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INVESTIGATING TRANSLATION METHODS AND TECHNIQUES IN RENDERING THE MAITREYA PANCASUTRA FROM CHINESE INTO INDONESIAN: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract: This study examines the methods and techniques employed in translating the Maitreya Pancasutra from Classical Chinese into Indonesian, with a focus on how linguistic and cultural complexities are managed. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this research analyzes how complex linguistic and cultural elements of this sacred Buddhist text are transferred and adapted in translation. Data were collected via document analysis of the source (Classical Chinese) and target (Indonesian) texts, with particular attention to idiomatic expressions, doctrinal terminology, and culture-specific references that pose translation challenges. Using content analysis, the study identifies translation strategies and evaluates their effectiveness in maintaining both semantic fidelity and cultural resonance.,The findings reveal a patterned use of translation methods—including literal translation, borrowing, modulation, adaptation, and communicative enrichment—indicating a consistent strategic effort to preserve sacred terminology while enhancing narrative clarity for Indonesian readers. For instance, the phrase "如是我聞" was translated using a combination of semantic and communicative approaches, while sacred names like "彌勒" (Mílè) were retained through transliteration, reflecting doctrinal respect and the principle of the "Five Untranslatables." Modulation and cultural approximation were applied to render abstract Buddhist concepts accessible to Indonesian readers, though sometimes leading to simplification of philosophical nuances. The use of adaptation, as in translating "仙人" as "Maharesi," illustrates how translators navigate cultural gaps between source and target audiences. This study contributes to contemporary Buddhist translation studies by arguing that the Indonesian translation of the Maitreya Pancasutra adopts a hybrid strategy of doctrinal foreignization combined with linguistic and cultural domestication. It underscores the importance of culturally sensitive translation techniques in conveying religious texts meaningfully across linguistic and cultural boundaries.
Keywords: *Buddhist texts; cultural adaptation; translation methods; Maitreya Pancasutra.*

INTRODUCTION

The *Pancasutra Maitreya* scripture is one of the core texts in Buddhist teachings, particularly within the Indonesian Buddhist Maitreya Sangha (MAPANBUMI). This scripture carries high spiritual and philosophical value and serves as an important guide in disseminating Buddhist teachings in Indonesia. It was first translated into Mandarin by the upāsaka Juqu Jingsheng during the Liu Song Dynasty in the 5th century. The Indonesian translation was published in 2017 by DPP MAPANBUMI with the aim of expanding the understanding and accessibility of Buddhist teachings among the Indonesian public.

However, feedback from readers indicates that the available translation is difficult to understand,

particularly due to the use of uncommon or foreign terms. Preliminary research conducted at Maha Vihara Maitreya in Medan revealed that many readers struggle to understand the translated text, especially due to the use of uncommon and foreign terms such as *baluarti*, *sarwasattva*, *serbaneka tirta*, *koti*, *vaidurya*, and *usnisasirsa*. These terms present significant challenges for lay readers trying to grasp the intended meanings. This raises critical research questions regarding not only which translation methods and techniques are employed, but also what underlying translation strategy they reveal and how the translator positions doctrinal fidelity in relation to reader accessibility.

While recent scholarship on Buddhist translation has increasingly adopted corpus-based and computational approaches to identify large-scale patterns, fewer studies offer close qualitative analyses that illuminate how translators negotiate doctrinal fidelity, cultural adaptation, and reader accessibility in specific socioreligious contexts (Li, 2023; Qiufen et al., 2025; Listimariam et al., 2025). This study addresses this gap by providing an in-depth qualitative case study of the Indonesian translation of the Maitreya Pancasutra, offering hermeneutic insight that complements emerging digital and corpus-based research.

Translating sacred texts like the Pancasutra Maitreya involves unique challenges, including the need to convey complex philosophical ideas while respecting cultural and religious contexts. It demands the preservation of deep philosophical and spiritual meanings while accounting for cultural differences and linguistic structures (Nida, 2003; Munday, 2015; Chan, 2020; Chai et al, 2022; Su, 2025). Notably, the Buddha himself granted his disciples the freedom to use local languages when transmitting and reciting his teachings. This is emphasized in the *Vinaya Pitaka*, *Cullavagga*:

"Anujānāmi bhikkhave sakāya niruttiyā buddhavacanam pariyāpuṇitun ti," which translates to, "I allow you, O monks, to learn the Buddha's words in your own dialects" (Vin. II.139).

