



Negotiating Indonesian Cultural Identity in Arabic Subtitle Translation of Dear David

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ENGLISH ABSTRACT

Cultural translation in film is a process of negotiation aimed at balancing the accuracy of the source culture with acceptability in the target culture. This study examines how Indonesian cultural identity is negotiated in the subtitle translation of the film *Dear David* from Indonesian into Arabic. The research employs a qualitative descriptive method with a comparative and interpretative approach. The analyzed data consist of linguistic units, such as words and phrases, that convey Indonesian cultural meanings and their equivalents in the Arabic subtitles. The data source is the film "*Dear David*," directed by Lucky Kuswandi, along with its Arabic subtitle version, available on the Netflix platform. Data collection was conducted through observation, close reading, and systematic note-taking. The analysis process includes data categorization, translation comparison, meaning interpretation, and drawing conclusions regarding the forms of cultural identity negotiation. The findings indicate that the negotiation process involves various aspects, such as material culture, social norms, forms of address, and religious terminology. Differences between linguistic structures and cultural values in Indonesian and Arabic serve as dominant factors influencing translation decisions. The analysis shows that the translator seeks to balance the preservation of the source culture with readability for Arabic-speaking audiences. This study makes a significant contribution to the field of cultural translation and intercultural communication. The implication is that translators must possess a deep understanding of social and cultural contexts and apply strategies such as cultural adaptation, glossing, or annotation to preserve the essence of the message in cross-linguistic transfers.

Keywords: Cultural Translation, Film Subtitling, Cultural Identity Negotiation, Indonesian–Arabic Translation, Intercultural Communication

INDONESIAN ABSTRACT

Penerjemahan budaya dalam film merupakan proses negosiasi yang bertujuan menjaga keseimbangan antara keakuratan budaya sumber dan keterterimaan dalam budaya target. Studi ini menelaah bagaimana identitas budaya Indonesia dinegosiasikan dalam alih bahasa subtitle film Dear David dari bahasa Indonesia ke bahasa Arab. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan komparatif dan interpretatif. Data yang dianalisis berupa unit lingual berupa kata dan frasa yang mengandung muatan budaya Indonesia serta padanannya dalam subtitle bahasa Arab. Sumber data diambil dari film Dear David garapan sutradara Lucky Kuswandi dan terjemahan Arabnya yang tersedia di platform Netflix. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, pembacaan mendalam, dan pencatatan sistematis. Proses analisis meliputi pengelompokan data, perbandingan terjemahan, interpretasi makna, serta penarikan simpulan mengenai bentuk negosiasi identitas budaya. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa proses negosiasi melibatkan berbagai aspek, seperti budaya material, budaya sosial, bentuk sapaan, serta istilah religius. Perbedaan antara sistem bahasa dan nilai budaya dalam bahasa Indonesia dan bahasa Arab menjadi faktor dominan yang memengaruhi keputusan penerjemahan. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa penerjemah berusaha menjaga keseimbangan antara pelestarian budaya asal dan keterbacaan bagi penonton Arab. Kajian ini memberikan sumbangan penting dalam ranah penerjemahan budaya dan interaksi lintas budaya. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa penerjemah perlu memiliki pemahaman yang mendalam terhadap konteks sosial dan budaya serta menerapkan strategi seperti adaptasi budaya, glosari, atau anotasi untuk menjaga esensi pesan dalam alih bahasa lintas bahasa.

Kata Kunci: *Penerjemahan Budaya, Subtitel Film, Negosiasi Identitas Budaya, Penerjemahan Indonesia-Arab, Komunikasi Antarbudaya*

Introduction

Cultural identity in translation is a central issue in cross-cultural studies because it involves the representation of cultural meaning from the source language into the target language. This complexity arises from the diversity of approaches in translating cultural elements, which do not always have direct equivalents. Sajarwa et al. (2023) found that such negotiation can be partial or complete, influenced by differences in language systems and cultural perspectives. In a technological context, Anik et al. (2025) developed a culturally aware multi-agent AI framework for translation, ensuring both linguistic accuracy and cultural relevance. On the other hand, Yuan & Hou (2024) examined the linguistic landscape of Shantou, China, and found that translation in a postcolonial multilingual context requires complex negotiations of meaning and identity. Thus, translating cultural identity requires a deep understanding of both cultures

involved and careful negotiation to bridge these differences, whether through manual human translation or with the aid of technology.

