



# Translation Ideology in the Indonesian-English Translation of Culture-Bound Words in Okky Madasari's Novel *Entrok*

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## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the translation of culture-bound words in Okky Madasari's novel *Entrok* and its English translation, *The Years of the Voiceless*. Using a descriptive qualitative method, this research examines 200 data points of culture-bound words classified according to Newmark's (1998) categories and explores the translation techniques and ideologies applied. The findings reveal that nine out of Molina and Albir's (2002) eighteen translation techniques were used, with adaptation being the most dominant technique with 59 items (29.5%), followed by established equivalent with 27 items (13.5%), borrowing with 26 items (13.0%), and description with 26 items (13.0%). Out of the 200 culture-bound words, 156 instances (78%) reflect domestication strategies, while 44 instances (22%) align with foreignization. These results indicate that domestication is the predominant translation ideology, as the translator tends to adjust Indonesian cultural elements to make them more accessible to English readers, though some foreignization is applied to preserve cultural authenticity. Beyond mapping techniques, this study highlights the cultural significance of *Entrok*, a novel deeply rooted in Javanese traditions, which underscores the challenges of rendering culture-specific meanings across languages. The findings not only contribute to translation studies by illustrating how ideology influences literary translation but also provide practical insights for translators and students in addressing culture-bound elements effectively.

**Keywords:** *translation, culture-bound words, translation techniques, domestication, foreignization*

## Introduction

Translation plays a crucial role in facilitating cross-cultural communication and knowledge exchange. It enables the transfer of literary, scientific, and cultural content across languages, helping people understand and appreciate foreign perspectives. Catford (1965) defines translation as the process of transferring meaning from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL) while achieving equivalence. Newmark (1988) further elaborates that translation should align with the author's intent while ensuring that the target audience comprehends the meaning accurately. However, translation becomes challenging when it involves culture-bound words, as they often lack direct equivalents in the target language.

Culture-bound words reflect the unique customs, traditions, and social contexts of a particular culture. Translators face difficulties in maintaining the original meaning while making the text accessible to target readers. Boas (1942) highlights that language is a reflection of culture, implying that translation is inevitably influenced by cultural factors. This creates a dilemma for translators: should they prioritize the cultural integrity of the source language (foreignization) or adapt the text to align with the target culture (domestication)?

Venuti (1995) introduces the concepts of domestication and foreignization as two primary translation ideologies. Domestication involves adapting the text to fit the target culture, making it more familiar and readable. On the other hand, foreignization preserves the foreign elements, maintaining the original cultural nuances. According to Hoed (2006), translation ideology is a key factor in shaping the final translation product, influencing how culture-bound words are rendered in the target language. Literary translation, particularly in novels, is an area where these translation ideologies come into play. Novels contain complex linguistic and cultural elements that require careful translation.

The present study focuses on Okky Madasari's *Entrok*, a novel recognized for its strong sociocultural critique and portrayal of Javanese traditions under the New Order regime. Madasari, a prominent Indonesian author and recipient of the Kusala Sastra Khatulistiwa award, is known for addressing issues of social injustice, tradition, and women's roles in Indonesian society. *Entrok* is particularly rich in Javanese cultural references, making it an ideal case for analyzing culture-bound words. The novel was translated into English as *The Years of the Voiceless* by Nurhayat Indriyatno Mohamed. Born and raised in Tanzania, Mohamed studied mechanical engineering at the University of Natal, Durban, South Africa, before moving to Indonesia at the age of 24, where he developed a strong interest in Indonesian culture and language.

His career as a translator began with the translation of Okky Madasari's work and later expanded to include award-winning Indonesian novels such as Erni Aladjai's *Kei* and Ahmad Tohari's *Bekisar Merah* (published in English as *The Red Bekisar*). Through these works, Mohamed has played an important role in

introducing contemporary Indonesian literature to international readers.

