

Subtitling Strategies of Real World Cultural References in the Complete and Extraordinary Life of Winston Churchill

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on analyzing cultural references and subtitling strategies in the translation of *The Complete and Extraordinary Life of Winston Churchill* from English into Indonesian. A descriptive qualitative approach was used in this study. It applied Pedersen's taxonomy on cultural references and used Díaz Cintas and Remael's subtitling strategies to identify subtitling techniques. The study found 118 cases of cultural references which were grouped into geographical (18.7%), ethnographic (28.8%), and socio-political references (52.5%) with socio-political references being the most dominant. Five subtitling strategies were identified which included literal translation (62%), loan (23%), substitution (9%), calque (4%), and explicitation (2%). These findings illustrate the challenge of translating texts rich in complex cultural references, specifically the balance of preserving the historical and political context for the intended readers. The classification system employed in the study assists in balancing the preservation of cultural meaning and the subtitlers' need to structure the translation for easy understanding. The study also invites other scholars to analyze the perception of audiences on cultural references in subtitles and the relationship between subtitling strategies and audience understanding and interest. The investigation of fan-subtitling and the socio-cultural implications of translated texts may enhance understanding of how audiovisual translation influences cultural perception and identity in a globalized context.

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INTRODUCTION

The internationalization of media has resulted in the ubiquitous application of subtitles across numerous countries. Now, viewers have access to content from different regions of the world through streaming services like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Hulu. As foreign media becomes more widely available, subtitling is becoming increasingly important. Besides enabling audiences to enjoy content in different languages, subtitles augment access for the deaf and hard of hearing, aid in language acquisition, and especially serve learners of the English language. The growing global demand for content has also compelled streaming services to provide quality subtitles that not only eliminate linguistic boundaries but foster understanding, promote inter-cultural relations, and increase the global distribution of media productions. The most recent studies highlight that subtitling is now an indispensable instrument for the internationalization of media, aiding in the content's accessibility and encouraging cultures to dialogue in the streaming age (Park & Hong, 2023).

In a globalized world, there is always an effort to make content available to everyone. Subtitles bear the new burden of ensuring that all audiences, ranging from speakers of various languages to individuals originating from different cultures, are able to comprehend the subtitles. This may lead to an attempt to "neutralize" the language, where specific cultural references are omitted in favor of more widely understood paraphrases. While such efforts broaden accessibility, they also risk losing the diversity and originality of the work (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2021).

At the same time, there is a noticeable movement toward "subtitling for culture." This is based on the notion that subtitles should retain not only the lexicon but also the surrounding context, culture, ethos, and sensibilities of the original work. This applies especially to movies and television series that deal with national identity or address particular social problems. In such circumstances, subtitling becomes an exercise in cultural conservation where the purpose is to retain the value of the original work while rendered for foreign viewers (Pérez-González, 2015).

Subtitles have profound cultural effects on viewers. Foreign films and television shows broaden viewers' perspectives and ways of thinking. This can aid in fostering cross-cultural understanding and empathy, as viewers learn about and look into different cultures, values, beliefs, and even daily life. In addition, through subtitling, individuals are able to enjoy foreign films and shows in their original versions which are more authentic than dubbed versions (Iaia, 2023).

Furthermore, there are challenges that come along with subtitling such as providing the wrong explanation for something, or misunderstandings. Misleading subtitles to distort the culture associated with the film might confuse the audience. This is most notable when cultural references and humor are improperly translated or left without explanation. Therefore, subtitling is not just a technical work but rather, a far more cultural work that demands careful attention to the intertwining social and linguistic aspects of the content being translated (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2021).

Consequently, the connection of subtitling and culture is intricate and deeply layered. It involves transcending language boundaries since subtitling requires translation of verbal messages within a cultural context, which often contains deeper significance than the mere words used. Effective subtitling aids in bridging numerous barriers to appreciate foreign media and allows access to viewers from diverse cultures

and languages. The modern era of globalization has increased the need for subtitles to be more easily understood in a universal context on one hand, and on the other, emphasized the need for proper cultural sensitivity and adaptation in the subtitling process. Thus, the practice of subtitling expands beyond a mere translation exercise to a substantial and linguistically comprehensive activity that advances the understanding and discourse among cultures in the world today. This study investigates how real-world cultural references are translated in the subtitles of the documentary *The Complete and Extraordinary Life of Winston Churchill*, using Díaz Cintas and Remael's framework to reveal how subtitling practices mediate cultural meaning in global media.

Based on the background, the statements of the problem formulated are as follows:

1. What are the types of real world cultural references found in *The Complete and Extraordinary Life of Winston Churchill*?
2. How are the real world cultural references in *The Complete and Extraordinary Life of Winston Churchill* translated?

