

Translation Orientations in Japanese-Indonesian Anime Subtitling: A Comparative Study of Muse Indonesia and Bstation in *New Game!!*

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed subtitle orientations in the Indonesian subtitles of *New Game!!* episodes 1–3 produced by Muse Indonesia and Bstation. The study aimed to examine how different subtitle orientations reflected contextual adaptation, semantic transfer, and subtitle readability in Japanese-Indonesian audiovisual translation. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach. The data consisted of 49 subtitle segments showing differences in lexical choice, subtitle rendering, contextual interpretation, or translation strategy between the two subtitle versions. The data were collected through repeated viewing, transcription, comparison, and classification of Japanese dialogue and corresponding Indonesian subtitle renderings. The findings demonstrated that Muse Indonesia generally prioritized communicative readability, emotional accessibility, and contextual naturalness through more audience-oriented subtitle renderings. In contrast, Bstation tended to preserve semantic meaning, source-language elements, and Japanese cultural nuances more directly. The findings also showed that subtitle translation involved pragmatic adaptation, semantic negotiation, cultural and contextual adaptation, and audience-oriented communication within audiovisual translation constraints. Overall, the study demonstrated that different subtitle orientations resulted in variations in the rendering of semantic, contextual, interpersonal, and cultural meanings in Japanese-Indonesian anime subtitling. The findings suggest that future comparative studies of anime subtitling should consider how semantic, pragmatic, and cultural factors interact with the communicative constraints of audiovisual translation.

Keywords: *audiovisual translation; anime subtitling; subtitle orientations; semantic fidelity; contextual adaptation*

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INTRODUCTION

Anime has become a global form of Japanese popular culture distributed widely through television broadcasts and digital streaming platforms (Hernández-Pérez, 2019; Noh, 2024). The increasing accessibility of legal streaming services has enabled international audiences to consume anime more easily, making anime an important medium of cross-cultural communication (Noh, 2024). In Indonesia, anime has remained popular since its introduction through television broadcasts in the 1970s and has continued to attract audiences from different generations. As anime consumption has increased internationally, subtitle translation has played an important role in transferring Japanese dialogue, cultural expressions, and pragmatic meanings into target languages (Guillot, 2016, 2020).

Translation plays an important role in reproducing meaning naturally and contextually from the source language into the target language. Nida and Taber (1982) defined translation as the reproduction of the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message in terms of meaning and style, while Newmark (1988) argued that translation involves rendering the intended meaning of a text into another language. These perspectives indicate that translation requires not only linguistic competence but also cultural and contextual understanding. This

complexity becomes more apparent in audiovisual translation, particularly in anime subtitling, where translators must consider synchronization with visual elements, subtitle duration, screen-space limitations, and audience readability simultaneously (Sanders, 2022; Tian, 2023). Consequently, subtitle translators frequently condense, adapt, or reformulate expressions in order to produce subtitles that remain natural and comprehensible for viewers (Alaa & Al Sawi, 2023; Tian, 2023).

Beyond linguistic and technical considerations, translation also involves the transfer of social and contextual meanings embedded in the source language. Kasmawati (2021) stated that translation was closely related to the transfer of social values, contextual meanings, and interpersonal relations embedded in the source language. This perspective is particularly relevant to subtitle translation because audiovisual dialogue often contains culturally bound expressions and pragmatic nuances that require contextual adaptation in the target language. Therefore, subtitle translation involves not only linguistic transfer but also meaning negotiation and audience-oriented interpretation.

Among the many anime series distributed through legal streaming platforms, *New Game!!* was selected as the object of this study. Produced by Doga Kobo, the anime portrays the professional life of employees working in the Japanese game-development industry. The series contains workplace-related expressions, interpersonal interactions, and culturally specific Japanese expressions that create various translation challenges. Furthermore, *New Game!!* was officially distributed on multiple streaming platforms with Indonesian subtitles produced by different subtitle providers, particularly Muse Indonesia and Bstation. This condition enables a comparative analysis of subtitle translations produced for the same audiovisual text.

Differences between the two subtitle versions can be observed in several dialogues. For example, the Japanese expression 「お願いします」 (*onegaishimasu*), which generally functions as a request for assistance, was translated differently by the two platforms. Muse Indonesia translated the expression as “Terima kasih!” (“Thank you!”), whereas Bstation translated it as “Mohon bantuannya” (“Please help me”). Although both translations appeared contextually acceptable, they reflected different translation orientations and produced different pragmatic interpretations. Muse Indonesia adapted the expression into a more contextual expression of gratitude, whereas Bstation preserved the original requesting function more directly. This difference illustrates that the same Japanese expression can be rendered through different interpretative choices depending on the translation orientation adopted by the subtitle provider.