Eco (2013) explains that translation is a process of negotiation involving many parties and is not merely the transfer of meaning from one language to another. The original text has its own linguistic and cultural rights that must be respected, including the author's intention to preserve certain meanings, styles, and messages. The source text is also bound to the source culture, which shapes how concepts and values are presented. On the other hand, the translated text must adapt to the target culture, such as its linguistic norms, social values, literacy levels, and audience expectations. The translator must ensure that the text remains relevant and acceptable without losing the essence of the source. The publishing industry also influences translation decisions through its publication goals. In academic contexts, translation tends to be more literal and technical, while translations for general readers are more flexible and communicative. Thus, translation becomes a compromise among the source text, source culture, author, translator, target culture, readers, and publisher.

Negotiating cultural identity in translation is a complex process, as it involves adapting meaning across cultures, which are often non-equivalent. Ma'shumah et al. (2021) emphasize that the translator functions as a cultural mediator, not only translating language but also navigating cultural differences so that the meaning of the source text can be understood contextually by readers in the target culture. In translation, there is often a need to balance between preserving the original meaning and adapting it to the social and cultural norms of the target audience. Arrasyid (2023) shows that in translating the novel *Gadis Kretek*, significant challenges arise because Indonesian cultural elements, such as views on gender freedom, may conflict with Arab socio-cultural norms. Research by Anik et al. (2025) further reveals that translators often need to adapt or even omit certain parts of the text to ensure acceptability within the target culture. Venuti (1995) also argues that translators often find themselves in a difficult position between domestication, adapting the text for target audience acceptance, and foreignization, which seeks to preserve the uniqueness of the source culture. Therefore, translation is not merely a linguistic transfer but a complex process of cultural negotiation.

Research on the translation of cultural identity can be categorized into four main aspects: resistance and negotiation, translation strategies, translation techniques, and translation procedures. Studies of the negotiation of cultural identity have been addressed in the works of Rahmadhani (2024), Mukminin et al. (2025), Sajarwa et al. (2023), Arrasyid (2023), Mukminin et al. (2025), Mukminin & Sajarwa (2025) and Fatin & Cholsy (2022). In terms of translation strategies, research has been conducted by Syamsinar et al. (2023), Kardiansyah & Salam (2020), Supardi & Sayogie (2019), Mukminin & Sajarwa (2025) and Ma'shumah et al. (2021). Translation techniques have also been discussed in the studies of Anis et al. (2021), Adawiyah et al. (2023), Sari & Gusthini (2023), and Fatin & Cholsy (2022). Meanwhile, in terms of translation procedures, relevant studies include Kuleli (2019), Sukaesih et al. (2025), and Dania et al. (2023).

Findings from previous studies show that most research has focused on various aspects of translating cultural identity. However, studies that specifically examine how cultural identity is processed through resistance and negotiation remain limited. To date, there has been no comprehensive investigation into the relationship between resistance and negotiation from a broader cultural perspective, especially within the context of cultural transfer from Indonesia to the Arab world. Although research on translation strategies, techniques, and procedures has enhanced our understanding of how cultural elements are managed, the negotiation of cultural identity, particularly in audiovisual translation, remains underexplored. Existing works on resistance and negotiation also rarely address Indonesian–Arab cultural transfer. This gap highlights the need for research that examines how translators navigate sensitive cultural meanings in cross-cultural media contexts.

