

Uncovering Negotiation Through Translating Cultural Identity in Formal Documents: A Case Study of UNESCO Agreements

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Abstract

This study investigates how Indonesian cultural identity has been constructed and negotiated through agreements with UNESCO and examines its influence on global awareness, cooperation, and collaboration. A descriptive-qualitative analysis was conducted on 414 pages of Indonesian–English contract texts available in UNESCO’s online repository, focusing on cultural-specific words and items classified according to Ahimsa-Putra and Rachman’s (2021) taxonomy and coded as either resistance or negotiation following Venuti and Eco. The analysis involved descriptive coding using definitions from the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* and the Oxford English Dictionary, Source–Target Relations (STR) analysis to identify shifts, thematic categorization of translation strategies, and interpretive analysis based on Derrida’s concepts of meaning shifts and *différance*. A conceptual framework was developed to ensure semantic alignment and control for potential confounders during validation of meaning connotation, with authoritative dictionaries used to validate the lexicon and cross-literature checks conducted to compare our dataset with established literature anchors. The findings indicate that direct equivalence translation is infrequent, with contrastive searches for equivalents often resulting in faithful representation in terms of meaning, identity, and culture, and that generative description reveals nuanced relationships between translation choices and the representation of cultural identity.

Keywords: Cultural identity, Cultural references, Negotiation, Translation, UNESCO Agreements

Introduction

Negotiation is common in cross-cultural rapport in our globalized world, and it bridges dissimilar socio-cultural interpretations of human communication (Benetti et al., 2021). In interpreting, this process is especially important in the translation of legal and official documents, as creating a mirrored effect in the target language requires words and structures for the target readership to be carefully considered in relation to contextual features, cultural customs, ethical principles, and genre patterns (Baker, 2018). Thus, it is important to conduct research on translation in

cultural communication. Linguists advocate the crucial functions of negotiation identity in cultural communication (Fu & Liu, 2023; F. Liu, 2019), aiming to overcome language and cultural barriers in two languages and to offer solutions. Hence, how cultural identity is formed and negotiated in translation is critical for the analysis of the UNESCO Agreements. Discussions on the identity of culture, negotiation, and translation are interconnected. Recent research has reconceptualized cultural identity at the intersection described Chen (2022), depicting it as multilayered self-consciousness shaped by ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, and sexual identification. Expanding this line of reasoning, Holliday (2020) suggests that identity is a flexible construction, fluid and dialectically shaped in intercultural communication. Extending this theoretical trajectory, cultural identity negotiation in the UNESCO Agreements is the primary focus of the current study. For the purpose of determining when and how identity is negotiated, recent research has generally distinguished between non-translation contexts and translation-mediated processes (Holliday, 2020). This categorization reflects the interdisciplinary nature of identity scholarship in sociocultural and language studies.

Outside of translation, Poole (2019) discusses cultural assumption negotiations in international schools, while Yazan et al. (2019) explore identity construction in language teaching. The topic of digital acculturation is examined by Yau et al. (2019), and Kobayashi et al. (2019) investigate Japanese identity in global advertising. Bettney (2021) examines national identity in bilingual learners, supported by Gaos's (2021) research into cultural schemas and English learning. For instance, Kiramba and Oloo (2020) address multilingual identity negotiation, whereas Asiyah (2020) examines diasporic Muslim women's identity through literature. Banerjee et al. (2022) investigate dual identities, and Nurcahyani and Kamil (2021) analyze The Leavers. Transnational experiences are discussed by Zhao and Ebanda De Bbéri (2022) regarding Chinese students in Canada, Liu et al.'s (2023) study of Singaporean immigrants, and Rostandi and Rohandy's (2024) analysis of Indonesian learners. Aljasir (2020) contributes to this category with phenomenological studies on SLA.

Translation contexts disclose different intercultural dynamics. Yang and Hemchua (2022) study the cultural positioning of diaspora translators, and Pourgharib and Pourya Asl (2022) research narrative identity in translated collections. Character identity changes are investigated by Pollali and Sidiropoulou (2021) and Sajarwa et al. (2023) examining Javanese-French cultural transposition. Sang (2019), meanwhile, uses the lens of semiotics to decode identity signs in translations. Institutional aspects would be a contribution on ethnic representation

by Segnini and Sulis (2021) and Yus's (2019) research on collaborative online translation. Cultural preservation is dealt with by Yuan and Hou (2023), and Guo (2019) on gender representations in Chinese texts. Gabriel (2020) draws on a post-colonial lens, whilst maritime heritage is the lens for Yuan (2020) and diaspora-home nation dynamics for Asscher (2021). Media localization is manifested in Filmer (2019) and Chatterjee (2022), and pedagogical uses in Villacañas De Castro (2020). Digital activism Neo-activism closes with an essay by Vázquez-Calvo and Thornes (2022) on Catalan game localization.

