that "the type of concept that is banned in a specific language will be a good representation of at least part of the system."

3. Wardhaugh's Classification of Taboo Words

According to Wardhaugh (2000: 234), a taboo is a society's restriction or avoidance of behavior that is thought to be harmful to its members because it causes discomfort, shame, or anxiety. Certain things should not be discussed or referred to in particular contexts, such as by specific people or by intentional circumlocution (e.g., euphemisms). Tabooed topics might vary greatly:

1. "Sex and Bodily Functions": Words relating to sexual actions, sexual organs, and bodily excretions (for example, excrement and urinating). These are frequently the source of the harshest words of abuse.
2. "Religion and the Church": inappropriate use of sacred images or the Lord's name.
3. "Death and Illness": Euphemisms are commonly used to discuss death, fatal

illnesses (e.g., cancers), and severe medical issues.

4. "Social discrimination" refers to racial insults, ethnic epithets, and sexist phrases towards oppressed groups. Wardhaugh observes that these words are frequently employed to exert dominance or cause harm. (Wardhaugh, 2006:239-240).

4. Culpeper's Theory of Impoliteness

This study uses Jonathan Culpeper's impoliteness model (1996, 2005). The approach describes how speakers deliberately employ words to assault the hearer's face. The model describes several distinct ways in which impoliteness can be developed and communicated (Bousfield, 2008: 92). The strategies are illustrated as follows:

1. "Bald on record impoliteness": Based on the evolution of the model, this strategy is often used when the speaker intends to assault the hearer's face or lacks the authority to speak impolitely. The utterance is direct, unambiguous, and clear. (Culpeper 2005: 41).

2. "Positive impoliteness": According to the development of the model, this strategy is used to attack the hearer's "positive face wants". Culpeper's 1996 list of such strategies consists of excluding others

from activities, ignoring, disassociating, snubbing, being disinterested, "unconcerned, unsympathetic," calling people names, using prohibited terms, seeking disagreement, making others feel discomforted, using improper identity markers, or using secretive or obscure expressions.(ibid: 41-42)

3. "Negative impoliteness": Based on the final modified version of the model, this strategy is used to attack the hearer's "negative face wants." A list of Culpeper's 1996 examples about this strategy includes the following: scorning, frightening, putting the other person's "indebtedness on record," violating the other person's space, mocking, connecting the other with a negative attribute explicitly. (ibid: 41)

4. "Off-record impoliteness": in this strategy the offense is communicated indirectly through an implicature and can be removed "e.g., denied, or an account, post-modification or other type of elaboration offered, etc." (Culpeper, 2005: 43-44)

5. "Withhold politeness": In this strategy, Culpeper (1996: 357) observes that impoliteness might be expressed by the absence of politeness where it is expected, for example, to fail to act politely or by being silent. Culpeper (2005: 42) explains

that declining to thank someone for a gift may be interpreted as intentional impoliteness.

5. Allan And Burridge's Pragmatic Theory of Taboo

A taboo is the prohibition of behavior that applies to a certain group of people in a specific setting and period. There is no absolute taboo that applies across all worlds, periods, and contexts (Allan and Burridge, 2006:27). Social connection is typically directed toward saving face. We as speakers are required to consider and respect the face wants of others. Just as we respect our face wants (ibid: 32-33). The theory consists of three core concepts. They are: "dysphemism, orthophemism and euphemism".

Generally, a "dysphemism" is considered to be a taboo. It is the reverse of the concept of euphemism. As a euphemism, it may result from hatred, fear, scorn, or disgust. Calling names, curses, and any other nasty comment intended for others so as to offend or harm them are all examples of dysphemistic language. "Dysphemisms" are commonly used by political entities and groups when discussing their rivals, by feminists when talking about men, and by male-dominated groups when referring to women and

expressing attitudes of powerlessness. "Dysphemism" is used by speakers to express frustration, annoyance, disapproval, humiliation, and degradation towards individuals and things. "Dysphemism" is also used to let off anger, such as when verbal swear words relieve irritation or rage (ibid:31). "Orthophemisms and euphemisms" are terms or phrases that serve as an alternative to a disliked or inappropriate word. They prevent or minimize the threat to the face for both the speaker and the hearer. Inappropriate words could be also called taboo words (ibid: 32). In contrast to "euphemisms", "orthophemisms" are more direct, literal, and formal. "Euphemisms" are usually more indirect, figurative, and informal than the related "orthophemism" (ibid: 33).

