

# An Analysis of Translation Procedures in Rendering Culture-Specific Items (CSI) in *Cek Toko Sebelah* English Translation

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## Abstract

*This study was conducted to investigate the translation procedures applied in rendering culture-specific items (CSI) in the English translation of the Indonesian comedy film entitled *Cek Toko Sebelah* by Ernest Prakasa. The theory of translation procedure proposed by Newmark is used as the theoretical framework of this research. This research uses qualitative research, and the method used is descriptive research. The data were classified by identifying and analyzing the procedures used to render culture-specific items (CSI) in the film's English translation based on Newmark's theory. The findings show that 50 culture specific items (CSI) were found. The most frequently discovered category of CSI is Social Culture, with 35 data or (70 %) from the total data, whereas the least discovered category of CSI is Ecology with only 2 data or (4%) from the total data. Among the twelve procedures suggested by the theory, only five procedures are applied in rendering the translation. The most used procedure is Cultural Equivalent with 25 data or (50%). The second most used procedure is Neutralization with 14 data (28%). The third most used procedure is Literal Translation with 5 data (10%). And the two least used procedures are Transference with 4 data (8%) and Couplet with 2 data (4%)*

**Keywords:** *Culture-specific items; Films; Translation Procedures.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Films serve as a universal medium that connects people around the world, offering a window into diverse cultures through storytelling and characters (Virtianti, 2024). Beyond their entertainment value, they also play a significant role in fostering understanding and building bridges between different cultures. Iskandar (2022) says the growing popularity of Indonesian films on streaming platforms such as Netflix has further enriched this exploration, providing global audiences with an opportunity to understand and appreciate the cultural elements of societies beyond their own.

In response to this, subtitles play a vital role in rendering the audiovisual content of a source language into written form in the target language (Abdelaal, 2019). According to Szarkowska (2005), subtitling is the process of adding captions that are synchronized with the verbal text and displayed at the bottom of the images or on screens to present a translation of dialogues in audiovisual materials. In film translation, there are several problems that may arise, one of which is translating culture-specific items. According to Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) culture-specific items are elements that are closely connected to the cultural, historical, and geographical background of a particular country. For that reason subtitles are needed, especially when dealing with different languages, so that worldwide audiences not only obtain a better understanding towards film dialogue, but also learn different cultural backgrounds that will help them understand the movie being watched.

*Cek Toko Sebelah*, is an Indonesian comedy-drama film directed by Ernest Prakasa, featuring a Chinese-Indonesian family who runs a grocery store. Throughout the movie, cultural-bound terms are often shown in the film dialogue as it is set in a multicultural background of Indonesian livinghood. Baker (1992) in her book highlights that differences between languages and cultures can cause certain words to have meanings that cannot be directly understood or translated into another language. Therefore, another problem arises when the translator may find difficulties to render these culture-specific items.

Several articles have been discussing translation procedures in films. First study, from Zahra and Indhiarti (2023) “Culture-Specific Items (CSIs) Categories and Translation Procedures of *Wang Sinawang* Short Movie”. The main objective of this study is to explore the types and the dominant procedures that were used by the movie translator in rendering Culture-Specific Items (CSIs) in the short movie that is using Javanese as the main language into English subtitles. This research was conducted by employing Newmark (1988) theory to classify the cultural words and to find the procedures of translation. The result of the study revealed that the most appeared CSI was Material Culture, while the least appeared CSI was Social Culture. The most used procedure was Recognized Translation while the least procedure was Naturalization and Descriptive Equivalent.

Second study, from Virtianti, et al. (2024) “Translation Procedure of Cultural Words of The First Episode of *Gadis Kretek* Series”. The main aim of the study is to analyze what translation procedures are used in translating cultural words. The research was conducted by employing Alonso and Ponte theory to identify the cultural words, followed by Newmark to identify the translation procedures applied in rendering the cultural words from Javanese into English. The study shows that Literal Translation marks the top rank in the frequency of usage, followed by Cultural Equivalence on the second rank. Similarly, the third study was conducted by Leksananda (2023) in his study entitled “Translating Cultural Words in Movie Subtitles : a Study on Translation Procedures.” In this research, the object of this study is *The Dictator* movie, where the main goal is to uncover the types of cultural words

and their translation procedures from English as the source language into Indonesian as the target language. By employing Newmark (1988) theory this study revealed that Material Culture is the most dominant cultural words found. Meanwhile, Transference and Literal Translation are the most used translation procedures.

