



TRANSLATING CULTURAL REFERENCES: APPROACHES AND CHALLENGES IN STUDENT SELF-TRANSLATIONS OF INDONESIAN SHORT STORIES INTO ENGLISH

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Abstract:

Translation has become essential for communication between cultures in our globalized world. This research investigates how the student translators translate Indonesian short stories into English, mainly on cultural references such as idiomatic expressions and customs, using methods to find out the approaches and challenges they face. While essential to narrative validity and cohesion, these features present their challenges. This research, then, investigates domestication (making the text familiar to the target) and foreignization (keeping original cultural elements) through qualitative case studies with content analysis and interviews. Results indicate that students apply domestication to obtain a more readable text, even at the cost of some cultural content. Even when it comes to translating food items or slang, they have somewhat of a shallow character in most cases. At the same time, personal names and some religious terms were preserved to avoid cultural and identity loss. Significant obstacles are dealt with in this study as the linguistic variety is taken into consideration and the cultural aspect of translators dealing with their strategies. It advises the usage of both domestication and foreignization in translation education, enhancing reflexivity and increasing familiarity with translation tools. Specifically, workshops on cultural competency and idiomatic expression are recommended for improved praxis. The empirical findings contribute to the understanding of literary translation by inviting further investigations across languages and genres. These insights can then help us create better translation practices and education that will theoretically cover the gap between cultures through literary works.

Keywords: *Cultural References, Domestication, Foreignization, Student Translators, Translation*

1. INTRODUCTION

With the world becoming increasingly globalized, translation is an essential medium for cross-cultural communication. When the world continues to interact, an incredibly revealing practice for engaging the challenges of cultural shifting across languages is self-translation — when authors translate their works (Cordingley, 2024; Van Doorslaer & McMartin, 2022). This is especially evident in literary translation, as cultural references are a part of the building blocks of narrative.

Through self-translation, authors have a solution to both linguistic and cultural distances present at the heart of translation, thus maintaining fidelity toward form and meaning (Cordingley, 2024; Van Doorslaer & McMartin, 2022). The focus of saving every bit of that referred to culture is essential because it relates to idioms, practices, traditions, historical references, social norms, names of places, foods, and other culturally bound terms ingrained into the source text (Romala, 2021). These references can be considered cultural identifiers, affecting a literary text's plot, characters, and meanings (Obeidat & Mahadi, 2019). Furthermore, cultural identities are so deeply embedded in source references that translators often struggle to find equivalent expressions or even a homogenous concept within the target language, making translating culture-based referents particularly complex.



Students have challenges sacrificing language fidelity for cultural transmission compared to other translators. Their task is far more complicated than translating words and text; translators must maintain the cultural references familiar to the source material. This problem is more visible in the cases of Indonesian short stories being translated into English because, quite often, the source texts uncover a great deal of Indonesian cultural text that would be unheard of by an English audience (House, 2014).

Cultural references represent any text's building blocks and reveal its origin's social, historical, and linguistic background. As a result, student translators face significant linguistic and cultural challenges in translating these references (Obeidat & Mahadi, 2019). Translating cultural references can be especially difficult, and it can have a far-reaching impact on the quality and authenticity of translations, so there needs to be a careful balancing act between preserving the original meaning anchored in culture while still making sure that the translation is accessible and relatable for the target audience. Maintaining that balance is also necessary to uphold the narrative and thematic integrity of the literature itself.

In addition, the article by Fitriyantisya & Munandar (2021), dealing with postcolonial translation studies, emphasizes foreignization and domestication of culture-specific items in Indonesian translations of literary works—taking "Of Mice and Men" as an example. This study demonstrates the challenge for translators faced with representing cultural nuances in po-faced texts tinged with colonial pedigree: how to mediate alienating foreignising elements that serve both to preserve authenticity and act as barriers to reader accessibility through forms of domesticating. The analysis of postcolonial texts highlights the constantly changing translation strategies within complicated contexts.