6. Methodology

The present study follows a qualitative socio-pragmatic approach to examine the usage of taboo language in the film Casino. This study emphasizes analyzing prohibited expressions used by characters and studying their pragmatic functions in the film. The data collected in the study involves choosing four scenes from the film that include various contexts of taboo language. In this approach, functions are determined by

context. The meaning of a taboo word is decided due to some factors: relation between characters, context, nonverbal body language, and authority. Thus, functions of taboo words will be explained in detail in the data analysis section following the three theoretical models. The first model that the study applies is Wardhaugh's classification of taboo expressions that classifies taboos into types semantically, including "body functions," "sex," illness and death, "religion," and "social discrimination". The categorization serves in recognizing the thematic groups of taboo words in the data.

The second model that the study applies is Keith Allan and Kate Burridge's pragmatic theory of taboo words. This approach is used to give cultural and sociological justification for the reason why particular words are regarded as taboo and the way they function in social contexts. This theory identifies taboos as a cultural and linguistic issue that is associated with offensiveness and social constraints. The third model that the study applies is Culpeper's theory of impoliteness (1996, 2005). The study utilizes this theory to analyze the pragmatic strategies used in the film. This model is concerned with how speakers employ words to threaten or attack the

hearer's face. The analysis reveals the different impoliteness strategies used by characters, including "negative impoliteness," "positive impoliteness," "bald on-record impoliteness," "sarcasm or mock politeness," and "withholding politeness."

- The methodology involves three basic phases:

1. Scene Description: A detailed explanation for each scene, which includes the characters who participated, the settings, the interactional context, and the emotional condition.

2. Analysis table: Each scene includes a table that has different points, such as speaker (the character's name), taboo words, type of taboo words (according to Wardhaugh), taboo category (according to Allan and Burridge), impoliteness strategies (Culpeper), and pragmatic functions.

3. Linguistic analysis within each scene: explains the reason the taboo term is used, the taboo category and semantic meaning, the way it reflects impoliteness strategy, and whether there are any other additional functions. This analysis will explore the connection between context and the characters' relationships.

7. Data Analysis

This section examines taboo expressions and their functions across four distinct scenes set in various contexts, in accordance with the three theories previously discussed. The analysis of each scene is followed by the scene's script, the scene's description, a detailed analytical table, and linguistic analysis.

7.1 First Scene

7.1.1 Script:

“ACE (to Nicky): I can't believe these **cowboys** out here. They inherited a gold mine and if it wasn't for us they'd **piss it away**.”

NICKY: What do you expect. They're **farmers**. They're not like us .. Listen

ACE: What?

NICKY: For Joe DiNapoli. His nephew. The kid wants to be a dealer.”
“ACE: Does he have any experience?

NICKY: No! He's just a kid. He **knocked up** some **broad** and they want him to go on the lam for a little while. He's okay. I'll vouch for him.

ACE: What are you vouching for him for? I know the kid. He's a **fucking troublemaker**. He'll make trouble for everybody.

NICKY: If he does, I'll personally **bury the fuck**.

ACE:

That's what I mean. You gotta watch yourself Nicky. There are complaints out on you already.

NICKY: **Who's fucking complaining?**

ACE: I'm telling you what I pick up from security. The Sheriff's looking to **bust your balls**. They wanna put you in the Black Book .

NICKY:

Ahh! It's all **bullshit**. They only got twelve people in that book for the whole state.

ACE: They do that and you won't be able to walk into a casino.

NICKY: What am I doing? I'm just trying to make a living here for **Chrissake**.

ACE: I'm telling you ... Just watch yourself, okay?

NICKY: Okay! Okay! So, what are we gonna do with him?”

(Pileggi & Martin Scorsese, 1995, 43–44)

7.1.2 Scene Description:

The scene takes place in the casino where Ace works. The dialogue is between Nicky and Ace, who are friends discussing a work matter. The style of their conversation showcases the masculine language commonly used in casinos. Their discussion is intense and violent, filled

with inappropriate taboo expressions that create discomfort for both the speaker and the listener. This reflects the high stakes and pressure often present in casino environments.

