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Article

An Analysis of Newmark's Translation Methods in The Story of *Si Pitung*

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A B S T R A C T

This study examines the translation methods used in the English translation of the Betawi folktale Si Pitung, with particular attention to the translator's orientation toward the source and target languages. Previous studies applying Newmark's translation framework have examined Indonesian folktales such as Malin Kundang, Nyi Roro Kidul, and Putri Lopian, while the translation of Si Pitung remains underexplored. This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to analyze 32 translation units from a bilingual edition published by Serba Jaya Surabaya. The Indonesian and English texts were compared and classified using Newmark's (1988) eight translation methods. The findings revealed that all eight methods appeared in the translation. Literal translation was the most frequently used method (40.6%), followed by word-for-word translation (21.9%) and communicative translation (12.5%). Overall, source-language-oriented methods accounted for 75% of the identified units. These findings indicate that the translator predominantly maintained the linguistic structure and expressions of the source text. Although this approach helped preserve proper names and certain Betawi cultural terms, some culturally specific expressions were generalized, while literal renderings occasionally affected the naturalness and accuracy of the English text. The study highlights the challenges of balancing cultural preservation, semantic accuracy, and linguistic naturalness when translating Indonesian folklore for English-speaking readers.

Keywords: *Translation Methods, Newmark, Indonesian Folklore, Si Pitung, Bilingual Storybook*
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INTRODUCTION

Translation involves transferring meaning from a source language into a target language while maintaining the accuracy and intention of the original text. Newmark (1988) defines translation as the process of rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way intended by its author. This definition emphasizes that translation is not simply the replacement of words or grammatical structures between languages. Rather, translators must understand the intended meaning of the source text and communicate it appropriately to target-language readers. Every lexical and phrasal choice can influence the accuracy and interpretation of the translated text. To achieve an appropriate translation, translators need to understand the characteristics of the source text and select methods that suit its communicative purpose. Newmark (1988) identifies eight translation methods: word-for-word, literal, faithful, semantic, adaptation, free, idiomatic, and communicative translation. These methods represent different orientations toward the source and target languages. Word-for-word, literal, faithful, and semantic translation generally prioritize the source text, although they differ in their treatment of linguistic forms, contextual meaning, and authorial intention. In contrast, adaptation, free, idiomatic, and communicative translation give greater attention to target-language conventions, naturalness, and readers' comprehension. In particular, semantic translation emphasizes the contextual meaning and stylistic characteristics of the original text, whereas communicative translation prioritizes the effect of

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the message on target-language readers. Examining these methods helps researchers understand how translators negotiate linguistic differences and maintain meaning across languages.

Literary translation presents particular challenges because literary works frequently contain figurative expressions, idioms, stylistic features, and culturally specific terms. These elements often carry meanings that cannot be transferred directly through lexical equivalence. Baker (2018) discusses culture-specific concepts as expressions associated with particular cultural experiences or notions that may not have readily available equivalents in another language. Folklore represents an important category of literary translation because it preserves a community's traditions, beliefs, historical experiences, and cultural identity. Translating folklore consequently requires attention not only to the storyline but also to the cultural meanings embedded in the narrative. A translator must decide whether to retain original cultural expressions, provide equivalent expressions, or adapt them to make the narrative more accessible to target-language readers. Such decisions may influence the representation of local identity in the translated text. Therefore, selecting appropriate translation methods becomes essential to balancing semantic accuracy, cultural preservation, and readability.

