

Lat's The Kampung Boy: Intermingling of Code-Switching in Comic Through Lens of Translation

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how Lat's *The Kampung Boy* negotiates cultural identity through code-switching and how these elements are handled in its Arabic translation. Using a qualitative, text-based comparison of the English and Arabic versions, the research draws on Ashcroft et al.'s (2002) postcolonial language appropriation model and Pedersen's (2005) translation strategies. Findings reveal that Lat's use of code-switching is a deliberate tool to express authentic Malay identity, while the Arabic translator navigates these elements through a balanced mix of source- and target-oriented strategies. This balance allows the translation to retain cultural depth without losing clarity for its new audience, illustrating how language, identity, and culture intersect in postcolonial translation.

Keywords: language appropriation; code-switching; translation strategies; translation procedures; English comic

INTRODUCTION

The British colonial regime strategically used language as a means of control, embedding English as a symbol of authority while relegating Indigenous languages to subordinate status. As noted by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1989), language operated as both an instrument of domination and a mechanism for cultural erasure. Colonialism reshaped Indigenous societies globally, with the forced adoption of European languages leading to the decline—and, in some cases, extinction—of native tongues (Lewis, 2020). This linguistic displacement not only altered modes of communication but also disrupted cultural continuity, leaving lasting effects on identity and collective memory.

Colonialism not only reshaped cultural identities but also sparked the emergence of hybrid languages like Haitian Creole, born from sustained intercultural contact and reflective of colonial social structures (Basit et al., 2025). Within this backdrop, language appropriation becomes a deliberate literary act, where authors bend the norms of dominant languages to assert identity and agency (Haroon & Daud, 2017). Awan and Ali (2012) further highlight how globalisation and migration have expanded this practice, especially in postcolonial literature. Here, English—once a symbol of imperial dominance—is reimagined as a voice of resistance. Ashcroft et al. (1989) argue that through strategies like code-

switching, writers embed local culture within colonial language, reclaiming narrative power and affirming identity in more subversive ways than outright defiance. Here, code-switching functions as more than a stylistic choice; it is a tool that bridges cultures, voices resistance, and affirms postcolonial identity.

The rise of English-language comics in Malaysia found a strong foothold in the work of Datuk Mohammad Nor Khalid, widely known as Lat. His early comic strips in *The New Straits Times* humorously depicted rural life while reflecting Malaysia's urbanising landscape. With *The Kampung Boy*, Lat moved from newspaper comics to a more enduring form, using caricature and cultural commentary to highlight the everyday realities of Malaysia's multicultural society (Chin et al., 2017). His use of code-switching in the comic text is particularly noteworthy; it serves not only as a stylistic choice but as a deliberate strategy to capture the layered identities and cultural interplay of a plural nation.

In literary translation, particularly in comics, authors often blend languages within a single work. Writers like Rohinton Mistry and Chinua Achebe have similarly indigenised English by embedding it with terms from local languages, thereby reflecting cultural authenticity. However, this multilingualism poses challenges in translation, especially when it involves code-switching. Translators must thoughtfully decide whether to retain or translate these foreign elements, striking a balance between preserving cultural nuance and ensuring the target reader's understanding.

Therefore, this study addresses a critical research gap by examining how translators navigate and apply translation procedures and strategies in rendering code-switching elements deeply embedded in Malay cultural contexts from English into Arabic. Through a comparative analysis, the research highlights code-switching as a dominant linguistic feature in the comic text, *The Kampung Boy*, while also theorizing the translatability of linguistic strategies within the broader framework of postcolonial language appropriation. By exploring how cultural identity is negotiated through translation, the study advances scholarly understanding of the interplay between language, power, and cultural representation, offering insights into how translators maintain cultural authenticity while bridging linguistic and cultural boundaries in literary translation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CODE-SWITCHING

In multilingual societies, code-switching and related language behaviours are common sociolinguistic patterns shaped by social interaction (Bassiouny, 2017; Ezeh, Umeh, & Anyanwu, 2022; Kunarawong, 2014; Martínez, 2013; Tahereen, 2016). These practices occur globally (Alkhresheh, 2015; Mabule, 2015) and reflect language's role beyond communication as part of human behaviour that deserves deeper analysis (Dewi, 2021). Grosjean (1982) defines code-switching as switching between languages within a single utterance, while code-mixing involves blending elements of different languages. Both occur among speakers fluent in multiple languages (Odhiambo, 2021). Batool et al. (2022) note that code-switching reflects conscious bilingual ability, while code-mixing often shows unintentional language interference. Bentahila and Davies (1997) further classify code-switching into three distinct types.