7.1.3 Analysis Table

Speaker (Character's name)	Taboo word /phrase	Type of taboo (Wardhaugh)	Taboo Category (Allan and Burridge)	Impoliteness strategy (Culpeper)	Pragmatic functions
ACE	Cowboys	Social discrimination (ethnic insult)	Dysphemism- degrading	Positive impoliteness	To scorn
ACE	piss it away	Bodily function (urinating)	Dysphemism- abusing	Positive impoliteness	scorn and depreciation
NICKY	Farmers	Social discrimination (ethnic name calling)	Dysphemism- degrading	Positive impoliteness	To scorn and mock
NICKY	knocked up	Sexual reference (slang sex idiom)	Dysphemism- informal	Negative impoliteness	To show disrespect
NICKY	Broad	social discrimination (female gender taboo)	Dysphemism- pejorative term	Positive impoliteness	contempt
ACE	fucking troublemaker	sex taboo term and name calling	Dysphemism- insult	Bald on record impoliteness	aggressive conduct and Direct abuse
NICKY	bury the fuck	sex taboo term	Dysphemism- threat and frighten	Bald on record impoliteness	threatening and frightening
NICKY	Who's fucking complaining	intensifying sex taboo term	Dysphemism	Negative impoliteness	challenging and confrontation
ACE	bust your balls	sex organs	Dysphemism- colloquial taboo	Negative impoliteness	frightening and threatening act
NICKY	Bullshit	Body excretion	Dysphemism- basic taboo	Positive impoliteness	Expressing total denial
NICKY	Chrissake	religion taboo	Dysphemism- blasphemous expression	Positive impoliteness	emotional amplifier (imitation)

7.1.4 Linguistic Analysis

This scene explores various taboo expressions within specific interactional context, including their categorization, multiple politeness strategies, and pragmatic functions. The environment allows the characters to use these taboos freely, and the setting fosters a masculine, violent atmosphere where male characters assert authority through language and seek to dominate power. According to *Allan and Burridge's pragmatic theory*, taboo expressions are context-dependent and do not always function strictly as taboos. Instead, their meaning relies on various

factors, including the context, the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, and the speaker's intention. Many taboo expressions serve as amplifiers and emotional intensifiers, used to deny statements or express disagreement rather than to launch explicit assaults. For example, "Chrissake," "bullshit," "piss it away," "bury the fuck," and "Who's fucking complaining?". The categorization indicates that all the taboo expressions are dysphemisms, where speakers intentionally select extreme or offensive forms. These dysphemisms create a conflicting and violent verbal dialogue, promoting an in-group male gangster identity while discriminating against others. According to *Wardhaugh's semantic classification of taboos*, the scene presents various categories of taboo expressions. These include social discrimination, as seen in phrases like "knocked up," "cowboys," and "broad"; religious references such as "for Chrissake"; and terms related to sex and bodily functions, like "piss it away," "bury the fuck," and "bust your balls." This variety suggests that taboo language in the scene is not restricted to a single area but rather expresses a wide range of sensitive social meanings.

According to *Culpeper's impoliteness theory*, Ace and Nicky accomplish

impoliteness through three different strategies. *Positive impoliteness* is used to convey contempt, scorn, mockery, and total denial. These expressions undermine the hearer's desire for approval and social status. Examples include "cowboys," "piss it away," "farmers," "broad," and "bullshit." *Negative impoliteness* in this scene is used to convey disrespect, threaten others, and create challenges and confrontations. These expressions limit the hearer's freedom of choice and impose constraints on them, resulting in tension between speakers in a dialogue. For example, phrases like "knocked up," "Who's fucking complaining?" and "Bust your balls." *Bald-on-record impoliteness* is used to demonstrate power, seriousness, and threat throughout the utterance. These expressions resemble explicit and direct assaults on the hearer's face, such as "I'll bury the fuck" and "fucking troublemaker."

7.2 Second Scene

7.2.1 Script:

"NICKY: How was I? (with a grin)

ACE: You're crazy. He'll go to the FBI.

NICKY: Wadda I care? I've been trying to find that **prick** for a week.

ACE: How does it look? My own banker in my own house ?

NICKY: Wadda you care? You didn't say

nothing. He's only alive because of you, because he's your banker.

ACE: You're way out of line. Don't you see that? Where's your head?

NICKY: Where's my head? **Where's your balls.** Don't you realize I'm getting ready to make some major moves out here? And, when I do, I'm gonna need you to come along with me." (*Pileggi & Martin Scorsese, 1995, 76*)

"NICKY: (CONT'D) **bastards** from Milwaukee and Kansas City? **Bullshit!** They've done nothing i for us out here. I mean, after all, what's right is right.

ACE: Look, I'm responsible for 5000 people working here. There's a hundred million dollars a year going through those places. It's all over for me if I don't get that license.

NICKY: **Your fuckin' license.** Do you know what kind of money I'm talking about? How come lately every time I come up with a proposition you don't want to hear about it."

"ACE: Because, -- if I heard right - I didn't hear your proposition. You're suggesting something and I don't want to know about it. Do you understand? I'm running casinos. That's it. All I want is to keep everything quiet until I get my license.

NICKY: Quiet? (holds up Business week Magazine) **Look at this bullshit!** "I'm the Boss!" Do you know they're calling me

from Chicago? They think you're **out of your fucking mind**.

ACE: It was all taken out of context. They sandbagged me, **the bastards**.

NICKY: They don't care if you got sandbagged. It looks bad.