This study aims to analyze how cultural identity negotiation is conducted in the Arabic translation of the film *Dear David's* subtitles. The main focus of this research is to identify and explore the translation negotiation patterns used to bridge cultural differences between Indonesian and Arab cultures, as well as to examine the extent to which Indonesian cultural identity undergoes adaptation in the translation process. In this context, it is crucial to understand the elements of Indonesian culture that may not be directly accepted by Arab audiences, such as references to social values, norms, and expressions of individual freedom portrayed in the film. This study will also assess the

impact of such cultural negotiations on Arab audiences' understanding of the film's message and how translation plays a role in fostering more inclusive and culturally sensitive comprehension for the target audience. Through an in-depth analysis of how translators adapt cultural elements, this study is expected to offer new insights into the field of audiovisual translation. Furthermore, the findings can serve as a guideline for translators in developing effective strategies for negotiating cultural identity in film and other audiovisual media, especially in managing sensitive and culturally relevant identity negotiations for the target audience.

Methods

The data in this study consist of cultural identity elements realized through linguistic units, both words and phrases. The data source used is the subtitle of the film (Kuswandi, 2023), directed by Lucky Kuswandi and produced by Netflix Indonesia, in both Indonesian and Arabic. *Dear David* was selected as the subject of study because it is an Indonesian youth film that has gained widespread attention on international platforms like Netflix and has become a subject of discussion in various global cultural forums. Its popularity suggests that the film has strong potential in representing Indonesian youth identity in urban and digital contexts. It contains rich cultural elements that reflect social dynamics, moral values, as well as the slang and unique expressions of Indonesia's younger generation (Fauziah, 2023). The film was also chosen due to the complexity of its cultural identity elements, expressed through dialogue, social interaction, and the imagination of its main character. As a contemporary cultural product rooted in local reality yet presented in a global format, the film presents distinct challenges in translation, particularly in negotiating sensitive cultural values and idiomatic expressions into Arabic while remaining accurate and communicative.

The research method employed is descriptive qualitative. According to (Creswell, John W, 2017), the descriptive qualitative approach is used to explore and understand the meaning embedded in texts through the analysis of non-numeric data. In this study, this method is applied to identify the representation of cultural identity in the Indonesian subtitles as the source text (ST) and the Arabic subtitles as the target text (TT) of the film *Dear David*. Cultural identity is analyzed through linguistic units such as dialogues, idiomatic expressions, and speech styles typical of Indonesian youth, which

reflect social values, cultural norms, and youth perspectives. Additionally, a comparative method is used to examine the equivalence and shifts in cultural meaning between the ST and the TT. As Koster (2012) notes, the comparative method enables systematic analysis of both linguistic and cultural transformation in translation. This method, therefore, helps reveal how cultural identity negotiation occurs in the subtitle translation process and to what extent Indonesian cultural elements are retained or adapted in the Arab cultural context.

The data collection process in this study follows several structured stages. First, the researcher watched the full *Dear David* film in both subtitle versions, Indonesian (ST) and Arabic (TT), to understand the storyline as well as the social and cultural context conveyed through the dialogues. Second, instances of cultural identity in the dialogues, such as youth-specific expressions, local cultural references, and social values, were identified in both subtitle versions. Third, the identified elements were documented as linguistic units (words or phrases) and compiled into a comparative table of the ST and TT, which also included the translation patterns and forms of negotiation. Fourth, the Arabic text was transliterated into Latin script to facilitate analysis and ensure semantic equivalence with the original. Fifth, each data point was numbered to ease classification based on cultural categories and maintain consistency and traceability during the analytical process.

The data analysis process in this study was conducted gradually and systematically. The first step was to categorize the data based on Newmark's (1998) classification of cultural identity, which includes: Ecology, Material Culture, Social Culture, Organizations, and Gestures and Habits, as observed in the Indonesian subtitles (ST) and their Arabic translations (TT). The goal of this classification was to reveal the diversity of cultural elements embedded in the film's dialogue. Next, a comparative analysis between the ST and TT was conducted to observe similarities and differences in how translators conveyed these cultural elements. The analysis examined the strategies used to determine whether the translator retained, adapted, or altered the cultural references to fit the Arab cultural context. The next stage was data interpretation, aiming to identify the factors influencing these differences, such as linguistic structure, social context, or specific cultural sensitivities. Finally, the study concludes the analysis to illustrate how cultural negotiation occurs in the subtitle translation of *Dear David*, as

well as its implications for the representation of Indonesian culture to Arabic-speaking audiences.

