

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research background, research questions, objective of this study, significance of this study and scope and limitation.

1.1 Background of the Study

Translation is an important activity that acts as a bridge for communication across languages and cultures. According to Munday (2001) translation studies is an interdisciplinary discipline that examines the theory, practice, and phenomena of translation. In general, translation is a method, technique, or procedure chosen by a translator when performing translation activities or facing challenges in the process (Putri, 2024). Translation, as the process of processing meaning from a source language to a target language, has become an essential bridge of cross-cultural communication in the era of globalization. In this context, a translation is considered good if it is able to capture and convey the meaning of the source language completely into the target language, thus transferring every meaning in the original text perfectly with proportional and natural results (Saputro, 2022). However, the complexity of translation does not only lie in the linguistic aspect, but also in the transfer of cultural values, social context and worldview embedded in the text.

Catford (1965) defined that “the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language” (p. 20). This definition demonstrates that the search for equivalence is a challenge in itself. This challenge becomes even more complex when dealing with texts rich in local cultural content, where translators must consider the balance between accuracy, acceptability, and readability for the target audience. This complexity is further compounded by the fact that each culture has a distinct conceptual framework, so cross-cultural translation is not simply a matter of translating language but also requires adapting meaning and understanding to different cultural mindsets. Despite advances in Machine Translation (MT) technology, translating cultural elements into regional

languages remain problematic. This is crucial because mistranslation can lead to cultural loss or distortion.

Translating cultural elements presents unique challenges in the field of MT that have not been fully addressed by current technological developments. Culturally Specific Items (CSI) often lack direct equivalents in the target language (Newmark, 1988). This creates a dilemma between maintaining cultural authenticity and ensuring understanding in the target language. Inaccurate translation of culture-specific items, expressions, and values can result in the loss of original meaning and even distortion of the message, impacting not only linguistics but also cultural understanding and preservation. This phenomenon becomes even more crucial in the context of regional languages in Indonesia, which are rich in cultural specificity but have limited representation in MT training data (Aji et al., 2022). Therefore, CSI was selected as the focus of this study because it represents most culturally loaded elements in the source text that are most vulnerable to meaning loss during machine translation. Madurese, as a regional language spoken by over 13 million speakers, has high cultural-linguistic complexity but is still considered a language with limited resources in the MT context (Maulana et al., 2025). The limited availability of parallel data and digital documentation makes this language face challenges in the development of automatic translation systems, including the risk of digital extinction. This situation impacts the quality of translations produced by mainstream MT, where cultural nuances are often lost or distorted during the translation process (Sulistyo, 2023).

To understand the extent to which cultural elements can be recognized and preserved in the translation process, a theoretical framework capable of identifying cultural forms within texts is required. In the context of cultural translation, Newmark offers a commonly used approach to identifying and classifying cultural elements. This theory divides specific cultural elements into several main categories. This theoretical framework systematically enables researchers to recognize the cultural aspects inherent in a work. Through this classification, translators can understand the social, material, and symbolic context of the source before determining an appropriate equivalent in the target language. Thus,

Newmark's theory serves not only as a categorization tool but also as a guide for assessing the extent to which cultural values can be accurately transferred into the target language. Several researchers also consider this classification effective for studying texts rich in cultural meaning because it provides systematic guidance for translators in finding appropriate equivalents. Safi'i (2025) even emphasized that Newmark's classification has proven applicable in analyzing bilingual texts containing cultural elements. These techniques are considered appropriate to the function of the text and the cultural proximity between the source and target languages.

Folktales are a form of cultural heritage that not only serve as entertainment, but also as a means of passing on values, morals, and philosophy from generation to generation. Madura is a regional representation that has a variety of folk tales, such as: The Legend of Jokotole (*Legenda Jokotole*), The Origin of Madura Island (*Asal-usul Pulau Madura*), and The Flame Never Goes Out (*Api Tak Kunjung Padam*). These stories represent the identity of the Madurese people, depicting their outlook on life and are a manifestation of local wisdom that is deeply embedded in everyday life. Therefore, Madurese folk tales are not only important as a local cultural heritage, but also have the potential to be introduced to international audiences as part of the promotion of national culture. This potential will be even more meaningful if it aligns with the needs of the globalization era which demands that each region be able to promote its cultural identity on the international stage. Suryanandi N. (2015), explained that the erosion of Madurese pride in cultural identity is a matter of concern because it is related to the very existence of Madurese culture. Madurese cultural identity needs to be maintained, not only for emotional ties, but also because Madurese society has a dual identity that must be recognized.

Mozaik Careta Dari Madhura by Azhar et al. (2019) is a collection of Madurese folktales that showcases the richness of Madurese language and culture. This book contains various genres of traditional stories such as legends, myths, and fairy tales, rich in cultural elements such as the *bhuppa'-bhabhu'-ghuru-rato* (father-mother-teacher-king) value system, *rokat tase'* (sea celebration) tradition, the concept of *tembhang* (traditional singing), and various Madurese idiomatic

expressions. The linguistic characteristics of the text basically use Indonesian, but it contains cultural elements expressed through Madurese and Javanese vocabulary, such as traditional greetings, local expressions, and terms related to social systems, beliefs, and cultural practices. This complexity makes this book an ideal data corpus for testing the capabilities of machine translation in handling cultural translation. The cultural terms contained in the text, such as the *bhuppa'-bhabhu'-ghuru-rato* value system, *rokat tase'* tradition, and the concept of *tembhang*, can be categorized as culture-specific items (CSI) according to Newmark (1988) classification. This theory provides a systematic framework for identifying local cultural forms, both material and non-material, in literary texts. By applying this classification, the study can describe the types of culture-specific items found in the book *Mozaik Caréta Dâri Madhurâ* before analyzing how Google Translate translates them into English.