LITERATURE REVIEW

A translation may be defined as a transfer of one language (source) into another (target), a process carried out by a translator who must possess attributes of a good translator to achieve translation objectives. However, there are still cases where translation results fail to convey the required language transmission, hence translation research needs to be carried out (Jancowicz-Pitel, 2023). Scholars such as Munday (2022) and Baker (2018) emphasize that translation is not merely linguistic conversion but an endeavor to reproduce meaning as accurately as possible, grounded in socio-cultural contexts. Munday (2022) further notes that translation involves converting a text from the source to the target language without distorting meaning, style, or intent, while Baker (2018) highlights that every text encodes layered meanings shaped by intertextual and cultural frameworks. Taken together, these views underscore that translation requires capturing expression, style, and intention while adapting appropriately to the target culture; accuracy in conveying the translated message is the primary objective, with style retained in tone to achieve the intended effect. In short, translation is reduction, moving, and reproduction of meaning, style, and concepts using the most natural equivalences in the target language.

Building on this broader understanding of translation, Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021) extend the discussion to subtitling as a form of translation conditioned not only by linguistic but also by cultural factors. They explain that subtitling is not merely a technical or linguistic activity but one that translates spoken words into written text while accounting for cultural idioms, humor, and social norms of the targeted viewers. Their analysis identifies four key relations:

1. **Cultural Context:** subtitling involves translating spoken words into written text but at the same time it requires understanding the culture attached to both the source and target. Often in most cases translation of subtitle texts is adapted to cultural idioms, humor, and social norms of the targeted viewers.
2. **Cultural Transfer:** In the process of subtitling, the subtitler must make a decision on how much of the culture in the source language should be kept and how much should be changed to cater to the audience of the target language. This creates a balance between domestication (adapting the content to make it familiar to the

target culture) and foreignization, which is keeping the cultural differences intact. In some cases, subtitlers decide to retain the reference but in some cases, they modify them to ensure better reception.

3. Impact of Media and Globalization: Globalization of media means that audiences from diverse cultures often interact with the same content. Accessibility through subtitling seeks to reduce the barriers of culture and create as wide an audience as possible for the content. Through the use of subtitles, content can be made available for various cultures, however, subtitlers need to exercise care in regard to cultural norms and stereotypes of oversimplification of complex social relations spanning various languages and cultures.
4. Ethnographic Considerations: All subtitlers need to have an ethnographic understanding of the audience they are translating the text for. This provides them the necessary background information that helps eliminate the chances of incorrect translation due to obscurity of cultural notions.

Therefore, the connection between subtitling and culture is essential to the translation process. Translations involving subtitling demand that the translator deal with the cultural distance between the two languages. Translations of this nature require the translator to make appropriate decisions in regard to the interpretation in order to communicate the intended meaning as it was in the source language. This involves providing equivalence at the lexical level and observing cultural contexts so that meaning is not distorted or lost. In conclusion, it can be stated that subtitling enhances translation accuracy only if the subtitler is able to resolve the cultural difficulty without compromising the essence of the text.

Cultural references illustrate these challenges. These are aspects of a community's culture, history, or geography. Extralinguistic cultural reference is defined by Pedersen (2011) as a reference made by a distinctive expression belonging to a language which is integrated within a culture that goes beyond the boundaries of language. Usually, the referent of the statement is supposed to exist within the knowledge of the audience who is exposed to the relevant information. In the same way, Diaz Cintas and Remael (2021) focus on the need for preservation or adaptation of meaning and relevance to the targeted audience in relation to culture in translation, particularly in audiovisual materials. Alawad and Alosaimi (2023) noted that subtitlers often struggle with references because they have to balance domestication and foreignization, the two competing adaptation strategies of either cultural retention or displacement. Furthermore, recent research underscores the need to apply various subtitling techniques such as substitution, generalization, or omission to translate terms of culturally specific nature without compromising the quality of the subtitles (Alaa & Al-Sawi, 2023).

Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021) classified cultural references into two categories: real world and intertextual culture references. The first category, real world culture references, is subsequently divided into the following items:

1. Geographical references to specific phenomena; to physical geography with general places; to physical geography with specific places; and endemic flora and fauna.

2. Ethnographic references include food and beverages, commonplace artifacts, labor, artworks, media and cultural productions, cultures, groupings, measures (metric system), brands and proper or personal names.
3. Sociopolitical references include administrative or territorial units, institutional and functional frameworks, sociocultural activity life, military elements and nomenclature, and personal and institutional nomenclature.
The second category, intertextual cultural reference, is classified as:
 1. Overt intertextual references.
 2. Covert intertextual references include various forms of parody that relate to a particular cultural reference.