Previous studies have examined translation ideology in various contexts, including literary works, films, and cultural texts. Research shows that domestication is more commonly used in translation to enhance readability and target audience comprehension. For instance, Menghan (2023) and Al-Kahtani (2023) highlighted the effectiveness of domestication in film and subtitle translation, while Salsabila and Mustaqim (2022) also illustrated its use in anime translation. In contrast, foreignization is employed to retain cultural authenticity, as observed in studies by Zhou (2022), Zhong (2023), and Supatmiwati et al. (2024) on novel and classical text translations. Some researchers argue that a balanced approach combining both ideologies is necessary. Ming and Zhingzhong (2024) emphasized this in their study of poetry translation, while Tian (2023) similarly found that blending strategies improved comprehension in the translation of Tao Te Ching.

Most existing studies focus on general ideological tendencies (e.g., the dominance of domestication) without specifically examining the micro-level relationship between translation techniques of culture-bound words and their ideological implications. Furthermore, Indonesian-English translation of contemporary literary works remains underexplored compared to other language pairs. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates how the translator's choice of techniques for rendering culture-bound words reflects broader ideological positioning, thereby providing insights into both theory and practice of Indonesian literary translation.

Given these considerations, this research is guided by the following questions:

1. What are the types of the culture-bound words found in *Entrok* and their English translation?
2. What are the translation techniques used in translating the culture-bound words in the novel *Entrok*?
3. How is the tendency of translation ideology used by the translator based on the techniques of translation?

By addressing these questions, this study not only contributes to translation studies but also highlights the significance of Indonesian-English literary translation in preserving cultural identity while ensuring readability for international readers. As Indonesian literature gains more international visibility, translating works like *Entrok* is essential for introducing Indonesian cultural narratives to wider audiences. At the same time, the cultural and structural distance between Indonesian and English makes the task especially demanding. By focusing on this language pair, the study not only contributes to the discussion of translation ideology but also emphasizes the role of translation in preserving cultural identity while making it accessible to readers beyond Indonesia.

## Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the translation of culture-bound words, the techniques used, and the underlying ideology in *Entrok* by Okky Madasari and its English version *The Years of the Voiceless*, translated by Nurhayat Indriyatno Mohamed. The qualitative method is appropriate as the focus lies on meaning, cultural representation, and ideological positioning rather than numerical measurement. The data consist of culture-bound words identified in both the source text and the target text. A word was considered culture-bound if it reflected cultural specificity, lacked a direct equivalent in English, or required cultural knowledge to understand (Newmark, 1988).

Identification was conducted through close reading of the source text, cross-checked with its translation, and all culture-bound words were collected exhaustively, resulting in 200 data points. To enhance reliability, the identification of culture-bound words was conducted by the researcher and validated by a lecturer from Universitas PGRI Semarang (UPGRIS) as an expert validator in the field of translation.

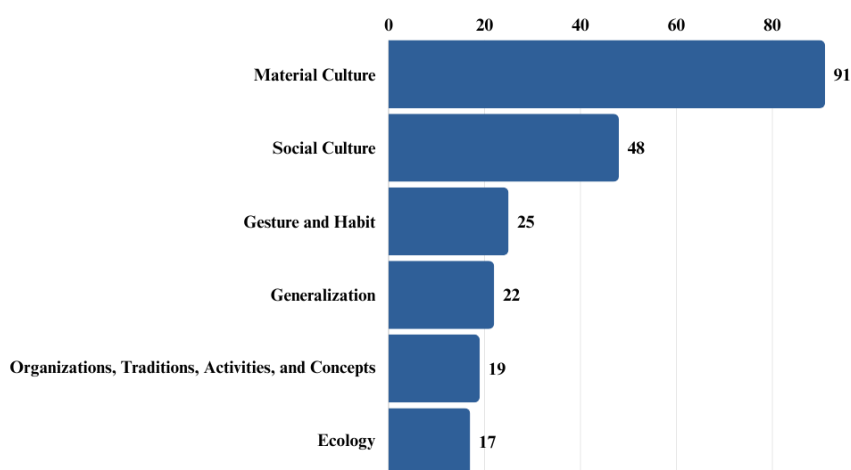
The analysis followed Miles and Huberman's (1994) framework, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the reduction stage, culture-bound words were classified into Newmark's five categories: ecology, material culture, social culture, organizations/traditions/concepts, and gestures/habits. The translations were then examined and categorized according to Molina and Albir's (2002) classification of translation techniques. Finally, to determine translation ideology, Venuti's (1995) framework was applied, with target-language-oriented techniques (such as adaptation, description, and established equivalent) categorized as domestication, while source language-oriented techniques (such as borrowing and literal translation) were categorized as foreignization.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, credibility was established through peer debriefing and validator checking, dependability was maintained by applying consistent coding procedures, transferability was ensured by providing clear methodological descriptions, and confirmability was supported through inter-rater discussion and the maintenance of an audit trail. Ethical considerations were also taken into account: since this study only analyzed published texts, no human participants were involved, but academic integrity was maintained through accurate citation and acknowledgment of the translator's authorship. The data collection was carried out from March to April 2024, followed by analysis and validation from May to Sept 2024.