The cultural identification in formal Agreements of UNESCO offers an important perspective for cross-cultural communication, the more so as translators have to cope with searching for equivalence, both in contextual, in normative and in ethical, as well as in cultural terms. Current research situates cultural identity as a complex sense of self (Chen, 2022) that is actively constructed through intercultural encounters (Holliday, 2020). This study fills a crucial gap by moving away from the context of analysis they explored, such as literary texts (Nurcahyani & Kamil, 2021), diaspora narratives (Asscher, 2021) or gender discourses (Guo, 2019), towards the largely uncharted territory of legal-level international norms in the form of formal international agreements. Unlike other genres of document, UNESCO Agreements are distinct in both the indirectly encapsulated cultural identity and the binding nature of the frameworks that enmesh this aspect of identity in multilateral political interest and policy imperative, yet institutionally they are woefully under-interrogated. Based on these above discussions, this paper postulates the research questions:

1. In what ways do translation processes in UNESCO pacts negotiate and (re)construct cultural identities for signatory states?
2. What are the implications of these fabricating cultural identifications for cross-cultural communication and international action?

Methodology

This research uses descriptive-qualitative case study design to investigate the ways in which translation processes in UNESCO-Indonesia agreements are negotiated the building of cultural identities (Objective1) and to measure the impact of these constructions for cross-cultural-oriented cooperation (Objective2). First of all, we chose the authoritative document of Agreement in the "Intangible Cultural Heritage" market of UNESCO as our workshop text on this is because it has an abundance of institutional cultural terminology. Data were obtained by reading systematically all 414 pages of the Indonesian source text and its official English

edition to search for culture-specific terms. These terms were mapped to Ahimsa-Putra and Rachman's (2021a) cultural taxonomy and encoded as instances of negotiation (domestication) for Eco (2013). The data analysis consisted of four stages: (1) descriptive coding as to term form and meaning using KBBI and the Oxford Dictionary; (2) comparative mapping of semantic shifts from ST to TT; (3) theoretical classification of translation strategies; and (4) interpretive analysis involving a fine-grained semantic shift using Derrida's *différance*. This methodological focus speaks directly to the aims of the study by showing how our coding scheme and levels of analysis relate to the two central questions – how cultural identities are negotiated in translation, and what these identificatory practices suggest for intercultural dialogue and policy-level collaboration.

The researcher plays the role of the key instrument in data collection, by downloading the whole contents of the 414 items of the Deed on Mutual Recognition between UNESCO and the Republic of Indonesia, in both Indonesian (SL) and English (TL) from the official UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage website (<https://ich.unesco.org/en>) to keep the text authentic and complete. The UNESCO–Indonesia Agreement was chosen because it is a legal document, published in both its original and English versions, and treats specifically the protection of intangible cultural heritage. Through the lens of purposive comparison, the product of a method that combines purposive sampling (of passages “that specifically mention cultural identity”) and comparison (between SL and TL samples in order to trace the translation of meaning), the translator proceeded to an extensive reading of all the text of the treaty in order to set the context and to locate the culturally sensitive nodes. From this reading, it was possible to identify 278 references to heritage-related terminology, description or concept. Of this set, 65 concrete examples of clear negotiation (or, adaptation for mediating between SL and TL audiences) were purposively chosen for more detailed analysis, based on the degree of clarity and relevance of their adaptive motivation. Finally, each pair of SL, TL was hand-recorded, coded according to type of reference (e.g., Classification, Art, Belief), and side by side comparison facilitated the identification of patterns of negotiation in translation of cultural identity.

Data were analyzed through a rigorous, multi-phased process. In the first place, all products derived from the Indonesia–UNESCO Agreement were categorized based on Ahimsa-Putra's (2020) cultural taxonomy—Communication; Classification; Institution; Economy; Health; Belief; Preservation; Transportation; Game; Art—that including Law based on Rachman (2021b). Table 1 shows all the stages and its components.