To address these cultural challenges, Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021) offered several subtitling strategies:

1. Loan is a translation approach where a word or phrase from the source text (ST) is directly used in the target language (TL) text. This occurs where both languages have a shared word due to historical contexts, or because the phrase is in the process of gaining acceptance in the TL, which is particularly commonplace with information and communications technology terms today.
2. Literal translation is a different type of loan translation where the translator adheres to the expression of the source language (SL) and translates word by word into the target language (TL) framework. It is processed in such a way that it looks like it was generated in the TL, thus sounding natural in the linguistic sense.
3. Calque is a type of literal translation that could be peculiar in the culture of the target language. It is usually opposite to what may be considered a more fluent or natural phrase within the culture of the target language because it creates some linguistic problems in translation by adhering too closely to the source language.
4. Explicitation is the strategy of adding information in the target language which is only hinted at in the source language with the aid of surrounding words or situations. The subtitler has a particular aim concerning the implicit or explicit textual description of translation to improve and enhance its readability. This can be achieved by (a) specification (employing specific expressions), (b) generalization (employing broader terms), or (c) adding more information.
5. Substitution: a type of explicitation. It involves replacing a cultural reference within the source text (ST) with an equivalent reference that exists in the source culture (SC) or the target culture (TC), which is also called cultural substitution. In addition, this may involve replacing an expression in the ST with an expression that is relevant to the context but does not bear any direct relation to the ST expression, which is known as situational substitution.
6. Transposition is one of the strategies that consists in replacing one cultural notion by one another. This strategy is appropriate when a loan or literal translation would jeopardize understanding on the part of the audience and explicitation is not possible.
7. Lexical recreation (the production of neologisms in the target language (TL)): This is necessary if the speaker in the source text introduces new words or terms.

8. Compensation: this refers to making up a creative adaptation for a certain aspect that was omitted during translation. However, because both source and target languages may have verbal and non-verbal elements, this method may not always be applicable in the case of subtitling.
9. Omission: this is commonly used where there is fast speech. Because space and time are tightly constrained, it is often necessary to leave specific words and phrases out, add to, or overwrite them. In addition, this method is less so when the original reference is out of scope for the intended audience, but the context is clear enough for the utterance. Omission can also happen in the absence of a relevant equivalence in the target language.

A few prior works talk about cultural references relative to translation. Alawad and Alosaimi (2023) performed a qualitative study to look at how the procedure of transcreation was used in subtitling cultural references with special focus on the Saudi animated cartoon Masameer. The researchers used a qualitative approach by gathering more than 50 sample culturally specific items like idioms, proverbs, and similes from the subtitles of the cartoon as posted on Netflix. This study embraced the theory of transcreation which highlights the need for creativity as well as cultural adaptation and precision in translation that seeks to close linguistic and culturally divergent divides. Based on some excerpts, the researchers analyzed the extent to which transcreation was used and how meaningful and culturally effective the conveyed message in the analyzed language was. It was found that transcreation is an important strategy in audiovisual translation because it gives the subtitlers the opportunity to adapt cultural references to suit different cultures while retaining the original intended idea and impact despite the technical and cultural limitations in subtitling.

Alaa and Al Sawi (2023) undertook a qualitative descriptive study focusing on the translation strategies implemented in subtitling culturally iconic references in the Egyptian film *Feathers*. For this study, they selected Pedersen's (2011) taxonomy of translation strategies for extralinguistic cultural references (ECRs) retention, specification, direct translation, generalization, substitution, and omission as their guiding framework. The data set included 80 instances of culturally specific references marked in the film's Arabic dialogue and the English subtitles. Scholars found that the most common strategies employed were substitution and generalization, which facilitated a greater audience reach. Pedersen's FAR model (Functional Equivalence, Acceptability and Readability) of subtitle accuracy was also applied for evaluation and results showed that the overall balance between comprehension and cultural accuracy was well-maintained.

Subata and Jumanto (2023) researched using a descriptive qualitative method to explore the subtitling strategies used in translating cultural elements from English and Spanish into Indonesian in the animated movie *Coco*. Through the lens of Newmark's (1988) classification of cultural words and Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling strategies, the researchers studied a hundred cultural words that were placed under ecology, material culture, social culture, gestures and habits, and organization. The study showed that the prevalent strategy used was transfer, which consisted of direct translation of cultural words into the language, then imitation and transcription. The research results provide insights on the extent subtitlers try to balance adherence to the source culture and

understanding by the target audience, thus highlighting the degree of importance strategy choice has in conveying culture in subtitling.

