Translation Strategies for Cultural Terms in Mandarin Language in the Subtitles of the Film 'Aftershock'

Megawati Putri[1]; Nurochman[2]; Hukmawati[3]
Megawatiputri330@gmail.com
Sastra Tiongkok, Universitas Gunadarma, Depok, Jawa Barat

Abstract

Literary works are a medium used by authors to convey ideas and concepts. Literature usually takes the form of a socially-oriented work, such as films. Films are creations that narrate the social or cultural life of a society. This research aims to determine the classification and translation strategies of cultural terms in the film "Aftershock." The method used in this research is qualitative descriptive. The approach used in this study is a case study, describing cultural terms and their translation strategies. The object of this research is the film "Aftershock." There are two theories used in this research: Newmark (1988) for cultural terms and Mona Baker (2011) for translation strategies. The data collection technique used is transcription. The results of this research include the classification of cultural term categories and the translation strategies used in translating cultural terms. The most frequently encountered cultural term category is social culture, and the most frequently encountered translation strategy is the use of more general words.

Keyword: *Culture, Movie, Language, Subtitle, Translation*

Introduction

Literary work is a medium used by every author to convey ideas or experiences (Sugihastuti, 2007: 81-82). Wellek and Warren, as cited in Pasaribu (2021: 1), further state that literary works are institutions that use language as a mediator, just as language is a creation of society. Literary works are social in nature, existing within a society with

growing norms that are used within that society. The forms of literary works are not only written works such as novels, poetry, but also include drama and film (Pasaribu, 2021: 3-4).

McDonald in Mariana (2014: 124) states that film is a multimedia tool that has existed since ancient times. Films have become a part of human life, from the early 19th century until now and in the future (Andrianto, 2010: 11). Besides being used for entertainment, films also play a significant role in teaching someone to understand something (Mariana, 2014: 124). Generally, humans tend to comprehend things better through hearing and seeing directly.

Gayus Siagian in Sekti (2009: 101) says that films based on everyday experiences and beautiful landscapes have educational value. Therefore, films provide a deeper understanding of other countries and nations, their customs, and cultures. Not only in Indonesia, but China also possesses a vast and well-known literary heritage globally. Additionally, films from China are widely appreciated by people worldwide, especially in Indonesia (Pasaribu, 2021: 2-3).

Aftershock 《唐山大地震 *Tángshān dà dìzhèn*》 is a Mandarin-language Chinese film that serves as a historical tribute to the 1976 earthquake disaster. The movie was released on July 22, 2010, and directed by Feng Xiaogang. Aftershock 《唐山大地震 *Tángshān dà dìzhèn*》 tells the story of a family consisting of Da Qiang, Yuan Ni, Fang Deng, and Fang Da in Tangshan, China. The story begins with the devastating earthquake that claimed numerous lives and reduced most buildings to rubble. Fang Deng and Fang Da find themselves trapped on different sides, and Yuan Ni must choose which one to save. With a heavy heart, she chooses to save her son. Unbeknownst to Yuan Ni, her daughter Fang Deng is still alive but decides to leave her family. Subsequently, Fang Deng is adopted by a Chinese soldier who was serving during that time. 32 years later, unexpectedly while volunteering in Tangshan, Fang Deng is reunited with her mother and younger brother. Her mother deeply regrets her past actions, and Fang Deng realizes how little she thought about her own mother during those 32 years.

Currently, the world of film translation is well-known, and its results are greatly enjoyed by film enthusiasts (Haq, 2017:101). Generally, translation is understood as a profession where someone translates or adapts one language into another, either in oral form (interpreter) or in written form (translator) (Maharani, 2019: 10). The act of translation is not merely about directly changing the source language into the target language; a language translator must be aware of and consider the conventions of each language in the translation process (Maharani, 2019: 11). Subtitles are one of the commonly used materials for translation.

Film translation (subtitling) is very popular, even though it is not an easy task (Brahmana, 2018: 7). Subtitles are often referred to as "subtitling." According to Gottlieb (2005) in Ilyas (2019: 156), subtitling is "the translation of transient polysemiotic texts presented onscreen to mass audiences." The focus of this definition lies in the type of text being translated, the media in which the text is presented, and the target audience for the text.

The definition of translation that encompasses cultural elements is explained by Shuttleworth and Cowie in Utami (2019: 15), stating that a translation is produced without neglecting the target culture. This is because language users significantly influence communicative acts. This is in line with Hoed's (2006:82) argument that the challenges in translation often arise from language customs (usage) and language styles, which are integral parts of culture. The term "culture" becomes one of the interesting categories in translation to understand the culture of a specific country.