Result

This study demonstrates that the subtitle translation of the film *Dear David* into Arabic involves various strategies of cultural identity negotiation, depending on the category of cultural elements being translated. Based on the data in the table, it is evident that the translator does not merely transfer language but also adapts meaning to align with the norms and value systems of Arab culture.

Table 1. Negotiation Patterns in the Translation of Social Culture

No.	ST	TT
1.	Kamu begadang melulu, Dik? (DD, 1:54:23)	هل سهرت حتى وقت متأخر؟ <i>Hal sahartā ḥattā waqtin muta'akhhir?</i> (DD, 1:54:23)
2.	Jadi beruntusan (DD, 1:54:21)	بدأت الحبوب تظهر في وجهك <i>Bada'at al-ḥubūb taẓharu fī wajhika</i> (DD, 1:54:21)
3.	Anak beasiswa memang suka cari muka (DD, 1:50:25)	طالبات المنح الدراسية متملقات <i>Ṭālibātu al-minaḥi al-dirāsiyyah mutamalliḡāt</i> (DD, 1:50:25)
4.	Jadi, David celananya becek kenapa? Dia mengompol ? (DD, 1:30:29)	لماذا بلل "ديفيد" سرواله؟ هل تبول؟ <i>Limādhā ballala "Dīfid" sirwālahu? Hal tabawwala?</i> (DD, 1:30:29)
5.	Coba tanya si Cece , tuh, dia pakai sabun muka apa (DD, 1:54:11)	اسألني أختك عن غسول الوجه الذي تستخدمه <i>Is'ali ukhtuki 'an ghusūl al-wajh alladhī tastakhdimu</i> (DD, 1:54:11)
6.	Mau berangkat, non ? (DD, 1:52:50)	أذهابه إلى المدرسة يا أنيسه؟ <i>'Azāhibah ilā al-madrasah yā ānisah?</i> (DD, 1:52:50)
7.	Ya, Coach (DD, 1:31:44)	حاضر أيها المدرب <i>Ḥāḍir ayyuha al-mudarrib</i> (DD, 1:31:44)
8.	Santai, bro . Gue enggak posesif (DD, 1:46:58)	اهدأ يا أخي، لست متملكا <i>Iḥdā'yā akhī, lastu mutamallikan</i> (DD, 1:46:58)
9.	Si dede , tuh, mukanya beruntusan begadang melulu (DD, 1:41:56)	بدأت الحبوب تظهر في وجه أختك من السهر <i>Bada'at al-ḥubūb taẓhar fī wajh ukhtika min al-sahar</i> (DD, 1:41:56)
10.	Cerita pornografi Dear David	انتشرت قصص "عزيري (ديفيد)" الإباحية بشدة على الإنترنت

	yang sedang viral menghebohkan netizen (DD, 1:01:12)	<i>Intasharat qīṣaṣ "‘Azīzī (Dīfīr)" al-ibāḥīyah bishiddah ‘alā al-Internet</i> (DD, 1:01:12)
11.	Ini, Bu (DD, 1:01:05)	تفضلي يا سيدة <i>Tafaddalī yā sayyidah</i> (DD, 1:01:05)
12.	Lu, ‘kan, Ketua OSIS . Lu bisa stop ini semua, Ras (DD, 59:32)	أنت رئيسة هيئة الطلاب. يمكنك وضع حد لهذا <i>Anti ra’īsah hay’at al-ṭullāb. Yumkinuki waḍ’ ḥadd li-hādhā</i> (DD, 59:32)