The previous three studies and the present one have similarities and differences with regard to method, theoretical frameworks, and sources of data. All four studies use qualitative or descriptive qualitative approaches to analyze subtitling techniques concerning culture references, paying attention to the translation of cultural elements through audiovisual translation. Alawad and Alosaimi (2023) analyzes transcreation by using a qualitative method in the Saudi animated cartoon *Masameer*, stressing on creativity, cultural adaptation, and accuracy of the translation done. Alaa and Al Sawi (2023) apply Pedersen's (2011) taxonomy of extralinguistic cultural references along with Pedersen's FAR quality assessment model on subtitling strategies of the Egyptian film *Feathers*. Subrata and Jumanto (2023) apply Newmark's (1988) categorization of cultural words with Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling strategies to the translation of cultural words in the Disney animation *Coco*. While previous studies have explored subtitling strategies, few have examined how real-world cultural references are rendered in historical documentaries available on global platforms. This current study uses cultural references and subtitling strategies of Díaz Cintas and Remael on *The Complete and Extraordinary Life of Winston Churchill*, which is a documentary with a particular historical and cultural setting. While the other studies concentrate on animated or fictional portrayals from the Arabic, Egyptian, and Indonesian spheres, this study moves towards a biographical documentary which may pose a different set of challenges regarding the cultural references used.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive methodology to examine how cultural references in audiovisual media are translated through subtitling. Guided by Creswell and Creswell's (2023) emphasis on describing phenomena in clear and straightforward terms, this approach enables the researcher to capture the nuanced ways subtitlers transfer meaning across languages and cultures without imposing abstract theorization. Using the documentary *The Complete and Extraordinary Life of Winston Churchill* (Timeline – World History Documentaries, 2023) as the primary source, the study analyzes real-world examples of cultural references drawn from historical, social, political, and geographical contexts. By applying Díaz Cintas and Remael's (2021) framework for classifying cultural references and subtitling strategies, the research systematically documents how meaning is preserved, adapted, or altered. To ensure rigor and trustworthiness, data coding and interpretation were cross-verified using inter-rater reliability checks, providing consistency and accuracy in the analysis.

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive research design, which, as noted by Creswell and Creswell (2023), focuses on providing a comprehensive summary of events and phenomena in clear language without heavy interpretation or the generation of new theories. Such an approach is particularly appropriate for this research because it seeks to investigate cultural references and their translations in subtitles, describing them as they naturally occur. A qualitative descriptive method emphasizes the presentation of data rather than abstract theorization, making it ideal for examining how real-world cultural references are rendered in the documentary *The Complete and Extraordinary*

Life of Winston Churchill produced by Timeline – World History Documentaries (2023). This design was selected over approaches such as grounded theory or phenomenology, which would have required developing new conceptual frameworks or exploring subjective lived experiences rather than providing an accurate description of translation practices as they exist.

Analysis Units

The unit of analysis consists of cultural references found in the dialogues and subtitles of the selected documentary. The documentary was chosen purposively due to its historical content, detailed portrayal of Winston Churchill's life and political career, and its production by Timeline – World History Documentaries, a YouTube channel recognized for reliable, well-crafted historical programming. The channel's partnerships with reputable broadcasters ensure high content credibility, making the material an invaluable source for examining real-world categories of cultural references and their subtitling.

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The study collects non-numeric data in the form of dialogue transcripts and subtitles, identifying elements of world social, political, historical, and geographic culture referenced in the documentary. The data are analyzed using Díaz Cintas and Remael's (2021) framework, which links types of cultural references to subtitling strategies. This framework was selected because it directly aligns with the research objective of examining how cultural references are transferred or adapted in audiovisual translation.

To ensure meticulous data collection, the researcher employed a coding sheet to record each cultural reference, its classification, and the subtitling strategy applied. In addition, inter-rater reliability was established by having a second qualified reviewer cross-check a sample of the coded data. This process validated that the identification and categorization of cultural references, as well as the assignment of subtitling strategies, were applied consistently and accurately.

Data Collection Procedures

First, the documentary was viewed repeatedly to ensure familiarity with the dialogue and subtitles. Next, transcripts were created and aligned with subtitle timing. All cultural references were systematically identified and marked using the coding sheet, noting their classification (e.g., geographical, ethnographic, sociopolitical) according to Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021). Each reference was then analyzed to determine which subtitling strategy (e.g., loan, literal translation, explicitation, substitution, omission) was employed. To maintain accuracy, the data underwent a verification process through inter-rater reliability checks in which a second researcher independently reviewed coded segments and confirmed classifications and strategy selections. Any discrepancies were discussed until full agreement was reached.

Data Analysis

The analysis used qualitative content analysis, applying Díaz Cintas and Remael's (2021) framework to interpret how cultural references are treated in subtitles. This method was chosen because it allows systematic description of translation practices without imposing external theory, aligning with the descriptive design. Data were organized manually using

tables, where each cultural reference was listed alongside its classification and subtitling strategy. Inter-rater reliability procedures ensured that coding and interpretation were consistent, enhancing the trustworthiness of findings. The descriptive focus allows the study to explain and interpret the ways subtitlers manage cultural meaning transfer while clearly documenting what changes were made to achieve that goal, consistent with Creswell and Creswell's (2023) emphasis on qualitative descriptive studies for intricate social phenomena.

