

Cultural Hybridization in Translation: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Dimensions in “Cerita dari Jakarta”

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ABSTRACT

Cultural hybridization plays a significant role in shaping cross-cultural understanding. Nevertheless, research on how local ethnic identities are negotiated through translation remains limited, particularly regarding Betawi culture. This study examines the translation of Betawi cultural terms in *Cerita dari Jakarta* and its English version, *Tales from Djakarta*. Utilizing Homi K. Bhabha's Third Space concept and Peter Newmark's cultural categories, the study analyzes 257 pairs of cultural terms. Terms are categorized as hybridized when source cultural elements are retained, and as de-hybridized when adapted, generalized, or neutralized. The findings reveal that 63% of the terms are de-hybridized, indicating a tendency to prioritize communicative accessibility and narrative fluency for international readers. However, hybridization is predominant in material culture, especially in names and tangible cultural objects (92%), while idioms and ritual expressions are de-hybridized more frequently (5%). These results suggest that translation functions as a process of cultural negotiation, wherein local identities are selectively preserved or adapted for a global audience.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In literary translation, cultural terms pose unique challenges, particularly when they represent local knowledge and identity. In an age of cross-cultural communication across diverse societies (Safronova & Michshenko, 2023), translating culturally specific texts such as Promoedya Ananta Toer's *Cerita dari Jakarta* requires translators to make decisions that affect not only linguistic clarity but also cultural visibility. These decisions often result in either hybridization, which preserves elements of the source culture, or dehybridization, which adapts them to the norms of the target language (Tuncer, 2023).

The central issue regarding hybridization in the Betawi context lies in its subtle complexity, as Betawi identity results from historical blending. There is a high risk that its specific nuances will be flattened into a generic Indonesian identity during translation. This

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ethnic group, which inhabited Batavia, the colonial name for Jakarta, is fundamentally a diverse mixture of Malay, Javanese, Arabic, Chinese, Bugis, Indian, and European influences (Suswandari & Nadjamuddin, 2019). When a translator encounters a Betawi term that is already hybrid, such as a mix of Chinese and Malay roots, the challenge extends beyond translating one culture into another to preserving a multi-layered identity already in flux. Without a precise strategy, the unique Third Space of Betawi culture, as a distinct hybrid identity, threatens to disappear behind the dominant norms of the English language. Based on this explanation, this study aims to identify the forms of Betawi cultural hybridization in English translation and examine the factors that influence it.

Studies on cultural hybridization generally develop in two main directions. The first focuses on socio-literary and postcolonial identity, examining how characters, gender roles, or communities negotiate hybrid cultural spaces (Aminah et al., 2020; Cristina, 2019; Tallapessy et al., 2020; Wardani & Widyahening, 2020). More recent studies have also expanded into multimodal and educational perspectives (Song, 2021; Tatham, 2023). These works provide a theoretical understanding of Bhabha's Third Space; they often remain at a macro-conceptual level, leaving the specific linguistic mechanics of cultural preservation largely secondary.

The second stream of research focuses more specifically on the translation of culture-specific items (CSIs). Researchers in this area have explored various translation strategies in fields such as tourism, food culture, and lexical translation (Marco, 2019; Wenting & Hongmiao, 2018; Qian & Gao, 2024). Although these studies provide valuable insight into translation techniques, many are mainly descriptive, focusing on whether a translation is accurate rather than examining how translation choices may preserve, simplify, or reconstruct a hybrid cultural identity (Leonavičiūtė & Kuzminskaitė, 2021; Al-Tenajji & Al-Batineh, 2024).

Despite the contributions of these two research streams, there is still a noticeable gap between postcolonial hybridity theory and detailed linguistic analysis. Very few studies integrate Homi K. Bhabha's concept of hybridity with a systematic taxonomy-based analysis of localized ethnic identities, particularly in Betawi culture. Existing studies on Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Cerita dari Jakarta* have mostly highlighted its historical and political significance, while paying limited attention to how Betawi cultural terms function as sites of linguistic hybridization. This study seeks to address that gap by combining Peter Newmark's translation framework with Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity. Through this approach, the research offers a deeper perspective on how the translation of localized cultural terms negotiates the visibility of a hybrid identity for global readers. It also contributes to postcolonial translation studies by combining hybridity theory with close translation analysis to show how localized ethnic identities are negotiated in literary translation.

Cultural hybridization, as proposed by Homi Bhabha, refers to the blending or merging of different cultural identities in a third space where new meaning is produced (Khalifa, 2025). In translation studies, this concept is used to analyze how elements of the source culture are either retained, negotiated, or replaced within the target text. Parham (2010) extends Bhabha's ideas by examining how hybridized identities emerge through language in postcolonial literature and translation, particularly when texts move across cultural and linguistic borders. In addition, the processes of hybridization and dehybridization primarily occur at the micro level, specifically at the lexical level. Thus, cultural terms are the focal point of these processes. In this study, hybridization is used to describe translation

strategies that retain or partially retain the original cultural identity. At the same time, dehybridization refers to the strategies that replace, adapt, or omit cultural elements.

