



Cultural Transfer in Indonesian Dubbing of Encanto

Rofingudin Arrosyid

STAI Ma'arif Kalirejo Lampung

* Email: alrasyidfaridz@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines how cultural aspects are rendered in the Indonesian dubbing of Disney's *Encanto*. Rather than treating culture-bound expressions as isolated lexical problems, it approaches dubbing as multimodal cultural mediation: verbal choices must remain intelligible and performable while interacting with image, music, gesture, and the narrative's Colombian setting. A qualitative content-analysis design was applied to the English soundtrack and Indonesian-dubbed version of the 102-minute film. Cultural units were identified, transcribed, coded using Newmark's five cultural categories, and interpreted through close comparison of source and target dialogue. The supplied dataset reports 558 units; however, an audit of its detailed frequency table produces 569, a discrepancy that is retained transparently and should be reconciled against the transcript before publication. The table nevertheless shows a clear pattern: socio-cultural references are most salient, led by kinship, followed by social organization and material culture. Close readings indicate selective retention of Spanish/Colombian markers (e.g., *Casita*), explanatory reformulation of food and ritual references, and target-oriented substitutions for idioms (e.g., knock on wood → *amit-amit*). The article argues that Indonesian dubbing generally preserves *Encanto*'s family-centred cultural logic while recalibrating culturally opaque forms for oral accessibility. It contributes an auditable framework that combines cultural taxonomy, dubbing constraints, and translation-function analysis for Indonesian audiovisual translation research.

Keywords: audiovisual translation; cultural references; dubbing; *Encanto*; Indonesian

INTRODUCTION

Audiovisual translation (AVT) is a site where language, culture, and media technology meet. A film does not communicate through dialogue alone: speech is synchronized with faces and bodies, anchored in an acoustic track, and interpreted through costumes, architecture, music, objects, and editing. Consequently, a dubbed version cannot be evaluated solely by asking whether individual words were replaced accurately. It must be assessed as a new spoken performance that enables a target audience to follow the story while maintaining a workable relationship with the cultural world staged on screen. This issue is especially important for animated family films, where dubbing is often the principal access mode for younger viewers and where songs, humour, and intimate address carry narrative work.

Encanto (2021) provides a productive case because its narrative makes Colombian cultural imagination central rather than decorative. The film organizes character conflict through an extended family, an enchanted household, communal obligation, food, music, Spanish kinship forms, and a village shaped by displacement and memory. These elements function together. An arepa is not merely food; it indexes Julieta's care. *Casita* is not merely a house; it is an animate family home. *Abuela* is both a Spanish form of address and a relation of seniority, affection, and authority. In a dubbed version, decisions about such items affect how Indonesian viewers understand the social order of the Madrigal family.

Translation studies has long established that translation entails cultural negotiation, not word replacement (Nida & Taber, 1969; Newmark, 1988; Venuti, 1995).

Yet the AVT literature cautions against applying general translation models without attending to medium-specific constraints. Dubbing requires dialogue that can be spoken naturally within an allocated time, coordinated with visible articulation where relevant, and aligned with character voice and scene rhythm (Chaume, 2012; Pavesi, 2018). A culturally explicit source expression may therefore be retained, glossed by its co-text, generalized, or replaced with a target-culture expression. Each choice has a different effect on cultural visibility and on the listener's processing burden.

Existing work falls into two partly disconnected strands. Studies of cultural references commonly classify items and list strategies, often in subtitles or in language pairs other than English–Indonesian. AVT scholarship, conversely, has developed sophisticated accounts of synchrony, orality, and multimodality but sometimes treats cultural references as one constraint among many. Research on *Encanto* has documented its Colombian representation, including food, landscape, music, clothing, ritual, and family values, but has rarely examined how those meanings change when English dialogue is performed in Indonesian. The present study connects these strands. It asks not only which cultural aspects occur in the Indonesian dubbing, but also how their translation makes Colombian specificity either audible, interpretable, or less visible.