Such differences are practically significant because subtitles serve as the primary linguistic access point through which Indonesian viewers understand dialogue, interpersonal relationships, and culturally embedded meanings in Japanese anime. A subtitle that prioritizes contextual naturalness may make an utterance more immediately accessible to target-language viewers, whereas a subtitle that retains the source-language meaning more closely may preserve pragmatic or cultural nuances. Therefore, comparing the two subtitle versions provides practical insight into how different translation orientations may shape the balance between readability, contextual naturalness, semantic fidelity, and cultural representation in Japanese-Indonesian audiovisual translation. The comparison is particularly relevant in audiovisual media because translators must convey meaning within constraints of subtitle length, reading time, and synchronization while also maintaining the communicative function of the original dialogue.

Several previous studies have discussed translation techniques and audiovisual translation. Sari et al. (2016) compared the translation of taboo expressions in official and amateur subtitles of *The Wolf of Wall Street* using Molina and Hurtado Albir's translation techniques. Azmy (2015) analyzed translation methods and techniques in the adaptation of AKB48 songs into JKT48 versions using Newmark's and Molina and Hurtado Albir's frameworks. Wiguna (2021) examined translation methods and techniques in expressive utterances found in the subtitles of *Paradise Kiss*. Jaharuddin et al. (2025) analyzed translation techniques in the Japanese versions of the songs *Arjuna* and *Bento* and found that the selection of translation techniques was influenced by differences in theme, syntactic structure, rhythm, and cultural acceptability in the target language. Maturbongs et al. (2024) investigated translation techniques applied to *gitaigo* onomatopoeia in the Indonesian translation of *Furicuri Furikura: Before the Coffee Gets Cold*, highlighting the challenges of transferring Japanese expressive forms into Indonesian. Simangunsong and Kasmawati (2025) examined translation strategies for *gairaigo* in the social media content of the Japanese Consulate General in Makassar, demonstrating the relevance of contextual considerations in Japanese-Indonesian translation. In addition, Kasmawati (2021) analyzed the translation of greeting expressions as sociolect markers in the Japanese translation of *Burung-Burung Manyar* and found that translation choices were strongly influenced by contextual and sociocultural factors.

Although these studies have contributed to translation studies, most have focused either on literary translation, particular linguistic forms, or a single subtitle source. Existing studies have therefore provided limited discussion of how different official subtitle providers construct meaning and pragmatic interpretation in the same audiovisual text, particularly in Japanese-Indonesian anime subtitling. This gap is important because comparing multiple subtitle versions of the same dialogue makes it possible to examine how different translation orientations influence semantic fidelity, contextual adaptation, and audience accessibility.

Unlike previous studies that primarily focused on identifying translation techniques within a single subtitle source, this study compares subtitle translations produced by two official streaming platforms to examine how different translation orientations are manifested through meaning shifts, contextual adaptation, and subtitle rendering in Indonesian anime subtitles. The comparison between Muse Indonesia and Bstation also provides insight into how differences in subtitle rendering affect the balance between semantic fidelity, pragmatic interpretation, and audience accessibility. Thus, the comparison does not merely identify differences in individual lexical choices but also examines how such choices contribute to different ways of constructing meaning in the target-language subtitles. This comparative perspective provides a basis for understanding the relationship between translation strategies and the communicative demands of Japanese-Indonesian audiovisual translation.

This study employed Newmark's (1988) theory of translation methods and procedures as the primary framework for analyzing translation orientation and translation shifts. In addition, Molina and Hurtado Albir's (2002) theory of translation techniques was used to identify micro-level translation strategies applied in the subtitle translations. These frameworks provide analytical tools for examining how subtitle translators negotiate semantic fidelity, contextual naturalness, and cultural adaptation in audiovisual translation. Newmark's framework is used to examine the broader translation approaches and procedures reflected in the subtitle renderings, while Molina and Hurtado Albir's framework is used to identify the specific techniques applied at the textual level. The combination of these frameworks enables the comparison to move from individual translation choices to the broader orientations reflected in the two subtitle versions.