Second, descriptive qualitative was utilized as it allows for rich, low-inference description of text-based phenomena and keeps analysis close to participants' language (Kim et al., 2017; Neergaard et al., 2009). The analysis was framed by three analytic dimensions: (1) term density (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008), (2) contextual richness (Sandelowski, 2000) and (3) pragmatic uniqueness (Patton, 2015). Validity was confirmed via source triangulation (SL–TL pairs with KBBI online entries and Oxford English Dictionary definitions) as well as peer debriefing with my thesis supervisor, who had expertise in Indonesian cultural semantics and who further honed the coding scheme and interpretational apparatus. Reliability was consistent with an audit trail, including a record of each stage of extraction, categorization and comparison, guaranteeing complete openness and traceability of all methodological choices. A brief summary of each cultural variable with its associated Rachman (2021b) dimensions is shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Cultural Dimensions and Elements

Cultural Elements	Dimension			
	Knowledge	Linguistic	Behavior	Material
Communication	Grammar, semantics	Communication, terms	Chatting, talking, Calling	Telephone, television, radio, internet
Classification	Counting, Mathematics	Calculation terms	Calculation Activities	Abacus, computer, calculator
Institution	Values, norms, Rules	Terms, organizational discourses	Kinship, Associations	Village halls, houses, settlements
Economy	Knowledge of flora, fauna, soil, water	Discourse terms about flora, fauna, nature	Hunting, gathering, farming, raising	Hunting, gathering, farming, raising livestock
Health	Knowledge of health, illness, medicine	Terms, health discourse	livestock Medicine	equipment Medicine, medical equipment
Transportation	Knowledge of means of transportation	Terms, discourses on transportation	Transportation activities	Bicycles, trains, cars, planes

Cultural Elements	Dimension			
	Knowledge	Linguistic	Behavior	Material
Belief	Belief about the unseen world	Terms, religious discourses	Rituals, ceremonies	Worship tools, houses of worship
Game	Philosophy of the game,	Discourse about the game, sports	Sports, games	Sports and game tools
Preservation	Knowledge, values, norms, rules	Terms, preservation discourse	Teaching, preservation, learning	Books, pencils, schools, museums
Art	Knowledge of beauty	Terms, discourse on beauty	Dancing, singing, painting, carving	Dance equipment, painting, carving, music
Law	Values, norms, rights and obligations, rules	Terms, discourses on law	Obeying regulations, ceremonies, convening statutory	Regulations, written customary regulations, judicial

Findings

Based on the entire strategic signing corpus of the 414-page UNESCO–Indonesia Agreement, we initially computed 278 heritage-related items, and after performing purposive selection, we ended up with 65 negotiation instances whose communicative actions of adaptive translating are the most notable. For the purpose of the discussion, we draw attention to the four cultural categories; Classification, Art, Institution, and Belief, in which the greatest levels of negotiation, are found.

1. The Negotiation and Production of Cultural Identities

Analyzing the issue etic/emic translation lens, it will illustrate how the translators resorted analytically to strategic shifts, such as explication, generalization and modulation in order to re-cast Indonesian cultural identity for an international readership, providing a response to the first reflect of the research question, “How do UNESCO Agreements negotiate and construct cultural identities for signatory countries through the medium of translations?”. In the context of this study, we categorize the following three primary negotiation strategies: a. Explication: the expansion of direct source-language cultural elements by adding clarifying elements (e.g., adjectives, appositives) to source-language terms to make implicit cultural

information explicit in the target text. b. Generalization: substitute of a target-language equivalent with a term from a higher level of generality when no term of equal specificity exists, for the purpose of making the concept more readable. c. Modulation: changing the semantic perspective or emphasis (for example, the word class, or point of view) to achieve a better equivalence with the cultural nuance in the TL. Table2 shows how the 3 categories of cultural types are distributed in the negotiation instances, documenting the selective abridgments that translators can resort to in redefining Indonesian cultural identity in English translations of UNESCO agreements.

Table 2. Distribution of Negotiation Instances by Cultural Category

No	Categories	Neg	%
1	Art	15	5.38
2	Classification	20	7.17
3	Communication	2	0.72
4	Economy	1	0.36
5	Games	0	0.00
6	Health	3	1.08
7	Institution	10	3.58
8	Law	3	1.08
9	Preservation	1	0.36
10	Religion/Belief	9	3.23
11	Transportation	1	0.36
Total		65	23.38

Table. 2 indicate that negotiation occurs most in Classification (7.17%) and Art (5.38%). It is possible that negotiators place more emphasis on attenuating the technical and artistic items, as translated works are for international readers. The top four subcategories covering translation relationships were chosen for an in-depth analysis of translation categorization strategy according to the distribution presented in Table 2. It starts with categories classification, art, institution, belief presented in tables below:

1.1 Classification

Table 3. Types of negotiation employed by translators when translating classification

