

ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL ADAPTATION STRATEGIES AND READABILITY IN *RESIDENT EVIL 9* CUT-SCENE SUBTITLES ON MiawAug

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Abstract. Subtitle translation in audiovisual media serves not only to convey the language from the source language to the target language, but also to adapt cultural elements and ensure the text's readability for the audience. In the context of video games, subtitle readability is crucial because both players and viewers reading the subtitles must understand dialogue quickly without disrupting the gaming experience. This study aims to analyze strategies for cultural adaptation and subtitle readability in the cutscenes of the video game *Resident Evil 9: Requiem*, translated from English to Indonesian. This study employs a descriptive qualitative design, using subtitle data from the MiawAug YouTube Channel, specifically unofficial subtitles by the BROMAX translator community. The study population is the video game *Resident Evil 9: Requiem*. The sample was selected purposively from cutscene subtitles containing character dialog that include cultural elements and aspects of readability. Data were collected through observation and documentation, then analyzed by classifying cultural adaptation strategies and assessing subtitle readability based on clarity, fluency, and contextual appropriateness. The results confirm that appropriate cultural adaptation strategies significantly enhance subtitle readability, clarity, and fluency for Indonesian viewers. This study concludes that a balance between cultural adaptation and readability is a key factor in the success of audiovisual subtitle translation for video games.

Keywords: audiovisual translation, cultural adaptation strategies, readability, subtitling, video game.

INTRODUCTION

Translation is the process of transferring meaning from the source language to the target language, which involves not only linguistic aspects but also cultural ones. Linguistic and cultural differences often give rise to problems of *non-equivalence*, that is, when a word, expression, idiom, or cultural term has no exact equivalent in the target language. In such situations, translators need to apply strategies that preserve meaning while producing a translation that is understandable to the target audience. One widely used framework for addressing this issue is "Strategies for Dealing with Non-Equivalence," proposed by Mona Baker (2018). These strategies help translators overcome linguistic and cultural *non-equivalence* so that the translation remains communicative and appropriate to the target cultural context. This challenge becomes even more complex in *Audiovisual Translation* (AVT), particularly in subtitling. Unlike written translations, subtitles are constrained by space and time, so translators must convey the message concisely without compromising the intended meaning. Furthermore, subtitles must remain easy to understand because viewers read the text while simultaneously following the visuals and audio. Therefore, in addition to addressing *non-equivalence*, translators must also prioritize readability so that subtitles can be understood quickly and naturally by the audience. In the context of AVT, subtitles serve not only as a means of language mediation but also as a

form of multimodal communication influenced by visual, audio, and cultural elements (Díaz-Cintas, 2020). Therefore, cultural adaptation is a crucial part of the subtitle translation process. Cultural adaptation is the process of adapting the meaning and cultural expressions from the source language to the target language to preserve the meaning and nuances of communication. O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013) state that video game translation requires adjustments to cultural references, social norms, and communicative contexts to ensure that the gaming experience remains intact for players from different cultural backgrounds. In addition to the gaming experience, translation adjustments also help viewers of gaming content understand the game's storyline more quickly and effectively. One of the parts of a video game that contains the most dialogue is the cutscene, which often includes idioms, slang, informal language, and cultural elements, therefore requiring appropriate translation strategies to ensure that the meaning and communicative effect are preserved in the target language. Given the growing popularity of community-created subtitles in digital gaming content, examining how cultural adaptation strategies are applied in video game subtitles has become increasingly relevant. This study aims to analyze the strategies used to address disparities in the English–Indonesian cut-scene subtitles for *Resident Evil 9: Requiem* on the MiawAug YouTube channel, as well as to examine their impact on subtitle readability based on Nababan's readability assessment.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study uses the *cut scene* subtitles in *Resident Evil 9: Requiem* on MiawAug's YouTube channel as its subject of analysis. These subtitles were translated by the BROMAX community, thus representing the growing phenomenon of *community-generated subtitles* on digital platforms. One example is the expression “**Feel like a million bucks,**” which was translated as “**sehat wal afiat.**” This translation does not retain the literal form but instead uses an expression that is more familiar in Indonesian culture, ensuring that the communicative meaning is effectively conveyed. This phenomenon demonstrates that strategies to address *non-equivalence* can result in forms of cultural adaptation that simultaneously influence the readability of subtitles.

