An Analysis of Cultural Translation Strategies of Culinary Texts in The Complete Book of Pasta and Noodles from English to Indonesian

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Abstract: *This study investigates the translation strategies employed in translating cooking recipes from English into Indonesian, focusing on meaning fidelity, function, and readability. A total of 20 recipes were selected from The Complete Book of Pasta and Noodles and analyzed using Mona Baker's (1992) and Peter Newmark's (1988) translation strategy frameworks. The results show that the most dominant strategy was modulation (40%), followed by transposition (25%), cultural adaptation (20%), literal translation (10%), cultural substitution (5%), and borrowing (5%). These strategies indicate that translators must consider both linguistic and cultural differences to make recipes understandable and practical for Indonesian readers. This study aims to serve as a reference for culinary text translators in producing functional and effective translations.*

Keywords: *translation, cooking recipes, translation strategies, modulation, cultural adaptation*

INTRODUCTION

Translating culinary texts presents unique and multifaceted challenges, as it involves more than just converting words from one language to another—it requires a nuanced understanding of both linguistic and cultural dimensions. Culinary texts are deeply embedded in the cultural contexts in which they originate; therefore, translating them requires a careful transfer of not only technical content but also cultural meanings, values, and practices. The translation of such texts demands accuracy in rendering specialized terminology, including ingredient names, cooking techniques, units of measurement, and procedural steps, which often differ significantly between source and target cultures. For instance, terms like "broil," "al dente," or "simmer" may not have direct equivalents in Indonesian and thus require adaptation or explanation to ensure clarity and accuracy.

Cookbooks, in particular, are not merely compilations of recipes; they function as instructional guides and cultural artefacts that transmit culinary traditions, norms, and values to readers. They often include culturally specific practices and ingredients unfamiliar to readers in the target culture. As such, translators must go beyond literal translation and employ appropriate strategies to

retain the intended meaning and function of the original text. This includes dealing with culturally bound terms, idiomatic expressions, and measurements that may not be commonly used in the target context. A failure to appropriately adapt these elements can lead to confusion, misinterpretation, or even unsuccessful cooking outcomes for the target readers.

Target language readers come from different culinary traditions and possess varied expectations, levels of familiarity with international cuisine, and understandings of food-related practices. Literal translation, therefore, often proves insufficient. Translators must consider the cultural knowledge of the target audience and strive for equivalence not only in language but also in functionality and accessibility. To address these complexities, it becomes essential to examine which translation strategies are most effective in preserving the original text's meaning while ensuring comprehensibility and usability for the target audience.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this regard, the present study aims to explore the translation strategies used in rendering recipes from English into Indonesian. It seeks to analyse how these strategies influence the fidelity of meaning (i.e., how well the original intent is maintained), the readability of the translated text, and its practical functionality—specifically, how effectively the translation enables readers to replicate the culinary process. The study draws on the established theoretical frameworks proposed by Mona Baker (1992) and Peter Newmark (1988), both of whom offer comprehensive typologies of translation strategies, such as translation by paraphrasing, cultural substitution, omission, or using a more general or more specific term.

To narrow the scope and ensure a focused analysis, this study limits its data set to 20 recipes selected from *The Complete Book of Pasta and Noodles*, published by America's Test Kitchen. These recipes were chosen for their rich culinary content and diversity of ingredients and techniques. The analysis is concentrated on three main textual elements commonly found in recipes: (1) the names of ingredients, which often include culturally specific or locally unavailable items; (2) step-by-step cooking instructions, which must be both linguistically clear and culturally adapted; and (3) special notes or tips that may contain implicit cultural assumptions or contextual references. This study does not evaluate the overall quality of the translation through reader response or usability testing, nor does it examine visual elements such as photographs or design layout, focusing instead purely on textual translation strategies.

The objectives of this research are fourfold: (1) to identify the specific translation strategies used in translating recipes from English to Indonesian; (2) to analyze how the application of these strategies affects the fidelity, readability, and functionality of the translated texts; (3) to describe the major challenges translators encounter, particularly those involving technical culinary terminology and culturally specific practices; and (4) to offer practical, evidence-based recommendations for culinary text translators, with the goal of producing

translations that are not only accurate and usable, but also culturally relevant and engaging for Indonesian readers.