One Indonesian folktale that offers an interesting context for examining these challenges is The Story of Si Pitung. Si Pitung is a well-known figure in Betawi folklore, commonly portrayed as a folk hero who fought against injustice during the Dutch colonial period. The narrative reflects aspects of Betawi cultural identity through local expressions, historical references, character names, and descriptions of traditional social life. These elements distinguish the story from folklore originating in other Indonesian cultural communities. When translated into English, such expressions may require different approaches because their meanings are closely connected to the historical and cultural experiences of the Betawi community. Some terms may retain their original forms, while others may require literal translation, explanation, or adaptation. Consequently, examining the English translation of The Story of Si Pitung provides an opportunity to investigate how translation methods represent Betawi cultural elements and communicate their meanings to readers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Previous studies have applied Newmark's (1988) framework to examine translation methods in Indonesian folklore. Hayadi et al. (2022), for example, investigated the bilingual edition of Malin Kundang and identified seven of Newmark's eight translation methods. Word-for-word, literal, and faithful translation appeared frequently, while idiomatic translation was used for fixed expressions such as pass away. Hendrawan & Kamayana (2023) examined the translation of Nyi Roro Kidul from English into Indonesian. Their findings revealed the use of all eight methods across 23 data units, with adaptation and free translation appearing most frequently, indicating a stronger orientation toward the target language. Mahmud et al. (2024) compared the Indonesian and English versions of the Sundanese legend Nyi Rorokidul and identified literal, adaptive, free, and communicative translation methods. Their findings demonstrated that different translation approaches could produce variations in how narrative content was transferred between languages. Similarly, Siregar et al. (2020) analysed the English translation of the Tapanuli folktale Putri Lopian. They identified seven translation methods, with free translation occurring most frequently and word-for-word translation absent. They associated this tendency with the intended readership, particularly children. These studies demonstrate that translators employ different methods depending on the linguistic characteristics of folklore, cultural elements, and the needs of their intended readers.

Beyond folklore, Newmark's framework has also been applied to novels, short stories, and bilingual storybooks. Ramadhan et al. (2021) examined Gill Westaway's English translation of Tere Liye's novel Bumi, published as Earth, and identified seven of Newmark's eight methods. Adaptation was absent because culture-bound expressions such as batagor and mencium tangan were handled through literal or communicative approaches rather than replacement with target-culture equivalents. Nugraha et al. (2017) analysed five students'

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Indonesian translations of Anton Chekhov's short story A Blunder. Their findings showed that communicative translation was the most frequently used method, with 94 data units, followed by literal translation with 87. In contrast, Kembaren et al. (2024) examined students' translations of Hans Christian Andersen's Thumbelina and found literal translation to be dominant, with 87 data units, followed by communicative translation with 72. Semantic and idiomatic translation did not appear in their findings. Hidayat & Harmoko (2018) investigated translation methods and procedures in bilingual storybooks. They reported that literal translation was the most frequently used procedure across the three books, while semantic translation represented the dominant method. More recently, Larasati (2025) identified five of Newmark's eight methods in the English-Indonesian translation of a children's storybook and evaluated the translation in terms of accuracy, acceptability, and readability. Collectively, these studies indicate that the application of translation methods varies according to the characteristics of the literary work, the translator's decisions, and the intended readership.

Although previous studies have examined Newmark's translation methods in Indonesian folklore, novels, short stories, and bilingual storybooks, the English translation of The Story of Si Pitung remains an underexplored subject in the literature reviewed for this study. A search of the Garuda database in October 2026 using the keyword Si Pitung returned 57 records, but none specifically examined the translation methods used in its English version. Additional searches combining Si Pitung with the term's translation, terjemahan, and Newmark also did not identify a study addressing this particular research focus. More importantly, the significance of this research extends beyond examining another folklore text. Si Pitung represents Betawi cultural identity through its local expressions, historical references, and culturally embedded meanings. How these elements are transferred into English may reveal whether the translator prioritizes the linguistic characteristics of the original narrative or adapts the expressions to meet the expectations of English-speaking readers. This study therefore addresses both a textual research gap and a cultural concern by examining the translation methods used to represent Betawi folklore in English.

Based on this research gap, the present study aims to analyze the translation methods employed in the English version of The Story of Si Pitung using Newmark (1988) theoretical framework. Specifically, it identifies the translation methods found in the bilingual story, determines the most frequently used method, and examines how Betawi and other culture-specific expressions are rendered into English. The analysis focuses on the relationship between the methods identified and the preservation of cultural meanings in the translated narrative. Accordingly, the study addresses three research questions: (1) What translation methods based on Newmark's theory are used in the English translation of The Story of Si Pitung? (2) Which translation method is the most dominant in the translated story? (3) How are Betawi and other culture-specific items translated into English, and to what extent are their cultural meanings maintained? The findings are expected to contribute to literary translation studies by providing evidence of how Newmark's translation methods operate in the translation of Betawi folklore and by offering insights for students, translators, and researchers interested in translating culturally specific literary texts.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method to examine the translation methods used in the English version of The Story of Si Pitung. This approach was selected because the research focused on identifying, classifying, and describing translation methods rather than testing hypotheses or examining relationships between variables. Creswell & Creswell (2018) explain that qualitative research aims to explore and understand the meaning of a particular problem or phenomenon. The data source was the bilingual Indonesian-English edition of Si Pitung, published by Serba Jaya, Surabaya (Ikranegara, 2021). In this edition, each Indonesian passage is presented alongside its English translation, allowing direct comparison between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). The narrative consists of 31

