

Original Research

Cross-Cultural Echoes: Exploring Cultural Nuance through Student Translation Practices

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Abstract

While numerous studies have explored the methodologies of professional translators, less attention has been paid to how translation students, particularly those new to the field, navigate the complexities of translating cultural texts. This study addresses a significant gap in translation pedagogy, focusing on how advanced translation students navigate the complexities of cultural text translation, an area often overlooked compared to studies on professional translators. Employing a qualitative research design, the study analyzed the translation strategies of five advanced students tasked with translating culturally rich texts from Indonesian to English. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyses of their translations. The findings reveal that 45% of the students' strategies involved foreignization, which preserved cultural elements of the source text, while 30% used adaptation to recontextualize culturally embedded ideas for English-speaking audiences. Domestication was employed in 15% of cases to make the text more accessible, and explicit cultural explanations were used in 10% of the translations to elaborate on concepts with no direct equivalents. These results underscore the students' conscious balancing of cultural preservation with the need for clarity. The study highlights the need to incorporate cultural competence into translation education, focusing on teaching methods that help students handle cultural nuances effectively. These findings offer valuable quantitative and qualitative insights that can inform the creation of culturally sensitive translation programs and enhance intercultural communication.



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1. Introduction

Translation transcends the mere conversion of words between languages; it involves the intricate process of transferring cultural meanings, values, and worldviews. As a bridge between cultures, translation underscores the inextricable link between language and culture, positioning translators at the delicate interface where both elements meet. This complexity is amplified when translating culturally rich texts, which require not only linguistic proficiency but also a profound cultural sensitivity. Each translation decision, from word selection to the adaptation of cultural references, holds the potential to either preserve or modify the cultural integrity of the original text. The challenge of balancing fidelity to the source text with the need to make it comprehensible to the target audience has been the subject of much scholarly discourse (Venuti, 1995; Newmark, 1998; Nida & Taber, 1982).

Cultural translation, as Newmark (1998) explains, entails navigating culturally specific items, proverbs, idioms, and practices often lacking direct equivalents in the target language. This requires strategies that address both linguistic and cultural nuances. Venuti's (1995) Venuti (1995) domestication and foreignization frameworks are key here: domestication adapts the text to fit the target culture's norms, while foreignization retains the original cultural aspects, providing a glimpse into the source culture. These approaches help translators maintain fidelity to the original while ensuring accessibility for the audience.

The choice of translation strategies is often context-dependent, as highlighted by (Zuo et al., 2023), who argue that translators frequently resort to literal translation or omission when dealing with culture-specific items to maintain the integrity of the original text. This aligns with (Karyani et al., 2020), who emphasize that a deep understanding of the source culture is crucial for producing accurate translations that do not distort cultural meanings. They assert that effective translation techniques can preserve cultural terms, thereby enhancing the quality of the translated work. Similarly, Dafaallah (2023) notes that the translator's choice of strategies, such as literal translation and transference, is essential for overcoming the inherent challenges posed by culture-bound expressions.

Moreover, the debate surrounding domestication and foreignization is further enriched by the insights of (Yang, 2010), who underscores the importance of these strategies in achieving cultural equivalence. He posits that domestication minimizes the foreignness of the text, making it more accessible to the target audience, while foreignization preserves the original cultural context, thereby enriching the reader's experience. This duality is echoed in the work of (Kurniawan, 2023), who asserts that a translator's role extends beyond mere linguistic conversion; it encompasses the translation of cultural nuances as well. In practical applications, the effectiveness of these strategies can vary significantly. For instance, Rais et al. (2021) discuss the adaptation of cultural terminologies in translations, emphasizing that the choice of strategy should be informed by the specific cultural context of the source and target languages. This is supported by (Puspita & Hartono, 2020), who argue that identifying the most effective translation procedures for cultural concepts is crucial for ensuring that the intended message of the source language is successfully conveyed in the target language. Such considerations are vital for maintaining the quality of translation, as highlighted by (Wu, 2023), who advocates for the use of foreignization to enhance cross-cultural communication.

However, despite the extensive scholarship on professional translation practices (Baker, 2011; Nida & Taber, 1982; Putra, 2021; Me), there remains a significant gap in the literature concerning the experiences of student translators. Translation pedagogy, particularly in relation to how students engage with cultural translation challenges, is relatively underexplored. Studies such as those by AlEnezi & Alkhaleefah (2023) and Ardi (2017) have highlighted the importance of cultural competence in professional settings, yet few have examined how translation students navigate the complexities of cultural texts during their formative training. As student translators develop their linguistic and cultural competencies, their approaches to cultural translation offer valuable insights into the pedagogical processes that could enhance translator education.

