

## Translating the untranslatable: negotiation of cultural terms and equivalence in the translation of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

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### Abstract

*Translating cultural terms remains one of the most complex challenges in literary translation, as cultural concepts are often deeply embedded in the source text (ST) and lack direct counterparts in the target text (TT). This research investigates how equivalence is achieved in the Indonesian translation of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. By applying Bassnet's concept of "translation as negotiation", Baker's (2018) translation strategies, and Bell's (1991) theory of equivalence, this research adopts a descriptive qualitative method by comparing cultural terms between ST and TT. It focuses on a semantic level and its implications for the equivalence. The findings reveal that translation by cultural substitution is the most frequently used strategy, resulting in partial equivalence where cultural meaning is adapted to ensure readability and cultural accessibility for Indonesian readers. Meanwhile, loan translation with explanation often achieves full equivalence, particularly in proper names, while paraphrase using unrelated words leads to non-equivalence due to semantic and cultural shifts. These results demonstrate that equivalence is not a fixed correspondence but a process of negotiating cultural meaning between languages. This research contributes to translation studies by reframing that equivalence as a dynamic cultural process. It is recommended for future research to investigate further the cultural background that influences their translation choices across different literary genres.*

**Keywords:** *Negotiation, Meaning, Equivalence, Cultural Terms, Translation, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

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### Introduction

The problem of language disparities between a source text (ST) and a target text (TT) is a significant challenge for translators, particularly in accurately rendering cultural terms, since each language has its own culture (Baker, 2018; Ukpong, 2017; Newmark, 1988). Malinowski (1961) proposed:

*"Language is bounded by context, as language does not exist in isolation from culture. Language reflects other aspects of culture, and supports, spreads, and aids in developing other aspects. Language is also the lifeblood of culture, and culture is the path that language takes as it grows and develops."*

The statement above suggests that the relationship between language and culture is inseparable, as each shapes the other. Therefore, translating cultural items requires deliberate effort to ensure that both language and cultural elements are meaningfully 'connected' in the TT. This problem is also highlighted by Catford (1965), who argues that the primary concern of translation is to establish equivalence in the TT. However, cultural translation is a problem for translators because its form in the source text often cannot be fully maintained in the target text (Rosita, 2017). Nowadays, translations

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not only retain the meaning of the source text but also adapt to the target text's culture and linguistic system. A translation product is considered good if it is both meaningful and accurate ([Zadeh et al., 2021](#)). One issue in translation is the equivalence of cultural terms ([Kashgary, 2011](#)). Translation of cultural terms is a challenge for the translator because they must find their equivalents in the target text, where each language has different contexts and socio-cultural norms. Thus, translation is not only a process of transferring messages but also a form of intercultural interaction. The cultural term is a concept of function, and a view of that is built on a certain philosophical basis about humans. Puspitasari ([2021](#)) notes that cultural values arise when humans or the environment face problems, as they represent the consequences of relationships and behaviors among humans. The specific characteristics of culture are closely tied to identity, as language and culture differentiate one group from another ([Ma'shumah, 2022](#)). Newmark ([1988](#)) defines cultures as a human view of certain phenomena that can be classified as follows: 1) ecology; 2) material culture; 3) social culture; 4) organization, habits, and ideas; and 5) gestures and habits.

On the other hand, in the context of translation, equivalence refers to the relationship between one sentence and another in a translation, formed through the interpretation of the text's meaning ([Baker, 2018](#)). Bell ([1991](#)) argues that there are three conditions of equivalence when viewed from the level of meaning and form, namely 1) full equivalence, 2) partial equivalence, and 3) not equivalent. Full equivalence occurs when the meaning of a text in ST is entirely transferred to the TT, while partial equivalence happens when the translated text lacks meaning, whether the meaning can be decreased or increased. On the other hand, non-equivalence occurs when an expression from ST is not translated into TT. These three levels of equivalence are important when translating cultural words, since linguistic transfer often involves negotiation not only of semantic meaning but also of the socio-cultural values embedded in the TT. Hence, the closer the equivalence in the TT, the better the quality of the translation product and vice versa ([Rahmah, 2022](#)). Hence, these categories of equivalence are applied to analyze how English cultural terms in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* are rendered into Indonesian, and to what extent the cultural meanings are maintained, adapted, or omitted.

