TRANSLATION STRATEGY OF CULTURAL TERMS IN THE SUBJECT OF THE FILM "KUCUMBU TUBUH INDAHKU" AS A FORM OF RESISTANCE AND NEGOTIATION

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Abstract

This study examines the translation strategies of cultural terms in the subtitles of a film entitled "Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku" (Memories of My Body) by Garin Nugroho, focusing on their role as acts of cultural resistance and negotiation. The research aims to (1) identify and describe the strategies used to translate culture-specific terms, (2) analyze how these strategies reflect tendencies toward foreignization (resistance) and domestication (negotiation), and (3) interpret their contribution to the construction of character identity and the representation of Javanese culture to international audiences. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method with a comparative approach. The primary data consists of two subtitle transcripts of the same movie, analyzed using Newmark's (1988) procedures for translating cultural terms, Gottlieb's (1992) subtitle strategies, Venuti's (1995) domestication and foreignization ideology, and the framework of social actor representation. The analysis reveals 85 culture-specific items distributed across five categories: social culture, ecology, social organizations, gestures and habits, and material culture. The most frequently applied strategies are transference, functional equivalence, paraphrase, adaptation, and substitution. The findings indicate that foreignization functions as cultural resistance by preserving key terms such as warok, lengger, and gemblak, while domestication functions as negotiation through strategies such as generalization, condensation, and adaptation. Drawing on social actor representation, the study shows that cultural identity in subtitles is articulated through practices of nomination, categorization, and functionalization, which illustrates how both the characters and Javanese culture are recontextualized in a global setting. Overall, the study argues that subtitling is not merely a linguistic transfer but an ideological arena that actively shapes perceptions of identity and cultural representation in international discourse.

Keywords: *Audiovisual Translation, Cultural Terms, Foreignization, Domestication, Resistance, Negotiation, Social Actor Representation.*

INTRODUCTION

The way humans interact and exchange information across cultures and geographies has been influenced by advances in digital technology over the past two decades. Film is a crucial medium in this transformation, combining audio, visual, and narrative elements to effectively convey cultural values. Film serves not only as a medium of entertainment in the modern era of digital interaction and globalization, but also as a tool for cultural diplomacy and a symbol of national or local community identity. Film translation is crucial for understanding the social, cultural, and emotional messages contained within films as they are increasingly distributed worldwide through digital platforms such as Netflix, YouTube, and international film festivals. Subtitle translation is one of the most common and least expensive types of translation for distributing films worldwide. Subtitling is particularly beneficial in the era of globalization of audiovisual media because it allows audiences to understand the film's content without disrupting the authenticity of the characters' voices and expressions in the original language. Subtitling in audiovisual translation (AVT) is more than simply converting words from one language to another; it is a complex practice encompassing cultural, technical, ideological, and linguistic elements. Subtitle translation must take into account the audience's reading speed, the length of the text, and the number of characters per line (Polcz, 2008). Difficulties increase when the source text contains culture-bound terms, which semantically and pragmatically reflect the social world and principles of the source society, but are not relevant to the target language. To ensure that information can

be conveyed clearly and effectively to audiences from different cultures, subtitling must be able to balance precise meaning and readability. The main problem in translation is not only related to sentence structure or grammar, but also how implicit cultural content is communicated through language. Language functions as a medium of cultural representation that stores the collective values, identity, and ideology of a society. Therefore, differences in value systems, social conventions, and cultural cosmologies between the source and target languages can lead to differences in understanding or cultural gaps (Nida, 1964). Cultural gaps cannot be bridged solely through linguistic approaches, as each culture has unique codes that regulate social practices and behavior. Therefore, a deep understanding of the cultural context is a key factor in successful translation. Because culture is composed of a system of symbols and "codes of life" that are cognitive and contextual. Conceptual differences between languages often require translators to engage in conceptual borrowing to fill gaps in meaning. The existence of culture-specific items, both concrete and symbolic, also widens the cultural gap between the source and target languages (Karimnia et al., 2020). Therefore, culturally sensitive translation strategies are crucial in maintaining the accuracy of meaning and cross-cultural representation. Domestication and foreignization are two ideologies that differentiate translation strategies (Venuti, 2008). Domestication attempts to adapt the source text to make it more understandable for the target reader or audience. Foreignization, on the other hand, preserves the distinctive elements of the source language and culture as a form of resistance to the dominance of the target culture. In film translation, foreignization can be seen as an effort to acknowledge cultural diversity while maintaining identity through the explicit transfer of cultural terms.

