

**[DOMESTICATION AND FOREIGNIZATION STRATEGIES IN TRANSLATION OF  
MALAY CULTURE- SPECIFIC ITEMS INTO ARABIC: A STUDY OF LAT'S *BUDAK  
KAMPUNG*]**

**STRATEGI DOMESTIKASI DAN FOREIGNISASI DALAM PENTERJEMAHAN  
UNSUR BUDAYA MELAYU KE BAHASA ARAB: SATU KAJIAN TERHADAP  
*BUDAK KAMPUNG* KARYA LAT**

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**Abstract**

*One of the most compelling challenges faced by Malay -Arabic literary translators lies in the rendering of culture-specific items (CSIs). This study investigates the application of domestication and foreignisation strategies which are pragmatic approaches that are still limited in the study of culturally based translation in Southeast Asian literary texts. Thus, it focuses on the comic text of *Budak Kampung* (1979) by Lat and Tiflu al-Qaryatt (2010), translated by the Arabic Language Unit, Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), published by the Malaysian Translation & Book Institute (ITBM). Through content analysis and frequency assessment methods, this study is theoretically grounded in Aixela's (1996) cultural categories and Norhazlina's (2015) framework for translation approach, which adapts modified Newmark's (1988) procedures and framework of domestication and foreignisation translation strategies proposed by Venuti (1995) used to operationalise the approach. The data was obtained from both texts, and each identified cultural element was then mapped to its counterpart in the translated text, and this mapping produced pairs of cultural elements ready for analysis. This finding reveals that translators use arabicization, which falls under the foreignization strategy, in translating CSI into Arabic to introduce exotic textures, as well as generalization, which falls under the domestication strategy to provide understanding to the target text readers. This strategy reflects a careful balancing act that aims to reach a wide audience while maintaining cultural elements. Therefore, this study offers new insights that highlight the dynamic relationship between culture and language in literary translation, with a special focus on the Malay context.*

**Keywords:** *culture-specific items; Budak Kampung; domestication; foreignization; Malay-Arabic translation*

**Abstrak**

*Antara cabaran yang paling signifikan yang dihadapi oleh penterjemah sastera Melayu-Arab ialah menterjemah unsur budaya. Kajian ini meneliti strategi foreignisasi dan domestikasi yang merupakan pendekatan pragmatik yang masih amat terhad diaplikasikan dalam kajian terjemahan berunsur budaya dalam teks karya sastera Asia Tenggara. Justeru, kajian ini memilih teks komik *Budak Kampung* oleh*

Lat dan terjemahannya berbahasa Arab, *Tiflu al-Qaryatt* (2010), diterjemahkan oleh Unit Bahasa Arab, Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), terbitan Institut Terjemahan & Buku Malaysia (ITBM). Melalui kaedah analisis kandungan dan penilaian kekerapan, kajian ini memanfaatkan kategori budaya oleh Aixela (1996) serta kerangka pendekatan terjemahan oleh Norhazlina (2015) yang mengadaptasi prosedur Newmark (1988), berserta strategi domestikasi dan foreignisasi oleh Venuti (1995) sebagai asas kajian. Data kajian diperolehi daripada kedua-dua teks tersebut, dan setiap unsur budaya yang dikenal pasti kemudiannya dipetakan pada padanannya dalam teks terjemahan dan pemetaan ini menghasilkan pasangan unsur budaya yang sedia untuk dianalisis. Hasil analisis ini mendedahkan bahawa penterjemah menggunakan arabisasi yang terangkum di bawah strategi foreignisasi dalam penterjemahan unsur budaya bagi mengekalkan elemen eksotik serta generalisasi antara prosedur di bawah strategi domestikasi untuk memberi kefahaman kepada pembaca teks sasaran. Kajian ini membuktikan bahawa satu kompromi yang menggabungkan penggunaan pelbagai strategi merupakan cara yang terbaik untuk mengekalkan unsur budaya dalam teks asal tanpa meminggirkan pembaca teks terjemahan. Oleh itu, kajian ini menawarkan sudut pandang yang baru untuk menonjolkan hubungan dinamik antara budaya dan bahasa dalam terjemahan sastera, khususnya dalam konteks Melayu.

**Kata kunci:** unsur budaya; *Budak Kampung*; domestikasi; foreignisasi; terjemahan Melayu-Arab.

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## INTRODUCTION

Translating literary texts, particularly those containing culture-specific items (CSIs), poses intricate challenges due to the translator's task of mediating between two distinct linguistic and cultural systems. As observed by Gang and Tan Ai Lin (2021), when significant cultural and linguistic disparities exist between the source and target languages, the translation process becomes increasingly complex. Translation is not a neutral or isolated linguistic act; rather, it is shaped by socio-cultural dynamics and the translator's own interpretative framework. Moindjie (2024) further argues that translation plays a crucial role in cultural exchange, enabling the transmission of literary traditions and intellectual knowledge across borders, particularly in developing societies. This highlights the necessity for translators to approach CSIs with acute cultural sensitivity and contextual awareness.

