



# Cultural Terms Negotiation in Indonesian Subtitles of Arabic Netflix Series “Baitu Tahir” and Its Implication for Equivalence at Word Level

Alfina Robi'ah Adawiiyah<sup>1</sup>, Arief Ma'nawi<sup>2</sup>

E-mail: [alfina.r@mail.ugm.ac.id](mailto:alfina.r@mail.ugm.ac.id)

<sup>1,2</sup>Magister Linguistic, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Received: 2025-03-21 Accepted: 2025-04-16

DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v13i1.6331

## Abstract

This study aims to analyze how cultural identity negotiation occurs in the Indonesian subtitles of the Arabic Netflix series *Baitu Tahir* and how this process affects word-level equivalence. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach with subtitling analysis techniques based on Gottlieb's (1992) translation strategy theory and Baker's (2018) equivalence theory. Data were collected from three out of six episodes of *Baitu Tahir*, covering the beginning, middle, and end of the series. The analysis process involved identifying categories of cultural terms (Newmark, 1988) as well as the translation strategies used. Cultural terms, according to Newmark, are categorized into five types: ecology; material culture; social culture; organizations, customs and concepts; lifestyle and habits. The data used in this study can be classified using these five categories, with the majority of terms falling under the category of social culture. Furthermore, the most frequently used translation strategies based on Gottlieb's strategies are imitation (28.91%), transfer (27.34%), and paraphrase (21.09%). Cultural identity negotiation in subtitles impacts word-level equivalence, where some terms are retained, adjusted, or even omitted for readability and audience comprehension. The findings of this study provide insights into how translators navigate the challenges of transferring cultural elements from Arabic to Indonesian in an audiovisual context. This study asserts that subtitle translation is not merely a linguistic process but also a complex form of cultural negotiation. For instance, the term *habsa* was retained in the translation, reflecting the use of the imitation strategy to preserve cultural specificity. Future research is recommended to expand the scope of data by analyzing more Arabic series from various streaming platforms and exploring how audiences perceive and accept cultural negotiation in subtitles.

**Keywords:** *Audiovisual Translation; Baitu Tahir; Cultural Terms Negotiation; Equivalence at Word Level; Subtitling*

## **Introduction**

Arab culture today is a blend of ancient traditions and modernization that is evolving across various Arab countries (Ridho & Priyoyudanto, 2024). Films and television shows can represent this trend of blending tradition and contemporary. Culture can be communicated both visually and aurally through movies or television shows (Saba et al., 2022). In general, Arab culture today reflects the diversity and vibrancy of contemporary Arab society by striking a balance between maintaining heritage and adjusting to the changes.

According to Balogun and Aruoture (2024), media platforms included Netflix have become important venues for negotiating cultural hybridity, promoting representation, and enacting cultural identities. *Baitu Tahir*, also known as Tahir's House, is a television series from Saudi Arabia in Netflix that represents Saudi Arabian culture through its dialogues and scenes. The series tells the story of a family of amateur entrepreneurs who must transform their fish shop business into a more promising venture. However, in developing the business, the family faces numerous challenges along the way. One of the international media platforms that significantly contributes to cross-cultural communication across languages and countries is Netflix, which makes it a worthwhile research topic.

The culture reflected in films and series can be conveyed to people around the world through subtitles in various languages. Negotiation is undoubtedly a part of the subtitle translation process. Through the process of negotiation, each party sacrifices something else in order to acquire something else, and since no one can have everything, everyone is ultimately pleased (Eco, 2013). Since negotiation is a process of sacrificing something and replacing it with something else, it will certainly have a significant impact on equivalence in translation. According to Baker (2018), the idea of meaning equivalency between words in the source and target languages at the individual word level is known as "equivalence at word level." Because every language has a different structure, culture, and conceptual meaning, translators frequently struggle to discover the correct word equivalents (Baker, 2018).

In this study, Gottlieb's subtitling theory (1992) is used to analyze the translation strategies applied in rendering Arabic cultural terms into Indonesian subtitles, such as transfer, imitation, and paraphrase. Meanwhile, Newmark's cultural categories (1988) are employed to classify the types of cultural terms found in the *Baitu Tahir* series, including social culture, material culture, and lifestyle. Furthermore, Baker's equivalence theory (2018) is utilized to evaluate the extent to which the meanings of these cultural terms are preserved at the word level in the translation. These three theories complement one another in examining the process of cultural negotiation and its implications for lexical equivalence in an

audiovisual context.

There are three categories of studies on negotiation in translation: (1) studies on negotiation related to culture, (2) studies on negotiation related to gender, and (3) negotiation studies related to online platform. The first category included Supardi and Sayogie (2019) discovered cultural negotiation in the Indonesian translation of English-language short stories, highlighting how cultural elements are adapted for local readers. Following this, Ma'shumah et al. (2021) examined negotiation strategies in translating English-language novels into Indonesian, further emphasizing the role of translators in mediating between cultures.

Fatin and Cholsy (2022) explored the negotiation of Japanese cultural identity in the novel *Tenki no Ko* and its Indonesian translation, illustrating how cultural nuances are preserved or transformed. Most recently, Sajarwa et al. (2023) unveiled the identity struggle of French culture in its translation into Indonesian, pointing to the challenges of maintaining cultural authenticity across languages.

The second category included studies on translation negotiation within the scope of gender. Wang et al. (2020) conducted a study focusing on negotiation in translation related to gender issues. Building on this, Cheng (2023) discussed translation negotiation in the context of the feminist movement in China, specifically the 6B4T movement.

The third category includes studies on negotiation in translation within the context of online platforms. Im et al. (2022) examined the translingual negotiation of English-medium communication in online marketplaces, highlighting how language is adapted and negotiated in digital commercial spaces. Subsequently, Jones (2023) and Hu (2024) analyzed translation negotiation on Wikipedia pages, shedding light on collaborative translation practices and the role of community in shaping multilingual content. Based on the previous studies reviewed, it can be concluded that research on the translation of cultural elements does exist; however, few have focused specifically on Arabic to Indonesian in the audiovisual context or on particular platforms such as Netflix.