No	Source Language	Target Language
Data 1	... Dua orang pemain duduk di belakang alat musik ini Figure 1 (Berkas, 2007)	Two players sit cross-legged behind the instrument
Data 2	Alat tersebut terbuat dari bahan logam perunggu, yang terdiri atas dua rangkaian bonang sebanyak 14 buah, bedug, kendang, kebluk, gong, dua buah	The instruments are made of bronze, which consists of two series of 14 pieces of bonang, bedug, kendang, kebluk, gong, two saron, and a

	saron, dan serangkaian jengglong. Figure 2 (File, 2015)	series of jengglong
Data 3	.....ini selalu mengiringi prosesi upacara besar di Pura-pura di Bugbug, seperti Usaba Sumbu dan rangkaian Usaba Gumang di Bukit Juru	....used in large ceremonial processions such as Usaba Dangsil, Usaba Sumbu, Usaba Sri, Usaba Manggung and so on.

1.2 Art

Table 4. Types of negotiation employed by translators when translating art

No	Source Language	Target Language
Data 4	... bentuk seni lain, seperti: wayang kulit...	.... other art forms, such as: leather/shadow puppet..
Data 5	<i>gaya Mataraman sendiri berkembang di...</i>	Mataraman style is flourishing in
Data 6	<i>Seiring dengan waktu seni bela diri atau yang akrab,</i>	.... Over time martial art or a familiar known as..

1.3 Institution

Table 5. Types of negotiation employed by translators when translating institution

No	Source Language	Target Language
Data 7	... Terdapat gamelan khusus yang disebut Gamelan Sekati/Sekaten; gamelan ini kepunyaan Keraton Kasepuhan dan Kanoman ...	.... There are special gamelan called Gamelan Sekati/Sekaten; There gamelan belong to the Palace of Kasepuhan and Kanoman. ...
Data 8	<i>Kami, masyarakat noken terdiri dari pengrajin</i>	We, the undersigned members of the community of noken
Data 9	... .. dilakukan oleh Balai Pelestarian Nilai Budaya	... is maintained by the Cultural Values Conservation Center

1.4 Belief

Table 6. Types of negotiation employed by translators when translating belief

No	Source Language	Target Language
Data 10	...yang paling sakral dalam melengkapi upacara...	This gamelan is a sacred gamelan used in religious ceremonies in Bali.
Data 11	...perjuangan para waliyullah berdakwah	.... the struggle of the waliyullah (the guardians) in dawah (preaching of Islam).
Data 12	<i>Para penabuhnyaapun bukanlah orang sembarangan ..</i>	The word Selonding is thought to originate from the word “salon” and “ning” which means a holy place, because of its function as sacred or holy gamelan. ...
Data 13	.... Alunan suara adzan Dzuhur yang terdengar	The sound of adzan Dzuhur (midday call to prayer)

2. Cross-Cultural Understanding and International Cooperation.

The findings in relation to the second research question, “What are the implications of these negotiated constructions of cultural identity for cross-cultural understanding and international cooperation?” are discussed here, across three

interrelated dimensions. First, Strategic Facilitation of Cross-Cultural Comprehension shows that explicating and modulating strategies yielded high-level target readers' understanding of culturally loaded items, potentially reducing misinterpretation.

Second, Enabling Institutional Cooperation Through Cultural Alignment shows that shared conceptual frameworks were created by the translators' conscious lexical adaptations (such as 'Karang Taruna' → 'youth club'), which facilitated co-operation between UNESCO and Indonesian entities. Third, Diplomatic Negotiation as Cultural Interface also demonstrates how specific translation strategies (such as coining hybrid terms like "leather/shadow puppet") worked as cultural signals that facilitated diplomatic conversation. These findings thus demonstrate that negotiation in translation serves not only to fill the linguistic niches but also to construct institutional and diplomatic partnerships. The UNESCO agreements also negotiated constructs of cultural identity which have three key implications:

2.1 Tact for Cross-Cultural Comprehension

Through functional equivalence (Baker, 2018), translators render culture-laden terms term manageable ones:

- 2.1.1 *Karang Taruna* --translated "youth club": Repackaged Indonesian civic structures in universal organizational forms.
- 2.1.2 *Wayang kulit* translated "leather/shadow puppet": Coinage of a fusion term compromising between authenticity of material and recognizability.
- 2.1.3 *Gaya Mataraman* ("Mataraman style") Translates as: retain markers of ulayat(th). (Mt) Keeps markers of places, takes up a transnational aesthetic vocabulary

2.2 Institutional cooperation by cultural fit.

Translation systematically appropriates indigenous concepts to UNESCO's operational heuristic's:

- 2.2.1 *Ninik Mamak* Hopeful of "traditional leader" Inclusion of *Minangkabau* Governance into Global Heritage Management Typologies
- 2.2.2 *Sembahyang* meaning prayer ritual: Conforms to the standard of interfaith documentation, as regards the use of Islamic worship terminology
- 2.2.3 Community of *noken* Defined by a community of local people their collectivism relates to Papuan identity and serves to frame Papuan

collective identity as a community of noken within participatory preservation paradigms.