Many scholars including Nida (1964), Newmark (1988), Hervey and Higgins (1992), Baker (1992), and Venuti (1995) have emphasized the importance of cultural elements in the translation process. These researchers emphasize that insufficient cultural knowledge or misinterpretation can lead to mistranslation, resulting in the loss of cultural meaning and nuance. This is because cultural elements tend to pose problems for translators especially if there are significant differences between the source and target cultures (Al Tenaijy & Al-Batineh 2024; Zagood et al. 2023; Rosli Mukhlis et al. 2023). Therefore, translators are urged to use context-appropriate strategies that respect the context of the original culture while ensuring access to the target audience. Contemporary studies (Albahiri et al. 2025; An, G. 2024; Fäldt, 2024; Zuo, et al. 2023) reinforce the need for translators to delve into pragmatic approaches such as domestication and foreignisation strategies which are still limited in their use to translate cultures found in Southeast Asian literary texts, especially in the context of Malay comic texts.

Although literary translation encompasses a variety of genres, this study narrows its focus to the comic genre, particularly the iconic *Budak Kampung* (1979) by Dato' Lat due to its content that is loaded with Malay cultural nuances and identity to the point of being translated into various languages and awarded international recognition in addition to the greatness of its author to the point of being bestowed with the title of Royal Artist by the Sultan of Perak, Sultan Nazrin Shah. Comics, as a hybrid literary form, are increasingly recognized as a site of legitimate and critical cultural and aesthetic expression (Norzaliza & Zeety 2021). Definitions

by McCloud (1993) and Zanettin (2008) position comics as structured visual narratives capable of conveying layered meanings, socio-political critiques and cultural knowledge. The integration of images and text makes comic translation very complicated, as visual cues must align with verbal meanings, and CSI must be adapted or maintained based on their cultural significance. Therefore, translating comics involves not only linguistic competence but also semiotic awareness and cultural insight.

The importance of this study lies in its exploration of an area that has been understudied in the study of the translation of Malay literary texts, namely the challenge of translating cultural elements in Malay comic texts into Arabic (Sheikh Salleh, et al. 2024;. Noorsyuhada & Maheram 2015). Therefore, the challenge in translating these elements needs to be addressed by selecting appropriate approaches in bridging cultural and linguistic gaps to advance literary diplomacy and promote intercultural understanding. However, the use of translation approaches such as domestication and foreignisation strategies, which is the main discourse in the field of translation, still lacks due attention in the study of the translation of cultural elements in Southeast Asian literary texts from translation researchers in particular (An, G. 2024;. al-Rikaby, et al. 2018)

Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader discourse on translation studies by providing critical insights into pragmatic translation approaches in the transfer of embedded cultural elements between Malay and Arabic contexts. It highlights the importance of choosing appropriate translation approaches such as the domestication and foreignisation strategies as a vehicle for cultural transmission and emphasizes the role of translators in preserving cultural integrity while fostering accessibility. These findings have practical implications for translators, educators, and researchers involved in cross-cultural communication and translation pedagogy. By analyzing the strategies used in producing Malay CSIs for Arab audiences, this study not only sheds light on the complexities of literary translation but also informs best practices in translating culturally rich texts in an increasingly globalized literary landscape.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past thirty years, the growing momentum of global integration and intensified intercultural exchange have spurred heightened scholarly interest in the translation of culture-specific items (CSIs). Academic discourse has increasingly focused on key aspects such as the conceptual definition, systematic classification, and effective translation strategies pertaining to CSIs. Historically, translation was predominantly viewed as a purely linguistic undertaking. However, as the significance of cultural factors became more widely acknowledged, both translators and theorists progressively shifted their focus from a language-centered to a culture-oriented perspective (Gao, 2016).

From a linguistic and socio-cultural standpoint, the interrelationship between language and culture is deeply intertwined and indivisible (Chai et al., 2022). In this regard, translation and culture are similarly interconnected. As Lotman (1978) posits, language cannot function independently of cultural context, just as culture is inherently structured through language. Echoing this notion, Hongwei (1999) asserts that language not only reflects culture but also plays a critical role in sustaining, transmitting, and advancing it. Toury (2000) further emphasizes that translation inherently involves the dynamic interplay between two languages and their respective cultural systems, making the convergence of linguistic and cultural elements an indispensable aspect of the translational act. This section presents a synthesis of prior research on the translation of culture-specific items (CSIs), alongside an overview of the translation strategies commonly employed in this context.

## **Translation and Culture-Specific Items**

Translation, far from being a mere linguistic exercise, is fundamentally a cross-cultural negotiation wherein language operates as a conduit between two distinct cultural systems. As Nida (1964) posits, effective translation hinges on the accurate conveyance of intended meaning within a cultural context, particularly in literary texts where aesthetic and cultural nuances are deeply embedded. Literary translation, therefore, is not just about linguistic fidelity but involves the careful transmission of the cultural essence of the source text. Scholars such as Goh (2016) and Farghal & Haider (2025) emphasize that this genre offers rich cultural insights and stands as a prestigious domain within translation studies, especially given its inherent intertwining of content and form. Comics, as a hybrid of visual art and literary narrative, embody this complexity. According to McCloud (1993) and Norzaliza & Zeety (2021), they serve as both entertainment and cultural documentation, transmitting moral, social, and historical knowledge across linguistic borders. Yet, as noted by Bao Hui Nan (2004) and Pourgharib & Asl (2022), translating literary and culturally dense genres like comics necessitates sensitivity to both linguistic translatability and cultural particularities tasks that challenge the viability of literal translation and call for nuanced intercultural mediation.