This research examines how the equivalence of cultural terms is achieved through the strategies used in translating the cultural terms. Cultural terms are words or expressions deeply rooted in the values, customs, and beliefs of a particular community, such as foods, social practices, or historical references ([Ahimsa-Putra, 2021](#)). Due to the inherent cultural specificity of these terms, it is impossible for a translator to achieve a "perfect" translation because of the cultural differences that exist. Thus, the translator must seek the most possible and the closest equivalence in the TT. Finding equivalence is important to make ST easily understandable to readers of various languages. Nowadays, translation is viewed as a negotiation between texts and culture, where the translator has a role to mediate the language from ST into TT. Thus, "negotiation" emphasizes the translator's decision ([Eco, 2003](#)). Bassnett ([2002](#)) proposed that translation is not just transferring texts from ST to TT, but is rightly seen as a process of negotiation between texts and cultures; there will always be adjustments, agreements, changes, and cultural activities in the translation process, which influence a translator's decision ([Ma'shumah et al., 2021](#)). This research highlights the interesting phenomenon of literary translation as an attempt to achieve equivalence, a core part of translation practice ([Barnstone, 1993](#)). Furthermore, this research emphasizes how finding equivalence becomes challenging yet essential. The process of translation requires not just linguistic but also cultural sensitivity. These linguistic adjustments aim to bridge the cultural gap but do not mean to remove the non-equivalence between

ST and TT. Therefore, this research will reveal the dynamic process that reflects both translation strategies and cultural negotiation.

Several studies have been conducted on equivalence and cultural terms. Recent research using the equivalence approach includes analyses of the syntactic level, ideology, and translation strategies. The research of equivalence can reveal the meaning shift by examining the textual equivalence of the construction of theme and rheme in terms of morpheme level, syntactic level shift, and word category shift (Anis, [2022](#)) and reveal the ideology adopted by the translator (Murthy & Ishlahiyah, [2024](#)) as well as the language style in the target text (Hanim, [2022](#); Permatasari, [2015](#)). In cultural terms, translators aim to achieve lexical, syntactic, and textual equivalence between the source and target texts (Zagood et al., [2023](#); Labeed & Bekouche, [2022](#)). Furthermore, Azka and Sutrisno (2025) examine the translation of cultural terms through the lens of lexical transformation. Translation strategies and techniques are employed to achieve equivalence (Ma'shumah & Sajarwa, [2022](#); Ahmed & Mansour, [2021](#); Zitouni, [2022](#)) as well as equivalence from an ideological perspective (Maesaroh, [2020](#); Susanto, [2018](#)). The current research shows that equivalence has been examined in textual, strategic, and ideological aspects. However, previous research has not focused on the implications of translation strategies for how equivalence reflects cultural negotiation in translation, offering new insight into how translators mediate culture through lexical choices and their implications on equivalence.

This research is grounded in the argument that translating cultural terms presents a particular challenge for translators, especially in literary works where the ST differs from general texts due to their aesthetic values and distinctive language style. In the concept of equivalence, cultural terms may or may not have correspondents in the TT, requiring translators to employ various procedures depending on whether the concept in the ST has an equivalent in the TT. Therefore, this research examines how translators address these challenges, particularly in rendering culturally bound expressions, and the procedures they employ in doing so. This research views cultural negotiation as a strategic act through which translators mediate between ST and TT cultures by making lexical and semantic choices, drawing on Newmark's cultural categories and Baker's translation procedures. In addition, factors such as translators' social, cultural, and ideological backgrounds can influence translation decisions, potentially leading to changes in translation strategies for cultural terms, either due to language development or shifting cultural perspectives. The research is expected to reveal translation patterns of cultural terms in the Indonesian translation of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, highlighting the approaches translators used in the target text.

## Method

The data in this research consist of words and phrases that contain cultural terms, as classified by Newmark. This research uses two novels as data sources. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, positioned as the source text (ST) in English, while its translated novel with the same title, translated by Arie Oktaviany Lorenzo, was published in 2024 as the target text (TT). The selection of the novel was based on two main reasons. First, the novel contains archaic and dialectal expressions characteristic of 19th-century American English, representing the sociolects of enslaved communities during the era of slavery. Moreover, the novel is recognized as a best-selling and controversial masterpiece of American literature, included in the Modern Library's 100 Best Novels list as one of the best novels of all time (Hanaq, [2021](#); Salman et al., [2024](#)). Second, differences in cultural backgrounds may influence word choices, as reflected in the recent Indonesian translation, published in 2024. This