Aforementioned previous studies have similarity in exploring and identifying cultural-specific items (CSIs) in film translation, the key difference is sets on the object of study where the first and the second study use Javanese as the film's source language, and in the third study use English as the film's source language. Initiated from the issue above, the author of this present study found that studies using popular Indonesian films as the main object of analysis are still very limited. Therefore, this research aims to fill the gap by investigating the culture-specific items (CSIs) found in the English translation of the Indonesian film *Cek Toko Sebelah* and the procedures applied to render them by employing Newmark's (1988) theory.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Definition of Cultural-Specific Items**

According to (Newmark, 1988), culture-specific-items (CSIs) are words or expressions that are deeply rooted in a particular culture and may not have direct equivalents in another language. These items reflect the unique aspects of society's environment, beliefs, social structures, and daily life. It is important to understand that cultural words are not limited to language alone. Therefore, a clear classification is necessary to better understand cross-cultural communication.

The following is the classification of culture-specific items according to Newmark (1988).

#### *2.1.1 Ecology*

Flora, fauna, winds, plains, hills. This classification contains the names of plants, trees, animals, winds, and natural phenomena.

Examples : *Gunung Merapi, Burung Cendrawasih, Bukit Barisan.*

#### *2.1.2 Material Culture*

Food, clothing, housing and urban centers, and transportation are examples of this category. This category contains food, beverages, clothes, houses, regions, and transportation. Examples : *Rumah Joglo, Wayang Kulit, Sate, Gudeg.*

### 2.1.3 Social Culture

This classification includes words in the community, performance name or activity name. Examples: *gotong royong* (communal cooperation), *tari jaipong* (kinds of Sundanese dance), *malam takbiran* (the night of the last day of Ramadhan).

### 2.1.4 Organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts

Governmental and administrative, spiritual, and creative. This classification contains the name of political organizations, activities, procedures, ideas, religions, and so forth. Examples: *BPJS* (National Health Insurance), *Pesantren* (Islamic Boarding School), *Pramuka* (Boy Scouts).

### 2.1.5 Gestures and Habits

Non-linguistic features. This classification contains the name of routine of habitual actions. Example : *Nongkrong* (hanging out with friends), *makan pakai tangan* (eating with bare hands).

## 2.2. Translation Procedures

(Newmark, 1988) proposes that translators may employ different translation procedures when dealing with culture-bound words. It is important to note that translation procedures are different from translation methods. Translation procedures apply to sentences and smaller linguistic units, meanwhile translation methods are employed to assess the text as a whole. Following are translation procedures of culture-specific items proposed by Newmark (1988: 102).

### 2.2.1 Transference

Transference refers to the process of transferring a word directly from the source language into the target language, resulting in what is commonly known as loan word. This procedure concept is to borrow or to loan a foreign word.

SL : Soto Betawi

TL : Soto Betawi

### 2.2.2 Cultural equivalence

Cultural equivalence refers to the process of translation in which culture-bound terms from source language are rendered using corresponding cultural terms that exist within the target language.

SL: Ikan Asin

TL: Salted Fish

### *2.2.3 Neutralization*

Cultural terms that pose difficulty to translate are occasionally rendered in a neutral manner by translators. This neutrality may manifest either in the form of a broader, more generalized, or through a more elaborated interpretation of the original term.

SL : Tari Kecak

TL : Traditional Balinese Dance

### *2.2.4 Literal translation*

In certain instances, further elaboration of cultural terms is unnecessary when a literal translation sufficiently conveys the intended meaning to the target audience. In such cases, the cultural terms can simply be translated in a word-for-word manner.

SL: Toko Kopi

TL: Coffee Shop

### *2.2.5 Label*

This procedure serves as a preliminary attempt to convey the meaning of a new or specialized term in the target language. It recognizes that further adjustments may be needed as the translation develops or as the term becomes more established in the target language.

### *2.2.6 Naturalization*

This procedure refers to the process of adapting sounds and word forms of a source language term into target language.

SL : Café

TL : Kafe

### *2.2.7 Componential Analysis*

In general, cultural words in the source language have more specific meanings than the target language. To produce translations that are close to the source language, the translator adds components that suit the source language.