ACE: That looks bad? I'll tell you what looks bad. Every time you're mentioned, I'm mentioned. **How the hell** am I gonna get licensed like that? You're like an albatross around my neck.” (Pileggi & Martin Scorsese, 1995, 77)

“NICKY: Between you and me, since I got out here ... **What the hell's** happened to you? Is it that you've got so many people **kissing your ass** all day, you forget you can't **treat everybody like shit...** including your wife.

ACE: My wife?

NICKY: Yeah. She came to me. For whatever reason, she's upset. I don't want to go into anything, but she got very upset with that whole situation with Diamond. You know.

ACE: (interrupts) That's none of your business, I'd appreciate it if you stayed out of my personal life. You wouldn't like it if I did that to you. Don't do it to me.

NICKY: She came. I talked to her. What am I supposed to do, kick her out?

ACE: Just stay away from her. There are certain things you don't do.

NICKY: Oh! A week ago it was my

business and now it's not my business no more? When you need me to take care of somebody, you need me.

ACE: That's right.

NICKY: I think your head's gettin' **bigger than your fucking casino.**” (Pileggi & Martin Scorsese, 1995, 78-79)

7.2.2 Scene Description:

This scene takes place in Ace's house, where Nicky secretly visits him because of issues with the police. The scene depicts an increasing conflict between the male characters, with tension centered on control, authority, and personal borders. The conversation becomes more violent and offensive, with regular use of prohibited terms indicating rage, dominance, and conflict between individuals, especially as Nicky questions Ace's decisions and power and ridicules his advice to calm things down in the city. Also, Ace asks Nicky to stop intruding in his personal life, exemplified by meeting Ace's wife and trying to help her with some problems. The scene ends where Nicky leaves furiously after delivering a rude threat to Ace.

7.2.3 Analysis Table

<i>Speaker (Character's name)</i>	<i>Taboo word</i>	<i>Type of taboo (Wardhaugh)</i>	<i>Taboo Category (Allan and Burridge)</i>	<i>Impoliteness strategy(Culpeper)</i>	<i>pragmatic functions</i>
NICKY	prick	Sexual organ	Dysphemism (abuse)	Positive impoliteness	Direct name calling.
NICKY	balls	Sexual organ	Dysphemism (insult)	Negative impoliteness	To negotiate power.
NICKY	bastards from Milwaukee and Kansas	Social discrimination ethnic adjective	Dysphemism strong offense	Positive impoliteness	An insult thrown toward a group
NICKY	bullshit	Body excretion	Dysphemism (insult)	Positive impoliteness	refusal, disagreement
NICKY	fuckin' license	Sex taboo (amplifier)	Dysphemism-assault	Negative impoliteness	dissatisfaction and irritation
NICKY	Look at this bullshit	Body excretion	Dysphemism-assault	Positive impoliteness	to show denial and frustration
NICKY	out of your fucking mind	Sex term-intensifier	Dysphemism (direct insult)	Bald on record	Intense personal assault
ACE	the bastard	Social taboo, to degrade others.	Dysphemism (insult)	Positive impoliteness	To conduct group

	s				identity assault
ACE	How the hell	Religion taboo. intensifier	Dysphemism	Positive impoliteness	to express anger and irritation
NICKY	What the hell	Religion taboo. intensifier	Dysphemism	Positive impoliteness	To reflect anger and astonishment
NICKY	kissing your ass	taboo expression refers to sexual action	Dysphemism-direct insult	Positive impoliteness	Disapproval and derision
NICKY	treat everybody like shit	Body excretion	Dysphemism	Positive impoliteness	To evaluate and assess ethical behavior.
NICKY	bigger than your fucking casino	Sex taboo reference-intensifier	Dysphemism	Positive impoliteness	to ridicule and directly attack the hearer's confidence

7.2.4 Linguistic Analysis

This scene reveals how taboo expressions are used to establish tension, power dynamics, and social conflict. NICKY seeks to coerce ACE into accepting his illegal activities. He even ridicules ACE's efforts to obtain a license for the casino and intrudes into his personal life, accusing him of mistreating

his wife. The discussion displays a language that is male-dominated and focused on power, allowing for the use of taboo words. The frequent presence of insults, disagreements, and conflicting metaphors establishes a social context in which power, allegiance, and control are conveyed through language. According to Allan and Burridge's pragmatic theory, all the terms discussed are considered