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Indonesian sentences across eleven pages. All sentences were included in the analysis to ensure comprehensive coverage of the story rather than selecting a sample.

The unit of analysis was defined as a translation unit, consisting of one Indonesian sentence and its corresponding English translation. However, when a sentence contained coordinated clauses translated using clearly different methods, the sentence was divided into separate units. This procedure was applied to one sentence, resulting in 32 translation units, identified as D01 to D32. Each unit was documented with its source-language text, target-language text, and identified translation method. The classification followed Newmark (1988) eight translation methods: word-for-word, literal, faithful, semantic, adaptation, free, idiomatic, and communicative translation. Operational criteria derived from Newmark's definitions were used to distinguish the methods. When a translation unit exhibited characteristics of more than one method, the dominant method governing the overall translation was assigned, while additional features were considered in the discussion. Following previous studies that classify individual sentences according to Newmark's framework (Hayadi et al., 2022; Kembaren et al., 2024; Siregar et al., 2020), the distribution of methods was also used to describe the overall translation orientation. In addition, Newmark (1988) translation procedures, including transference, functional equivalent, and cultural equivalent, were considered when examining culture-specific expressions at the word or phrase level.

Data analysis involved four main steps. First, the researcher read the entire bilingual story and identified all Indonesian sentences and their corresponding English translations. Second, the sentences were organized and segmented into 32 translation units based on the established unit-of-analysis criteria. Third, each unit was compared with its corresponding translation and classified according to Newmark's eight translation methods using the operational criteria presented in Table 1. Finally, the frequency and percentage of each method were calculated to identify the dominant method and describe the translator's overall orientation toward the source and target languages. Culture-specific items were also examined separately by comparing their original expressions with their English renderings and identifying the procedures used to transfer their meanings. The results of this analysis were used to explain how Betawi cultural elements were represented and whether their cultural meanings were maintained, modified, or generalized in the English translation.

Table 1. Operational Criteria Used to Classify The Translation Units (Based on Newmark (1988))

Method	Orientation	Operational criterion
Word-for-word	SL	SL word order kept; words given their most common meanings out of context; the English clause stays ungrammatical or barely grammatical.
Literal	SL	SL constructions converted to the nearest English structures, so the clause is grammatical; lexical words still rendered singly and out of context.
Faithful	SL	Contextual meaning reproduced within English grammar; cultural words transferred; some SL structural awkwardness retained.
Semantic	SL	As faithful, but word order or register adjusted for naturalness while the content stays close to the SL.
Adaptation	TL	An SL cultural item replaced by a term from the reader's own frame of reference.
Free	TL	Content kept but form abandoned; elements paraphrased, condensed, or omitted.
Idiomatic	TL	An English idiom or ready-made expression replaces an SL expression, levelling its nuance.
Communicative	TL	Contextual meaning rendered in natural, conventional English wording, such as English narrative formulas.

To make the classification verifiable, all 32 units are displayed in the Appendix with their assigned methods, so that each decision can be checked against the criteria in Table 1 (Miles et al., 2020). Remarks on accuracy and naturalness in the discussion are descriptive and correspond to two of the three quality aspects examined by Herianto et al. (2025): fidelity, referred to here as accuracy, and acceptability, which covers the naturalness of the English.

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The third aspect, readability, was not examined, and no rating scale was applied, since quality assessment was not an aim of the study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the bilingual edition of *Si Pitung* produces 32 translation units. Each unit was classified against the criteria in Table 1; all 32 units are listed in the Appendix. All eight methods were found in the text, but they were distributed very unevenly. Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage of each method.