This demonstrates the Buddha's wisdom in valuing linguistic and cultural diversity, underscoring the importance of understanding the essence of the teachings over rigid formalism. This statement provides a strong foundation for translating Buddhist scriptures in ways that make them accessible to all, regardless of language barriers (Gethin, 2017; Wang & Liu, 2021). The translation method plays a vital role in determining the quality of the final text. Newmark (1988) categorizes translation methods into two broad types: source-oriented methods, which emphasize fidelity to the source language, and target-oriented methods, which prioritize readability and comprehension for the target audience (Wang, 2023; Ngongo et al., 2024). SL-oriented methods such as word-for-word, literal, faithful, and semantic translation prioritize fidelity to the original text's structure and meaning. In contrast, TL-oriented methods such as adaptation, free translation, idiomatic translation, and communicative translation focus on readability and comprehensibility for the target audience—often incorporating cultural adjustments (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995; House, 2015; Van Thao et al., 2020).

Translation techniques, such as transposition, modulation, and cultural equivalence, play a crucial role in addressing linguistic and cultural challenges inherent in sacred text translation (Saputra et al., 2022; Smith et al., 2022; Chai et al., 2023; Amelia et al., 2023). Scholars such as Keraf (1991), Machali (2009), and Choliludin (2006) highlight techniques like transposition, modulation, and cultural equivalence as essential strategies for achieving effective translation. Idiomatic translation, in particular, helps preserve meaning and natural flow in the target language, especially when dealing with complex religious texts (Bell, 1989; Larson, 2021; Amenador & Wang, 2022; Jefriadi & Ardi, 2025).

Religious texts like the *Pancasutra Maitreya* face additional challenges, including the difficulty of conveying abstract philosophical meanings, cultural differences that affect comprehension, and technical terms lacking direct equivalents in the target language. Munday (2015) emphasizes that translating sacred texts requires careful attention to meaning, context, and the intended message. Recent studies (e.g., Zhang & Wu, 2021) stress that the translator must not only be proficient in the source and target languages but also culturally competent and theologically sensitive (Rosida & Herdi, 2024).

Recent developments in translation studies increasingly conceptualize translation not merely as a linguistic transfer but as a culturally and ideologically situated practice shaped by social context, institutional expectations, and reader reception (Ahmed & Mansour, 2021; Anis et al., 2022; Akizhanova. 2025). While early linguistic models framed translation primarily as a matter of structural equivalence between languages (Catford, 1965), contemporary scholarship emphasizes the

translator's interpretive agency and the sociocultural embeddedness of translation decisions (Batubara et al., 2023; Sinambela et al., 2024; Song, 2025). This shift is particularly relevant in the translation of sacred texts, where linguistic choices simultaneously carry doctrinal, pedagogical, and cultural implications. Building on Holmes' (1988) foundational mapping of translation studies, recent descriptive translation studies have expanded product-oriented and function-oriented analyses to examine how translated texts operate within specific religious communities. Empirical studies in Asian and Southeast Asian contexts demonstrate that translations of religious scriptures often function not only as textual representations but also as instruments of doctrinal education and community formation (Tsoi, 2022; Sulistyo et al., 2023; Ur Rahman, 2023; Fitryansyah & Fauziah, 2024). In this regard, translation quality is evaluated not solely in terms of semantic accuracy but also in relation to readability, cultural resonance, and ideological alignment with institutional goals.

Within this framework, translation methods have been re-examined as strategic orientations applied to entire texts rather than as isolated linguistic procedures. Newmark's (1988) distinction between source-language-oriented methods (semantic and literal translation) and target-language-oriented methods (communicative and adaptive translation) remains influential, yet recent studies suggest that contemporary translators often adopt hybrid strategies that combine both orientations (Holay et al., 2024). Empirical analyses of religious and philosophical text translation indicate that literal or semantic methods are frequently applied to doctrinal terminology, while communicative or adaptive methods are employed in explanatory or narrative passages to enhance reader comprehension (Herman et al., 2024; Zhou & Wang, 2025; Guo, 2025; Ismail et al., 2025). Research on translation methods in sacred texts further shows that strict literalism, long advocated by scholars such as Benjamin and Nabokov, is rarely applied uniformly in practice. Instead, translators selectively preserve formal features when they carry doctrinal significance, while allowing flexibility in syntactic or stylistic rendering to accommodate target-language norms (Alhaj, 2023; Cheng & Wang, 2025; Anggun et al). Studies of Buddhist sutra translations into modern languages reveal that excessive literalism can hinder comprehension for lay readers, prompting translators to balance textual reverence with pedagogical clarity (Li et al., 2022; Tamang, 2025; Zhang et al., 2025).