## Results

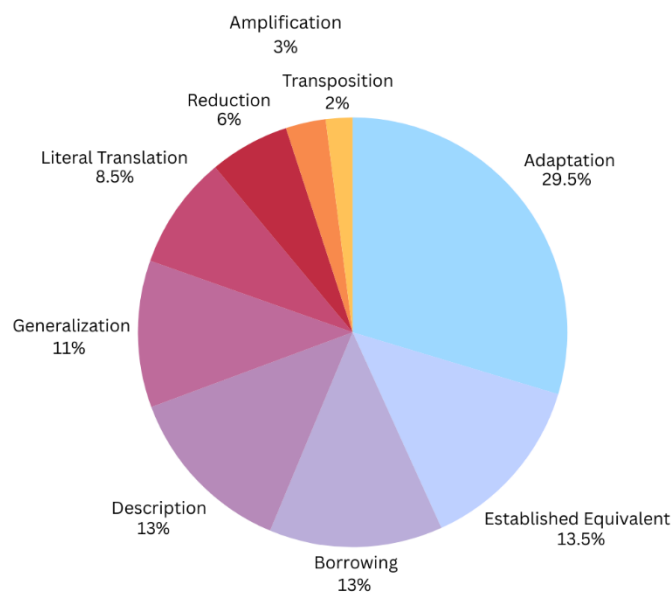
This study examines culture-bound words in *Entrok*, a novel by Okky Madasari, and its English translation, *The Years of the Voiceless*. *Entrok* contains numerous cultural terms, and in this research, the author adopts the cultural term categories proposed by Newmark. The analysis is conducted on 200 data points classified according to Newmark (1988) theory into five cultural categories: "ecology," "material culture," "social culture," "organizations, customs, and concepts," and "gestures and habits." The findings are presented in the form of charts and tables based on the three research questions formulated: the categories of culture-bound words, the translation techniques used by the translator, and the chosen translation ideology.

The results, as shown in figure 1, show that the material culture category, which includes terms associated with housing, clothing, food and beverages, and artifacts, occurs most frequently (91 items, 45.5%) such as *lurah* (village head), *batik* (traditional cloth), and *ketoprak* (Indonesian tofu salad). This is followed by social culture, which includes terms closely related to occupations (48 items, 24%) like *dukun* (shaman) or *tukang becak* (rickshaw driver), gestures and habits (25 items, 12.5%) such as *sungkeman* (kneeling gesture to show respect), and organizations, traditions, and concepts, which cover terms related to social administration, history, styles, addresses, and religion (19 items, 9.5%) such as *slametan* (communal feast). The least frequent category is ecology, which includes terms related to flora and fauna (17 items, 8.5%) like *pohon asem* (tamarind tree). The predominance of material culture reflects the novel's focus on everyday life, domestic traditions, and social settings under the New Order regime, which makes tangible cultural elements more visible than abstract or ecological ones.



**Figure 1.** Culture-Bound Words and Their Usage Frequency

With regard to translation techniques, nine of Molina and Albir's (2002) strategies were found. The most frequently applied was adaptation (59 items, 29.5%), for example ketoprak translated as "Indonesian tofu salad," which makes the cultural item more accessible to international readers. Other techniques included established equivalent (27 items, 13.5%), such as lurah rendered as "village head"; borrowing (26 items, 13%), such as retaining dukun without translation; and description (26 items, 13%), such as slametan translated as "a communal feast held for various life events." Less frequent techniques were generalization (22 items, 11%), literal translation (17 items, 8.5%), reduction (12 items, 6%), amplification (6 items, 3%), and transposition (4 items, 2%). These findings indicate that while the translator often sought equivalence by adapting terms into more familiar forms, some terms were deliberately preserved to retain cultural nuance.