Despite these previous contributions, limited research has examined how Arabic cultural terms are translated into Indonesian subtitles on global streaming platforms such as Netflix. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how cultural identity is negotiated in the Indonesian subtitles of the Arabic Netflix series *Baitu Tahir* and how this affects word-level equivalency. This study provides a fresh viewpoint by concentrating on an understudied language pair (Arabic and Indonesian) in the setting of streaming media, even though earlier research has looked at cultural identity transformations in translation and subtitling.

The following concerns were addressed by this study: (1) what forms of negotiation are found in subtitles? (2) why does this negotiation occur? (3) what are the implications of the negotiation in the word level equivalence?

In the age of worldwide digital streaming, audiovisual translation is essential for promoting intercultural dialogue. One of the most popular translation techniques, subtitles represent the negotiation of cultural identities between source and target languages in addition to acting as linguistic bridges. This study argued that the negotiation of cultural identity is connected to the word level of equivalence.

With the increasing consumption of cross-cultural digital content, understanding how cultural identity is negotiated in translation is becoming increasingly important. This study not only contributes to the field of audio-visual translation but also provides insights into how Arab culture is represented and adapted in Indonesian. By examining translation strategies in *Baitu Tahir*, this research seeks to uncover the dynamics between preserving the source culture and adapting to the target culture's norms, ultimately influencing meaning at the word level.

## **Method**

The research data were obtained from the subtitles of the Saudi Arabian Netflix series *Baitu Ṭāhir*, which is translated into Indonesian as *Rumah Keluarga Ṭāhir*. According to *Al-Arabiya English* (Abueish, 2023), this first original Netflix series from Saudi Arabia officially premiered on September 6, 2023. Being the first Saudi Arabian series to debut on Netflix, this series is worth studying because it provides a standard by which to measure the level of innovation in Saudi Arabian television shows and movies. Since the General Commission for Audiovisual Media (GCAM) was established in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2012, this represents a major advancement (Alamri, 2023). In addition to successfully launching the first Netflix series in 2023, it highlights the commission's establishment by reopening Saudi Arabian movie theaters in 2017 after a 30-year prohibition following the horrific attack on Mecca's Masjid al-Haram (Radwan, 2022).

Three out of six episodes from this series were used as data. By selecting 3 out of 6 episodes, the study covers half of the entire series, which is sufficient to identify patterns in cultural identity negotiation and translation. The episodes were strategically chosen to include the beginning, middle, and end, providing a comprehensive overview. The selected episodes are the first episode, the third, and the sixth. First episode was selected as it serves as the introductory episode, presenting the cultural background, main characters, and the initial narrative context. The third episode, situated at the midpoint of the series, captures the progression of character interactions and highlights the increasing complexity of cultural representations. And the sixth episode, as the concluding episode, provides narrative closure and reflects possible transformations in the cultural values

conveyed through the characters.

The cultural identity negotiation between Arabic and Indonesian in the series was examined using a qualitative descriptive methodology. The goal of qualitative research, according to Creswell (2012), is to explore issues and gain a thorough understanding of a key phenomenon. The series' cultural fusion of Arabic and Indonesian is the main phenomenon in this regard. Furthermore, the word level of equivalence demonstrating the cultural terms negotiation between Arabic and Indonesian in the series was analyzed using a qualitative interpretative methodology.

A total of 128 data consisting of Arabic cultural aspects were analyzed in this study. The data were collected through several processes: (1) watching all episodes of the series on Netflix, (2) selecting the first, third, and sixth episodes to be the data source, (3) downloading the Indonesian and Arabic subtitles using the "Subtitles for Netflix" and "Tampermonkey" applications, (4) combining both subtitles into one Excel sheet file, and (5) organizing the data in the Arabic and Indonesian subtitles based on the corresponding time durations. After that, translation data containing elements of cultural term categories were selected based on the theory proposed by Newmark (1988) and then classified using Gottlieb's (1992) strategy. Once the classification of cultural terms data emerged, the data were analyzed for their implications on equivalence at the word level using Baker's (2018) equivalence theory.

According to Peter Newmark (1988), cultural terms can be categorized into five main groups based on the cultural domains they represent. First, ecology, which includes elements of nature and the environment such as flora, fauna, and geographical conditions. Second, material culture, which refers to man-made objects including food, clothing, houses, means of transportation, and other culturally specific items. Third, organization, custom and concept, covering political, legal, and administrative institutions, as well as social customs and rituals. Fourth, social culture, including beliefs, worship practices, and culturally specific religious terms. Fifth, lifestyle and habits, which encompass literature, music, art, and aesthetic expressions unique to a culture. This classification helps translators and researchers identify and analyze culturally loaded terms in the source text.

The accuracy of the Arabic content was ensured through cross-referencing with the Al-Ma'ani Arabic dictionary and by consulting an Arabic language expert. This dual approach aimed to minimize misinterpretations and ensure culturally appropriate analysis of the terms. After the classification and analysis process was completed, the results were evaluated to identify key patterns in the negotiation of cultural identity between Arabic and Indonesian. In this study, the analysis was conducted by a single researcher. The analysis was conducted by considering the

broader social and cultural context to understand how cultural terms are translated and adapted in the target text. With this approach, the study not only examines translation strategies from a technical perspective but also explores how translation can reflect, preserve, or alter cultural meanings in a global context.

Since the analysis was conducted by a single researcher, the process of identifying and categorizing cultural terms may involve a degree of subjectivity. Although efforts were made to apply Newmark's cultural categories consistently and refer to contextual cues, the interpretations may still reflect individual judgment. This limitation is common in qualitative research and should be considered when generalizing the findings

## Results

### *Percentage of Cultural Term Categories and Translation Strategies*

This study analyses the categories of cultural terms found in the Netflix series *Baitu Tahir* and the strategies used to translate these cultural terms from Arabic into the target language. Using the classification of cultural terms proposed by Newmark (1988), this study identifies various cultural aspects embedded in the series. Additionally, it explores translation strategies based on Gottlieb's (1992) theory, which are applied by translators to adapt Arabic cultural terms into the target language. The analysis results are presented in the following two tables.

