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An Analysis of Cultural Words and Translation Techniques in Michelle Zauner's *"Crying In H Mart"* Novel

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ABSTRACT

Language and culture are closely interconnected, making cultural words challenging to translate because they are often rooted in the source culture and may have no direct equivalents in the target language. This study aims to identify the categories of cultural words in Michelle Zauner's Crying in H Mart and analyze the translation techniques used in its Indonesian translation, Tangisanku di H Mart. This research employed a descriptive qualitative method and used Newmark's (1988) theory of cultural words and Molina and Albir's (2002) theory of translation techniques. The findings identified 223 cultural words classified into five categories: Ecology (19), Material Culture (135), Social Culture (16), Social Organization (27), and Gestures and Habits (26). Material Culture was the most dominant category, accounting for 60.54% of the data. Among the translation techniques identified, Pure Borrowing was the most frequently used, followed by Literal Translation, Established Equivalent, Amplification, Description, Naturalized Borrowing, Adaptation, Reduction, Generalization, and Modulation. The frequent use of Pure Borrowing indicates the translator's tendency to retain Korean cultural terms and preserve their cultural identity in the Indonesian translation. Overall, the findings show that Crying in H Mart represents Korean culture through food, traditions, institutions, and everyday practices.

Keywords: cultural words, literary translation, translation techniques, Newmark, Molina and Albir, Crying in H Mart.

INTRODUCTION

Literary translation involves transferring a literary work from one language to another while conveying not only the meaning of the source text but also its cultural elements. Cultural elements reflect the values, beliefs, traditions, and social practices of a particular community. Therefore, translating literary works can be challenging because cultural expressions in the source language may not have direct equivalents in the target language.

One of the challenges in literary translation concerns cultural words. Cultural words are words or expressions that are closely associated with the culture of the source language and may require particular treatment when translated into another language. Newmark (1988) classifies cultural words into five categories: Ecology, Material Culture, Social Culture, Social Organization, and Gestures and Habits. This classification provides a framework for identifying and analyzing culture-specific elements in literary texts.

Cultural words are found extensively in *Crying in H Mart* by Michelle Zauner. The memoir presents Korean and American cultural experiences through food, family relationships, traditions, and everyday life. These cultural elements make the work relevant to the study of cultural words and their translation. When such expressions are translated into Indonesian,

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translators may employ different techniques to convey their meanings and cultural references in the target language.

Translation techniques can be used to examine how cultural words are transferred from the source language into the target language. Molina and Albir (2002) proposed eighteen translation techniques that describe the procedures used by translators to address different translation problems. These techniques provide a framework for examining how the cultural words found in *Crying in H Mart* are rendered in its Indonesian translation.

Previous studies have examined cultural words and translation techniques in various literary works. However, studies focusing on the combination of Newmark's classification of cultural words and Molina and Albir's translation techniques in *Crying in H Mart* and its Indonesian translation remain limited. Therefore, this study examines the cultural words found in *Crying in H Mart* based on Newmark's classification and analyzes the translation techniques used to translate them into Indonesian based on Molina and Albir's framework. The study also identifies the dominant translation techniques used in the translation of the cultural words.

Literature Review

Cultural Words

Cultural words are words or expressions that are closely associated with the culture, beliefs, customs, and way of life of a particular community. In literary translation, cultural words may present challenges because their meanings are often closely connected to the social and cultural background of the source text. Therefore, translating such expressions requires not only linguistic knowledge but also an understanding of the culture represented in the source text.

Newmark (1988) classifies cultural words into five categories: *Ecology, Material Culture, Social Culture, Social Organization, and Gestures and Habits*. Ecology refers to cultural expressions related to geographical features, flora, fauna, and other natural conditions. Material Culture includes food, clothing, houses, transportation, and other physical objects. Social Culture covers activities, occupations, and aspects of everyday social life. Social Organization refers to terms related to political, administrative, religious, and social institutions. Meanwhile, Gestures and Habits include culturally specific gestures, behaviors, and customary practices. In this study, Newmark's classification is used to identify and categorize the cultural words found in *Crying in H Mart*.