FINDINGS

From the data gathered for *The Complete and Extraordinary Life of Winston Churchill*, a total of 118 data points were identified. These elements of culture, classified as real-world cultural references, were analyzed using Díaz Cintas and Remael's (2021) framework. The information was grouped into three major categories: geographical references, ethnographic references, and socio-political references (see: Table 1).

Table 1. Items of Real World Cultural References Category

Real World Cultural References Category	Number of Data	Percentage
Geographical references	22	18,7%
Ethnographic references	34	28,8%
Socio-political references	62	52,5%
Total	118 Data	100%

Table 1 shows how the 118 references are divided across the three main categories. The figures highlight that socio-political references form the largest group, comprising more than half of the identified data points, followed by ethnographic references and geographical references. It indicates that cultural references relating to politics, institutions, and governance dominate the documentary content, while geographical references are comparatively fewer.

Table 2 demonstrates that literal translation is the most frequently applied strategy, used in more than 60% of cases, followed by loan translation at 23%. Less frequent strategies include calque, explicitation, and substitution, which appear in limited but significant contexts. This distribution highlights that translators relied heavily on direct linguistic transfer methods, with more adaptive strategies—such as substitution and explicitation—used selectively to resolve cultural or contextual challenges.

Table 2. Subtitling Strategies used in translating cultural references

Subtitling Strategies	Number of Data	Percentage
Loan	27	23%
Literal Translation	73	62%
Calque	5	4%
Explicitation	2	2%

Substitution	11	9%
Total	118 Data	100%

Geographical References

This section addresses the treatment of geographical references in the subtitles of *The Complete and Extraordinary Life of Winston Churchill*. These references appear as proper names, metonymic locations, and universal city markers, each requiring specific translation strategies (see: Table 3).

Table 3. Geographical References

No.	Source Language	Target Language
1.	Timecode: 0:13 ...the 30 th of November 1874 at <i>Blenheim Palace</i> in Oxford shire one of England's finest stately homes...	... 30 November 1874 di <i>Istana Blenheim</i> di Oxford shire, salah satu rumah megah...
2.	Timecode: 16:15 ...entered <i>Westminster</i> for the first time as a 25-year-old incidentally the 1900 election...	...memasuki <i>Westminster</i> untuk pertama kalinya sebagai pemuda berusia 25 tahun kebetulan pemilihan tahun 1900...
3.	Timecode: 19:52 ...genuine respect and affection they quickly moved into a house in Eccleston Square in Pimlico in <i>London</i>rasa hormat dan kasih sayang yang tulus . Mereka segera pindah ke sebuah rumah di Eccleston Square di Pimlico <i>London</i> ...

In the first sentence in Table 3, *Blenheim Palace* is designated as a geographical reference since it is an actual and important site situated in Oxfordshire, England. It is the birthplace of Winston Churchill and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, thus carrying both cultural and historical significance. The palace embodies British aristocracy and heritage, and its mention in the documentary enables the audience to appreciate Churchill's immense privilege. While it serves as a unique name of a place, it also symbolically represents geography in the context of the documentary.

In the subtitle, *Blenheim Palace* is left in its English version, which supports the loan translation method noted by Diaz Cintas and Remael (2021). This method is commonplace for proper names and ethnically related place names which are known names or do not have a meaningful equivalent in the language to which they are translated. Translating or adapting the name would change the documentary's historical accuracy or cultural nuance, so the decision is practical and contextually respectful.

In the second data set, *Westminster* is a metonymic geographical reference. While it is a district in London, it is known globally as the location of the UK Parliament. In this case, it symbolizes Churchill's entrance into politics as it represents the British government and political power. The mention of *Westminster* not only provides spatial orientation but also emphasizes the importance of the context of Churchill's political ascent (see: Table 3).

The subtitle keeps *Westminster* in its original English form, which applies the loan translation strategy. As cited by Diaz Cintas & Remael (2021), this approach is frequently used for geographical locations that possess an intrinsic institutional or symbolic essence transcending mere spatial reference. The literal translations such as *Parlemen Inggris* or *Gedung Parlemen* would arguably dampen the formal, metonymic impact and lose the multilayered significance associated with Westminster. Thus, in this case, loan translation is both culturally appropriate and precise.

In Table 3, for the third data set, *London* serves as a universal geographical reference and is the capital of the United Kingdom. In this instance, it operates as a more general locator after more specific ones (*Eccleston Square and Pimlico*) to help wider audiences grasp the situated context where the events occurred. Its inclusion aids framing spatially, especially for those who are not acquainted with the smaller districts.

In the subtitle, London is directly carried over without translation as a form of loan translation. Diaz Cintas & Remael (2021) point out that well-known city names are often retained in their original form in interlingual subtitles because they do not need to be translated. This is beneficial for understanding as well as the economy of translation.