The issue of translatability, particularly of culture-specific items (CSIs), has long preoccupied translation theorists. Various scholars have proposed taxonomies to manage CSIs, acknowledging their potential to resist direct equivalence due to culturally embedded meanings. While Baker (1992) and Espindola (2006) provide structural classifications of cultural content, Aixela (1996) offers one of the most influential frameworks, defining CSIs as textual elements requiring adjustment when transferred to a culturally divergent context. These elements ranging from names and local institutions to rituals and measurements are not merely linguistic but encode cultural worldviews. The terms *culturemes*, *culture-bound references*, and other similar concepts reflect an increasing scholarly consensus on the centrality of culture in translation (Nord, 1997; Pedersen, 2005; Gambier, 2007). The translator's task thus becomes one of cultural interpretation, balancing fidelity to the source with the intelligibility for the target audience. As alRousan & Hassan (2025) argue, understanding CSIs involves not only linguistic competency but also cultural fluency, as these elements often function as markers of identity, ideology, and social values making their translation both a linguistic and sociocultural act.

## **Strategies for Translating CSIs**

A translation is generally considered successful when it is both comprehensible and accessible to its intended readership. According to Venuti (2008, p.1), a high-quality translated text is typically well-received by publishers, critics, and readers alike when it demonstrates a level of fluency that renders it seemingly transparent free from conspicuous linguistic or stylistic irregularities. Such transparency allows the translated work to convey the authorial voice or the core meaning of the source text with clarity and coherence. Consequently, the deliberate application of appropriate translation strategies becomes essential to achieving a translation that meets these standards of readability and fidelity.

Given the inherent complexity involved in translating culturally-bound terms, numerous translation theorists have proposed various strategies to address the challenges of cross-cultural textual transfer. Among the most prominent approaches are the strategies of domestication and foreignization, both of which conceptualize translation as an act of intercultural negotiation (al-Rikaby et al. 2018, Zuo et al. 2023 & Al Tenaijy & Al-Batineh 2024). These foundational concepts were introduced by German philosopher and theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher, who posited that a translator must either endeavor to bring the reader closer to the author, preserving the foreignness of the source text, or draw the author nearer to the reader by adapting the text into familiar cultural norms (Schmidt, 2013, p. 537; Lefevere, 1977, p. 74).

Expanding on this, Venuti (1995, p. 20) defines domestication as an ethnocentric strategy that assimilates the foreign text into the target culture's linguistic and ideological framework essentially bringing the author home. In contrast, foreignization exerts an ethno-deviant influence that resists assimilation, preserving the source culture's distinctiveness and thereby "sending the reader abroad." Understanding the translator's strategic preference offers insight into whether their approach privileges the source text or the target audience. In light of this, the current study underscores the significance of examining culture-specific items (CSIs) within comic text, as such an analysis can illuminate broader translation strategies and cultural considerations in educational materials.

## Domestication and Foreignisation

The debate surrounding translation strategies has long centered on whether a translator should prioritize the cultural expectations of the target language (TL) audience or remain faithful to the source language (SL) culture. This tension is most prominently captured in the dichotomy of domestication and foreignization, as conceptualized by Schleiermacher and later popularized by Venuti (1995). Domestication involves adapting a text to the norms of the TL, resulting in a fluent and familiar translation, while foreignization retains the cultural and linguistic markers of the SL, thus foregrounding the text's foreignness. Venuti argues that domestication often leads to the erasure of cultural distinctiveness, especially within the Anglo-American context, where TL norms dominate. He critiques the ethnocentric tendencies of domestication, asserting that foreignization is a more ethical and politically resistant strategy that makes visible both the translator and the cultural alterity of the original. Yet, scholars such as Nida (1964), who advocates dynamic equivalence, emphasize the importance of fluency and naturalness in translation, aligning more closely with the principles of domestication. Recent scholarship also contends that the application of either strategy is not absolute but context-dependent, influenced by social, linguistic, and ideological factors that shape the translator's choices.

This dichotomy is particularly salient in the translation of culture-specific items (CSIs) from *Budak Kampung* into Arabic, where the preservation or adaptation of cultural references becomes a critical concern. CSIs are embedded with deep cultural meanings that pose challenges in cross-cultural translation. The study at hand utilizes the domestication–foreignization framework to analyze how the translators of *Budak Kampung* balanced readability for Arabic audiences with the retention of Malay cultural identity. Domestication strategies may enhance accessibility and reader relatability by aligning content with familiar cultural norms, while foreignization strategies safeguard cultural authenticity by maintaining the source text's distinctiveness. This analysis reveals the nuanced decisions translators must make to negotiate between cultural preservation and adaptation. By critically examining how both strategies were applied, particularly in handling CSIs, the study underscores the importance of translation as both a linguistic and cultural act, highlighting the translator's role in mediating between two worlds without reducing one to the terms of the other.

## Related Studies

Extant scholarly literature on comic translation, particularly involving *Budak Kampung*, has primarily focused on narrative, stylistic, and socio-cultural aspects. Studies by Abd Rahman & Bahfen (2014), Chin et al. (2017), and Salehuddin (2022) examine themes of national identity, Lat's distinctive framing, and linguistic features, respectively, while Mohd Dahalan and Wan Teh (2020) explored the comic's socio-cultural implications without interrogating the relationship between language and culture. More recent work, such as Beng & Amarasekera (2025), adopts a psychogeographical lens. Despite these contributions, relatively little attention has been given to the translation of culture-specific items (CSIs), particularly within the Malay-Arabic language pair. Broader research on comic translation also remains nascent, with few

empirical studies addressing this genre's unique semiotic, linguistic, and cultural complexities (Yildirim & Şimşek, 2025). Notable studies by Zakiah et al. (2017), Carisya (2019), Chow & Hasuria (2019), Rue et al. (2022), and Hieda (2024) highlight key technical challenges, linguistic considerations, and varying applications of translation procedures in different language contexts, though many lack in-depth theoretical engagement or comprehensive discussion on translation strategies.