Table 2. Distribution of Newmark's Translation Methods in The English Translation of The Story of *Si Pitung*

No	Translation Method	Frequency	Percentage
1	Word-for-word translation	7	21.9%
2	Literal translation	13	40.6%
3	Faithful translation	3	9.4%
4	Semantic translation	1	3.1%
5	Adaptation	2	6.3%
6	Free translation	1	3.1%
7	Idiomatic translation	1	3.1%
8	Communicative translation	4	12.5%
	Total	32	100%

As Table 2 shows, the four source-language-oriented methods in Newmark (1988) spectrum, namely word-for-word, literal, faithful, and semantic translation, together account for 24 of the 32 data, or 75%. The four target-language-oriented methods, namely adaptation, free, idiomatic, and communicative translation, account for the remaining 8 data, or 25%. The description below follows Newmark's order, beginning with the method closest to the source language.

Translation Methods Found in the English Translation of The Story of *Si Pitung*

Word-For-Word Translation

Newmark (1988) describes word-for-word translation as an interlinear rendering in which the word order of the source language is preserved and lexical items are translated singly by their most common meanings, out of context. Seven data, or 21.9% of the collection of writings, behave in this way. The clearest instance is data (1).

(1) SL : *Orang tua Si Pitung takut dan gemetaran menjawab pertanyaan kompeni.*
TL : *Pitung's Parent fear and trembling answered questions The Kompeni.*

The English version follows the Indonesian slot by slot. The pair *takut dan gemetaran* is carried across as the uninflected "fear and trembling", so that two verbs and one participle sit in the same clause without any grammatical relation being marked. The noun phrase *pertanyaan kompeni* keeps its Indonesian head-modifier order and becomes "questions The Kompeni" instead of "the Kompeni's questions", and the plural reference of *orang tua* is left unmarked in "Parent". The sentence remains recoverable only because the Indonesian text is printed on the same page, which is precisely the interlinear function Newmark ascribes to this method. A comparable case appears in data (2).

(2) SL : *Hasil bumi diserahkan pada Kompeni sehingga banyak rakyat kecil yang miskin dan kelaparan.*
TL : *Earth wealth was delivered to the Kompeni so many commoners who were poor and hungry.*

Hasil bumi is a fixed collocation meaning agricultural produce or crops. The translator has separated the two elements and rendered each by its most frequent dictionary equivalent, producing "Earth wealth", a phrase that does not exist as an English collocation and that loses

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the agricultural sense on which the episode depends. The relative marker *yang* is likewise carried over as "who", although English does not require a relative clause at that point in the sentence.

Literal Translation

Literal translation differs from word-for-word in that the grammatical structures of the source language are converted into their nearest target-language equivalents, while lexical words continue to be translated singly and out of context (Newmark, 1988, p. 46). With 13 data, or 40.6%, this was the most frequent method in the collection of writings. Data (3) illustrates the pattern.

(3) *SL : Para Kompeni mulai gelisah dengan adanya gerakan Si Pitung.*
TL : The Kompeni began to fidget with the movement of Pitung.

Gelisah covers both physical restlessness and psychological anxiety, and the context here clearly calls for the second reading, since the colonial authority is becoming alarmed rather than physically fidgety. By selecting the most concrete equivalent, "fidget", the translator produces a comic effect entirely absent from the source. Unlike data (1) and (2), however, the English clause is grammatical*: mulai gelisah* is restructured as the verb-plus-infinitive "began to fidget", and the plural marker *para* is dropped. Under the criteria in Table 1 this grammatical adjustment places data (3) in literal rather than word-for-word translation, and it is counted there; it is discussed here because it shows that an out-of-context lexical choice alone does not make a unit word-for-word. In all seven data classified under this method, the fault is not that the translator misunderstood the story but that the decision was made at the level of the individual word rather than the sentence. Data (4) shows where the boundary with the next method lies

(4) *SL : Zaman dahulu di daerah Betawi tepatnya di kampung Rawa Belong, hiduplah seorang pemuda bernama Pitung.*
TL : A long time ago, in Betawi exactly in Rawa Belong village, there lived a young man named Pitung.

Two grammatical adjustments show that this is no longer word-for-word. The existential predicate *hiduplah* is restructured into the English existential "there lived", and the head-initial phrase *kampung Rawa Belong* is inverted to the head-final "Rawa Belong village" as English requires. The lexis, however, is still handled item by item. *Tepatnya* functions here as a discourse marker meaning "more precisely" or "to be exact", but it is rendered by the bare manner adverb "exactly", which does not sit comfortably between two place adverbials. Data (5) is a further example.