2.3 Diplomacy as Cultural Interface on the Level of Negotiation

The discursive strategies of negotiation within and across categories (Table 2) expose translation as cultural diplomacy:

- 2.3.1 Spaces new possibilities as "third spaces" (Bhabha, 1994) where keraton (Javanese ceremonial palace) and "the palace" (secular public administration) intersect.
- 2.3.2 Facilitates multi-party agreement By allowing cultural identities to exist in negotiable forms, as in the case of Indonesia's leadership in the discussion of digital preservation of culture at UNESCO Conventions.
- 2.3.3 Contributions Advances UNESCO's experience-based mission for cooperative safeguarding with necessary trade-offs in ontological depth.

Discussion

Data (1) Translation of "duduk" to "sit cross-legged" is an act of culture negotiation through accommodation. In terms of lexeme, *duduk* 'sit' is more general in meaning and it includes sitting with the body weight borne on the buttocks (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, Kemdikbud RI, 2024e), whereas sit cross-legged is the action of sitting in a cross-legged position (Oxford University Press, 2024b). This change in semantics reflects the cultural context of the Javanese gamelan performance, where players sit cross-legged in the "duduk bersila". Under Bhabha's (1994) concept of hybridity, the translation formulates a third-space translation to negotiate between Indonesian bodily practice and English descriptive conventions. Pragmatic equivalence Baker (2018) is attained via the primacy of cultural specificity over lexical exactitude and the retention of the behavioral aspect of musical performance at the expense of universals of application of concepts.

Data (2) numerical classification is taken through cultural negotiation of functional compromise. The Indonesian classifier "buah" (for countable objects) (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, Kemdikbud RI, 2024d) gets morphed into a short ME "pieces" = separable, (Oxford University Press, 2024d). This new signification throws away the cultural coding of "buah" (as being that conceptualizes the gamelan instruments are unisolating elements) in favor of TL reason. Following Eco's (2013) approach to negotiation, the translation trades-off mathematical clarity for epistemic shallowness. Material equivalence emerges in the

support of context: the visual representation in figure 2s lets TL readers regard the instruments as a whole despite the fragmenting usages of pieces; it shows how classification systems cater to the documenting needs of the institution.

Translational negotiation Cultural typology: translating data (3) In spatial classification, what becomes cultural typology is a matter of translation. The source sentence of "di Bugbug, seperti Usaba Sumbu dan rangkaian Usaba Gumang di Bukit Juru" (locating certain ceremonies) (*Filosofi Selonding Dalam Tatwa Hindu | ISI Denpasar*, 2011) is generalized into "Usaba Dangsil, Usaba Sumbu, Usaba Sri, Usaba Manggung dlsb." It is this transference that obliterates geographical specificity while broadening ritual allusions, building a pan-Balinese template of "usaba" for global consumption. Hybridity in Bhabha's work (1994) operates via a deterritorialization the translation of rite shifts the ceremonies from its topographic location in the landscape into a transferable cultural knowledge. Pragmatic equivalence Baker (2018) works better with UNESCO's documentary focus by privileging procedural knowledge (ceremonial types) over spatial accuracy, and by doing so at the expense of local "beats" of the time frame.

Collectively, these categorization discussions build Indonesia's cultural identity as a context-based civilizational frame within UNESCO archives. The translation decisions also work in favor of documentary function over epistemic shade: they level 'bodily' practices (duduk), material taxonomies (buah), and ritual geography into fit-for-purpose units which marshal themselves to meet global heritage paradigms. This recasts Indonesia's diversity as a collection of exchangeable cultural tokens, opening up cross-institutional legibility while occluding locally formed knowledge registers.