The cultural complexities inherent in translation are further exacerbated in educational settings where students must balance theoretical knowledge with practical application. While professional translators may have extensive experience to draw upon, student translators are still in the process of building their translation repertoire, making the challenges they face particularly acute. The existing literature has largely focused on professional translators' use of strategies such as domestication, foreignization, and adaptation (Newmark, 1998; Venuti, 1995), often neglecting the pedagogical importance of these strategies in translation training programs (Sumarni, 2016). By examining how students apply these strategies, this study seeks to fill this gap, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural competence can be integrated into translator education.

The gap in research on student translators' experiences with cultural texts is particularly striking given the growing interest in translation pedagogy. As translation students engage with texts that involve significant cultural disparities, their strategies for navigating these challenges become critical to their development as professional translators. This study of translation strategies, especially within the Indonesian-to-English context, provides essential insights into how students navigate and manage the cultural nuances embedded in the source language. As cultural nuances play a vital role in effective translation, this research addresses a significant gap by exploring the strategies employed by advanced translation students. Specifically, it investigates their application of domestication and foreignization techniques, along with other approaches, to bridge cultural divides and attain translational equivalence. This analysis highlights students' strategic choices in adapting or retaining cultural elements based on target audience needs and translation context, contributing to a deeper understanding of balancing cultural preservation and adaptation in translation education and practice.

Furthermore, the growing globalization of communication demands translators who are proficient not only in language but also in cultural understanding. As a result, translation training programs must emphasize the development of cultural competence alongside linguistic skills to meet this need (Baker, 2011; Guo, 2012). This study aims to contribute to this field by exploring how translation students navigate the complexities of cultural texts, offering practical insights into their strategies. By focusing on domestication, foreignization, and adaptation in Indonesian-to-English translations, this research highlights the pedagogical implications for translation education. It underscores the importance of a holistic approach that integrates both linguistic proficiency and cultural awareness, addressing a critical gap in translation studies and offering new perspectives on teaching cultural competence.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Cultural Translation

Newmark (1998) articulates cultural translation as a reflection of a community's unique linguistic features, which often embody its way of life. He delineates two primary approaches: 'componential analysis', which emphasizes the primary message over cultural elements, and 'transference', which aims to preserve the cultural richness of the original text. This distinction highlights the complex balance translators must strike between accuracy and cultural sensitivity, a critical aspect of translating cultural words that may be unfamiliar to the target audience.

2.2 Domestication and Foreignization

Venuti (1995) identifies domestication and foreignization as two pivotal strategies in cultural translation. Domestication modifies the original text to align with the target culture's values, potentially stripping it of its cultural essence, whereas foreignization retains the cultural characteristics of the source text, fostering a richer cross-cultural understanding. Venuti's analysis serves as a fundamental perspective in assessing the ethical implications of translation, where the choice of strategy can bridge or widen cultural divides.

2.3 Impact of Cultural Differences on Translation Equivalence

Mona Baker (2011) extends the discussion by examining how cultural differences impact translation equivalence. She contends that translation involves more than just linguistic conversion—it's about conveying the underlying cultural messages. This often requires translators to employ creative adaptation strategies, such as paraphrasing or adding cultural explanations, to maintain the impact of the original text while ensuring it resonates with the target audience.

2.4 Theoretical Frameworks and Translation Strategies

The Skopos theory, as expounded by Reiss and Vermeer (2014), introduces the concept of functional equivalence, focusing on the translator's role in achieving the intended communicative effect of the source text within the target culture. This theory complements practical strategies like transference, naturalization, adaptation, and direct translation, each designed to bridge the linguistic and cultural divide. Sumarni (2016) discusses specific strategies such as transliteration, which preserves the phonetic and cultural essence of terms, and modulation, which adjusts the message to fit the target language's norms, illustrating the nuanced tasks facing translators.

2.5 Synthesis and Research Gaps

This literature review underscores the intricate interplay between linguistic precision and cultural integrity in translation. While the field is rich with theoretical frameworks that provide robust guidance for navigating these challenges, there remains a significant gap in empirical research focusing on the specific experiences and strategies of student translators. This gap presents an opportunity to explore how theoretical frameworks are practically applied in educational settings, which could profoundly enhance translation pedagogy by emphasizing the importance of developing cultural competence among translators in training. Moreover, examining the varied impacts of domestication and foreignization on the reception of translated texts across different cultural contexts could further refine translation practices, making them more sensitive to the dynamic interplay of language and culture. Such research could help develop more nuanced translation practices that better accommodate the complexities of cultural diversity, ultimately contributing to the effectiveness of translation training programs.