Given the increasing number of local films, including those from Indonesia, entering international festivals and global platforms, this topic has become highly relevant to the current situation. Garin Nugroho's film "Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku" (2018) raises the themes of identity, body, gender, and tradition through the character of a lengger lanang dancer named Juno. This film not only tells a personal story, but also maintains the diversity of Javanese culture, local beliefs, and non-normative gender expressions that are highly contextual. Terms such as "warok", "gemblak", and "lengger" have ideological and historical meanings that are not easily translated into other languages. In this regard, the researcher will examine one of Garin Nugroho's literary works, a film entitled "Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku" or Memories of My Body (2018). The film tells the story of the life journey of a man named Juno who has been a dancer since he was a child. He lives in a village known as the village of lengger lanang dancers, a female dance performed by men. Juno's childhood was a blend of masculine and feminine bodies, naturally shaped by her family and environment. However, her subsequent life journey was fraught with the trauma of violence. Juno's independent life in this impoverished village made her both a mother and a father to her children. In this process, the translator's sensitivity in translating terms related to gender expression, sexuality, and the accompanying social discourse will be tested. According to Frosh (1999), cultural and gender identities are socially constructed and represented through language (Venuti, 2003). Therefore, the cultural terms (semantically and socially linked to gender identity) translated into subtitles will significantly influence cross-cultural audiences' perceptions of the film's characters and narrative.

The table contains transcriptions in two languages: Indonesian as the source language and English as the target language. The term Warok in this dialogue refers to a powerful male figure in the Reog Ponorogo culture. This term indicates the use of transfer and expansion strategies based on the theory presented by Gottlieb (1992). Transfer is used because the translator retains the word Warok without any changes into English. In this example, there is a cultural gap due to the term warok not having a direct equivalent in Western culture. Then, expansion is applied by adding the descriptive phrase "...is disrespectful," to replace the insult celeng/bajingan so that its emotional meaning is still conveyed. In this case, cultural resistance (foreignization) lies in the translator's effort to maintain the term Warok. However, a slight domestication is found in the phrase "...is disrespectful," in accordance with the theory stated by Venutti (1995) because it is considered more culturally neutral than the original insults, namely celeng (pig) and mertua (bastard) which in English is interpreted as bastard/asshole. This phrase does not reflect the emotional intensity of the word "bastard" in Indonesian and Javanese (SL), which in the source language context is much harsher. Thus, the analysis of the data illustrates a complex strategic compromise in translation practice. On the one hand, the translator employs foreignization through the Transfer strategy (Gottlieb, 1992) to retain the key cultural term "Warok," a choice that successfully maintains authenticity despite creating a cultural gap. On the other hand, the domestication strategy (Venuti, 1995) is simultaneously employed to tone down the offensive insult "celeng/bajingan" into a more culturally neutral phrase, "...is disrespectful." This binary choice effectively demonstrates the translator's dilemma: cultural identity is successfully preserved, but this is achieved at the expense of the emotional intensity of the original dialogue. This case serves as concrete evidence of how the translator must constantly negotiate between loyalty to the source text and adaptation to the norms of the target culture, with each

choice having its own consequences. Previous studies on audiovisual translation have generally focused on domestication and foreignization strategies or on the readability of subtitles, but few have linked these to the processes of resistance and cultural negotiation in subtitling. Studies on cultural terms in Indonesian films are also limited, and tend not to examine in depth how Javanese cultural terms such as warok, gemblak, or the lengger tradition are maintained, negotiated, or represented in English translations. Furthermore, previous studies rarely integrate Newmark's (1988) framework of translation procedures, Gottlieb's (1992) subtitle translation techniques, Venuti's (1955) translation ideology, and Van Leeuwen's (1996) theory of representation. However, this combined framework has the potential to provide a deeper understanding of how cultural term translation strategies play a role in constructing character identities and representing the source culture to cross-cultural audiences.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Translating Cultural Terms in an Audiovisual Context

Audiovisual translation (AVT) is the process of adapting messages conveyed simultaneously through verbal, visual, and audio elements in media such as films, cartoons, and serials (Chaume, 2018). Audiovisual translation is divided into two categories: subtitling and dubbing. In subtitle translation, space and duration limitations force translators to compress or expand the text concisely. Therefore, several strategies are commonly used for subtitle translation, such as transcreation, explicitation, and generalization (Timko, 2023). In contrast, dubbing demands phonetic and semantic correspondence between the original and translated sounds, so a specific analysis model for culture-bound references is essential. Satkauskaitė and Astrauskienė (2022) developed an analytical framework that considers the typology of cultural references, time synchronization, and articulation limitations during the dubbing process.

