



PRESERVING JUDGEMENT OF TOPENG PANJI CIREBON FROM INDONESIAN TO ENGLISH: AN APPRAISAL ANALYSIS OF TRANSLATION TECHNIQUE

MELESTARIKAN PENILAIAN TOPENG PANJI CIREBON DARI INDONESIA KE INGGRIS: ANALISIS PENILAIAN TEKNIK TERJEMAHAN

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62567/micjo.v3i1.2064>

Abstract

This study investigates translation techniques used in rendering judgment evaluation from Indonesian into English at Topeng Gegesik book. The research focuses on the characterization of Topeng Panji Cirebon. The study applies (Molina & Albir, 2012) translation techniques framework to identify how judgment meanings are transferred into English. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the data consist of clauses containing judgment expressions in Indonesian and its translation in English. The findings reveal that translation techniques such as modulation, amplification, established equivalence and literal translation are predominantly employed to preserve positive judgment values especially normality and propriety. The study demonstrates that translation technique choices significantly influence the maintenance of cultural values, moral evaluation, and character identity. This research contributes to translation studies by integrating appraisal theory with translation techniques in the context of traditional cultural texts.

Keywords : Appraisal Theory, Judgment, Translation Technique, Topeng Panji Cirebon.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji teknik penerjemahan yang digunakan dalam menerjemahkan penilaian karakter dari bahasa Indonesia ke bahasa Inggris pada buku Topeng Gegesik. Penelitian ini berfokus pada karakterisasi Topeng Panji Cirebon. Lalu, penelitian ini menerapkan teori teknik penerjemahan (Molina & Albir, 2012) untuk mengidentifikasi bagaimana makna penilaian karakter bahasa Indonesia diterjemahkan ke dalam bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dan data terdiri dari kalimat yang mengandung ungkapan penilaian karakter bahasa Indonesia dan terjemahannya dalam bahasa Inggris. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa teknik penerjemahan seperti modulasi, amplifikasi, padanan lazim dan harfiah secara dominan digunakan untuk mempertahankan nilai-nilai penilaian karakter positif terutama normality dan propriety. Penelitian ini menunjukkan



bahwa pilihan teknik penerjemahan secara signifikan mempengaruhi pemeliharaan nilai-nilai budaya, penilaian moral, dan identitas karakter. Penelitian ini juga berkontribusi pada kajian penerjemahan dengan mengintegrasikan teori appraisal dengan teknik penerjemahan dalam konteks teks budaya tradisional.

Kata Kunci : Teori Appraisal, Judgement, Teknik Penerjemahan, Topeng Panji Cirebon.

1. INTRODUCTION

Traditional performing arts are not only aesthetic expressions but it also carriers of cultural values, moral judgments, and social norms. One of arts form is *Topeng Panji Cirebon*, a classical masked dance from Cirebon, Indonesia which embodies ideals of nobility, self-control, humility, and ethical leadership. These values are implicitly constructed through narrative, gesture, symbolism, and linguistic expression. When texts related to *Topeng Panji Cirebon* are translated into English, the challenge goes beyond transferring propositional meaning; it involves preserving evaluative meanings, particularly judgments about human behavior that reflect local wisdom and cultural ideology. Thus, by applying the judgment category of appraisal theory as proposed by (Martin & Rose, 2007). This study reveals how characters in the *Topeng Panji* performance are linguistically framed as virtuous or deviant, allowing moral evaluations and social expectations to emerge explicitly through language.

In translation studies, the appraisal framework within systemic functional linguistics offers a robust tool for examining how evaluation is expressed and re-expressed across languages. One core subsystem of appraisal is judgement which concerns moral and social assessment of human behavior such as propriety, capacity, and tenacity. Judgement plays a crucial role in cultural texts like *Topeng Panji Cirebon* as it encodes values that define ideal conduct in Javanese–Cirebonese culture. However, differences between Indonesian with English linguistic and cultural systems may lead to shifts, reductions, or reinterpretations of these evaluative meanings in translation. At the same time, translation techniques as proposed by (Molina & Albir, 2012) significantly influence how such evaluative meanings are transferred. Choices such as modulation, amplification, adaptation, or reduction can either preserve or alter judgement meanings embedded in the source text. Despite growing interest in appraisal-based translation analysis that studies focusing on traditional performing arts and local Indonesian culture remain limited. Therefore, this study aims to analyze how judgement in *Topeng Panji Cirebon* is preserved, shifted, or transformed in Indonesian to English translation through the use of specific translation techniques. By combining appraisal analysis with translation technique classification, this research contributes to translation studies, cultural preservation, and the international dissemination of Indonesian intangible cultural heritage.