The study addresses three questions: (1) What cultural aspects occur in the English–Indonesian dubbed corpus when classified through Newmark's framework? (2) Which translation operations are used for culturally salient units? (3) What do those operations imply for the representation of family, locality, and social obligation for Indonesian viewers? Its contribution is threefold. First, it reports a broad, film-wide coding dataset rather than a small collection of striking examples. Second, it interprets frequency alongside narrative function, avoiding the assumption that frequent items are automatically the most culturally consequential. Third, it explicitly audits the numerical

inconsistency inherited from the draft, modelling the reporting transparency required in qualitative AVT research.

Newmark (1988) defines culture as a way of life and its manifestations particular to a community using a language as its means of expression. His five categories, ecology; material culture; social culture; organizations, customs, activities, procedures, and concepts; and gestures and habits, remain useful because they make the analyst look beyond nouns for exotic objects. The categories can capture a river's narrative symbolism, a domestic artefact, a kinship term, a ceremony, or an idiomatic bodily practice. In this study, however, the taxonomy is used as a descriptive starting point rather than a complete theory of equivalence. A category names the cultural domain of a unit; it does not by itself explain the translator's decision or its audience effect.

For that purpose, the analysis draws on functional and sociocultural accounts of translation. Nida and Taber's (1969) dynamic-equivalence orientation foregrounds a target response that is natural and meaningful. Newmark's distinction between semantic and communicative translation similarly helps differentiate the retention of source-culture texture from the effort to produce immediate comprehension. Venuti's (1995) foreignization/domestication distinction is also relevant but should not be treated as a binary label attached to a whole dubbed film. A single scene can retain *Casita*, translate *abuela* as *Nenek*, and substitute an Indonesian superstition for an English idiom. Such mixed solutions are typical of audiovisual texts.

Dubbing intensifies this hybridity. The translated line must fit time and speech rate, sound plausible in a character's mouth, and cooperate with the visual track. Chaume (2012) identifies phonetic, kinetic, isochronic, and dramatic synchrony as interrelated constraints. Bucaria (2017) and Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021) further show that audiovisual meaning is polysemiotic: viewers infer culture from the combined verbal and non-verbal message. Where an

arepa remains visible in Julieta's hand, a descriptive Indonesian phrase may communicate its ingredients without requiring a loanword. Where a Spanish kinship term is heard but translated into Indonesian, the image and family interaction may still sustain some of its interpersonal meaning. The key analytic question is therefore not whether a single term is 'lost', but which layer of meaning is retained through the verbal-visual ensemble.

Prior studies support this approach while revealing the present gap. Rodríguez Rodríguez (2019) shows that Disney dubbing negotiates cultural references under genre and audience expectations. Paananen (2021) compares dubbing and subtitling and demonstrates that the mode affects the availability of strategies. Zhu et al.'s (2022) systematic review finds that direct transfer, literal translation, idiomatic equivalence, and cultural adaptation recur across genres, but strategy distribution varies with medium and textual function. Martendi et al. (2022) examine Indonesian cultural terms translated into English in *Battle of Surabaya*, reversing the direction considered here. These works establish the relevance of cultural-reference analysis; none combines a Colombian-themed Disney animation, Indonesian dubbing, a full-film cultural count, and a multimodal interpretation of target-language consequences.

METHOD

This research uses qualitative descriptive content analysis with a quantitative descriptive component. The primary source is Disney's *Encanto*, produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios and released in 2021, viewed in its English audio and Indonesian-dubbed audio versions on Disney+ Hotstar. The unit of analysis is a cultural reference realized as a word, phrase, clause, or conventional expression in dialogue. The study does not claim that every spoken lexical item is cultural. A unit was included when its interpretation required knowledge of a cultural practice, social relation, object,

place, belief, environmental reference, or habitual expression beyond a context-free dictionary gloss.

Data collection followed four stages. First, the researcher watched both versions repeatedly and prepared aligned dialogue notes. Second, potentially cultural units were marked with timestamps and contextual descriptions. Third, each unit was assigned to one of Newmark's five categories and, where appropriate, a more specific subcategory: flora, fauna, nature, food, drink, residence, tools, instruments, kinship, greetings, ceremony, magic/gift, society, gesture, or habit. Fourth, source and target units were compared to identify the principal operation: retention/borrowing, close translation, descriptive reformulation, generalization, cultural substitution, or omission. The categories are analytic labels; in interpretation, units could have overlapping cultural functions.