In the field of translation, these terms must be given significant attention. The cultural terms that researchers focus on here are Chinese social cultural terms (Maharani, 2019: 10). Therefore, Chinese social cultural terms must be taken into careful consideration, especially in the field of translation. With the long history of China, a diverse range of Chinese social cultural terms has emerged, which becomes a crucial point to be observed (Maharani, 2019: 10).

This research aims to explore the importance and necessity of cultural term translation because language and culture are closely interconnected in translation (Isnaeni, 2018: 36). Language is depicted as the identity of a society that cannot be separated from culture. Therefore, the researcher attempts to investigate the translation of cultural terms in the subtitles of the film "Aftershock 《唐山大地震 *Tángshān dà dìzhè*》," which uses Mandarin as the source language and Indonesian as the target language.

1. Cultural Term Theory

Newmark (1988) proposed several categories of cultural terms, wich are: (1) Ecological culture (flora, fauna, place names, seasons) (2) Material culture (food, drinks, clothing, buildings, residences, transportation, archaeology) (3) Social culture (occupations, kinship terms, entertainment, sports, arts), (4) Organization, traditions, beliefs, concepts (artistic, historical terms, international terms, politics) (5) Body language and habits.

2. Translation Strategy Theory

Several translation strategies proposed by Mona Baker (2011) wich are: (1) Using more general words (2) Using neutral words (3) Using cultural substitution (4) Using borrowing with explanation (5) Using paraphrase with related words (6) Using paraphrase with unrelated words (7) Deletion (8) Using illustrations.

Method

This research uses a qualitative descriptive research method. Moleong (2010: 6) defines qualitative research as a study aimed at understanding phenomena, such as behavior, perception, motivation, and actions experienced by research subjects, in a holistic manner through description using words and language in a specific natural context, utilizing various scientific methods. Therefore, the researcher classifies the categories of cultural terms and translation strategies used in the subtitles of the film "Aftershock 《唐山大地震 *Tángshān dà dìzhèn*》."

The data collection technique used in this research is the observation and note-taking technique. The observation method is employed in language research by observing language usage in the studied object (Sudaryanto, 2015:203). This is followed by the note-taking technique, which involves recording data from the research object using writing

instruments or specific instruments. As explained by Sudaryanto (2015:205-206), note-taking can be done after the first or second technique is completed using specific writing tools.

Based on the methods and techniques used, the steps taken in this research include: (1) Watching and comprehending the entire storyline of the film "Aftershock 《唐山大地震 *Tángshān dà dìzhèn*》" (2) Transcribing and marking cultural terms found in the film (3) Identifying and classifying data from cultural terms based on the categories found in the film (4) Identifying and describing the translation strategies used in the film.

The data analysis technique in this research involves using several literary sources to support the accuracy in describing the data findings. These sources include the Xinhua Chinese Dictionary (新华汉语词典 *Xīnhuá hànyǔ cídiǎn*), the Modern Chinese Dictionary 7th edition (现代汉语词典.第 7 版 *Xiàndài hànyǔ cídiǎn dì 7 bǎn*), the Medium Mandarin-Indonesian and Indonesian-Mandarin Dictionary (Silvia: 2014), and 百度 *Bǎidù* in both Mandarin (source language) and Indonesian (target language) using the Great Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) (2016). These dictionaries and sources are utilized to ensure the accuracy and clarity in explaining the data findings related to cultural terms and translation strategies in the film "Aftershock 《唐山大地震 *Tángshān dà dìzhèn*》."

Results

The results of the research, which involved classifying the categories of cultural terms and translation strategies used in the subtitles of the film "Aftershock 《唐山大地震 *Tángshān dà dìzhèn*》," showed that there were 106 data that represented cultural terms, divided into 5 categories of cultural terms. Specifically, there were 19 data in the category of ecological culture, 20 data in the category of material culture, 30 data in the category of social culture, 17 data in the category of organizational, traditional, belief, and concept culture, and 20 data in the category of body language and habits culture.

This research utilizes the cultural term theory proposed by Newmark (1988) as the basis for identifying the categories found in the subtitle transcript of the film "Aftershock 《唐山大地震 *Tángshān dà dìzhèn*》." From the analysis, it was found that there are 106 cultural term data in the film, which can be divided into 5 categories:

1. **Ecological Culture**

From the data analysis, there are 19 data in this category:

Table 1. Ecological Culture

8:23	Bsu	我要**天安门**的
		*Wǒ yào **tiān'ānmén** de*
	Bsa	Aku ingin **Lapangan Tiananmen** satu.