Several previous research employing appraisal theory has demonstrated its wide applicability in analyzing evaluative language across different genres and discourse contexts. Then, the translation studies with appraisal theory have been researched in literary text especially novel (Zain & Nababan, 2023; Thahara et al., 2021; Sodiq et al., 2022; Suhartini & Nugroho, 2023; Wikanditha, 2024; Putra et al., 2024; Sun & Liu, 2025). In general, novels



contain attitudinal resources as the way of speakers or writers approve and disapprove, produce feeling values and the way writers construe their particular authorial identities or personal. Then, the translator should comprehend to the situational context especially on the emotional dimension. It will be realized in affect that are being felt by someone or characters on the story (Zain & Nababan, 2023). Next, characterization is crucial thing especially for the readers because characterization can create imagination or fantasy and in the translation field, the depiction of the characters should be translated as it is from source to target text (Ayunikmah et al., 2024). In specific, many translators used more dominant literal and established equivalent technique to translate the attitudinal resources (Suhartini & Nugroho, 2023; Zain & Nababan, 2023; Thahara et al., 2021). However, some of translation results showed that there is a shifting and changing of appraisal systems. It is caused by the use of discursive creation, modulation technique and sometimes literal technique will have a shifting in the out of context and surface meaning. In addition, the study of appraisal used translation shift with finding ideology and positioning in some of texts such as politics, news, literature and children story (Liu et al., 2022; Ayunikmah et al., 2024). So, it is very limit in the culture text such as *Topeng* book.

To fill the gap, this study aims to investigate the translation techniques used by the translator in preserving judgment of *Topeng Panji* Cirebon from Indonesian to English. In investigating the study, the researcher employed the translation technique formulated by (Molina & Albir, 2012). By applying this technique, the researcher argues that this research can provide a comprehensive representation how the translator employed the translation techniques to translate judgment (character evaluation) experienced by characterization of *Topeng Panji* Cirebon in *Topeng Gegesik* book.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research method. Qualitative approach to research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behavior. Research in such a situation is a function of researchers' insights and impressions. Such an approach to research generates results either in non-quantitative form or in the form which are not subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis (Kothari, 2004). The research aims are to describe, interpret and explain how judgement values in the source text are realized and preserved in the target text through specific translation techniques. Then, the form of data were words and phrases that contains judgment evaluation in characterization of *Topeng Panji* Cirebon. After that, the data source is *Topeng Gegesik* book in Indonesian version. The researcher employed written documentation to gather the data and applied note-taking. Documentation was used as the data collection which allows for the interpretation of data based on its context and meaning (Fitria, 2020). Furthermore, the data analysis used technique namely; 1. Data condensation (selecting, categorizing, summarizing and developing themes), 2. Data display (organizing and presenting condensed data), 3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification (interpreting the meaning of data, drawing conclusions, and testing their validity) (Miles et al, 2014).



3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The objective of research is to find out the translation techniques (Molina & Albir, 2012) of judgment in characterization *Topeng Panji* Cirebon from Indonesian to English version. Look at the table below:

Table 1. Translation Technique

No	Translation Technique	Frequency	Percentage
1	Literal	5	38,46%
2	Established Equivalent	4	30,77%
3	Modulation	2	15,38%
4	Amplification	2	15,38%
Total		13	100%

a. Literal Translation

Literal translation is a technique that to translate a word or an expression word for word. The data showed that there are 7 data about social esteem; *positive normality* in characterization *Topeng Panji* Cirebon (Martin & Rose, 2007) by using literal translation. For instance:

Table 2. Source and Target Language Text

Source Language Text	Target Language Text
<i>Raut mukanya memancarkan keagungan dan ketenangan</i>	His facial expression radiates majesty and quiet

The sentence implied the judgment with *positive normality* and it can be seen in the word '*keagungan dan ketenangan*'. These reflects *positive affect* and carries connotations of dignity, peace and spiritual depth. However, the translator failed to transfer '*ketenangan*' in the target language. The word "quiet" is the synonym but this refers to *characterized by an absence or near absence of agitation or activity* (<https://www.xamux.com/online-translator.php>). Translator should transfer into "calmness or serenity" that refers to the character of *Topeng Panji*. So, this translation is called literal translation.