Based on the background above, this study aimed to analyze the translation methods, procedures, and techniques applied in the Indonesian subtitles of *New Game!!* produced by Muse Indonesia and Bstation. In addition, this study aimed to examine how different translation strategies influenced meaning shifts, contextual adaptation, and subtitle interpretation in Indonesian anime subtitles. Through this comparative analysis, the study seeks to demonstrate how subtitle translation mediates between source-language meaning, target-language naturalness, cultural representation, and the communicative needs of audiovisual audiences.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to examine subtitle orientations in the Indonesian subtitles of *New Game!!* episodes 1–3 produced by Muse Indonesia and Bstation. The study focused on how differences between the two subtitle versions reflected contextual adaptation, semantic transfer, and subtitle readability in Japanese-Indonesian audiovisual translation.

The primary data source consisted of the anime *New Game!!*, produced by Doga Kobo and officially distributed through legal streaming platforms. The unit of analysis consisted of Japanese dialogue segments and their corresponding Indonesian subtitle translations produced by Muse Indonesia and Bstation. The data selection process involved reviewing the Japanese dialogues and comparing the corresponding subtitle renderings in both versions across episodes 1–3. A subtitle segment was included when the Muse Indonesia and Bstation versions showed a difference in lexical choice, semantic rendering, contextual interpretation, or translation strategy. Based on these criteria, 49 subtitle segments were identified as the complete dataset containing differences between the two subtitle versions. Thus, the 49 segments were not selected as a representative sample but comprised all identified segments that met the data-selection criteria. For the detailed discussion, seven segments were presented as representative data because they illustrated the recurring translation patterns identified in the dataset. Secondary data consisted of books, journal articles, previous studies, dictionaries, and relevant online sources related to translation studies, audiovisual translation, and subtitle translation.

The data were collected through repeated viewing, transcription, and systematic comparison of the Japanese dialogues and their Indonesian subtitle renderings in the two versions. First, the dialogues in episodes 1–3 were reviewed repeatedly to identify subtitle segments that differed between Muse Indonesia and Bstation. Second, the Japanese source expressions and their corresponding Indonesian translations were transcribed and compared. Third, the identified differences were classified according to semantic meaning, contextual adaptation, and subtitle rendering. This process was used to organize the complete dataset of 49 subtitle segments according to the established selection criteria and recurring translation patterns.

The data were analyzed using a comparative translational analysis adapted from Sudaryanto's (1993) translational equivalent method, in which source-language expressions were compared with their target-language renderings to identify translation shifts and equivalence patterns. Newmark's (1988) theory of translation methods and procedures and Molina and Hurtado Albir's (2002) theory of translation techniques were used as the analytical frameworks. The analysis involved identifying the translation method, procedure, and technique applied in each subtitle version and examining how these choices affected semantic transfer, contextual interpretation, and subtitle rendering. The 49 identified segments were then grouped according to recurring translation patterns, from which seven representative segments were selected for detailed presentation and discussion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section examines how the subtitle strategies of Muse Indonesia and Bstation shaped contextual interpretation, meaning transfer, and subtitle readability in *New Game!!* episodes 1–3. The analysis applied Newmark’s (1988) translation methods and procedures and Molina and Hurtado Albir’s (2002) translation techniques. A total of 49 differing subtitle segments were identified across the three episodes; these segments constituted the complete dataset, while seven representative segments are discussed in detail.

The findings revealed different subtitle orientations between the two platforms. Muse Indonesia generally emphasized communicative readability, emotional accessibility, and contextual naturalness, whereas Bstation more consistently retained semantic meaning, source-language structure, and Japanese cultural nuance. Thus, subtitle translation involved not only linguistic transfer but also contextual adaptation and audience-oriented interpretation. The same Japanese expression could also generate different pragmatic interpretations depending on the translation strategy applied.

Table 1 presents the distribution of the 49 subtitle segments across Episodes 1–3. The discussion is organized into three categories: (1) pragmatic adaptation and audience readability, (2) semantic fidelity and literal rendering, and (3) cultural and contextual adaptation.

Table 1. Distribution of Subtitle Segments across Episodes 1–3

Episode	Subtitle segments
Episode 1	24
Episode 2	11
Episode 3	14
Total	49

1. Pragmatic Adaptation and Audience Readability

Muse Indonesia generally prioritized communicative readability and emotional accessibility by contextually reformulating Japanese expressions into more natural and expressive Indonesian renderings. Rather than maintaining strict lexical equivalence, the subtitles often adjusted conversational nuance and interpersonal tone to reflect everyday Indonesian communication patterns.