translation reflects contemporary translational tendencies in rendering 19th-century cultural concepts, providing space to explore the negotiation between historical and recent cultural values, which may impact the equivalence in the translated text. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method to identify equivalence, positioning the researcher as the primary instrument. Qualitative methods have a role in examining phenomena through in-depth text analysis (Creswell & Creswell, [2018](#)). In addition, the comparative method is applied by comparing one data set with another. In this case, the ST and TT are compared to understand the changes in meaning. Furthermore, this research employs an interpretive approach to provide a detailed explanation of the equivalence of cultural terms in the novel, which focuses on the semantic level. Furthermore, the types of cultural terms are identified by Newmark's taxonomy, while Baker's translation strategies explain the translation strategies applied to them. The equivalence of the translated text is evaluated for [Bell's \(1991\)](#) framework.

Data of this research were collected and documented manually through the following steps: (1) reading the ST and TT carefully and comprehensively to understand the context and the cultural terms in the novel; (2) identifying the cultural elements in the ST and TT using note-taking; (3) identifying the data by marking the words, phrases, and clauses containing cultural terms by codification; (4) using table sheet to categorize the data according to the categories of Newmark's cultural terms; (5) analyzing the translation strategies according to Baker to reveal the translation patterns in which strategies are used; (6) grouping and analyzing the equivalence based proposed by [Bell \(1991\)](#)

After the data were collected, the analysis was conducted through the following stages: (1) comparing the ST and TT to find out the similarities and differences in the translation of English cultural terms into Indonesian; (2) describing the form of translation of cultural terms based on [Baker \(2018\)](#) translation strategies to reveal the equivalence and cohesion; (3) classifying the types of equivalence that appear according to Bell ; (4) drawing conclusions based on the results of the analysis that has been carried out in this research. With this identification, this research is expected to reveal the translation patterns used in translating cultural terms and their equivalents in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

## Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings of this research by examining the cultural terms identified in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and their Indonesian translation. The discussion begins by outlining the cultural categories from the data, followed by an analysis of the translation strategies applied to those terms. Finally, the patterns of equivalence are identified to determine how cultural meaning is negotiated between the source and target texts. Hence, these components illustrate the translator's approach to the untranslatability of cultural terms and their equivalence.

### Cultural Terms' Categories

The data in the table below shows the percentage of cultural terms found in the Indonesian translation of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The results show that four out of five categories of cultural terms were found. Based on Table 1, the most frequently used cultural terms belong to the category of ecology culture, specifically fauna, as well as to material culture in the categories of place and transportation, followed by flora in ecological culture. In addition, material culture includes

equipment, clothing, books, and jewelry. Furthermore, cultural terms in social culture include categories such as games, dances, and name-calling. Cultural terms in the types of organization, customs, and religion include social concepts as well as terms related to religion.

Table 1. Cultural terms categories

Cultural Terms	Category	f (%)
Ecology	Flora <i>Bulrushes, Vines, Willows, P'simmons, Jimpson Weeds, Strawberries</i>	9 (12%)
	Fauna <i>Catfish, Ducks, Mud-turkles, Hogshead, Blue Jay, Outlandish Parrot, Moccasins, Rattlesnakes</i>	10 (13.3%)
Material Culture	Places <i>Shed, Garden Fence, Tanyard, Hut, Chimbly, Shanty, Harem, Log, Bars Field</i>	18 (24%)
	Transportation <i>Skiff, Canoe, Raft, Ferry, Rail</i>	10 (13.3%)
	Tools <i>Bottom chair, Quicksilver, Spyglass, Pin, Knick-Knacks, Breau, Grindstone</i>	7 (9.3%)
	Clothes <i>Straw Hat, Sun-bonnet, Boot, Calico Suit</i>	4 (5.3%)
	Books <i>Pilgrim's Progress, Friendship Offering</i>	2 (2.67%)
	Jewellery <i>Locket</i>	1 (1.3%)
Social Culture	Game <i>Seven-up</i>	1 (1.3%)
	Dance <i>Highland Fling</i>	1 (1.3%)
	Name-Calling <i>Big-bug, Dandy, Dukes, Capet, Majesty, Pup</i>	6 (8%)
Social Organization, Political, & Administrative	Religious Terms <i>Brazen Serpent, Obsequies</i>	4 (5.3%)
	Social Concept <i>Abolitionist, Orgies</i>	2 (2.67%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Patterns of Translation Strategies

This research examines the strategies translators use to overcome mistranslation of cultural terms when there is no equivalent in the source text (ST) in the translation of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* into Indonesian.