Furthermore, a literal translation technique which lexical equivalence is prioritized over contextual and cultural meaning. Although "*keagungan*" is accurately rendered as "*majesty*," the translation of "*ketenangan*" into "*quiet*" results in a semantic shift. In the source text, *ketenangan* implies an *inner calm, serenity, and spiritual composure* which contributes to *positive judgement (normality)* and *positive affect* in appraisal terms. However, the word "*quiet*" in English mainly denotes the absence of sound or activity rather than emotional or spiritual tranquility. As a result, the evaluative meaning associated with the dignified and serene character of *Topeng Panji* is weakened. A more appropriate choice such as "*calmness*" or "*serenity*" would better preserve the intended judgment and cultural nuance. Therefore, while the translation is linguistically accurate at the surface level, it fails to fully transfer the interpersonal and attitudinal meaning of the source text.

Table 3. Source and Target Language Text

Source Language Text	Target Language Text
<i>Bentuk mulutnya renyah dan tersungging senyum dikulum</i>	The shape of the mouth was crisp and a curled smile was formed



The sentence above implied the judgment with *positive normality* and it can be seen in the word '*renyah dan tersungging senyum*'. However, the translator doesn't transfer '*renyah*' in the target language with semantic accuracy. The word "crisp" used to *describe cooked foods that are well cooked with dry and hard enough* (<https://www.xamux.com/online-translator.php>). Next, the word '*tersungging senyum*' becomes "curled smile" that *curled* means *something else having a circular shape*. In this context, *Topeng Panji* is described by author with inner composure, refinement and controlled emotion so it is not only on the physical shape of the lips. The correct translation should be "a serene or a clam and gently formed smile. A more appropriate equivalent such as "serene, composed, calm" would better for the translation of *renyah*. These equivalents preserve the *positive judgment (normality)* and the dignified, tranquil character of *Topeng Panji* rather than merely transferring the word literally. Literal translation fails to convey the evaluative nuance and cultural symbolism of the *Topeng Panji*.

Furthermore, this data highlights the limitations of literal translation when dealing with culturally nuanced evaluative expressions. The terms *renyah* and *tersungging senyum dikulum* function as aesthetic and ethical markers, signaling emotional control, serenity, and refined demeanor rather than concrete physical properties. Translating *renyah* as "crisp" and *tersungging senyum* as "curled smile" shifts the focus to surface-level physical description and introduces unintended semantic associations that are incongruent with the character's moral portrayal. As a result, the positive judgment of normality, which constructs *Topeng Panji* as calm, balanced, and inwardly composed, is weakened. This case demonstrates that without adapting lexical choices to convey evaluative meaning, literal translation risks distorting cultural symbolism and diminishing the interpersonal meaning intended in the source text.

b. Established Equivalent Translation

Established Equivalent is a technique to use a term or expression recognized by dictionaries or language in use as an equivalent in the TL. The data showed that there are 5 data about social sanction; *positive propriety* in characterization *Topeng Panji* Cirebon (Martin & Rose, 2007) by using established equivalent. For example:

Table 3. Source and Target Language Text

Source Language Text	Target Language Text
<i>Matanya yang sipit dan hidungnya yang mancung merunduk mempertegas kesan kehalusan dan kelembutan perangnya</i>	His narrow eyes and gently lowered, well-defined nose reinforce the impression of refinement and gentleness in his character

The word '*mancung merunduk*' refers to judgment; *positive propriety* as it reflects behavior that aligns with socially and culturally valued norms such as humility, politeness, and self-restraint. In the context of *Topeng Panji*, "a lowered yet well-defined nose" symbolizes not weakness but it is ethical refinement and moral composure which are highly respected traits in Javanese cultural philosophy. By translating this expression, the translator successfully preserves both the physical imagery and the evaluative meaning embedded in the source text. The choice of *gently lowered* conveys humility and respectful demeanor while *well-defined* maintains the aesthetic elegance associated with nobility. This demonstrates the use of an



established equivalent as the translation reproduces the same interpersonal meaning and moral judgement for target readers without relying on literal word for word rendering.