In contrast, Bstation tended to retain semantic meaning, source-language structure, and conversational nuance more directly. These differences show that subtitle rendering involved not only semantic transfer but also interpretative choices concerning audience accessibility, readability, and conversational naturalness.

Data 1

遠山 : 今年は新社員いないわよ
Toyama : Kotoshi wa shinnyuushain inai wayo

Translation result

Muse Indonesia : Tapi, tahun ini kita tidak mendapatkan pegawai baru.
BStation : Hari ini tidak ada pendatang baru.

New Game!!, Episode 1, Menit: 00:37

This dialogue occurred when Toyama explained to Suzukaze that Eagle Jump would not recruit new employees that year. Suzukaze initially assumed that new employees would enter the company, and Toyama corrected this assumption by explaining the company's situation.

Muse Indonesia translated 今年は新入社員いないわよ (*kotoshi wa shinnyūshain inai wa yo*) as “But this year we are not getting any new employees.” The addition of “but” explicitly marks the contradiction to Suzukaze's assumption, while “we” makes the Indonesian expression more structurally complete. These additions reflect the linguistic amplification technique proposed by Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002), as linguistic elements were added to improve readability and naturalness.

The expression いない (*inai*), meaning “there is none” (Matsuura, 1994, p. 342), was also rendered as “not getting.” This shift changes the perspective from nonexistence to acquisition and contextualizes the utterance from the speaker's perspective. Thus, the translation reflects Newmark's (1988) modulation procedure, in which the source expression is reformulated from a different semantic perspective.

Bstation rendered the same utterance as “Today there are no newcomers.” The expression 今年 (*kotoshi*), meaning “this year” (Matsuura, 1994, p. 552), was rendered as “today,” shifting the temporal reference from the year to the immediate situation. This contextual shift can be understood as modulation in Newmark's (1988) framework. In addition, 新入社員 (*shinnyūshain*), meaning “new employee” or “newly hired employee” (Matsuura, 1994, p. 926), was translated as “newcomers.” Because “newcomers” has a broader semantic scope than the workplace-specific source expression, this choice represents generalization in Molina and Hurtado Albir's (2002) framework.

Overall, both subtitle versions employed contextual reformulation to produce natural target-language renderings. Muse Indonesia emphasized readability through linguistic amplification and a shift from “there is none” to “not getting,” whereas Bstation broadened the workplace-specific “new employee” into “newcomer” and shifted “this year” to “today.” These choices demonstrate how the two subtitle versions adapted the source dialogue through different combinations of translation procedures and techniques.

Data 2

滝本	: はい
Takimoto	: Hai

Translation result

Muse Indonesia	: Terima kasih
BStation	: Ya

New Game!!, Episode 1, Menit: 05:45

This dialogue occurred when Takimoto responded to Hazuki's praise regarding her improved social interaction with her coworkers at Eagle Jump. Takimoto responded briefly with はい (*hai*), which literally means “yes” (Matsuura, 1994, p. 237).

Muse Indonesia translated はい (*hai*) as “Terima kasih.” Rather than maintaining its literal affirmative meaning, the translator interpreted the utterance as an expression of gratitude in response to Hazuki's compliment. This contextual shift emphasizes Takimoto's emotional

response and makes the interpersonal meaning more explicit for Indonesian viewers. The rendering therefore reflects Newmark's (1988) free modulation procedure, as the source expression was reformulated from an affirmative response into an expression of gratitude based on its communicative context.

In contrast, Bstation translated はい (*hai*) as “Ya,” maintaining the direct semantic and conversational function of the Japanese expression. This rendering preserves the affirmative meaning without contextual reinterpretation and therefore reflects the literal translation technique proposed by Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002).

The two renderings thus reflect different approaches to the same expression. Muse Indonesia prioritized contextual and emotional interpretation through free modulation, whereas Bstation maintained closer semantic fidelity through literal translation. The contrast illustrates how different subtitle orientations can produce different interpretations of the interpersonal function of a brief Japanese utterance.

Data 3

葉月	: うそ
<i>Hazuki</i>	: <i>Uso</i>

Translation result

Muse Indonesia	: Tidak mungkin!
BStation	: Bohong, kan?

New Game!!, Episode 1, Menit: 18:59

This dialogue occurred when Hazuki reacted emotionally after Toyama reminded her to remain at the office because work still needed to be completed. The expression うそ (*uso*) literally means “lie,” “falsehood,” or “deception” (Matsuura, 1994, p. 1445), but in this context it functioned as an emotional reaction expressing disbelief and disappointment.