Data (4) Lexically, "wayang kulit" is defined by a ritualistic Javanese tradition of leather puppetry, with a dalang (puppeteer), gamelan accompaniment, and Hindu-Buddhist epics (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, Kemdikbud RI, 2024). Semantic shift occurs in translation as such because Oxford restricts "shadow puppet" to a perforated effigy between a source of illumination and a screen (*A History of Puppets in Britain* · V&A, n.d.), reducing the concept to optic mechanics while deleting the presence of three components: the sanctified status of kulit (leather) as sacred material, a dalang's spiritual role, and a narrative's mythological content. This change is necessary to cater to target-culture expectations that so associate "shadow puppet" with European Ombres Chinoise, not a competing form of secular entertainment as was the wayang's religious purpose. Nevertheless, this pragmatic equivalence Baker's (2018) is negotiated in the hybrid term "leather/shadow puppet". In this term, "leather" maintains a

strong bond with authenticity whereas “shadow puppet” refers to Oxford’s performance definition for cross-cultural recognizability, the ontological depth of the former is sacrificed for the functional accessibility of the second.

Data (5), the terminology of source term “gaya Mataraman” represents a comprehensive Javanese aesthetic package involving musical protocols (pathet), philosophical *rasa* (emotional resonance), and regional identity (Wardani et al., 2013). Here we see examples of lexical reduction exactly as Oxford defines style reductively as a manner of execution (Oxford University Press, n.d.-b), which flattens the concept by erasing its epistemic dimensions: the historical development of south east Javanese artistry, the embodied knowledge shared by gamelan musicians, and the cultural values captured within performance practices. This shift indicates a strategy of negotiation in order to extend the term’s legibility to the global level, for the Oxford “style” values the superficial technique rather than the cultural ontology. This cultural equivalence is achieved via Bhabha’s (1994) the hybridity: retaining “Mataraman” without Washpon, the title is the anchor of geographical specificity and adopting The Oxford’s style leads the readers to read the story in a hybrid third-space viewing that allow audience to make artistic originality although the nuances are lost.

Data (6) ‘Seni bela diri’ lexically collapses martial arts, spiritual discipline (kebatinan), and moral education in communal traditions such as pencak silat (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, Kemdikbud RI, 2024c). Semantic narrowing is induced by Oxford’s TL definition of martial art is various sports or skills of attack and defense” (Oxford University Press, n.d.-a), which prompts three shifts: first, it depersonalizes spirituality (e.g., meditation rituals) to physicality; second, de-socializes behavioral codification (*salam* respect gestures, *adat* ceremonies); third, de-territorializes martial techniques from cultural identity. This adjustment is made possible by the focus on “sports” in “martial art” Oxford which, in the era of globalized combat disciplines, fits Indonesian practices, despite misrepresenting them, since self-defense is only secondary to building character. In its compact definition, functional equivalence Eco’s (2013) is achieved by selecting contra distinguishability over an immediately recognizable statement by accepting that metaphysics and religious/spiritual dimensions should be inferred through context – a tradeoff between cultural loyalty and communicative expedience. table 3 shows how translators try to negotiate when translating institution from SL to TL.

The terms of art: negotiations of Indonesian identity as hybrid cultural laboratory. It is in the act of squeezing wayang’s sacrality, Mataraman’s philosophy and pencak silat’s spirituality into material logics (shadow puppet, style, martial art)

that translators produce amenable paint brushes for international consumption as digestible cultural markers. This strategic essentialism, in turn, furnishes diplomatic capital to Indonesias place in UNESCO and marks its unique trades while submitting to a cost of global ontological reduction, thereby commodifying Indonesian culture as accessibly exotic.

Data (7) The word “keraton” means the residence of a queen or king; a palace (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, Kemdikbud RI, 2024f). Its meaning has shifted to "palace," referring not only to the royal residence but also to the residence of a head of state, such as a president. data (8), the "Masyarakats Noken" that represents an amount of humans in the widest sense of the word and which adhere to a similar culture, undergoes a change on the date language definition to "Community" in a group language (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, Kemdikbud RI, 2024g). data (9), the word "Balai" translates as building; house (common); office (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, Kemdikbud RI, 2024b) has a sense shift which does not refer to place or building, when lexically translated into English as "Center" which means "the middle point or part of something". (Oxford University Press, 2024a)

Lexically, the word “keraton” surely not corresponding to be the word of “the palace” since the word “keraton” according to the definition above is aimed only to kings, not only at the king and also head of government like president. But to put it in perspective, in older centuries kings ruled an area as well by the definition of "raja" in Kbbi online – highest ruler in a kingdom (usually received as inheritance); person who leads/governs a nation or a state (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, Kemdikbud RI, 2024i). In the second data (2), the term “Masyarakat Noken” does not fit “Community” or community in Indonesian by lexical meaning which differs from “masyarakat” for within a community (about the profession, stream, social class, etc.) (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, Kemdikbud RI, 2024g) However, in the context, “masyarakat noken” could mean a community of artisans that make bag or noken is traditional bag from Papua made of wood fibre ((Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, Kemdikbud RI, 2024h). On data (3), lexically, the word “Balai” does not correspond to “Center”, which belongs to a Middle point/part of something. Yet, in usage under a context-generating definition in grammar, "Center" could also be interpreted as any building, place, facility, or location used for a particular purpose or activity (Oxford University Press, 2024a). From the data presentation above, there is same context or pragmatic equivalent (Baker, 2018)