### *2.2.8 Deletion*

Sometimes translation might require a detailed explanation, however on the other times, a simpler form can deliver the message just as effectively. In this case, the translator's skill is needed in omitting unnecessary parts in the target language through this procedure.

SL : Self-rolled cigarettes

TL : Tingwe

### 2.2.9 Couplet

When cultural terms are unfamiliar to the target audience and no suitable equivalent or general definition can be found, translators may creatively apply a combination of two translation procedures to address the challenge of conveying the meaning of such terms.

### 2.2.10 Accepted standard translation

Accepted standard translation uses internationally agreed translations, for example for terms such as President, Senate, and so on.

SL: PBB

TL: United Nations

### 2.2.11 Paraphrase, gloss, notes, etc.

Paraphrase, gloss and notes in which the decomposition of a speech in another form or arrangement of words, in order to be able to explain the hidden meaning.

### 2.2.12 Classifier

The classifier translation procedure involves keeping the specific word used in the original language when talking about a particular item, without trying to find an exact translation. This is done when that word carries a special meaning or cultural significance that would be lost in translation.

## 3. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the data. Qualitative research is research that collects and analyzes non-numerical data, for example, text, video, or audio to understand concept opinion, or experiences (Bhandari, 2020). Based on the research topic, the data for this study were obtained from *Cek Toko Sebelah* movie (2016). The object of this research is both Indonesian and English subtitles of *Cek Toko Sebelah*. Hence, this study specifically looks into cultural-specific items and to find what translation procedures applied in rendering in the English translation (subtitles).

In carrying out this study, the researcher watched the movie through Netflix. Then, the researcher transcribed both Indonesian and English subtitles with the help of an online tool named Subadub. The researcher decided to use this tool because it is more convenient and time efficient for data collecting process, moreover the transcribed texts which serve as the main data of this research can be trusted since this tool will automatically transfer and obtain the original data from Netflix. Both Indonesian and English subtitles transcripts were the data in this research. After the

subtitles have been transcribed, the research process begins. First, to identify culture-specific items found in the subtitles, the researcher read the Indonesian subtitle transcript and noted down what culture-specific items were found in the transcript. Thereafter, all culture-specific items found were identified using Newmark (1988) classification of cultural words. Furthermore, to determine the translation procedure applied in rendering the culture-specific items, the researcher checked the English translation of each culture-specific item found in the Indonesian transcript. Then applied the translation procedures proposed by Newmark (1988).

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the culture-specific items found in the film English translation, and identify the translation procedures used to render the CSI.

##### 4.1 Types of Culture-Specific Items

Based on the finding, the researcher found 50 numbers of Culture-Specific Items (CSIs) in the subtitled conversation. As we can see from the table below.

**Table 1.** Category percentage of CSI in *Cek Toko Sebelah* film.

<i>CSI Categories</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Social Culture	35	70 %
Material Culture	9	18 %
Organization, Customs, Ideas, etc.	4	8 %
Ecology	2	4 %
Gestures and habits	0	0 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

As described in the literature review, according to Newmark there are 5 categorizations of cultural words. However, based on the finding, only four cultural words categories were found in the subtitled conversation. Among these 50 culture-specific items found, the most frequently discovered category is Social Culture with 35 occurrences (70%), followed by Material Culture with 9 occurrences (18%), Organization, Customs, Ideas, etc. with 4 occurrences (8%), and the last one ecology with 2 occurrence (4%).

## 4.2 Translation Procedures of CSI from Indonesian to English

Based on the finding, the researcher found 50 numbers of Culture-Specific Items (CSIs) in the subtitled conversation. As we can see from the table below.

**Table 2.** Distribution of Translation Procedure.

<i>Translation Procedures</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Cultural Equivalent	25	50 %
Neutralization	14	28 %
Literal Translation	5	10 %
Transference	4	8 %
Couplet	2	4 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

This section below discusses the translation procedures used in the subtitled dialogues in the movie, along with their further analysis.

### 4.2.1 Cultural Equivalent

Cultural words in the source text were usually specific, particularly concerning cultural aspects. In order to deal with this, the translator needs to understand the meaning contained within these cultural terms and find a suitable equivalent in the target language. The following below are the data examples.