In Table 1, the term *begadang* in Indonesian culture refers to staying up late at night and is translated into *سهرت (saharta)* (1), a common expression for staying up late in Arab culture. Meanwhile, *beruntusan*, which directly refers to a skin condition or minor acne in Indonesian, is rendered as *الحبوب (al-ḥubūb)* (2), conveying a more formal and structured impression, possibly reflecting Arab cultural values that emphasize formality in communication. The expression *cari muka*, which carries a negative connotation of seeking attention or recognition insincerely, is translated into *متملقات (mutamalliqāt)* (3), a sharper and more critical term in Arabic that emphasizes manipulation or hypocrisy. The term *mengompol*, which has a light teasing tone in Indonesian, becomes *تبول (tabawwala)* (4), a literal and more neutral word in Arabic, showing a shift from expressive to denotative meaning. The term of address *Cece*, used to refer to an older sister, is translated into *أختك (ukhtuki)* (5), which aligns with the concept of a sister in Arabic. The term *Non*, a polite form of address for a young woman with colonial connotations, once used for noble or Dutch girls, is translated into *آنسة (ānisah)* (6), which carries a culturally equivalent meaning in Arabic. *Coach*, a borrowed English term commonly used in Indonesian sports contexts to reflect a hierarchical relationship between coach and trainee, is translated into *المدرّب (al-mudarrib)* (7), preserving the social hierarchy in Arab culture. The informal term *bro*, derived from "brother" and used among young Indonesian males to signal camaraderie, is translated as *أخي (akhī)* (8), meaning "my brother," emphasizing kinship. *Dede*, an affectionate term for a younger sister, becomes *أختك (ukhtika)* (9), which emphasizes familial relation but removes the infantilizing tone. The modern term *netizen*, referring to active social media users, is translated implicitly as *الإنترنت (al-Internet)* (10), without a direct address form, indicating meaning adaptation within the Arab cultural context. *Bu*, a respectful term for

adult women, is translated into سيدة (*sayyidah*) (11), maintaining equivalent social status in Arab culture. Finally, *Ketua OSIS* (student council president), a hierarchical position in school structure, is translated as رئيسة هيئة الطلاب (*ra'isah hay'at al-ṭullāb*) (12), without a direct form of address, highlighting the emphasis on status and function within Arab cultural norms.

Table 2. Negotiation Patterns in the Translation of Material Culture

No.	ST	TT
13.	Mama bikin bubur ya (DD, 1:34:47)	سأعدُّ لك العصيدة <i>Sa'u'idu laka al-'aṣīdah</i> (DD, 1:34:47)
14.	Ini ambil sekop nya jangan lupa sama kabel-kabel itu (DD, 1:35:27)	أحضري المجرفة والأسلاك <i>Aḥḍirī al-majrafah wal-aslāk</i> (DD, 1:35:27)
15.	Ma, tambahkan sosis , Ma (DD, 1:54:34)	أمي، هلاًّ تضيفين بعض النقانق من فضلك <i>Ummī, hal-lā tuḍīfin ba'ḍ an-naqānaq min faḍlik</i> (DD, 1:54:34)
16.	Coba tanya si Cece, tuh, dia pakai sabun cuci muka apa (DD, 1:54:14)	اسألني أختك عن غسل الوجه الذي تستخدمه <i>Is'alī ukhtaki 'an ghusūl al-wajh alladhī tastakhdimuhu</i> (DD, 1:54:11)
17.	Ddia pernah "itu" sama Arya di gedung OR? (DD, 1:48:41)	هل مارسسته مع "أريّا" في الصالة الرياضية؟ <i>Hal mārastahu ma'a "Aryā" fī aṣ-ṣālah ar-riyāḍiyyah?</i> (DD, 1:48:41)
18.	La, mau teh , enggak? (DD, 1:05:41)	هل تريدن الشاي يا "لا"؟ <i>Hal turīdīn ash-shāy yā "Lā"?</i> (DD, 1:05:41)
19.	Perlahan ia mengelus terong milik David yang tumbuh membesar (DD, 1:31:30)	تداعب قضيب (ديفيد) ببطء فيكبر (DD, 1:31:30) <i>Tudā'ibu qaḍīb (Dāyfid) bibuṭ'in fa-yakburu</i>
20.	Ikuti petunjuk, gunakan senter untuk menuju ke pos berikutnya (DD, 48:59)	استخدموا المصابيح لتتبع اللافتات إلى النقطة التالية (DD, 48:59) <i>stakhdimū al-maṣābih li-tatabba' al-lāfitāt ilā an-nuqṭah at-tāliyah</i>
21.	Dan jangan lupa minta token ke penjaga pos (DD, 48:55)	ولا تنسوا أن تطلبوا من حارس النقطة عملة (DD, 48:55) <i>Wa-lā tansaw an taṭlubū min ḥāris an-nuqṭah 'umlah</i> (DD, 48:55)
22.	Yuk, gue mau lihat putri duyung (DD, 1:02:52)	أريد رؤية حوريات البحر <i>Urīdu ru'yat ḥūriyāt al-baḥr</i> (DD, 1:02:52)

