

Article

From Batu Gajah to Tokyo: Translating and Publishing Lat's *Budak Kampung* for the Global Market

Nor Idatul Akmar Zulkipli* & Haslina Haroon

Translation and Interpreting Section, School of Humanities, University Sains Malaysia,
11800 Penang, Malaysia

*Corresponding Author: idatul@usm.my

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Abstract: The globalisation of knowledge and information has positioned translation institutions and publishers as key agents in spreading cultural and linguistic diversity worldwide. Beyond economic exchange, translation and publishing activities enable local works to cross borders, promoting cultural dialogue and intellectual sharing. This paper discusses the role of the Malaysian Institute of Translation and Books (ITBM) as both publisher and translation institution in promoting Malaysian works to the international market. Using the Japanese edition of Lat's graphic novel *Budak Kampung* as the study material, the paper highlights ITBM's functions in (i) selection and evaluation, (ii) production and design, and (iii) marketing and distribution. The research, based on manual data collection and descriptive analysis, shows that the decision to translate *Budak Kampung* into Japanese was driven by three factors, Lat's prominence as an author, the collaborative practices among publishers, and the credibility of the story, which has been translated into 13 world languages. The findings also reveal that changes were made to the content, design and book size to align with the Japanese market. TUFUS Press Tokyo was identified as the partner responsible for marketing and distribution in Japan. The implications of this study indicate that publishers are not only mediators of texts but also active cultural agents, promoting local works internationally through translation and publishing while strengthening Malaysian cultural identity in the global arena.

Keywords: Graphic novel; translation; publishing; translation institution; internalisation

Introduction

Lat's *Budak Kampung* originated from the author's real-life experiences in Batu Gajah, Perak, and has since become an iconic masterpiece representing Malaysia's cultural identity. More than just an autobiographical comic, it humorously depicts village life while conveying important values and a sense of nostalgia. The transition of *Budak Kampung* into a Japanese edition is, therefore, a significant effort to showcase Malaysia's cultural products on the global stage, and it sets the stage for a closer look at the wider dynamics of the comics industry.

According to Fortune Business Insights (2024), the global comic market was valued at USD16.83 billion in 2024, marking a 24.3% increase from its post-pandemic value of USD13.54 billion in 2021. The market is projected to grow further, reaching USD26.75 billion by 2032, which reflects an annual growth rate of 6.09%. The Asia Pacific region makes up over 52% of the global market, with Japan being the largest single contributor. In 2024, the Japanese comic market alone generated USD2.62 billion and is expected to rise to USD5.29 billion by 2030, achieving an annual growth rate of 12.6%. These statistics not only demonstrate the

resilience of the industry but also highlight Japan as a key hub for the acceptance and validation of international works.

During this period, ITBM's initiative to publish the Japanese edition of *Budak Kampung* in 2014 is seen as a forward-thinking move reflecting the current trends in the comic industry. Recent market reports indicate a growing interest in physical comics as collectible items, with rare and special editions fetching the highest bids. Meanwhile, Japan continues to play a significant role in the industry, not only serving its domestic market but also catering to international demands through substantial exports. In this context, ITBM's strategy to position Lat's work within the Japanese market is a prudent decision, as Japan remains one of the dominant forces shaping the direction of the international comic industry.

In view of the above, the translation and publication of *Budak Kampung* into Japanese should be seen not only as a linguistic process but also as a cultural and commercial strategy. Therefore, this article aims to provide an overview of ITBM's role in title selection, production and design, as well as marketing and distribution, while assessing how the publisher can support the distribution of Malaysian works in the global market through its partnership with TUFS.

Literature Review

The graphic novel *Kampung Boy* is a work inspired by the cartoonist Mohd Nor Khalid, better known as Lat. Originally written in English, it was first published in 1979 by Berita Publishing and later translated into *Budak Kampung* by Zainon Ahmad. In addition to Malay, *Kampung Boy* has also been translated into various languages, including Arabic, Mandarin, Tamil and German by the Malaysian Institute of Translation and Books (ITBM).