This study investigates the issues and strategies student translators face in translating cultural references from Indonesian short stories into English and the domestication and foreignization strategies offered by Venuti (1995). Domestication adapts the ST to fit with what is appropriate for a target audience, giving it an increase in self-evidence and increasing accessibility at the cost of cultural color. To make the text more familiar and easier to understand, in other words, to make it operate (Baker, 2018; Hatim & Mason, 2000; Munday, 2016), cultural substitution or simplification and adaptation strategies are used.

On the other hand, foreignization supports keeping cultural references from the source text to maintain its distinctiveness. Still, it may come at a cost of being less comprehensible for readers since they are not familiar with some Indonesian culture. It encompasses strategies of cultural preservation, literal translation to maintain original meaning, and explanatory additions to clarify nuances (Newmark, 1988; Schäffner & Holmes, 1995; Venuti, 1995). Both strategies have pros and cons, and there is a complicated line to tread between high-fidelity translation and cultural fluency.

There are some theories on domestication and foreignization by Venuti (1995) that could be used as the basis. Still, no general theory explains how students translating Indonesian cultural references to English might deal with these issues. Such a



theoretical gap in the literature must be filled to learn better how translation practices should be carried out here.

Recent studies show domesticity and alienation are essential for preserving cultural information and readability. According to a survey (Rachmi & Yassi, 2023), a hybrid approach in translation blends elements of both approaches so the cultural gap can be filled without making the translated text less fluent and natural for the target reader. This is a vital strategy for crossing the cultural divide & ensuring translated texts truly resonate with target audiences.

This research is significant on a theoretical and practical level. It fills a theoretical gap in translation strategies, thereby contributing to the academic field of translation studies in Indonesia and overseas. This offers a subtler insight into student translators' decision-making processes, which can increase the scholarly discourse on literary translation. Ultimately, it provides practical training and guidance for student translators and leads to establishing a more effective translator training program. The research focuses on helping students magnify translators' skills and experiences to produce good quality, authentic literary works written such that the cultural values of Indonesian short stories can be maintained in English (Rachmi & Yassi, 2023).

Moreover, the urgent need to address these challenges within university education underscores this study's significance. By examining the decision-making processes involved in navigating cultural references, this research contributes to the academic field of translation studies. It offers practical implications for curriculum development, teaching methodologies, and assessment strategies within university translation programs.

Additionally, this study is critical because it addresses the challenges faced within university education settings. Its exploration of strategies for dealing with cultural references adds to the academic landscape that translation studies now inhabit (wherein it should also be noted that the lens through which much TS research is read leads to publication as an afterthought in previously mainstream journals), but will also have practical ramifications regarding venue choice, teaching approaches, and assessment design in university translation programs.

This study aims to investigate the strategies applied by student translators in self-translating cultural references found in Indonesian short stories into English, determine what kind of problems they experience, and determine how it affects their choices of strategy. Focusing on their self-translation, we hope to learn more about the decision-making processes behind moving between cultural references. Making these aims will up-skill student translators and significantly contribute to the field of translation studies.

This research employs a qualitative case study to achieve its objectives because it involves an in-depth exploration and analysis of self-translation strategies and challenges from Indonesian short stories with particular attention to how self-translation challenges shape the strategic response. This in-depth analysis offers practical context relevant to university education contexts. Understanding the complexities of self-translation can help teachers design better translation training, teaching, and assessment to equip their students with appropriate skills and knowledge.



Thus, this investigation aims to fill some gaps in the field of translation studies and, at the same time, is directly relevant to curriculum development and educational practices in university translation programs.

2. METHOD

The objectives of this study were to explore student translators' strategies in self-translating each cultural reference found in Indonesian short stories into English, identify the challenges they faced when translating them, and find out their preference in choosing one strategy among other methods. This research method is a qualitative case study. First, content analysis outlined decision-making and translation issues such as domestication/foreignization strategies and general cultural allusion problems. Qualitative insights were given through semi-structured interviews with students about their experiences and strategic choices. The dual mode provided a detailed overview of translation strategies and issues, which added to the field of translations but also recommended advancements for training programs.