Code-switching, as defined by Batool, Ali, and Javed (2022), is the deliberate or unconscious alternation between languages within a single conversation by bilingual speakers, often influenced by social context. In literature, this phenomenon is purposefully used by writers (Bakhtin, 1981; Myers-Scotton, 1998, 2006) to mirror real-life multilingual interactions. Coulmas (2013) asserts that code-switching is a conscious and manageable linguistic choice, not a random act. Kachru (1983) adds that it also reflects emotional expression and cultural identity. Rather than reinforcing English as dominant, code-switching repositions it as one of many expressive tools, allowing speakers to convey nuanced identity and adapt to various social settings.

Code-switching, in the realm of language appropriation, involves the deliberate alternation between two or more languages or dialects within a single interaction whether within a sentence or across a conversation. This linguistic strategy, often used by bilinguals or multilinguals (Ahmad, 2023), reflects more than just linguistic versatility; it is deeply tied to identity, audience, and context. Scholars like Myers-Scotton (2006) view such switching as a meaningful act that signals cultural affiliation and social positioning. Likewise, Jonsson (2005) asserts that identity is not fixed, but fluid shaped by heritage as much as by modern influences like education and global engagement. For bilingual writers, code-switching becomes a creative and cultural expression, embedding layers of meaning that reflect both personal history and present realities.

The existing body of scholarship has addressed code-switching in literary contexts, though most of these investigations have concentrated on other language pairs. Prior research has examined code-switching between Spanish and English (Martínez, 2013), African languages and English (Brown & Patchainayagi 2022; Larsson, 2007), Urdu and English (Khalid et al, 2022; Khan et al., 2019; Shah et al., 2020), Dari and English (Ahmad, 2023) Tamil and English (Kumaran, 2020), and Arabic and English (Qabaha & Hamamra, 2022; Hamamra & Mahamid, 2025). Despite this growing scholarly interest, literary works produced by Malaysian bilingual and multilingual authors particularly those navigating between English and Malay and Arabic remain significantly underexplored. This research seeks to address that gap by offering a focused examination of how code-switching functions within this linguistic and cultural intersection. In doing so, the study aims not only to enrich the existing literature but also to provide deeper insight into the creative and stylistic patterns that characterize the writing practices of bilingual authors in contemporary literary landscapes.

In line with the aforementioned, in *The Kampung Boy*, Lat's use of code-switching goes beyond mere reflection of Malaysia's bilingual society it becomes a subtle yet potent act of linguistic resistance against colonial dominance. By weaving Malay into English seamlessly, Lat dismantles the long-standing hierarchy that elevates English as the superior literary norm. This stylistic decision empowers postcolonial speakers to assert their linguistic autonomy, choosing freely from their multilingual repertoire to express identity and context. Rather than conforming to imposed colonial standards, Lat reshapes English into a medium infused with local culture and worldview, turning bilingualism into a compelling vehicle for authentic, postcolonial self-expression.

Overall, although a number of studies have explored *code-switching* in literary contexts, little scholarly attention has been devoted to its manifestation within bilingual or multilingual comic texts by Malay authors particularly when analysed through the lens of English-Malay *code-switching* into foreign languages translation such as Arabic. This study addresses that critical gap by examining how *code-switching* operates as both a narrative and cultural device within translated comic literature. It positions the phenomenon as central to understanding the complexities of postcolonial identity, while also contributing to the broader interdisciplinary dialogue across translation studies, linguistics, and literary scholarship. Thus, this research aspires to enrich existing literature on bilingual authorship and deepen insight into the stylistic and cultural strategies employed in contemporary multilingual narratives.

LANGUAGE APPROPRIATION STRATEGIES IN LITERARY WORKS

Appropriation, as discussed in postcolonial discourse, refers to the process by which formerly colonized societies adopt and adapt elements of colonial powers such as language, epistemology, and analytical frameworks to articulate their own cultural identities and national independence (Spurr, 1993). It allows these communities to use the colonizer's language as a tool to convey indigenous values and traditions. Richards and Schmidt (2010) describe it as the act of reshaping a language to reflect one's own cultural and communicative needs. From Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin's (2007) viewpoint, appropriation often involves the deliberate use of dominant linguistic forms to express alternative cultural realities, embedding them into mainstream modes of discourse. Meanwhile, Hill (2009) frames it as a form of

complex social acquisition where dominant groups co-opt elements of a marginalized group's language, often manipulating meanings or linking them with broader social narratives (Khan et al., 2019).

Many postcolonial writers have reshaped English to reflect their native worldviews and resist colonial dominance. Early figures such as Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, and Chinua Achebe pioneered the indigenization of English, transforming it into a vehicle for expressing local experience (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2007). This linguistic resistance continues in the works of South Asian writers like Shazaf Fatima Haider and Ahmad Ali, who weave Pakistani culture and idioms into English narratives (Khosla et al., 2018; Akram & Ayub, 2018). Likewise, Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* reclaims English as a voice for Indian identity (Jadoon, 2017), while African authors such as Achebe, Masiye, and Luangala similarly adapt the language to articulate indigenous realities (Chilala, 2016). Collectively, these writers transform English from a colonial instrument into a medium of cultural affirmation and resistance.