The graphic novel カンポンボーイ (kanponbōi) published by ITBM represents the second Japanese edition, following the first version released by Shōbunsha Ltd in 1984 (Hieda, 2024). The re-publication of this Japanese edition by ITBM-TUFS Press is intended as teaching material for Southeast Asian studies students at that esteemed university. For the purposes of this study, the researcher refers to the second version of the novel, translated from Malay, *Budak Kampung*, into Japanese by ITBM in 2014. The translation was carried out by Hieda Natsue, with editing by Soda Naoki. The most significant distinction between these two translated texts lies in their source languages, while the Shōbunsha edition was translated from the English text, *Kampung Boy*, the ITBM edition was translated from the original Malay source text, *Budak Kampung* (Hieda, 2024).

Lat's work is a script that highlights the role of cartoons in shaping Asian society (Muliyadi, 2001). His work is considered to possess unique and special qualities of the Malaysian people through the portrayal of the diversity of customs, cultures, and traditions of the multicultural society in Malaysia, making him a reflection of the Asian face. The phenomenon of Lat's cartoon art further proves that "cartoons are the most effective media of communication in the world" (Muliyadi, 2012). *Budak Kampung* tells the story of the village life experiences that Lat himself went through in the Kinta Valley in the 1950s (Sarinah Sharif & Saliza Ismail, 2021). This graphic novel not only highlights the Malay identity and the traditional lifestyle of the community in Malaysia at that time (Norzaliza et.al., 2020) but also vividly depicts the atmosphere and traditions of the village community through cultural practices such as the customs of shaving, circumcision, wedding ceremonies, and daily activities like tin mining, rubber tapping, and clearing gardens.

In 1995, *Kampung Boy* was adapted into an animated series comprising 26 episodes. The project was initiated and funded by ASTRO, with Matinee Entertainment (Los Angeles) handling the storyboard, Philippine Animation Studios producing the animation, and Frank Saperstein directing. The episode *Oh Tok!* won an award at the 1999 Annecy International Film Festival. The series also aired internationally, including in Germany and Canada (Muliyadi, 2001). The graphic novel *Lat Kampung Boy* was adapted into a musical by Tall Order Production in collaboration with ITBM and the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia Malaysia. Staged at Istana Budaya from 16 March to 5 April 2011, it attracted 30,000 spectators and was well-received.

The novel's originality and cultural depth earned it numerous accolades, including the Editor's Choice Book List (2006), Outstanding Book (2007), and the Gaiman Award (2014), which it won due to its relatable depiction of village life and Malaysian social harmony (Soon Li, 2021). In 2015, the inaugural *Kampung Boy* Award was introduced to honour local cartoonists and revitalise Malaysia's cartoon industry, with categories such as the Grand Award, Legendary Cartoonist Award, and Young Talented Cartoonist Award.

1. Translation Institutions as Publishers

According to Gouadec (2007), translation institutions in translation studies refer to "any translation carried out in the name, on behalf of, and for the benefit of institutions". The goal of these institutions in producing translations is to sell and distribute them in the market (Mossop, 1988). Therefore, translation institutions are seen as having the authority to determine translation strategies, deciding whether the translation should be literal or free, whether the language should conform to specific norms or break from them, and whether the original style should be preserved or adapted to suit the target audience.

This decision-making power is not exercised in a vacuum. Rather, any process that involves multiple parties is inseparable from the concepts of field and capital. Drawing on concepts of field and capital, translation institutions such as publishers do not operate in a neutral space. Instead, they function within a field, a social space of competition, where they use various forms of capital, which are the valuable resources within that field (Bourdieu, 1995). As ideological, economic, and political entities, their social capital is evident in their interconnection with the government. This makes the translation process a complex one (Koskinen, 2008) as publishers must navigate the regulations and competing interests of other parties within the field to maintain and increase their symbolic capital.