Translation Techniques

To examine how cultural words are transferred into the target language, this study applies the translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir (2002). Translation techniques refer to procedures used by translators to address specific problems that arise during the translation process. Molina and Albir identify eighteen translation techniques: *Adaptation, Amplification, Borrowing, Calque, Compensation, Description, Discursive Creation, Established Equivalence, Generalization, Linguistic Amplification, Linguistic Compression, Literal Translation, Modulation, Particularization, Reduction, Substitution, Transposition, and Variation.*

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These techniques provide a framework for examining the procedures used to translate cultural words from the source text into the target text. In this study, Molina and Albir's framework is used to analyze how the cultural words identified according to Newmark's classification are translated into Indonesian. The application of these techniques helps reveal how culture-specific expressions are maintained, adapted, explained, or modified in the target text.

Previous Research

Previous studies have examined cultural words and translation techniques in various literary works. Ulfiyatuzzuhriyyah (2022), for example, investigated cultural words in *The Midnight Library* using Newmark's (1988) classification and Molina and Albir's (2002) translation techniques. Similarly, Rahmah (2019) analyzed Indonesian cultural words in *Laskar Pelangi* and its English translation using the same theoretical frameworks. Kuswahono (2020) also examined cultural words in *The Da Vinci Code* by applying Newmark's cultural categories and Molina and Albir's translation techniques. Other studies, such as Wenda (2024), have focused on cultural words and translation quality, while Rahmawati (2015) examined translation techniques in *Divergent* without specifically focusing on cultural words.

These studies demonstrate that Newmark's classification and Molina and Albir's translation techniques are useful frameworks for examining culture-specific expressions in translated literary works. However, previous research has focused on different literary works, cultural contexts, and analytical purposes. Research specifically examining cultural words related to Korean and Korean-American culture in Michelle Zauner's *Crying in H Mart* and their Indonesian translation remains limited. Therefore, the present study applies Newmark's (1988) classification of cultural words and Molina and Albir's (2002) translation techniques to investigate the cultural words found in *Crying in H Mart* and the techniques used to translate them into Indonesian.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a *descriptive qualitative approach* to identify and analyze cultural words in Michelle Zauner's *Crying in H Mart* and their Indonesian translation. The qualitative approach was used because the study focused on describing and interpreting linguistic data in their textual and cultural contexts. The analysis was based on *Newmark's (1988) classification of cultural words and Molina and Albir's (2002) translation techniques*.

The data were taken from Michelle Zauner's memoir *Crying in H Mart*, published by Alfred A. Knopf in 2021, and its Indonesian translation, *Menangis di H Mart*, translated by Devina Heriyanto and published by Gramedia Pustaka Utama in 2023. The primary data consisted of *223 cultural words* identified in the source text and their corresponding translations in the target text. The data were classified into five categories proposed by Newmark: *Ecology, Material Culture, Social Culture, Social Organization, and Gestures and Habits*. Each cultural word was then analyzed to identify the translation technique used based on Molina and Albir's

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(2002) framework. Secondary sources, including books, journal articles, and previous studies, were also used to support the theoretical and analytical discussion.

The data were collected through *documentation and close reading*. The researcher read both versions of the memoir carefully, identified words and expressions containing cultural elements, and recorded the relevant data in a data sheet. The identified cultural words were then classified according to Newmark's five categories.

The data analysis was conducted in several stages. First, the identified cultural words were classified based on Newmark's (1988) cultural categories. Second, each cultural word was compared with its Indonesian translation to determine the translation technique applied according to Molina and Albir's (2002) framework. Third, the frequency of each cultural category and translation technique was calculated to identify the dominant findings. Finally, the results were interpreted descriptively to answer the research questions and explain the patterns of cultural-word translation in the Indonesian version of *Crying in H Mart*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Types of Cultural Words

The analysis revealed a total of *223 cultural words* identified in Michelle Zauner's Crying in H Mart and its Indonesian translation, *Menangis di H Mart*. The findings were classified into five categories of cultural words proposed by Newmark (1988), namely Ecology, Material Culture, Social Culture, Social Organization, and Gestures and Habits. The analysis focused on cultural words representing specific cultural elements in the source text and their corresponding translations in the target text.