dysphemisms, each serving different functions. Some are direct insults, while others act as intensifiers. Additionally, certain terms, including “bastard,” “prick,” “balls,” and “bullshit,” are not only descriptive but also function as insults. These expressions are deliberately chosen to amplify feelings of hatred, resentment, and anger. According to *Wardhaugh's semantic classification of taboos*, double terms are classified into different categories. And this diversity of terms reflects the multifunctional nature of taboo words, in which they express assessment and violence. The examples are religious terms (e.g., “the hell”), body functions and excretion terms (e.g., “bullshit” and “shit”), terms with sexual references (e.g., “fucking,” “prick,” “kissing your ass,” and “balls”), and social discrimination (e.g., “bastards”). According to *Culpeper's impoliteness theory*, there are different conveyed strategies. The scene involves an example of a bald-on-record strategy where it represents a direct aggressive insult to the hearer, such as “out of your fucking mind.” The scene also includes examples of negative impoliteness, which imposes a burden and threatens the hearer's sense of freedom. These expressions enhance Nicky's authority in the discussion and doubt Ace's assertiveness. Such as “Where are your

balls?” “What the hell,” and “You're fucking licentious.” There is also an increasing number of positive impoliteness strategies that attempt to undermine the hearer's social value and desire for approval. The examples undermine Ace's authority and criticize his behavior and skills. Like “you're out of your fucking mind” and “treat everybody like shit”. Some expressions in this scene are not actual taboo words, and they may not function as insults. On the contrary, these expressions serve as amplifiers and intensifiers to enhance emotions and function as strategies for impoliteness. This indicates that impoliteness is not only limited to taboo language. Thus, the functions of these taboos and their relationship with impoliteness are determined by the context in which they are used. For example, Ace's sentences “You're crazy,” “You're way out of line. Don't you see that?” “That's none of your business,” and “Just stay away from her,” and NICKY's term “fucking.”

7.3 Third Scene

7.3.1 Script:

“GINGER: Hi Harry! (brightly)

ACE: Don't "Hi Harry me." You **Irish bitch**.

GINGER: (exasperated) Please. Don't start.

ACE: Don't you understand that's your son. I thought there was a common ground between us. I'm the father. You're the kid's mother. I'm going to have to have you committed. I can't believe what you did to your own son!

GINGER: It was just for a little while. To keep him from getting up while I went out. He was asleep. I would have been back before he even woke up.

ACE: If you ever do anything like that again to the kid, you'll regret it. If I ever find as much as a scratch on that kid, I'll throw you out a **fucking window**.

GINGER: Just let me go, all right. I'll sign whatever you want. Just give me the key to my jewels and let me go.

ACE: What? And let you disgrace me. God knows what you'll do. No!

GINGER: You **miserable bastard**!

ACE: You're a **sick woman**. There's no use talking to you. C'mon! Get up! Go get in your car and go home.

NICKY: Do me favor. Let me talk to her. She'll never do it again.

ACE: Nicky, stay out of this. You come out here as a friend. I tried to do everything for you even though I knew inside that you were going to bury me. You buried me

NICKY: You buried yourself in all that **bullshit**. That's what buried you.

ACE: ... **you're fucking around** with a

sick woman. You're a pig."

(Pileggi & Martin Scorsese, 1995, 123-124)

7.3.2 Scene Description:

This scene takes place at a restaurant where Ace confronts Ginger after she has run away from home, leaving her son tied to the bed. Nicky's presence creates tension in the atmosphere. Ace accuses Ginger of being a negligent mother and threatens to kill her if she ever harms the child again. He notices Ginger looking at Nicky and concludes that they are having an affair, prompting him to warn Nicky to stay away from his wife. The scene reveals an intense discussion between Ace and Ginger on parenting responsibilities, authority, and ethical judgment. Ace openly condemns Nicky for having an affair with his best friend's wife. The scene ends as Nicky reacts to Ace's insults and feels the urge to hit him. Characters use taboo terms frequently in this scene to employ power, ethical criticism, and relationship chaos, particularly Ace's effort to impose dominance and Ginger's opposition. There are lots of violent threats, explicit accusations, gender-based insults, and confrontational emotional intensification.

7.3.3 Analysis Table

<i>Speaker (Character's name)</i>	<i>Taboo word</i>	<i>Type of taboo (Wardhaugh)</i>	<i>Taboo Category (Allan and Burridge)</i>	<i>Impoliteness strategy(Culpeper)</i>	<i>pragmatic functions</i>
ACE	Irish bitch	social discrimination (ethnic epithet+ sexist insult)	Dysphemism- insult	Bald –on- record	Explicit insult, and degradation.
ACE	fucking window	sexual reference taboo (intensifier)	Dysphemism- amplifier	Bald –on- record	Direct aggressive threat
GINGER	miserable bastard	Societal taboo (offensive epithet).	Dysphemism- direct insult	Positive impoliteness	to attack and to express contempt
ACE	sick woman	social discrimination taboo - racial insult	Dysphemism- degradation	Positive impoliteness	to evaluate ethics
NICKY	bullshit	Body excretion	Dysphemism	Positive impoliteness	denial and rejection
ACE	fucking around	sexual reference taboo	Dysphemism	Positive impoliteness	disapproval and allegation
ACE	pig	Social taboo- using negative epithet as a metaphor	Dysphemism- explicit insult	Bald –on- record	to degrade and dehumanize