Muse Indonesia translated うそ (*uso*) as “Tidak mungkin!” Rather than retaining the literal meaning of “lie,” the translator adapted the expression to its emotional function in the dialogue. This rendering produced a more natural and expressive Indonesian subtitle for the target audience. The translation therefore reflects Newmark's (1988) communicative translation method, which prioritizes the communicative effect of the source expression. The shift from the noun うそ (*uso*) to the phrase “Tidak mungkin!” can also be considered transposition, as the grammatical form of the expression changes in the target language.

Bstation translated うそ (*uso*) as “Bohong, kan?” This rendering retains the core semantic meaning of “lie” while adding “kan?” to convey the speaker's emotional reaction and conversational nuance. The addition of “kan?” represents the linguistic amplification technique proposed by Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002), as an additional linguistic element was introduced to reinforce the conversational expression.

The two subtitle versions therefore reflect different approaches to the same Japanese expression. Muse Indonesia prioritized the communicative and emotional effect of the utterance through contextual reformulation, whereas Bstation retained its core lexical meaning while adding a conversational element. The contrast demonstrates how subtitle translation can vary according to contextual interpretation, emotional delivery, and target-language communication patterns.

The preceding data illustrate how subtitle translators adapted Japanese expressions to achieve contextual naturalness, emotional accessibility, and audience readability. The following category shifts the focus to semantic fidelity and literal rendering, examining how the subtitle versions maintained or reformulated the semantic content and structural characteristics of the Japanese source expressions.

Semantic Fidelity and Literal Rendering

The second category concerns semantic fidelity and literal rendering, particularly the extent to which the subtitle versions maintained the semantic content and structural characteristics of the Japanese source expressions. The data in this category illustrate that semantic fidelity did not necessarily require identical translation choices in the two subtitle versions. While one subtitle version could preserve the source meaning through relatively direct rendering, the other could employ contextual reformulation while still conveying the intended meaning.

Data 4

ねね	:分かってますよ
Nene	: <i>Wakatteremasu yo</i>

Translation result

Muse Indonesia	: Aku mengerti!
BStation	: Aku tahu keterampilanku buruk

New Game!!, Episode 1, Menit: 10:34

This dialogue occurred when Nene responded to Umiko during a discussion about programming bugs and technical ability. In the conversation, Umiko explained that a programmer's skill could be evaluated based on how difficult the bugs they handled were. Nene then responded emotionally with the expression 分かってますよ (*wakatteremasu yo*).

Muse Indonesia translated 分かってますよ (*wakatteremasu yo*), which literally means “I understand” or “I fully understand” (Matsuura, 1994, p. 1153), directly into “I understand!” The subtitle maintained the original semantic meaning because the expression could already be understood naturally in the target language without requiring additional contextual adjustment. Furthermore, the sentence-final particle よ (*yo*) was replaced with an exclamation mark in order to reproduce the emphatic nuance contained in the original utterance. This adaptation was also supported by the speaker's high intonation, which emphasized the emotional force of the utterance. Based on this analysis, Muse Indonesia applied the literal translation technique proposed by Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002) because the subtitle preserved both the structure and semantic meaning of the source-language expression without significant modification. As a result, the subtitle maintained semantic fidelity while still sounding natural and communicative in the target language.

Meanwhile, Bstation translated 分かってますよ (*wakatteremasu yo*) into “I know my skills are bad.” In this version, the translator added the contextual information “my skills are bad” in order to clarify the implied meaning of the dialogue. This addition reflected Nene's realization that her game-development ability was still inadequate within the conversational context. As a result, the subtitle conveyed the implicit emotional meaning of the utterance more explicitly for viewers.

Based on this analysis, Bstation applied the free translation method proposed by Newmark (1988) because the translator prioritized communicative meaning and contextual interpretation over preservation of the original sentence structure. Rather than translating the utterance literally, the subtitle reformulated the dialogue to deliver the implied message and emotional effect more clearly in the target language.

Viewed from the perspective of semantic fidelity, the two subtitle versions demonstrate contrasting approaches to translating the utterance 分かっていますよ (*wakatteremasu yo*). Muse Indonesia applied the literal translation technique proposed by Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002) because the subtitle “I understand!” preserved the original semantic meaning and sentence structure while replacing the particle よ (*yo*) with an exclamation mark to reproduce emphatic nuance in the target language. In contrast, Bstation applied the free translation method proposed by Newmark (1988) by adding the contextual expression “my skills are bad” in order to convey the implied meaning more explicitly. These differences indicated that Muse Indonesia prioritized semantic fidelity and structural preservation, whereas Bstation emphasized contextual interpretation and communicative clarity in the target language.