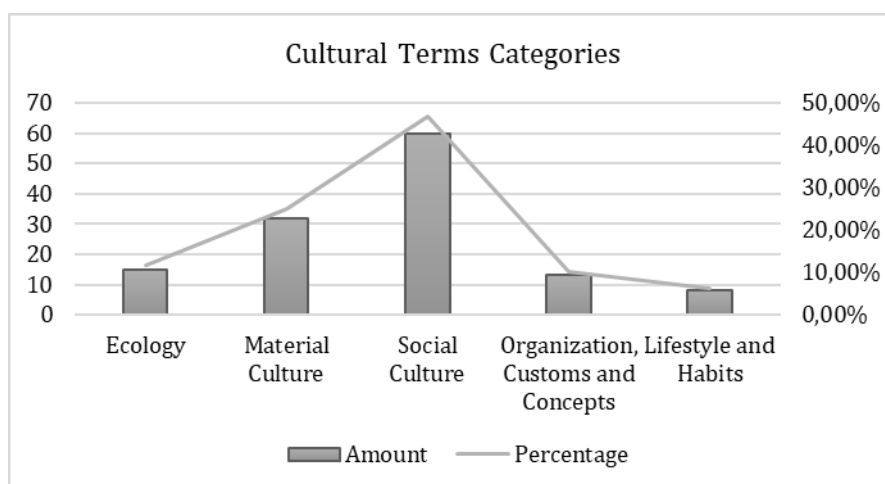


Figure 1. Cultural Term Categories Percentage of Netflix Series Subtitles "Baitu Tahir"

The five categories of cultural terms proposed by Newmark (1988) are used to classify the existing data in the Netflix series *Baitu Tahir*: ecology; material culture; social culture; organization, customs, and concepts; lifestyle and habits. The chart illustrates the distribution of cultural term categories based on both the number of occurrences and their corresponding percentages. Among the five categories analyzed from 128 data, Social Culture dominates with the highest frequency, accounting for 60 instances or around 46,88% of the total. This indicates the significant presence of socially rooted cultural expressions in the data. Material

Culture follows with 32 terms (25%), while Ecology and Organization, Customs and Concepts each contribute around 11,72% and 10,16% (15 and 13 terms). The least represented category is Lifestyle and Habits, comprising only 8 terms or 6,25%. These results suggest that the cultural content of the episodes analyzed is largely shaped by social and material elements, with less emphasis on ecological or habitual aspects.

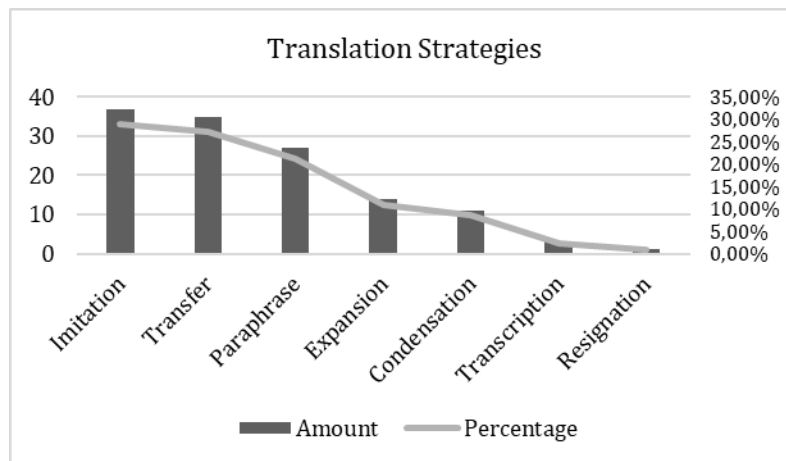


Figure 2. Translation Strategies for Arabic Cultural Terms

Overall, the results show that the way translators translate material cultural concepts from the source text into the target text can be used to identify and formulate the negotiation of Arab cultural identity. The chart above illustrates the distribution of translation strategies used to render cultural terms in the analyzed subtitles. A total of 128 instances were categorized into seven different strategies. The most frequently employed strategy was Imitation, with 37 occurrences, accounting for 28.91% of the total. This was closely followed by Transfer (35 instances, 27.34%) and Paraphrase (27 instances, 21.09%). These three strategies alone comprise over 75% of all translations, indicating a strong tendency to either retain the original form or slightly adapt it while preserving the meaning.

Less frequently used strategies include Expansion (14 instances, 10.94%) and Condensation (11 instances, 8.59%), which suggest moderate adjustments to the source content depending on space or clarity. The least used strategies were Transcription (3 instances, 2.35%) and Resignation (1 instance, 0.78%), likely reserved for cases where literal rendering or adaptation was difficult or impractical. This distribution reveals a clear preference for minimal intervention approaches in the translation of cultural terms from Arabic into Indonesian.

The data above were taken from three episodes of the series: episodes 1, 3, and 6. Episode 1 has a duration of 35 minutes, episode 3 is 34 minutes long, and episode 6 is 27 minutes long. From the total video duration of 96 minutes, 1,436 subtitle entries were processed. Among these, 128 entries were identified as containing cultural terms.

## Discussion

### *Translation Strategies and Negotiation for Arabic Cultural Terms*

In this study, Newmark's (1988) theory is employed to identify and categorize cultural terms found in the Arabic source text. He classifies cultural terms into five categories: ecology, material culture, social culture, organizations, customs and concepts, as well as gestures and habits. These categories serve as a framework for systematically analyzing the types of cultural references embedded in the source material. Once identified, the translation of these terms is examined using Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling strategies, which account for the spatial and temporal constraints inherent in audiovisual translation.

These strategies include transfer, imitation, paraphrase, expansion, condensation, transcription, and resignation. Together, Newmark's cultural categorization and Gottlieb's translation strategies offer a comprehensive framework for examining how cultural elements are treated in the subtitling process, particularly in the Arabic-Indonesian context.