7.3.4 Linguistic Analysis

This scene illustrates that taboo terms act as important pragmatic strategies for

establishing power, navigating interpersonal relationships, and creating conflict. According to *Allan and*

Burridge's pragmatic theory, taboo terms are recognized as dysphemisms in which participants deliberately choose offending expressions to optimize a psychological effect and social harm. For instance, the term "sick woman" combines a negative biological adjective that offends women by explicitly judging their ethics. In addition, "Irish bitch" mixes nationality and gender to create an extremely magnified insult, whereas "pig" serves as a metaphor, using a negative epithet to degrade and dehumanize the addressee's social status.

According to *Wardhaugh's semantic classification of taboos*, the most common semantic classification in the present scene is the social discrimination taboo, specifically cultural, ethnic, and gender-based and insulting phrases such as "bastard," "Irish bitch," and "pig." These phrases are further complemented by examples of body excretion taboos, such as "bullshit," and sex-related taboos, like "fucking," used for emphasis. The analysis reveals that communication mainly focuses on attacking a person's identity and social standing rather than solely on physical or religious taboos." Certain taboo terms function as amplifiers and intensifiers, where they add emotional impact to the speech instead of contributing new meaning. This gives evidence to the claim that taboo speech is

used not only to insult but also to express emotion, make a decision, and show perspective. According to *Culpeper's impoliteness theory*, this scene's aggressive nature leads to the use of two strategies: bald-on-record and positive impoliteness. The bald-on-record is represented by the use of direct offensive terms of different types of taboos. These terms are dysphemisms, where they act as explicit insults, such as "Irish bitch," which functions as an insult to degrade the hearer; "pig," to degrade and dehumanize the hearer; and "throw you out of your fucking window," an intensifier to violently threaten and insult the hearer. By using such terms, Ace openly enhances his authority and control over Ginger through his position and gender. The positive impoliteness is conveyed through the use of direct offensive expressions by the three characters, which are dysphemisms from various categories including sexual references, exertion, and social discrimination. Examples include "bastard," which functions as an attack to show contempt; "sick woman," which serves as a blatant racial insult to judge ethics; "bullshit," used to express rejection and denial; and "fucking around," which reveals disapproval and allegation.

Male gender domination is noticed in this scene through the use of command

sentences by male characters to achieve certain functions and the performance of impoliteness strategies, such as Ace's sentences to Ginger: "Don't...if I ever find a scratch on that kid, go get in your car and go home." And Ace's sentence to Nicky: "Stay out of this; you buried me."

7.4 Fourth Scene

7.4.1 Script:

"GINGER: Where is he? I want that **Jew bastard** killed!

NICKY: (to Marino) Hide that car in the back so nobody can see it.

GINGER: Don't worry about hiding that car. He knows everything. He told me that he knows about us. *Nicky covers her mouth and looks around.*

NICKY: Shut up! Get inside!

GINGER: He shoved it in my face the minute we got home.

NICKY: So what did you do? You told him? "

"GINGER: No! He just knows it. He told me. And I don't **give a fuck** anymore.

NICKY: Didn't I tell you about this? What if he goes to Chicago and makes a beef? I wanna know exactly what you said? What did you tell him?

GINGER: Nothing. I told him nothing. He told me.

NICKY: You don't understand? This is dangerous.

GINGER: If it's **so fucking dangerous**, why don't you kill him and get it over with?

NICKY: What are you saying? That I should kill him? No!

GINGER: Then have him killed.

NICKY: Hey Ginger, I can't do that. I've known him thirty-five years. We don't do things like that to each other.

GINGER: (pauses) Then, what about my money? You promised to help me get my money.

NICKY: How can I get your money now? What, are you **out of your fucking mind**? He's gonna give you your money now? Look at what you've done to him! If you kept **your fucking mouth** shut - Ahh! What's the use. I should have never gotten involved with you. I feel bad enough about it already.

Ginger screams and attacks Nicky, scratching his face. Nicky roughly slaps her across the face, roughly grabs her arm and pushes her out of the storage area and out the back door.

GINGER: (opening the door and getting in her car) I'll get my **own fucking money**. I don't **give a damn** anymore. I don't need you or anybody.

screaming at Nicky as she starts to pull out.