In addition, this translation shows that the established equivalent technique effectively bridges cultural interpretation gaps between Indonesian and English. The phrase *mancung merunduk* operates simultaneously on two levels: it describes a physical feature and encodes a moral stance. In Javanese–Cirebonese cultural aesthetics, a downward orientation of the face or nose signifies voluntary restraint and respect, especially when combined with refined physical traits. By rendering this as “gently lowered, well-defined nose,” the translator avoids a rigid literal translation that might sound awkward or meaningless in English, and instead selects expressions that naturally evoke dignity, humility, and composure. Consequently, the judgment of positive propriety is preserved not through form but through shared evaluative meaning, allowing target readers to perceive the character’s nobility and ethical refinement in a culturally intelligible way.

Table 4. Source and Target Language Text

Source Language Text	Target Language Text
<i>Sorot matanya tak pernah mendongkak dan lebih terkesan selalu merunduk tajam</i>	His gaze is never arrogant , instead consistently conveying a sense of humble restraint

This translation employs the established equivalent technique particularly in rendering the phrase “*tak pernah mendongkak*.” In the source language, *mendongkak* does not simply refer to a physical upward gaze but carries a strong evaluative and moral implication, commonly associated with pride, arrogance, and a lack of humility. By translating “never arrogant”, the translator replaces the literal bodily action with a conventional evaluative expression in English that conveys the same socially recognized meaning. This choice preserves the judgement *positive propriety* embedded in the source text, emphasizing humility and ethical self-control as defining traits of the *Topeng Panji* character. Rather than focusing on eye direction, the translation successfully transfers the interpersonal and cultural value encoded in *tak pernah mendongkak*, demonstrating an appropriate use of the established equivalent technique.

Moreover, the use of established equivalent in translating *tak pernah mendongkak* into “never arrogant” demonstrates a deliberate shift from a behavioral description to a moral evaluation that is more readily recognized in English discourse. In the source text, the upward or downward movement of the gaze functions as a culturally coded sign of propriety within Javanese–Cirebonese ethics, where avoiding a raised gaze symbolizes respect and self-discipline. Since this semiotic meaning may not be immediately accessible to target readers, the translator opts for an established evaluative expression that directly encodes the intended judgment. As a result, the translation maintains functional equivalence at the interpersonal level, ensuring that the ethical stance and character ideology associated with *Topeng Panji* remain intact despite differences in cultural perception systems.



c. Modulation

Modulation technique is to change the point of view, focus or cognitive category in relation to the ST. There are 1 data that showed about social sanction *tenacity* of *Topeng Panji* characterization. The data is below:

Table 5. Source and Target Language Text

Source Language Text	Target Language Text
<i>Topeng ini jika dipakai menari tatapannya menyudut 45 derajat. Bentuk topeng dengan ciri-ciri seperti itu menunjukkan bahwa itu berkarakter halus</i>	When this mask is worn dance performance. Its' gaze is angled at a 45-degree angle. A mask with such visual features signifies a refined character

In the source text, the word '*menyudut*' is not a purely geometric term. It encodes a performative and aesthetic perspective, referring to the indirect, lowered gaze of the mask when used in dance. This gaze conventionally symbolizes subtlety, restraint, and refinement in traditional mask performance. Thus, *menyudut* functions as a culturally loaded descriptor rather than a strictly technical one.

In the target text, instead of translating *menyudut* literally as *slanted* or *oblique*, the translator reformulates it as "angled at a 45-degree angle." This represents a modulation from a qualitative and culturally embedded viewpoint to a quantitative and spatially explicit viewpoint. The meaning is preserved, but the way it is conceptualized is altered to suit English descriptive norms.

