



## Translation of Balinese Culture Terms in the Film *Widya:Jemari Jiwaku Menari*

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### Abstract

Language and culture are closely interconnected, making the translation of culture-specific terms a complex process, particularly in audiovisual media such as film. However, limited studies have specifically examined how Balinese cultural terms are translated in film subtitles and how these choices reflect the translator's ideological orientation. This study aims to identify the types of Balinese cultural terms in the film *Widya: Jemari Jiwaku Menari*, classify them based on Newmark's (1988) cultural categories, and analyze the translation procedures using Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) framework, as well as Venuti's (1995) concepts of domestication and foreignization. This research employed a descriptive qualitative method. Data were collected through documentation by analyzing the film's original dialogues (source language) and their corresponding English subtitles (target language). The findings reveal four categories of cultural terms: gestures and habits (65%), material culture (15%), social organization and religious terms (15%), and social culture (5%). Six translation procedures were identified, with literal translation being the most dominant (50%), followed by borrowing (15%), calque (10%), transposition (10%), modulation (10%), and equivalence (5%). These results indicate a dominant tendency toward foreignization (65%), although domestication is selectively applied to enhance clarity for the target audience. This study highlights the role of translators as cultural mediators and emphasizes the importance of balancing cultural preservation with accessibility in subtitle translation.

Keywords: *Balinese culture; cultural terms; film; translation*

### 1. Introduction

Language functions as a fundamental medium for the development of culture. Culture can be understood as a way of life that evolves within a particular community and is transmitted across generations. As noted by Devianty (2017), human culture would not be possible without language, as it plays a central role in shaping and sustaining cultural identity. Therefore, language and culture are deeply interconnected. The diversity of languages and cultures, along with the need for communication in human interaction, has made translation an essential means of facilitating cross-cultural exchange and knowledge transfer (Abbasi et al., 2012). Consequently, translation must take into account not only linguistic elements but also cultural contexts.

Translation is more than the mere transfer of words from one language to another. Newmark (1988) defines translation as the process of rendering the meaning of a text into another language in accordance with the author's intention. Similarly, Freeman (2009) emphasizes that translation involves the negotiation of shared meaning. From a broader perspective, translation can be viewed as a cultural act. Hatim and Mason (1990) argue that translation is a communicative process

between cultures, requiring translators to convey both linguistic meaning and cultural perspectives. This highlights the complexity of translation, particularly when dealing with culturally embedded expressions.

This complexity becomes more evident in multilingual and multicultural contexts such as Indonesia. Zubaidah and Arsih (2021) state that Indonesia is home to more than 1,300 cultural groups, each with its own linguistic and cultural characteristics. Among these, Balinese culture stands out due to its strong integration of language, religion, and tradition. The Balinese language is closely tied to Hindu religious practices, traditional performances, and daily rituals. It reflects a rich cultural system with vocabulary that encodes spiritual values, social hierarchy, and local wisdom. One important medium for representing culture is film, which combines verbal and non-verbal elements to portray local identities to a wider audience. In this context, translation, particularly subtitling, plays a crucial role in conveying cultural meanings across languages. Translating local films into English enables global audiences to access and understand cultural content; however, it also presents significant challenges. Culture-specific terms, such as *puri* (a Balinese royal palace) and *metanding* (a ritual activity of preparing offerings), often lack direct equivalents in the target language. As a result, translators must carefully choose strategies to preserve meaning while ensuring comprehensibility.

Previous studies in translation have widely discussed the translation of culture-specific items using frameworks such as Newmark's (1988) cultural categories and Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) translation procedures. In addition, Venuti's (1995) concepts of domestication and foreignization have been frequently applied to examine the ideological orientation of translation. However, most of these studies focus on written texts or general translation practices, with relatively limited attention given to audiovisual translation, particularly in the context of Indonesian local films.

Therefore, a research gap can be identified in two main areas. First, there is still a limited number of studies that specifically analyze the subtitling of Indonesian local films, especially those representing regional cultures such as Bali. Second, there is a lack of in-depth analysis of how translation ideology domestication and foreignization is applied in audiovisual translation and how it affects the representation of cultural identity in subtitles. This gap highlights the need for further research that integrates linguistic, cultural, and ideological perspectives in the analysis of film translation.

In response to this gap, this study focuses on the translation of Balinese cultural terms in the film *Widya: Jemari Jiwaku Menari*. This film was selected because it contains a variety of culturally bound expressions presented in Balinese and Indonesian, accompanied by English subtitles. Accordingly, this study has two main objectives: (1) to identify and classify the types of cultural terms found in the film based on Newmark's (1988) cultural categories, and (2) to analyze the translation procedures applied using Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) framework, as well as to examine the translator's ideological orientation toward domestication or foreignization (Venuti, 1995). By applying these theoretical frameworks, this study aims to reveal how cultural meanings are negotiated in translation and to highlight the role of translators as mediators between languages and cultures, particularly in the context of audiovisual media.