23.	Di sebuah pondok di samping laut (DD, 44:53)	في كوخ بجوار البحر (DD, 44:53) <i>Fī kūkh bijiwār al-baḥr</i>
24.	Dia lagi menulis novel terbarunya... (DD, 44:45)	... كانت تكتب روايتها الجديدة (DD, 44:45) <i>Kānat taktubu riwāyatahā al-jadīdah</i>

In Table 2, the term *bubur*, which in Indonesian culture refers to a soft food typically associated with babies, the sick, or as comfort food, is translated into العصيدة (*al-‘aṣīdah*) (13). In Arabic, this refers to a traditional dish with a heavier consistency than typical porridge and is usually served on specific occasions (e.g., the Prophet’s Birthday in Yemen, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia). Meanwhile, the term *sekop*, referring to a tool used for digging or transporting soil, sand, or other materials, is translated as المجرفة (*al-majrafah*) (14), which carries an equivalent connotation in Arab culture. The word *sosis*, a cylindrical processed food commonly consumed in Indonesia, is rendered as النقانق (*an-naqāniq*) (15), a direct cultural equivalent in Arabic. The term *sabun cuci muka*, a modern skincare product, is translated as غسول الوجه (*ghusūl al-wajh*) (16), preserving its meaning within a modern context. *Gedung OR*, referring to a school’s athletic facility, becomes الصالة الرياضية (*aṣ-ṣālah ar-riyāḍiyyah*) (17), a formal and neutral equivalent in Arabic. The term *teh*, a popular beverage in Indonesia, is translated as الشاي (*ash-shāy*) (18), which is a common equivalent in Arab culture. The word *terong*, which in Indonesian slang is often used as a vulgar metaphor for male genitalia, is translated into the explicit Arabic term قضيب (*quḍīb*) (19), meaning “penis.” *Senter*, a handheld lighting tool commonly used outdoors in Indonesia, is rendered as المصابيح (*al-maṣābīḥ*) (20), which broadly refers to “lamps” in Arabic. This translation reflects a generalization of meaning, as *maṣābīḥ* encompasses various types of lamps and does not specifically denote a flashlight. The term *token*, a symbol used in games within Indonesian popular culture, is translated as عملة (*‘umlah*) (21), meaning “coin,” serving as a cultural substitution more familiar in Arab contexts. The mythological creature *putri duyung*, a half-human, half-fish figure in Indonesian folklore, is translated as حوريات البحر (*ḥūriyāt al-baḥr*) (22), which in Arab culture refers to sea maidens and carries a religious or mythical nuance. The term *pondok*, which in Indonesian culture may refer to a simple structure in nature or by the sea, is translated as كوخ (*kūkh*) (23), which similarly denotes a hut or small, simple house in Arab culture, demonstrating semantic

equivalence without cultural shift. Lastly, *novel*, referring to a long narrative fiction commonly found in Indonesian literary culture, is translated as رواية (*riwāyah*) (24), a direct and widely used equivalent in Arabic literary contexts, showing both semantic and cultural preservation.