#### 1. Imitation Strategy

Table 1. Imitation Strategy

| Datum (1)                  |                                 | في نَبْتَة اسْمُهَا الْحَبْسَة. هُو... |                  |                |              |            |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|------------------|----------------|--------------|------------|
| Clip selected:             |                                 | هُوَ                                   | الْحَبْسَة       | اسْمُهَا       | نَبْتَة      | في         |
| 00:18:13,160 -             | <i>huwa</i>                     | <b>al-habsah.</b>                      | <i>Ismuha</i>    | <i>nabatah</i> | <i>Fi</i>    |            |
| 00:18:15,320               | It is.                          | <b>habsa.</b>                          | its name         | plant          | There is     |            |
| [1st Episode]              |                                 | There is a plant called <b>habsa.</b>  |                  |                |              |            |
| Cultural terms categories: | <i>Itu</i>                      | <i>adalah..</i>                        | <b>habsa.</b>    | <i>Namanya</i> | <i>herba</i> | <i>Ada</i> |
| Ecology                    | <i>Ada herba bernama habsa.</i> |  |                  |                |              |            |
| Datum (2)                  |                                 | هَذِي هِيَ الْحَبْسَة الْمُجَفَّفَة.   |                  |                |              |            |
| Clip selected:             |                                 | الْمُجَفَّفَة.                         | الْحَبْسَة       | هِيَ           | هَذِي        |            |
| 00:22:16,880 -             | <i>al-mujaffafah</i>            |  | <b>al-habsah</b> | <i>hiya</i>    | <i>Hadzi</i> |            |
| 00:22:18,000               | dried.                          |  | <b>Habsa</b>     | Is             | This         |            |
| [1st Episode]              |                                 | This is dried <b>habsa</b>             |                  |                |              |            |
| Cultural terms categories: | <i>kering.</i>                  |  | <b>Habsa</b>     | <i>adalah</i>  | <i>Ini</i>   |            |
| material culture           | <i>Itu habsa kering.</i>        |  |                  |                |              |            |



Data (1) and (2) in table 3 were term الحَبْسَة (*al-habsah*) translated into Indonesian using the imitation strategy. The imitation translation strategy was used due to the significant cultural differences between the source and target languages. Imitation allows the translator to recreate the artistic effect while maintaining the essence of the original text. Negotiation in the imitation strategy occurs because the translator must balance fidelity to the original text with its acceptance in the target language. Through this strategy, the translator can adapt the text to be more easily understood by the target audience without losing its deeper meaning.

In data (1) and (2), the word الحَبْسَة (*al-habsah*) is still translated as *habsa* in Indonesian. This imitation strategy is used not only to preserve the meaning of the term *habsa* but also because no equivalent term has been found in Indonesian. In this series, the term *habsa* is used to describe an aphrodisiac herbal remedy. An aphrodisiac is defined as a substance “that increases sexual desire (i.e., libido) and/or sexual pleasure,” and/or “sub stances which enhance sexual performance or aid in the proper functioning of the male and female sex organs” (Melnik & Marcone, 2011).

In the table above, the term *habsa* is categorized as ecology and material culture within the category of cultural terms. This is due to the two different contexts in which the term *habsa* is used in this series. *Habsa* in datum (1) is categorized as ecology in cultural terms when it refers to the plant itself. Meanwhile, *habsa* in datum (2) is categorized as material culture in cultural terms when it refers to a prepared herbal remedy that is ready for consumption.

## 2. Transfer Strategy

Table 2. Transfer Strategy

| Datum (3)  | اللهُ يَكُونُ فِي عَوْنِ رَوْجَتِكَ.  |                |           |                    |                 |
|--|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------------|
|  | اللهُ                                 | يَكُونُ        | فِي       | عَوْنِ             | رَوْجَتِكَ.     |
| Clip selected:<br>00:08:33,840 -<br>00:08:35,760<br>[1st Episode]          | <i>Allahu</i>                         | <i>yakunu</i>  | <i>fi</i> | <i>'auni</i>       | <i>zaujatic</i> |
|  | <b>God</b>                            | be             | in        | Help               | wife            |
|  | <b>May God</b> help your wife.        |                |           |                    |                 |
| Cultural terms<br>categories:<br>organization,<br>customs, and<br>concepts | <i>Allah</i>                          | <i>menjadi</i> | <i>di</i> | <i>Pertolongan</i> | <i>istrimu.</i> |
|  | <i>Semoga Allah menolong istrimu.</i> |                |           |                    |                 |
| Datum (4)  | "أَبُو سِرَاجٍ" جَابَ لِي خَبْرٍ      |                |           |                    |                 |
| Clip selected:   | أَبُو                                 | سِرَاجٍ        | جَابَ     | لِي                | خَبْرٍ          |

|                            |                         |                 |                 |              |            |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|------------|
| 00:04:08,000 -             | <i>Khabar</i>           | <i>Li</i>       | <i>Jaba</i>     | <b>Siraj</b> | <b>Abu</b> |
| 00:04:09,920               | News                    | Me              | Answer          | <b>Siraj</b> | <b>Sir</b> |
| [3rd Episode]              | <b>Abu Siraj</b> said   |                 |                 |              |            |
| Cultural terms             | <i>Berita</i>           | <i>Kepadaku</i> | <i>Menjawab</i> | <b>Siraj</b> | <b>Pak</b> |
| categories: social culture | <b>Abu Siraj bilang</b> |                 |                 |              |            |

An imitation strategy is a translation technique that, although more adaptable to the target language and culture, preserves the aesthetic effect and subtleties of the source text. Transfer strategies, on the other hand, preserve the source text's structure and meaning while making only minor adjustments to the target language. By keeping as many aspects of the original text as feasible, the transfer technique also prioritizes meaning correctness. The terms kept from the original text components are اللهُ (Allahu) in datum (3) and أَبُو سِرَاج (Abu Siraj) in datum (4); if any modifications are found, they are minor, like in phonetic vocal symbols.

Culture and religion are inextricably linked (Chukwudebelu, 2024). Datum (3) is a cultural term that belongs to the group of conceptions, organization, and customs, which also includes elements of religion. In datum (3), the phrase Allah refers to the Islamic name for God. One similarity between Saudi Arabia, the setting for this series, and Indonesia is that the vast majority of their people are Muslims. This is among the reasons why the Arabic word اللهُ (Allahu) is translated as Allah rather than translated as God (Tuhan). Since Muslims make up the majority of Indonesians, the name Allah is understood by Indonesians and Arabians.

In datum (4), the term أَبُو سِرَاج (Abu Siraj) is retained as Abu Siraj in the translation. The Arabic term أَبُو (Abu) means "Pak" in Indonesian and is commonly translated as "Mr." in English. Meanwhile, Siraj is the name of a male character in this series. The translator chose to retain the term *Abu Siraj* to ensure accuracy of meaning.