Classification of Cultural Terms in the Film I Miss My Beautiful Body

Newmark (1988) states that the term culture or culture-specific items is a lexical element that contains a specific cultural reference so that it does not have a direct equivalent in the target language. Newmark divides these cultural terms into five main categories, namely (1) Ecology, which refers to the natural elements typical of a region including flora, leaves, climate, terrain, and topography. Examples of this category are bamboo in the context of Southeast Asia, endemic animal species, local wind names, or types of highlands or lowlands (Sari & Gusthini, 2023;, Siddiq & Ali, 2023). Then (2) Material Culture, which relates to cultural objects created by humans such as traditional food, traditional clothing of a region, means of transportation, handicrafts, and other everyday objects. For example, the word "sarong" in Southeast Asia, and "kemben" in Javanese culture (Saleh & Mohammed, 2023). Next, there is category (3) Social Culture, which relates to social practices, professions, entertainment, customs, and habits of a community, such as kendurenan, wayang kulit, and so on. In addition to social culture, there is also category (4) Social Organizations, which includes institutions, structures, and organizational concepts that originate from social and religious contexts, including local government systems, membership of traditional groups, religious rituals, and collective norms. Examples of this category include "Rukun Warga or RW", "dharma" in the Hindu religious tradition, or noble titles such as "Gusti Kanjeng Ratu". Finally, (5) Gestures and Habits, which relate to body movements, signals, habits, and behavioral patterns that have cultural meaning. For example, "namaste", a gesture of respect for parents in various cultures, as well as the habit of sitting on the floor in Southeast Asia (Siddiq & Ali, 2023).

Transference Strategy

Translating subtitles involving cultural terms requires a transference strategy. This strategy is considered crucial to address issues arising from cultural differences between the source and target languages. Transference is defined as the direct borrowing of text from the source language to the target language, helping to preserve the rich nuances of the original culture (Syamsinar et al., 2023). In this context, translators, as cultural mediators, must be able to employ appropriate approaches to preserve the meaning, context, and culture contained in the translated cultural terms. When translators translate literary works rich in cultural terms, such as the novel "Jatisaba," they create an understanding that connects international readers with the local culture (Syamsinar et al., 2023). In general, in translating cultural terms, the transference approach should vary depending on the context and purpose of the translation. More adaptive methods, such as changing meanings and using various techniques, will improve translation quality and enable a more efficient transfer of cultural values (Vula and Tyfekçi (2024).

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METHOD

This study aims to uncover and explain the translation strategies of cultural terms and the domestication and foreignization tendencies in the subtitles of the film "Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku". Based on this objective, this study uses a qualitative descriptive method. The qualitative method was chosen because the data analyzed are in the form of spoken texts and phrases, not numbers, thus requiring contextual and interpretative interpretation. The material objects of this study are two versions of subtitle transcripts from the same film, which represent different translation approaches. The main focus of the analysis lies in how each transcript handles cultural elements in the film's dialogue, as well as the translation strategies used, both those that show domestication tendencies and those that maintain resistance to the source culture. The data collection technique was carried out through systematic documentation and recording of all subtitle units in the two versions of the transcripts studied. The first step was to align the two transcripts based on the order of their appearance in the film. Next, the researcher identified linguistic units containing cultural elements by referring to Koentjaraningrat's (2009) cultural classification, such as knowledge systems, language, technology, livelihoods, arts, social systems, and religion. The collected data was analyzed using content analysis with a comparative-qualitative approach. The analysis stages refer to the interactive model developed by Miles & Huberman (1994), which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Cultural Identity Resistance through Foreignization

The strategy of foreignization, which seeks to preserve the cultural elements of the source text, plays a crucial role in affirming cultural identity amidst globalization. This approach not only preserves the uniqueness of local culture but also actively conveys authentic nuances to the target audience. Several studies have confirmed the effectiveness of foreignization in strengthening the representation of cultural identity, as demonstrated by Chen (2023) in literary studies and Zuo & Guo (2024) in song translation. In the context of non-professional translation (fansubbing), Cruz et al. (2019) emphasize that fansubbing often utilizes the strategy of foreignization to maintain cultural distinctiveness, while Akabli & Khaloufi (2024) show that this strategy plays a role in opening up a space for more equal cross-cultural dialogue. In the context of constructing the main character's identity, foreignization can be seen as a form of resistance to domestication, which tends to obscure the distinctive characteristics of the source culture. By retaining Javanese cultural terms, symbols, or practices, the translator affirms the character's identity within the framework of the original culture. This aligns with Van Leeuwen's (2008) framework, particularly the dimensions of nomination, categorization, and functionalization, where a character's identity is represented through names, titles, and specific cultural categories. Thus, foreignization is not merely a technical strategy but also an ideological act that makes the translator an active agent in strengthening the representation of authentic and specific cultural identities.