In the Philippines, Manuel Arguilla employs similar strategies in his short stories. By embedding untranslated vernacular terms and glosses within English prose, Arguilla authentically captures Filipino emotions and perspectives. His literary style highlights the tension between the colonizer's language and native identity, offering a platform for indigenous voices within a postcolonial context (Quinto & Santos, 2016). A comparable pattern is observed in Afghan literature through the works of Khaled Hosseini. Novels like *The Kite Runner* (2003), *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), and *And the Mountains Echoed* (2013) exhibit deliberate integration of Persian and Arabic linguistic elements into English narrative structures. Hosseini's writing not only preserves Afghan cultural nuances but also challenges the monolithic character of English, enriching it with local sensibilities to render an authentic portrayal of Afghan society (Awan & Ali, 2012).

However, very few studies have looked into the use of language appropriation strategies in literary works. Among the limited body of scholarship that has examined literary works, the majority has concentrated on corpora outside the comic genre. This trend reflects a broader inclination within literary and translation studies to privilege more conventional or canonical texts such as novels, poetry, or drama while often overlooking comics as a legitimate and rich site for critical inquiry. As a result, the comic medium remains relatively underexplored despite its narrative and cultural significance, particularly in multilingual and postcolonial contexts.

Comic books serve as compelling literary forms that blend narrative and visual storytelling, offering readers a unique lens into cultural experiences (Sulaiman & Chew, 2023; Connors, 2013). As Botzakis (2009) highlights, comics can meaningfully engage readers, encouraging reflection on the cultural backgrounds they depict. For example, Farahsani et al. (2019) explored code-mixing in Indonesian Webtoons, showing how bilingualism enriches digital narratives by expressing characters' inner lives. Similarly, works like Ng & Lee (2019) illustrate how Malaysian comics reflect authentic communication through code-switching, particularly during sociopolitical moments like the early Covid-19 pandemic. These examples show that code-switching and code-mixing are more than linguistic quirks; they are powerful storytelling strategies rooted in multilingual realities.

In the context of this study, Lat's comics have been extensively examined within academic scholarship. Abd Rahman & Bahfen (2014) examined the construction of national identity. Meanwhile, Chin et al. (2017) analysed Lat's distinctive narrative structure and framing. In the study of Mohd Dahalan & Wan Teh (2020), they adopted a socio-cultural lens but did not explicitly address the language and culture nexus. Salehuddin (2022) explored linguistic devices in the comic. Recent study, such as Beng & Amarasekera (2025), has begun exploring Lat's work through a psychogeographical lens, indicating a shift towards more interdisciplinary approaches. Despite increasing academic interest in Lat's work within Malaysia, research specifically addressing the translation of language appropriation elements from foreign language into other languages remains underdeveloped. For instance, Norzaliza Ghazali et

al. (2020) conducted a translation analysis focusing on culture elements of the latest edition of *Kampung Boy* from a sociolinguistic perspective. Similarly, studies by Sarinah & Saliza (2021), Ahmad Jalaluddin et al. (2022), Nurul Asmira & Suhaila (2023), and Hieda (2024) examined translating culture-specific items in *Kampung Boy* involving Malay and languages such as Japanese and Arabic.

To address these limitations, the current research adopts language appropriation framework proposed by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2002) in conjunction with Pedersen (2005), whose typology of translation strategies was adapted to examine how code-switching was handled in the comic text. This study offers a more comprehensive analysis of how Malay cultural elements are written in English and translated into Arabic in comic text, thereby contributing novel insights to the evolving field of literary and cultural translation studies.

TRANSLATION APPROACHES OF CODE-SWITCHING

Some scholars have examined the language appropriation from different perspectives and in different fields. For instance, they have studied code-switching in novels (Martínez, 2013; Khan et al., 2019; Shah et al., 2020; Brown & Patchainayagi 2022; Qabaha & Hamamra, 2022; Ahmad, 2023; Hamamra & Mahamid, 2025), film (Zabalbeascoa & Corrius, 2014), comic texts (Farahsani et al. 2019; Ng & Lee, 2019), among others. However, language appropriation in lens of translation using literary corpus for postcolonial authors is still an area rarely explored. Furthermore, the translation of literary works, particularly comic text genres, is not only neglected in Malaysia's academic scholars, but it is also a difficult and demanding task. This is especially true when translating language pairings from various language families (Sheikh Salleh et al., 2024). For instance, Haroon & Daud, (2017) examine the translation of language appropriation, particularly foreign words in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* from English into Malay, focusing on how such culturally significant terms are handled in literary translation.