(5) *SL : Hasil rampokkanya [sic] dibagi-bagikan pada rakyat miskin.*
TL : The outcome of the booty was distributed to the poor.

The clause structure is rebuilt correctly, with an English infinitive complement and a passive The Indonesian passive is properly matched by an English passive, and the reduplicated verb dibagi-bagikan, which conveys repeated distribution, is reduced to the single verb "was distributed". Hasil again receives its commonest equivalent, "outcome", giving the tautologous "the outcome of the booty" where "the proceeds of the robbery" would have been idiomatic. Taken together, the thirteen data in this category show a translator who is able to build English sentences but who consults the dictionary rather than the context when choosing what to put inside them.

Faithful Translation

Faithful translation attempts to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the original within the constraints of target-language grammar; it transfers cultural words and preserves the degree of grammatical and lexical deviance of the source (Newmark, 1988, p. 46). Three data, or 9.4%, fall under this method.

(6) *SL : Seluruh rakyat kecil mengalami penderitaan karena kekejaman para Penjajah Belanda yang sering disebut juga Kompeni.*

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TL : The whole commoners have suffered because of the violence of the Dutch colonizers were often referred to as the Kompeni.

Rakyat kecil, literally "small people", is not rendered word by word but by the functional equivalent "commoners", which conveys the social position the Indonesian phrase implies. More importantly, the culturally loaded term *Kompeni* is transferred unchanged and its explanatory apposition is kept, so that English readers are given both the referent, the Dutch colonizers, and the name by which Betawi people knew them. The transfer of the cultural word together with the retention of a slightly awkward source structure, visible in the missing relative pronoun before "were often referred to", is exactly the profile Newmark associates with faithful translation. Data (8) works in the same way.

(7) *SL : Ia merampok kediaman salah satu tuan tanah dan pejabat-pejabat Kompeni.*
TL : He robbed the residence of one of the landowners and officials of the Kompeni.

Tuan tanah becomes "landowners" and *kediaman* becomes "residence", both of which keep the formal register of the source rather than reaching for a neutral word such as "house". The reduplicated plural *pejabat-pejabat* is correctly reduced to the English plural "officials", and *Kompeni* is once again transferred. The sentence is accurate, readable, and recognizably Indonesian in flavour.

Semantic Translation

Semantic translation differs from faithful translation chiefly in that it takes more account of the aesthetic value of the source text and is willing to compromise on meaning where a rigid rendering would be jarring Newmark (1988). Only one data, or 3.1%, shows this degree of flexibility.

(8) *SL : Akhirnya Haji Naipin menyerah dan memberitahu kelemahan-kelemahan Si Pitung.*
TL : Haji Naipin finally gave up and told the weaknesses of Pitung.

Two decisions distinguish this data from the literal ones. The sentence-initial *akhirnya* is moved into the mid-sentence adverbial position that English narrative prose prefers, rather than being fixed at the front as in the source. *Menyerah* is rendered by the phrasal verb "gave up" instead of the formal "surrendered", which matches the plain register of a children's story and keeps the rhythm of the sentence intact. The translator has therefore weighed how the English sentence would sound while remaining close to the content of the source. That this occurs only once suggests it was an isolated success rather than a policy.

Adaptation

Adaptation is the freest of the eight methods, in which the culture of the source language is converted into that of the target language and the text is rewritten accordingly Newmark (1988). Two data, or 6.3%, show this conversion, and both involve the same term.

(9) *SL : Sehingga ia sulit untuk dikalahkan, hal ini semakin membuat para kompeni menjadi resah.*
TL : So he was hard to beat, and making the VOC became restless.

(10) *SL : Para kompeni pun segera mendatangi kediaman Haji Naipin.*
TL : The VOC was rushed to the residence of Haji Naipin.