A cluster of studies utilizing *Budak Kampung* as a corpus such as Sarinah & Saliza (2021), Ahmad Jalaluddin et al. (2022), and Nurul Asmira & Suhaila (2023) explores the rendering of Malay cultural elements into Japanese and Arabic. These works apply frameworks such as Newmark's (1988) procedures and often emphasize the translation of socio-cultural references including rituals, traditional garments, and social customs. Sarinah & Saliza's (2021) investigation into Malay-Japanese translation notably foregrounds six categories of culture, while Ahmad Jalaluddin et al. (2022) and Nurul Asmira & Suhaila (2023) underscore the translational challenges posed by Malay-Arabic CSIs. These studies affirm the intricacies of conveying cultural content accurately, yet they predominantly focus on micro-level procedures and offer limited exploration of broader translation strategies or ideological orientations such as domestication and foreignisation. Similarly, Hieda (2024) contributes to retranslation theory by comparing two Japanese versions of *Budak Kampung*, highlighting shifts in Skopos and stylistic preferences, but again, without a comprehensive exploration of macro-strategic frameworks.

Given this landscape, it is evident that a substantial gap exists in research addressing both micro and macro translation approaches for CSIs in Malay comics, particularly within the Malay-Arabic context. While prior studies have identified mistranslations and over-literal renderings (Ahmad Jalaluddin et al., 2022), a nuanced, theory-driven analysis grounded in cultural translation models remains largely absent. This study seeks to fill that void by employing Aixela's (1996) cultural categorization and Norhazlina's (2015) modified translation approach framework to critically analyze the translation of CSIs in *Budak Kampung*. By doing so, it extends existing scholarship and contributes a deeper understanding of the strategies, ideological choices, and cultural negotiations involved in rendering culturally dense comic texts into Arabic, an area still significantly under-researched within translation studies.

### Summary of *Budak Kampung*

*Budak Kampung* (1979), the seminal autobiographical comic by Dato' Mohammad Nor Khalid (Lat), encapsulates his formative years in the rural district of Kinta, Perak, during the 1950s. The narrative charts his childhood experiences ranging from domestic life and traditional ceremonies to communal village activities culminating in his departure to a boarding school in Ipoh at the age of ten. Through its rich visual storytelling, the comic offers a nostalgic portrayal of kampung life, infused with depictions of multicultural traditions, Malay customs, national icons, and socio-religious rituals, such as Perak's traditional wedding ceremonies and communal *gotong-royong*. Originally produced in English as *The Kampung Boy* to target an international audience, Lat's work resonated globally and locally, prompting translations into multiple languages, including Arabic, and even being adopted as a school text in Australia. The Arabic edition, *Tiflu al-Qaryatt* (2010), produced by UiTM's Arabic Language Unit in collaboration with the Malaysian Institute of Translation and Books (ITBM), serves as the primary corpus of this study, alongside the original Malay and English versions.

Lat's artistic oeuvre is marked by a subtle but potent documentation of Malaysia's evolving national identity, offering visual insights into the cultural and religious transformations from the 1960s to the 1970s. His comics, while nostalgic, engage with broader socio-political currents, as seen in depictions of once-popular cultural phenomena like *Joget Lambak*, now largely relegated to tourism. These works move beyond personal memoir, instead providing a chronicle of the nation's transition from kampung values to urban modernity. The cross-cultural appeal and sustained popularity of *The Kampung Boy*, evidenced by numerous reprints and translations, affirm its resonance with diverse audiences. This study thus critically investigates

the translation of culture-specific items (CSIs) in *Tiflu al-Qaryatt*, drawing comparative insights from its Malay source text to assess how cultural meanings are retained, adapted, or altered across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

## METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative data analysis to achieve a nuanced understanding of the translation strategies applied to culture-specific items (CSIs). This analytical method allowed for a more comprehensive exploration of patterns and variations in the translated content. This approach also aligns with the study's objective to critically examine the dichotomy between domestication and foreignization. The rationale for adopting a content analysis methodology (Bryman, 2016) lies in its capacity to systematically interpret the linguistic and cultural features of two translated versions of the comic *Budak Kampung*. As content analysis emphasizes the detailed investigation of textual phenomena, it was particularly appropriate for examining the subtle cultural elements embedded in the source and target texts.