Using Pedersen's (2011) taxonomy for rendering cultural references, the research identifies 32 code-switching items in the source text and maps them to their equivalents in the Malay version. The findings reveal that retention is the most frequently used strategy, followed by specification, together comprising about 70% of the total procedures applied. This suggests a predominantly source-oriented approach, in which the translator prioritizes faithfulness to the original cultural context while also ensuring accessibility for Malay readers. The study contributes to ongoing discussions in translation studies by highlighting the delicate balance between preserving cultural authenticity and maintaining reader comprehension through language appropriation in cross-cultural literary translation.

The issue of the translation of these foreign words is indeed an important one in the field of Translation Studies (Haroon & Daud, 2017). Rizzardi (2014) echoes the opinion of Bellos and states that the strategies of linguistic and cultural localization used by postcolonial writers to mark their difference are one of the most problematic aspects in the translation of their texts. In other words, a central challenge that emerges when translating texts that contain more than one language is determining how to handle the language appropriation terms embedded within them. Should these terms be translated into the target language, or should they be preserved in their original form to maintain their cultural resonance? This question lies at the heart of multilingual literary translation, as the chosen approach directly influences how cultural identity, meaning, and authenticity are conveyed to the target audience.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

DATA COLLECTION

In alignment with the study's objective to investigate translation strategies applied to code-switching expressions in the comic *The Kampung Boy*, this research adopts a qualitative design, grounded in contextual analysis and textual interpretation. A total of thirty-two (32) instances of code-switching were identified and systematically analyzed from the original comic text following the extraction process,

each identified code-switching element will be classified according to the language appropriation framework proposed by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2002). In qualitative research, the sample size is typically guided by the principle of data saturation that is, data collection proceeds until no new significant insights emerge. There are no fixed numerical standards for reaching this threshold. Accordingly, the researcher focused on selecting sentences rich in Malay cultural elements that could only be interpreted meaningfully within their local sociocultural context. The chosen source text, *The Kampung Boy* by the iconic Malaysian cartoonist Datuk Lat, was selected for its legacy as a national cultural artifact that has left a lasting impact on Malaysian society from cultural, educational, and social perspectives. The comic offers a vivid depiction of village life in 1950s Perak, layered with traditional lexicon and cultural nuances, making it a compelling text for studying the linguistic challenges in rendering such expressions into another language.

Lat's *The Kampung Boy* does more than recount childhood memories it offers a vivid, humorous, and culturally grounded portrait of Malaysia's multiracial society. Translating this comic into Arabic requires careful navigation between preserving the cultural specificity of Malay expressions and aligning them with Arab and Western sensibilities. Given these complexities, the text serves as a valuable case study for exploring how culturally embedded code-switching is translated. Using Pedersen's (2005) framework on subtitling strategies, the study mapped instances of code-switching in the original and their Arabic counterparts. These were then analyzed based on their tendency toward either source-language preservation or target-language adaptation. Lat's distinctive blend of satire, local color, and visual storytelling enriches the comic's narrative depth, making it an ideal subject for investigating how language and culture intersect in cross-cultural translation.

DATA ANALYSIS

This study draws upon Ashcroft et al.'s (2002) language appropriation model and Pedersen's (2005) model of translation strategies. This theory focuses on the relationship between text types and translation strategies. It can be instrumental in translating code-switching in comic because it stresses the importance of maintaining the indigenous cultures and expressions of the text. The present study draws on the theoretical framework developed by Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffin (2002) language appropriation model, which outlines how postcolonial writers strategically engage with language as a form of cultural resistance and creative expression. Within this framework, language appropriation is viewed as a deliberate literary practice that enables writers to reshape and recontextualize the language of former colonial powers. Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffin (2002) identify several key techniques frequently employed in this process, including code-switching, glossing, the intentional retention of untranslated terms, and the use of interlanguage.

The analysis of verses containing code-switching was guided by Ashcroft et al.'s (2002) language appropriation model, which situates translation within broader cultural and ideological frameworks, emphasizing that each text carries a distinct function and purpose. Complementing this, Pedersen's (2005, 2011) typology outlines two overarching strategies for translating cultural references: source-oriented and target-oriented approaches. The former prioritizes fidelity to the source text through procedures such as *retention*, *specification*, and *direct translation*, thereby maintaining the original's cultural resonance. In contrast, the target-oriented approach seeks reader accessibility through *generalisation*, *substitution*, and *omission*. As summarized in Table 1, this study applies Pedersen's framework to systematically examine how these strategies operate in rendering code-switching, offering an analytical foundation for understanding the translator's negotiation between cultural preservation and communicative clarity.