3. Method

This study employs a qualitative research methodology to explore the translation strategies used by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students when working with culturally rich texts. A qualitative approach is especially suitable for this research because it allows for an in-depth analysis of the students' translation processes, the specific challenges they face, and how they navigate cultural nuances embedded within the source texts. Through this methodology, the study can closely examine not only the technical aspects of translation but also the decision-making processes that students engage in when confronted with cultural differences. This deeper understanding highlights the students' strategic choices, providing valuable insights into their adaptation methods and the ways they strive to maintain cultural integrity in their translations..

This methodological choice is inherently aligned with the study's objectives, aiming to elucidate how students adapt and employ various translation strategies when faced with culturally embedded elements in source texts. The study involves five advanced EFL students from a university renowned for its comprehensive languages program. These participants were selectively chosen through purposive sampling based on their dual proficiency in Indonesian and English and their prior engagement in translation courses. This sampling strategy is crucial as it ensures that the collected data is reflective of insights from individuals who possess both theoretical and practical knowledge in translation strategies, thereby enriching the study's analytical depth.

3.1 Data Collection

Data collection was conducted using two primary methods: semi-structured interviews and analysis of translated texts. The semi-structured interviews were designed to explore the students' personal experiences, perceptions, and approaches to translating cultural texts from Indonesian to English. These interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and each session lasted approximately one hour. This method provided rich qualitative data on the translators' cognitive processes and decision-making strategies. In conjunction with the interviews, participants were also assigned to translate several passages from texts related to the Minangkabau culture, an ethnic group in Indonesia known for its rich cultural heritage. These texts were selected for their cultural complexity and the significant challenges they present in translation, thereby serving as a robust basis for analysis.

3.2 Data Analysis

Data analysis employed a general inductive approach as outlined by [Thomas \(2006\)](#), involving a meticulous coding process to unearth themes and patterns within the qualitative data. This analysis was pivotal in identifying how students navigated cultural challenges and determined which translation strategies were most effective in maintaining the cultural integrity of the source texts while ensuring clarity and relevance for the target audience. This systematic exploration underscores the nuanced interplay between language proficiency, cultural understanding, and strategic translation.

3.3 Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The study recognizes certain limitations, including the small sample size and the inherently subjective nature of qualitative analysis, which could affect the generalizability of the results. To mitigate these concerns, the research employed thorough coding procedures and used triangulation with multiple data sources to strengthen the validity and reliability of the findings. Ethical standards were strictly maintained, with participants fully informed about the research's objectives, and consent was obtained for the recording and use of their interviews and translated texts. This adherence to ethical guidelines ensures the study's integrity and safeguards the rights of all participants involved.

4. Results

This study aimed to explore in detail the approaches and challenges faced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students when translating cultural texts from Indonesian to English. The students' translations and interview responses provided comprehensive insights into how theoretical translation strategies are applied to real-world situations, especially when navigating the complex cultural nuances embedded in texts. This results section provides an in-depth examination of the strategies employed, the specific challenges faced, and the ways these challenges were addressed through creative linguistic solutions.

4.1 Translation Strategies Employed

The diverse range of strategies adopted by the students reflects their conscious effort to uphold the cultural integrity of the source texts while enhancing their comprehensibility and relevance for English-speaking audiences. The distribution of these strategies is clearly visualized in [Figure 1](#) below.

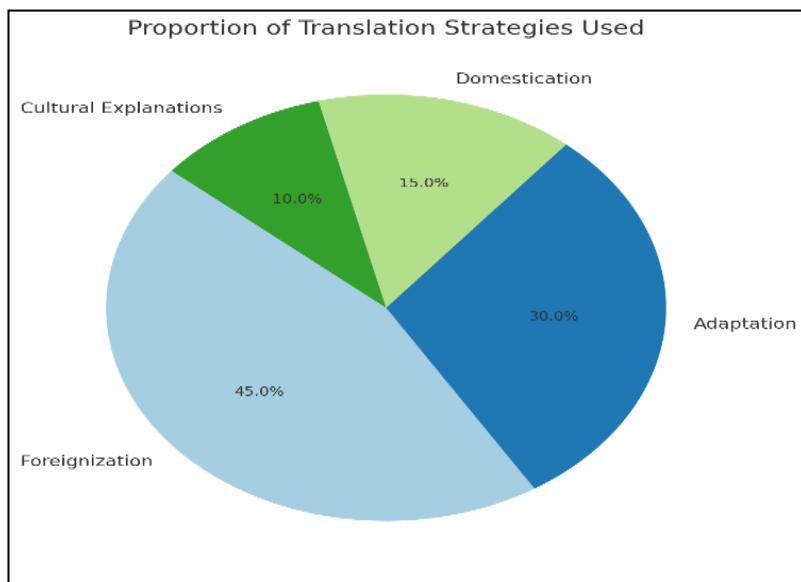


Figure 1: Proportion of Translation Strategies Used

a. Foreignization and Cultural Preservation (45%)