The key data sources for this study include: short stories made by Indonesian students; translated texts: the same short stories translated into English by the same students; and interviews with Participants: These give a qualitative perspective and more specificity about the translation process.

Purposive sampling was used in this study to include participants with appropriate experience in translating Indonesian short stories. Participants were trained in relevant areas that provided them with the skills and knowledge required to add meaningful input to their research. This study involved eleven students in the sixth semester of the English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Al Washliyah Medan. The students who entered the program in 2020 completed coursework that laid a critical groundwork for this research. In particular, they have completed two supporting courses: Theoretical Foundations of Translation, which was taken in the fourth semester and familiarised them with critical theories and principles, as well as Practice of Translating, that has been taken in the fifth semester, enabling them with practicum to translate texts from Indonesian to English languages and vice versa. Furthermore, in their course of Practice of Translating, these students were assigned to write a short story in Indonesian and publish the English version by translating it on their own. The twelve participants included one male and ten females aged 20-22. The students were eleven and ethnically diverse. In particular, there were six Javanese students, two Mandailingnese students, two Malay students, and one Acehnese student.

The study utilized two main instruments, translation tasks and semi-structured interview guides. Translation tasks is A set of tasks in which the short stories highlighting cultural references were translated from Indonesian to English. Cultural references included idioms, customs, traditions, historical references, social norms, geographic identifiers for places, food terms, and other culturally centered words/phrases. It sought to investigate how students handled these processes in their translations, their strategies of domestication and foreignization, and the resulting



difficulties they experienced. Semi-structured interview guides were created to investigate explicitly coming up with translation methods and challenges. Interview questions were targeted at what students encountered when translating cultural references, how they made decisions for them, specific problems that arose, and the tools utilized. This semi-structured audio format helped us have in-depth conversations while allowing for the flexibility of sharing tips. Semi-structured interview guides related to the experiences of student translators regarding cultural references the guides were aimed to elicit information on different translation strategies and obstacles. The three sections focused on other elements of the translation process, giving a rule-based structure to how students make choices and where they struggle.

Table 1 Semi-Structured Interview Guides: Exploring Student Experiences with Cultural References

Sections	Questions	Purposes
General Translation Challenges	1. Can you describe any general challenges you face when translating elements like idioms, traditions, customs, food items, names, places, or historical references from Indonesian to English?	To identify broad challenges in the translation process.
	2. How do you usually translate a complex idiom, tradition, or custom?	To understand the initial strategies and thought processes students employ
Specific Challenges with Cultural Elements	3. Can you give examples of idioms, traditions, or customs that were hard to translate? What made them tough?	To gather detailed instances and reasons for difficulties.
	4. When translating things like idioms or traditions, do you try to make them easier for English readers by using something more familiar, or do you keep them as they are to maintain the original culture? Why do you choose one approach over the other?	To explore the decision-making process between making the text more familiar to the target audience and preserving the original cultural elements
Influence of Challenges on Strategy Choice	5. Can you tell about a time when a challenge made you decide whether to make something easier for English readers or to keep it the same?	To link specific challenges to the choice of strategy.
	6. Do you find that some aspects, like idioms or traditions, are more likely to be changed to something familiar for English readers or kept as they are? Why?	To identify patterns in strategy choice based on the type of element.



Reflection and Adaptation	7. After finishing a translation, do you reflect on your choices? Do you think about how you could have handled things like idioms or traditions differently?	To understand the reflective practices of students and their learning process.
	8. What tools or methods are most helpful in dealing with challenges like idioms, traditions, or customs? Do you use dictionaries online tools or ask others for help?	To identify valuable tools and methods that aid in the translation process.

Data collection involves original and translated texts by collect original Indonesian short stories and their English translations from participants, and interviews. Administering interviews to gain insights regarding the translation process. A qualitative research design was used to realize these aims. In analyzing the translated texts, a content analysis was used to identify domestication and foreignization strategies and to emphasize and provide some examples of common problem areas of cultural references. In addition, to enrich our understanding of student translator experiences, perceptions, and strategic choices, we employed semi-structured interviews. This varied data and methodological triangulation allowed for a more nuanced representation of young student translators' translation choices and decisions.