TABLE 1: The relationship between Pedersen's framework of source language-oriented (SL) and target language-oriented (TL)

1. Retention

1. Generalisation

2. Specification
3. Direct translation

2. Substitution
3. Omission

In other hand, Pedersen also suggests the procedure of official equivalent, which falls neither under the source language -oriented strategy nor under the target language-oriented strategy. This is because the procedure is a bureaucratic one in the sense that the translation is officially determined by some authority (Pedersen, 2005, p. 3). In other words, there is already a predetermined solution to the translation problem. As such, the translator's intervention is not required. Because of this, in analysing the data, this study will only take into account the procedures which fall under the source language-oriented and target language-oriented strategies and will not take into consideration the procedure of official equivalent. In this study, an examination of the frequency of each of the procedures used will therefore be able to point to the overall strategy used in the translation of foreign words in the novel into Malay.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section outlines the main findings from the textual analysis. From the comparative study of the English source text and its Arabic translation, 42 Malay lexical items were identified, with 32 clearly functioning as instances of code-switching. This technique emerges as Lat's dominant method of language appropriation in *The Kampung Boy*. These findings respond directly to the study's central inquiry on how the translation of code-switching conveys Malay cultural nuances in the comic. Each instance is examined through contextual examples and brief commentary, with "ST" and "TT" referring respectively to the source and target texts.

SOURCE LANGUAGE-ORIENTED STRATEGY

The source language -oriented strategy respects the source text and involves the use of three procedures, namely (1) retention, where the cultural item is retained in the translation, (2) specification, which involves leaving the cultural items in its foreign form but by making the reference explicit or by adding extra explanation, and (3) direct translation, which involves translating the cultural item literally, thus retaining the foreign feel of the word.

THE PROCEDURE OF RETENTION

This procedure involves the complete or partial adoption of culture-bound terms in the target language. It showcases a high fidelity to the ST by entirely transposing the cultural term into the TT (Pedersen, 2005).

Excerpt (1):

ST: A **batik** sarung

TT: **باتيك** إزار

In the translation of *batik*, the term in Excerpt (1) is retained as **باتيك** to preserve its cultural identity, while *kain* is rendered as **إزار**. However, this choice is semantically limited, as **إزار** does not fully capture the cultural and material nuances of *kain batik*. A clearer alternative, **باتيك قماش**, would enhance both accuracy and cultural resonance. To further aid understanding, a brief explanation—such as a footnote describing batik as a traditional Malaysian fabric using wax-resist dyeing—would help bridge cultural gaps for the target audience.

From the perspective of the language appropriation strategies proposed by Ashcroft et al.'s (2002), Lat employs clothing as a symbolic medium to express both religious devotion and cultural identity. In his use of the cultural code-switching term *batik*, the word is left untranslated within the comic, likely due to its global recognition and the assumption that most readers would already be familiar with its meaning. Furthermore, Lat portrays *batik* not merely as attire, but as a gesture of

gratitude—specifically, a token of appreciation for the midwifery services provided to his mother—thus elevating its cultural significance beyond material value.

Excerpt (2):

ST: She lost me near **Pak Alang's** house...

TT: منها أنقذني الذي **فألاً** الانج وجدت أني حظي حسن من وكان

Throughout *The Kampung Boy*, Lat's use of honorific titles reflects the deep-rooted Malay tradition of expressing admiration and respect toward elders, intellectuals, and family members. In this context, honorifics serve not merely as terms of endearment, but also as linguistic markers of cultural identity that are deeply intertwined with postcolonial experience. As illustrated by Lat in Excerpt 2, these titles embody cultural continuity and convey the nuanced social hierarchies embedded in Malay society.

Excerpt (2) above focuses on the the spirit of respect within the Malay community is also reflected through the use of honorifics such as *Pak Alang*, a colloquial term referring to the eldest paternal or maternal uncle, or more generally, an elderly male figure. This designation conveys both familial hierarchy and communal reverence, highlighting the intricate cultural norms that shape interpersonal relationships in traditional Malay society.

Through the the Ashcroft et al.'s model (2002) in Excerpt (2) above, the consistent use of culturally specific terms and code-switching practices serves as a powerful symbolic mechanism for preserving cultural identity and resisting the marginalization of indigenous heritage amidst the challenges of postcolonial transition and cultural displacement. Thus, the word *Pak Alang* is retained in the text, with no information about its actual meaning. The translator in fact merely reuses the the technique used by the original author.

In the other hand, traditional Malay culture expresses itself through food, where culinary heritage serves as a psychological strategy to preserve the spirit of resistance and resilience among future generations. In *The Kampung Boy*, food functions as a cultural marker, symbolizing the continuity of Malay identity amid the complexities of postcolonial experience. Through deliberate code-switching of food-related terms, Lat highlights deep-rooted cultural ties, as exemplified in Example 3.

Excerpt (3):

ST: But occasionally mum would bake our favourite cake- kueh **bengkang**

TT: "بنكج" حلوى وهي... العالم في الحلويات الذ أمني تعمل وأحياناً

The Excerpt (3) above refers to the one of heritage of Malaysian dessert. Bengkang is a category of savoury dessert, usually steamed or traditionally baked. Recipe range from rice flour with battered egg, wheat flour and the classic steamed tapioca cake.