In this paper, it is found that ITBM is classified as a translation institution that acts as a publisher due to its specific function of managing translation affairs at both the national and international levels in Malaysia, under the supervision and monitoring of the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE). As a government-linked company (Atikah, 2025) engaged in commercial activities, this institution is required to generate profits, ensure strong company performance, and effectively manage business gains and losses. To achieve these objectives, the institution seeks publishing opportunities with various agencies, both domestic and international, to fulfil its core functions and mission of internationalising national works and enriching and empowering the Malay language library. These efforts also serve to cover the institution's maintenance and operational costs.

The institution's commitment to internationalise national works aligns with Kang's (2014) observation that translation institutions consistently facilitate cultural and linguistic exchange. Moreover, translation institutions are recognised as key actors in promoting the national language and literature, strengthening cultural identity, and securing global recognition within the literary sphere (Milton and Bandia, 2009).

2. The Role of Publishers In The Publication of Translated Works

According to Johanson et al., (2022), the production of books within a country is influenced by a commercial force represented by the publishing industry. This process is typically analysed through the roles of the three principal players in the industry, which include publishers, editors, and literary agents.

In the process of producing a translated work, the publisher functions as the commissioner who initiates the translation task, fulfilling their role as "the key figure in the establishment of cross-cultural communication" (Schulte, 1990). For commercial publishers, a significant amount of upfront costs must be incurred to publish works deemed to have market potential. Consequently, publishing involves a high-risk decision, as expenses such as editorial fees, printing, wages, and royalties must be paid in advance, while profits from book sales may take considerable time to materialise (Moeran, 2011). In this context, publishers commonly offer contracts with fixed rates for translated works as a strategy to minimise production costs (Venuti, 1998).

From the aspect of selecting and evaluating a work for publication, the publisher acts as a "gatekeeper" by determining the type of work that will be published and presented to the target audience (Neavill, 1975). Depending on market demands and economic factors, publishers have the power to accept or reject a

manuscript by considering the cost of publication and the profit and loss from sales. Therefore, when publishing a translated work, publishers tend to choose authors who are already well-known or whose books have been previously translated into English (Tamaki, 2009).

The publication of subsequent works can only be carried out when both the author and the publisher reach an agreement to publish the manuscript; meanwhile, the author and editor must agree to modify any content of the manuscript if necessary. Therefore, it is a common practice for the publisher to make any changes or modifications at the manuscript editing stage. The modifications made include spelling, grammar, structuring, or revision of the original manuscript. The revision by the editor is generally aimed at making the work easier for readers to understand (Neavill, 1975).

In the publication of translated works, the publisher is allowed to make changes to a certain extent to the translated manuscript if the original text is deemed unsuitable for the cultural perspective and belief practices of the target audience. Among the modifications made are omissions, additions, or adaptations to other forms. As a result, at the final stage of publication, translated works are often produced according to the editor's or publisher's framework, which is also seen to consider other publishing factors such as market trends and the financial capacity of the organisation, which Fawcett referred to as "power play" (Tamaki, 2009).

As a publisher, book distribution can be conducted based on location through two primary methods, which are either selling them directly to customers or appointing potential book sales agents. The choice of marketing strategy depends on the financial resources available and the institutions or publisher's capacity to implement marketing and promotional activities. Additionally, existing distributors, whether traditional bookshops or digital platforms, play a significant role in enhancing the product's market reach and effectiveness (Neavill, 1975). To publish and distribute books to the international market, there are three methods that publishers can utilise (Thompson, 2005):

- i. Establishing cooperation with foreign publishers in the target country, either by granting a licence to publish and sell the books or by co-publishing through cost-sharing.
- ii. Appointing agents to sell and market books without setting up a physical bookshop. While overhead costs are low, book visibility and market penetration are limited, and sales may be unprofitable if imported book prices are too high.
- iii. Establishing company operations through setup, merger, or acquisition. Although costlier and riskier, this approach offers long-term returns and full financial control over profit and loss.