This research also draws on Peter Newmark's (2009) classification of cultural words, which divides cultural terms into five main categories: Ecology, Material Culture, Social Culture, Organizations, political and administrative terms, and religious terms. Cultural terms are interpreted as linguistic markers, such as words or phrases specific to a particular culture that distinguish it from others (Kramersch & Hua, 2020). These terms can refer to things, concepts, events, or other intellectual expressions of a particular society or time, such as literature, music, or art. This framework was selected because it provides a detailed, systematic approach to identifying and classifying culture-specific items in the data. Through Newmark's taxonomy, the researcher can examine more clearly which cultural elements, ranging from physical objects to social hierarchy, are more likely to be preserved or altered in translation. As a result, the framework provides a strong basis for analyzing how cultural identity shifts throughout the translation process.

In addition, the choice of translation strategy is closely connected to readability and communicative purpose. Drawing on Nida's concept of dynamic equivalence (Kim, 2015) and Venuti's idea of domestication (Puławski, 2023), readability can be understood as a normalizing force in translation. In the context of cultural hybridization, translators often simplify culturally complex expressions in order to make the text easier for global readers to understand. This process of simplification may lead to dehybridization, in which local cultural nuances are reduced or replaced with more familiar, generic expressions. Therefore, this study does not treat readability as an empirical variable measured through reader testing. Instead, readability is viewed as a strategic motivation that influences whether a Betawi cultural term is maintained as a visible marker of hybridity identity or transformed into a more neutral and dehybridized form in the target language.

To analyze how these terms are translated, the study applies Farahzad (2004) to distinguish between strategies of retaining, such as borrowing or transliteration, and adapting, such as substitution and generalization, which map onto hybridization and dehybridization, respectively. By combining postcolonial theory and practical translation models, this framework allows us to critically examine not only what is translated, but also why certain cultural meanings are preserved or transformed in the English version. Accordingly, drawing on postcolonial translation theory and cultural term taxonomy, this study explores how such processes operate in the English translation of *Tales from Djakarta*. The study aims to reveal the dynamics of cultural identity negotiation within translation. Based on this framework, the research addresses the following questions:

1. What types of Betawi Culture terms are found in *Cerita dari Jakarta*?
2. How are these terms rendered in translation, through hybridization or dehybridization?
3. What intrinsic (linguistic) and extrinsic (cultural) factors influence the translator's choices?

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This research adopts a qualitative approach with content analysis method to examine the translation of Betawi cultural terms in *Cerita dari Jakarta* and its English version *Tales from Djakarta*. The qualitative design is appropriate for analyzing textual data and describing how cultural elements are transferred across (Mihás, 2023). The study analyzes

the denotative meanings and referents of cultural terms using the Cambridge Dictionary and KBBI (The Great Dictionary of Indonesian Language) to ensure accuracy and contextual clarity. Content analysis is applied to systematically categorize terms (Bengtsson, 2016), enabling the identification of patterns, themes, and degrees of hybridization in translation. This combined approach enables a comprehensive exploration of both linguistic and cultural dynamics within the translated text.

2.2 Data and Data Source

A total of 257 data pairs were identified across the 13 short stories in *Cerita dari Jakarta* and its English version, *Tales from Djakarta*. The data consist of linguistic units at the word and phrase levels that function as culture-specific items (CSIs). A term qualifies as culturally specific if it meets the criteria of being a linguistic marker, whether a noun, an idiomatic expression, or a social honorific, that denotes an object, custom, or social concept unique to the Betawi community and lacks a direct, one-to-one semantic equivalent in the English lexicon. To ensure the dataset's accuracy, we paid special attention to borderline cases, particularly terms widely used in Indonesian but with specific Betawi socio-historical meanings within the stories' context. To clarify these cases, the terms were cross-checked against the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (*Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, KBBI) and ethnographic records documenting Jakarta in the 1940s–1950s. Only terms that clearly indicated local or Jakarta-specific usage were included in the analysis. These cultural terms are significant because they reflect the social realities of that period, including urbanization, class differences, and social hierarchies, through the author's distinctive linguistic choices.

2.3 Data Collection and Data Analyzing Technique

This study employed reading and note-taking techniques to collect the data. The researcher examined Betawi cultural terms found in two sources, the original Indonesian text and its English translation. Words and phrases reflecting Betawi culture in the source text, along with their translations in the target text, were then documented for further analysis. The data analysis was conducted through several steps.