Several previous studies have examined video game translation, localization, and subtitling from various perspectives, such as translation quality, cultural adaptation, accessibility, and user experience. However, research that specifically links the use of Mona Baker's *Strategies for Dealing with Non-Equivalence* to the readability of video game subtitles, particularly those produced by translator communities, remains relatively limited. Given this gap, this study aims to identify the *dealing with non-equivalence* strategies used in the *cut scene* subtitles for *Resident Evil 9: Requiem* on the MiawAug YouTube channel and to analyze their impact on subtitle readability based on Nababan's assessment instrument. This study is expected to contribute to the field of *Audiovisual Translation*, particularly in the translation of video game subtitles, and to serve as a reference for translators in producing more communicative and easily understandable subtitles.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. This approach was chosen because the study aims to identify and describe the translation strategies used to address *non-equivalence* and to analyze their impact on the readability of subtitles. This study focuses on the translation of *cut scene* subtitles from English to Indonesian in the video game *Resident Evil 9: Requiem*. The data sources consist of subtitles for character dialogues in *cut scenes* from the video game *Resident Evil 9: Requiem*, available on the YouTube channel MiawAug, with Indonesian subtitles translated by the BROMAX community. The research data consists of pairs of source-language (English) and target-language (Indonesian) texts containing idioms, cultural expressions, slang, or elements indicating *non-equivalence*. The data was selected using purposive sampling, meaning only dialogues relevant to the research objectives were analyzed.

Data collection was conducted through observation and documentation. The researcher observed all *cut scenes* and then transcribed the English dialogue along with its Indonesian subtitles. Next, the data were selected based on the presence of *non-equivalence* elements and grouped according to the categories of *Strategies for Dealing with Non-Equivalence* proposed by Mona Baker (2018). To assess the readability of the subtitles, this study used Nababan's readability assessment instrument, which classifies data into three categories: high, moderate, and low readability. The data were analyzed descriptively in several stages. First, each data point was identified based on the translation strategies used, as defined by Mona Baker. Second, the readability of each translation was analyzed using Nababan's instrument. Third, the relationship between translation strategies and readability was analyzed to explain how the strategies used affect the ease with which Indonesian viewers can understand the subtitles. The results of the analysis were then presented in the form of a descriptive analysis supported by representative data examples.

DISCUSSION

This study analyzes the application of Baker's (2018) *Strategies for Dealing with Non-Equivalence* in the translation of the *Resident Evil 9: Requiem* cut-scene subtitles and examines their impact on subtitle readability based on Nababan's (2012) readability assessment. Readability was evaluated through a questionnaire involving 50 respondents using Nababan's three-point scale,

Tabel 1. Readability Rating

Score	Level
3	High
2	Medium
1	Low

where score 3 indicates high readability, score 2 indicates moderate readability, and score 1 indicates low readability. The analysis identified two dominant translation strategies: translation by cultural substitution and translation by paraphrase using unrelated words. Representative data for each strategy are discussed below..

3.1 Translation by Cultural Substitution

SL	Feel like a million bucks.
TL	Sehat wal afiat.

The expression “feel like a million bucks” is an English idiom that means feeling very healthy or being in excellent condition. However, it is also often interpreted as feeling extremely happy, yet that meaning does not fit the context of the cutscene. To align with the context, the expression was translated to mean “healthy” or “in good condition,” which in Indonesian is often expressed as “sehat wal afiat.” According to Baker’s theory (2018), this strategy falls under “translation by cultural substitution” because the translator replaces the source-language idiom with an expression that is more familiar in Indonesian culture. Although the lexical forms differ, both expressions serve the same communicative function: to assure the listener that the speaker is in good condition.

Based on the results of the readability questionnaire, 44.9% of respondents gave a score of 3, 38.8% gave a score of 2, and 16.3% gave a score of 1. The majority of respondents felt that the translation was easy to understand because it used familiar expressions in Indonesian. However, some respondents felt that “sehat wal afiat” sounded too localized or failed to capture the nuances of the source language idiom. These findings indicate that the cultural substitution strategy can improve the readability of subtitles, even though there is a slight shift in the expressive nuances of the original expression.

3.2 Translation by Cultural Substitution

SL	Good riddance.
TL	Syukurlah dia sudah metong.

The phrase “good riddance” is used to express relief that someone or something considered a nuisance has left or come to an end. In the Indonesian subtitles, this phrase is translated as “syukurlah dia sudah metong.” According to Baker’s theory (2018), this translation falls under “translation by cultural substitution” because the translator replaced the source language expression with one that is closer to Indonesian culture and slang. The word “metong,” which is slang for “dead,” was chosen to preserve the emotional and informal tone of the original dialogue, making it feel more natural to some Indonesian viewers.