Negotiation in the translation of the term اللهُ (*Allahu*), which remains *Allah/God*, and أَبُو سِرَاج (*Abu Siraj*), which translated to be *Abu Siraj*, occurs due to several linguistic, cultural, and semantic factors that the translator must consider. The term *Allah* is widely recognized in various languages, including Arabic, English and Indonesian, making translation unnecessary. The name *Abu Siraj* is retained because it is part of the Arabic naming system, which carries specific meanings and cultural significance. Altering it could reduce the authenticity of the character in the story.

### 3. Paraphrase Strategy

Table 3. Paraphrase Strategy

| Datum (5)   | عَشَانِ الْحُبِّ لِحَالِهِ مَا حَيَّاكُلْ عَيْشِ. |                                |                                    |                                 |                         |   |
|---|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
|   | عَيْشِ.   | حَيَّاكُلْ                     | مَا                                | لِحَالِهِ                       | الْحُبِّ                | عَشَانِ   |
| Clip selected:<br>00:09:26,960 -<br>00:09:28,680<br>[3rd Episode] | <b>'isy</b><br><b>Bread</b>                       | <b>haya'akul</b><br><b>Eat</b> | <i>Ma</i><br>Not                   | <i>Lihalihi</i><br>it self      | <i>hubbu</i><br>love    | <i>Asyan</i><br>Because   |
| Cultural terms<br>categories:<br>social culture                   | <b>roti.</b>                                      | <b>Makan</b>                   | <i>tidak</i><br><i>itu sendiri</i> | <i>Cinta</i>                    | <i>Karena</i>           | <i>Love can't pay the bills</i><br><i>Cinta tak bisa bayar tagihan.</i>                                     |
| Datum (6)   | مُمْكِنٌ تَخَلِّصُ شَاهِيكَ ... تَتَفَضَّلُ؟      |                                |                                    |                                 |                         |   |
|   | تَتَفَضَّلُ؟                                      | وَ                             | شَاهِيكَ                           | تَخَلِّصُ                       | مُمْكِنٌ                |   |
| Clip selected:<br>00:10:30,200 -<br>00:10:32,720<br>[6th Episode] | <b>Tatafaddal</b><br><b>Please</b>                | <i>Wa</i><br>And               | <i>syahika</i><br>your<br>tea      | <i>takhallisu</i><br>you finish | <i>Mungkin</i><br>Maybe |   |
| Cultural terms<br>categories:<br>lifestyle and<br>habits          | <b>silahkan?</b>                                  | <i>Dan</i>                     | <i>kalian</i>                      | <i>kalian menghabiskan</i>      | <i>Mungkinkah</i>       | <i>Can you finish your tea and then leave?</i><br><i>the</i><br><i>Bisa habiskan teh kalian lalu pergi?</i> |

The paraphrasing strategy is used in subtitle translation because it helps convey meaning more naturally while adhering to the technical constraints of subtitles, such as character limits and display duration. Through paraphrasing, subtitles can be made easier to understand without strictly following the original sentence structure, which may be long or complex. In datum (5), the term حَيَّاكُلْ عَيْشِ (haya'akul 'isy/ eat bread) is translated as bayar tagihan (pay the bills). Meanwhile, in datum (6), the term تَتَفَضَّلُ (tatafaddal/please) is translated as pergi (leave).

In data (5) and (6), negotiation occurs in translating Arabic phrases. The discourse in data (5) contains a metaphor that is highly characteristic of Arab culture; therefore, it falls under the category of cultural terms, specifically social culture. In this case, the translator successfully provides an equivalent translation in Indonesian. The phrase حَيَّاكُلْ عَيْشِ (haya'akul 'isy / eat bread) illustrates that Arab society primarily consumes bread, known as 'isy, as a staple food. In contrast, Indonesians do not typically consider bread as their main staple food. Hence, the translator opted to render the phrase حَيَّاكُلْ عَيْشِ (haya'akul 'isy/ eat bread) as bayar tagihan (pay the bills), which sounds more familiar and relatable to Indonesian society, where paying bills—such as electricity, water, WiFi, and others—is an essential part of daily life.

In datum (6), the term *تَتَفَضَّلْ* (*tatafaddal/please*) undergoes negotiation in its translation. The term *تَتَفَضَّلْ* (*tatafaddal/please*) requires clarification regarding what is being "granted permission." In the context of this discourse, the character is subtly asking their guest to leave after finishing their tea. Therefore, to provide clarity and account for subtitle duration, the translator chose a more straightforward term, *pergi/leave*, as the meaning of *تَتَفَضَّلْ* (*tatafaddal/please*) in this context is essentially "please leave."

#### 4. Expansion Strategy

Table 4. Expansion Strategy

| Datum (7)      | الله يقدره.                      |               |
|----------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Clip selected: | الله                             | يقدره.        |
| 00:18:01,520   | <i>yuqaddiruhu</i>               | <i>Allahu</i> |
| -              |                                  |               |
| 00:18:02,760   | appreciate him                   | God           |
| [1st Episode]  | <b>May God</b> help him.         |               |
| Cultural terms | <i>memampukannya</i>             | <i>Allah</i>  |
| categories:    | <i>Semoga Allah menolongnya!</i> |               |
| social culture |                                  |               |
| Datum (8)      | جمعة مباركة.                     |               |
| Clip selected: | جمعة                             | مباركة.       |
| 00:25:17,840   | <i>mubarakah</i>                 | <i>Jum'ah</i> |
| -              |                                  |               |
| 00:25:18,960   | Blessing                         | Friday        |
| [1st Episode]  | Friday full of blessings         |               |
| Cultural terms | <i>Berkah</i>                    | <i>Jum'at</i> |
| categories:    | <i>Jumat penuh berkah.</i>       |               |
| social culture |                                  |               |

In subtitle translation, the expansion technique is employed because it assists in explaining meanings that the target audience might not understand right away, particularly in cases where there are cultural differences or phrases that are challenging to translate straight. The destination language might not directly translate certain terms or ideas from the source language. The translator can further clarify the message by adding more details through expansion.

Data (7) shows the presence of translation negotiation using the expansion strategy. The phrase *الله يقدره* (*Allah yuqaddiruhu*) literally means Allah *memampukannya* (Allah enables him). However, in certain contexts, its meaning can be broader, such as a hope that someone will be granted ease or assistance by

Allah. The translation *Semoga Allah menolongnya* (May Allah help him) is more appropriate in conveying the intended prayer or positive hope for someone. By choosing a phrase that is more commonly understood, such as *Semoga Allah menolongnya* (May Allah help him), the audience can immediately grasp its meaning without having to think too much about its literal translation.