This study used data triangulation to make the findings more credible and valid for further research and applications. Using original short stories, translated texts, and semi-structured interviews with student translators in parallel to ensure data triangulation. Triangulating these sources was intended to cross-validate the data and obtain an in-depth insight about the translation process. This made it possible to gain a better insight into the student translators' strategies and difficulties in self-translating cultural references from Indonesian short stories to English. Triangulation also reduced biases and increased the overall trustworthiness of the research results. The ethical integrity of the research was maintained by taking the following steps:

1. Informed Consent: All students in this study signed the informed consent before data collection. Once again, this included offering background on the study's objective, procedures used, risks and benefits involved, and confirmation that participation was entirely voluntary.
2. Anonymity and Confidentiality: Students remained anonymous, as did their translations during the research process and in this report. The identity of participants was protected through de-identification or coding, and data were stored securely with measures in place to prevent unauthorized access.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Strategies Employed by Student Translators

The following section contains the findings from an analysis of English translations of Indonesian short stories produced by students. The first strategy is domestication, which adapts the text to be more familiar and accessible to the target

audience, which may come at the cost of cultural independence. In contrast, the second is foreignization, which retains many of the original context-dependent elements from ST, maintaining its exotic identity.

Table 2 Approaches Used for Translating Cultural References

Cultural References	Original Indonesian Text	Translated English Text	Strategy Used	Approach Used
Terms of Address	“Kak”	Omitted	Simplification	Domestication
	“Mas”	Omitted	Simplification	Domestication
	“Mbak”	“Omitted”	Simplification	Domestication
	“Nak”	Omitted	Simplification	Domestication
	“Ayah”	“Father”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
	“Ibu”	“Mother”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
	“Bu”	“Mom”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
	“Bun”	“Mom”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
	“Mak”	“Mom”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
	“Yah”	“Dad”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
	“Om”	“Uncle”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
	“Tante”	“Auntie”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
	“Pah”	“Daddy”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
	“Papa”	“Daddy”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
	“Mama”	“Mom”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
	“Bapak-bapak”	“Gentlemen”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
	“Ibu-ibu”	“Ladies”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
“Pak”	“Sir”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication	
“Kakek Robi”	Grandpa Robi”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication	
Flora	“bunga lili putih”	“white lily”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
Personal Names	“Karyo”	“Karyo”	Preservation	Foreignization
	“Sudirman”	“Sudirman”	Preservation	Foreignization



Indonesian Food Company	“perusahaan Indofood”	“Indofood company”	Adaptation	Domestication
Indonesian Foods	“roti bakar”	“toasted bread”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
	“ayam bakar”	“grilled chicken”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
	“donat isi coklat”	“chocolate filled donut”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
School Systems	“kelas 3 SMA”	“the 3rd grade of high school”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
	“kelas 2 SMA”	“grade 2 of high school”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
	“IPA dan IPS”	“Science and Social Sciences”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
	“UN”	“National Examination”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
Religious Practices	“Maghrib”	“Maghrib”	Preservation	Foreignization
	“Assalamualaikum”	“Assalamualaikum”	Preservation	Foreignization
	“Alhamdulillah”	“Alhamdulillah”	Preservation	Foreignization
	“Adzan”	“call to prayer”	Adaptation	Domestication
	“Allah”	“Allah”	Preservation	Foreignization
	“Astaghfirullah’ladzim”	“Astaghfirullah’ladzim”	Preservation	Foreignization
	“aamiin”	“amen”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
Cultural/Supernatural Entities	“genderuwo”	“genderuwo”	Preservation	Foreignization
Slang Terms	“menjombo”	“single”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
	“cikiwir”	“cikiwir”	Preservation	Foreignization
	“cowok”	“guy”	Cultural Substitution	Domestication
	“membolos”	“skipped school”	Adaptation	Domestication
Idiomatic Expression	“keras kepala”	“stubborn”	Adaptation	Domestication