The corpus of this study consists of a bilingual dataset: the original Malay comic *Budak Kampung* (1979) by renowned cartoonist Datuk Mohd Nor Khalid (Lat), and its Arabic translation, *Tiflu al-Qaryatt* (2010), rendered by the Arabic Language Unit at UiTM under the commission of the Malaysian Institute of Translation and Books (ITBM). This comic was selected due to its literary merit, rich portrayal of Malaysian cultural diversity, and the international stature of its author. The data analysis was conducted in three stages. Initially, the Malay text was meticulously reviewed to identify CSIs, followed by cross-verification to generate a consolidated list. The corresponding Arabic translations were then analyzed and both source and target items were classified using Aixela's (1996) typology of cultural references. Aixela's framework, widely employed in translation studies, provided a robust and systematic foundation for categorizing and interpreting the cultural elements found in the texts. The two categories are as follows:

- Proper nouns (personal name, nickname or titles, toponyms or place names, institutional names)
- Common expressions (objects, institutions or social systems, habits, and beliefs of each culture)

The second stage of the data analysis involved grouping the extracted culture-specific items (CSIs) according to Norhazlina's (2015) framework, which adapts modified Newmark's (1988) procedures and Venuti's (1995) strategies for translating them into Arabic. Newmark's (1988) identified translation procedures provide a comprehensive set of tools for helping researchers analyse translation of culture-specific items (CSIs). For this stage, the study utilised the translation procedures Newmark's (1988) proposed:

Procedure	Definition
<b>Transference</b>	It is the process of transferring a SL word to a TL text as a translation procedure. The word, then, becomes a loan word. It includes transliteration and is the same as what is called transcription
<b>Literal translation</b>	Word for word translation which include those from single word to single word, group to group, collocation to collocation, clause to clause or finally sentence to sentence
<b>Through-Translation</b>	Loan translation which refers to a special kind of borrowing whereby a language borrows an expression form of another, but then translates literally each of its elements

<b>Arabicization</b>	Adapted from naturalization which is a process of transforming the SL word into the Arabic pronunciation and morphology of the TL
<b>Explicitation</b>	Presenting additional information in the TL, which is already implicit in the ST
<b>Generalization</b>	Replacing SL word with more neutral or general one
<b>Cultural Equivalent</b>	Utilized when a SL cultural word or phrase is translated through a TL cultural word phrase
<b>Transposition</b>	Involving a change in the grammar from SL to TL, example change from singular to plural, change a SL verb to a TL word, change of SL noun group to a TL noun, and so forth
<b>Modulation</b>	Reproducing the message of the original text in the TL text in accordance with the current norms of the TL, because the SL and the TL, may be different in perspective
<b>Recognized Translation</b>	It is employed to normally use the official or the generally accepted translation of any institutional term
<b>Compensation</b>	It is employed to make up for the loss of a certain ST effect by creating a similar effect in the TL
<b>Componential Analysis</b>	As the splitting up of a lexical unit into its sense components, often one-to-two, three or four translations
<b>Couplets, triplets and quadruplets</b>	It occurs when the translator applies two, or three or four different procedures together

Finally, to study the effectiveness of the translation approach used to translate culture-specific items (CSIs) in the target text (TT) and tendency in the strategy used by translator, whether source or text-oriented, Venuti's (1995) translation strategies model was adopted. Venuti (1995) introduced the concepts of domestication and foreignization, which are two fundamental strategies in translation, particularly when handling culture-specific elements.

Venuti underscores the importance of these strategies in shaping the degree to which a translation either adapts a foreign text to align with the language and culture of the target audience or retains the distinct features of the original text. He emphasizes that domestication and foreignization play crucial roles in balancing adaptation and preservation in the translation process. A significant advantage of Venuti's (1995) translation strategies model is that it provides a systematic approach to achieve an accurate translation in the cultural terms between two languages (Saleh & Mohammed 2023, Al Tenaijy & Al-Batineh 2024).

Hence, the study provides a comprehensive set of tools for helping researchers analyse translation of culture-specific items (CSIs) by applying Norhazlina's (2015) framework for translation approach, which adapts modified Newmark's (1988) procedures and Venuti's (1995) strategies as follows:

<b>Domestication</b>	<b>Foreignization</b>
1. Explicitation	1. Transference
2. Generalization	2. Literal translation
3. Transposition	3. Arabicization
4. Modulation	4. Through-Translation
5. Cultural Equivalent	
6. Compensation	
7. Recognized Translation	
8. Componential Analysis	
9. Couplets, triplets and quadruplets	



## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the outcomes derived from the data analysis. It begins with the quantitative findings based on the classification of culture-specific items (CSIs) according to Aixela's categories. This is followed by a comprehensive overview and detailed examination of the qualitative results concerning the translation procedures and strategies employed by Newmark's (1988) and Venuti (1995) in rendering Malay CSIs into Arabic. The section concludes with a critical discussion of how these selected translation approach influenced the construction of meaning within the target text.

The analysis of the comic *Budak Kampung* identified 67 culture-specific items (CSIs), systematically categorized according to Aixela's (1996) framework into two cultural domains: proper names (PNs) and common expressions (CEs). Proper names constituted the majority with 37 items (55.2%), while common expressions comprised 30 items (44.8%). These quantitative findings laid the groundwork for assessing the translators' strategic choices in rendering Malay CSIs into Arabic. As revealed in the data, arabicization emerged as the dominant strategy, applied in 27 cases (40.3%), followed by literal translation (14 cases, 21%), and through-translation (11 cases, 16.4%). Less frequently employed strategies included generalization (7.46%), cultural equivalent (6%), transposition (4.48%), explicitation (2.99%), and modulation (1.5%), while compensation, recognized translation, and componential analysis were entirely absent. This distribution reflects a discernible tendency towards foreignization, particularly through the retention of source cultural elements, although instances of domestication are evident in strategies like generalization and cultural equivalence. The subsequent analysis delves into these categories to critically evaluate how each CSI was rendered either preserved in its original cultural form or adapted to the Arabic-speaking audience.