At the micro-textual level, translation techniques such as borrowing, modulation, transposition, equivalence, and adaptation play a crucial role in resolving linguistic and cultural asymmetries. Recent empirical research confirms that borrowing and transliteration are commonly used to retain sacred names and doctrinal terms, reflecting respect for religious authority and the principle of preserving "untranslatable" concepts (Smith et al., 2022; Chai et al., 2023; Jefriadi & Ardi, 2025). Conversely, modulation and cultural equivalence are often employed to render abstract philosophical ideas more accessible, particularly when target audiences lack familiarity with the source culture's conceptual framework (Al-Khalafat & Haider, 2022; Amelia et al., 2023; Rosida & Herdi, 2024). In studies of Buddhist text translation specifically, scholars highlight the importance of doctrinal sensitivity and cultural competence. Zhang and Wu (2021) demonstrate that translators must possess not only linguistic expertise but also a deep understanding of Buddhist philosophy to avoid semantic distortion or oversimplification. More recent qualitative case studies show that translators frequently act as cultural mediators, selectively domesticating explanatory elements while maintaining foreignized forms for key doctrinal terms, thereby constructing a layered translation that serves both fidelity and accessibility (Li, 2023).

The notion of translator agency is further illuminated through Lefevere's theory of translation as rewriting, which has been increasingly applied to religious translation contexts. Recent research indicates that institutional patronage, pedagogical objectives, and the expectations of lay religious communities significantly shape translation strategies (Nasution & Kharisma, 2024; Batubara et al., 2023). In Buddhist organizations, translations often function as teaching tools, leading translators to prioritize clarity and moral instruction while carefully safeguarding doctrinal authority (Song, 2025; Su, 2025). Although corpus-based and computational approaches have recently gained prominence in Buddhist translation studies—enabling large-scale pattern identification across multiple texts—scholars caution that such methods risk overlooking the nuanced decision-making processes underlying individual translation choices (He et al., 2024). Consequently, close qualitative analyses remain essential for understanding how translation methods and techniques interact within

specific socioreligious contexts. By examining concrete instances of linguistic choice, qualitative studies provide insight into how translators negotiate tensions between semantic fidelity, cultural adaptation, and reader accessibility.

Taken together, recent literature suggests that the translation of Buddhist scriptures is best understood as a dynamic, context-sensitive practice characterized by methodological hybridity and strong translator agency. However, studies focusing on Indonesian translations of Buddhist texts remain limited, particularly those offering detailed analyses of method–technique interaction within institutional religious settings. Addressing this gap, the present study situates itself within contemporary descriptive and sociocultural translation research by examining how translation methods and techniques are employed in the Indonesian rendering of the Maitreya Pancasutra, thereby contributing empirical insight into the evolving practice of Buddhist scripture translation in Southeast Asia.

This research, therefore, seeks to answer two central questions: (1) What translation method was used in translating the *Pancasutra Maitreya* from Mandarin into Indonesian? (2) What translation techniques were employed, and how do they affect the quality of the final translation? By integrating both source-oriented and target-oriented approaches and considering cultural context, this study examines the translator's role as a cultural mediator whose decisions are shaped by doctrinal priorities, institutional expectations, and the perceived needs of Indonesian Buddhist readers. The ultimate goal is to ensure that the spiritual and philosophical messages embedded in this scripture are conveyed effectively and received meaningfully by Indonesian readers.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, which is particularly suitable for exploring the complex translation process of the Maitreya Pancasutra and understanding translators' strategies in context. According to Sugiyono (2020), qualitative descriptive research provides a deep and holistic description of social phenomena, enabling a nuanced understanding of textual and cultural aspects. This approach emphasizes understanding specific events and processes through words and texts rather than numerical data, which is unsuitable for examining the nuanced linguistic and cultural features of Buddhist scripture translation. Qualitative descriptive research employs data collection techniques such as document analysis, in-depth interviews, and participant observation. In this study, document analysis is the primary technique, enabling a detailed examination of translation methods and techniques used in the Pancasutra Maitreya.