**Figure 2.** The Translation Techniques and Their Usage Frequency

The author then compares the two ideologies analyzed based on the translation strategies used in the data findings. Out of the 200 data points examined, 44 items (22%) are categorized as source-language (SL) oriented or aligned with the foreignization ideology, while 156 items (78%) are target-language (TL) oriented, falling under the domestication ideology.

**Table 1.** Translation Ideology Based on Translation Techniques

No	Translation Techniques	Translation Ideology	Frequency	Percent
1	Literal	Foreignization	17	8.5
2	Borrowing	Foreignization	27	13.5
3	Transposition	Domestication	4	2.
4	Established Equivalent	Domestication	29	14.5
5	Amplification	Domestication	6	3.0
6	Adaptation	Domestication	59	29.5
7	Reduction	Domestication	9	4.5
8	Description	Domestication	27	13.5
9	Generalization	Domestication	22	11
<b>Total</b>			<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Domestication examples include rendering batik as “traditional patterned cloth,” while foreignization examples include borrowing terms like *dukun* or *slametan* to preserve authenticity. When compared with the criteria for foreignization and domestication proposed by Venuti (1995) and several previous findings, it can be concluded that the translated novel *The Years of the Voiceless* leans more toward the domestication ideology. Thus, the translation ideology applied in this novel is domestication, where cultural terms from the source language are adjusted to be more easily understood by target-language readers.

As a native Indonesian researcher, the author acknowledges that her cultural background provided valuable insight in identifying culture-bound words but may also introduce interpretive bias. To address this, validation with an expert in translation studies was conducted. Inter-rater validation was applied in classifying techniques and ideologies. The classifications were discussed between the researcher and a validator from Universitas PGRI Semarang (UPGRIS), Dr. Arso Setyaji, M.Hum., an expert in translation studies, ensuring consistency and reliability in the coding. Although statistical significance testing was not applied due to the qualitative design of this research, the distribution of data shows clear tendencies. The high frequency of material culture terms and the dominance of domestication techniques were expected, but the relatively balanced use of borrowing and description was somewhat surprising, indicating that the translator deliberately alternated between preserving authenticity and clarifying meaning depending on context.

Overall, the results show that the translation of *Entrok* reflects both the challenges and strategies in transferring cultural meanings across languages. While domestication dominates, foreignization plays a significant role in maintaining cultural visibility, and the combination of both reveals the translator’s effort to balance readability with authenticity.

## Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that domestication is the dominant translation ideology in the English version of *Entrok*, with 156 items or 78% of culture-bound words translated using target language oriented techniques, and adaptation was the most frequent technique, showing the translator's tendency to replace culture-bound words with more familiar equivalents, such as rendering *ketoprak* as "Indonesian tofu salad". This reflects the translator's strategy to prioritize fluency and accessibility for international readers. This aligns with Venuti (1995) framework, which suggests that domestication often serves readability and fluency for target readers.

However, this raises critical questions about cultural visibility. While readers gain a smooth narrative, they may lose opportunities to encounter Indonesian culture in its original form. This trade-off echoes Venuti (1995) critique of domestication as an "ethnocentric reduction" of the foreign. In the context of *Entrok*, domestication makes the novel more marketable for global readers but risks reducing its ethnographic richness. The role of the publisher and target audience also cannot be overlooked. As an English translation aimed at a global readership, the publisher likely favored domestication to ensure market acceptance.

This aligns with Kujamäki (2023) view that translation is a professional service shaped by market dynamics, institutional standards, and industry structures, all of which significantly influence translators' decision-making in practice. At the same time, the presence of foreignization 44 items or 22% through borrowings like *dukun* or *slametan* shows that the translator deliberately preserved key cultural markers, signaling authenticity. This balanced strategy suggests an awareness that total domestication might erase the novel's cultural identity, while excessive foreignization might alienate readers.