The analysis proceeded through iterative coding. In the first cycle, the researcher coded cultural domain and translation operation. In the second, the coding was checked against the audiovisual context: what is visible, who speaks, what relationship is enacted, and whether timing or a song constrains the line. In the third, representative examples were selected because they illustrate a pattern and have narrative consequence, rather than because they are merely unusual. Expert judgement, as specified in the supplied draft, was used as a validity procedure. For a submission-ready study, this procedure should be strengthened by reporting the judge's expertise, the number of disputed cases, and an agreement measure or a documented consensus protocol.

An important limitation concerns numerical integrity. The supplied draft reports a total of 558 cultural units. Yet adding the detailed values in its table yields 569: 67 ecological, 119 material, 210 socio-cultural, 131 social-organization, and 42 gesture-and-habit instances. The table additionally contains internal tensions between subcategory prose and item frequencies. This article therefore uses 569 only when discussing the transcribed table

and refers to 558 as the draft's reported corpus total. It does not silently normalize the mismatch. The definitive version should recheck every coded timestamp, clarify whether repeated tokens, distinct types, or clauses were counted, and regenerate every percentage from the validated dataset.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Distribution of Cultural Aspects

The tabled data show that culture in Encanto's dialogue is primarily relational. Socio-cultural references account for 210 of 569 entries (36.9%), and kinship alone accounts for 192. Social organization follows with 131 (23.0%), material culture with 119 (20.9%), ecological culture with 67 (11.8%), and gestures and habits with 42 (7.4%). This pattern is analytically more revealing than a simple inventory of Colombian items. The film's cultural world is voiced most consistently through who may address whom, how elder authority is indexed, and how family members position themselves around obligation. Its strongest cultural signal is thus not a scenic landmark or a food name but the linguistic organization of family life.

Table 1. Frequencies recalculated from the detailed table in the supplied draft

Category	Tabled frequency	Share of 569	Most salient subdomain
Ecological culture	67	11.8%	Weather (25)
Material culture	119	20.9%	Housing (58)
Socio-cultural	210	36.9%	Kinship (192)
Social organization	131	23.0%	Gift/ceremony (42); magical gift (42)
Gestures and habits	42	7.4%	Vision (24)
Total	569	100.0 %	Audit total; draft reports 558

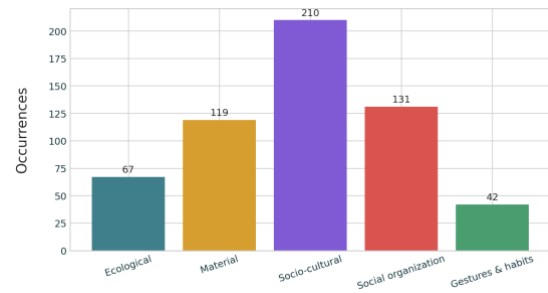


Chart 1. Cultural-aspect frequencies in the supplied coding table (n = 569)

Chart 1 makes the hierarchy visible: socio-cultural items exceed material culture by 91 occurrences and ecological culture by 143. The result qualifies a common reading of Encanto as chiefly a display of colourful national artefacts. Colombian material signs matter, but the dubbing's recurring cultural labour lies in making an extended family legible in Indonesian. This finding is consistent with representation studies that identify Encanto's cultural meaning in family values and social coexistence, while adding the linguistic evidence that these values are carried through dense address and relation terms rather than visuals alone.

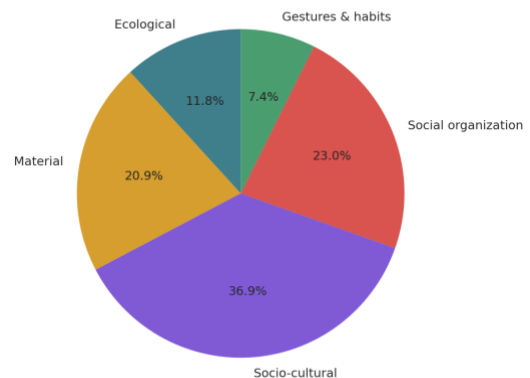
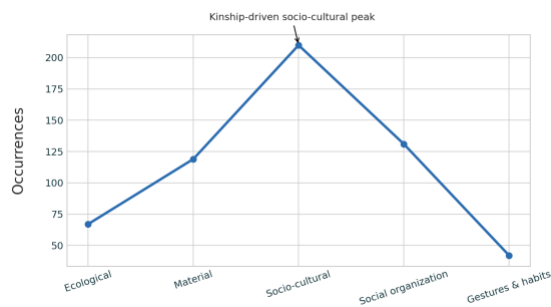