GINGER: I'll go to the FBI. I'm not afraid. I made it on my own all my life."

(Pileggi & Martin Scorsese, 1995, 126-127)

7.4.2 Scene Description:

This scene characterizes the direct conflict and climax between Nicky and Ginger, as well as the indirect tension involving Ace. It encapsulates chaotic emotions, physical violence, and psychological turmoil. The setting is Nicky's garage, where Ginger arrives late at night to confront him, demanding that he kill her husband and retrieve her

money. Nicky tries to calm her down, telling her that he can't kill Ace because he is his friend. For that, Ginger goes berserk and has an emotional and psychological breakdown. She starts cursing and hitting Nicky. The scene ends with Nicky hitting her and cursing back in an attempt to silence her and force her to leave. Taboo expressions are regularly employed to reflect certain feelings such as indifference, depression, and rage.

7.4.2 Analysis Table

Speaker (Character's name)	Taboo word	Type of taboo (Wardhaugh)	Taboo Category (Allan and Burridge)	Impoliteness strategy(Culpeper)	pragmatic functions
Ginger	Jew bastard	Social discrimination taboo ethnic and racial	Dysphemism- explicit insult	Bald- on- record	aggressive and direct insult
Ginger	give a fuck	sexual reference taboo	Dysphemism- offensive phrase	Positive impoliteness	shows indifference
Ginger	so fucking dangerous	sexual reference taboo- intensifier	Dysphemism	Negative impoliteness	challenging and confrontation
NICKY	Out of your fucking mind	sexual reference taboo- intensifier	Dysphemism- direct insult	Bald- on- record	an insult that shows disbelief
NICKY	your	sexual	Dysphemism-	Positive	to express

	fucking mouth	reference taboo- intensifier	direct insult	impoliteness	complaint aggressively
Ginger	own fucking money	sexual reference taboo- intensifier	Dysphemism- strong insult	Positive impoliteness	expressing independence
Ginger	give a damn	mild religion taboo	Dysphemism- informal	Positive impoliteness	expressing emotional emphasis

7.4.4 Linguistic Analysis

The analysis of this scene highlights how taboo words can be effective pragmatic devices for escalating conflict, conveying intense feelings, and managing shifting power dynamics in the context of a personal situation. The dialogue highlights a gender-specific aspect in which Ginger's speech is aggressive and emotional. As a female, she appears to be influenced by her emotions, whereas the male character, Nicky, demonstrates organized and logical speech, maintaining a controlled reaction. Both genders utilize taboo words in different ways. According to *Allan and Burridge's pragmatic theory*, all the terms used are dysphemisms, which convey insults for different functions to reveal various negative emotions. Some are used as amplifiers and intensifiers, for example, "Jew bastard", which is an ethnic and racial taboo that indicates social discrimination that functions as an

aggressive and direct insult. "Give a fuck," which is a sex reference taboo that acts as an intensifier that expresses challenging and confrontation. Also phrases like "so fucking," "out of your fucking mind," and "your fucking mouth," which are sex-reference taboos that act as insult intensifiers to convey different functions such as showing disbelief, expressing complaint openly and aggressively, and showing indifference.

According to *Wardhaugh's semantic classification of taboos*, there are three different types used by different characters: sex references, which mainly act as amplifiers and intensifiers such as "so fucking," "give a fuck," and "your fucking mouth," in which they extend the meaning emotionally and double the negative effect. Social discrimination taboo such as "Jew bastard," which addresses ethnicity and race to insult the hearer violently and directly. Additionally,

there are religious taboos, such as “give a damn,” which convey emotional emphasis. According to *Culpeper's impoliteness theory*, three strategies are employed in this chaotic confrontational scene. Bald-on-record is represented by Ginger's use of “Jew bastard” to convey a direct and aggressive insult to the hearer and Nicky's offensive phrase “out of your fucking mind” to convey disbelief and to intensify the feeling disrespectfully. Negative and positive impoliteness are used by both characters mainly as intensifiers to intensify the negative aggressive emotion, such as “give a fuck,” “so fucking dangerous,” “own fucking money,” and “your fucking mouth,” where these expressions convey different functions, like to show indifference, express independence, and indicate complaint violently.

Some sentences act as impolite strategies and convey certain functions due to their structure and sentence type. For instance, Nicky's commands to Ginger include “Shut up; get inside, and I should have never gotten involved with you.” In this statement, he expresses his disagreement with her and his regret over their affair. It acts as positive implements where he gives orders and shows sympathy and disconcert. Ginger's sentences serve as provocations for

murder, robbery, and verbal threats, exemplified by her statement, “Why don't you kill him?” and “I don't need you, and I'll go to the FBI.” Ginger's emotional breakdown causes aggressive physical and verbal abuse to both characters. It displays negative impoliteness through threats and scorn. This scene resembles the destruction of ethical concepts and relationships where we find verbal and physical abuse done by characters of both genders to accomplish their goals.