Based on the Ashcroft et al.'s model (2002), the symbolic concept of this culinary heritage in Lat's portrayal represents the importance of cultural heritage in the postcolonial Malay context through local food references, emphasizing that even something as simple as dessert can serve as a powerful marker of identity. By employing code-switching to highlight traditional food items, Lat not only reinforces cultural belonging but also underscores how food acts as a bridge between identity, place, and a sense of ownership. These culinary references reflect shared memory and cultural continuity, as food becomes a unifying element that brings Lat and his family together in meaningful moments of collective experience.

From a translational perspective, the retention procedure demonstrates how cultural terms from the source text are transferred into the target language without modification, essentially being borrowed into the translation. As conclusion, in this way, the code-switched food terms employed by Lat and preserved by the translator reflect a deep-rooted connection to the homeland. Their unaltered inclusion not only reinforces cultural authenticity but also anchors the author's identity in a heritage that transcends linguistic boundaries, serving as a symbolic assertion of national and cultural belonging.

THE PROCEDURE OF DIRECT TRANSLATION

Applied in the translation of names and common object names, this strategy straightforwardly transfers the terms from the ST to the TT (Pedersen, 2005).

In *The Kampung Boy* (1979), one of the most defining spaces shaping the protagonist's early identity is the *kampung*, or traditional village. This rural setting is not just where Lat grows up—it's where his cultural roots take hold, his values are shaped, and his childhood memories unfold. From a postcolonial perspective, the *kampung* becomes a meaningful site where language, emotion, and behaviour are all closely tied to local traditions. As the narrative unfolds, it is through this deeply familiar space—his home and village—that the effects of language appropriation resonate most strongly, giving voice to the protagonist's lived experiences in a way that both preserves and celebrates Malay cultural identity. Lat describes this rural setting as in the following Excerpt (4):

Excerpt (4):

ST: I was born in **kampung**

TT: قرية من فإني أنا أما

Excerpt (4) illustrates one of the earliest toponyms to appear in *The Kampung Boy* is the term *kampung* itself. Meanwhile, the *kampung* as depicted by Lat encompasses more than just a geographical entity—it encapsulates domestic spaces such as the traditional Malay wooden house, as well as communal and natural environments, including the school, mosque, river, and open fields where the protagonist's daily life unfolds. These settings are not mere backgrounds but form integral spaces that shape the protagonist's identity through repeated interaction with family, peers, and nature. Daily spaces such as the home, public areas (bus stops, restaurants, schools), and the natural environment profoundly impact his psychological, emotional, and cultural development. In particular, the family home emerges as a site rich with memory, imagination, and aspiration. It is within this space that both tangible experiences and contextual understandings are cultivated, ultimately serving as the foundation for identity formation (Rowles & Chaudhury, 2005).

Lat's emotional attachment to this domestic space is evident throughout the narrative, reinforcing the argument made by Marcus (2006) that home and childhood are intricately connected. Childhood, after all, is the formative period during which self-awareness begins to take shape, and recollections of one's first home often serve as portals into this phase of life. From birth, the home in *The Kampung Boy* functions as the primary space where Lat learns, internalises, and embodies the ethical and cultural values expected of a Malay child.

Through the portrayal by Lat in Excerpt (4) above, he employed code-switching term such as *kampung*, the most prevalent of language appropriation strategies proposed by Ashcroft et al.'s (2002). Lat intentionally retains the code-switched term *kampung* without further explanation to prompt Western readers to engage more deeply with its meaning and to explore the historical, geographical, and cultural dimensions of the Malay world it embodies. This deliberate choice transforms the untranslated term into a cultural signifier, inviting readers to move beyond linguistic comprehension toward an appreciation of the lived realities and heritage embedded within Malay society. Meanwhile, in the context of translation, Excerpt (4) illustrates the use of the foreign term *kampung* in the source text. However, this term is not retained in the Arabic translation. Instead, it is rendered directly as قرية, which effectively conveys the original meaning of *kampung* within the narrative context. The use of this procedure can also be seen in Excerpt (5) and (6).

Excerpt (5):

ST: From inside my **kelambu** I could hear her saying...

TT: سمعتها الناموسية داخل وأنا...

Excerpt (6):

ST: Sometimes we'd borrow Pak Alang's **sampan**...

TT: قارب... خالي من نستعير وأحياناً:

In exploring the element of code-switching within the comic text, it becomes evident that Lat skillfully illustrates how traditional Malay society employed wisdom and critical thinking in solving everyday problems. His work reflects the intellectual and practical dimensions of local knowledge traditions, portraying how these cultural practices fostered a distinctive form of indigenous intelligence. Through such depictions, Lat not only preserves but also celebrates the role of traditional knowledge as a guiding principle in shaping communal values and problem-solving methods. This embodiment of local wisdom is vividly represented in examples 6 and 7, where everyday experiences are transformed into reflections of cultural intellect and practical philosophy.