	“cuci mata”	“washing the eyes.”	Literal Translation	Domestication
	“dadaku naik turun”	“My chest rises and falls”	Literal Translation	Domestication
Places	“alun-alun kota”	“town square”	Adaptation	Domestication
Social Norms and Etiquette	“Ibuku pasti memarahiku atas keterlambat anku sampai di rumah.”	“My mother must have scolded me for my late arrival at home.”	Adaptation	Domestication
	“Gak usah pake mandi-mandi segala sil, kelamaan, lagian lo tetep cantik kok walaupun belum mandi',eits indra mulai mengeluarkan jurus lelakinya padaku. “Yaudah aku ganti baju kalau gitu,” sahutku.”	“You don't have to take a bath all the time; after all, you're still beautiful even though you haven't taken a bath', Eits Indra started to cast his male moves on me. “Okay, I'll change my clothes then' I said.”	Adaptation	Domestication
	“Malam Tahun Baru”	“New Year’s Eve”	Cultural substitution	Domestication

Indonesian short stories that have been translated into English seem to favor domestication in their translation, providing a more reader-friendly text for those who speak English. But, it comes at the cost of losing a considerable amount of cultural context and text-specific nuance.

Translational pairings for address terms indicate a steered simplification. Omitting problematic terms of address like Kak, Mas, and Nak is especially difficult because it diminishes the familial relationships embedded in Indonesian speech acts. Even though "Ayah" and "Ibu" can be translated literally as "Father" and "Mother," this approach may lack the formal or intimate level of the original words. Likewise, while "Tante" is rendered as "Auntie" and "Om" as "Uncle" to keep informal family tones intact, the cultural overtones are not preserved.



One curious thing is when "Bapak-bapak" is translated as "gentlemen" and "Ibu-ibu" as "ladies." These translations capture the direct meanings, but may not express the same level of respect and formality as provided in Indonesian. Both "Bapak-bapak" and "Ibu-ibu" in Indonesian culture may be used to politely address a group of older men or women, like English Sir / Madam. It takes away from the formality of the words gentlemen and ladies if you translate them.

But even "Bun" and "Yah," simplifying them to just "Mom" and "Dad," are faithful to the family relationship but also dangerously over-simplify cultural ideas of respect and affection. While Kakek Robi translates into English as "Grandpa Robi," there's the familial connection of that title but maybe not as much warmth and familiarity.

These translations serve but are somewhat utilitarian; they lose some of the culture found here that can be unpacked and clear to an English-speaking audience. The foreignisation that retains personal names like "Karyo" and "Sudirman" is a good example because it maintains cultural identity and authenticity. However, leaving the cultural context intact in this manner is both accurate and honorable to the story. Retaining these names is a cultural anchor point for English readers to stay within the original culture. On the other hand, "perusahaan Indofood" is translated to "Indofood company," which retains its cultural element while still being understandable to English readers. This is an exact translation, but it also makes sense in English, which does the job of keeping the company's identity to have their English audience understand.

The translations of Indonesian foods, such as roti bakar to toasted bread and ayam bakar to grilled chicken, aim to make these kinds of food more comprehensible for the reader of English. These transparent translations do not color the ideas with rich cultural overtones. For example, roti bakar is a different kind of toasted bread served with unique toppings or filling sprinkled with grated chocolate. It is famous as street food all over Indonesia. Another copy is like "ayam bakar" in Indonesian cuisine, a grilled chicken dish packed with flavors. For instance, the keyword "donat isi coklat" can be translated to "chocolate-filled donut," which is accurate but also loses the uniqueness of this Indonesian food. Perhaps a one-sentence description or original term continued with an explanation would allow the weight of the culinary-related word to touch English speakers more fully.