Table 3. Negotiation Patterns in the Translation of Religious Terms

No.	TSu	Tsa
25.	Kami manusia yang kotor dan tidak layak untuk-Mu, Tuhan (DD, 1:42:21)	نحن خطّأون ولا نستحق حبك يا رب <i>Naḥnu khaṭṭā'ūn wa-lā nastaḥiqqu ḥubbaka yā Rabb</i> (DD, 1:42:21)
26.	Shalom , pak Dedi (DD, 1:41:51)	مرحباً يا سيد "ديدي" <i>Marḥaban yā Sayyid "Dīdī"</i> (DD, 1:41:51)
27.	Anak Tuhan , tuh harus sabar (DD, 1:41:13)	يجب أن يتحلّى أبناء الرب بالصبر <i>Yajibu an yataḥallā abnā' ar-Rabb biṣ-ṣabr</i> (DD, 1:41:13)
28.	Sama-sama Sesama jemaat harus saling membantu (DD, 1:40:46)	على الرحب والسعة. ترتاد الكنيسة نفسها، فلنعلن بعضنا بعضاً. <i>'Alā ar-raḥbi wa-s-si'ah. Tartādu al-kanīṣah nafsahā, falnu'in ba'ḍanā ba'ḍan</i> (DD, 1:40:46)
29.	Ah, Puji tuhan! (DD, 53:44)	الحمد للرب <i>Al-ḥamdu li-r-Rabb</i> (DD, 53:44)
30.	Di dalam nama Tuhan Yesus , kami berdoa. Haleluya , amin (DD, 49:10)	باسم "عيسى المسيح" نصلي. الحمد للرب آمين <i>Bi-smi 'Īsā al-Masiḥ nuṣallī. Al-ḥamdu li-r-Rabb, 'Āmīn</i> (DD, 49:10)

In Table 3, the term *Tuhan*, a general term used in Indonesian culture to refer to the Almighty, is translated as رب (*Rabb*) (25), which in Arab culture conveys a similar hierarchical relationship as found in Indonesian religious expression. Meanwhile, the term *Shalom*, used in Indonesian as a religious greeting containing blessings and wishes of peace, is rendered as مرحباً (*Marḥaban*) (26). In Arab culture, however, *Shalom* is strongly associated with Jewish (Israeli) usage and is rarely used in everyday Christian Arab contexts, thus replaced by a more culturally neutral greeting. The expression *Anak Tuhan*, referring to a believer (someone who has accepted God and lives according to His teachings), is translated as أبناء الرب (*abnā' ar-Rabb*) (27), which holds an equivalent connotation in Arab Christian contexts. The term *jemaat*, meaning a spiritually close

Christian congregation in Indonesian culture, is translated as ترتاد الكنيسة (*tartādu al-kanīṣah*) (28). However, in Arab culture, this phrase more commonly associates with Muslim communities, potentially altering the intended religious affiliation. The expression *Puji Tuhan*, commonly used in Indonesian Christianity as an expression of gratitude, is rendered as الحمد للرب (*al-ḥamdu li-r-Rabb*) (29), which maintains spiritual meaning and is an appropriate equivalent in Arab Christian usage. The prayer phrase *Di dalam nama Tuhan Yesus... Haleluya, amin* (In the name of Lord Jesus... Hallelujah, amen) is translated as عيسى المسيح... نصلي. الحمد للرب (*‘Īsā al-Masīḥ... nuṣallī. al-ḥamdu li-r-Rabb*) (30). This translation preserves the structure of the prayer while adjusting the name Yesus to *‘Īsā al-Masīḥ*, the commonly accepted form in Arab Christian tradition.

Discussion

In the Arabic subtitle translation of *Dear David*, cultural identity negotiation is clearly evident, especially in the realms of social culture, material culture, and religious expressions. In social culture, expressions such as *begadang*, *beruntusan*, *cari muka*, and *mengompol* are translated more directly and literally into Arabic as سَهَرْتُ (*saharta*), الحبوب (*al-ḥubūb*), متملقات (*mutamalliqāt*), and تبؤل (*tabawwala*). This shift reflects a difference in communication styles. Indonesian tends to use euphemisms and metaphors, while Arabic favors more explicit and straightforward expressions. Likewise, terms of address such as *Cece*, *Non*, *Bro*, and *Dede* are adapted into culturally appropriate Arabic forms like أختي (*ukhtukī*), آنسة (*ānisah*), أخي (*akhī*), and سيدة (*sayyidah*), which align with Arabic social hierarchies and politeness norms. The strategy employed here is pragmatic equivalence, ensuring that social roles and intimacy levels are preserved in the target culture.