This is in line with excerpts (5) and (6), which Lat's portrayal of the *sampan* and *kelambu* in *The Kampung Boy* highlights how rural Malays creatively solved everyday problems. The mosquito net (*kelambu*) reflects how villagers protected themselves from insects at night, while the *sampan* (skiff) represents their handmade water transport used for travel and fishing. These elements show the community's wisdom and practical ingenuity in adapting to their environment. Through the application of the Ashcroft et al.'s model (2002), we can observe how Lat's deliberate use of code-switched lexical artefacts serves as a deeply evocative expression of local wisdom, reflecting the lived consciousness of the Malay community in this region. These linguistic insertions are not merely stylistic flourishes but powerful cultural symbols anchoring Malay identity to its ancestral heritage. Through such integration, Lat captures the essence of tradition and belonging transforming everyday language into a vessel that preserves and celebrates the enduring spirit of Malay cultural continuity.

In translating the word *kelambu*, the translator rendered directly as الناموسية while the foreign term of *sampan* is rendered directly as قارب. Overall, this procedure involves rendering a culturally specific reference from the source language into the target language through a direct, literal translation, aiming to preserve its original form while facilitating cross-cultural understanding.

TARGET LANGUAGE-ORIENTED STRATEGY

The target language-oriented tries to assist the target readers and involves the use of three procedures, namely (4) generalisation, in which the cultural item is replaced with a more general target language word, (5) substitution, in which the cultural item is substituted with a different cultural reference or another reference in the target language which is not cultural in nature, and (6) omission, in which reference to the cultural item is removed altogether.

THE PROCEDURE OF SUBSTITUTION

This strategy replaces an ST cultural term with a TT cultural equivalent. It comes into play when the term from the ST culture is substituted by one rooted in the TT culture.

Excerpt (7):

ST: Then he whispered the **bilal**'s call softly in my ears

TT: أذني في الأذان أقام حيث...:

Several code-switched terms in *The Kampung Boy* are deeply intertwined with religious concepts and traditions that align with both the national discourse and the Islamic-Malay cultural heritage. A notable example is the term *azan*, the Islamic call to prayer. In Excerpt (7), Lat depicts the *azan* being softly recited into Mat's ear immediately after birth an age-old ritual rooted in Islamic teachings and cultural custom. This practice is believed to protect the newborn from malevolent influences and signifies an early spiritual anchoring. It also marks Mat's first exposure to Malay tradition, with the accompanying postnatal ceremony serving as his initial encounter with the symbolic world of custom and heritage. This moment not only reflects the continuity of cultural transmission but also signals the beginning of Mat's lived experience within the framework of Malay religious identity.

In lens of translation, Excerpt (7) illustrates the use of the foreign term ‘azan’ in the source text and its rendering into Arabic. The phrase “*Bilal’s call*” in the original is translated as ‘azan’ in the Arabic version. While this may initially appear to be a straightforward case of retention, it in fact represents a substitution procedure, since the term ‘azan’ is already well-integrated into Malay vocabulary through historical borrowing from Arabic. As a result, ‘azan’ is not italicized in the translation—indicating its normalized usage within the linguistic and cultural framework of the Malay-speaking world.

Excerpt (8):

ST: ...could get two **katis** per day

TT: ...رطل كل مقابل...

Excerpt (8) in *The Lat’s Kampung Boy* conveys a traditional weighing method commonly practiced by the postcolonial Malay community. The depiction centers around the concept of *kati*, a customary unit of measurement for weight or mass. Still in use in parts of Southeast Asia particularly in Malaysia *kati* remains a familiar reference in local markets and traditional shops. Officially, one *kati* in Malaysia is equivalent to 604.79 grams, illustrating how traditional systems of measurement continue to coexist with modern metric standards, preserving cultural continuity in everyday life.

In the concept of code-switching by Ashcroft et al.’s model (2002), Lat deliberately retains the code-switched term without further explanation to invite Western readers to explore its deeper meaning and to appreciate the traditional Malay methods of measuring weight or mass. The foreign term *kati* in the source text is rendered in the Arabic translation as رطل, which literally refers to a traditional unit of weight used in the Arab world, similar to a kilogram or pound. This translation reflects the use of substitution, where the original term is replaced with a culturally familiar equivalent in the target language. However, رطل does not carry the same specific cultural or historical connotations embedded in *kati*, a unit deeply rooted in Malay tradition. It remains unclear whether this was a deliberate translational strategy or an oversight. Nevertheless, the choice is unlikely to confuse the target readers, as رطل broadly conveys the intended concept of weight or mass measurement, aligning with the original meaning in general terms.

THE PROCEDURE OF GENERALISATION

This procedure involves making the cultural term less conspicuous in the TT than in the ST, often by using more general terms. It incorporates hypernyms and hyponyms to achieve its objective. This is akin to the concept of addition, as hypernyms and hyponyms are also utilized for generalization.