Table 2. Translation strategies and equivalence

Translation Strategies	Frequency	Percentage	Equivalence
Translation by Cultural Substitution	57	76%	Partial Equivalence
Translation by Paraphrase using an Unrelated Word	12	16%	Non-Equivalence
Translation using a loan word or a loan word plus an explanation	6	8%	Fully Equivalence
<b>TOTAL</b>	75	100%	

Based on [Table 2](#), this research found patterns of translation strategies used to achieve equivalence in translating cultural terms in the Indonesian translation of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The findings demonstrate that translation by substitution is the most frequently used procedure. This procedure typically results in partial equivalence, as the translator adapts cultural references in the TT. Moreover, the second most frequent procedure is translation by paraphrase using an unrelated word, which leads to non-equivalence, as the cultural reference in the ST is replaced by a different concept in the TT. On the other hand, loan words or loan words with explanation appear less frequently, but they can achieve full equivalence, especially for proper names or specific cultural items that cannot be substituted. These patterns suggest that the translator continually negotiates between cultural specificity and readability for the target audience.

### Equivalence Criteria in the Translation of Cultural Terms

In this research, the equivalence of cultural terms is analyzed based on the extent to which the cultural terms in the source text (ST) can be maintained, adapted, or altered in the TT. By employing Bell's (1991) categories, the analysis below illustrates how cultural meaning is negotiated at the semantic level.

#### 1. Partial Equivalent

Partial equivalence occurs when the TT retains the general meaning of the ST but with shifts in nuance or connotation. This strategy allows the translator to preserve the referential meaning, while modifying the pragmatic or cultural implications to ensure the acceptability in the TT.

1. ST: "scratchy clothes-very. You think you're a good deal of a **big-bug**, don't you?"

TT: "*pakaianmu sangat rapi seperti hasil setrikaan. Apa kau berlagak seperti **tuam muda** disini?"*

2. ST: "Ain't you sweet-scented **dandy**, though? A bed, and bedclothes, and a look'n-glass, and a piece of carpet on the floor, and your father got to sleep with the hogs in the tanyard"

TT: "*Hidupmu sepertinya **enak** sekali ya? Kau tidur di atas kasur dengan spreji, jendela dari kaca, dan karpet lantai, sedangkan ayahmu tidur berdesakan dengan babi di pabrik kulit"*

3. ST: ...but **jimson weeds**, and sunflowers, and ashpiles, and old curled-up boots and shoes

TT: ... *tidak ada apapun di dalam kebun itu kecuali **rumput liar** dan bunga matahari*

In excerpt (1), the term "**big-bug**" is a popular 19th-century expression referring to a person of aristocratic or influential wealth. However, the term is often used in a sarcastic or condescending tone, especially to imply that someone feels higher in status than others. In TT, **big-bug** is translated into ***tuan muda*** (young master), which in feudal Indonesian culture refers to a son of a prominent or noble family. Referentially, **big-bug** and ***tuan muda*** are similar in terms of social status, but there are differences in terms of pragmatics. *Tuan muda* is more neutral and can even contain elements of respect, while **big-bug** has a pejorative connotation. In addition, seen in excerpt (2) is the term **dandy**, which means a man who pays excessive attention to appearance and aesthetics (see [www.dictionary.cambridge.org](http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org)). **Dandy** refers to a person who is well-groomed and pays attention to manners in his life during the 19th century. However, the translator renders it as *enak sekali* (living well) in TT because there is no equivalent there. However, *enak sekali* can still convey the meaning of dandy and the story's context, because living well describes the life of someone dubbed a dandy, so the meanings are almost equivalent. This shift shows that the translator prioritizes meaning equivalence in the context of social status but reduces the satirical and cultural elements of the original term.

Furthermore, in excerpt (3), the term "**jimson weeds**" refers to a type of poisonous, useless wild plant. In the TT, the translator replaces it with ***rumpuk liar*** (weeds), a term that describes untidiness but does not fully capture the negative aspects of **jimson weeds**. This change shows an attempt to find a close equivalent in the referential element. From these two cases, it can be concluded that the translator chooses the strategy of finding near equivalents to maintain the primary meaning in the ST, but there is a shift in the pragmatic aspect. This shows that, in translating cultural terms, translators need to balance meaning equivalence with acceptability in the target text.