The research process began with the identification of culture-specific items (CSIs) related to Betawi culture from the source text and their corresponding translations in the target text. Next, the identified terms were classified using Peter Newmark's (2009) cultural categories: ecology, material culture, social culture, organizations and ideas, and gestures and habits. Each cultural term in the source text was then compared with its translated form in the target text to determine how cultural meaning was transferred. The terms were categorized as hybridized when elements of Betawi cultural identity were retained, either fully or partially, in the translation. Full hybridization referred to the retention of original cultural terms without modification or additional explanation, while partial hybridization involved retaining the original terms with slight modifications or contextual support to aid understanding.

Conversely, terms were considered dehybridized when they were simplified, generalized, substituted, adapted, or omitted, thereby reducing their local cultural specificity. To ensure coding consistency, a pilot categorization was first conducted on a sample of 30 terms before analyzing the full dataset. Peer consultation with two researchers to review the consistency of categorization and cultural interpretation. To ensure the validity

and expertise, these researchers were selected based on their academic qualifications as Master of Linguistics and their social backgrounds as native Betawi descendants. Their professional profiles are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1.
Profile of Peer Consultants

Researcher	Educational Background	Cultural Background	Expertise
Consultant A	Master of Linguistics	Native Betawi descendant	Sociolinguistics, Language and Culture, Language and Gender
Consultant B	Master of Linguistics	Native Betawi descendant	Translation Studies, Language and Culture

Additionally, the study drew on several linguistic and ethnographic sources to better understand culturally nuanced terms and avoid potential misinterpretation. Abdul Chaer's *Kamus Bahasa Betawi Pengayaan Kosakata (2023)* was used as the linguistic reference, while the Encyclopedia of Jakarta, accessed through the National Library of Indonesia (*Perpusnas*) digital archive, provided socio-historical background on postcolonial Jakarta in 1940s to 1950s. These references were particularly useful for interpreting terms related to material culture and traditional occupations within their historical context. Finally, the study analyzed patterns of transformation and interpreted the translation strategies in relation to intrinsic factors, such as lexical gaps and semantic shifts, as well as extrinsic factors, including cultural familiarity, ideological positioning, and audience considerations. These findings were discussed within the broader framework of cultural hybridization. In this study, readability is not treated as an empirical variable measured through audience testing; rather, it is considered a theoretical factor that influences translation strategies, particularly in relation to domestication and communicative accessibility.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Typology of Betawi Cultural Terms

Based on a data analysis of the manuscript *Cerita dari Jakarta*, this study successfully identified 257 Betawi-specific cultural terms. These terms were then classified using Newmark's (2009) cultural taxonomy, which includes the categories of social life, political concepts, religious concepts, idioms, names, food, and clothing. The frequency distribution of these types of cultural terms is presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2.
Typology of Betawi Cultural Terms in *Cerita dari Jakarta*

No	Category	Number	Percentage
1	Social Life	142	55.25%
2	Political concept	30	11.67%
3	Religious concept	29	11.28%
4	Idiom	20	7.78%
5	Name	13	5.06%
6	food	13	5.06%
7	Clothes	10	3.89%
Total		257	

Table 2 shows that cultural terms related to Social Life constitute the most dominant category, comprising 142 entries (55.25% of the total findings). This dominance reflects the depth of the narrative in depicting the daily life, traditions, and social interactions of the Betawi community, which serves as the story's primary setting. The next largest categories are Political Concepts (11.67%) and Religious Concepts (11.28%), reflecting the influence of the colonial bureaucratic structure as well as spiritual values in the lives of the community during that era. Meanwhile, categories such as Idiom (7.78%), Name (5.06%), Food (5.06%), and Clothes (3.89%) provide additional contributions that enrich the local flavor of the text. These findings answer the first question regarding the types of Betawi cultural terms that appear. The dominance of the Social Life and Material Culture categories indicates that Betawi identity in this manuscript is deeply rooted in daily life, physical objects, and interactions among residents. This demonstrates that in *Cerita dari Jakarta*, local identity is not discussed merely in philosophical or abstract terms, but manifests tangibly through depictions of household items, clothing, and the ways Betawi people socialize. This data serves as a crucial foundation for understanding how these concrete elements are subsequently translated into English.

3.2 Rendering of Terms: Hybridization vs Dehybridization

After mapping the typology of cultural terms, the next stage of analysis is to examine how these identities are rendered in the target text. In general, the data reveal a tension between efforts to preserve cultural authenticity (hybridization) and the need to maintain narrative fluency for a global readership (dehybridization). Table 3 summarizes the distribution of hybridity levels across the seven cultural categories identified:

Table 3.
Degree of Hybridization across Betawi Cultural Categories

No	Category	Number	Hybridization	Dehybridization
1	Social Life	142	55	87
2	Political concept	30	4	26
3	Religious concept	29	11	18
4	Idiom	20	1	19
5	Name	13	12	1
6	food	13	5	8
7	Clothes	10	7	3
Total		257	95	162

Overall, a fairly distinct pattern emerges. Of the 257 terms, 162 (63%) tend to be dehybridized. This means that the majority of Betawi cultural terms in *Cerita dari Jakarta* were translated through neutralization or generalization to ensure the text remained easily understandable. Nevertheless, the presence of 95 hybridized terms (37%) indicates that the translator still made an effort to preserve the visibility of Betawi culture so that it would not be completely lost in English.