The phrase *جمعة مباركة* (Jum'ah Mubarakah) in datum (8) literally means Jum'at yang diberkahi (blessed Friday). In translation, this phrase is often adapted as Jum'at penuh berkah (Friday full of blessings). The literal translation, Jumat yang diberkahi (blessed Friday), sounds less natural in Indonesian. Jum'at penuh berkah (Friday full of blessings) is more commonly used and easier to understand for Indonesian speakers. If translated too literally, its meaning may be unclear to viewers who are not familiar with the expression. By using Jum'at penuh berkah (Friday full of blessings), the message remains clear while fitting within the technical constraints of subtitles.

### 5. Condensation Strategy

Table 5. Condensation Strategy

| Datum (9)      | - خَلَصَ بِالشَّيْخِ. |                |
|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Clip selected: | بِالشَّيْخِ.          | خَلَصَ         |
| 00:17:46,680 - | <i>ya Syaikh</i>      | <i>Khallas</i> |
| 00:17:48,680   | Sir                   | Enough         |
| 3rd Episode]   | Cepatlah.             |                |
| Cultural terms | <i>Syaikh</i>         | <i>Cukup</i>   |
| categories:    |                       |                |
| organization,  |                       |                |
| customs, and   | <i>Cepatlah.</i>      |                |
| concepts       |                       |                |
| Datum (10)     | أَيْنَ الشُّهُودُ؟    |                |
| Clip selected: | الشُّهُودُ؟           | أَيْنَ         |
| 00:18:07,200 - | <i>asy-syuhud?</i>    | <i>Aina</i>    |
| 00:18:08,320   | the witness?          | Where          |
| [3rd Episode]  | The witness?          |                |
| Cultural terms | <i>para saksinya?</i> | <i>Di mana</i> |
| categories:    |                       |                |
| organization,  |                       |                |
| customs, and   | <i>Saksinya?</i>      |                |
| concepts       |                       |                |

When translating subtitles, the condensation technique is employed to make the text simpler without sacrificing its essential meaning. This is significant since the character count and display length of subtitles are limited. It is possible to condense long texts without sacrificing their main points. Viewers might not have enough time to read lengthy subtitles while still keeping up with the plot of the movie. The language becomes more succinct and direct when the condensation approach is used.

When *خَلِّصْ يَا شَيْخَ* (*khallas ya syaikh*) in datum (9) is translated as *cepatlah* (hurry up), a process of condensation occurs in the translation. This relates to how the meaning of the phrase in the source language is simplified in the target language based on its usage context. The word *خَلِّصْ* (*khallas*) literally means *cukup* (enough of something). In spoken language, especially in dialects, *خَلِّصْ* is often used to urge someone to finish something quickly, carrying the connotation of *cepatlah!* (hurry up!) or *selesaikan sekarang!* (finish it now!). Meanwhile, *يَا شَيْخَ* (*ya asy-syaikh*) is a form of address for someone respected or senior.

In the translation from Arabic to Indonesian, semantic reduction occurs, shifting the meaning from *selesaikan!* (finish it!) to *cepatlah!* (hurry up!). In Indonesian, when someone urges another person to complete something quickly, the word *cepatlah!* (hurry up) sounds more natural than *selesaikan!* (finish it!). Instead of retaining the full meaning of *cepat selesaikan!* (finish it quickly!), the translator opts for a more concise and direct phrase: *cepatlah!* (hurry up!). This represents a pragmatic adaptation, rather than a literal word-for-word translation.

In datum (10) when the phrase *أَيْنَ الشُّهُودُ؟* (*aina asy-syuhud?*) is translated as *saksinya?* (the witness?), syntactic condensation and semantic reduction occur in the translation. The word *أَيْنَ* (*aina*) means "where", which is an interrogative word for location or presence. While, *الشُّهُودُ* (*asy-syuhud*) means *para saksi* (the witnesses) or *saksinya* (witnesses) in certain contexts. Literally, *أَيْنَ الشُّهُودُ؟* means *di mana para saksi?* (where are the witnesses?). Syntactic condensation occurs as the word *di mana* (where/aina) in Arabic is omitted in Indonesian. In conversational contexts, the question *saksinya?* (The witness?) is already sufficient to convey the meaning of *di mana saksinya?* (where are the witnesses?), making the interrogative element *أَيْنَ* unnecessary for explicit translation.

Semantically, in Indonesian, in certain contexts, a noun expressed as a question (e.g., *Saksinya?*) is enough to indicate a question about location or presence. Therefore, translating *أَيْنَ الشُّهُودُ؟* as *saksinya?* (the witness?) still preserves the same meaning, even though some parts are omitted in the literal sense (semantic reduction).

## 6. Transcription Strategy

Table 6. Transcription Strategy

| Data (11)      | خلينا نلحق العمرة قبل صلاة الظهر.                                     |                |                |                   |                   |                  |
|----------------|---|----------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Clip selected: | الظهر.  | صلاة           | قبل            | العمرة            | نلحق              | خلينا            |
| 00:03:52,480 - | <i>az-zuhri</i>   | <i>Shalati</i> | <i>qabla</i>   | <i>al-'umrata</i> | <i>nalhaqu</i>    | <i>Khallina</i>  |
| 00:03:54,640   | <b>zuhur</b>  | <b>Pray</b>    | before         | <b>the umrah</b>  | catch-up          | Let's            |
| [1st Episode]  | Let's complete the <b>umrah</b> before the <b>zuhur prayer</b> .      |                |                |                   |                   |                  |
| Cultural terms | <i>zuhur</i>  | <i>Salat</i>   | <i>sebelum</i> | <i>umrah</i>      | <i>selesaikan</i> | <i>Mari kita</i> |
| categories:    |   |                |                |                   |                   |                  |
| organization,  | <i>Mari kita selesaikan <b>umrah</b> sebelum <b>shalat zuhur</b>.</i> |                |                |                   |                   |                  |
| customs, and   |   |                |                |                   |                   |                  |
| concepts       |   |                |                |                   |                   |                  |

When maintaining the original elements of the source language is more important than fully translating them, the transcription technique is employed in subtitle translation for a number of reasons. Keeping some words or phrases in the original language might help viewers experience the subtleties of the culture since they have cultural meanings that are hard to translate. The original language is frequently used to refer to persons, locations, organizations, or technical words. It is more useful to leave some words in the source language in their original form because the target audience is already familiar with them.