This study uses descriptive qualitative method to analyze the translation strategies used in translating recipes from English to Indonesian. The research is based on the main theories in translation studies, particularly related to translation strategies relevant for culinary texts. The object of this research is a recipe text taken from the English version of The Complete Book of Pasta and Noodles (America's Test Kitchen, 2001) which is translated into Indonesian. The focus of the research object includes elements such as ingredients, cooking instructions, and special notes or tips. This research analyzes how these elements are translated and what strategies are used to maintain the meaning, readability and practical function of the recipes in the Indonesian cultural context.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

One of the most frequently used strategies in translating recipes from English to Indonesian is modulation, which accounted for 40% of the observed cases. This strategy is primarily applied to accommodate differences in measurement systems between the source and target cultures. For instance, in Indonesia, the metric system is predominantly used, unlike the imperial system that is standard in many English-speaking countries. As such, translators must convert measurement units to maintain functional equivalence. An example of this can be seen in the translation of "1 cup heavy cream," which is rendered as "240 ml krim kental." The translator applies modulation by changing the imperial unit "cup" into the metric "ml" to align with what Indonesian readers are familiar with. Similarly, "1 stick unsalted butter" is translated into "113-gram mentega tawar," reflecting another application of modulation through the conversion of "stick" into "gram." Furthermore, instructions that involve temperature, such as "bake at 375°F for 25 minutes," are translated into "panggang pada 190°C selama 25 menit." This not only ensures comprehension but also prevents practical errors in cooking, demonstrating how modulation supports both linguistic and functional accuracy.

The second most prominent strategy is transposition, occurring in 25% of the data, and it involves changes in grammatical structure or shifts in word classes to produce more natural expressions in the target language. Transposition allows the translator to adjust the form of the sentence while maintaining its original meaning, thus improving fluency and readability. A clear example is found in the translation of "whisk vigorously," which becomes "kocok kuat-kuat." This shift reflects a move from a formal instruction in English to a more conversational and direct imperative form that resonates with Indonesian culinary discourse. Another case is "grate the cheese," rendered as "parut kejunya." The translator subtly modifies the structure to make the command flow more naturally in Indonesian, which often favors subject-object-verb constructions in everyday language.

Additionally, the phrase "toss with dressing before serving" becomes "aduk dengan saus sebelum disajikan," where the structure is adjusted to prioritize semantic clarity and align with local expression patterns. These examples underscore how transposition enhances the cultural and linguistic compatibility of translated texts.

Another strategy frequently employed is cultural adaptation, which constitutes 20% of the translation strategies identified. This approach is crucial when specific cooking techniques or tools mentioned in the source text are uncommon or unfamiliar in the target culture. For instance, the instruction "broil for 5 minutes" is translated into "panggang atas 5 menit." Since most Indonesian home ovens do not include a broil function, the translator adapts the method to a more widely understood technique—top heat grilling—thereby preserving the intended cooking outcome while making the instruction relevant and executable. Similarly, the term "broiler pan" is translated as "loyang panggang," substituting a less familiar kitchen tool with a more commonly known Indonesian equivalent. These adaptations reflect an effort to make the translated recipe not only understandable but also practical for the target audience, emphasizing the need for cultural sensitivity in culinary translation.

In contrast, literal translation is employed more selectively, accounting for 10% of the observed data. This strategy is typically used when terms or instructions are already well known or culturally accepted in the target language, requiring minimal modification. For example, "parmesan cheese" is translated directly as "keju parmesan." The use of literal translation here is effective because this type of cheese is widely recognized by Indonesian readers and is often marketed under the same name. Another instance is the simple instruction "let rest for 10 minutes," which becomes "diamkan selama 10 menit." In this case, the phrase is both linguistically straightforward and culturally appropriate, making literal translation a suitable and efficient choice. These instances show that when familiarity and clarity align, direct translation can be the most effective method.

The strategy of cultural substitution, although used less frequently (5%), plays a significant role when dealing with ingredients that are rare or unavailable in the target culture. This involves replacing an ingredient from the source language with a local equivalent that approximates the original in flavor, function, or appearance. For instance, "basil leaves" are translated into "daun kemangi." While basil is not commonly found in traditional Indonesian markets, kemangi offers a similar aromatic profile and is widely available, making it a practical and culturally resonant substitute. Likewise, "zucchini" is translated as "labu siam," a more accessible local vegetable that can serve a comparable culinary role. Through this strategy, translators ensure that the recipe remains feasible and meaningful to the target audience, while preserving the spirit of the original dish.

Finally, borrowing is applied in cases where there is no established equivalent in the Indonesian language, and the English term is either retained in its original form or slightly localized. This strategy, which also appears in 5% of the data, maintains the authenticity of the source item when it has entered the target culture's vocabulary. For example, the term "fettuccine" is translated as "mi fettuccine." In this instance, the English word is borrowed directly, with the addition of the Indonesian generic term "mi" (noodle) for clarity. Another example is "use fresh thyme," which is translated as "gunakan daun thyme segar." Since "thyme" does not have a well-known equivalent in Indonesian and is increasingly available in its original form, borrowing the term preserves accuracy and avoids confusion. This strategy is particularly useful for ingredients that are globally marketed under their original names or have niche usage in upscale or international cooking contexts.