Based on the results of the readability questionnaire, 36.7% of respondents gave a score of 3, 38.8% gave a score of 2, and 24.5% gave a score of 1. These results indicate that the readability of the data tends to fall into the moderate category. Some respondents felt that the word “metong” was easy to understand because it is quite popular in slang, while others considered the term to be uncommon, too crude, or inconsistent with Leon’s character. These findings suggest that the use of cultural substitution can maintain communicative effectiveness, but the choice of vocabulary that is too specific or slang-based has the potential to lower readability for some audiences.

3.3 Translation by Cultural Substitution

SL	Oh, Shit!
TL	Asem.

The expression “Oh, shtit!” is an English exclamation commonly used to express surprise, frustration, or sudden realization. In the Indonesian subtitle, it is translated as “asem”, a colloquial interjection frequently used by Indonesian speakers to express similar emotions without employing offensive language. According to Baker (2018), this translation represents translation by cultural substitution because the translator replaces the source-language expletive with a culturally familiar expression that evokes a comparable emotional response among Indonesian audiences. Rather than preserving the literal vulgarity of the original expression, the translator prioritizes naturalness and communicative effect within the target culture.

Based on Nababan's readability criteria, the subtitle “asem” can be considered highly readable because it is short, familiar, and immediately understood by Indonesian audiences. Although the level of vulgarity is reduced, the emotional function of the utterance remains intact, demonstrating that cultural substitution can effectively improve subtitle readability while maintaining the intended communicative impact.

3.4 Translation by Paraphrase Using Unrelated Words

SL	You’ve got to be shitting me.
TL	Yang benar saja.

The phrase “You’ve got to be shitting me” is an informal expression used to convey surprise, disbelief, or frustration. In the Indonesian subtitles, this phrase is translated as “You’ve got to be kidding me.” According to Baker’s theory (2018), this strategy falls under “translation by paraphrase using unrelated words,” because the translator does not retain the form or vulgar elements of the source language but conveys the meaning through a different expression that is more common and understandable to Indonesian audiences. This strategy results in a translation that is both more natural and appropriate for the audiovisual context.

Although there is no questionnaire data for these subtitles, based on Nababan’s readability indicators, the accurate translations alone can be categorized as having a high level of readability because they use common expressions in Indonesian that are easy to understand without requiring additional interpretation. However, the removal of vulgar elements weakens the emotional intensity of the source language. Thus, the strategy of paraphrasing using unrelated words successfully improves the readability of the subtitle, although there is a reduction in expressiveness compared to the original dialogue.

3.5 Translation by Paraphrase Using Unrelated Words

SL	Ok, hit me.
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TL	Infokan aku.
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In this context, the expression “Ok, hit me” does not literally refer to physical violence but functions as an idiomatic expression meaning “tell me” or “give me the information.” The Indonesian subtitle translates it as “infokan aku”, which conveys the intended communicative meaning without retaining the idiomatic form of the source expression. Based on Baker's (2018) framework, this translation can be categorized as translation by paraphrase using unrelated words, as the translator expresses the original meaning through a different lexical form that is more natural in Indonesian.

From the perspective of readability, infokan aku is considered highly readable because it employs a common expression that can be easily understood by Indonesian viewers. Although the idiomatic flavor of the original dialogue is omitted, the translation successfully conveys the intended message while ensuring clarity and naturalness within the subtitle.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the phenomenon of translating cut-scene subtitles in the video game Resident Evil 9: Requiem, which requires not only semantic equivalence but also cultural adaptation to ensure they are easily understood by Indonesian audiences. Using Mona Baker's (2018) theory of *strategies for dealing with non-equivalence* and Nababan's theory of readability, this study analyzes how translation strategies influence the readability of subtitles. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method, using English–Indonesian subtitles from the YouTube channel MiawAug, translated by the BROMAX community, as its data. The analysis revealed the use of several *strategies for dealing with non-equivalence*, in which translation by *cultural substitution* appeared most frequently, followed by translation by *paraphrase using unrelated words* and other strategies. Both strategies proved effective in producing subtitles that were easily understood by Indonesian audiences, although in some cases there was a shift in the expressive nuances from the source language. The results of the readability questionnaire also showed that viewers' familiarity with cultural expressions or slang influences the readability of subtitles. Thus, the success of subtitle translation is determined not only by equivalence of meaning but also by the translator's ability to adapt cultural elements to the needs and understanding of the target audience. This study contributes to the development of research on *Audiovisual Translation* (AVT) by applying Mona Baker's *non-equivalence* strategy and Nababan's readability theory in the context of video game subtitles. It is hoped that this study will serve as a reference for subtitle translators, fansub communities, and digital content creators in producing subtitles that are more natural, easy to understand, and culturally appropriate for Indonesian audiences.

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