In the datum (11) The term العمرة is translated as umroh, and صلاة الظهر is translated as shalat dzuhur due to the strategy of transcription and loanword adoption in translation. The word العمرة (al-umratu) is an Islamic term referring to a specific pilgrimage in Makkah that does not have a direct equivalent in Indonesian. If translated literally, for example, as “a pilgrimage to Makkah”, its meaning could become broader and lose specificity. The term صلاة الظهر (shalat dzuhur) refers to an obligatory prayer performed at midday, and there is no perfect substitute for this term in Indonesian.

The words umroh and shalat dzuhur have become part of the recognized vocabulary in the Indonesian language, especially within the Muslim community. Borrowing these terms ensures that the translation remains easily understandable to readers or listeners without requiring additional explanation. The terms umroh and shalat dzuhur are retained in translation for reasons of semantic accuracy, reader familiarity, religious connotation, and consistency in Islamic literature. This is an example of the transcription and loanword adoption strategy used to maintain clarity and accuracy in translation.

## 7. Resignation Strategy

Table 7. Resignation Strategy

| Data (12)   | والله يمكن يوظفوك داحين.                    |   |                         |  |
|---|---|---|-------------------------|--|
|   | داحين.                                      | يوظفوك  | يمكن                    | والله  |
| Clip selected:<br>00:02:06,160 -<br>00:02:07,400<br>[1st Episode] | <b>Dahin</b><br><b>right</b><br><b>now,</b> | <i>Yuwadzifuka</i><br>they hire you<br>They might hire you. | <i>yumkinu</i><br>Maybe | <b>Wallahi</b><br><b>For the sake</b><br><b>of God</b> |
| Cultural terms<br>categories:<br>social culture                   | <b>Sekarang</b>                             | <i>mempekerjakanmu</i>                                      | <i> mungkin</i>         | <b>Demi Allah</b>                                      |
|   |   | <i>Mereka mungkin mempekerjakanmu.</i>                      |                         |  |

The resignation strategy in subtitle translation is used when the meaning or effect of words/phrases in the source language cannot be fully transferred to the target language. As a result, the translator must accept a certain loss of meaning and replace it with an expression that still conveys the core message. Some terms or expressions in the source language carry unique cultural meanings that are difficult to find exact equivalents for in the target language. If forced into a literal translation, the result may sound unnatural or nonsensical to the audience.

The phrase والله is often not translated into Indonesian for several linguistic and pragmatic reasons in translation, especially in the context of subtitles or conversations. والله (wallahi) literally means demi Allah (for the sake of God), but in spoken Arabic, this phrase is often used as a spontaneous expression to emphasize a statement, express surprise, or reinforce an utterance. In the case of datum (12), this phrase does not add new information to the conversation, so it can be considered unnecessary to translate.

In Arabic, والله (wallahi) is a common expression used by all groups of people, whether in religious or everyday contexts. In Indonesian, the phrase demi Allah (For the sake of God) carries a more serious connotation and is usually used in more formal or solemn situations (such as in an oath). If والله were translated every time it appeared, it might sound too strong or inconsistent with the natural tone of the conversation.

### ***The Implication for Equivalence at The Word Level***

When a translator must select a suitable approach to attain equivalency, particularly at the word level, meaning negotiation takes place. Imitation, transfer, paraphrasing, enlargement, condensation, transcribing, and resignation are some of the strategies that affect how much of the source language's meaning can be preserved or altered in the target language.



An imitation technique preserves aspects of the source language while making no alterations to the target language, particularly in terms of names, technical words, or popular culture. Because it is preserved and can result in linguistic loans in the target language, this word-level equivalency method suggests no change in meaning. However, readers who are unfamiliar with the translated cultural concepts may not always get it right away. Transfer and transcription strategies imply maintaining lexical equivalence but can experience shifting meaning if there is no exact equivalent. In addition, this strategy is also likely to produce calques or translations that sound less natural in the target language.

However, in the target language, paraphrase, expansion, condensation, and resignation methods suggest that one word is frequently changed into a phrase or sentence, or vice versa. Although it runs the danger of making the content longer or even shorter, this can enhance comprehension. Additionally, it may result in the loss of cultural or emotional subtleties.

There are a number of restrictions in the study "Cultural Terms Negotiation in Indonesian Subtitles of Arabic Netflix Series 'Baitu Tahir' and Its Implication for Equivalence at Word Level." The results of this study might not accurately reflect translation techniques used in Arabic series subtitles generally because it only examines one Netflix series (Baitu Tahir). This study is unable to cover all Arabic terminology and cultural situations. Furthermore, the interpretation of the translator—which may be impacted by personal preferences or the researcher's linguistic background—is crucial to the examination of cultural term negotiation.

It seems probable that future studies would broaden the data corpus by examining additional Arabic television shows or movies in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the methods used to translate cultural terms in Indonesian subtitles. Additionally, future studies may be able to compare different types of films or television shows. More generally, a variety of streaming services, including Disney, Amazon Prime, WeTV, and many more, can provide subtitle data.

## **Conclusion**

According to this study, a number of translation techniques, such as imitation, transfer, paraphrasing, expansion, condensation, transcribing, and resignation, have a significant impact on the negotiation of cultural identity in the Indonesian subtitles of the Netflix Arabic series Baitu Tahir. Imitation is the most commonly employed approach (28.91%), followed by transfer (27.34%) and paraphrase (21.09%). This suggests that translators frequently either keep Arabic cultural concepts in their original form or substitute them with more accurate Indonesian equivalents.

The cultural and linguistic distinctions between Arabic and Indonesian lead to this negotiation because they influence how cultural words are conveyed in subtitles. The translator must modify certain terms that lack direct Indonesian equivalents so that the Indonesian audience can still understand them without losing their original meaning.