This approach allows the researcher to explore the meanings, understandings, and perspectives of research subjects within their natural context, thereby providing a more holistic and contextualized picture of the phenomenon being studied. In this research, the focus is on an in-depth exploration of the translation process and techniques used in the *Pancasutra Maitreya*. Content analysis will be applied to understand how the translated text is structured and contextualized in Indonesian. Through the qualitative approach, I aim to uncover meanings and nuances that may be overlooked by quantitative methods, while situating the findings within relevant cultural and social contexts. This approach enables a detailed and insightful understanding of the translation process and the interpretation of this sacred text, thereby contributing significantly to improving the quality and accuracy of the *Pancasutra Maitreya* translation.

This qualitative research was conducted from January to July 2025 in several temples and Buddhist communities in and around Medan, selected for their active engagement in Buddhist practices and accessibility to translators experienced in sacred text translation. Additionally, online interview sessions and focus group discussions were conducted to include informants located outside the immediate area, ensuring broader perspectives on translation practices. In addition, several interview sessions and focus group discussions were conducted online to reach informants located outside the immediate area. The research aimed to explore and understand the translation process and translators' experiences, directly addressing the study's research questions regarding methods and techniques used in rendering the Pancasutra Maitreya into Indonesian.

The population of this research includes the entire text of the Pancasutra Maitreya in both Mandarin (source language) and Indonesian (target language), with a focus on specific units of analysis such as words, phrases, clauses, or sentences that are particularly challenging to translate. These units were selected because they often present challenges in semantic accuracy and cultural appropriateness, allowing the study to evaluate the effectiveness of different translation methods and

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techniques. These units were selected because they often pose challenges in the translation process, both in terms of semantic accuracy and cultural appropriateness. Analyzing these complex units enables the research to identify the translation methods and techniques employed and assess their effectiveness in conveying the source text's meaning, thereby directly addressing the study's objectives. This approach provides in-depth insight into the quality of the translation and areas for potential improvement.

The primary research instrument in this study is the researcher, who is responsible for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data while maintaining objectivity through systematic content analysis and triangulation with supporting literature. Specifically, the researcher examines the source text and its Indonesian translation to identify difficult words, phrases, clauses, or sentences and evaluates the translation methods and techniques applied to these units. The researcher identifies words, phrases, clauses, or sentences that are difficult to comprehend and evaluates the translation methods and techniques used. Supporting documents, including translation theories, studies on religious texts, and relevant literature, are employed to validate findings and ensure accurate interpretation of translation strategies. Moreover, the analysis process is carried out systematically using content analysis guidelines to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. Thus, the main research instrument is designed to deeply explore the existing problems and produce comprehensive findings.

Data were collected using document analysis, which allows an in-depth examination of both the Mandarin source text and the Indonesian translation, making it suitable for identifying translation methods and techniques. The researcher systematically reviewed both texts to identify units based on semantic complexity, cultural specificity, and potential difficulty for the target audience, ensuring that the analysis focuses on the most challenging segments. Comparisons between source and target texts were conducted to highlight correspondences and differences, allowing the study to answer the research questions regarding translation methods and techniques. Through this technique, the researcher can uncover hidden meanings, patterns, and themes that might be overlooked by other methods, thereby gaining deep insights into the translation techniques and methods used, and evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the translation in conveying the original meaning of the sacred *Pancasutra Maitreya* text.