In this study, the researchers found that ITBM adopted a less risky approach by collaborating with foreign publishers abroad, who acted as co-publishers in the translation and dissemination of books for the international market.

3. Translation Strategies in Literary System Dynamics

According to Koskinen (2008), the translation process is a collaborative effort that involves multiple parties. Publishers play a crucial role in selecting the most effective translation strategies to suit the text and ensure that the translated work is well-received by the target audience. They must also adapt the text so that it fits into the desired literary system and culture. In Even-Zohar's (1990) polysystem theory, the literary system is described as an intertwined network of the text, the author, the publisher, and the reader. Within this network, the status of a text, whether it is dominant or peripheral, must be assessed before it can be translated.

A dominant text, such as classical literature or internationally recognized works, is often translated using a foreignisation strategy. This approach focuses on preserving the original identity, style, and cultural elements of the source text. In contrast, for peripheral texts like popular novels, a domestication strategy is used to simplify the reading experience for the target audience. In the Malaysian comic market, for instance, the *Doraemon* comics are considered a dominant text due to their large readership. These comics have been translated in a way that preserves the cultural authenticity of the source text, making them more closely resemble the original Japanese version.

One challenge in translating a dominant text is to preserve its authenticity while also ensuring comprehension for the target readers. In this context, paratext emerges as a valuable solution. Paratext, as defined by Genette (1997), refers to the elements surrounding a text and plays a crucial role in this type of translation. It may include supplementary materials, such as translator's notes, glossaries, or illustrations, which help facilitate reading without altering the cultural elements of the source text. By utilising paratext, translators can meet the demands of polysystem theory, which aims to preserve the hierarchy of the dominant text within the new literary system while also making it accessible and acceptable to the target audience.

Methodology

This study aims to explore the role played by the Malaysian Institute of Translation and Books (ITBM) as a publisher actively promoting translation activities by marketing local works to the international market. This methodology section will detail the procedures and approaches employed in the study.

1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative design that uses a secondary data analysis approach. This approach is appropriate because the research utilises existing data, specifically the source text, *Budak Kampung*, and the target text, カンポンボーイ (kanponbōi). The research will be descriptive, focusing on the roles of translation institutions as publishers.

2. Research Approach

This study uses document analysis and library research to investigate two main corpora. It analyses the roles of translation institutions, publishers, and paratext to interpret the gathered information.

3. Purposive-Sampling Technique

This study utilises a purposive sampling technique. Two main texts, *Budak Kampung* (1971) and カンポンボーイ (kanponbōi) published by ITBM in 2014, were selected as the study corpus. The selection was based on inclusion criteria relevant to the objectives of this study, which are the texts being published by ITBM, translated from Malay, and intended for publication and marketing in Japan, the key hub of the comic market in Asia.

4. Data Collection

The study data were collected through document analysis, specifically by closely reading and comparing two source manuscripts, which were obtained with official permission from the Translation Division of the Malaysian Institute of Translation and Books (ITBM). Key information was gathered from significant sections, including the copyright (imprint) page, preface, and back matter of the books. Observations on selection, design, and marketing aspects, as reflected in the manuscripts, were systematically recorded in study notes during the analysis process.

5. Data Analysis

A thematic analysis was carried out to interpret the data. This process involved identifying, analysing, and reporting the main themes, which included selection and evaluation, production and design, as well as marketing and distribution of the translated manuscripts. The aim was to provide a more detailed and in-depth account.

The Findings

The ITBM Book Translation Division publishes translated books in four main categories: translation into the Malay language, translation into foreign languages, commissioned publications, and co-edition titles. They select books based on the following key criteria:

- i. Scientific value – works widely used as reference materials at the primary, secondary, or tertiary levels of education

- ii. Commercial success – bestsellers with high market potential
- iii. Cultural significance – literary or cultural works that reflect Malaysian identity and have the potential for international promotion
- iv. Award-winning merit – titles that have received prestigious awards such as the Nobel Prize, Pulitzer Prize, or Malaysia's Perdana Literary Award.