Lapangan Tiananmen is a historic building in China that was constructed during the Ming and Qing dynasties and has become the National Museum of China, attracting global attention. Therefore, 天安门 (*tiān'ānmén*), which means Tiananmen Square, falls into the category of ecological culture under place names.

2. Material Culture

From the data analysis, there are 20 data in this category:

Table 2. Material Culture

24:02	Bsu	你快去抱着孩子上**唐山机场**吧
		Nǐ kuài qù bàozhe háizi shàng tángshān jīchǎng ba
	Bsa	Cepat bawa dia ke **bandara Tangshan**

Tangshan Airport (唐山机场 *tángshān jīchǎng*) refers to the airport located in the city of Tangshan, Hebei province, known as Tangshan Sannvhe Airport. Therefore, 唐山机场 *tángshān jīchǎng*, which means Tangshan Airport, falls into the category of material culture under buildings.

3. Social Culture

From the data analysis, there are 30 data in this category:

Table 3. Social Culture

1:12:09	Bsu	**护士**都夸你漂亮
		***Hùshì** dōu kuā nǐ piàoliang*
	Bsa	Para**perawat** mengatakan bahwa kamu sangat cantik.

A nurse is someone who works as a healthcare professional responsible for caring for patients. Therefore, 护士 (*hùshì*), which means "nurse" in Indonesian, falls into the category of social culture under the occupation section.

4. Organization, Traditions, Beliefs, Concepts

From the data analysis, there are 17 data in this category:

Table 4. Organization, Traditions, Beliefs, Concepts

1:10:10	Bsu	我都是每年**春节**的时候回趟老家
		*Wǒ dū shì měinián **chūnjié** de shíhòu huí tàng lǎojiā*
	Bsa	Aku kemabli ke rumah pada **Tahun Baru**.

春节 (*chūnjié*) is one of the important celebrations in China, observed on the first day of the first month in the lunar calendar. Therefore, 春节 (*chūnjié*), which means "Spring Festival" or "Chinese New Year," falls into the category of cultural terms related to the concept of historical terms.

5. Body Language and Habits

From the data analysis, there are 20 data in this category:

Table 5. Body Language and Habits

	Bsu	没骗你
9:00		*Méi piàn nǐ*
	Bsa	Aku tidak **berbohong**.

Lying is something done not in accordance with the truth or a trick to deceive. Therefore, 骗 (*piàn*), which means "lying" in Indonesian, falls into the category of cultural terms under the section of habits.

Translation Strategies

This research uses the translation strategy theory proposed by Mona Baker (2011) as the basis for analyzing the translation strategies used in translating cultural terms in the subtitle transcript of the film "Aftershock 《唐山大地震 *Tángshān dà dìzhèn*》." From the analysis, it was found that there are 106 data representing the translation strategies used by the translator in translating cultural terms in the film. These strategies can be divided into 5 out of 8 categories, which are as follows:

1. **Using More General Words**

From the data analysis, there are 68 data for this strategy, and the following are examples of this strategy:

Table 6. Using More General Words

	Bsu	大小**伙子**了得注意形象
47:05		*Dà xiǎo **huǒzi** liǎo dé zhùyì xíngxiàng*
	Bsa	**Pria** muda perlu terlihat hebat.

Based on the Mandarin definition from 百度 Bǎidù, it is explained that 伙子 (*huǒzi*) refers to a young man. According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) (2016), the word "pria" is classified as a noun and means an adult male. Therefore, the translation of 伙子 (*huǒzi*) as "pria" using a more general word is more commonly known in the target language culture.

2. **Using Neutral Words**

From the data analysis, there are 10 data for this strategy, and the following are examples of this strategy:

Table 7. Using Neutral Words

	Bsu	长大了可以**搞文艺**
28:41		*Zhǎng dàle kěyǐ **gǎo wényì***
	Bsa	Dia bisa menjadi seorang **aktris** ketika ia besar nanti.

Based on the Medium Mandarin-Indonesian, Indonesian-Mandarin Dictionary (2014: 98-452), the word 搞 (*gǎo*) is classified as a verb, meaning to do, organize, create, or cause. The word 文艺 (*wényì*) is classified as a noun, meaning literature and arts. According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) (2016), an "aktris" is a woman who plays a role

in performances such as drama, stage plays, radio, television, or film. Therefore, it can be concluded that the term 搞 文艺 (*gǎo wényì*) in the source language refers to women who work in the field of arts and literature, such as actresses and others. Hence, in the target language, it is commonly referred to as "aktris" or "actress."