## 2. Research Methodology

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to analyze the translation of Balinese cultural terms in the film *Widya: Jemari Jiwaku Menari*. This approach was chosen because the study focuses on interpreting linguistic and cultural phenomena within their context, rather than measuring numerical data. The primary data were obtained from the film's original dialogues in Balinese and Indonesian as the source language (SL), along with their corresponding English subtitles as the target language (TL).

The data in this study consisted of 20 instances of culture-specific items identified throughout the film. These data were selected using purposive sampling based on several criteria. The selected data include utterances that contain Balinese culture-specific terms, reflect Newmark's (1988) cultural categories, and are translated into English subtitles for comparison between the source and

target languages. In addition, only expressions that carry culturally bound meanings and do not have direct equivalents in English were included in the analysis. The unit of analysis in this study is words and phrases that represent cultural terms within the dialogue, which are examined in relation to their contextual usage in the film.

The data were collected using a documentation technique. The researcher watched the film repeatedly, identified relevant dialogues containing cultural terms, and transcribed them manually. The source language expressions were then aligned with their corresponding English subtitles to form paired data for analysis. After the data were collected, they were analyzed in several stages. First, the cultural terms were classified based on Newmark's (1988) cultural categories, namely ecology, material culture, social culture, social organization and religious, and gestures and habits. Second, the translation of each item was analyzed using Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) translation procedures, including borrowing, calque, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation.

Finally, the analysis was interpreted using Venuti's (1995) concepts of domestication and foreignization to identify the ideological orientation of the translator. This interpretation aimed to determine whether the translation tends to preserve the cultural identity of the source text or adapt it to the expectations of the target audience. Through this analytical framework, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Balinese cultural meanings are transferred in audiovisual translation and how they are negotiated across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

### 3. Result Aand Discussion

This subsection presents some kinds of culture term found in *Widya: Jemari Jiwaku Menari*. This analysis relied on Newmarks theory of culture term (1988). There are four kinds of cultural terms found in this film, namely gestures and habits, material culture, social culture, social organization and religion. Each kind of culture term is provided by an analysis of one sample. To render these cultural terms into English, the translator used various procedures proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958). Literal translation was the most frequently applied procedure, accounting for ten of the twenty total instances, especially for simple expressions and gestures. Other strategies such as three borrowings, two calque, two transposition, two modulation, and one equivalence were applied.

Drawing on Venuti's (1995) framework, the translation of Balinese cultural terms in the film indicates a dominant tendency toward foreignization, particularly when using borrowing and literal translation. Many cultural elements such as *canang*, *Om Swastiastu*, and even terms like *kolok* (deaf) were retained or directly translated, suggesting the translator intended to preserve the cultural integrity of the source text. However, in a few cases, domestication strategies were evident. For instance, the use of modulation or equivalence in emotionally loaded phrases like "*so pity very sorry, beautiful deaf*" shows an attempt to adjust meaning for clarity and emotional resonance in the target language.

**Table 1. Example Gesture and Habits**  
(7.15)

No	SL	TL
1	" <i>Tolong beri tahu teman-temannya Widya, masa di sekolah Widya dibilang kolok dan bongol</i> "	"Please tell to widya's friends Why at school Widya is said to be <b>dumb</b> and <b>deaf</b> "

*Kolok* and *Bongol* were the culture terms found. Putri and Sutjaja (2018) explains *Kolok* is a Balinese term for deaf people: it can mean 'deaf' or 'deaf people' or 'mute', 'without sounds', or 'unhearable'. Wibawa et al. (2024) further explain Moreover, no comparison with previous studies is provided. Therefore, a comparative discussion with prior research should be included. *Bongol* is

a term used for people who cannot hear sounds if you mention that even to someone who suffers from the disease, it is considered insulting and degrading to that person. The terms *kolok* and *bongol* commonly used in informal or even derogatory contexts carry strong cultural connotations in the source language, referring not only to physical disabilities (deaf and mute) but also to perceived social inferiority or ridicule.

In this case, the translator applied literal translation, a procedure described by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) as a direct word-for-word rendering that retains the structure and lexical choices of the source language. This strategy results in a target text that closely mirrors the original, with minimal cultural adaptation. As a result, the phrase “*dumb and deaf*” appears in the English version without further contextual explanation or softening.