Data 5

涼風	: やっぱりすごいな
<i>Suzukaze</i>	: Yappari sugoina

Translation result

Muse Indonesia	: Memang hebat.
BStation	: Sungguh menakjubkan

New Game!!, Episode 2, Menit: 05:52

This dialogue occurred when Suzukaze saw Yagami’s character design for a design competition and praised the quality of the illustration. Suzukaze expressed admiration for Yagami’s drawing ability after observing the final design result.

In Muse Indonesia’s subtitle, the word すごい (*sugoi*), which literally means “great,” “amazing,” or “extraordinary” (Matsuura, 1994, p. 1001), was translated as “hebat,” preserving the core semantic meaning of the source-language expression. Therefore, the translator applied the **literal translation technique** proposed by Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002) because the meaning of the source expression was maintained without significant structural modification.

Furthermore, the word やっぱり (*yappari*), which literally means “also” or “still” (Matsuura, 1994, p. 1162), was translated as “memang.” In conversational use, やっぱり (*yappari*) can express the sense of something being “as expected,” reflecting a connection between the current situation and what has been previously anticipated or assumed (Suzuki, 2023). In this context, the translator interpreted the expression as an affirmation of Yagami’s recognized ability in character design because her previous work had already been used as the main character design in an earlier game project.

Therefore, the rendering of やっぱり (*yappari*) as “memang” represents a contextual adaptation intended to convey the speaker’s recognition of Yagami’s previously established ability. This shift reflects the **free modulation procedure** proposed by Newmark (1988), as

the translator adjusted the perspective of the source expression to produce a more natural and communicative target-language rendering.

Meanwhile, Bstation translated the entire expression やっぱりすごいな (*yappari sugoi na*) as “Sungguh menakjubkan.” The translator rendered the admiration expressed by the utterance through a target-language expression that naturally conveys praise and amazement. The combination of “sungguh” and “menakjubkan” enables the subtitle to communicate Suzukaze’s strong appreciation of Yagami’s design ability in a natural Indonesian expression.

Based on this analysis, Bstation applied the **established equivalence technique** proposed by Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002) because the subtitle employed a target-language expression that naturally conveys the communicative meaning of the source utterance. Rather than translating each lexical element individually, the translator rendered the expression as a familiar Indonesian formulation that preserved its overall communicative function.

The two subtitle versions therefore demonstrate different approaches to rendering やっぱりすごいな (*yappari sugoi na*). Muse Indonesia translated すごい (*sugoi*) as “hebat” through literal translation while rendering やっぱり (*yappari*) as “memang” through contextual modulation. Bstation, in contrast, rendered the entire expression as “Sungguh menakjubkan” through established equivalence. These differences show that semantic fidelity can be achieved through different translation choices, ranging from relatively direct lexical rendering to contextual reformulation of the complete expression.

The preceding data demonstrate that semantic fidelity can be achieved through different translation choices, ranging from relatively direct lexical rendering to contextual reformulation. However, subtitle differences are not limited to semantic transfer and linguistic form. The following category examines how the two subtitle versions adapted culturally and contextually embedded expressions to convey meanings that are shaped by the social, situational, and cultural context of the dialogue.

Cultural and Contextual Adaptation

The findings also demonstrated differences in how Muse Indonesia and Bstation handled Japanese cultural expressions and context-specific terminology. In several subtitle segments, Muse Indonesia tended to replace or reformulate Japanese expressions into more familiar target-language forms to increase subtitle accessibility and audience comprehension. In contrast, Bstation more frequently retained Japanese lexical items and conversational nuances directly in the subtitles, indicating a stronger orientation toward source-language meaning and cultural elements.

These differences suggest that subtitle translation involves not only linguistic transfer but also cultural and contextual adaptation. Translators need to decide whether Japanese cultural elements should be rendered through familiar target-language expressions or retained to preserve aspects of the original cultural context. Such choices can influence how viewers understand culturally specific objects, expressions, and interactions represented in the anime.

Data 6

葉月 :あれっそのお弁当は
Hazuki : Are sono obentou wa

Translation result

Muse Indonesia : Kotak bekal itu?
BStation : Eh? Bento ini.....