Ethnographic References

This section answers how cultural products, identities, and practices are rendered in translation. Ethnographic references include items or terms reflecting national identity, occupational groups, and modern social practices (see: Table 4).

Table 4. Ethnographic References

No.	Source Language	Target Language
1.	Timecode: 14:26 ...bottles of <i>scotch whiskey</i> and half a dozen bottles of vintage Brandy loaded...	...botol <i>wiski skotlandia</i> dan setengah lusin botol Brandy vintage yang dimuat...
2.	Timecode: 17:11 that he would be fighting in the field against the <i>British</i> it was the first of...	...bahwa ia akan bertempur di lapangan melawan <i>Inggris</i> itu adalah...
3.	Timecode: 22:18 liberal reforms such as the mines 8 hours bill which restricted <i>mine workers</i>	...reformasi liberal seperti undang-undang tambang 8 jam yang membatasi <i>pekerja tambang</i> ...
4.	Timecode: 1:18:51 ... <i>4,000 tons</i> of explosives on the city of Dresden in less than 72 hours.	... <i>4.000 ton</i> bahan peledak di kota Dresden dalam waktu kurang dari 72 jam.

Within the scope of the documentary, the first sentence revolves around the specific smoking and drinking habits of Winston Churchill. The phrase *bottles of Scotch whiskey and half a dozen bottles of vintage Brandy* serves to illustrate the documentary-like comportment of his character while reinforcing the image of an eccentric and indulgent figure. *Scotch whiskey* is a product of culture characteristic of Scotland;

therefore, it is an ethnographic reference which encompasses cultural practices, products, and traditions of a particular group or nation (see: Table 4).

In the subtitle, *Scotch whiskey* is translated as *wiski Skotlandia*. This applies the explicitation strategy, as *Scotch* is transformed into *Skotlandia* to spell out where it is from. This portrays *Skotlandia* as the place where *whiskey* is produced and makes the translation easier for those with no prior knowledge of the term. Cintas & Remael (2021) explicate that this is often the case when dealing with culture specific items which are likely not known to the targeted audience. This approach meets the primary goal of the translation by closing the gap between cultures.

In the second sentence in Table 4, the documentary segment discusses an individual who was getting ready to combat the British. Here *British* denotes a national identity along with its political connotation, including the people, culture and military. Thus *British* serves as an ethnographic reference since it signifies a culturally homogeneous collection of people.

In the Indonesian subtitle, *British* is rendered as *Inggris*, which is also used for *England* and by extension *Britain*. This is a clear cut case of generalization as *Inggris* may lose the distinction between *England* and the *United Kingdom*. Cintas & Remael (2021) describe generalization as a strategy where a more general term is used for clarity, or in this case a direct translation is absent. While this does diminish precision, coherence and clarity is more important in the Indonesian context.

In the third data, the narrator considers Churchill's social policy participation within the context of *mines 8 hours bill*. The term *mine workers* conceptualizes a certain occupational group that is culturally and historically important, particularly in the United Kingdom, where mining communities were close-knit and instrumental to industrial development. Therefore, *mine workers* also serves as an ethnographic shorthand capturing a specific class, culture, and lifestyle (see: Table 4).

In Indonesian, it is translated as *pekerja tambang*, which is a direct and culturally appropriate translation. This demonstrates equivalence where the term aligns with the intended meaning of *mine workers* as the translation without losing cultural context. Cintas & Remael (2021) explain that equivalence is employed where the translator succeeds in locating an appropriate counterpart in the target culture. In this case, *pekerja tambang* conveys the idea of the participants as laborers working in the mines without losing cultural validity.

In Table 4, the fourth data illustrates the extent of devastation caused by the Allied bombing of Dresden during World War II by mentioning the destructive underbelly of dropping *4,000 tons* of explosives within less than 72 hours. It describes the impact of an air raid in heightened dramatic fashion, edging towards the absurd. Although *4,000 tons* is a quantitative measure, it evokes specific cultural modern warfare practices, technologies, and militaristic might of contemporaneous civilization. Thus, it serves as an ethnographic reference in this case—industrial ethics and scale of warfare in the twentieth century.

The phrase *4,000 ton* uses loan translation strategy but changes spacing for numbers to fit the Indonesian style. Cintas & Remael (2021) note that transfer is often utilized where the audience is most likely to relate to the term or unit. Retaining *ton* as opposed to converting to *kilogram* further supports the logic of tone and scale preservation, helping maintain the statistic's emotional significance and context.

Socio-political References

The final section addresses how political, military, and historical terms are treated in the subtitles. These references frequently involve ideological institutions, military designations, electoral systems, and global figures (see: Table 5).