In the category of data (10), “paling sakral” there is “keramat” sacred and blessed, having the magical effect and psychological on the others (about the sacred things firmed up or place or phenomenon) (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, Kemdikbud RI, 2024j) there is a shift in meaning since it translated into the word “sacred” which is related with God or deity and i.e. holy (Oxford University Press, 2024f) a shift in meaning when the object thing is not having the magical effect and psychological on the others perse. data (11), the word of waliyullah berdakwah consists of waliyullah beautiful preachers and teachers (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, Kemdikbud RI, 2024k), there is a dissemination of meaning when it is translated into the word waliyullah (protectors) in dawah (preaching of Islam) so that it becomes “the protectors” according to Oxford University Press (2025) which is meant to protect everything while “preaching” have the meaning to explain to people about a religion, way of life, system, etc., with the aim of persuading them to accept it according to Oxford University Press (2024e). Change of meaning, from only teaching the religion, whether they receive it or not it is not a problem (Kemenag, 2024) to propagating the religion for other people to accept it, in the target language.

data (12) ”gamelan player is called “niyaga” or “pradangga” or “wiyaga” signifies that gamelan players have roles or status which is special (Supriyono, 2008) there is a shift in meaning when translated into “The word Selonding is thought to originate from the word "salon" and "ning" which means a holy place, because of its function as sacred or holy gamelan, which only explains the origin of the name of the gamelan, making the gamelan sacred without mentioning the role of the gamelan players (*Filosofi Selonding Dalam Tatwa Hindu* | ISI Denpasar, 2011). in data (13), the item “azan” which is translated as call to invite to congregational prayers (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, Kemdikbud RI, 2024a), in the target language is translated into midday call, and when it is combined with the word “midday” becomes call at 12 o’clock at noon; the period around this time (Oxford University Press, 2024c), a shift in meaning can be seen there where the call used to call people at prayer time becomes a call at 12 o’clock at noon. Also, “azan” which calls for “prayer” which is the second pillar of Islam, it is a service of worship to Allah, it is obligatory for every accountable Muslim, if certain conditions are met, pillars are performed, and specific recitations are uttered, from *takbir* (Allah is the Greatest) to *salam* (greetings) (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, Kemdikbud RI, 2024a) is translated to “prayer which is a mere religious event to offer prayers, additive to the former two such reasons make the shift in meaning.

Between institution and belief translations: The sacred-secular interfaces of Indonesias UNESCO representation. References to *keraton* (sacred kingship) and *paling sakral* (supernatural sacredness) undergo semantic secularization (palace, sacred) to tune into UNESCO-mandated secular governance schemas. This forms an identity of compromise spirituality--where Indonesian cosmological terms are institutionally validated in return for terminological concessions, representing the unequal give-and-take between local ontologies and the discourse of heritage at the global level.

In the end, UNESCO's translation practices frame Indonesian cultural identity through three paradoxical optics: diversity as modularity, sacrality as adaptability, and complexity as accessibility. Such negotiated representations act as diplomatic currency, giving Indonesia heritage recognition but nonetheless sustaining epistemic ranking. They do so in terms of the ambivalence of cultural translation that, following Bhabha (1994), is the turning of visibilization into empowerment and oversimplification into disempowerment in performances of govern mentality on the global arena.

Cultural identity construction in the UNESCO agreements on cross-cultural understanding and international cooperation

1. Cross-Cultural Understanding through Negotiated Identities

The patterns of negotiation we identified also converge into three major patterns for foreign readers to interact with Indonesian cultural concepts. This is because translators employ the strategy of pragmatic equivalence to translate unfamiliar terms into familiar actions or roles, creating intuitive "bridges" between the source and target cultures. Second, hybrid forms themselves construct liminal "third spaces" where neither culture is completely subsumed under the component cultures, and where readers are invited to enter into a negotiated encounter between the cultures, rather than to be culturally submerged. 3) Thirdly, translators sometimes forego the depth of meaning or context of what is being said in an attempt to make it quickly understandable, leaving out complex details of the ritual to make the material easy to understand for a mass market.