These results resonate with recent studies that observed a dominance of domestication in literary, audiovisual, and cultural texts (Menghan, 2023; Al-Kahtani, 2023; Salsabila & Mustaqim, 2022). However, they also echo findings by Zhou (2022), Zhong (2023), and Supatmiwati et al. (2024), which emphasize the role of foreignization in maintaining cultural visibility. Compared to these studies, the present research demonstrates a more balanced interplay, as the translator strategically alternated between domestication and foreignization depending on the cultural significance and readability of the terms. This highlights a nuanced approach where domestication ensures accessibility while foreignization signals cultural richness.

The implications of these findings are multifaceted. For Indonesian literature in translation, the results show how domestication can help novels like *Entrok* reach wider audiences by making them more readable, but at the risk of diluting cultural nuance. For translation pedagogy, the study illustrates the importance of



training students to balance ideological strategies rather than adhering to one approach exclusively. In terms of cross-cultural communication, this case underscores the delicate balance between maintaining cultural authenticity and ensuring comprehension for readers unfamiliar with Indonesian traditions.

Despite these contributions, the domestication-heavy approach raises certain limitations. Excessive adaptation may result in cultural loss, reducing the opportunity for readers to engage directly with Indonesian cultural specificity. For example, batik rendered as “traditional patterned cloth” enhances understanding but flattens its cultural and historical richness. Conversely, borrowing terms like slametan without explanation risks alienating readers unfamiliar with the practice. This trade-off between accessibility and authenticity is a recurring tension in translation. From a quality perspective, the translations can be considered effective in terms of readability, but they reveal uneven levels of cultural visibility. Future research could further assess target reader’s reception to evaluate whether these choices achieve both communicative clarity and cultural transmission.

Another critical issue is the translator’s positionality. Nurhayat Indriyatno Mohamed, though deeply engaged with Indonesian culture, is not a native Indonesian. His outsider perspective may have influenced his inclination to domesticate, ensuring comprehensibility for international readers while occasionally foregrounding Indonesian terms for authenticity. This dual orientation reflects both an accommodation to global readership and an effort to retain cultural specificity. Such tensions underline the complex role of ideology in shaping literary translation.

In sum, the findings suggest that while domestication dominates, foreignization remains a meaningful complementary strategy. The interplay between the two reflects the translator’s effort to balance cultural preservation with accessibility. For translators working with similar culturally dense texts, it is recommended to apply domestication strategically for clarity, while using foreignization to highlight terms of high cultural significance. This balanced approach allows translations to function both as accessible narratives for global readers and as vehicles of cultural transmission for Indonesian literature in the international arena.

## **Limitations**

Although this study provides valuable insights into the translation of culture-bound words in *Entrok* and its English version *The Years of the Voiceless*, certain limitations must be acknowledged. First, the data were restricted to one novel and its single English translation, which may not fully represent broader patterns in Indonesian–English literary translation. Second, the analysis did not include empirical reception studies, meaning that the target readers’ actual responses to domestication or foreignization strategies remain unknown. Third, while validation was conducted with an expert validator, inter-rater reliability was not

quantified in statistical terms, which may limit the degree of replicability. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings and their implications.

These limitations open avenues for future research. Studies could expand the scope by examining multiple Indonesian novels and their translations to reveal broader ideological tendencies. Reception studies involving international readers would also provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of domestication and foreignization strategies in conveying cultural meanings. Additionally, corpus-based or computational methods could be employed to analyze larger datasets, offering a more systematic overview of translation patterns. Finally, further research could explore translator training and pedagogical practices to examine how ideological choices are developed and transmitted in academic and professional contexts.

## Conclusion

Based on the conducted research, it can be concluded that the translation of cultural words in the novel *Entrok* into English employs various translation techniques. Adaptation is the most dominant technique, indicating that the translator prefers to adjust cultural terms from the source language to make them more easily understood by target readers. However, some terms are still translated using foreignization techniques to preserve the original cultural nuances. This suggests that the translator strives to maintain a balance between readability and cultural authenticity in the target text.

The findings of this study can serve as a reference for translators, linguistics students, and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Understanding translation techniques and ideology helps produce more accurate and communicative translations. For future research, it is recommended that the analysis be expanded by examining the impact of translation techniques on reader comprehension and comparing translation strategies in other literary works.

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