Interestingly, the tendency to retain or blend this identity depends heavily on the category type. For example, in the Name category, nearly all data (12 out of 13) were retained in their original form. Conversely, in the "Idiom" category, nearly all (19 out of 20)

were de-hybridized to ensure their meaning was conveyed functionally. This strategic variation demonstrates how the translator negotiates each term; some elements are left 'foreign' as markers of identity, while others must be 'sacrificed' for the sake of readability. To examine in greater depth how this process of identity negotiation occurs within each group, the following section will analyze translation strategies and the manifestation of hybridity within each cultural category.

3.2.1 Social Life

The social life category is the largest contributor to the data, with nine subcategories ranging from tools and identity to social relationships. Details on the distribution of strategies for this category are presented in Table 4:

Table 4.
Betawi Cultural Terms Related to Social Life in *Cerita dari Jakarta* into *Tales from Djakarta*

No	Subcategory	Total data	Degree of hybridization	Number of data	Source Text	Target Text
1a	Tools and equipments	28	Hybridization	10	<i>Alu</i> (CDJ53)	The <i>alu</i> (TFD31)
1b			Dehybridization	18	<i>Gendang</i> (CDJ73)	Drum (TFD88)
2a	Identity	26	Hybridization	9	<i>Priyayi Jakarta</i> . (CDJ122)	Djakarta's <i>prijaji</i> . (TFD104)
2b			Dehybridization	19	<i>Noni Belanda!</i> (CDJ93)	Many girls! (TFD133)
3a	Labor	21	Hybridization	4	<i>Tukang sate</i> (CDJ23)	Sate-seller (TFD41)
3b			Dehybridization	17	<i>Tukang loak</i> (CDJ41)	a hawker (TFD50)
4a	Housing	19	Hybridization	9	<i>Sice</i> (CDJ92)	Sitje (TFD132)
4b			Dehybridization	10	<i>Pendopo gedung bioskop</i> (CDJ19)	the lobby of a movie theatre (TFD39)
5a	Ecology	15	Hybridization	3	<i>Lalang</i> (CDJ 60)	<i>Lalang</i> (TFD 35)
5b			Dehybridization	12	<i>Kayu-kayu galar</i> (CDJ 143)	Two-by-fours (TFD 137)
6a	Social relation	14	Hybridization	10	<i>Empok</i> (CDJ2)	<i>Empok</i> (TFD18)
6b			Dehybridization	4	<i>Kemenakan</i> (CDJ21)	Nephew (TFD39)
7a	Artistic terms	10	Hybridization	7	<i>Tembang sekar</i> (CDJ143)	<i>Tembang sekar</i> (TFD137)
7b			Dehybridization	3	<i>Golek-golek</i> (CDJ68)	A theater puppet (TFD101)
8a	Transportation	5	Hybridization	3	<i>Fiat</i> (CDJ28)	<i>Fiat</i> (TFD43)
8b			Dehybridization	2	<i>Mobil krip</i> (CDJ59)	An ambulance (TFD34)
9a	Disease	4	Hybridization	0	-	-
9b			Dehybridization	4	<i>Masuk angin</i> (CDJ52)	Chills (TFD31)

The analysis in Table 4 shows that terms referring to physical objects or tools tend to be retained more readily. For example, terms such as *alu* (1a) and *sice* (4a) are left in the English text to lend cultural texture to the story's setting. However, when these terms relate to social roles or medical conditions that have functional equivalents in English, the translator tends to opt for de-hybridization. This is evident in the term *tukang loak*, which becomes hawker (3b), or *masuk angin*, which is simplified to chills (9b). This shift indicates that more abstract social aspects are often sacrificed to ensure that international readers can follow the plot without being hindered by foreign terms.

3.2.2 Political Concept

In the realm of politics and bureaucracy, this text contains many terms dating back to the colonial era. The patterns of their usage can be seen in Table 5:

Table 5.