Table 1. Categories of Cultural Word

No.	Cultural word	Quantity	Percentage
1.	Ecology	19	8.52%
2.	Material Culture	135	60.54%
3.	Social Culture	16	7.17%
4.	Social Organization	27	12.11%
5.	Gestures & habits	26	11.66%

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Total Data	**223**	**100%**

Distribution of Cultural Words Based on Newmark's (1988) Categories:

As presented in Table 4.1, *Material Culture* is the most frequently occurring category, with *135 data (60.54%)*. This finding indicates that the memoir contains numerous cultural references related to food, clothing, and other tangible cultural objects. Meanwhile, *Social Culture* is the least frequent category, with *16 data (7.17%)*, indicating that references to occupations, leisure activities, lifestyles, and popular culture appear less frequently in the memoir.

Translation Strategies Applied in the Translation

In response to the second research question, the researcher analyzed the translation techniques applied to the identified cultural words based on Molina and Albir's (2002) framework. From the **223 cultural words**, ten translation techniques were identified, namely Pure Borrowing, Literal Translation, Established Equivalent, Amplification, Description, Naturalized Borrowing, Adaptation, Reduction, Generalization, and Modulation.

Tabel 2. Cultural Words on Molina and Albir's

No.	Translation Technique	Quantity	Percentage
1.	Pure Borrowing	113	50.67%
2.	Literal Translation	54	24.22%
3.	Established Equivalent	22	9.87%
4.	Amplification	14	6.28%
5.	Description	6	2.69%
6.	Naturalized Borrowing	5	2.24%
7.	Adaptation	3	1.35%
8.	Reduction	3	1.35%
9.	Generalization	2	0.90%
10.	Modulation	1	0.45%
	Total Data	**223**	**100%**

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Distribution of Translation Techniques Based on Molina and Albir's (2002) Theory

As shown in Table 4.2, *Pure Borrowing* is the most frequently employed translation technique, with *113 data (50.67%)*. This finding indicates that the translator tends to retain cultural terms in their original forms when translating Korean cultural elements into Indonesian. Meanwhile, *Modulation* is the least frequently used technique, occurring in only *one datum (0.45%)*.

This section discusses the representative data from each category of cultural words and the translation techniques applied by the translator. One datum from each of Newmark's (1988) five cultural word categories was selected to represent the findings.

Datum 1

Ecology – Literal Translation

ST: We moved to Eugene, Oregon, a small college town in the **Pacific Northwes**t.

TT: Kami pindah ke Eugene, Oregon, sebuah kota kecil di wilayah **barat-laut Pasifik** yang menjadi lokasi beberapa perguruan tinggi.

The cultural word ***Pacific Northwest*** is categorized as ***Ecology*** because it refers to a geographical region in the northwestern part of North America. According to Newmark (1988), geographical features and regions are included in the Ecology category because they represent elements of the natural environment associated with a particular culture. The translator employs ***Literal Translation*** by translating *Pacific Northwest* into *barat-laut Pasifik*. This technique transfers the source expression directly into the target language while maintaining its original meaning. The translation successfully conveys the geographical reference without altering its cultural identity.

Datum 2

Material Culture – Pure Borrowing

ST: Sweet braised black soybeans, crisp yellow sprouts with scallion and sesame oil, juicy cucumber kimchi were shoveled into our mouth behind spoonfuls of warm, lavender **kong bap** straight from the open rice cooker.

TT: Kedelai hitam rebus manis, taoge yang renyah dengan daun bawang dan minyak wijen, dan kimchi ketimun yang asam dan segar masuk ke mulut kami setelah suapan **kong bap**, nasi campur kedelai yang hangat dan berwarna ungu muda.

The cultural word ***kong bap*** belongs to ***Material Culture*** because it refers to a traditional Korean food. Newmark (1988) includes food and beverages in this category because they represent tangible cultural products associated with a particular society. The translator

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applies ***Pure Borrowing*** by retaining the Korean term *kong bap* in the target text. According to Molina and Albir (2002), Pure Borrowing transfers a source-language term directly into the target language without modification. The translator also provides an explanation of the dish, allowing Indonesian readers to understand its meaning while preserving its Korean cultural identity.

Datum 3

Social Culture – Pure Borrowing

ST: Jeju was famous for its **haenyo**, female divers trained for generations to hold their breath without scuba gear, collecting abalone, sea cucumber, and other underwater delicacies.

TT: Jeju terkenal akan **haenyo**, penyelam perempuan yang sudah terlatih selama turun-temurun untuk menahan napas tanpa peralatan selam, mengumpulkan abalon, teripang, dan hasil laut lainnya.