Negotiating Character Identity through Domestication

In contrast to foreignization, which asserts cultural identity through resistance, the domestication strategy emphasizes the process of adapting cultural terms and structures to make them more easily understood by global audiences. In the context of subtitling, domestication is carried out by shifting the cultural elements of the source text into more familiar forms, either through generic equivalents, functional explanations, or universal descriptions. This choice results in a negotiation of the character's identity: some cultural characteristics are dissolved to increase comprehensibility, but traces of cultural identity are retained to a certain extent. Thus, domestication is not a total erasure, but rather a compromise between preserving local elements and the need for global accessibility. In line with Van Leeuwen's (2008) framework, the negotiation of the character's identity through domestication can be seen in three dimensions of representation: nomination, categorization, and functionalization. In the following section, data analysis will show how the translator negotiates Juno's identity by shifting specific cultural elements into more general forms without completely eliminating the original cultural content. Below is a presentation of the data grouped by

The Impact of Translation Strategies on the Representation of Javanese Culture

After analyzing the construction of character identities, this section turns to the broader impact of the translation strategy choices, namely on the representation of Javanese culture as a whole for global audiences. This representation is formed through a dialectic between two opposing ideological approaches: (1) foreignization, which aims to present cultural authenticity, and (2) domestication, which is oriented towards the ease of conveying meaning

for the audience. These choices influence how the cultural sphere, values, and social practices in the film are introduced and understood. On the one hand, the foreignization strategy serves to present an authentic image of Javanese culture and resists simplification. By retaining unique terms such as gamelan and reog, as well as social concepts such as warok, the translator presents a representation rich with specific cultural nuances. This approach allows the audience to enter the narrative world of the film with all its foreignness, offering a more immersive experience even though it demands greater interpretive effort.

Authentic Representation through Foreignization

The foreignization strategy in translation preserves the terms, symbols, and cultural practices of the source language to present an authentic cultural representation. This approach challenges the hegemony of the target language by 'sending the reader abroad', forcing the audience to confront the foreignness of the source culture directly (Venuti, 1995). In the context of this film, foreignization is consistently chosen to maintain Javanese cultural identity attached to characters, communities, and traditional artistic practices. By rejecting the distortions caused by domestication, this strategy produces an unfiltered cultural representation, although it demands greater interpretive effort from the audience. The analysis in this section will outline how foreignization influences the representation of Javanese culture through three dimensions of social identification adapted from van Leeuwen's (2008) framework: nomination, categorization, and functionalization. Data will be presented in the form of dialogue excerpts and subtitles to demonstrate its direct impact on the authenticity of Javanese cultural representation.

Easy-to-Understand Representation through Domestication

Domestication strategies in translation tend to adapt the terms, symbols, and cultural practices of the source language into more common and familiar forms in the target language. This approach is meant to 'bring the text home' to the reader by simplifying foreign elements to make them easily understandable to global audiences (Venuti, 1995). In the context of this film, domestication was chosen to bridge cultural differences, so that the representation of Java is presented in a form that is more easily understood by foreign audiences, although its distinctive nuances risk being lost. The analysis in this section will outline how domestication influences the representation of Javanese culture through three dimensions of social identification adapted from van Leeuwen's (2008) framework: nomination, categorization, and functionalization. Data will be presented in the form of dialogue excerpts and subtitles to show how local culture is represented more simply for foreign audiences.

Potential Shifts in Meaning and Their Consequences

After discussing how foreignization and domestication shape the representation of Javanese culture, this section examines the potential shifts in meaning that emerge in subtitles. These shifts occur not only at the lexical level but also involve cultural aspects tied to terms, symbols, and cultural practices. The two main phenomena analyzed are the reduction of cultural complexity and the creation of hybrid meanings. Complexity reduction refers to the simplification of cultural elements that were previously rich in meaning, while the creation of hybrid meanings indicates the emergence of new forms of representation resulting from the adaptation of terms or concepts in the target language. Thus, subtitle translation is not only a means of language transfer but also an arena for the negotiation of cultural meanings.