The Translation Book Title Selection Committee (JKPJ) evaluates manuscripts for compliance with the Copyright Act of 1987, obtaining permission from the original publisher, copyright holder, or author. Approved projects are assigned to translators according to their language and subject expertise, with progress monitored and tasks reassigned if deadlines are missed. Once translations are complete, manuscripts undergo external editing, typesetting, proofreading, and two rounds of final editing to meet publishing standards. Works with copyright permission must be published within 18 months and have a minimum print run of 1,000 copies. The translation process follows three main stages: assignment and translation, technical preparation, and final editing before printing, distribution, and sale.

Building on this process, the findings indicate that ITBM first published *Budak Kampung* in a German edition in collaboration with Horlemann Verlag, before expanding the project to include Arabic, Mandarin, and Tamil editions, and subsequently a Japanese edition. The German, Mandarin, and Tamil editions were based on *Kampung Boy*, whereas the Arabic and Japanese editions were translated from the Malay version, *Budak Kampung*. The choice of source text is explicitly stated in the explanatory notes found in the Japanese edition.

Table 1. The publication of *Budak Kampung* by ITBM

Original titles	Translation titles	Languages	Year
	<i>Ein Frechdachs Aus Malaysia</i>	English-German	2008
	<i>Tifl Al-Qaryah</i>	Malay-Arabic	2010
<i>Budak Kampung</i>	<i>Gan Bang Xiao Zi</i>	English-Mandarin	2011
	<i>Kampattup Paiyan</i>	English-Tamil	2011

Table 2 presents the paratextual elements inserted by the translator in the final pages of the translated book. These paratextual additions, which take the form of explanatory notes, were not part of the source text and therefore constitute editorial interventions unique to the translation. These comprise explanatory notes, references, and Lat's biography. The explanatory notes address themes such as the background of *Kampung Boy*, the era depicted in the narrative, and the subsequent reception of the work. In addition, a reference section and Lat's biography are provided.

Table 2. Paratextual elements in the Japanese edition

Paratextual element	Title of explanatory notes
	<i>Kampong Boy and its era</i> (p. 144)
Explanatory note	<i>The era depicted in Kampong Boy - Kampong "tradition" and "modernity"</i> (p. 145)
	<i>The era when "Kampon Boy" was created - Kampong as urbanisation and "nostalgia"</i> (p. 147)
	<i>After that, "Kampong Boy" - Various forms of acceptance</i> (p. 150)
Reference	Reference (p. 156)
Biography	Lat's biography (p. 158)

In terms of production, as shown in Table 3, the Japanese edition employs several foreignisation strategies that reflect the publisher's approach to cultural representation, which is also evident at the textual level. The translation retains culture-bound references through borrowing; terms such as *kampong*, *kueh benkan* (bengkang), *kare* (curry), *cengai* (cengal) wood, *aazan* (adhan) and *maguribu* (maghrib) are preserved from the source text, maintaining their original cultural identity.

Table 3. Translation strategy for culture-bound references

Category	Examples
Place	<i>kampong</i>
Food	<i>kueh benkan, kare</i>
Flora	<i>cengai wood</i>
Customs and religion	<i>aasaan, maguribu</i>

In terms of book format and design, the publisher adapts to Japanese market expectations, taking full responsibility for production, layout, and publication strategy. As shown in Table 4, the physical size of the book varies across editions. Other elements, such as the type of paper and binding, are kept the same as in the source text. The cover of カンポンボーイ (*kanponbōi*) also retains the original *kutai* house illustrations, preserving the visual identity of the work. These observations reaffirm that the publisher holds primary authority over production and design decisions, including translation strategies and overall presentation. At the same time, TUFS is actively involved in distribution and academic dissemination within the Japanese market.