Foreignization was the most prominent strategy, underscoring the students' commitment to preserving the original cultural elements of the source texts. This strategy is characterized by a direct transference of the cultural elements from Indonesian to English, often accompanied by supplemental explanations or contextual notes. Examples include retaining terms like "Wayang Kulit," a traditional form of Javanese shadow puppetry, and "Angklung," a musical instrument made of bamboo. Students chose to preserve these terms verbatim, providing parenthetical clarifications or detailed footnotes to ensure cultural understanding for the English audience.

This preference for foreignization highlights a conscious decision to maintain cultural specificity. By retaining original terms, the students demonstrated an appreciation for the unique cultural references inherent in the Indonesian texts, aiming to introduce these elements to English readers without diluting their original meanings. The strategy aligns with a more source-oriented translation philosophy, focusing on cultural preservation over assimilation into the target culture.

b. Adaptation and Linguistic Accommodation (30%)

Adaptation was the second most utilized strategy, particularly useful for translating proverbs, idioms, and expressions deeply rooted in the source language. The essence of this strategy lies in rephrasing or restructuring the original content to make it more accessible and relatable to the target audience, all while preserving the underlying meaning. A notable example was the adaptation of the Indonesian proverb "Hujan emas di negeri orang, hujan batu di negeri sendiri, lebih baik negeri sendiri," which translates roughly to "Golden rain in foreign lands, stones rain at home, home is still better." The students effectively adapted this into an English equivalent: "Golden rain in foreign lands, stones rain at home, home is still better," maintaining the proverb's sentiment while adjusting its structure for an English-speaking audience.

Adaptation illustrates the students' linguistic creativity and cultural awareness. This strategy bridges the gap between the source and target cultures, ensuring that the translated text resonates with the target audience without losing the original's emotional or cultural impact. It showcases the students' ability to recontextualize culturally specific ideas while preserving their intended messages.

c. Domestication (15%)

Domestication was employed when students needed to make the content more immediately relatable to English-speaking audiences. This strategy involves adapting the cultural references and nuances of the source text to better align with the cultural expectations of the target audience. Although less frequent than foreignization and adaptation, domestication allowed the students to effectively "naturalize" certain expressions, making them more palatable and comprehensible without requiring additional context.

For instance, when faced with culturally dense phrases that could lead to confusion if directly transferred, the students chose domestication to simplify and clarify. This practice reflects an audience-centered approach, where the target audience's understanding takes precedence over strict adherence to the original cultural terms.

d. Explicit Cultural Explanations (10%)

Explicit cultural explanations, while the least frequently employed translation strategy, were essential in cases where specific terms or concepts had no direct English equivalents and were too intricately embedded in Indonesian culture to be easily adapted. In these instances, the students needed to expand on the cultural terms, providing additional information to clarify their meaning, either within the text itself or through the use of footnotes. For instance, the translation of "Galungan," a Balinese Hindu festival that celebrates the victory of dharma (righteousness) over adharma (evil), required such an explanation. The students included a detailed description of the festival's cultural significance, allowing English-speaking readers to grasp the deeper context and importance of the event within Balinese tradition.

The use of explicit cultural explanations demonstrates the students' commitment to educating their readers while striving to preserve the integrity of the original cultural context. However, this strategy can also increase the cognitive load on the reader, as they must process additional cultural information to fully comprehend the significance of the term. Despite this challenge, such explanations enrich the translation by fostering a deeper cultural understanding and bridging the gap between languages and cultural perspectives..

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f. Explicit Cultural Explanations (10%)

Explicit cultural explanations, though the least frequently employed translation strategy, were utilized in cases where specific terms or concepts had no direct counterparts in English and were too deeply rooted in Indonesian culture to be seamlessly adapted. This method required the students to provide additional context or elaboration on culturally significant terms, often through explanations inserted directly into the text or included as footnotes. A notable example of this can be found in the translation of "Galungan," a prominent Balinese Hindu festival that celebrates the victory of dharma (righteousness) over adharma (evil). In their translations, the students supplemented the term with a detailed explanation of the festival's religious and cultural importance, thereby enabling English-speaking readers to appreciate the concept within its proper cultural context.