Betawi Cultural Terms Related to Political Concept in *Cerita dari Jakarta* into *Tales from Djakarta*

No	Subcategory	Total data	Degree of hybridization	Number of data	Source Text	Target Text
10a	Position	15	Hybridization	3	<i>Kommis</i> (CDJ33)	<i>A kommis</i> (TFD46)
10b			Dehybridization	12	<i>Hermandat</i> (CDJ132)	Watchman (TFD59)
11a	Office	7	Hybridization	0	-	-
11b			Dehybridization	7	<i>Kantor haminte</i> (CDJ134)	The municipal office (TFD60)
12a	Administration	6	Hybridization	0	-	-
12b			Dehybridization	6	<i>Rebewes</i> (CDJ39)	Drivers' licenses (TFD49)
13a	Organisation	2	Hybridization	1	<i>Kongsi Semprong Tiga</i> . (CDJ40)	<i>The Kongsi Semprong Tiga</i> (TFD94)
13b			Dehybridization	1	<i>Komunis</i> (CDJ30)	Communist (TFD45)

In this category, dehybridization strategies are particularly prevalent, especially for administrative terms. Translators appear to view the function of an institution as more important than its historical label; for example, *kantor haminte* is rendered as “municipal office” (11b) and *rebewes* as “driver’s licenses” (12b). Terms that remain hybridized are typically specific positions that lack direct equivalents, such as *kommis* (10a). Here, the Betawi’s past political identity tends to be subsumed into more neutral global terms.

3.2.3 Religious Concept

The religious terms in this text refer not only to worship but also to a way of life. Table 6 illustrates how these terms are negotiated:

Table 6.

Betawi Cultural Terms Related to Religious Concepts in *Cerita dari Jakarta* into *Tales from Djakarta*

No	Subcategory	Total data	Degree of hybridization	Number of data	Source Text	Target Text
14a	Beliefs	13	Hybridization	5	<i>Riba</i> (CDJ69)	<i>Riba</i> (TFD102)
14b			Dehybridization	8	<i>Wahyu</i> (CDJ25)	A sign from Heaven (TFD42)
15a	Practices	11	Hybridization	4	<i>Hari lebaran</i> (CDJ31)	<i>Lebaran day</i> (TFD45)
15b			Dehybridization	7	<i>Sembayang</i> (CDJ32)	Prayer (TFD46)
16a	Figures	5	Hybridization	2	<i>Ustad</i> (CDJ64)	<i>Ustad</i> (TFD99)
16b			Dehybridization	3	<i>Engkau makhluk daif</i> (CDJ18)	You’re a weak, ignorant creature (TFD38)

The data indicate an effort to preserve terms with specific theological connotations through hybridization, as seen in the words *Riba* (14a) and *Ustad* (16a). However, for activities of a general nature, the translator employs linguistic normalization. The most striking examples are *sembayang*, which becomes ‘prayer’ (15b), and *wahyu*, which becomes “a sign from Heaven” (14b). These changes eliminate the local Betawi-Islamic nuance and replace it with a more universal concept of religiosity.

3.2.4 Idiom

The hybrid element of the idiom category refers to expressions with idiomatic meanings that differ from their literal interpretations. Idiomatic expressions are deeply connected to the culture and habits of a community. Table 7 presents the subcategories found in this study, followed by a detailed explanation below.

Table 7.

Betawi Cultural Terms Related to Idioms in *Cerita dari Jakarta* into *Tales from Djakarta*

No	Subcategory	Total data	Degree of hybridization	Number of data	Source Text	Target Text
17a	Body parts	13	Hybridization	1	<i>Tertangkap tangan</i> (CDJ 32)	Caught red-handed (TFD46)
17b			Dehybridization	12	<i>Mata-mata</i> (CDJ 114)	Spies (TFD 116)
18a	Non-Body parts	7	Hybridization	0	-	-
18b			Dehybridization	7	<i>Si jago cancangan, si jago sayur</i> (CDJ132)	Mr. Stuck-at-Home and Mr. Vegetable (TFD59)

Nearly all Betawi idioms (95%) have been de-hybridized. Distinctive expressions like *si jago cancangan* (18b), rich in local cultural connotations, are functionally translated as “Mr. Stuck-at-Home.” While this strategy certainly makes the text flow very smoothly for foreign readers, it also completely loses the richness of Betawi oral expression in the English version.

3.2.5 Name

This category shows that hybrid elements include place names, personal names, and object names, which are unique and contain cultural values from the source language. In stark contrast to idioms, the category of names actually serves as a bastion of Betawi cultural hybridity, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8.

Betawi Cultural Terms Related to Names in *Cerita dari Jakarta* into *Tales from Djakarta*

No	Subcategory	Total data	Degree of hybridization	Number of data	Source Text	Target Text
19a	Public Facilities	7	Hybridization	7	<i>Pasar Tanah Abang</i> (CDJ54)	<i>Tanah Abang</i> market (TFD32)
19b			Dehybridization	0	-	-
20a	Region	6	Hybridization	5	<i>Gang Klinci</i> (CDJ68)	<i>Klinci</i> lane (TFD101)
20b			Dehybridization	1	<i>Daratan tiongkok</i> (CDJ25)	Chinese mainland (TFD42)

The translator consistently retains geographical names and public facilities to preserve the authenticity of the setting. Tanah Abang Market (19a) and Klinci Lane (20a) remain present to remind readers that this story is deeply rooted in Jakarta. The only instance of de-hybridization occurs with “the Chinese mainland” (20b), which is a general geographical term, not specific to Betawi.