### Proper Nouns (PNs)

The proper nouns category encompasses the terms associated with a range of culturally or religiously or historically figures or titles or places or organizations including personal names, nickname or titles, toponyms or place names and institutional names.

TABLE 1 Sample of CSIs in the proper nouns category

Source Text	Target Text	Procedure	Strategy	Subcategory
Pak Alang	فأ ألانج	Arabicization	Foreignisation	People- greetings and kinship terms
Wan Chu Khatijah	وان شو خديجة	Arabicization	Foreignisation	People- greetings and kinship terms
Tuan Syed Ahmad	الأستاذ سيد أحمد	Arabicization	Foreignisation	People- greetings and kinship terms
Kedai Ah Yew	دكان (أه يو)	Couplets - Literal translation & Arabicization	Foreignisation	Place- Local Chinese's grocery in the village
Ipoh	إيبوه	Arabicization	Foreignisation	Place- the seat of Kinta District in Perak, Malaysia

<b>Jajahan Kinta</b>	منطقة "كينتا"	Couplets – Literal translation & Arabicization	Foreignisation	Place- the most populated district in Perak, Malaysia
<b>Kereta Austin</b>	سيارة أوستين	Arabicization	Foreignisation	Brand Name- British automotive manufacturer
<b>Kereta Morris Minor</b>	سيارة موريس مينور	Arabicization	Foreignisation	Brand Name- British automotive manufacturer
<b>Basikal Raleighnya</b>	بدراجته	Generalization	Domestication	Brand Name-British manufacturer of bicycles
<b>Galang Elswick</b>	دراجته الصينية	Generalization	Domestication	Brand Name- United Kingdom- based manufacturer of bicycles

On the whole, arabicization emerged as the most frequently used procedures, the translators applied it in translating 17 items, representing 25.4% of the instances. They used generalization less frequently for translating two cultural items 2.99%. It is reasonably justifiable that the majority of proper names (PNs) in *Budak Kampung* were transliterated through arabicization, given their function as specific referents within the text. Additionally, it is noteworthy that a significant portion of these PNs are culturally embedded, being closely associated with Malay heritage and Muslim religious traditions.

### Common Expressions (Ces)

In the common expression category, the translators primarily used literal translation for 14 items (21%) to translate the CSIs into Arabic, while they used modulation at least often, for only once (1.5%). Notably, translators' predominant procedures in this category aligned with the foreignisation approach in that literal translation essentially seeks to retain the cultural elements of the source text and requires the target audience to adapt to the source culture.

TABLE 2 Sample of CSI in the common expressions category

Source Text	Target Text	Procedure	Strategy	Subcategory
<b>Tok Mudin</b>	تو مودين	Couplets - Eplicitation & Arabicization	Domestication & Foreignisation	Profession
<b>Dresser</b>	الممرضين	Arabicization	Foreignisation	Profession
<b>Marhaban</b>	أنشودة ((مرحبا))	Couplets - Eplicitation & Arabicization	Domestication & Foreignisation	Neologism
<b>Berwuduk</b>	الوضو	Arabicization	Foreignisation	Neologism
<b>Tajwid</b>		Arabicization	Foreignisation	Neologism
<b>Pokok Durian</b>	التجويد أشجار (الدوريان)	Couplets – Literal translation & Arabicization	Foreignisation	Ecology-flora

<b>Kayu Cengai</b>	خشب (( تشانجاي ))	Couplets – Literal translation & Arabicization	Foreignisation	Ecology-flora
<b>Ikan Keli</b>	بأسماك القرموط	Literal translation	Foreignisation	Ecology-fauna
<b>Pulut Kuning</b>	الأرز الأصفر	Literal translation	Foreignisation	Food-Malay culture cuisine
<b>Kuih Bengkang</b>	حلوى "بنكنج"	Couplets – Literal translation & Arabicization	Foreignisation	Food-Malay culture cuisine
<b>Kain Batik</b>	إزار باتيك	Couplets – Literal translation & Arabicization	Foreignisation	Cloth -Malay culture heritage

Thus, literal translation and arabicization help maintain the cultural specificity and richness of the original text. For religious or culturally significant terms such as 'tajwid' and 'berwuduk' or concept such as 'marhaban', literal translation and arabicization can also show accuracy and respect by maintaining the original term, the translator ensures that the specific cultural or religious meanings are not diluted. The translators' predominant use of modulation and generalization, in contrast, appear to have been influenced by the complexity of the source concepts and the absence of one-to-one correspondence between the source and the target languages. Offering alternative translations for such intricate concepts may have potentially disrupted the reading experience and impeded the narrative flow; the translators' procedures were to balance the preservation of cultural specificity with the imperative of ensuring broad accessibility, a pervasive challenge in the field of translation. However, the translators' approach also demonstrated variation when translating items related to material culture, as discussed next.