The implications of these negotiations for word-level equivalence suggest that imitation and transcription strategies preserve the original terms but may pose challenges in comprehension for audiences unfamiliar with Arabic culture. Transfer and paraphrase strategies allow for better readability in the target language, although they sometimes experience shifts in meaning. Expansion and condensation strategies help overcome space limitations in subtitles, but risk losing certain cultural nuances.

Resignation strategies are used when meaning cannot be fully transferred, so some cultural elements are omitted from the translation. Overall, this study confirms that audiovisual translation functions not only as a language bridge but also as a complex process of negotiating cultural identities in the context of digital globalization.

### **Acknowledgement**

The completion of this research was made possible through the financial support provided by *Beasiswa Pendidikan Indonesia* (BPI). The generous funding contributed significantly to the success of this study. Deep appreciation is extended for their commitment to advancing education and research, which has allowed for an in-depth exploration of this topic.

### **References**

- Abueish, T. (2023, August 16). First Saudi TV Series Produced by Netflix Set to Premiere in September. *Al Arabiya English*.  
<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/saudi-arabia/2023/08/16/First-Saudi-TV-series-produced-by-Netflix-set-to-premiere-in-September#:~:text=Netflix's%20first%20original%20Saudi%20TV,on%20the%20video%20streaming%20platform>.
- Annisa, N., Syam, A. T., & Masruddin, M. (2022). Teaching vocabulary through the Round Robin Brainstorming Technique. *English Education Journal*, 13(1), 46-55.
- Alamri, M. (2023). Film Regulation and Censorship Practices in Saudi Arabia: A Case Study of GCAM. *AJMC: Asian Journal of Media and Communication*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.20885/asjmc.vol7.iss1.art1>
- Baker, M. (2018). In *Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation* (Third edition). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

- Balogun, S. K., & Aruoture, E. (2024). Cultural Homogenization vs. Cultural Diversity: Social Media's Double-Edged Sword in the Age of Globalization. *African Journal of Social and Behavioural Sciences (AJSBS)*, 14(4).  
<https://journals.aphriapub.com/index.php/AJSBS/article/view/2722/2515>
- Cheng, X. (2023). 6B4T in China: A case of inter-Asian feminist knowledge negotiation and contestation through translation. *Asia Pacific Translation and Intercultural Studies*, 10(2), 125–140.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/23306343.2023.2241126>
- Chukwudebelu, I. A. (2024). Exploring the Dynamic Interplay between Religion and Culture: A Multidisciplinary Inquiry. *Journal of Humanities, Music, and Dance*, 44, 33–43. <https://doi.org/10.55529/jhmd.44.33.43>
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Pearson.
- Eco, U. (2013). *Mouse or Rat? Translation as Negotiation*. Phoenix.
- Fatin, J. S. B., & Cholsy, H. (2022). Negosiasi Identitas Budaya Jepang dalam Novel *Tenki No Ko* dan Terjemahannya dalam Bahasa Indonesia. *IZUMI*, 11(2), 248–259. <https://doi.org/10.14710/izumi.11.2.248-259>
- Gottlieb, H. (1992). Subtitling—A New University Discipline. In C. Dollerup & A. Loddegaard (Eds.), *Teaching Translation and Interpreting: Training, Talent, and Experience*. J. Benjamins Pub. Co.
- Hu, B. (2024). Negotiation, power, and ethics in online collaborative translation: Translation of “COVID-19” by Wikipedia translator-editors. *The Translator*, 30(1), 78–95. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2023.2278224>
- Im, J., Park, G. Y., & Choe, H. (2022). Translingual negotiation strategies in CMC contexts: English-medium communication in online marketplaces. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 13(4), 477–499. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2019-0034>
- Jones, H. (2023). “Gua means scrape”: A conversation analysis of identity construction and negotiation in polylogal Wikipedia paratext. *Translation Studies*, 16(3), 379–397.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14781700.2023.2229330>
- Ma'shumah, N. K., Arum, A. A., & Syamsi, A. N. (2021). Translators as Mediators: Cultural Negotiation in Translating English Literary Text into Indonesian. *Language Literacy: Journal of Linguistics, Literature, and Language Teaching*, 5(2), 306–320. <https://doi.org/10.30743/ll.v5i2.4418>
- Masruddin, M., Amir, F., Langaji, A., & Rusdiansyah, R. (2023). Conceptualizing linguistic politeness in light of age. *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language*, 11(3), 41-55.

- Masruddin, Hartina, S., Arifin, M. A., & Langaji, A. (2024). Flipped learning: facilitating student engagement through repeated instruction and direct feedback. *Cogent Education*, 11(1), 2412500.
- Melnyk, J. P., & Marcone, M. F. (2011). Aphrodisiacs from plant and animal sources—A review of current scientific literature. *Food Research International*, 44(4), 840–850.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodres.2011.02.043>
- Newmark, P. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. Prentice Hall.
- Radwan, R. (2022, March 22). How the Reopening of Cinemas in Saudi Arabia Has Proved a Film-Industry Game-Changer. *Arab News*.  
<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2041361/saudi-arabia>
- Ridho, A., & Priyoyudanto, F. (2024). Budaya Arab Dan Kearifan Lokal: Menyelusuri Nilai-Nilai Tradisional Dalam Masyarakat Modern. *Student Research Journal*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.55606/srjyappi.v2i1.1027>
- Saba, S., Prawira, N. G., & Pratama, G. (2022). Representasi Budaya Nusantara di Indonesia dalam Film Animasi *Raya and the Last Dragon*. *Finder Journal of Visual Communication Design*, 2(1).
- Sajarwa, Khumairo Ma'shumah, N., Arrasyid, N. D., & Ediani, A. (2023). Identity struggle through the negotiation of cultural identity in the translation of French cultural references into Javanese. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 10(1), 2184448. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2023.2184448>
- Supardi, M., & Sayogie, F. (2019). Negotiating Cultural Translation in *The Gift of the Magi*. *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Culture and Language in Southeast Asia (ICCLAS 2018)*. *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Culture and Language in Southeast Asia (ICCLAS 2018)*, Tangerang Selatan, Indonesia.  
<https://doi.org/10.2991/icclas-18.2019.53>
- Wang, Y., Yu, X., & Chen, Q. (2020). Translation and negotiation of gender stereotypes: Metamorphosis of female characters in the English version of a Chinese classical novel. *Perspectives*, 28(5), 702–716.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2019.1663887>