Figure 1. Distribution of tabled cultural aspects

Figure 1 should not be mistaken for a measure of cultural importance. A one-off reference to arepa or tiple can be more culturally specific than a recurrent generic family term. Frequency indicates textual salience, how often a domain is activated, not authenticity, quality, or audience impact. The value of the distribution is that it directs close reading to the film's recurrent cultural system: domestic interaction, ceremony, obligation, and community. The large organization category

supports this view. Gift ceremonies, magic, and communal life encode an order in which individual abilities are evaluated through service to others.



Graph 1. Pattern of cultural-aspect salience across categories

Graph 1 underscores a sharp peak rather than a smooth continuum. The socio-cultural category rises because the coding captures recurring kinship discourse across the film. Methodologically, this peak also indicates why token counts should be paired with type counts in future work. A family label repeated in many turns may inflate token frequency while a rare culture-specific object is underrepresented. Reporting both would distinguish lexical repetition from cultural diversity and would make cross-film comparison more rigorous.

Kinship, Address, and Family Authority

Kinship is the study's dominant finding and its most consequential translation domain. The English dialogue includes Spanish address forms such as *abuela/abuelita* and terms of endearment such as *mi amor*, alongside English labels including mother, aunt, uncle, cousin, and sister. In the Indonesian dub, "I'm coming, Abuela!" becomes "Aku datang, Nenek!" The solution is communicatively effective: Nenek immediately identifies the relation and carries an Indonesian norm of respectful elder address. It also removes the Spanish phonological marker. In this instance, the visual setting, the character's name, and the family's Latin American design continue to signal source culture, while Indonesian speech makes the interpersonal relation locally accessible.

This is neither a simple gain nor a simple loss. Retaining *Abuela* could foreground Colombian linguistic texture, but it might momentarily be opaque to

younger Indonesian listeners and could sound less natural in a fast line. Translating it as Nenek shifts the cultural centre of gravity from Spanish naming practice to the social function of grandmotherly authority. Because Alma's authority, affection, and pressure are essential to the plot, functional clarity is a defensible dubbing priority. The dubbing domesticates the form while preserving the hierarchy. In contrast, a version that retained every Spanish address term might preserve local colour but risk reducing it to unintegrated exoticism.

The same mixed logic appears in "Mi amor, if you ever wanna talk," rendered as "Sayang, jika kau ingin bicara." Sayang is a natural Indonesian endearment usable within family life. The translation transmits warmth and concern, though it does not reproduce the Spanish phrase's sound or its potential ambiguity between romantic and familial affection. The choice demonstrates that target-oriented wording can preserve pragmatic force. It also aligns with research on dubbed dialogue as spoken interaction: a caregiver's line must sound like a line a caregiver would plausibly say, not like a glossary entry.

The high kinship frequency therefore supports a wider claim: the Indonesian dub represents *Encanto* as a family drama before it represents it as a catalogue of Colombian difference. That orientation is appropriate to the narrative, but it needs critical attention. Indonesian equivalents can make familial obligation feel culturally familiar, potentially narrowing the recognition of Colombia's particular histories and linguistic repertoire. A future reception study could test whether Indonesian child and adult viewers infer the same balance of familiarity and foreignness from retained Spanish terms, translated kinship labels, and visual context.

Material Culture: Between Visibility and Explanation

Material culture contains 119 tabled instances, dominated by housing (58), domestic equipment (19), food (12), *Casita* (10), and candles (8). *Encanto*'s objects are narratively active. The house responds, doors assign gifts, food heals, and the candle

holds communal memory. Their translation cannot be assessed independently from what viewers see. A visible object reduces the need for lexical explanation but also constrains the translator: the Indonesian line cannot reimagine arepa as an unrelated local food when the camera shows a round corn cake.