## Qualitative Analysis

### Proper Nouns (PNs)

#### Example 1-3

Mujur ada <b>Pak Alang</b>	وكان من حسن حظي أني وجدت فألاً أنج الذي أنقذني منها
...dihantar mengaji Quran di rumah <b>Tuan Syed Ahmad</b>	...فقد أرسلني إلى بيت الأستاذ سيد أحمد
Yang seronok sekali ialah apabila emak saudara teman, <b>Wan Cu Khatijah</b> , balik dari menoreh...	.. وكانت أسعد الأوقات لدي عند ما تعود خالتي (وان شو خديجة) من البزل

The civilization of the Malay people is clearly reflected through the cultural expressions embedded in their daily lives, particularly in their courteous social interactions grounded in

Islamic teachings. They frequently employ forms of address and reference terms that signify respect in their communication practices. Terms of address refer to expressions used by a particular community or ethnic group (Awang, 2015) to initiate greetings or acknowledge others, whether in formal settings such as protocols involving honorific titles or informal daily conversations. Yusmawati and Mohd Khaidir (2021) study have shown that the forms of address and reference in the Malay community can generally be categorized into three main types: personal pronouns, kinship terms, and societal references, all of which are considered to fall within the class of proper nouns. The translations of example 1-3 exhibit a fairly high degree of foreignisation which the translation of arabicization were applied in this case. Arabicization does not deliver the exact message to TT readers. The use of arabicization along with explication would be more appropriate and would convey the intended meaning of TT readers. Therefore, an alternative translation for Wan Chu Khatijah could be:

وان شو (يطلق على العمة أو الخالة، وهي الأخت الصغرى للأم أو الأب، وكذلك يُطلق على الجدة  
من جهة الأم أو الأب)

a kinship term used to address a maternal or paternal aunt who is the youngest sibling of one's mother or father, and also commonly used for grandmother figure.

#### Example 4

Di sebelah dispensari itu ialah  
**kedai si Ah Yew...**

بجوار العيادة دكان (أه يو)

The cultural element is framed through the setting of the events; that of a village, as well as that of a multicultural environment. In the history of business development in Malaysia during postcolonial period, Kedai Ah Yew refer to a small grocery store in Lat's village owned by Chinese man called Ah Yew, Chinese nick name often used as a term of familiarity. In this example, the translators adopted couplet comprising literal and arabicization, which is relatively unfamiliar to foreign readers. Thus, to explain the status of character and to better let readers understand the philosophy of a foreign culture, explication is suggested and could be alternatively translated as:

الاسم الصيني "آه يو (阿佑)" هو اسم مُعطى شائع أو اسم تدليل يُستخدم كثيراً كصيغة محبة  
أو ودية.

#### Example 5

Pengantin lelaki menaiki **sebuah**  
**Morris Minor** kepunyaan  
seorang guru sekolah...

ركب العريس سيارة موريس مينور لأحد  
المدرسين

The name of a transport brand should be classified under proper nouns in Aixelá's categorization, as it denotes a specific, culturally embedded entity rather than a generic term. In this instance of 5, the translators used a couplet, literal and arabicization which do not transmit the intended meaning. Therefore, adding a note explaining the transport brand could render a more appropriate translation, as not only introduces foreign characteristics of the original text, but also reduces the TT readers' barriers. It can be described as well-polished translation. In this example, this transport brand refers to well-known British manufacturer of

motor vehicles founded in 1905, which was exported all over the British empires, with particularly strong export markets in Asia countries including Malaysia and South Africa making it major manufacturing company during the colonial period.

#### Example 6

Di tengah-tengah **Jajahan Kinta**... تقع في قلب منطقة "كينتا"

Example 6 shows that toponym terms such as name of specific places and institution fall under proper noun in Aixela's categorization. This term has cultural and administrative specificity that may not have an equivalent. Historically, the term Jajahan is a Malay term used in some states, particularly Kelantan and Perak to denote a district or administrative division and also was once famous for its tin, being one of the major tin product in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, may not be familiar to the Arabic-speaking audience. According to Al-Maany Dictionary, Jajahan or district (PRPM) refers to منطقة, the translators used a couplet combining arabicization and literal translation, which is acceptable because the use of this couplets conveys the intended meaning as the TT readers would be able to understand the term well. Indeed, in the Arabic translated edition, *Tiflu al-Qaryah*, Lat describes Kinta as the world's largest tin mining district. This aligns with the explanation found in the original Malay text, which refers to it as "the world's largest tin mining district."

Overall, the translations of Example 1-6 reflect a strong tendency towards foreignisation. The translators employed a notably conservative approach, demonstrating clear fidelity to the source material. Proper nouns, which are typically rare lexical items denoting distinct entities such as individual, locations, or objects, were retained with minimal adaptation. Should a translator opt for a less conservative stance by favouring domestication, this would entail a greater degree of cultural modification to align the expressions more closely with the target audience's cultural context.

### Common Expressions (CEs)

#### Example 7

Bila musim buah, kami akan  
bertugas menjaga **pokok-pokok**  
**durian** Meor Yusof وفي موسم الفواكه كنا نعمل في حراسة  
أشجار (الدوريان) التي يملكها العم ميور  
يوسف

The translators employed a couplet procedures combining literal translation and arabicization, both, pokok-pokok as أشجار and durian as الدوريان. The translation retains the cultural and historical authenticity of the original term and facilitates understanding of the source text. It is likely that readers familiar with world literature will recognise durian as globally recognised loanword, especially in tropical and botanical contexts, hence these procedures work in conveying the intended meaning. As a translation strategy, foreignisation is excellent at retaining the source text's cultural representation.