Data 1

ID : Nggak ngerti sejarah semua, **katro!**

EN : You all don't know your history? **Bumpkins.** (01:43:48 - 01:43:51)

"*Katro*" falls under the category of social culture according to Newmark's cultural categories. "*Katro*" is a Indonesian term that is used to describe someone who is considered unsophisticated, outdated, or out of touch with modern trends and urban culture. It carries a strong social connotation that is deeply rooted in Indonesian social norms and culture, often used to describe someone who is perceived as being from a rural or less developed background and therefore lacking in social sophistication or urban sensibility. The translation of "*katro*" into "bumpkin" can be classified as cultural equivalence according to Newmark's framework, as the translator has replaced the culturally specific Indonesian slang term with a culturally equivalent term in the target language. "Bumpkin" is an English term that refers to someone who is unsophisticated or socially awkward, typically associated with a rural or countryside background, which carries a similar social connotation to "*katro*" in the Indonesian context.

Data 2

ID : Pas banget kayaknya kamu pakai **daster**, gitu...

EN : Although I have been imagining you wearing a **house dress**.

“*Daster*” is a type of loose, longwear dress commonly worn by Indonesian women at home, particularly in informal domestic settings. It is culturally associated with everyday life and reflects local clothing practices. Therefore, it can be categorized as culture-specific items under Material Culture, specifically clothing. In the English translation, *daster* is translated as house dress. This translation suitable with Cultural Equivalent procedure, as the translator replaces the SL cultural word to TL term that serves similar function and is more familiar to target audience. Although house dress is not identical to *daster*, it conveys a comparable concept of casual home wear, allowing audience to understand the intended meaning.

Data 3

ID : **Auban** si Aloi.

EN : Aloi is **nuts**.

*Auban* derives from Chinese language, specifically Hokkien dialect which means being hard-headed or cannot accept one fact and being firm with personal own understanding. This term is still widely used among Chinese-Indonesian from Hokkien rooted family, even it is used by non-Chinese members in everyday conversation. This word is classified under Social Culture category. The translator uses the same equivalent term in the target language. According to Cambridge dictionary the term “*being nuts*” means to be enthusiastic about an object, activity, or person. It means that the translator's main intention is to replace an equivalent from the source language term into the target language.

#### 4.2.2 Transference

Transference means to transfer the source language terms without prior changing, namely to loan the foreign words. Here is an example of the data.

Data 4

ID : Cobain **Nastar** baru aku, ya?

EN : Try my new style of **Nastar**, okay? (00:01:00 - 00:01:01)

“*Nastar*” falls under the category of material culture, specifically food, according to Newmark's cultural categories. *Nastar* is a traditional Indonesian cookie that is made of pineapple jam filling wrapped in a buttery pastry dough. It is a culturally specific food item that is deeply embedded in Indonesian culinary culture, particularly associated with festive celebrations such as Eid and Christmas. As a uniquely Indonesian term, *Nastar* does not have a direct equivalent in other cultures, making it a clear example of a CSI. The translation of “*Nastar*” into “*Nastar*” can be classified as transference according to Newmark's framework, as the translator has chosen to

retain the original Indonesian term in its untranslated form in the target language. By transferring "*Nastar*" directly into the English subtitle without any modification or explanation, the translator has preserved the cultural authenticity and specificity of the original term.

#### **4.2.3 Neutralization**

Cultural terms that pose significant translation challenges are occasionally rendered in a neutral manner by subtitle translators. This neutrality may manifest either as the use of a more general term or through a more elaborated interpretation of the original expression. Based on the findings of this study, a total of 14 culture-specific items were identified as having been translated through the application of neutralization procedure. One example of the data is as follows.

Data 5

ID : Gue mau nyobain semua **empang** di Jabodetabek.

EN : I'm going to fish every **pond** in the Greater Jakarta area. (01:41:28 - 01:41:31)

"*Empang*" falls under Newmark's Ecology category, as it refers to a specific type of man-made water body commonly found in Indonesian rural and suburban landscapes. While it can be broadly translated as "pond". Specifically "*empang*" in Indonesian culture refers to a fish farming pond used for cultivating fish and shrimp. The translator rendered "*empang*" as "pond", since it is the nearest meaning in English. This follows Newmark's Neutralization procedure, where the SL culture-specific term is replaced with a broadly equivalent TL term that is familiar and accessible to English readers, although it loses its specific meaning.