From the perspective of Venuti (1995), this translation reflects a foreignization strategy, where the translator prioritizes preserving the cultural and emotional impact of the source text, even at the risk of creating slight ambiguity or discomfort for the target audience. By retaining the directness and harshness of the original terms, the translator exposes the audience to the raw emotional reality and societal prejudice faced by the main character, Widya.

**Table 2. Example Gesture and Habits**  
(52.06)

No	SL	TL
1	“ <i>Yih, ngoyong. Bangun</i> ”	“ <b>why are you sitting</b> , get up”

The expression *ngoyong* in Balinese is a cultural term referring to a gesture or habit of sitting down in a relaxed or idle posture, often implying that someone is not doing what they are supposed to be doing or is wasting time. In Balinese daily conversation, *ngoyong* can carry a subtle connotation of laziness or reluctance to act, depending on the tone and context. The interjection *Yih* adds an element of surprise, mild scolding, or urgency, reflecting an informal and situationally emotive interaction.

In the target text, the translator rendered *ngoyong* as “sitting,” which constitutes a transposition, one of Vinay and Darbelnet’s (1958) oblique translation procedures. Here, the shift occurs from the culturally loaded verb *ngoyong* (which includes behavioral and attitudinal implications) to a more neutral physical description “sitting” in English, thus altering the grammatical and semantic category to fit target-language norms. The informal interjection *Yih* is omitted, possibly to maintain fluency and avoid awkwardness in English dialogue.

From Venuti’s (1995) perspective, this choice represents a domestication strategy, as the translator adapts the expression into a familiar, culturally neutral form for the target audience. While this ensures clarity and naturalness in English, the cultural nuance of *ngoyong* its embedded social judgment and behavioral imagery is partially lost. As a result, the TT communicates the immediate physical action but downplays the subtle cultural tone of admonishment present in the SL.

**Table 3. Example Social Organizations and Religious**  
(39.03)

No	SL	TL
1	“ <i>Om Swastiastu, Bu Widya, kok tumben ibu yang bawa canang</i> ”	“ <b>Best regards</b> , this is the first time you brought the canang”

The greeting *Om Swastiastu* is a traditional Balinese Hindu salutation, carrying spiritual meaning. Nurhadi et al. (2020) Hindu people interpret the meaning of the utterance “*Om*” as a form of call or symbol for offering prayers, worship, and praise to their God. The utterance “*Om*” is then followed by the word “*Swasti*,” which means safety, happiness, and welfare, and is concluded with

the word '*astu*,' which means 'may it be so.' *Om Swastiastu* means may one be in a good condition through the grace of God. According to Newmark's (1988) classification, these terms fall under the category of Social Organizations and Religious, as they are deeply embedded in the Balinese Hindu tradition and are tied to daily religious practices.

The translator applied the calque procedure, defined by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) as a form of literal translation where each element of the source phrase is translated word-for-word to create a phrase in the target language that mirrors the structure of the original. In this case, "*Om Swastiastu*" is rendered as "*Best regards*," which superficially matches its function as a greeting, but lacks its cultural and religious nuance. From the perspective of Venuti (1995), this translation reflects a domestication, the use of "*Best regards*" suggests slight domestication, it still inadequately captures the sacred and ceremonial nature of "*Om Swastiastu*", thereby resulting in a partial cultural loss.

**Table 4. Example Social Organizations and Religious (35.38)**

No	SL	TL
1	" <i>Nggih, bu agung. Titiang Made murid ibu dumun</i> "	"Mrs. Agung.. <b>I'm</b> Made, your first student"

In Balinese, *titiang* is a humble and highly formal first-person singular pronoun, typically used in respectful, ceremonial, or hierarchical contexts to convey deference toward the interlocutor. In the target text, *titiang* is translated as the contraction "I'm", a neutral and informal form in English that carries no inherent marker of respect or humility. While this rendering falls under literal translation at the lexical level, as described by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), it results in a register shift that omits the cultural nuance of politeness embedded in the SL pronoun. From Venuti's (1995) perspective, the translation overall leans toward foreignization due to the preservation of the honorific *Agung*, which exposes the target audience to Balinese social hierarchy. However, the pronoun shift represents a subtle domestication at the interpersonal level, aligning the dialogue with standard English norms and thereby reducing the sociolinguistic depth of the original expression.

**Table 5. Example Material Culture (32.08)**

No	SL	TL
1	" <b>Canang</b> yang kemarin udah habis, ibu bayar dulu ya"	"The <b>canang</b> that was sold out yesterday, I'll pay it now"

*Canang* is commonly seen on the streets of Bali. Suprapti et al. (2015) explained one essential product used in the rituals is called *canang* that is made of young coconut leaves and fresh flowers. The key cultural term here is *canang*, a Balinese offering, used daily in Hindu religious practices across Bali. According to Newmark's (1988) classification of culturespecific items, *canang* falls under the category of Material Culture, as it refers to a physical object tied to traditional cultural rituals and belief systems.