Kompeni is the Betawi vernacular form of the Dutch *compagnie* and is used throughout the story as the popular name for the colonial authority. In these two data it is replaced by "VOC", the institutional acronym under which that authority is known in historical writing and therefore in the frame of reference of an international reader. The cultural item of the source is thus exchanged for a term belonging to the reader's own world, which is what defines adaptation. The substitution is not applied consistently, however. Twelve other occurrences of the same term are transferred unchanged as "Kompeni", so that a reader working from the English text alone is given two names for a single participant with nothing to indicate that they refer to the same body. What could have been a useful cultural bridge becomes a source of confusion. In Venuti (2018) terms, applied here locally to two items rather than to the overall

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orientation of the text, keeping Kompeni is a foreignizing choice and substituting "VOC" a domesticating one; using both without comment gives the reader the benefit of neither.

Free Translation

Free translation reproduces the matter of the original without its manner, or the content without the form Newmark (1988). One data, or 3.1%, belongs here.

(11) *SL : Maka mereka pun menyandera kedua orang tuanya.*
TL : So they seized his parents.

The content of the sentence survives but its manner does not. *Menyandera* means specifically "to take hostage", and the hostage frame is what motivates the extortion described in the sentences that follow; "seized" reports only the physical act of capture and leaves the reader without the reason the parents are being held. The quantifier *kedua*, marking that both parents were taken, and the emphatic particle *pun* are both dropped. The result is shorter and smoother than the source, and it moves the story forward, but a specific element of meaning has been traded for that smoothness.

Idiomatic Translation

Idiomatic translation reproduces the message of the original but tends to distort nuances of meaning by preferring colloquialisms and ready-made expressions of the target language Newmark (1988). One data, or 3.1%, was classified here.

(12) *SL : Ayah Si Pitung dengan berat hati memberitahu pada kompeni bahwa selama ini Si Pitung diajar mengaji oleh gurunya Haji Naipin.*
TL : Father of Pitung reluctantly from informed on the Kompeni that Pitung was taught religion by his teacher Haji Naipin.

Dengan berat hati is an idiom whose literal sense is "with a heavy heart". Instead of transferring the image, which English would in fact have accepted, the translator supplies the ready-made adverb "reluctantly". The message is preserved and the English is clear, but the figurative colouring of the original, in which reluctance is felt as physical weight, is levelled out. This is precisely the loss of nuance that Newmark associates with the idiomatic method. It is worth noting that the rest of the same sentence relapses into word-level rendering, since the sequence "reluctantly from informed on" carries over the Indonesian preposition *pada* and adds a stray element, which shows how unevenly the methods are applied even within a single sentence.

Communicative Translation

Communicative translation attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership Newmark (1988). Four data, or 12.5%, were classified under this method, and they cluster in a revealing place.

(13) *SL : Pada suatu hari, kompeni dan pasukannya berhasil menemukan informasi tentang keluarga Si Pitung.*
TL : One day, the Kompeni and its troops managed to find information about Pitungs family.

(14) *SL : Seiring berjalannya waktu, Belanda mengetahui keberadaan Si Pitung.*
TL : Over time, the Dutch knew where Pitung was.

In data (14) the formula *Pada suatu hari* is not translated element by element but replaced by "One day", the corresponding opening formula of English storytelling, and *berhasil menemukan* is compressed into the natural collocation "managed to find". In data (15) the nominalization *keberadaan*, meaning whereabouts or existence, is unpacked into the finite clause "where Pitung was", a structural change that English readers process far more easily than a nominal equivalent would allow, and the time expression *Seiring berjalannya waktu* is replaced by the conventional narrative connector "Over time". A third unit, "At the time, Indonesia was still under the Dutch rule", produces the established English collocation "under

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Dutch rule" for *di bawah kekuasaan Belanda*. What these data have in common is that they occur at episode boundaries, where the source text uses fixed narrative formulas. The translator evidently recognized these formulas as formulas and reached for their English counterparts, whereas the descriptive sentences in between were processed word by word. Communicative translation in this text is therefore triggered by recognizable narrative frames rather than adopted as a consistent orientation.

The Most Dominant Translation Method

The second research question concerns dominance. As Table 2 shows, literal translation is the most frequently used method, appearing in 13 of the 32 data or 40.6% of the corpus. Word-for-word translation follows with 7 data or 21.9%, and communicative translation is third with 4 data or 12.5%. %. The remaining five methods account for only 8 data between them. In all, 24 of the 32 units (75%) fall on the source-language side, and 20 of 32 (62.5%) are handled by the two methods closest to the source pole. The English version of The Story of *Si Pitung* is, on this evidence, a decidedly source-oriented translation.