For example, pragmatic equivalence can be found in translations like "sit cross-legged" (Data 1) and "traditional leader" (Data 7), while hybridization is demonstrated in "leather/shadow puppet" (Data 4). The tension between maximizing functional transparency and maximizing epistemic opaqueness is apparent in the tendency to "cut" complex ceremonies to the bone as in the stripped down treatment of "usaba" rites (Data 3).

2. Enabling International Cooperation: Evidence-Based Analysis

These identity constructs in turn facilitate collaboration by aligning Indonesian cultural specificity with UNESCO's operational modalities. An example where Indonesia's inscription proved ICH's constructed nature is that of the Three Genres of Traditional Balinese Dance: the reliable translation policy evidenced in our data, in particular the shortening of "gaya Mataraman" to "Mataraman style" (Data 5), produced a documentation that satisfied UNESCO's criteria for the recognition of ICH. By the same token, the translation "community of noken" (Data 8) contributed to Papua's preservation of craft program on noken in accommodating communal practice in UNESCO's participatory framework. Data Monitoring reports, however, suggest that something has gone wrong in translation here, for as 42% of UNESCO-sponsored silat schools now prioritise competition over spiritual practice (Bidang Kebudayaan KWRI UNESCO, 2023), "seni bela diri" is quite clearly being sportified as "martial art" (Data 6)

3. Critical Challenges & Diplomatic Tensions

The study uncovers three enduring paradoxes in identity in life negotiation: 1) Epistemic asymmetry, where Balinese "paling sakral" (magico-religious sacredness) secularizes into "sacred" (Data 10), favoring Western cosmologies. 2) Behavioral oversimplification happens in waliyullah berdakwah (the righteous teaching) becomes a persuasive "preaching" (Data 11), changing the image of religion in interfaith dialogue. 3) Institutional erasure occurs when specialist roles vanish from the records, obstructing capacity building. Such compromises of convenience are illustrative of what Indonesia's own UNESCO Delegation refers to as 'the paradox of recognition' — cultural recognition demands terminological concessions that can end up skewing the very heritage the terminology is created to safeguard.

4. Recommendations for Equitable Cooperation

Strategies such as explicitation, generalization, and modulation can make a text more readable and clearer in terms of its diplomatic message while also potentially reducing cultural richness (flattening cultural differences) and, at times, hiding the ritual and philosophical thickness upon which institutional legitimacy rests. Explicitation offers explanatory remarks that may dilute the complex meaning of worldviews, generalization flattens out discrete cultural concepts and may reduce their social import, and modulation changes semantic domains at the expense of performative or sacred aspects.

To avoid such dangers yet also promote international collaboration, an approach in multiple layers is required. For example, provide brief in-text glossaries

and or footnotes for explicitation cases — such as for ‘Mataraman style’ as having a certain philosophical *rasa* and performance conventions. 2. Second, convene co-translation panels with cultural bearers of an identifiable ‘quality’ to vet generalizations, checking that ‘community of noken’ is an honest reflection of origins and social use of the term. Lastly, embed hyperlinks in movies/recordings:100 For the issue of supplement, include hyperlinks in moving image (SMR): for instance “leather/shadow puppet,” so rendered, supplemented by multimedia annotations – short ethnographic videos or interactive glossaries which are connected to supplementary objects hosted in UNESCO’s digital platform (to re-instate the original performativity and sacredness).

Conclusion

This study discovered that identity is constructed through three translational means: explicitation (which adds disambiguating elements to make a piece of implicit cultural information explicit), generalization (which often stands for a turning of polysemic terms into more hyperonymic labels), and modulation (which stands for the semantic shift in translation that may produce a certain cultural nuance), each of which such that these change Indonesian concepts into something international: hybridization (‘*wayang kulit* into ‘leather/shadow puppet’), lexical reduction (‘*gaya Mataraman* into style’), and pragmatic adaptation (‘*duduk* into ‘sit cross-legged’). These linguistic negotiations create fluid cultural representations that hover between local specificity and global legibility, which are closer to being authorized as heritage, as has happened in the case of Indonesia’s 1992 nomination of Three Genres of Traditional Balinese Dance, and at the same time introduce disjuncture in the secularization of sacred language and in the dumbing down of practices charged with spiritual or religious meaning such as “pencak silat”. With its restricted focus on Indonesia-UNESCO documentation and textual methodology, however, this research identifies translation as a form of institutionalized cultural diplomacy that is based on identity-as-diplomatic currency and identity-as-ontological compromise. Future research could work towards general translations across the Global South and digital annotation norms for UNESCO collections to address epistemic loss and retain the cultural richness that is filtered into standardized diplomatic texts.

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