Through this modulation, the implicit cultural meaning carried by *menyudut* is made accessible to the target reader by emphasizing visual measurability rather than symbolic convention. The evaluative interpretation is then reinforced in the following sentence (*signifies a refined character*), ensuring that the original aesthetic value associated with *menyudut* is not lost. This example shows modulation at the lexical–semantic level, specifically a shift from symbolic orientation to explicit spatial description. The technique allows the translation to remain faithful in meaning while adapting the cognitive framing of *menyudut* to the target language, making the refined character (*berkarakter halus*) comprehensible to English readers.

d. Amplification

Amplification technique is to introduce details that are not formulated in the ST. There are 1 data that showed about social sanction *propriety* of *Topeng Panji* characterization. The data is below:

Table 6. Source and Target Language Text

Source Language Text	Target Language Text
<i>Sorot matanya tak pernah mendongak dan lebih terkesan selalu merunduk tajam</i>	His gaze never looks upward instead of it consistently directed sharply downward , conveying a sense of humility and restraint

The translation employs the amplification technique which according to (Molina & Albir, 2012). It involves making implicit information in the source text explicit in the target text. The phrase "*selalu merunduk tajam*" is not merely a physical description of eye direction. Lexically, *merunduk* indicates a downward position while *tajam* intensifies this action,



suggesting firmness and control rather than weakness. Pragmatically and culturally, the expression implies constant self-restraint, humility, and disciplined demeanour.

In the English rendering, this implicit meaning is amplified through the phrase “consistently directed sharply downward, conveying a sense of humility and restraint.” “Consistently” explicitly represents *selalu*, emphasizing continuity, “Sharply downward” strengthens the physical intensity of *merunduk tajam*, “Conveying a sense of humility and restraint” verbalizes the evaluative meaning that is culturally understood in the source text but not overtly stated.

This data illustrates amplification at the lexical–semantic and pragmatic levels. The translator expands the target text to explain the attitudinal significance embedded in “*selalu merunduk tajam*.” By adding interpretive elements, the translation ensures that target-language readers grasp both the visual description and the character value implied in the original, while maintaining semantic equivalence.

4. CONCLUSION

This article examines how judgment values in the characterization of *Topeng Panji Cirebon* are preserved when translated from Indonesian into English. Using Appraisal Theory—specifically the judgment subsystem (Martin & Rose, 2007) and translation techniques proposed by (Molina & Albir, 2012). The study analyses clauses from the *Topeng Gegesik* book that contain moral and social evaluations of character “Preserving Judgment of *Topeng Panji Cirebon* from Indonesian to English.”

Employing a descriptive qualitative method, the research identifies four dominant translation techniques: literal translation, established equivalent, modulation, and amplification. The findings show that literal translation and established equivalence are most frequently used, mainly to preserve *positive judgment* values, particularly *normality* and *propriety* which reflect ideals such as humility, refinement, self-control, and ethical conduct central to Javanese–Cirebonese culture. Modulation and amplification are applied to handle culturally embedded expressions, allowing implicit meanings—especially those tied to gesture, gaze, and demeanour—to become accessible to English readers without losing evaluative force.

The study concludes that the choice of translation technique plays a crucial role in maintaining judgment meanings and cultural values in the translation of *Topeng Panji Cirebon*. While literal translation can retain surface meaning, it may weaken evaluative nuance if cultural symbolism is not considered. In contrast, established equivalent proves effective in preserving moral and social judgments by using culturally recognized expressions in the target language. Modulation and amplification are particularly valuable for translating culturally loaded terms, as they successfully reframe perspective or explicate implicit meanings.

Overall, the research demonstrates that integrating appraisal theory with translation techniques provides a robust framework for analysing how character identity and moral evaluation are transferred across languages. This approach not only contributes to translation



studies but also supports the preservation and international dissemination of Indonesian intangible cultural heritage, especially traditional performing arts like *Topeng Panji Cirebon*. Furthermore, this study highlights the importance of translator sensitivity to cultural semiotics embedded in traditional performance texts. Linguistic elements describing gaze, posture, facial expression, and demeanor in *Topeng Panji Cirebon* are not neutral descriptions but function as carriers of ethical and social judgment. When such elements are translated, the translator's strategic use of modulation and amplification becomes essential to prevent cultural dilution. By explicitly articulating values that are implicitly understood in the source culture, the translation enables target readers to access the same moral framework intended in the original text. Therefore, translation is shown not merely as a linguistic transfer but as an act of cultural mediation, where evaluative meaning, character ideology, and local wisdom must be consciously negotiated to achieve functional and interpersonal equivalence.

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