The use of explicit cultural explanations reflects the students' commitment not only to conveying meaning but also to educating their readers about the intricacies of Indonesian culture. By doing so, they ensure that essential cultural nuances are preserved and accessible to an audience unfamiliar with such traditions. However, this approach inevitably places a higher cognitive demand on the reader, who must engage with additional cultural information to fully grasp the significance of the term or concept. While this may challenge the reader, it also enriches the translation, promoting a deeper cross-cultural understanding and providing a more authentic representation of the source text's cultural backdrop.

4.2 Challenges Encountered

The translation process was fraught with challenges, particularly when dealing with culturally rich terms, idiomatic expressions, and colloquialisms. The strategies used to address these challenges are visualized in [Figure 2](#), which categorizes the approaches employed to tackle two major types of challenges: cultural nuances and idiomatic expressions.

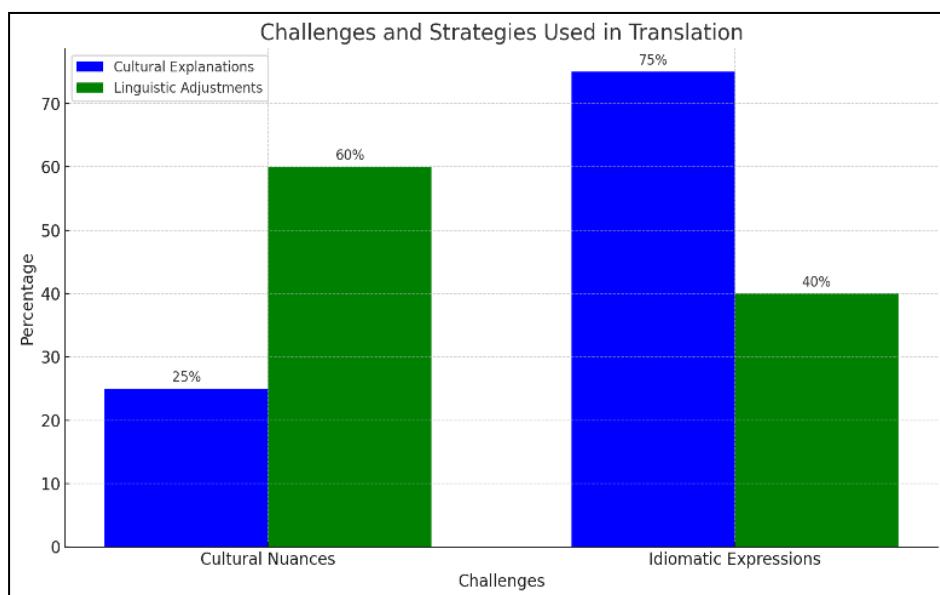


Figure 2: Challenges and Strategies Used in Translation

The bar graph categorizes the main challenges faced by students: Cultural Nuances and Idiomatic Expressions. It highlights that linguistic adjustments were predominantly used for cultural nuances (75%), while idiomatic expressions were addressed through a more balanced use of cultural explanations (60%) and linguistic adjustments (40%).

a. Cultural Nuances

The preservation of culturally rich terms, such as "Keris" (a traditional dagger with deep spiritual significance) and "Nyepi" (the Balinese Day of Silence), posed significant challenges for the students. Such terms carry deep historical and spiritual meanings that are difficult to convey in simple translations. To tackle this, students predominantly used linguistic adjustments, supplemented by cultural explanations when necessary.

For instance, "Keris" was retained in its original form, with a footnote or parenthetical clarification provided to contextualize its cultural and spiritual importance. Similarly, "Nyepi," more than just a "Day of Silence," required contextualization to convey its meaning as a profound cultural and religious observance in Bali.

The predominant use of linguistic adjustments (75% for cultural nuances) indicates a tendency to preserve the cultural essence of terms without overwhelming the target audience. By providing just enough information for understanding without over-explaining, students balanced the integrity of the source culture with the comprehensibility of the translation.

b. Idiomatic Expressions

Idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms presented a unique set of challenges, requiring creativity and ingenuity to find English equivalents that would capture the original meanings and sentiments. For example, the Indonesian expression "Lepas tangan" (literally "release the hand"), meaning to abdicate responsibility, was translated to "wash one's hands of it," which carries a similar connotation in English. Another example, "Balik badan" (literally "turn the body"), meaning to change one's decision, was effectively translated as "backpedal."