Although *Mozaik Caréta Dâri Madhurâ* primarily represents Madurese culture, the book also contains traces of Javanese linguistic and cultural elements. This combination reflects the intertwined history of the two ethnic groups, which share geographical proximity and familial ties. As illustrated in the story *Asal Muasal Kata Madura*, the myth of the origin of the Madurese people reflects the cultural relationship between Madura and Java. This story symbolizes the meeting of two cultural forces: Madura and Java, which have been intertwined and shaped each other since the beginning of their history (Azhar et al., 2019). Rather than treating these Javanese elements as external influences, this study views them as part of a cultural hybridity that enriches the text. Therefore, the identification of cultural elements in this study encompasses both Madurese and Javanese influences, as both naturally coexist in the narrative.

The development of artificial intelligence technology has revolutionized the field of translation through Machine Translation (MT). One widely accessible MT is Google Translate. Since 2016, this translation engine has used Neural Machine Translation (NMT) technology, offering instant translation capabilities with support for over 100 languages through a deep learning approach that can understand the context of sentences more holistically (Wu et al., 2016). Despite its extensive development, Google Translate remains understudied in its ability to

translate cultural elements, particularly in languages with limited resources like Madurese. Because the system relies on a large amount of translated text data, languages rarely used digitally often struggle to produce accurate translations, particularly when it comes to cultural meaning. Google Translate was chosen for this study because it is one of the most accessible and widely used machine translation tools in Indonesia and has been frequently investigated in previous translation studies (Putra, 2022; Zalkra, 2019). Furthermore, its performance in handling culturally specific elements provides an important area of investigation, particularly regarding how cultural meanings are preserved or altered in machine-generated translations.

To analyze the translation results by Google Translate, this study applies Newmark 1988 translation procedure as main framework. These procedures provide systematic guidance for understanding how each culture-specific items is rendered into English, including techniques such as, transference, naturalization, cultural equivalent, literal translation, paraphrase, etc. This study focuses on identifying which procedures are applied to each cultural item. Focusing on translation procedure is essential because it highlights how machine translation preserves or adapts cultural meaning. Without proper procedural handling, even a grammatically correct translation may fail to convey the intended cultural significance of the source text. According to Newmark (1988), analyzing translation procedures allows researchers to identify how each culture-specific item is rendered in the target language and to understand the strategies applied by the translator or translation system.

Although research on machine translation has advanced rapidly, studies specifically examining MT's ability to handle culture-specific items, particularly in regional languages in Indonesia, remain very limited. Most research on machine translation focuses on high-resource language pairs or general translation performance. Meanwhile, research on cultural translation in the Indonesian context, particularly involving Madurese folktales, is still scarce. Examining how machine translation handles and renders cultural content is crucial for developing more culturally sensitive technologies that can represent the richness of local cultures.

This research is increasingly urgent given that the acceleration of digitalization has increased the need for accurate cultural translation, multicultural education, and intercultural communication in a global context. Several previous studies have examined CSI in various contexts, such as Madurese digital folktales (Rahma, 2020), Balinese Folklore (Putra, 2022), Turkish short stories (Kuleli, 2019), and Indonesian subtitles (Farkhan, 2020). However, most of these studies focused on human translation or were limited to languages other than Madurese. No study has specifically examined Google Translate's translation procedures on CSI in Madurese literary texts, particularly in *Mozaik Caréta Dâri Madhurâ*. This study aims to fill this gap. Therefore, this study will focus on analyzing how Google Translate renders Madurese and Javanese culture-specific items contained in the *Mozaik Caréta Dâri Madhurâ* into English. Newmark (1988) will be applied to identify the culture-specific items and examine the translation procedures used for each item. This approach allows researcher to see how Google Translate handle culture-specific items and the strategies used to convey into the target language.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the issues outlined in the background, this study focuses on the culture-specific items found in *Mozaik Caréta Dâri Madhurâ* and how these items are translated into English using Google Translate. To guide the analysis and ensure that the study aligns with its aims, the following research question are formulated:

1. What are Culture-Specific Items found in *Mozaik Caréta Dâri Madhurâ*?
2. What are translation procedures used by Google Translate in translating the Culture-Specific Items?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In line with the research questions, this study is designed to achieve several objectives that reflect the overall focus to identifying culture-specific items, examining their translations, and analyzing the translation procedures involved. The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To find out the culture-specific items in *Mozaik Caréta Dâri Madhurâ*.

2. To analyze the translation procedures used by Google Translate in translating the culture-specific items.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research has both theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, it contributes to the field of translation studies by enriching academic discussions on how machine translation systems handle culturally specific issues, which are often challenging due to the lack of direct equivalents between languages.

Practically, this research provides an overview of Google Translate's performance in translating regional culture-specific items, particularly from Madurese and Javanese into English. The results of this study can serve as a reference for students and researchers in linguistics, translation studies, and cultural studies interested in the intersection of language, technology, and culture. In addition, the result can support teacher and lecturer in developing teaching materials related cultural translation by providing concrete examples of translation procedures used in translating culturally specific items.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this research is in the field of translation studies and focuses on the translation of culture-specific items contained in the book *Mozaik Carèta Dâri Madhurâ* by Azhar et al. (2019). This research includes the process of identifying culture-specific items in the text based on cultural categories according to Newmark (1988), translating them into English using Google Translate, and analyzing the translation procedure from the same theoretical framework reflected in Google Translate's output.

The limitation of this study is that it only uses one of data source, *Mozaik Carèta Dâri Madhurâ* and one of machine translation that is Google Translate. This study only focuses on the translation procedures used in Google Translate's results. It does not address other aspect, does not utilize other translation tools. Therefore, the findings are limited to the culture-specific items present in the text and the translation procedures used by Google Translate.