



## Ethics in Cross-Cultural Translation : Understanding Cultural Sensitivity in Translation Work

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**Abstract.** *This study discusses the importance of ethics in cross-cultural translation, emphasizing cultural sensitivity as a core principle to ensure accurate representation and respect for both source and target cultures. Through a qualitative approach involving a literature review, case studies, and text observations, the research finds that translators act as cultural mediators responsible for bridging linguistic and cultural gaps. Strategies such as the use of euphemism, modulation, substitution, and cultural adaptation are identified as primary ways to address cultural and linguistic differences.*

*The findings highlight the translation of taboo terms in the first season of Sex Education. This series features language rich in humor, teenage slang, and taboo terms that are difficult to translate directly without adjusting to local cultural norms. Translators used strategies such as softening the meaning and cultural adaptation to render terms like "fuck" as "sialan" or "berhubungan seks," making them relevant to Indonesian audiences without violating cultural norms. Additionally, cultural sensitivity was also applied in the translation of the novel Desperate Duchesses, where coarse and sexual terms were adjusted to be more acceptable in the context of a conservative society.*

*This study emphasizes that cultural sensitivity plays a crucial role in avoiding distortion of meaning and biased representation. By applying ethical translation practices, translators not only improve cross-cultural communication but also strengthen intercultural respect. The study recommends translator training focused on cultural awareness and the development of flexible ethical guidelines, enabling translators to effectively address challenges in diverse cultural contexts.*

**Keywords** Cultural Sensitivity, Cross-Cultural Communication, Ethics, Translation, Sex education.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Ethics is a fundamental element in translation, particularly in cross-cultural contexts where differences in values, norms, and beliefs often present complex challenges. Translation is not merely about transferring meaning from one language to another but also involves the accurate and respectful representation of cultures (Koskinen & Pokorn, 2021). In this process, translators face ethical dilemmas, such as maintaining fidelity to the source text while ensuring relevance and acceptance in the target culture. These dilemmas frequently arise when cultural elements—such as taboo terms, humor, or emotional expressions—lack direct equivalents in the target language or are considered sensitive within the local cultural context.

In cross-cultural translation, ethics extends beyond linguistic accuracy. Translators serve as cultural mediators who must decide how to convey messages while respecting cultural differences. This practice requires a balance between fidelity to the source text and adaptation to the target culture. Mistakes in translating cultural elements can have serious consequences, such as reinforcing negative stereotypes, distorting meanings, or even causing intercultural

conflict. Therefore, ethics in cross-cultural translation aims to promote effective communication, prevent misunderstandings, and strengthen mutual understanding between cultures (Katan & Taibi, 2021).

Failure to consider cultural sensitivity in translation often results in unintended consequences. For instance, in international contexts, inaccurate translations can damage the reputation of a work, misrepresent the source culture, or provoke negative reactions from the target audience. Katan and Taibi (2021) emphasize that translators bear a significant responsibility in bridging cultural gaps and ensuring that the conveyed message reflects the authenticity of the source culture while remaining relevant to the target audience.

This study seeks to examine the importance of cultural sensitivity in cross-cultural translation and the critical role of ethics in this practice. It highlights relevant ethical principles and strategies employed by translators to address cultural challenges. For example, in the Sex Education series, taboo terms related to teenage humor and sexual themes were adapted to align with Indonesian cultural norms. Strategies included euphemism, modulation, and substitution to maintain cultural relevance without compromising the core message of the work. Additionally, cases from the novel *Desperate Duchesses* demonstrate how translators must adjust coarse or sensitive terms to suit audiences with conservative values.

The study also underscores the importance of ethical training for translators, especially when navigating complex cross-cultural contexts. By developing flexible, culturally sensitive ethical guidelines, translators can more effectively bridge cultural divides, prevent misunderstandings, and promote inclusive communication. This research not only contributes to theoretical advancements in translation studies but also offers practical guidance for translators to address ethical challenges in diverse cultural contexts.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Chesterman (2018) emphasizes the importance of ethics in translation, stating that adherence to ethical principles ensures the integrity of translation both as an art and a social responsibility. He introduces the concept of "ethics of sameness," which stresses fidelity to the source text to preserve accuracy and truth, especially in the context of sensitive translations, such as religious texts or those containing taboo material. One example of a translation requiring special ethical attention is the series *Sex Education*, which is filled with teenage humor and taboo terms related to sexuality. In this case, the translator must consider the cultural norms of the target audience to ensure the original meaning is preserved without offending local cultural sensitivities.

Clark et al. (2017) offer a practical perspective on the ethical challenges in cross-cultural research. They outline transcription and translation protocols to maintain ethical accuracy within multilingual teams. These protocols highlight the risks that arise from inaccurate translations, which can lead to misrepresentation of social or political issues. Their findings underline the importance of applying ethical translation practices to maintain the credibility of data and the accuracy of representation in cross-cultural contexts. This is relevant to translating series like *Desperate Duchesses*, where translators must also avoid misunderstandings related to coarse language and sexual expressions, adjusting them to the more conservative norms of the target culture.

Drugan and Tipton (2017) expand on translation ethics by emphasizing the social responsibility of translators. They highlight the need for translators to focus not only on linguistic accuracy but also on the well-being of clients and stakeholders, particularly when translating sensitive information. In this regard, translating series like *Sex Education*, which contains taboo terms and themes of sex, requires extra attention to avoid misunderstandings that could harm the target audience, especially in a conservative cultural context. Similarly, translating the novel *Desperate Duchesses* requires similar strategies to handle coarse or sexual expressions, adjusting them to suit the more conservative cultural norms of Indonesian society.