The domestication of school system terms such as "kelas 3 SMA" to "the 3rd grade of high school" and "kelas 2 SMA" to "grade 2 of high school" ensures clarity but lacks sufficient context about the Indonesian education system. While these translations are precise, adding explanatory notes would enhance accuracy and provide the necessary context for English-speaking readers.

In the domain of religious practices, the foreignization of terms like "Maghrib," "Assalamualaikum," "Alhamdulillah," and "Astaghfirullah'ladzim" preserves their spiritual and cultural significance, which is crucial for maintaining the original context. However, translating "Adzan" to "call to prayer" domesticates the term,



losing its specific cultural connotations. Retaining the original term with a brief explanation might be more appropriate. Similarly, translating "aamiin" to "amen" is functionally equivalent but slightly shifts the religious context, as "amen" is primarily associated with Christianity, whereas "aamiin" is used in Islamic prayers.

Retaining the term "genderuwo" for cultural and supernatural entities is accurate and preserves the cultural essence. Providing a brief explanation or footnote about what a "genderuwo" is would enhance understanding for readers unfamiliar with Indonesian folklore. For slang terms like "menjombo" (single), "cowok" (guy), and "membolos" (skipped school), the translations are effective in conveying the intended meaning but lose the informal and cultural nuances of the original terms. The foreignization of "cikiwir" retains the original slang but lacks clarity without context, highlighting the need for explanatory notes.

Idiomatic expressions such as "keras kepala" (stubborn) and "cuci mata" (washing the eyes) are translated in a way that is clear to English readers but does not convey the original idiomatic nuances. For example, "cuci mata" means to enjoy a pleasant view or to relax one's eyes, and translating it as "washing the eyes" is literal but loses the idiomatic meaning. Translating idioms requires balancing literal meaning with cultural context, which is not fully achieved here.

While a translation of alun-alun kota is just town square, not all of that term's meaning has been faithfully reproduced. As a term, "town square" comes close to replicating the literal sense of the term used in their context. Still, at the same time, it does not cover all aspects of what "alun-alun kota" is as an idea or concept within Indonesian culture and history. More than just a physical place with wide-open public space between the city's central square, "alun-alun kota" is a focal point of social activities and events in Indonesian society. Greater clarity, perhaps with a few notes of cultural context toward the significance of this object in its own culture for English-reading audiences, would have been more in line with those practices of preserving cultural authenticity in translation.]

English translations of social norms and etiquette are often stripped of their tone and respect. Example: Ibuku pasti memarahiku kalo telat sampe rumah (My mother must have scolded me for late getting home). Despite the seeming informal tone of the original text, it is a very formal and respectful way to convey a written thought. Likewise, other casual phrases, such as Gak usah pake mandi-mandi segala sil, or You do not have to shower so much (a reminder that the translation may lose its laid-back feel, too). This bit about coming home late or not being clean before meeting somebody might be cultural and does not translate too well in Bahasa Indonesia. Terms such as "Malam tahun baru" (New Year's Eve), which can be simply translated into English to the cultural representation of new_year_eve, lose their implicit meaning. Providing additional context or explanatory notes may help English readers here, perhaps to ensure that the translation retains something of the cultural warmth of Indonesian text.

To wrap up, Indonesian short stories translated into English have differences with regard to the strategies applied by student translators in translating. Some want



it to be clear to English readers; others need the original culture and richness embedded. Some reach a happy medium; others may lose meaning. Translators should navigate between these two approaches so that English-speaking audiences can receive both alternative access to the original work and its cultural meaning. Further explanations can help readers understand the cultural environment of the stories, he said.

3.2 Challenges Faced by Student Translators

The challenges in the translation of cultural references are numerous, as revealed through an exploration of student translator experiences. They face challenges such as language barriers and cultural differences. Nonetheless, students employ various strategies to meet these challenges as they reconcile cultural representational correctness with readability.