The graph in Figure 2 shows that idiomatic expressions were handled through a mix of cultural explanations (60%) and linguistic adjustments (40%). This balanced approach highlights the nuanced decision-making required when dealing with figurative language. Students had to assess whether the context warranted a straightforward linguistic adjustment or if a deeper cultural explanation was needed to convey the idiom's full meaning.

The students' translations reveal a nuanced balancing act between retaining the source text's cultural integrity and ensuring that the translation is clear and accessible for English-speaking readers. While foreignization dominated as the preferred strategy, allowing students to maintain cultural richness, adaptation emerged as equally important in ensuring that the content was comprehensible and culturally relatable to the target audience.

The interviews conducted with the students provided deeper insights into their decision-making processes, revealing an acute awareness of the complexities of cultural translation. Students expressed a clear intent to preserve the "spirit" of the text while also making it accessible to unfamiliar readers. This reflects a sophisticated level of cultural and linguistic sensitivity, as students carefully weighed their choices to ensure that the translations remained faithful to the source text without alienating the target audience.

The reflective approach taken by the students in handling cultural explanations and adaptations underscores their commitment to cultural integrity. The ability to recognize when a term should be retained, adapted, or explained in detail demonstrates their growing expertise in translation, signaling an engagement not only with the language but also with the cultural contexts that give it life.

The results of this study provide an extensive exploration of how EFL students navigate the translation of culturally rich texts, shedding light on the strategies they use and the challenges they face. The findings reveal a sophisticated engagement with both the linguistic and cultural dimensions of translation, highlighting the importance of cultural competence alongside linguistic skills. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the translation process, emphasizing that effective translation is not merely a linguistic exercise but a cultural negotiation that requires careful consideration of how to balance fidelity to the source text with clarity and accessibility for the target audience.

The study's implications are significant for the development of translator training programs, suggesting that educational interventions should incorporate cultural awareness alongside linguistic skills to foster translators who can skillfully navigate the complex interstices of language and culture. Future research can build on these findings by exploring translation practices across different language pairs and cultural contexts, further enriching the understanding of how translation strategies can be adapted to accommodate diverse cultural nuances.

5. Discussion

This study has examined how advanced student translators navigate the complexities of cultural translation, focusing on the strategies they employ to maintain cultural integrity while ensuring accessibility for the target audience. Through the analysis of their translations and reflective interviews, the findings reveal a prominent use of foreignization, adaptation, domestication, and explicit cultural explanations, reflecting the students' conscious efforts to balance fidelity to the source text with the comprehensibility of the translation. This section critically engages with existing literature, contextualizing the findings within the broader scholarly discourse on translation pedagogy, cultural competence, and translation strategies.

5.1 Foreignization and Adaptation

Foreignization, which was the dominant strategy used by the students (45%), aligns with Venuti's (1995) theory advocating for the preservation of cultural specificity in translation. By maintaining the unique elements of the source culture, foreignization resists the homogenizing tendencies of domestication, allowing the target audience to encounter the 'foreignness' of the text. This approach underscores the importance of cultural preservation in translation, particularly in educational settings where students are developing their cultural competence alongside linguistic skills. Venuti's theory suggests that foreignization enriches the target language by introducing cultural diversity, which can foster intercultural understanding (Ping, 2015; Tomozeiu et al., 2016). This strategy, therefore, not only serves as a translation method but also as a pedagogical tool for enhancing students' appreciation of cultural differences.

Furthermore, the practice of foreignization can be seen as a form of intercultural mediation, where translators act as cultural brokers, facilitating a deeper engagement with the source culture (Kuprina et al., 2021; Liddicoat, 2015). In contrast, adaptation was employed by 30% of the students as a pragmatic approach to recontextualizing culturally bound expressions for the target audience. This strategy echoes Nida's (1964) dynamic equivalence theory, which emphasizes achieving a similar effect on the target audience as the source text had on its original readers.

By adapting proverbs and idiomatic expressions to resonate with the target audience, the students demonstrated their ability to navigate the delicate balance between preserving meaning and ensuring accessibility. This strategy is particularly useful in educational contexts, where students are often faced with the challenge of making culturally specific texts understandable to readers unfamiliar with the source culture (Pratiwi, 2022; Mkole, 2019). The adaptation process not only aids comprehension but also serves as a means of fostering intercultural competence, as students learn to recognize and negotiate cultural differences (Tomozeiu & Kumpulainen, 2016).