Collectively, these translation strategies—modulation, transposition, cultural adaptation, literal translation, cultural substitution, and borrowing—illustrate the complexity and contextual nature of culinary translation. Each strategy serves a specific function, and their application depends on factors such as cultural relevance, linguistic clarity, reader familiarity, and practical execution in cooking. The careful selection and combination of these strategies by translators play a critical role in ensuring that translated recipes are not only linguistically accurate but also culturally meaningful and functionally effective for Indonesian readers.

CONCLUSION

Based on the comprehensive analysis of 20 recipes selected from *The Complete Book of Pasta and Noodles*, translated from English into Indonesian, it can be concluded that a variety of translation strategies were employed to ensure that the target texts are not only linguistically accurate but also culturally and functionally appropriate for Indonesian readers. The most dominant strategy identified was modulation, which appeared in 40% of the translated segments. This prevalence is primarily attributed to the need to convert measurement units from the imperial system commonly used in English-language cookbooks (such as cups, sticks, ounces, and Fahrenheit) into the metric system (milliliters, grams, and Celsius), which is standard in Indonesia. Modulation was also used to adjust technical culinary terms that may not have a direct equivalent or require reformulation to maintain practical clarity in the target culture. For instance, translating "1 cup heavy cream" to "240 ml krim kental" or "bake at 375°F" to "panggang pada 190°C" exemplifies how modulation plays a crucial role in ensuring the recipe remains executable and precise for Indonesian home cooks.

Following modulation, the second most frequently used strategy was transposition, which accounted for 25% of the data. Transposition involves changing the grammatical structure of the original text, such as altering word classes or syntactic arrangements, in order to produce a more natural and idiomatic expression in the target language. This strategy was particularly useful in transforming command-based instructions into forms that are stylistically and

culturally acceptable in Indonesian. Examples include translating "whisk vigorously" into "kocok kuat-kuat" or "grate the cheese" into "parut kejunya," which shows a shift not only in structure but also in tone, ensuring that the instructions are comprehensible and resonate with the typical linguistic patterns used in Indonesian recipes.

The third significant strategy observed was cultural adaptation, accounting for 20% of the translated segments. This approach was crucial when addressing tools, techniques, or cooking practices that are uncommon or unfamiliar in Indonesian culinary culture. For instance, the concept of "broiling" or the use of a "broiler pan" is not prevalent in most Indonesian households, which led translators to adapt "broil for 5 minutes" into "panggang atas 5 menit" and "use a broiler pan" into "gunakan loyang panggang." These adaptations reflect a functional translation approach, ensuring that the reader can achieve a similar cooking outcome using locally available equipment and commonly understood techniques. Cultural adaptation in this context enhances not only comprehension but also usability, reinforcing the recipe's practicality for its new audience.

Meanwhile, literal translation was employed in 10% of cases, typically in situations where terms or ingredients are already widely recognized in Indonesian culinary discourse. Items such as "parmesan cheese" or "mozzarella cheese" were translated directly as "keju parmesan" and "keju mozzarella" without modification, as these terms have been adopted into everyday usage among Indonesian cooks, particularly in urban or international culinary settings. Literal translation was also used for simple and direct instructions like "let rest for 10 minutes," which becomes "diamkan selama 10 menit," demonstrating that when the source text is straightforward and culturally neutral, a literal approach can effectively convey the intended meaning without distortion.

In a smaller proportion of the data, cultural substitution (5%) emerged as a necessary strategy when the original ingredient was not easily found in Indonesian markets, prompting the translator to replace it with a locally known equivalent that offers a similar taste, texture, or culinary function. For example, "basil leaves" were translated as "daun kemangi," and "zucchini" as "labu siam" (chayote). These substitutions are not merely lexical decisions; they reflect an understanding of the sensory and functional properties of the ingredients, as well as considerations of availability and familiarity within the local context. Cultural substitution ensures that readers can recreate the recipe using ingredients they can realistically source, maintaining the dish's overall integrity and culinary intention.

Lastly, borrowing accounted for 5% of the strategies used. This method was applied when the source language term referred to an ingredient or concept that has no equivalent in the target language and is typically known by its original name even in Indonesian contexts. For example, "fettuccine" is rendered as "mi fettuccine," and "thyme" becomes "daun thyme segar." Borrowing is an effective strategy in such cases because these terms often carry specific culinary identities that are better preserved in their original form, especially when the ingredients are

imported or used in niche or specialized cooking. This approach helps retain authenticity while acknowledging the growing globalization of culinary practices.

In sum, the variety and distribution of these translation strategies reflect the complexity and contextual demands of culinary translation. Each strategy was chosen based on careful consideration of linguistic accuracy, cultural appropriateness, and functional effectiveness. The translator's role is thus not only to bridge languages but also to mediate between culinary cultures, ensuring that the translated recipes are both faithful to the original and fully accessible to Indonesian readers. The findings of this study underscore the importance of adaptive, audience-cantered translation approaches in the field of gastronomic texts, where precision, usability, and cultural resonance must harmoniously coexist.

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