8. Discussion

The earlier analysis of the four scenes in *Casino* film demonstrates that the taboo terms function in multiple ways and are dependent on context. The uses, meanings, and functions of taboo terms are influenced by various factors, including culture, social relationships between speakers, gender, and the situational context. In the selected scenes, it is evident that certain male characters, such as Nicky, utilize taboo expressions more frequently than Ace and Ginger. Nicky often employs these terms without regard for context, indicating that they are integral to his character identity. Characters often use taboos to express their feelings, to break down emotionally, or as a defining trait, as seen with Ginger. In contrast, characters like Ace use taboos

only when the situation requires. In this film, taboos are primarily linked to negative emotions and contexts. The intense and aggressive emotions expressed by the characters demonstrate a clear connection between these negative feelings and their attitudes and reactions. Examples include anger, threats, treachery, insults, and displays of indifference and ethical judgment. Violent contexts are exemplified by fights, serious arguments, and direct confrontations. The analysis reveals a connection between power, authority, the language used, and violent masculinity. Masculine characters who possess power and seek to assert authority over others often use taboo terms more frequently than their counterparts. The use of these taboos reflects a sense of dominance, control, and authority over others.

The taboos discussed are dysphemisms that serve as insults or forms of abuse, in line with Allan and Burridge's pragmatic theory. According to Wardhaugh's semantic classification, various types of taboos are identified. These types are ranked from most commonly used to least commonly used: sex taboos, often employed as intensifiers; body excretion taboos; references to social discrimination; and religious taboos. The setting of the film, a social environment

that takes place in a casino, is not only a workplace; it represents a negative environment characterized by elements such as organized crime, intense tension, conflicts over money and power, and competition among individuals. These aspects significantly influence the language used by the characters. According to Culpeper's theory of impoliteness strategies, the most commonly employed type is positive impoliteness. This involves actions that belittle or abuse the hearer. Following this, bald on-record impoliteness occurs, characterized by direct verbal and non-verbal assaults as well as threats directed at the hearer. Finally, the negative impoliteness strategy is employed through certain actions that restrict and impose conditions on the hearer. The taboos used in the analysis serve various social pragmatic functions, including revealing negative emotions such as anger and tension; insulting; demonstrating power; expressing identity; maintaining solidarity among gangsters; showing denial and rejection; threatening; degrading; dehumanizing; challenging; and confronting. Furthermore, there is gender dominance within scenes where males dominate females and try to restrict their behaviors and judge their morals. It is represented by Ace's scene with Ginger

and Nicky's final scene with Ginger. Males use taboo language, particularly to offend Ginger. Ginger, as a female character, uses taboo language as a sign of revealing emotions. There is also a use of different command sentences, which act as impoliteness strategies and serve some pragmatic functions.

9. Conclusion

The study concludes that taboo terms are not always inherently abusive. Taboo expressions do not necessarily act as impolite strategies and convey negative pragmatic functions. They act as multifunctional expressions and serve various functions. The use of taboo expressions depends on the social relationships between speakers, the context, gender, culture, and the speaker's intention. Where a taboo expression can be used in a specific context and convey a certain function, the same expression can still be used in the opposite context, where it conveys a different function and meaning.

The study concludes that there is a significant connection between taboo expressions and the social interactions of characters, particularly in relation to authority and gender dynamics. Powerful male characters seek to dominate

powerless female characters through both violent and direct non-verbal aggressive behaviours, as well as verbally by employing abusive and offensive taboos within a violent, masculine in-group criminal community. This study integrates three frameworks: Allan and Burridge's pragmatic theory, Wardhaugh's semantic classification of taboos, and Culpeper's impoliteness theory. Within the semantic level, different categories of taboo terms were identified; they are arranged in order, such as sex taboos, body excretion taboos, religion taboos, and social discrimination taboos. The employment of these terms varied; certain ones were utilised in emotional contexts, particularly as intensifiers, with a focus on sex and body excretion taboos. Within the pragmatic level, it was discovered that taboo words act as dysphemisms, in which they are socially and culturally inappropriate for speakers to use. These taboos served several functions, including conveying feelings (personal confrontation) and social rank. Finally, within the impoliteness level, different strategies were employed; the most prominent type was positive impoliteness, followed by bald on-record. The least commonly used was negative impoliteness. These strategies are used within different serious emotional contexts. All these strategies

threaten the image and face needs of speakers and convey certain acts.

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