4. ST: But towards daylight we got it all settled satisfactorily, and concluded to drop crab apples and **p'simmons**

TT: *Paginya kamu memutuskan untuk melepaskan apel dan **tomat***

In excerpt (4), the term **p'simmons** (persimmon) in the TT refers to persimmons, which are round with thin skin. However, the translator replaces it with **tomat** (tomato) in the TT. This substitution is most likely chosen because of the similarity in shape and texture between persimmons and tomatoes, and because tomatoes are more familiar to readers in the target culture. Although persimmon and tomato are two different fruits in meaning, they have similarities in visual and textural aspects, so this selection can still be categorized as a partial equivalent. It can be said that, although the meaning shifts, the main elements can still be recognized by readers.

## 2. Full Equivalent

This category covers cultural terms that are translated without any change in form, style, or meaning in TT. Full equivalence appears in translation when the translator uses a loanword or adds explanations. These cases are typically found in proper names whose cultural identities must be preserved in the context of the novel.

1. ST: One was **Pilgrim's Progress**, about a man that left his family – it didn't say why  
TT: *Aku melihat buku **Pilgrim's Progress**, bercerita tentang seorang pria yang meninggalkan keluarganya tanpa alasan yang jelas*

2. ST: Another was **Friendship's Offering**, full of beautiful stuff and poetry  
 TT: *...lainnya Adalah Friendship's Offering, yang dipenuhi kalimat-kalimat indah serta puisi.*
  3. ST: Then he waves along again, perfectly ca'm and goes to dropping in his funeral **orgies**.  
 TT: *Begitulah, ia terus saja mengoceh dan berceletoh. Setiap kesempatan ia selalu mengatakan pemakaman **orgies** sampai sang Pangeran tak tahan lagi.*
- \*) Orgies berarti upacara keagamaan rahasia atau pesta pora
4. ST: "I'll answer by doing the **Highland** fling or the sailor's hornpipe"  
 TT: *"Itu seperti aku akan melakukan lompatan **Highland** atau meniup terompet pelaut"*

In the excerpts above, the translator tends to maintain the ST cultural terms in TT as an exclusive culture. In excerpt (1), **Pilgrim's Progress** is the title of a spiritual book by John Bunyan, published in 1678, that tells the story of a traveller named Christian on a spiritual journey. In excerpt (2), **Friendship's Offering** is a book containing poems, short stories, essays, and illustrations for young women in the 19th century. Another cultural term is also found in the excerpt (3). **Orgies** refer to 'wild' parties with indecent behaviour. Meanwhile, **Highland** in data (4) means the oldest traditional dance originating from Scotland that was used by kings at that time to select the best men for their retinue and warriors. The translator's decision to maintain the cultural terms by using the translation strategy is because the book titles, dances, and other terms are proper names, which are names used to identify things and are different from common names, so that there is no equivalent in Tsa. This shows that the translation process can serve as a means of introducing the cultures of the TL to readers in the TL. Furthermore, the use of a footnote, as seen in the data (2), explained the culture itself, providing readers with a portrayal as well. Cultural differences between ST and TT have a considerable bearing on reading reaction, so that additional information is needed to prevent misinterpretation of cultural terms.

### 3. Non-Equivalent

Non-equivalence results when the translator replaces the cultural items in the ST with a different concept in the TT. In this research, it is found that the 'not equivalent' pattern uses translation by paraphrasing using unrelated words. In some cases, the translator not only changes cultural elements but also replaces the existing concept, object, or meaning in ST with something different in TT, resulting in a significant difference in meaning between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT).

1. ST: After supper, she got out her book and learned me about "Moses and the **Bulrushes**"  
 TT: *Setelah makan malam, Nyonya Douglas membacakan cerita tentang "Musa dan Pengumpul Rumput Gajah"*
2. ST: "It's the **brazen serpent** in the wilderness"  
 TT: *"Ayo, duduklah di **bangku pengakuan dosa**"*

In excerpt (1), **bulrushes** refer to a type of plant that grows around the Nile River, which in the context of the story of Moses in the Bible, is used as a shelter for baby Moses to avoid Pharaoh's order to kill the baby. However, the translator translates **bulrushes** as **rumput gajah** (elephant grass), a type of large grass found in Indonesia, but with no direct connection to the story of Moses. This shift in

meaning causes the loss of referential aspects in the target text (TT). Hence, this translation can be categorized as non-equivalent or incompatible due to differences in cultural and historical references. On the other hand, in excerpt (2), **brazen serpent** refers to the biblical story of the bronze serpent made by Moses as a symbol of healing for people affected by curses. In the target text, this phrase is translated as **bangku pengakuan dosa** (confessional bench), a concept in the Catholic Christian tradition relating to the forgiveness of sins through confession to a priest. These two concepts have very different meanings and historical backgrounds, and have no clear referential relationship. This change was most likely made to align with readers' understanding in the target culture, but it still results in a significant difference in meaning. Therefore, this translation can also be categorized as non-equivalent, as the original meaning in the source text is not preserved in the target text.