Table 4: Book format

Edition	Page size	Justification
<i>Budak Kampung</i>	21 x 28cm	Original Malaysian publication in A4 format
カンポンボーイ (<i>kanponbōi</i>)	15 x 22cm	Size reduced for Japanese edition to match standard tankōbon format

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight how the Malaysian Institute of Translation and Books (ITBM) functions simultaneously as a translation institution and a publishing authority, shaping every stage of the translation process from text selection to international distribution. Using カンポンボーイ (*kanponbōi*) as a case study, it is evident that editorial decisions, design specifications, and dissemination strategies are interconnected rather than discrete processes, revealing the complex interplay of institutional policies, cultural capital, and publishing practices within the wider literary polysystem.

The selection of *Budak Kampung* for translation into the Japanese market reflects ITBM's role as a gatekeeper in the translation field, overseeing which works are deemed culturally significant and suitable for international audiences. According to Masahiro Takano, as cited by Tamaki (2009), the publication of translated books in Japan is largely influenced by whether the original manuscript has received widespread attention among readers or critics in its country of origin. In line with these considerations, ITBM's internal policies require translated works to meet criteria of cultural significance, marketability, and symbolic value.

Lat's reputation as Malaysia's most celebrated cartoonist, with both domestic recognition and international visibility, positioned *Budak Kampung* as an ideal candidate for translation. *Budak Kampung* was selected for international translation due to its prior translations into twelve languages and its reflection of societal norms and community values (Siti Norhaliza Yusop, 2014). Its recognition with the 2014 Gaiman Award demonstrates ITBM's effective selection and, using Bourdieu's (1995) field concept, illustrates how Lat's symbolic capital reinforces institutional credibility while promoting Malaysian cultural identity globally.

At the same time, this decision reflects ITBM's cultural mandate to project Malaysian identity through works of high literary and cultural value, aligning with Even-Zohar's (1990) view that dominant texts occupy a privileged position in the literary polysystem. Overall, the selection practices exemplify the institutional power described by Koskinen (2008), where translation organisations function as ideological, political and cultural entity rather than neutral intermediaries. The authority of ITBM as a publisher is clearly demonstrated in Lat's case. The managing director required the Japanese edition to be translated directly from the Malay version, *Budak Kampung*, instead of the English text, and the translator was specifically appointed at ITBM's request (Hieda, 2024), asserting ultimate control over the source text and the translator, as well as ensuring the preservation of its cultural authenticity.

The modifications in the translated graphic novel *Kampung Boy* involve changes in the text content due to the translation strategies employed. For example, a study by Norzaliza et al., (2020) on カンポンボーイ

イ (kanponbōi) revealed that the translator used katakana script for terms rendered through the borrowing technique. Borrowing is a technique that preserves the source text's words and cultural identity (Abdelraouf Alharahsheh et al., 2023). In Japanese, katakana is used to spell foreign words. Therefore, any words borrowed from other countries, including foreign personal names, object names, and onomatopoeia, are adapted to approximate Japanese pronunciation (Norhazlina Husin, et al., 2020).

The use of borrowing as a translation strategy is also acknowledged by Sarinah Sharif and Saliza Ismail (2021), who stated that the translator applied borrowing to translate cultural elements embedded in the novel. Out of twelve samples analysed, six employed the borrowing technique, five used substitution, and one applied generalisation. Borrowing was used to match cultural aspects related to Malay customs, food, and local ideology, demonstrating a consistent effort to preserve the cultural specificity of the source text.

Building on this systematic use of borrowing and other strategies, the Japanese edition further reflects ITBM's institutional policies, which favour foreignisation as a strategy for representing cultural elements. While some foreign terms are retained and followed by in-text explanations, the overall cultural identity of the source text remains intact, showing a clear commitment to foreignisation. In practice, this strategy is realised through the careful preservation of these elements in the translation. Loanwords such as *kampung* and *adhan*, as well as Malay onomatopoeia, are maintained with katakana script to approximate Japanese pronunciation, thereby preserving the Malaysian cultural context in the Japanese edition (Norzaliza et al., 2020).