Table 5. Socio-political References

No.	Source Language	Target Language
1.	Timecode: 11:28 ...of a non-conforming member of the conservative party he stood in a by-election in <i>the constituency of Oldum</i>anggota partai konservatif yang tidak patuh. Ia berdiri dalam pemilihan sela <i>daerah pemilihan Oldum</i> ...
2.	Timecode: 13:10 ...way back south and rejoined the <i>British Army</i> in time to participate in the siege...	...kembali dengan <i>Angkatan Darat Inggris</i> tepat pada waktunya berpartisipasi dalam pengepungan...
3.	Timecode: 15:54 ...to call a snap <i>general election</i> for October 1900 hoping to benefit from...	...untuk mengadakan <i>pemilihan umum</i> cepat pada bulan Oktober 1900 untuk mendapatkan keuntungan dari...
4.	Timecode: 35:01 ...British rule in the aftermath of the <i>first World War</i> Churchill's attitude seemed to change...	...setelah <i>Perang Dunia pertama</i> , sikap Churchill tampaknya berubah...
5.	Timecode: 47:27 ...in the early 19 30s, Churchill also began sounding the alarm concerning the rise to power of <i>Adolf Hitler</i>di awal tahun 1930an, Churchill juga mulai membunyikan alarm mengenai kebangkitan kekuasaan <i>Adolf Hitler</i> .

In the first data, the sentence outlines Churchill's political career beginnings, including his race for Member of Parliament in the *constituency of Oldum* as a nonconformist Conservative. This is one of the districts on the map of British parliamentary divisions which Churchill sought to represent. Bringing in *constituency* is already a socio-political label as it embodies a democratic representation framework of a given country, in this case, Britain (see: Table 5).

In the subtitle, it is rendered as *daerah pemilihan Oldum*, applying the explicitation strategy. The translator uses a functional equivalent *daerah pemilihan* which translates to *electoral region* while retaining the proper noun *Oldum*. As Cintas & Remael (2021) explain, explicitation is suitable for culturally bound political terms translation that are unfamiliar to the target audience. This enables the concept of an electoral district to be comprehended even where *Oldum* may be strange to many Indonesian viewers.

In the second data in Table 5, the segment covers the narration of South Africa to which Churchill returned to rejoin the *British Army* during the Boer War. While the *British Army* is a military organization, it simultaneously stands as a monument of British imperial might and identity, particularly in colonial contexts. Therefore, the phrase serves as a socio-political reference, a national military framework alongside the colonial agenda of the British Empire.

Translating *British Army* as *Angkatan Darat Inggris* exemplifies a substitution strategy. This is because it uses a culturally more appropriate equivalent for the intended

audience instead of a direct translation. Instead of a literal or borrowed *Tentara Britania* which would be foreign or nonsensical in Indonesian, the subtitler utilizes an equivalent that resonates culturally and categorically with Indonesian military branches. This technique retains the core essence and purpose of the original term while contextually and linguistically streamlining it for an Indonesian audience. Such approach embodies the essence of the substitution strategy in translation for audiovisual materials.

In the third data, the sentence refers to what Churchill strategically did of calling a sudden general election in October 1900 after recent military success. A *general election* is a socio-political term that occurs in parliamentary democracies where elections are held to select members to the legislature. It is a clear social aspect and political mark which is heavily ingrained into the life of democracy generally and the specific political life of Britain and other parliamentary countries (see: Table 5).

The translation of *general election* into *pemilihan umum* is regarded as a literal translation because it follows the construction and meaning of the original term in a more or less word-for-word manner. As defined by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021), literal translation is rendering a text to be as direct as possible to a source without losing grammar and meaning in the target expression. In this instance, *general* translates to *umum* and *election* to *pemilihan*, both of which have congruent Indonesian counterparts. The phrase *pemilihan umum* retains the nationwide voting notion without cultural adjustment or phrasing changes, thereby complying with the literal translation principle.

In Table 5, the fourth data shows how Churchill's views changed after the First World War and how that shaped British policies and strategies. The term *First World War* serves as a socio-political label since it designates and delineates a historical event of tremendous scope and impact involving diverse nations, ideologies, and transformations in geopolitics.

The phrase *World War I* is translated as *Perang Dunia Pertama*. This too is considered a literal translation as it captures each element of the original phrase and translates it in a straightforward, sequential manner: *world* is rendered as *dunia*, *war* is *perang*, and *first* is *pertama*. Literal translation occurs as described by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021) when the source expression is natural in the target language but equivalent in structure and meaning. *Perang Dunia Pertama* is an Indonesian phrase widely known and accepted that captures the equivalent historical notion as the English expression. It does not need any modification, adaptation or cultural substitution, thus exemplifying literal translation.

In the fifth data, the segment focuses on Churchill anticipating and warning of *Hitler's* ascendancy in the late 1930s, well ahead of World War II. As a person, *Adolf Hitler* represents and constitutes a socio-political reference as he was the dictator of Nazi Germany and tied to fascism, genocide, and global conflict in history (see: Table 5).