Data were analyzed using content analysis, following a systematic process of identifying, coding, and interpreting recurring patterns, with Vinay and Darbelnet's taxonomy serving as the primary framework for identifying translation techniques, supplemented by Newmark's semantic–communicative distinction and Venuti's foreignization/domestication model for interpretive analysis. The researcher first gathered relevant literature, then conducted an in-depth evaluation to identify recurring translation strategies, which informed the assessment of methods and techniques in the Pancasutra Maitreya translation. The researcher then coded the data by categorizing frequently occurring words, phrases, or key concepts, allowing for systematic analysis of translation methods and their effectiveness in conveying meaning. This process allows the researcher to highlight main issues, uncover hidden meanings, and delve into the deeper implications of the literature. Content analysis structured and organized the findings comprehensively, providing insights into the translation process and evaluating the effectiveness of methods and techniques in conveying the Pancasutra Maitreya's meaning. It also enables the researcher to identify significant trends and relationships between concepts within the reviewed literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The translation of the Maitreya Pancasutra from Classical Chinese to Indonesian reveals a consistent strategic pattern in which sacred names and doctrinal terms are predominantly foreignized through borrowing and transliteration, while narrative and explanatory elements are domesticated through modulation, adaptation, and communicative translation to enhance reader accessibility. Table 1 summarizes these techniques with corresponding source and target texts. The canonical phrase '如是我聞' was translated as 'Demikianlah yang telah kudengar,' classified as literal translation with transposition. This phrase is foundational in Buddhist scripture and demands structural and lexical preservation. However, grammatical adjustments—such as the addition of "telah" and "ku-"—reflect communicative choices tailored to the target language's syntactic norms. From Newmark's framework, this represents a hybrid between semantic and communicative translation, while from Nida and Taber's lens, it combines formal and dynamic equivalence.

The term '彌勒' (Mílè) was rendered as 'Maitreya,' classified under borrowing and transliteration. This strategy aligns with the Buddhist principle of the "Five Untranslatables" (五不翻), specifically the guideline to avoid translating sacred names to maintain their spiritual resonance. Vinay and Darbelnet's model classifies this as direct translation through borrowing, while Venuti would categorize it as foreignization, intentionally preserving cultural otherness. Furthermore, the translator's decision to retain "Maitreya" without semantic interpretation shows a strong emphasis on doctrinal authenticity and spiritual reverence.

In another case, the phrase "佛說彌勒大成佛經" was rendered as "Khotbah Sang Buddha tentang Bodhisatva Maitreya Mencapai Kebuddhaan." This demonstrates the use of modulation, as the original noun phrase "大成佛" ("Great Attainment of Buddhahood") is transformed into the verbal phrase "Mencapai Kebuddhaan." This change reflects an effort to adapt sentence logic and clarity in the target language. Similarly, the addition of the term "Bodhisatva" in the translation of "彌勒" (Data 004) highlights communicative enrichment, helping readers unfamiliar with Mahayana spiritual hierarchies grasp Maitreya's role.

Other instances include '所問' → 'pertanyaan yang diajukan' and '慈心因緣' → 'Sebab Jodoh Maitri,' identified as modulation and borrowing. Cultural adaptation occurred in translations such as '仙人' → 'Maharesi' and '摩伽提國' → 'Negeri Magadha. These strategies reframe abstract Buddhist terms into more accessible Indonesian expressions without distorting core meanings. For instance, the term "因緣" (pratītyasamutpāda) was rendered as "jodoh", a culturally resonant term in Indonesian society. This shift serves communicative clarity but also signals potential philosophical reduction, a trade-off inherent in such modulation processes.

Other findings include the application of adaptation techniques to convey cultural or geographical concepts absent in the target audience's worldview. The translation of "仙人" (xiānrén) as "Maharesi" (Data 010) exemplifies this, replacing a Taoist-transcendent figure with a more familiar Indic archetype. Likewise, geographic terms such as "摩伽提國" (Magadha) are adapted using standardized Buddhist nomenclature in Indonesian. These transformations demonstrate a nuanced negotiation between preserving sacred specificity and ensuring target audience comprehension—a balance particularly evident in Data 012, where "一切智光明仙人" becomes "Maharesi Sarvajnaprabha", combining adaptation and borrowing in a culturally resonant manner.

Finally, the translation of dietetic and ethical concepts such as "不食肉" ("not eating meat") as "Berpantang Makan Daging" reflects a blend of semantic translation and cultural equivalence. The term "berpantang" evokes religious discipline in the Indonesian context, more effectively than a literal rendering. This suggests that the translator prioritized the spiritual connotation over linguistic precision, highlighting the necessity of pragmatic enrichment in rendering doctrinal content meaningfully.