3.2.6 Food

Cuisine is the most tangible marker of identity. Table 9 illustrates how these food terms are handled:

Table 9.
Betawi Cultural Terms Related to Food in *Cerita dari Jakarta* into *Tales from Djakarta*

No	Subcategory	Total data	Degree of hybridization	Number of data	Source Text	Target Text
21a	Dish	8	Hybridization	3	<i>Kue serabi</i> (CDJ29)	Serabi cakes (TFD44)
21b			Dehybridization	5	<i>Dendeng</i> (CDJ23)	The dried-meat (TFD41)
22a	Beverages	3	Hybridization	0	-	-
22b			Dehybridization	3	<i>Tuak</i> (CDJ51)	Rice-liquor (TFD30)
23a	Snack	2	Hybridization	2	<i>Krupuk</i> (CDJ131)	Krupuk (TFD59)
23b			Dehybridization	0	-	-

A unique pattern emerges here: terms considered “product names,” such as *kue serabi* (21a) and *krupuk* (23a), are retained. However, terms with simple material descriptions are dehybridized, such as *dendeng* becoming dried-meat (21b). This indicates that food is treated as a cultural symbol when it has an iconic name, but as an ordinary commodity when it can be described literally.

3.2.7 Clothes

This study identifies several cultural terms within the hybrid clothing element. Below is an explanation of the subcategories identified.

Table 10.
Betawi Cultural Terms Related to Clothing in *Cerita dari Jakarta* into *Tales from Djakarta*

No	Subcategory	Total data	Degree of hybridization	Number of data	Source Text	Target Text
24a	Textiles	7	Hybridization	6	<i>Berselendang kuning</i> (CDJ119)	Yellow selendang (TFD119)
24b			Dehybridization	1	<i>Kainnya</i> (CDJ46)	Other nice clothes (TFD27)
25a	Accessories	3	Hybridization	1	<i>Pici</i> (CDJ62)	<i>Pitji</i> (TFD98)
25b			Dehybridization	2	<i>Terompah kulit</i> (CDJ8)	Leather sandals (TFD21)

Highly specific clothing terms with strong visual connotations, such as *selendang* (24a) and *pici/pitji* (25a), have been retained. Conversely, when these terms refer to common objects like *terompah*, the translator prefers the word *sandal* (25b), which is more familiar to a global readership. This underscores that hybridization is applied selectively only to elements considered irreplaceable cultural icons. Overall, the data indicate that Betawi identity in Tales from Djakarta is handled differently across categories. There is a tendency to retain the original terms for physical objects or place names to preserve the local atmosphere. At the same time, linguistic aspects are more frequently adapted to ensure the text flows smoothly. This recurring pattern raises questions about the rationale behind these strategic choices. Therefore, the following section will detail the linguistic and cultural factors that led the translator to make these decisions.

3.3 Intrinsic Factors and Extrinsic Factors influence the translator's choices

These intrinsic factors arise from technical challenges when bringing Betawi and English together. First, lexical gaps often lead translators to employ hybridization strategies as a last resort when English lacks an equivalent for a specific physical object. Terms such as *alu* or *pici* are retained because replacing them with more generic words like “stick” or “hat” would completely lose the object’s specific meaning and historical value. Second, dehybridization predominantly occurs with terms that share universal functional similarities. Translators tend to choose words already familiar to the target audience, such as “prayer” for *sembayang* or “chills” for *masuk angin*, to avoid unnecessary linguistic complexity.

Meanwhile, extrinsic factors are more closely related to how the text is intended to be positioned before an international readership. First, prioritizing narrative fluency appears to play a significant role in the translator’s choices. The high rate of dehybridization in the idiom section (95%) indicates a desire to maintain the story’s rhythm. Translators appear to avoid using foreign terms in dialogue or expressions so readers do not have to pause to guess the meaning, thereby making the reading experience smoother. Second, there is a balance between visual authenticity and conceptual assimilation. The data show a clear distinction: the translator wants readers to continue “seeing” the Jakarta setting through place names and objects (hybridization), yet allows readers to “feel” the emotions and conversations through adapted language (dehybridization). In this context, the translator acts as a mediator who determines the boundary between which aspects of identity should be highlighted and which should be blended for the sake of global accessibility.