Three explanations for this orientation suggest themselves. The first is the physical design of the book. Because each page prints the Indonesian text directly above its English translation, the two versions invite line-by-line comparison, and a close correspondence between them allows a young reader to match one against the other word by word. A source-oriented rendering is, in that sense, functional for a bilingual learning aid in a way it would not be for a stand-alone literary translation. The second is the cultural density of the source. Betawi terms such as *kompeni*, honorifics such as *Haji*, and the mystical vocabulary of *ilmu kebal* and *kesaktian* have no ready English equivalents, and a translator who is unsure how to handle them may reasonably default to staying close to the original. The third, and the one the data support most strongly, is the translator's command of English. Forms such as "deployed", "taught", "abillities", and "Pitung parents" indicate that the source-oriented profile is at least partly a consequence of limited target-language resources rather than a deliberate strategy.

The consequences of this dominance are visible in the handling of culture-specific items, summarized in Table 3. Proper names and place names are transferred without loss, but terms carrying religious or mystical content are consistently generalized, and the most important cultural term in the story is rendered in two different ways.

Table 3. Treatment of Betawi and Indonesian Cultural Terms in The English Translation

Source term	English rendering	Effect
Kompeni	"Kompeni" (11); "VOC" (2)	Transferred, but twice adapted; the two names are never linked
mengaji	"learn about religion"; "religion"	Generalized; the sense of Qur'anic recitation is lost
silat	"martial movements"	Generalized; the specific Betawi martial art disappears
ilmu kebal	"invulnerable abillities"	Partly retained; the notion of acquired knowledge is lost
kesaktian	"the magic"; "his power"	Inconsistent; the two renderings suggest different concepts
rakyat kecil	"commoners"	Functional equivalent; social meaning preserved
tuan tanah	"landowners"	Functional equivalent; register preserved
Betawi, Rawa Belong, *Haji Naipin*	transferred unchanged	Local colour preserved without explanation

Data IDs refer to the Appendix. Kompeni is transferred in D1–D3, D5, D7, D8, D13, D14, D23, D29, D30, and D32 and adapted as "VOC" in D10 and D11; *mengaji* occurs in D19 and D13, *silat* in D20, *ilmu kebal* in D28, *kesaktian* in D30 and D32, *rakyat kecil* in D2 and D7, *tuan tanah* in D8, and Betawi and Rawa Belong in D4.

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The pattern in Table 3 is worth further examination. The two terms that anchor *Si Pitung* in Betawi Islam, *mengaji* and *silat*, are both replaced by superordinates, which Baker (2018) calls translation by a more general word. Mengaji refers to the recitation and study of the Qur'an, an activity that in the story explains why *Pitung* is entrusted to *Haji Naipin* in the first place and why the colonial authorities later go to *Haji Naipin* for the secret of his immunity; "learn about religion" does not carry that specificity. *Silat* names a martial art that is itself a marker of Betawi identity, and "martial movements" reduces it to generic physical training. In both cases the storyline survives but the cultural texture that the introduction identified as the reason for studying this text does not. This suggests that source-oriented methods protect the form of the source text without necessarily protecting its cultural content, since protecting cultural content requires a decision about the reader, and the decision here was consistently deferred. Saputri et al. (2026) report the same risk for Indonesian–English bilingual folktale books, noting that generalization can weaken the cultural specificity of the stories.

Compared with previous research, the present findings align most closely with Hayadi et al. (2022), whose bilingual edition of *Malin Kundang* is the nearest comparison in genre and format: the data they present are dominated by word-for-word, literal, and faithful translation, as here, although their translation runs in the opposite direction, from English into Indonesian, and they report no frequencies. The findings likewise agree with Kembaren et al. (2024), who also found literal translation to be the most frequent method, and with Hidayat & Harmoko (2018), who concluded that the bilingual storybooks they examined remained oriented toward the source text even where the translators had eased the reader's path with procedures such as modulation and addition. Ariyati et al. (2025) likewise found literal translation to be the most frequent procedure in an Indonesian–English bilingual storybook for children. The findings differ from Nugraha et al. (2017), whose student translators favoured communicative translation above all others, from Hendrawan & Kamayana (2023), whose analysis of *Nyi Roro Kidul* identified adaptation and free translation as dominant, and from Siregar et al. (2020), who found free translation dominant in *Putri Lopian* and no word-for-word translation at all.