In this case, the translator uses the borrowing procedure, where the term *canang* is retained in its original Balinese form in the target language. As described by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), borrowing is a strategy used when there is no direct equivalent in the target language or when the

translator aims to preserve the cultural uniqueness of the term. No explanation or footnote is provided, and the term is introduced directly into the English sentence.

From Venuti's (1995) perspective, this choice reflects a foreignization strategy, as it prioritizes the preservation of cultural specificity over immediate comprehensibility for the target audience. By keeping *canang* in its original form, the translator exposes the audience to an authentic Balinese cultural artifact. However, without accompanying explanation, the TL reader unfamiliar with Balinese traditions may not fully grasp the religious and symbolic significance of *canang*.

**Table 6. Example Material Culture**  
(35.43)

No	SL	TL
1	"Dadi tumben Made ka <b>Puri</b> ?"	"why did you just come <b>here</b> now"

In Balinese, *Puri* refers to a traditional Balinese royal palace, the residence of members of the royal family, and a significant symbol of heritage and social hierarchy. It is an important element of Balinese material culture, as *Puri* is not simply a building but a living cultural institution, often associated with rituals, political functions, and community gatherings.

The translator rendered the sentence as "why did you just come here now," omitting the culturally specific term *Puri* and replacing it with the neutral English word *here*. This represents a modulation procedure, as described by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), involving a change in the point of view or cognitive category from a specific culturally marked location (*Puri*) to a general spatial reference (*here*).

From Venuti's (1995) perspective, this choice reflects domestication, adapting the cultural term into a familiar, non-specific expression in the target language. While this ensures clarity and accessibility for the TL audience, it removes the rich cultural connotation tied to *Puri*, thereby reducing the reader's exposure to Balinese royal and historical heritage.

**Table 7. Example Social Culture**  
(39.08)

No	SL	TL
1	"Kebetulan Widya sedang <b>metanding</b> <b>canang</b> di rumah"	"By chance widya is <b>making canang</b> at home"

In Balinese, *metanding* refers to the culturally specific act of arranging, decorating, or preparing offerings often in a ritualistic and aesthetically guided manner. This activity is a part of Balinese social culture, as it is commonly done in households to fulfill daily religious obligations and community ceremonial duties. The object *canang* is a palm-leaf offering tray with flowers, rice, and other symbolic items, central to Balinese Hindu practice.

The translator rendered *metanding* as "making," applying a transposition procedure (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958) by shifting from the SL verb with specialized cultural connotations to a more general TL verb that fits standard English syntax. While the physical action of creation is retained, the ritualistic and cultural dimensions of *metanding* are generalized.

From Venuti's (1995) perspective, this choice reflects domestication, as it adapts the culturally specific action into a widely understandable English term. Although *canang* is retained through borrowing, the translation of *metanding* to "making" dilutes the cultural nuance, presenting the act as an ordinary craft rather than a religiously significant preparation.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study has examined the translation of culture-specific terms in the film *Widya: Jemari Jiwaku Menari*, highlighting that translating culturally embedded expressions requires careful consideration of both linguistic and cultural dimensions. Based on Newmark's (1988) cultural categories, the findings show that the film contains rich cultural expressions, particularly in gestures and habits, material culture, social culture, and social organization and religion. These cultural elements demonstrate the strong presence of Balinese cultural identity in audiovisual discourse.

In terms of translation procedures, Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) framework reveals that literal translation is the most frequently used strategy. This tendency indicates a dominant orientation toward preserving the form and cultural authenticity of the source text, which aligns with Venuti's (1995) concept of foreignization. At the same time, the presence of transposition and modulation shows that domestication strategies are also applied selectively to enhance comprehensibility for the target audience. This combination reflects a hybrid translation strategy that negotiates between cultural preservation and readability.

Theoretically, this study contributes to translation studies by providing empirical evidence of how Newmark's cultural classification, Vinay and Darbelnet's procedures, and Venuti's ideological framework can be integrated to analyze audiovisual translation, particularly in the context of Indonesian local culture. It also expands the application of these theories to Balinese cultural representation in film subtitles, an area that remains relatively underexplored.

Practically, the findings of this study can serve as a reference for translators working with culturally rich audiovisual materials, especially in balancing cultural accuracy and audience accessibility in subtitling. In addition, the study may be useful for educators and translation practitioners in understanding how cultural meaning can be maintained or adapted in cross-cultural communication through film. Future research is encouraged to investigate audience reception of translated cultural terms in order to evaluate how effectively these strategies support intercultural understanding.

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