Lat’s Kampung Boy is rich in code-switched expressions that vividly capture diverse aspects of Malay material culture, including daily artifacts and domestic objects. One such example is illustrated in Example 9 below:

Excerpt (9):

ST: Dad took out his **parang**

TT: السكين أبي أعطاني ذلك وبعد

In general, traditional Malay weaponry that has captured the public’s attention includes the *keris*, *lembing* (spear), *parang* (machete), and *pedang* (sword). In Excerpt 9, the term *parang* refers to a large knife commonly used across the Malay Archipelago. It functions as a versatile tool both for cutting through dense wood and as a traditional weapon. The inclusion of *parang* in the comic not only reflects material aspects of Malay culture but also conveys the ingenuity and practicality embedded in the daily lives of rural communities.

As illustrated in the excerpt 9, the *parang* becomes a symbolic instrument of responsibility, where Mat learns values rooted in the Malay concept of *budi*. His father’s advice becomes a moral compass,

reminding him of the importance of managing inherited property responsibly. Through this traditional blade, Mat internalizes the virtue of self-reliance and the dignity of earning a living through one's own efforts. Depending on others to safeguard one's sustenance is portrayed as an irresponsible act, contrary to the values upheld in his upbringing.

In the concept of language appropriation proposed by Ashcroft et al.'s (2002), through the deliberate use of culture-specific items rendered via code-switching, Lat not only preserves Malay cultural heritage for future generations but also fosters deeper intercultural understanding among readers from diverse backgrounds. This translational strategy invites readers to engage beyond the surface of the narrative, encouraging a more immersive exploration of the material culture embedded within the lived experiences of the postcolonial Malay community.

Thus, this observation reflects Lat's strategic use of cross-linguistic cultural references to raise awareness of the significance of Malay material culture particularly among Western audiences who may be unfamiliar with such cultural allusions. By choosing not to translate every culturally embedded term, Lat subtly compels non-Malay readers to confront the limits of their cultural understanding, positioning Malay culture as something that resists full comprehension through a purely Western lens. This deliberate use of code-switching not only accentuates the layers of Malay local identity and indigenous wisdom but also constructs a boundary that differentiates dominant Western interpretations from the authenticity of the Malay lived experience.

In terms of translation, the term *parang* a culturally specific tool was rendered rather generically into the target language as السكين (knife), which inadequately captures its full cultural and functional significance. This approach results in a semantic loss, as the term fails to convey the layered meanings tied to Malay material culture and traditional practices. To better reflect the nuances of *parang*, and in alignment with the principles of code-switching, it is recommended that the term be transliterated as المنجل and accompanied by a footnote. This preserves its cultural identity while providing necessary explanatory context for non-Malay readers, ensuring both fidelity and accessibility in cross-cultural translation.

CONCLUSION

This study bridges a key gap by examining how translators render culturally rooted code-switching in *The Kampung Boy* from English to Arabic, highlighting the balance between cultural fidelity and reader accessibility. Using Pedersen's (2005) framework, the analysis distinguishes between source-oriented methods, such as retention and direct translation, and target-oriented ones, including generalisation and substitution. Retention emerged as the dominant strategy, preserving Malay cultural nuance, while other techniques ensured clarity for Arabic readers. This balanced approach, consistent with Davies' (2003) argument, demonstrates that flexibility in translation best maintains cultural meaning while fostering cross-cultural understanding.

The study synthesises Ashcroft et al.'s (2002) model of language appropriation to analyse how *The Kampung Boy* (1970) by Lat becomes a powerful vehicle for asserting both cultural and linguistic autonomy in postcolonial Malaysia. By embedding code-switching throughout the narrative, Lat deliberately reclaims the linguistic space often dominated by English and reshapes it into a tool that expresses and preserves Malay identity. This technique not only deepens the authenticity of the narrative but also serves as a quiet resistance to colonial norms that favour linguistic homogeneity. Rather than allowing English to overshadow native traditions, Lat transforms it into a respectful medium that conveys local realities without erasing their essence. His stylistic choice to retain untranslated Malay expressions further subverts the idea of English as a universal standard, while his strategic code-switching illustrates the hybrid dynamism of Malay-English discourse. Ultimately, Lat's work demonstrates that language appropriation and bilingual storytelling are not just aesthetic choices but are vital narrative strategies that empower cultural expression and redefine postcolonial literary landscapes.

This study sheds light on the vital role of translation strategies in preserving the cultural richness embedded in code-switching, particularly in *The Kampung Boy* by Lat, a text that subtly resists colonial linguistic norms through its bilingual narrative style. As the comic has been translated into multiple languages, future research could examine how translators in diverse cultural contexts interpret and adapt these elements for their target audiences. More importantly, engaging directly with translators may reveal the deeper motivations and challenges behind their procedural choices, highlighting how translation not only bridges languages but also actively negotiates cultural identity and postcolonial representation in global literary spaces.

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