#### Example 8-10

Sememangnyaakah wajib bagi budak-  
budak baya teman mula belajar **Tajwid**...  
وكان واجبا على الأطفال في مثل عمري أن  
يبدأوا تعلم التجويد...

...setengah dari para jemputan tadi  
pun mula menyanyikan **marhaban**.  
بدأ الضيوف ينشدون أنشودة  
: ((مرحبا))، (أنشودة عن رسول الله)

Gambar ini menunjukkan Tuan Syed  
sedang mengajar cara **berwudhuk**  
وهذه الصورة ترينا أن الأستاذ سيد أحمد  
يعلمنا كيفية الوضوء

In the case of Example 8-10, arabicization is the most appropriate procedure and to be adequate translation; the translators favoured foreignisation over domestication in dealing with the concepts of Islamic cultural and religious terms preserving the original term maintains cultural specificity and authenticity. This procedure is commonly used for neologisms, especially when the terms has been widely borrowed across cultures.

#### Example 11

...**pulut kuning** satu pinggan  
طبق من الأرز الأصفر

In Aixela's (1996) framework, material-related terms such as name of tools, clothing, food, architecture tied to cultural identity should be categorized under common expressions. In the case of example 11, the translators utilized the procedure of literal translation, as referring to Al-Maany Dictionary that term pulut is glutinous rice and kuning as yellow. However, this procedure is not always successful. For food item such as pulut kuning translated as الأرز الأصفر, it specifically refers to the term pulut kuning, a traditional Malay yellow glutinous rice dish typically served during significant ceremonial occasions such as weddings or religious celebrations embodies deep symbolic value in Malay culture, often associated with blessings, prosperity, and communal honour; this aspect is lost in the translation. Accordingly, the use of couplet combining arabicization and explicitation is suggested, keeping the original terminology to retaining their full cultural flavour and identity and could be alternatively translated pulut kuning as:

البولوت كونيغ هو طبق ملايوي تقليدي من الأرز اللزج الأصفر يُقدَّم في المناسبات السعيدة  
كالأعراس والاحتفالات الدينية

#### Example 12

**Kain batik** satu helai  
إزار باتيك

The translation of batik in Example 12 demonstrates a nuanced translational approach through the use of a couplet comprising arabicization and literal translation. The term *batik* is

preserved phonologically as *باتيك*, reflecting its cultural specificity, while the Malay word *kain* is rendered as *إزار*. However, this translation is semantically imprecise, as *إزار* may not fully convey the material and cultural meaning embedded in the term. A more accurate alternative would be *قماش باتيك*, which retains the cultural specificity of the fabric while enhancing its semantic clarity. As defined by PRPM, batik refers to a traditional Malay textile decorated through wax-resist techniques, a meaning also recognized in Arabic sources. This illustrates that the term encapsulates more than its literal appearance it signifies cultural artistry and traditional practice. Therefore, relying solely on arabicization risks obscuring these deeper cultural connotations. To enhance cultural comprehension, the use of an explicitation such as *بطريقة مقاومة الشمع وهو قماش تقليدي ماليزي مزخرف*, coupled with a footnote or glossary entry, would provide the target audience with contextual insights into *batik*'s historical and socio-cultural relevance.

The translators' approach reveals a sophisticated balance between preserving cultural identity and facilitating audience accessibility. The consistent use of arabicization in translating CSIs, particularly those related to clothing and cuisine, reflects a clear preference for foreignization, a strategy that upholds the authenticity and distinctiveness of the source culture. Meanwhile, explicitation is selectively applied to clarify unfamiliar concepts, demonstrating a strategic effort to mediate between linguistic fidelity and reader comprehension. This dual strategy embodies the translators' careful negotiation of the tension between cultural preservation and cross-cultural intelligibility. By emphasising cultural richness through arabicization and ensuring interpretive clarity through explicitation, the translators construct a layered translation that respects the integrity of the original text while accommodating the interpretive needs of an Arabic-speaking readership.

## CONCLUSION

This study explored the translation strategies employed in rendering Malay culture-specific items (CSIs) from *Budak Kampung* into Arabic, utilizing a dual-theoretical framework drawn from Aixela's (1996) cultural taxonomy and Norhazlina's (2015) adaptation of Newmark's (1988) procedures, all framed within Venuti's (1995) domestication and foreignisation taxonomy. Further, the study critically evaluated the implications of these strategies for the conveyed meanings and the cultural representations of these items. The identification of 67 CSIs largely composed of proper names and cultural expressions reveals a dominant preference for arabicization and generalization strategies, while techniques such as compensation or componential analysis are notably absent. This strategic orientation suggests a clear inclination toward foreignisation, which reflects the translator's effort to preserve the semantic and cultural essence of the source text.

The translators' results also demonstrate a deliberate alignment between the cultural specificity of the items and the most contextually appropriate strategies. While foreignisation was preferred for proper names to preserve cultural identity, domestication was used judiciously to increase access to culturally dense terms such as traditional foods and clothing. The limited but meaningful use of generalizations reveals an effort to balance semantic clarity with cultural fidelity. Although constrained by its case study design and focus on textual analysis, this study contributes significantly to translation scholarship by highlighting the importance of domestication and foreignization that continue to be key discourses in the field of cultural translation studies in comic genre literary texts. As such, this study invites further research into the translatability of CSI across various literary genres and language pairs and the implications of using this approach, suggesting a culturally anchored framework for future explorations in cross-cultural translation practice.

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