The above findings demonstrate that the translation of Betawi cultural terms in this manuscript constitutes a complex form of negotiation. The decision to preserve or assimilate local identity appears to be heavily influenced by the type of cultural category and various underlying factors. This pattern of uneven hybridity then serves as the basis for further examining the significance of these findings from a postcolonial perspective. Therefore, the following section will discuss the significance of these findings by relating them to the concept of the Third Space and the role of the translator as a cultural mediator in a global context.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal an ongoing tension between preserving Betawi cultural identity and adapting texts for international readers. Since 63% of cultural terms underwent dehybridization, the translations tended to prioritize communicative accessibility

and narrative fluency over maintaining the full visibility of the source culture. From a postcolonial perspective, this high level of dehybridization signifies more than just a linguistic adjustment; it reflects a form of linguistic normalization that aligns with Venuti's critique of domestication (Puławski, 2023). This suggests that, in the context of global literature, translation often functions as a process of cultural normalization in which local expressions are simplified to bridge the cultural gap between Betawi culture and English-speaking readers (Xuetao, 2025; Hastürkoğlu, 2020).

4.1 Domestication and Cultural Invisibilization

The high level of dehybridization appears closely related to the translator's efforts to ensure clarity and a smooth reading experience. Drawing on Eugene Nida's concept of dynamic equivalence (Kim, 2015) and Lawrence Venuti's idea of domestication (Puławski, 2023), the English translation of *Tales from Djakarta* demonstrates a preference for expressions that are more easily understood in the target-language context. However, this strategic prioritization of functional clarity creates a theoretical consequence of cultural invisibilization (Dorpenyo & Pestova, 2025).

This can be seen in several translation choices. For example, "*dendeng*" is translated as "*dried meat*," reducing its culinary specificity through generalization. Similarly, the *pendopo* is rendered as a *lobby*, emphasizing practical function over cultural significance. A particularly striking example of cultural silencing occurs in the translation of '*sembayang*' as 'prayer' (15b). While 'prayer' conveys a general religious act, it fails to capture the unique ontological roots of '*sembayang*', which is derived from the Sanskrit '*Sembah*' (worship) and '*Hyang*' (divinity), reflecting a specific Indonesian-Islamic spiritual synthesis. By neutralizing such nuances, the translation subjects minority identities to domestication pressure, where cultural specificity is deemed expendable for the sake of narrative flow (Karpíšek, 2025).

4.2 Hybridization as Cultural Resistance and the Third Space

Meanwhile, hybridization continues to be employed as a deliberate strategy to preserve elements of Betawi cultural identity. In this light, hybridization serves as a form of cultural resistance against the totalizing force of the target language (Çelikel, 2019). This manifests in both full and partial forms. Full hybridization occurs when terms like *pici* and *alu* are retained in their original forms, creating what Bhabha calls a 'Third Space'; a site where the hegemony of the English language is disrupted by the persistent presence of the 'foreign' (Ahmed & Nayeem, 2023).

On the other hand, partial hybridization serves as a compromise between preservation and accessibility. An example can be seen in the phrase *yellow selendang*, where the descriptive adjective 'yellow' helps readers understand the context while the cultural term itself is retained. This pattern indicates a selective strategy: the translator strives to balance cultural preservation with communicative needs (Yang, 2023). This choice is ideologically significant as it asserts that certain aspects of Betawi identity, especially those with strong visual or material markers, are non-negotiable and must be encountered by the reader in their original form (Torop, 2020).

4.3 Cultural Politics and the Loss of Socio-Cultural Pungency

These findings also indicate that certain cultural categories are treated differently. Terms related to names and material culture are more frequently hybridized because

readers can often infer their meaning from context. Conversely, idioms and abstract concepts are more frequently dehybridized (Vasung, 2025). This is evident in the translation of *si jago cancangan* and *si jago sayur* into Mr. Stuck-at-Home and Mr. Vegetable. This pattern can be seen in the translation of idiomatic insults, which are closely tied to Betawi social and cultural values. In one scene, a group of children mocks the protagonist using the expressions:

“... di luar rumah suara anak-anak meribut dan mengejek-ejeknya sebagai ***si jago cancangan, si jago sayur***. Buru-buru Maman menutup pintu dan kembali mendekati si adik yang tetap membisu.”

In the English translation, the line becomes:

“... from outside the house come the voices of children making a din and jeering at him **as Mr. Stuck-at-Home and Mr. Vegetable.**”

In the source culture, these terms carry a sharp, biting sarcasm that functions as a social label. However, the English translation results in a loss of socio-cultural pungency, where the stinging nature of Betawi insults is significantly softened. From a pragmatic perspective, there is a “softening of illocutionary force”; what was originally a harsh social mockery is reshaped into a more playful or humorous form to fit the cognitive comfort of a global audience (Irawan et al., 2026). While this ensures narrative fluency, it dilutes the raw social texture of Betawi communal interaction, where masculinity and social ridicule are partially overlooked for the sake of international accessibility.