3. ST: "...but mostly they hang around the **harem**"

TT: "...namun, kebanyakan mereka menghabiskan waktu di **rumah bordil**"

4. ST: The king got out and old ratty deck of cards, after breakfast, and him and the duke played **seven-up** a while, five cents a game.

TT: *Dia dan di Pangeran bermain selama **tujuh kali**, taruhannya lima sen setiap permainan.*

Moreover, in excerpt (3), the term **harem** refers to the part of the palace where the king's wives, concubines, and other female relatives of the king lived. **Harem** refers to a special place for women from noble families, located close to men other than the king. In TT 2, **harem** is translated as a **rumah bordil** (brothel), which is the definition of a place where commercial prostitution is practiced. This difference in meaning reflects a mismatch, where the harem has shifted connotative meaning from a place where noble wives live to a place of commercial sex. In the excerpt (4), seven-up is a card game for two or more players in which each player has a value of seven (see [www.collinsdictionary.com](http://www.collinsdictionary.com)). In contrast, the context of the game **seven-up** is interpreted as **tujuh kali** (playing seven times) in TT, so the meaning of the game shifts to the number of times it is played. Based on the example above, it can be concluded that the translator makes different decisions when interpreting cultural terms from ST to TT, resulting in a shift in cultural perception.

Compared with the studies reviewed in the background, this research's findings reveal a distinct pattern of equivalence in the translation of cultural terms. While Anis (2022) examines the textual equivalence through the construction of theme and rheme, and Murthy and Islahiyah (2024), Maesaroh (2020), and Susanto (2018) relate equivalence to the translator's ideological stance, this study reveals that cultural substitution plays a dominant role, resulting in a high proportion of partial equivalence. In contrast with Hanim (2022) and Permatasari (2015), who found that equivalence can be achieved through stylistic consistency in the TT. In the field of cultural terms translation, researchers such as Zagood et al. (2023) and Labeed and Bekouche (2022) highlight lexical and syntactic mechanisms as key for maintaining cultural meaning; however, the current analysis shows that the translator of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* frequently adapts cultural references rather than preserving them.

Furthermore, Azka and Sutrisno (2025) examine the translation of cultural terms through lexical transformation strategies, including generalization, specification, modulation, and compensation, which focus primarily on the techniques applied rather than on the resulting levels of equivalence. In addition, although Ma'shumah and Sajarwa (2022), Ahmed and Mansour (2021), and Zitouni (2022)

discuss the use of translation strategies to achieve equivalence, this study shows that such strategies may still lead to partial or even non-equivalence, depending on the cultural accessibility of the TT. Finally, unlike research focusing on ideological equivalence (Maesaroh, [2020](#); Susanto, [2018](#)), which views equivalence as a reflection of ideology, the present research shows that equivalence also emerges through cultural negotiation, shaped by the translator's effort to mediate between the ST's cultural specificity and the TT's cultural expectations. This constitutes the main contribution of this research, offering new insight into how equivalence in cultural terms is dynamically constructed through cultural mediation

## Conclusion

Based on the analysis, equivalence in translation refers to the extent to which the meaning in the ST can be maintained in the TT through the language meaning and translation strategies applied. In this research, the translation of cultural terms in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* into Indonesian employs partial equivalence through the procedure of translation by cultural substitution. This pattern shows that the translator negotiates meaning by adapting cultural references to the socio-cultural context of the TT, emphasizing accessibility over strict preservation of ST nuances. Non-equivalence occurs when paraphrasing replaces the cultural concept entirely, while full equivalence appears in cases involving loan words or loan words with explanations, particularly for proper names and culturally fixed items.

This research shows that equivalence is not static but negotiated to overcome cultural untranslatability. The problem of equivalence in the translation process can be addressed, given that untranslatability is very broad due to language differences, particularly differences in cultural backgrounds, and patronage (editors and publishers). This research suggests that cultural untranslatability can be addressed through negotiation rather than direct correspondence. Future research may expand this discussion by exploring how cultural negotiation operates across different genres, media, and readership contexts.

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