Table 1. *Summary of translation techniques in the Maitreya Pancasutra*

Data No.	Source Text Segment	Target Translation	Main Technique(s)	Theory/Framework Applied
001	如是我聞	Demikianlah yang telah kudengar	Literal Translation, Transposition, Semantic Translation	Yule (2008), Newmark (1988), Vinay & Darbelnet (1958)
002	彌勒 (Mílè)	Maitreya	Borrowing, Transliteration	Vinay & Darbelnet, Newmark, Venuti (1995)
003	佛 說 彌 勒 大成佛經	Khotbah Sang Buddha tentang Bodhisatva Maitreya Mencapai Kebuddhaan	Modulation, Addition	Vinay & Darbelnet (1958), Newmark (1988)
004	彌勒	Bodhisatva Maitreya	Communicative Translation	Newmark (1988)
005	大成佛	Mencapai Kebuddhaan	Semantic Translation, Domestication	Newmark (1988), Venuti (1995)
006	所問	Pertanyaan yang diajukan	Modulation	Vinay & Darbelnet (1958)
009	第四經	Sutra 4	Borrowing, Modulation	Vinay & Darbelnet (1958)

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010	仙人	Maharesi	Cultural Adaptation	Vinay & Darbelnet (1958), Katan (2004)
011	一切智光明	Sarvajñaprabha	Borrowing	Newmark (1988), Venuti (1995)
012	一切智光明仙人	Maharesi Sarvajñaprabha	Cultural Adaptation, Borrowing	Vinay & Darbelnet, Newmark, Schäfer (2011)
013	慈心因緣	Sebab Jodoh Maitri	Modulation, Borrowing	Vinay & Darbelnet (1958), Xuanzang (五不翻)
014	不食肉	Berpantang Makan Daging	Semantic Translation, Cultural Equivalent	Newmark (1988)
015	摩伽提國	Negeri Magadha	Cultural Adaptation	Katan (2004), Vinay & Darbelnet (1958)
016	自在天祠精舍	Seorang anak keluarga brahmana	Cultural Equivalence, Recontextualization	Newmark (1988), Nord (1997)

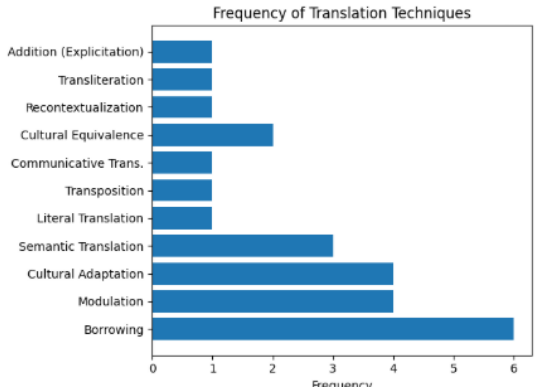


Figure 1. *Frequency of techniques used*

This study reveals that the Indonesian translation of the Maitreya Pancasutra is governed by a coherent translation strategy rather than an ad hoc application of techniques. Specifically, the findings indicate a patterned combination of doctrinal foreignization—through borrowing and transliteration of sacred terms—and linguistic and cultural domestication—through modulation, adaptation, and communicative enrichment—to balance textual reverence with reader accessibility. Analysis identified multiple translation techniques, including literal translation, modulation, borrowing, transposition, cultural adaptation, and semantic and communicative translation. The selection of these techniques reflects attention to linguistic structure, doctrinal accuracy, and cultural nuances, illustrating the multifaceted nature of translating sacred texts.

The sacred formula 如是我聞 ('Demikianlah yang telah kudengar') was translated using literal and semantic approaches, reflecting a deliberate effort to preserve textual authenticity and ritual continuity, a priority commonly observed in canonical Buddhist translations where formulaic expressions function as markers of scriptural authority. While this observation aligns with Nida and Taber's principle of formal equivalence, it also illustrates the limits of strict formalism, as minor grammatical adjustments were introduced to accommodate Indonesian syntactic norms, demonstrating the translator's pragmatic negotiation between textual sanctity and communicative clarity.