1. **Wide-ranging translation challenges:** Using more expansive text, students need to deal with many different aspects of linguistic differences and cultural nuances. This is obviously with the intention that a non-Japanese reader will understand the terminology, and thus, they will tend to translate the term directly without verifying whether everything corresponds. This highlights domestication, focusing more on the legibility of texts than their exact cultural significance.
2. **Translating Difficult Aspects:** The students don't write only to show how culture is embedded in language; they seem aware that translating some aspects in a way that most closely resembles English gives them the best chance of getting their point across, but at the same time this may lead to leaving out cultural subtleties. This is a domestication strategy in the sense of clarity.
3. **Specific Challenges with Cultural Elements:** Cultural components like greetings are converted directly into English, utilizing the maintenance of equivalence or context. While this enhances readability, it does come at the cost of cultural detail since domestication is applied to strengthen intelligibility.
4. **Translation Decision Process:** The process ensures the translated text is easy to read for English audiences, preferring more literal translations of cultural ideas to fill in the gaps.
5. **Cultural challenges induce strategies that focus on clarity and understanding at the expense of sophistication;** complex concepts are made digestible for the effective reader in English by sacrificing their richness.
6. **Element type — Patterns in strategy choice:** the patterns for driving literal translations work but differ based on element importance. In this selective domestication, some elements are adapted for the sake of transparency while still retaining cultural context.
7. **Reflecting and Adapting:** When reflecting on their translations, students are able to further hone in strategies of domestication for a more effective message across the language barriers.



8. Resources and Strategies: Even while emphasizing domestication, students use various resources for accuracy, bridging cultural and linguistic gaps surprisingly well.

Overall, the interview results shed light on what student translators do to deal with difficulties in cross-cultural translation by giving more weight to domestication. Hence, it makes reading and understanding more manageable for an English-speaking audience. The decision-making between the fidelity to the original and the need for accessibility is alluded to, indicating that such translations are the results of a considered process.

3.3 Influence of Challenges on Strategic Choices

As shown in the results of the interviews, these challenges encountered by student translators play an essential role in shaping individual differences and their approach toward translation. Predominantly, linguistic differences and cultural diversity are challenging for translators to act strategically. When students conduct their translation, they often choose between domestication and foreignization strategies. Domestication entails the adaptation of a text for a target language reader to produce an easily readable and intelligible translation, even if it can often emerge as literal translations that, in everyday practice, lose sight of their exact cultural nuances. This method makes sure that the translated text can be understood by English readers as quickly as possible. On the other hand, foreignization retains aspects of the source culture and source language—even if strange or obscure to the target audience at first.

These strategic decisions are influenced significantly by cultural sensitivity and awareness. Student translators face the challenge of balancing fidelity to the original text with ease of reading for its intended readership. It is essential to keep this balance because it directly affects the quality and authenticity of the translated work. If they are not tackled correctly, the translation may be incoherent or fail to convey precisely what the original words meant.

Thus, student translators would need to consider the impact of these challenges when developing their strategies for translating faithfully and with communicative competence. Such a contingency-based model of decision splitting reveals the intricacies and subtleties inherent to cross-cultural translational practices, thereby underscoring achieving a harmonious balance between domestication and foreignization and accommodating the needs of readers from various cultural backgrounds.

3.4 Evaluation and Interpretation of Findings

The study shows that student translators use domestication strategies in translating Indonesian short stories into English, targeting English readers to make the works more accessible. This, however, caused the loss of some cultural specificities. Individuals with foreign names were still kept, which may be a cultural term but is food related, so they remain the same and have their original words



retained occasionally; however, slang does not seem to contain sentiments with cultural richness and taste. There were challenges, such as balancing between reaching cultural authenticity and writing understandably or saying certain emotional undertones through different languages. Online tools, dictionaries, and peer/expert assistance were effective strategies.

One of the trends they noticed was that authors tend to favor domestication strategies rather than foreignization, pointing towards prioritization of reader fluidity and accessibility. However, this sometimes minimized cultural elements, most evident in food items and slang shorthands. A further trend was the use of external resources, such as online tools and dictionaries, to demonstrate their place in facilitating the process of translating. Shortly after, constant self-reflection and feedback loops were key for improving translation skills and shaping strategic decisions.