#### **4.2.4 Literal Translation**

In some cases, translators choose not to provide additional explanation for cultural terms when a direct translation is already clear enough for the audience to understand. In such situations, translators simply translate these cultural terms word for word without any further modification. One example is provided as follows.

Data 6

ID : Waktu **kerusuhan 98**.

EN : During **'98 riots** . (00:27:08 - 00:27:12)

this phrase refers to the May 1998 riots of Indonesia, a major socio-political event in Indonesian history during Reformasi period, which caused chaotic, mass violence, and financial crisis. Therefore, this term falls into Organization, Customs, Procedures, and Concepts. as we can see the phrase is rendered as '98 riots, which reflects the use of Literal Translation procedure. By preserving the term '98 riots, the translation retains the cultural and historical context embedded in the source expression while still making it understandable for the target audience.

#### 4.2.5 Couplet

This procedure is a combination of two types of translation procedures. When one procedure may not be sufficient in order to render a cultural word, the translator might use this procedure to make the translation result even better.

Data 7

ID : Lumayan, Win. **Sepuluh juta.**

EN : Quite a lot, **10 million Rupiah (\$750.)** (00:50:56 - 00:50:58)

“*Sepuluh juta*” means amount of money in Indonesian Rupiah (IDR) currency. Based on Newmark categorization, currency can be classified into part of material culture. With the complete translation being “ten million Rupiah (\$750)”, the translation procedure applied is actually a couplet according to Newmark's framework.

This is because the translator has combined two individual translation procedures to handle a single translation problem. First procedure used is Transference, the original term “Rupiah” is retained and transferred directly into the target language as it is, preserving the cultural specificity of the Indonesian currency. And then second procedure used is Cultural Equivalent, as the translator has added the approximate US Dollar equivalent “\$750” in a bracket as a culturally equivalent monetary reference for the target audience.

#### 4.3 Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this study show some differences when compared with previous research employing the same theoretical framework. In terms of CSI categories, this study found Social Culture to be the most dominant category (70%), whereas Zahra and Indhiarti (2023) found Material Culture to be the most dominant in “*Wang Sinawang*” short movie, and Leksananda (2023) similarly found Material Culture to be the most dominant category in *The Dictator* movie. This contrast may be attributed to the difference in setting and storyline; while the previous studies’ objects mostly revolve around traditional or rural settings that foreground material aspects of daily life such as food, clothing, and housing, *Cek Toko Sebelah* is a family comedy-drama set in an urban, multicultural community, where dialogues are dominated by social interaction, slang, and relational terms that fall under Social Culture.

A similar pattern of variation is observed in the translation procedures applied. The present study found Cultural Equivalent to be the most frequently used procedure (50%), followed by Neutralization (28%). This differs from Virtianti, et al. (2024), who found Literal Translation to be the most dominant procedure in translating cultural words in the *Gadis Kretek* series, and from Leksananda (2023), who found Transference and Literal Translation to be the most used procedures in *The Dictator*. The tendency in this study toward Cultural Equivalent suggests that the translator of *Cek Toko Sebelah* prioritized audience comprehension and naturalness in the target language over preserving the original cultural form, whereas the translators in the

previous studies, retaining source-language or rendering them word for word, leaned more toward preserving the source culture's textual identity. These variations indicate that although all four studies apply Newmark's (1988) theory, the choice of dominant CSI category and translation procedure is highly influenced by the genre, setting, and communicative purpose of each audiovisual text, which in turn supports the relevance of this study in providing a comparative case from a popular Indonesian comedy-drama film.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The objective of the study was to explore what culture-specific items (CSI) found in the *Cek Toko Sebelah* film and how they were rendered in the English translation. From the research findings and discussions, it can be concluded that from five CSI categories proposed by Newmark (1988) only four categories were found in the film, namely Social Culture category leading the highest number of occurrences and the least appeared category was Ecology. And from twelve Translation Procedures proposed by Newmark only five procedures were found with the most used procedure, namely Cultural Equivalent, and the least used procedure, Couplet. Therefore, from the analysis the researcher may conclude that the film translators tend to use Cultural Equivalent in their orientation to preserve intended word or message directly from one culture to target culture.

The researcher has several recommendations for future study that another researcher can conduct. First, other researchers could do the same study with different objects of study, namely Indonesian-made popular films, since there still lack literature available towards this topic. Second, to precisely analyze the other form of CSI found, specifically like idioms, similes, humour, etc.

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