Borrowing and transliteration were the primary techniques for religious terms such as 彌勒 ('Maitreya') and Sarvajñaprabha, a choice that positions the translator as a doctrinal gatekeeper who prioritizes the preservation of sacred authority over immediate semantic transparency. Theoretically, this approach resonates with Xuanzang's 'Five Principles of Non-Translation' while also aligning with Venuti's concept of foreignization, suggesting continuity between classical Buddhist translation ethics and modern strategies of preserving doctrinal alterity.

Cultural adaptation and modulation were employed for terms lacking direct equivalents in Indonesian culture; however, these strategies also involve interpretive risk, as they may subtly reframe Chinese Buddhist concepts within Indic or Indonesian cultural schemas, potentially reshaping doctrinal nuance. For instance, 仙人 was translated as 'Maharesi,' and 慈心因緣 as 'Sebab Jodoh Maitri,' facilitating comprehension while maintaining doctrinal relevance. From a theoretical perspective, these strategies exemplify Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) oblique translation, applied when direct equivalence is insufficient to convey meaning.

Additionally, the use of recontextualization and cultural equivalence in some cases (e.g., 自在天祠精舍 → "seorang anak keluarga brahmana") reflects the translator's attempt to prioritize narrative coherence and accessibility. While this may result in some loss of archaeological or historical precision, it enhances functional

communication and comprehension for a general Indonesian readership. These decisions highlight a recurring tension between foreignization and domestication, a central debate in translation studies, wherein the translator selectively preserves doctrinal otherness while domesticating peripheral narrative elements to ensure comprehension.

Taken together, the findings suggest that the translation of the Maitreya Pancasutra cannot be adequately explained by any single translation method. Instead, the translator adopts a flexible, context-sensitive strategy shaped by doctrinal responsibility, institutional expectations, and pedagogical concerns. This hybrid strategy challenges rigid methodological binaries and underscores the translator's role as an ethical and interpretive agent in the transmission of sacred texts.

Finally, the multiplicity of techniques across the corpus also reflects the translators' effort to strike a balance between fidelity to source text and receptivity of the target audience. This dual allegiance—between doctrinal preservation and cultural intelligibility—emerges as a defining feature of translating sacred texts. It is evident that no single technique suffices across all contexts; rather, a flexible and context-sensitive approach is necessary.

In sum, this study demonstrates that translating Buddhist canonical texts is an inherently interpretive and ethical practice, requiring translators to negotiate doctrinal fidelity, cultural intelligibility, and reader engagement through strategically hybrid translation choices. The results affirm that translation is not a mechanical transfer of words but a hermeneutic and ethical act—a negotiation between reverence for the source and responsibility to the reader.

This study illustrates the necessity of integrating linguistic, doctrinal, and cultural frameworks when translating sacred texts. Findings suggest that existing typologies of translation techniques remain relevant but require flexible application for religious texts with complex cultural content.

Translators of Buddhist scriptures into Indonesian or other languages should consider: (1) Prioritizing borrowing/transliteration for sacred names to maintain spiritual authenticity. (2) Applying modulation or cultural adaptation when source concepts lack direct equivalents, balancing doctrinal fidelity with audience comprehension. (3) Using footnotes selectively to supplement explanation without disrupting narrative flow. These guidelines can enhance both accuracy and readability in religious text translation."

CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the translation methods and techniques employed in rendering the Maitreya Pancasutra from Chinese into Indonesian. The analysis identified multiple translation techniques, including literal translation, grammatical adjustment, semantic and communicative translation, modulation, adaptation, borrowing, substitution, and the strategies of foreignization and domestication.

The findings show that translators selected techniques strategically, considering linguistic structure, doctrinal significance, and cultural context. Supplementary explanations, such as footnotes, were used to enhance reader understanding while maintaining fidelity to the source text. Overall, the study highlights that translating Buddhist canonical texts is a complex and context-sensitive process. Translators must balance textual fidelity, doctrinal accuracy, and cultural intelligibility, making deliberate choices to convey meaning effectively across linguistic and cultural boundaries. These insights contribute to translation studies by demonstrating the necessity of integrating technical, cultural, and doctrinal frameworks when working with sacred texts. Practically, the results provide guidance for translators of Buddhist scriptures, suggesting that a flexible, context-sensitive approach—combining borrowing, adaptation, and modulation—can help maintain both spiritual resonance and accessibility for target readers.

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