Material culture is another key domain for negotiation, as it involves objects, food, and places that carry strong cultural meanings. The translator applies a mix of preservation and adaptation strategies. For instance, *bubur* is rendered as العصيدة (*al-‘aṣīdah*), a similar food item familiar in Arab culture, while *sabun cuci muka* becomes غسول الوجه (*ghusūl al-wajh*), a modern term maintained due to its widespread recognition. Some items, like *senter* and *pondok*, are translated literally because they have universal equivalents in Arab culture. This approach demonstrates the use of cultural substitution

and descriptive equivalence to adapt material elements to the target cultural context without significantly losing original meaning.

Religious negotiation is equally important. Terms and expressions such as *Tuhan*, *Puji Tuhan*, *anak Tuhan*, and *Dalam nama Tuhan Yesus* are translated into forms more aligned with Arab Christian practice and belief, such as رب (*Rabb*), الحمد للرب (*al-ḥamdu li-r-Rabb*), and باسم عيسى المسيح (*bi-smi 'Īsā al-Masīḥ*). Interestingly, the religious greeting Shalom is translated as مرحبا (*Marḥaban*), avoiding a term that might be associated with Jewish identity or political contexts in the Arab world. This reflects religious framing, adapting religious expressions so they remain acceptable within the target cultural and religious context without obscuring their spiritual meaning.

Overall, these translation choices illustrate the subtitler's role as a cultural mediator, employing various strategies such as pragmatic equivalence, cultural substitution, and narrative framing to make Indonesian cultural content accessible and acceptable to Arabic-speaking audiences. These decisions are shaped by differences in linguistic structure, socio-religious norms, and conceptual worldviews between the two cultures, highlighting the translator's role in constructing cultural identity through language.

Conclusion

This study shows that the negotiation of Indonesian cultural identity in the Arabic subtitle translation of *Dear David* occurs through several adaptation patterns influenced by linguistic and cultural differences. These patterns involve social culture, material culture, and religious terminology that require meaning adjustments to maintain clarity and acceptability. Each category reflects adaptation strategies commonly discussed in translation studies, including cultural substitution, modulation, and transposition, which help reduce cultural distance between the source and target audiences. The findings address the research gap identified in the introduction, namely, the limited studies on translating Indonesian youth identity into Arabic within audiovisual contexts. The adaptation of Indonesian address terms demonstrates negotiation with Arabic social structures. The adjustment of religious expressions also reflects efforts to manage cultural sensitivities and avoid potential resistance. Overall, the findings show that subtitling is not merely a linguistic transfer but a complex process of cultural

negotiation. Translators act as cultural mediators who must balance the uniqueness of the source culture with the norms and value systems of the target culture.

This study provides a theoretical contribution by demonstrating that subtitle translation functions as a strategic form of cultural mediation rather than a simple linguistic replacement. The findings support the view that translators serve as cultural agents who negotiate social values, symbolic meanings, and sensitive expressions to ensure that the target audience receives the message without losing essential cultural elements. Practically, the study offers insights into how translators adapt Indonesian youth expressions to fit the Arabic cultural context while maintaining semantic coherence. However, this study has limitations because it focuses on a single film and one language pair, making the findings not yet generalizable. The study also does not examine how Arab audiences interpret the negotiated cultural elements presented in the subtitles. Future research should expand the scope by analyzing various audiovisual media and including audience reception studies to understand how viewers perceive cultural negotiations. It is also important to examine how digital platforms and technological developments influence the direction and form of cultural adaptation in translation in an increasingly globalized environment.

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