Reduction of Cultural Complexity

Translating subtitles in films is a complex practice that involves more than just language transfer but also a process of cultural negotiation. When dealing with rich cultural references, subtitle translators face the dilemma of preserving their authenticity or simplifying them to make them more understandable to the target audience. Strategies such as generalization, paraphrase, and hyponymy are often chosen to reduce cultural complexity without completely erasing the source culture's identity. Sanatifar and Ayob (2022), for example, show how Iranian film subtitle translators used these strategies to introduce elements of Persian culture to international festival audiences. These findings emphasize that cultural reduction is not always negative but can serve as a bridge for cross-cultural understanding. However, simplifying cultural meanings often results in the loss of certain dimensions that are at the heart of the cultural expression. Mehawesh and Neimneh (2021), through their study of the film Theeb, highlight the challenges of translating complex Arabic dialects and expressions. They show that under certain circumstances, subtitle translators are forced to engage in cultural substitution or even omission, which results in the loss of social and philosophical aspects of the source text. Thus, the reduction that occurs is not only a matter of linguistic form, but also relates to the transformation of the social function of cultural expressions.

The Creation of Hybrid Meaning

Hybrid meanings in subtitle translation emerge from the complex interaction between audiovisual communication and the audience's cultural context. Translation is not simply a linguistic task, but rather a multidimensional process involving visual, audio, and sociocultural elements. The use of multimodal elements allows narratives to be understood beyond the text itself, where translators adapt language to visual cues while maintaining the intent and emotional impact of the source, creating hybrid meanings that are relevant to the audience (Ahonen, 2021). Furthermore, technological advances, particularly machine translation and neural machine translation (NMT), have influenced the practice of subtitle translation by enabling translators to work more efficiently without neglecting cultural nuances (Bywood et al., 2017). The role of transcreation, or creative adaptation of the text, is crucial for maintaining cultural references while creating a natural impact for the target audience. This creative strategy allows subtitles to evolve beyond simply copying the original content into new works that are responsive to the audience's cultural context, deepening the hybrid meaning conveyed (Alawad & Alosaimi, 2023; Bellés-Calvera & Quintana, 2021). This layered approach emphasizes that audiovisual translation is a transformational practice that goes beyond mere language translation.

CONCLUSION

The explanation of the translation strategy of cultural terms in the subtitles of the film "Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku" has been outlined in the chapter. In this chapter, the conclusions of the research results will be outlined. Essentially, subtitle translation is an activity of transferring messages across languages that not only functions to convey linguistic meaning but also represents cultural identity. Thus, the translation of cultural terms is always in a dynamic between efforts to maintain the authenticity of the source culture and adaptation to the understanding needs of global audiences. The analysis results show that the translation strategies used include foreignization, domestication, and hybrid strategies. Of the 85 cultural terms analyzed, the most dominant trend was domestication. Translators predominantly used strategies such as generalization, adaptation, substitution, deletion, and condensation. This tendency indicates that the primary orientation of subtitling is cultural negotiation, where readability, accessibility, and clarity of the message for a global audience are prioritized over retaining all details of the source culture.

Despite the dominance of domestication, foreignization strategies remain present and play a significant role as a form of resistance. This is evident in the translator's efforts to retain core terms such as lengger, gamelan, Arjuno, and gemblak. By preserving these terms, the translator resists cultural oversimplification and allows for authentic Javanese identity. Foreignization serves as an ideological marker that the translation is not entirely subject to the currents of global homogenization. Furthermore, hybrid strategies were also found, demonstrating the interaction between foreignization and domestication. In some cases, translators retained specific cultural terms as a form of resistance, but added explanations or expansions to ensure readability. This hybrid strategy demonstrates that subtitling translation does not simply choose one pole, but rather cultivates a balance between authenticity and acceptability. However, overall, the results of this study confirm that despite resistance and hybrid strategies, domestication still dominates in the translation of cultural terms in the subtitles of the film "Kucumbu Tubuh Indahku." The dominance of domestication shows the translator's orientation to prioritize the communicative function of the subtitles so that the film's message can be conveyed effectively to international audiences. Thus, the subtitles in this film function more as a space for cultural negotiation than solely as a form of resistance, although they still contain elements of resistance in an effort to maintain the continuity of local identity.

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