The most informative food example is “You just healed my hand with an arepa con queso,” rendered as “Kau menyembuhkan tanganku dengan kue jagung isi keju.” The target phrase uses descriptive reformulation. It supplies ingredient-based intelligibility, corn cake with cheese, rather than retaining the Spanish name. This assists an audience unfamiliar with Colombian food and matches the scene’s immediate function: the viewer must understand that the food is edible and healing. However, the solution weakens arepa’s status as a named Colombian staple. It converts a culturally located culinary item into a generic descriptive category. The visual and the family’s Latin American setting partly compensate, but the verbal label no longer invites recognition of the dish as a distinctive cultural referent.

A different strategy operates in *Casita*, which is retained in “Iya, iya, *Casita*, kami berangkat!” Borrowing is effective because the house has character-like status and the repeated name becomes learnable through context. Translating it consistently as *rumah* would make the denotation clear but flatten its personified identity. The draft also gives “The house isn’t gonna decorate itself” as “Rumah ini takkan menghias dirinya sendiri.” Here the generic Indonesian noun is appropriate because the line exploits the animated house’s action rather than its proper-name identity. The alternation between *Casita* and *rumah* is thus functional: retention marks the singular animated entity; translation supports fluent dialogue in ordinary references.

Material references show why a strict domesticating/foreignizing verdict is inadequate. The Indonesian dub retains a core proper name, generalizes some items, and uses descriptive wording where visible context permits rapid comprehension. This

balanced pattern resembles findings from other animated-film dubbing studies, where localization and explanatory solutions help sustain humour and comprehension but may reduce source-specific labels. For translation pedagogy, the implication is that object names should be evaluated through narrative role: whether an item is a recurring emblem, a plot device, a visible prop, or disposable background detail.

Ritual, Magic, Community, and Landscape

The organization category totals 131 items. Gift-giving ceremony (42) and magical gift (42) dominate, followed by magic (31), society (8), wedding (5), and proposal (3). In the Indonesian dub, “Gift ceremony” becomes “*upacara Karunia*,” while “magic Gift” becomes “*Karunia sihir*.” The capitalized *Karunia* provides a semi-formal, elevated register that fits a ritualized family institution. Its co-occurrence with *upacara* frames the event as more than a birthday party; it is a public transition into responsibility. The translation preserves the narrative’s ethical axis: a gift is socially meaningful because it is expected to benefit the community.

At the same time, the classification of magic under religion in the original draft deserves reconsideration. In Newmark’s framework, social organization includes religious and artistic concepts, but *Encanto*’s miracle is a fictional narrative system, not evidence of a real Colombian religious practice. Coding it as “social organization/ritual and belief” or as “fictional institutional culture” would avoid conflating fantasy magic with Colombian religion. This revision matters ethically and analytically. It lets the study examine how the film borrows the language of miracle, candle, blessing, and ceremony without making an unsupported claim about Colombian religious life.

Ecological references contribute 67 entries: weather (25), flora (21), fauna (14), mountains (5), and river (2). “You’re lucky it’s not a hurricane” becomes “Kau beruntung itu bukan badai.” *Badai* is a broader Indonesian term than hurricane. The generalization is understandable in oral

dialogue and maintains Pepa's weather-related emotional threat. Yet it reduces meteorological specificity. By contrast, "This river is where we were given our miracle" is translated close to the source: "Sungai ini adalah tempat kami menerima keajaiban." The river's symbolic role (memory, loss, reconciliation, and origin) remains recoverable because the scene's visual design and narrative exposition carry it.

The tiple example illustrates a more consequential material-cultural shift. The draft records "Has anybody seen my tiple?" as "Ada yang lihat gitarku?" A tiple is generalized to guitar. This makes sense for immediate recognition: the instrument looks guitar-like and the scene does not require technical knowledge. But it removes a specifically Colombian musical sign. Unlike arepa, whose ingredients can be described, the tiple's identity is largely historical and sonic; calling it guitar makes the Colombian marker less audible. The example suggests a practical principle: where a culture-specific item is narratively brief, generalization is efficient; where the item recurs, is named by a performer, or carries heritage value, retention plus contextual support may better balance accessibility and representation.