3. **Using Cultural Substitution**

From the data analysis, there are 18 data for this strategy, and the following are examples of this strategy:

Table 8. Using Cultural Subtitution

27:12	Bsu	你的**爸爸妈妈**呢
		*Nǐ de **bàba māmā** ne*
	Bsa	Dimana **orangtua**mu?

Based on the Medium Mandarin-Indonesian, Indonesian-Mandarin Dictionary (2014: 183), the word 爸爸 (*bàba*) is classified as a noun, meaning papa, father, or dad. The word 妈妈 (*māmā*) is also classified as a noun, meaning mama, mother, or mom. Based on the explanation above, the term 爸爸妈妈 (*bàba māmā*) is translated as "orang tua" (parents) using cultural substitution. According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) (2016), "orang tua" refers to two people, the biological father and mother. Therefore, it can be concluded that 爸爸妈妈 (*bàba māmā*) is translated as "orang tua" (parents), which is more commonly known in the target language culture.

4. **Using Paraphrase With Unrelated Words**

From the data analysis, there are 6 data for this strategy, and the following are examples of this strategy:

Table 9. Using Paraphrase With Unrelated Words

9:45	Bsu	方登嗑**瓜子**嗑大头 方达也嗑大头
		*Fāng dēng kē **guāzǐ** kē dàtóu fāng dá yě kē dàtóu*
	Bsa	Jika salah satu punya **cemilan biji bunga matahari**, yang satunya juga mau.

Based on the 现代汉语词典 (*Xiàndài hànyǔ cídiǎn*) edition 7 (2017: 473), the word 瓜子 (*guāzǐ*) is classified as a noun, meaning sunflower seeds. Based on the explanation above, the term 瓜子 (*guāzǐ*) is translated as "sunflower seeds" using paraphrase with related words. However, in the target language, the term 瓜子 (*guāzǐ*) already has its equivalent, which is "kuaci" or "kwaci" in an informal form. According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) (2016), "kuaci" refers to dried and salted seeds of watermelon, sunflower, pumpkin, and others (eaten as snacks). Therefore, it can be concluded that 瓜子 (*guāzǐ*) is translated as "cemilan biji bunga matahari" (sunflower seed snacks) because it has a related meaning in the target language.

5. **Deletion**

From the data analysis, there are 4 data for this strategy, and the following are examples of this strategy:

Table 10. Deletion

29:07	Bsu	他们的照片都在**唐山市救灾办**
		Tāmen de zhàopiàn dōu zài tángshān shì jiùzāi bàn
	Bsa	Fotonya telah diposting di **kantor penyelamatan darurat**

According to the Mandarin definition from 百度 *Bǎidù*, it explains 唐山是位于河北省东部、华北平原东北部，南临渤海，北依燕山，毗邻京津，地处华北与东北通道的咽喉要地。*Tángshān shì wèiyú héběi shěng dōngbù, huáběi píngyuán dōngběi bù, nán lín bóhǎi, běi yī yànshān, pílín jīng jīn, de chù huáběi yǔ dōngběi tōngdào de yānhóu yào dì.* It means Tangshan is located in the eastern part of Hebei Province and the northeastern part of the North China Plain, bordered by the Bohai Sea to the south, Yanshan Mountain to the north, and adjacent to Beijing and Tianjin. It is a crucial location in the throat of the passage between North China and Northeast China.

According to the Medium Mandarin-Indonesian, Indonesian-Mandarin Dictionary (2014: 11-366), 唐山市救灾办 *tángshān shì jiùzāi bàn* is translated as "Tangshan Emergency Rescue Office," combining the meanings of 市 (shì) meaning "city," 救灾 (jiùzāi) as "emergency rescue," and 办 (bàn) as "office" or "bureau."

Based on the explanation above, 唐山市救灾办 (*tángshān shì jiùzāi bàn*) should be translated to "Tangshan City Disaster Relief Office." However, the translator omitted the translation for "Tangshan" (唐山 *tángshān*).

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the translation strategies for cultural terms in the subtitle transcript of the film "Aftershock 《唐山大地震 *Tángshān dà dìzhèn*》," it is shown that there are 106 data representing cultural terms, divided into 5 categories of cultural terms. Specifically, there were 19 data in the category of ecological culture, 20 data in the category of material culture, 30 data in the category of social culture, 17 data in the category of organizational, traditional, belief, and concept culture, and 20 data in the category of body language and habits culture. Additionally, out of the 8 translation strategies used by the translator, only 5 were employed, which are as follows: (1) using more general words, with 68 data; (2) using neutral words, with 10 data; (3) replacing cultural terms, with 18 data; (4) paraphrasing with related words, with 6 data; and (5) using deletion, with 4 data.

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