4.4 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors of Negotiation

The interplay between intrinsic linguistic constraints and extrinsic ideological goals ultimately shapes the negotiation of identity. Intrinsic to some cultural terms, there are no exact English equivalents, making hybridization nearly unavoidable. For example, the *alu* is not merely a rice-pounding tool; the existence of the *alu* (also known as *antan* in some local dialects) as a traditional pounding tool is embedded in the material culture of the Betawi society (Chaer, 2023). It carries philosophical and historical significance within Indonesian society, particularly in reflecting the values of cooperation and mutual support (Efendi & Pratiyo, 2020).

Extrinsic factors, such as the intended position of the text in the global market, also influence these choices (Xu, 2007). The dehybridization of terms like *Lebaran* may reflect an effort to avoid confusion among readers unfamiliar with Indonesian Islamic practices. While rendering these terms into general English equivalents preserves the broader meaning, it simultaneously reflects a subtle form of cultural silencing. In contrast, retaining terms like *‘prijaji’* helps the translation maintain visibility of the Betawi social reality. This confirms that hybridization and dehybridization are not random acts but strategic responses to the cultural complexity of each term (Stawecka-Kotula, 2021).

4.5 Broader Implications of the Findings

The distribution of 63% de-hybridization and 37% hybridization in *Cerita dari Jakarta*, translated as *Tales from Djakarta*, reflects how local identity is negotiated when entering the global literary context. However, this pattern does not indicate that the translation

consistently domesticates or foreignizes the text. Instead, the translation applies both tendencies selectively. Abstract concepts, spiritual terms such as *sembayang*, and idiomatic expressions are often adapted into more familiar forms to maintain readability and narrative flow for international readers. At the same time, culturally visible material elements such as *pici*, *alu*, and local names are retained, allowing traces of Betawi identity to survive in the English translation.

Overall, these findings suggest broader implications for the study of postcolonial translation. Hybridization in translation does not always function as a wholly resistant or absolute political strategy. In the reality of the global publishing market, where texts from the Global South are often expected to conform to Western readability standards, selective preservation itself can become a form of practical cultural negotiation. This study demonstrates that the “Third Space” in translation can be constructed selectively, not uniformly. Translators can simplify certain abstract linguistic or cultural nuances while still preserving the source text’s primary material and cultural markers. Therefore, translation should not be understood purely as a process of cultural loss or cultural preservation, but rather as an ongoing negotiation of cultural visibility.

5. CONCLUSION

This study has examined the complex dynamics underlying the translation of Betawi cultural terms in *Tales from Djakarta*. Through this analysis, the translation process is not merely a rigid linguistic exchange, but rather an active space for the negotiation of identity. Based on the analysis conducted, three main conclusions can be drawn. First, from the realm of cultural terminology typology, Betawi cultural identity in this text is structurally rooted in three main pillars: the dynamics of daily social life, aspects of material culture, and expressions of the community’s religiosity. Second, regarding the implementation strategy, translators’ treatment of these terms was non-uniform. A selective hierarchy of visibility emerges: concrete and physical cultural elements, such as the names of traditional clothing or tools, tend to be preserved through hybridization strategies to maintain the local flavor of the story. Conversely, more abstract verbal and conceptual aspects, such as idioms, social satire, and hierarchical relationships, are deliberately dissolved through dehybridization strategies. Third, this structural division is not a random choice. The translator’s decisions are driven by the intersection of intrinsic constraints, such as lexical gaps in English, and extrinsic market pressures demanding textual fluency for the reading comfort of a global audience. Ultimately, although this translation succeeds in opening a “Third Space” for the preservation of Betawi identity, that space is strictly limited; local culture is permitted to remain visible primarily in its physical form, while its deeper social and linguistic structures undergo normalization.

Despite its findings, this study has several limitations. First, the analysis is restricted to a single literary corpus, which may not fully represent the diversity of Betawi cultural expressions across other genres. Second, the assessment of readability and cultural impact was conducted from a textual and theoretical perspective rather than empirical testing. Therefore, future research could incorporate reader reception and audience response testing to determine how international readers actually perceive and understand hybridized versus dehybridized expressions. Additionally, a comparative study involving multiple translators could provide deeper insights into how individual ideological stances further influence the rendering of local identities.

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Availability of Data and Materials

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Competing Interests

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Authors' Contribution

Widya Evayani initiated the original research idea and led the conceptual development of the study. She contributed to data collection, processing, categorization, tabulation, and manuscript drafting (Introduction, Results, Methods, and Discussion). She also performed the initial methodology design and structured the study's findings in the conclusion. Yusuf Haikal contributed to the development of the research context, data collection, data processing, method, and categorization. He identified relevant previous literature and contributed to writing the Abstract, Method, and Literature Review. Arimbi Alessandra Naro contributed to the manuscript revision process by providing interdisciplinary input from the perspectives of cultural preservation and local knowledge systems. Drawing on her involvement in community-based cultural projects, she offered valuable insights into translation issues, linguistic nuances, and cultural preservation within a local context. She also assisted with language editing, grammar correction, and the final review of the manuscript.

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