New Game!!, Episode 3, Menit: 17:25

This dialogue occurred when Hazuki reacted with surprise after seeing Hifumi bring a large amount of food during the lunch break. Hazuki appeared surprised by Hifumi's food, which was presented in a context of interaction among the office staff.

In Muse Indonesia's subtitle, the utterance あれ、そのお弁当は (*are, sono obentou wa*) was translated as "Kotak bekal itu?" The interjection あれ (*are*) was omitted, as it was not necessary to convey the basic referential meaning of the utterance in Indonesian. This omission can be understood as **linguistic compression** in Molina and Hurtado Albir's (2002) framework, since an element of the source expression was removed to produce a concise subtitle.

The expression お弁当 (*obentou*), referring to a meal prepared and carried in a container, was rendered as "kotak bekal." Rather than retaining the Japanese lexical item *bento*, Muse Indonesia used a familiar Indonesian expression that explicitly conveys the object to Indonesian viewers. This choice reflects **established equivalence** in Molina and Hurtado Albir's (2002) framework because the source-language expression was replaced by a conventional target-language equivalent. From Newmark's (1988) perspective, the restructuring of the expression into "kotak bekal itu" also involves a **transposition procedure**, as the linguistic arrangement was adjusted to conform to natural Indonesian usage.

In contrast, Bstation translated あれ、そのお弁当は (*are, sono obentou wa*) as "Eh? Bento ini....." The interjection あれ (*are*) was rendered as "Eh?", which preserves its conversational function as an expression of surprise or sudden attention. Unlike Muse Indonesia, Bstation retained the lexical item *bento* rather than replacing it with an Indonesian equivalent. This choice represents the **borrowing technique** proposed by Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002), in which a source-language lexical item is transferred directly into the target-language subtitle.

The retention of *bento* also preserves a Japanese cultural reference more explicitly than the rendering "kotak bekal." Although both expressions refer to the food container or prepared meal in the context of the dialogue, "bento" retains a stronger connection to the Japanese cultural setting, whereas "kotak bekal" provides a more familiar Indonesian formulation. Thus, the difference between the two subtitles illustrates how translators may negotiate between **cultural accessibility and cultural retention** when rendering culturally associated lexical items.

The two subtitle versions therefore reflect different approaches to the same culturally and contextually embedded expression. Muse Indonesia omitted the interjection and rendered *obentou* through the familiar Indonesian expression "kotak bekal," prioritizing concise and accessible communication. Bstation retained the interjection through "Eh?" and preserved *bento* through borrowing, maintaining a more explicit connection to the Japanese source context. These differences demonstrate that subtitle translation can involve a choice between adapting culturally associated expressions for target-language accessibility and retaining source-language elements to preserve cultural context.

Data 7

うみこ : 相変わらずですね

Umiko : *Aikawarazu desune*

Translation result

Muse Indonesia : Seperti biasa, ya?

BStation : Sungguh kuno

New Game!!, Episode 3, Menit: 19:21

This dialogue occurred when Hazuki playfully offered to feed Umiko in an attempt to see her embarrassed reaction. However, Umiko did not appear embarrassed, which led to a playful interaction between the two characters. In response to Hazuki's teasing behavior, Umiko uttered the expression 相変わらずですね (*aikawarazu desu ne*).

Muse Indonesia translated 相変わらずですね (*aikawarazu desu ne*) as “Seperti biasa, ya?”

The expression 相変わらず (*aikawarazu*) literally means “as usual” or “just like always” (Matsuura, 1994, pp. 5, 706). The subtitle therefore maintained the primary semantic meaning of the source expression while adapting it into a natural Indonesian conversational form. The addition of “ya?” also reproduces the interactional nuance of the sentence-final particle ね (*ne*), which can signal shared understanding or invite the interlocutor's response.

Based on this rendering, Muse Indonesia applied the **literal translation method** proposed by Newmark (1988), as the primary meaning of the source expression was retained without substantial semantic reformulation. At the same time, the rendering of ね (*ne*) as “ya?” represents a contextual adjustment that preserves the conversational function of the Japanese particle in Indonesian.

In contrast, Bstation translated 相変わらずですね (*aikawarazu desu ne*) as “Sungguh kuno.”

Rather than retaining the relatively neutral meaning of “as usual,” the translator reformulated the expression into an evaluative statement. Within the context of the interaction, Umiko's response can be interpreted as a playful or sarcastic reaction to Hazuki's behavior. The subtitle “Sungguh kuno” therefore shifts the expression from a neutral observation of continuity toward a more evaluative characterization.