The contrast with Siregar et al. (2020) is the most instructive of these, because their study shares both the direction of translation of the present study, Indonesian into English, and its genre, a regional folktale addressed to young readers. Their translator moved decisively toward the reader; the translator of *Si Pitung* did not. The divergence therefore cannot be explained by direction or genre alone, and by extension it cannot be explained by the cultural density of the source either, since *Putri Lopian* carries Batak cultural material such as marga that is no less resistant to translation than the Betawi material examined here. Of the three explanations offered above, this leaves the design of the book and the translator's command of English as the ones that carry weight. *Putri Lopian* was translated, according to Siregar et al. (2020), who interviewed the translator, by someone who deliberately simplified the language for the child readers he expected, which points to a conscious decision about the reader, whereas *Si Pitung*, for which no information about the translator or the editing process is available, is a facing-text bilingual storybook, a format in which close correspondence between the two versions is functional. That the book received little editorial revision is an assumption rather than an established fact, although the uncorrected errors documented above are consistent with it. The absence of adaptation in Ramadhan et al. (2021) points in the same direction: there too a translator working out of Indonesian preferred literal and communicative handling of culture-bound items such as *batagor* over substitution by a target-culture equivalent, which is close to what happens with *mengaji* and *silat* in the present data.

These findings carry a practical implication for the use of bilingual folklore books in language teaching. Because such books are widely used to introduce children to English through familiar stories, a source-oriented rendering containing forms such as "questions The Kompeni" or "Earth wealth" risks presenting learners with English that is not English. At the same time, the four communicative data show that the translator was capable of producing natural target-language formulations when a familiar narrative frame prompted it. The

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problem is therefore not a lack of ability but the absence of a consistent method, applied by decision rather than by default.

CONCLUSIONS

This study identified all eight of Newmark's (1988) translation methods in the English version of *The Story of Si Pitung*. Literal translation was the most dominant (40.6%), followed by word-for-word (21.9%) and communicative translation (12.5%). Source-language-oriented methods accounted for 75% of the translation units, indicating that the translator largely retained the source text's linguistic structures and lexical choices. While this approach preserved proper names and some Betawi cultural expressions, it also resulted in unnatural English expressions and generalized cultural meanings, particularly in translating *mengaji* and *silat*. The inconsistent translation of *kompeni* through both transference and adaptation further suggests a lack of consistency in handling culture-specific items. These findings highlight the need to balance cultural preservation, semantic accuracy, and natural English expression when translating Betawi folklore. However, the findings are limited to one bilingual edition and 32 translation units. Future research could compare different editions, examine translation methods and procedures, and explore readers' responses to culturally specific expressions.

DECLARATION

Author Contributions: Daniel undertook the examination of the Indonesian and English versions of the Si Pitung folktale, identified the translation units, applied Newmark's translation framework, and developed the initial research report. Paulina Erawati Paramita contributed to the theoretical discussion, verification of the translation classifications, evaluation of the analytical results, and refinement of the manuscript. The authors jointly discussed the research interpretations and gave their approval to the completed article.

Conflict of Interest: The authors confirm that the research and its publication were not influenced by any competing interests. No personal, financial, or institutional affiliations affected the analysis or reporting of the study.

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Ethical Approval: This research involved textual examination of an existing bilingual folktale publication. No human subjects, experimental procedures, or private personal records were included in the research. Accordingly, ethical clearance from a research ethics committee was not necessary.

Informed Consent: Not applicable. The materials examined were published Indonesian and English versions of the Si Pitung story, and the study did not require the recruitment or direct involvement of research participants.

Use of Generative AI: AI-assisted applications, where used, served as supplementary resources for improving the linguistic presentation of the manuscript. The identification of translation units, categorization based on Newmark's eight translation methods, comparative textual examination, and interpretation of the findings were undertaken and checked by the authors. Responsibility for the research content, analytical decisions, and final conclusions rests entirely with the authors.

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