Idioms, Gestures, and Oral Naturalness

Gestures and habits are least frequent (42) but especially revealing of target-language creativity. The draft's clearest example is "Knock, knock, knock, knock, knock. Knock on wood," rendered as "Tok, tok, amit-amit." The Indonesian phrase amit-amit is a cultural substitution. It does not translate the source action literally; instead, it invokes a familiar Indonesian verbal practice of warding off an undesirable possibility. The solution performs the same pragmatic task, countering bad luck or tempting fate, while sounding natural in speech. It is a strong example of functional equivalence under dubbing constraints.

The substitution also demonstrates that domestication need not be a defect. Literal "ketuk kayu" would preserve the English wording but could sound marked or fail to activate the intended superstition for some listeners. Amit-amit shifts the material

action of wood-knocking into a spoken Indonesian ritual formula. The semantic image changes; the interactional effect is preserved. Because the original action is audible and perhaps visually suggested, a viewer may perceive a slight mismatch, but the line's rhythm and comic tone remain workable. This is precisely the kind of multimodal trade-off that a word-level analysis would miss.

Other gesture labels, such as "mischievous grin" rendered as "seringai nakal," are close translations that retain evaluative meaning. They show that not every cultural item demands adaptation. The translator's task is selective: identify whether a form is conventional, whether its cultural implication is essential to plot or identity, and whether the target audience has an equivalent pragmatic routine. The resulting Indonesian dubbing is best described as selectively domesticating, not uniformly domesticating. It preserves cultural visibility through proper names, setting, objects, and ritual vocabulary, while using Indonesian interpersonal and idiomatic resources to keep dialogue immediate.

Implications for AVT and Education

The study advances AVT research in three ways. Conceptually, it proposes a two-level model: classify the cultural domain first, then analyse translation function in the audiovisual scene. Newmark's categories answer "what kind of culture is activated?"; dubbing analysis answers "what does this wording enable or constrain here?" Methodologically, it shows why frequency needs transparent denominator control, type/token distinction, and audit trails. Pedagogically, it offers concrete material for translator education. Students can compare the alternatives arepa, roti jagung, and kue jagung isi keju; Abuela, Nenek, and Abuela (Nenek); or tiple and gitar, then justify a choice using visual evidence, character voice, audience age, and cultural visibility.

For Indonesian dubbing practice, the findings caution against two opposite simplifications. Treating every source marker as untouchable may create opaque, unnatural speech. Treating every marker as

a generic Indonesian equivalent may erase the cultural architecture that makes Encanto distinctive. A more defensible workflow is to map high-value cultural anchors, recurring kinship labels, named foods, instruments, rituals, and locations, before dialogue adaptation begins. Translators and dubbing directors can then decide which anchors must remain audible, which can be explained through descriptive phrasing, and which permit culturally equivalent target routines. Such planning is particularly important in children's media, where comprehension and cultural learning are simultaneous goals.

CONCLUSION

This study examined cultural aspects in the Indonesian dubbing of Encanto through Newmark's taxonomy and a multimodal dubbing perspective. The supplied coding table shows a dominant socio-cultural pattern, led overwhelmingly by kinship references, followed by social organization and material culture. Close analysis shows that the Indonesian version usually preserves the film's family-centred cultural logic while deploying mixed translation operations. Spanish proper names such as Casita can be retained; relational forms such as Abuela and mi amor are rendered through familiar Indonesian address; culturally specific food and instruments may be described or generalized; and idioms may be replaced with Indonesian pragmatic equivalents, as in amit-amit.

The principal contribution is the argument that cultural transfer in dubbing should be assessed as a distribution of functions across sound, image, and narrative, not as a score of lexical sameness. The dub makes Encanto available as an emotionally intelligible Indonesian family story without wholly stripping its Colombian setting. Its main risk is the quiet attenuation of source-specific lexical markers, particularly culinary and musical ones. Before journal submission, the 558/569 discrepancy must be resolved through a transcript-based recoding audit, and future research should add inter-coder

reliability, song translation, lip-synchrony analysis, and audience reception. These steps would turn a valuable descriptive corpus into stronger evidence about how Indonesian viewers recognize, interpret, and remember cultural difference in dubbed animation.

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