Paratextual elements (see Table 2) reinforce the cultural context, with the translator's commentary providing Lat's real name, birth year, hometown, and the origin of his nickname, as well as background on the novel and its original publication (Sarinah Sharif & Saliza Ismail, 2021). These elements are deliberately incorporated into the translation to preserve Malaysia's cultural identity, signalling the publisher's intention to foreground cultural specificity. As Genette (1997) notes, paratexts act as thresholds of interpretation, guiding readers' engagement with the text. Batchelor (2018) further emphasises that paratext shapes reception, especially in cross-cultural contexts, highlighting the translator's and publisher's role in mediating audience understanding.

ITBM adapted the presentation of the work to align with Japanese market conventions by resizing the edition to A5 (approximately 15 × 22 cm), smaller than the Malaysian version, which measures 21 × 28 cm (see Table 4). This size corresponds closely to the standard dimensions of tankōbon, the manga volumes compiled from individual episodes that are highly popular in Japan and typically printed in black and white. Both editions are paperbacks, featuring the architecture of the *kutai* house on the cover, a symbol of local wisdom from the Malay community in Perak.

Despite changes in text content and book design, the publisher retained the original front cover material and illustrations. The cover prominently features the *kutai* house, portraying Malay cultural heritage and identity while reinforcing Lat's depiction of traditional Malaysian society. As Hanafi Mohd Tahir et al., (2018) state, book cover design significantly shapes readers' initial perceptions and attracts the target audience. In this context, the traditional Malay house serves as a deliberate cultural statement, emphasising Lat's consistent portrayal of Malay identity and lifestyle.

The Japanese edition, therefore, functions not merely as a translated text but also as a cultural bridge that introduces and communicates Malay identity to a foreign readership. By rendering the title in katakana and adapting the format to Japanese design conventions, ITBM extends the notion of foreignisation beyond the linguistic level while ensuring marketability. These design choices highlight the publisher's significant role in cultural promotion, supporting Milton and Bandia's (2009) view that publishers act as mediators of language, culture, and identity rather than as passive distributors of texts.

The distribution of カンポンボーイ (kanponbōi) illustrates the division of roles between ITBM and its Japanese partner, TUFS. ITBM oversaw production and editorial decisions. It was also actively involved in promotional activities, including participation in the Tokyo International Book Fair, an event that effectively brings together members of the publishing supply chain for face-to-face interaction and networking (Moeran, 2011). TUFS, on the other hand, managed course adoption and academic circulation in Japan. It also promoted the novel digitally through a virtual store operated by Kinokuniya Company Ltd., accessible

at <https://www.kinokuniya.co.jp/>. This approach allowed broader and faster audience outreach while reducing operational costs. TUFs's role highlights its institutional capital within the Japanese literary and educational field, complementing ITBM's editorial and promotional authority. These strategies align with Mossop (1988), stating that the primary goal of institutions producing translations is to sell and distribute them effectively in the target market.

Together, this collaboration demonstrates how institutional partnerships operate within the global literary polysystem, ITBM provides editorial and cultural gatekeeping, while TUFs delivers the infrastructure and networks necessary for international dissemination. Taken together, the processes of selection, translation, design, and distribution illustrate a holistic view of ITBM's role as a translation institution, showing how institutional policies permeate every stage of the translation process from text selection to reaching readers abroad.

Conclusion

This study highlights ITBM's essential role in shaping the Japanese edition of *Budak Kampung*. By employing editorial authority and foreignisation strategies, ITBM preserved the work's cultural authenticity while expanding its global reach. The findings reveal how institutional publishers serve as cultural mediators, influencing translation outcomes beyond language. For academics, it offers insights into institutional translation practices and their impact on cultural diplomacy. For policymakers, it points to the value of supporting translation organisations to advance cultural exchange and international cooperation. Additionally, it contributes to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4 (Quality Education) by enhancing access to diverse resources and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) through collaboration between ITBM and TUFs.

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