The subtitle keeps his name as *Adolf Hitler* with the loan translation strategy. According to Cintas & Remael (2021), loan translation is usually reserved for renowned global figures whose names are historically, politically, and culturally important across different languages. Because his name is known everywhere, there is no need for localization, so retaining it is the most accurate option and prevents any chance of inaccuracy.

DISCUSSION

The Complete and Extraordinary Life of Winston Churchill was analyzed in detail, with 118 instances of real-world cultural references identified and categorized as geographical, ethnographic, and socio-political. Socio-political references dominated the dataset, accounting for 52.5 percent of the total. This predominance reflects the documentary's thematic emphasis on Churchill's political career, wartime leadership, and institutional affiliations, which naturally yield dense socio-political content. When compared to Alawad and Alosaimi's (2023) study on *Masameer*, which highlighted the role of transcreation in bridging cultural divides, the current study takes a more quantitative and descriptive approach, relying on systematic counting and categorization rather than creative adaptation. While Alawad and Alosaimi stress the importance of cultural flexibility to retain meaning across borders, the present findings reveal that literal translation (62%) was the most frequently used strategy. This suggests a more rigid, source-oriented subtitling practice rather than an adaptive or audience-tailored approach.

A similar contrast emerges when considering Alaa and Al Sawi's (2023) analysis of *Feathers* using Pedersen's taxonomy. Their findings showed substitution and generalization as dominant strategies—choices that privilege audience comprehension by reshaping cultural meaning. While both studies share an emphasis on socio-political content, this research demonstrates a strong fidelity bias, favoring literal translation over adaptation-driven solutions. By comparison, Subata and Jumanto's (2023) study of *Coco* revealed a predominance of transfer (direct translation), imitation, and transcription, aimed at balancing cultural fidelity with accessibility for global audiences. Their alignment with direct translation mirrors this study's reliance on literal translation, though *Coco* involved a wider range of language pairs and cultural categories, offering a broader translational landscape.

In summary, while all these studies explore subtitling strategies for cultural references, their approaches diverge: *Masameer* illustrates adaptation through transcreation, *Feathers* emphasizes accommodation through substitution and generalization, whereas both *Coco* and the *Churchill* documentary demonstrate a tendency toward direct transfer of meaning with minimal cultural adjustment. This pattern underscores the present study's contribution in highlighting how literal translation can dominate even in content dense with socio-political nuance, an approach that preserves source fidelity but risks limiting cross-cultural accessibility.

CONCLUSION

In this study, cultural references in *The Complete and Extraordinary Life of Winston Churchill* were examined using the taxonomy of cultural references and subtitling strategies proposed by Diaz Cintas and Remael. A total of 118 instances of real-world cultural references were identified and grouped into three categories: geographical references (22 instances, 18.7%), ethnographic references (34 instances, 28.8%), and socio-political references (62 instances, 52.5%). Among the subtitling strategies observed, five of the nine described by Diaz Cintas and Remael were applied: Loan (27 instances, 23%), Literal translation (73 instances, 62%), Calque (5 instances, 4%), Explication (2 instances, 2%), and Substitution (11 instances, 9%), with Literal translation occurring most frequently.

The outcomes regarding the nature of cultural references in focus within this study are important because they reveal the particular cultural aspects subtitlers face in

documentary texts, especially the predominance of socio-political references. This highlights the complexity of the cultural landscape embedded in the source text, which the subtitler must navigate to retain meaning and context for the intended audience. Serving as a bridge between empirical findings and practical implications, this categorization of cultural references into geographical, ethnographic, and socio-political groups provides a model framework to assist translators and researchers in addressing challenges posed by diverse cultural items. This adds to the efficient development of subtitling policies that balance cultural accuracy with audience understanding, improving the standard and accessibility of translated audiovisual materials. In addition, understanding the socio-political context of documentaries underscores the need for cultural respect and sensitivity in translation since such references are laden with history and influence the worldviews of audiences about the culture being presented.

Future research could explore how audiences from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds interpret subtitled cultural references, assessing the impact of various subtitling strategies on comprehension, nuance, and viewer engagement. Studies might also examine how emerging practices—such as crowdsourced or fan-subtitled media—affect the representation and translation of culture. Furthermore, investigating the broader socio-cultural effects of subtitled media would deepen understanding of how audiovisual translation shapes intersocietal relations and national identity in an era of increasing media globalization. Collectively, such research would advance knowledge of the multidimensional relationship among culture, translation, and reception. By systematically documenting both the frequency and strategy of cultural reference translation, this study fills an important gap in subtitling research by offering a detailed, data-driven perspective on how historical documentaries handle cross-cultural meaning.

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