This shift can be understood as **free modulation** in Newmark's (1988) framework because the translator changed the perspective and semantic formulation of the source expression in order to convey an implied contextual meaning. Rather than reproducing the lexical meaning of 相変わらず (*aikawarazu*) directly, Bstation selected an evaluative expression that foregrounded the interpersonal and humorous dimension of the exchange.

The two subtitle versions therefore demonstrate different approaches to rendering 相変わらずですね (*aikawarazu desu ne*). Muse Indonesia retained the primary semantic meaning through “Seperti biasa, ya?” while adapting the sentence-final particle ね (*ne*) to an Indonesian conversational equivalent. Bstation, in contrast, reformulated the source expression as “Sungguh kuno,” foregrounding an evaluative and context-dependent interpretation. These differences illustrate how the same Japanese utterance can be rendered either through relatively direct semantic transfer or through contextual reformulation to emphasize interpersonal meaning.

Taken together, Data 6 and Data 7 demonstrate that cultural and contextual adaptation involves different forms of translation choices. Muse Indonesia generally adapted source expressions into familiar Indonesian forms to support accessibility and conversational naturalness, whereas Bstation more frequently retained Japanese lexical elements or reformulated expressions according to contextual and interpersonal nuances. These findings indicate that cultural representation and contextual interpretation were negotiated differently in the two subtitle versions.

Overall, the findings demonstrated that Muse Indonesia and Bstation employed different subtitle orientations in translating *New Game!!*. Muse Indonesia generally prioritized communicative readability, contextual naturalness, and emotional accessibility, while Bstation more frequently maintained source-language meaning, lexical elements, and Japanese cultural nuances. These orientations were reflected in different combinations of translation methods, procedures, and techniques across the 49 identified subtitle segments.

The findings also indicated that subtitle translation involved negotiation among semantic fidelity, contextual interpretation, readability, and cultural representation. Because subtitles are presented within limited screen space and reading time, translators may condense, reformulate, or retain source-language expressions according to the communicative demands of each dialogue. Thus, audiovisual translation is not merely a process of linguistic substitution, but also an interpretative and communicative process shaped by translation orientation and audiovisual constraints.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzed subtitle orientations in the Indonesian subtitles of *New Game!!* episodes 1–3 produced by Muse Indonesia and Bstation. The findings demonstrated that the two subtitle providers employed different approaches to transferring meaning from Japanese into Indonesian, particularly in relation to semantic fidelity, contextual interpretation, readability, and cultural representation.

Muse Indonesia generally prioritized communicative readability, emotional accessibility, and contextual naturalness by reformulating Japanese expressions into more familiar and audience-oriented Indonesian subtitles. This tendency was reflected in the use of contextual reformulation, free modulation, linguistic compression, and other translation choices that adapted source-language expressions to Indonesian conversational patterns and subtitle constraints. Such choices enabled culturally or pragmatically embedded expressions to be rendered in forms that were more immediately accessible in the target language.

In contrast, Bstation tended to preserve source-language meaning, lexical elements, conversational nuances, and Japanese cultural references more directly. This orientation was reflected in the retention of source-language elements through borrowing and in the use of relatively direct semantic rendering. At the same time, Bstation also employed contextual reformulation and linguistic amplification when additional information was needed to convey implied meanings or conversational nuances. Therefore, its subtitle orientation was not exclusively literal, but combined semantic preservation with contextual interpretation.

The comparison further demonstrated that the differences between the two subtitle versions did not result from a single translation method or technique. Rather, the translators employed different combinations of methods, procedures, and techniques according to the semantic, pragmatic, cultural, and audiovisual characteristics of individual utterances. Muse Indonesia tended to emphasize target-language naturalness and accessibility, whereas Bstation more often maintained source-language lexical and cultural elements. These differences illustrate

the negotiation involved in Japanese-Indonesian audiovisual translation between semantic fidelity, contextual naturalness, readability, and cultural representation.

Overall, this study contributes to audiovisual translation studies by demonstrating how different subtitle orientations can produce different renderings of the same Japanese expressions in an Indonesian anime-subtitling context. The findings show that subtitle translation involves not only the transfer of linguistic meaning but also the interpretation of contextual and interpersonal meanings and the treatment of culturally embedded expressions. Within the constraints of subtitle space and reading time, translators must make choices concerning what to retain, adapt, condense, or reformulate in order to construct an appropriate target-language subtitle.

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