The findings of the study are relevant for translation studies and teaching translation. First, it is essential to teach students to call a balance between Cultural denotes and the definition of readability. A good approach would be to challenge students with questions to evaluate their translation from both a linguistic and cultural perspective, i.e., the text may have lost much of its embedded culture due to domestication, or the opposite effect might arise if foreignization was taken too far, secondly, through the incorporation of pragmatic tools into university translation classes that allow for students to tackle challenges head-on. Finally, by promoting a reflective and feedback-oriented learning environment, students will be better prepared for accurate translations that convey the intended meaning with cultural resonance.

3.5 Practical Implications and Recommendations

This research tracks cultural reference translation as a *sine qua non*, steering student translators toward effective practices. Thus, a translation program must find some middle ground while keeping cultural context in mind, with the release aimed at an English-speaking audience. Translation curricula must-have modules on domestication and foreignization theory integrated with practical exercises about the cultural complexities of translations.

Training in online translation tools, dictionaries, and resources supports accurate translations but conveys cultural authenticity. Such tools help translate idioms, traditions, and value systems better, promoting translatable practices and restoring faith in the cultural gap between languages.

Self-assessment and feedback to encourage reflection can help hone translation skills. Assessment should challenge accuracy and cultural authenticity, helping to build students' contextual knowledge. Real-life examples and projects give practical experience through different culture-related references and practices that make students prepare to face any translation challenge with confidence.

Cultural translation is supplemented with workshops and seminars in functional expertise such as cultural competence, idiomatic expressions, and contextual



understanding. A collaborative learning community that fosters peer and expert consultation for new strategies to preserve cultural richness yet balances clarity and engagement to the English reader. By following these recommendations, translation programs can generate better translations that communicate cultural resonance at its very core. It increases proficiency and prepares students to communicate across cultures.

4. CONCLUSION

The research indicates that student translators prefer domestication strategies to make original texts more readable for English readers. While this strategy makes the text more approachable, it sometimes sacrifices cultural peculiarities from the original Indonesian tales. The research sheds light on how translation choices preserve or change the cultural context by analyzing student translators' approaches to self-translate cultural references found in Indonesian short stories into English.

Student translators face linguistic differences and cultural diversity, amongst other challenges, that greatly influence their strategic decision-making as they juggle between staying faithful to the original and rendering it more accessible. The focus on some practical translation problems and solutions in this study also helps us better understand translating literature across cultures, which is an essential theme from both a theoretical and empirical standpoint.

The research is essential for academia and practice, as it has contributions to translation studies that offer implications for curriculum development, teaching methodologies, and assessment strategies within university translation programs while remaining focused on student experience. These recommendations enable programs to produce effective and high-quality translations from the values associated with the native language; this improves proficiency enhancement, easing fluid exchanges in cross-cultural communication.

The strengths of this study are based upon its in-depth capture of student translators' decision-making process and the real-life obstacles they face, relevance to the academic literary translation discourse, and offering constructive feedback for enhancing translation training programs. Regarding contributing to theory, a qualitative case study in one or two language pairs and cultures can hardly yield generalized findings. Still, only influential data with research implications contrasted with standardized assumptions about desired end states of meaning between languages (both structurally and culturally).

Finally, this research answers the questions regarding cultural translation elements and provides suggestions for improving translation education. Translators can enhance cross-cultural literary communication and cultural appreciation through translation by addressing these challenges effectively. Further research can examine other language pairings and include mixed-method approaches to provide a broader perspective on literary translation practices across cultures.

Future studies should link these results with broader translation literature, provide clear illustrations of hurdles in translating, and make specific curriculum suggestions



for improvement in training. Finally, a research design that could confirm the study's hypotheses with more substantial external validity through more quantitative methods (i.e., experimental and extensive survey) and qualitative ones. Research on a broader range of languages and cultures could improve understanding translational norms. In addition, some simple guidelines on evaluating readability and cultural accuracy in translations could be created to provide valuable pointers when working towards improved translation quality and education.

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