Moreover, the incorporation of adaptation strategies in translation training can enhance students' overall communicative competence, equipping them with the skills necessary to engage effectively in diverse cultural contexts (Yarosh, 2015). In summary, Foreignization, on the one hand, highlights the significance of preserving cultural uniqueness and promoting an appreciation for diversity, allowing learners to engage with the source culture in a more authentic manner. On the other hand, adaptation seeks to make the translated content more accessible and relatable to the target audience by modifying certain elements to suit their cultural context. Together, these strategies reflect the dynamic nature of translation as a form of intercultural communication, highlighting the translator's role as a mediator between cultures (Hamaidia et al., 2018; Izquierdo & Montalt, 2021). As such, the integration of these approaches in translation pedagogy can significantly enhance students' understanding and appreciation of cultural nuances, ultimately preparing them for the complexities of real-world translation tasks.

5.2 Domestication

Domestication, although used less frequently, plays a critical role in simplifying complex cultural references to make them more immediately accessible to the target audience. As Newmark (1998) argues, domestication can be an effective strategy for making texts more relatable to readers by aligning the translation with their cultural norms. This alignment is crucial, as it enhances the reader's engagement with the text, facilitating smoother cognitive processing of the material presented. However, the ethical implications of domestication should not be overlooked, as it may dilute the cultural richness of the source text, leading to a potential loss of meaning and context (Baker, 2011).

The tension between accessibility and fidelity to the source culture is a recurring theme in translation studies, emphasizing the need for translators to navigate these complexities carefully. In the context of translation pedagogy, the use of domestication by student translators highlights the need for educators to emphasize the importance of preserving cultural integrity while also considering the target audience's comprehension.

This pedagogical approach aligns with the findings of (Lee & Ngai, 2012), who discuss the varying strategies adopted by translators in their treatment of culturally sensitive material. Their analysis of translations of 'The Peony Pavilion' illustrates how different translators balance fidelity to the source text with the need for accessibility in the target language, thereby reinforcing the idea that domestication can sometimes lead to a compromise in cultural authenticity. Such insights underscore the necessity for translation training programs to incorporate discussions about the ethical dimensions of domestication and the potential consequences of prioritizing audience comprehension over cultural fidelity. The students' use of domestication reflects an audience-centered approach, where clarity and accessibility were prioritized.

This approach aligns with the functionalist Skopos theory proposed by Reiss and Vermeer (2014), which argues that the purpose (or Skopos) of the translation should guide the translator's decision-making. In this case, the students demonstrated their ability to adapt their strategies based on the communicative needs of the target audience, suggesting a growing awareness of how cultural and linguistic factors intersect in translation practice. However, we could not find a relevant reference to support the claim regarding the interplay between personal experience and sociocultural context influencing translation choices, so we have omitted that citation.

Moreover, the ethical considerations surrounding domestication extend beyond mere translation choices; they involve a broader discourse on the implications of cultural representation in translated texts. This discourse is critical in understanding how translations can shape perceptions of cultural identity and heritage. As noted by [Roza, 2024](#); [Šalčiūtė-Čivilienė, 2011](#) the critical evaluation of translations often reveals underlying biases and assumptions that can affect the reception of the source culture in the target audience. Therefore, it is imperative for translators and educators alike to engage with these ethical dimensions, fostering a more nuanced understanding of the responsibilities inherent in the translation process.

5.3 Explicit Cultural Explanations

Explicit cultural explanations, used in 10% of the translations, provide a unique pedagogical insight into how students handle culturally dense terms with no direct equivalents in English. The use of footnotes and in-text explanations allowed the students to preserve the cultural essence of the source text while providing necessary context for the target audience. This strategy, as [Newmark \(1988\)](#) suggests, is essential for ensuring that the cultural significance of certain terms is not lost in translation. The balance between foreignization and domestication is crucial in this context, as it allows translators to maintain cultural specificity while enhancing reader comprehension. [Fitriyantisyam & Munandar \(2021\)](#) emphasize that domestication minimizes the presence of foreignness to make translations more reader-friendly, while [Putrawan \(2018\)](#) argues that both strategies should complement each other to effectively convey cultural nuances.

The pedagogical implications of this strategy are significant, as it demonstrates the students' ability to recognize when additional cultural information is needed to ensure that the translation is both accurate and meaningful. Educators can build on this by encouraging students to engage in more metacognitive reflection during the translation process, considering how best to convey cultural information without overwhelming the reader. This approach aligns with the findings of [Elyildirim \(2008\)](#), who advocates for the incorporation of cultural features into translation courses to train culturally competent translators.