The cultural word ***haenyo*** is categorized as ***Social Culture*** because it refers to a traditional community of female divers in Jeju who have practiced free diving for generations. The term represents not only an occupation but also a distinctive social and cultural practice associated with Korean society. The translator employs ***Pure Borrowing*** by retaining the original term *haenyo* in the target text. This technique preserves the cultural identity of the term and introduces Indonesian readers to a distinctive aspect of Korean culture without replacing it with a more general expression.

Datum 4

Social Organization – Pure Borrowing

ST: **Ever since my mom died, I cry in H Mart.**

TT: Sejak ibuku meninggal, aku menangis di **H Mart**.

The cultural word ***H Mart*** is categorized as ***Social Organization*** because it refers to a Korean-American supermarket chain that functions as a commercial establishment and an important cultural space for Korean communities. According to Newmark (1988), commercial institutions and organized establishments are included in the Social Organization category. The translator employs ***Pure Borrowing*** by retaining the name *H Mart* in the target text. Since it is a proper name without an equivalent in Indonesian, retaining its original form preserves the identity and cultural association of the institution.

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Datum 5
Gestures and Habits – Established Equivalent

ST: On my birthday, we ate **miyeokguk**—a hearty seaweed soup full of nutrients that women are encouraged to eat postpartum and that Koreans traditionally eat on their birthdays to celebrate their mothers**.**

TT: Di hari ulang tahun, kami makan **miyeokguk**—sup rumput laut yang sehat dan penuh gizi yang disarankan untuk dimakan perempuan pasca-melahirkan dan biasa dimakan orang Korea sebagai tradisi ulang tahun untuk menghormati ibu mereka.

The cultural word ***miyeokguk*** is categorized as ***Gestures and Habits*** because its use represents a traditional Korean birthday custom. The practice of eating *miyeokguk* on birthdays reflects a cultural tradition associated with honoring mothers. The translator employs ***Established Equivalent*** by retaining the term *miyeokguk* while providing the Indonesian expression *sup rumput laut*. According to Molina and Albir (2002), Established Equivalent uses an expression recognized as an equivalent in the target language. This technique helps Indonesian readers understand the cultural reference while maintaining the original Korean term.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that *Crying in H Mart* contains cultural words representing all five categories proposed by Newmark (1988), with Material Culture being the most dominant category. The prominence of this category reflects the memoir's strong connection to Korean food, culinary traditions, and other tangible cultural elements. Food in the memoir functions not only as a physical cultural object but also as a representation of memory, family relationships, identity, and cultural heritage. This finding highlights the significant role of material culture in conveying the author's Korean cultural identity.

The analysis also shows that Pure Borrowing is the most frequently used translation technique based on Molina and Albir (2002). The frequent retention of Korean cultural terms indicates the translator's tendency to preserve culture-specific expressions rather than replace them with Indonesian cultural equivalents. Terms such as *hanbok*, *gyeranjjim*, *Jesa*, and *noraebang* are retained to maintain their cultural identity. Other techniques, including Literal Translation, Established Equivalent, Amplification, and Reduction, are applied according to the characteristics of each cultural word and the needs of Indonesian readers.

Overall, the findings suggest that the Indonesian translation emphasizes cultural preservation while maintaining comprehensibility for the target readers. The use of various translation techniques allows Korean cultural elements to remain recognizable without compromising the readability of the translation. Thus, the translation of *Crying in H Mart* serves not only to convey the meaning of the original memoir but also to introduce and preserve Korean cultural values and identity for Indonesian readers.

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CONCLUSION

This study concludes that cultural words play an important role in representing Korean cultural identity in Michelle Zauner's *Crying in H Mart*. The cultural elements found in the memoir reflect various aspects of culture, particularly food, traditions, social practices, and institutions that are closely connected to the author's memories and identity. The analysis also shows that the translation of cultural words requires careful consideration of both linguistic meaning and cultural context. The translator applies different translation techniques depending on the characteristics of each cultural expression, with the general tendency to preserve culture-specific terms rather than replace them with target-culture equivalents. This approach allows the Indonesian translation to remain accessible while maintaining the cultural identity of the source text. Overall, the Indonesian translation of *Crying in H Mart* demonstrates that translating cultural words is not merely a matter of transferring meaning between languages. It also involves preserving the cultural values and identity embedded in the original text. Through appropriate translation techniques, the cultural richness of the memoir can be maintained and introduced to Indonesian readers without losing its connection to Korean culture.

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