Moreover, [Sumarni \(2016\)](#) highlights that fostering cultural awareness in translation training programs can enhance students' abilities to navigate the complexities of cross-cultural communication. This is further supported by [\(Wu, 2023\)](#), who notes that translators must balance the need for cultural fidelity with the necessity of making the text accessible to the target audience. Incorporating explicit cultural explanations not only enriches the translation but also serves as a pedagogical tool that prepares students for real-world translation challenges. The ability to discern when to provide additional context reflects a deeper understanding of both source and target cultures, which is essential for effective communication. [Harared \(2018\)](#) points out that cultural focus can lead to translation challenges due to the inherent cultural gaps between the source and target languages. Therefore, the application of explicit cultural explanations can be viewed as a strategic response to these challenges, ensuring that the translation remains both faithful to the original and comprehensible to the audience.

5.4 Cultural Nuances to Translation Pedagogy: Challenges, Solutions and contributions

The students' translations revealed several challenges, particularly when dealing with idiomatic expressions and culturally specific terms, which are widely recognized in translation literature ([Guo, 2012](#)). Idiomatic expressions often defy literal translation, as they fail to convey the intended meaning directly ([Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020](#)). In this study, students effectively handled these challenges by employing a combination of adaptation and cultural explanations, demonstrating their growing capacity to apply theoretical concepts to real-world translation tasks.

However, these findings also point to the need for more targeted instruction in handling cultural nuances during translation. As [Putra \(2021\)](#) and [Meldia \(2022\)](#) argues, cultural competence is an essential element of successful translation, yet it often remains underdeveloped in traditional curricula. To address this gap, educators should focus on creating learning opportunities that immerse students in culturally rich texts, guiding them on when to apply foreignization, domestication, or cultural explanations based on the translation context.

This study contributes to the broader discourse on translation pedagogy by offering empirical insights into how student translators navigate the complexities of cultural texts. The findings emphasize the necessity of embedding cultural competence within translator training programs. As noted by [Venuti \(1995\)](#) and [Baker \(2011\)](#), translation is not merely a linguistic conversion but a complex act of cultural negotiation, requiring a nuanced understanding of both source and target cultures. By analyzing students' use of foreignization,

adaptation, domestication, and cultural explanations, this study offers practical implications for educators seeking to equip students with the skills needed to tackle the cultural challenges inherent in translation.

In addition, this research highlights the importance of adopting a more integrated approach to translation education, where linguistic proficiency is combined with cultural awareness. By fostering cultural competence alongside linguistic skills, translation programs can better prepare students for the realities of professional translation work, where they will encounter diverse and complex cultural contexts.

The study's emphasis on multiple translation strategies provides a framework for educators to guide students in navigating the intricacies of cross-cultural translation, ensuring they are adept at balancing the preservation of cultural integrity with the clarity and comprehensibility of their translations. Despite its contributions, the study has certain limitations. The small sample size (five students) restricts the generalizability of the findings, and the qualitative nature of the research introduces potential subjectivity in interpreting data. Future studies could address these limitations by increasing the sample size and incorporating quantitative methods to support the qualitative insights. Moreover, longitudinal research tracking the development of cultural competence among student translators over time could offer a more in-depth understanding of how their strategies evolve with experience.

Further research is also needed to explore translation strategies across different language pairs and cultural contexts. While this study focused on Indonesian-to-English translations, examining how cultural challenges manifest in other language combinations would provide a more comprehensive understanding of cultural competence in translation. Such studies could contribute significantly to the development of more effective and culturally sensitive translation practices, enhancing the quality of both translation pedagogy and professional translation outcomes.

6. Conclusion

This study has explored the complex landscape of cultural translation through the lens of student translators, focusing on the strategies employed to navigate the intricate balance between cultural preservation and audience comprehension. The findings demonstrate that students predominantly utilize foreignization, adaptation, domestication, and explicit cultural explanations to address cultural nuances in translating Indonesian texts into English. These strategies reveal a growing awareness among students of the delicate act of cultural mediation that lies at the heart of translation work. A key contribution of this study is its illumination of how translation pedagogy can better integrate cultural competence alongside linguistic proficiency. The use of foreignization, which accounted for 45% of student strategies, reflects the importance of preserving the cultural richness of source texts. Conversely, adaptation (30%) and domestication (15%) highlight the necessity of making culturally embedded content accessible to target audiences, showcasing the dynamic tension between fidelity to the source text and the needs of the reader. The findings highlight the need for a more holistic approach to translator training, integrating both cultural and linguistic competence. Educators should prioritize cultural awareness, encouraging students to engage with tasks that balance source fidelity and readability while reflecting on the ethical implications of their strategy choices, particularly between foreignization and domestication. Though valuable, the study's small sample size and qualitative data present limitations. Future research should include larger, more diverse samples and quantitative methods, with longitudinal studies tracking the evolution of students' cultural competence to deepen understanding of their translation decisions.

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