Katan and Taibi (2021) describe translators as cultural mediators, stressing that translation is not merely a linguistic exchange but a complex process of cultural interpretation. They argue that cultural sensitivity is at the heart of ethical translation, as the translator must respect and accurately convey the cultural nuances embedded in the source text into the target text. In the case of *Sex Education*, translators must be highly sensitive to the presentation of content that is rich in taboo terms and humor, ensuring that the original message is preserved without violating local cultural norms. Furthermore, translators must apply cultural sensitivity in cases such as the translation of *Desperate Duchesses*, where terms related to sex and social customs must be carefully translated to meet the expectations of the target audience.

Koskinen and Pokorn (2021) explore the moral implications of cultural representation in translation. They emphasize that ethical translation requires sensitivity to cultural contexts to avoid stereotypes or misrepresentations. This book is an important reference in understanding the relationship between translation ethics and cultural identity, showing the role of the translator in shaping cultural perceptions through their ethical decisions. In the context of *Sex Education* and *Desperate Duchesses*, translators must navigate how terms and situations involving sexuality are translated while still respecting the existing cultural norms.

### **3. METHODS**

This study employs a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis. According to Creswell (2014), this method is well-suited for exploring complex social and cultural phenomena, such as cross-cultural translation. The research examines how translators address cultural differences in their work, drawing on Chesterman's (2018) ethics of sameness, which emphasizes staying faithful to the source text while considering the context of the target audience. The concept of translators as cultural mediators, proposed by Katan & Taibi (2021), is also highlighted, emphasizing their role as bridges for fair and ethical cultural representation. Data collection is conducted using three main methods. First, a literature review analyzes works like *Translation Ethics* (Chesterman, 2018) and *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Ethics* (Koskinen & Pokorn, 2021) to explore ethical principles in translation, such as social responsibility and cultural sensitivity. Second, case studies investigate the translation of taboo terms in popular works like *Sex Education* (Zahra, 2022) and *Desperate Duchesses* (Anita et al., 2019), as translating taboo terms requires culturally sensitive adaptations (Tursunovich, 2022). Third, text observation and documentation examine ethical translation guidelines from organizations such as the *Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs* (FIT) and professional translation samples, providing data on applying principles like the ethics of difference (Drugan, 2017).

Data analysis adopts a theory-based approach. Content analysis identifies ethical elements such as fidelity to the source text, cultural adaptation, and stereotype avoidance, consistent with Krippendorff's (2004) view that content analysis effectively uncovers latent meanings. Comparative analysis evaluates translations from different cultural contexts to assess the balance between fidelity to the source text and relevance to the target audience (Chesterman, 2018). Finally, the findings are contextualized within theories such as the ethics of sameness and the concept of cultural mediators (Katan & Taibi, 2021), providing a theoretical foundation for understanding the translator's role in bridging source and target cultures.

### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **Case of Cultural Sensitivity in Translation of *Sex Education* Season 1**

Cultural sensitivity in translation work emerges as a pivotal factor when dealing with the transfer of taboo terms from English to Bahasa in the TV series *Sex Education*, Season 1. The series' narrative is firmly embedded in adolescent culture, characterized by humor, informal slang, and overtly taboo language. These linguistic elements often contain cultural

undertones that reflect not only the realities of teenage discourse but also specific societal attitudes towards sexuality, profanity, and colloquial norms. Translating such language requires more than linguistic proficiency; it demands a nuanced understanding of cultural appropriateness in both source and target languages.

Zahra (2022) and Lubis et al. (2022), demonstrates that translators must adapt the taboo terms to align with the local cultural and religious context without undermining the show's intended message. For instance, terms like “fuck,” commonly used in the original English version, may not be readily accepted in Indonesian society due to the cultural and religious emphasis on modesty. Therefore, the translation of such a term might require the use of euphemisms or alternative expressions that convey the sentiment without direct offense, ensuring that the series remains accessible and culturally appropriate for Indonesian viewers.

One of the most striking aspects of the translation process, as discussed by both Zahra (2022) and Lubis et al. (2022), is the necessity to adapt taboo words to fit the cultural and religious context of the target audience. In Indonesian society, which is predominantly Muslim and has strong cultural norms regarding modesty, the direct use of certain English terms, such as “fuck,” may be considered highly offensive and inappropriate. As a result, translators must find alternative expressions that retain the original meaning without alienating the audience or violating cultural taboos. The translation of such terms often requires the use of euphemisms or indirect language. For example, the term “fuck” may be translated into Indonesian as “berhubungan seks” (engaging in sex) or “bersetubuh” (having intercourse). These terms convey the general meaning of the original term but are more socially acceptable within the Indonesian context. In cases where a direct translation is not possible, the translator might choose to tone down the language to ensure that the message remains culturally appropriate while still preserving the original sentiment.

The translation of other taboo expressions, such as “to get laid,” presents similar challenges. In English, this phrase refers to engaging in sexual intercourse, but the casual, somewhat crude connotation of the phrase can be off-putting in many cultures, including Indonesia. In the Indonesian context, more neutral or less vulgar expressions are often used, such as “berhubungan seks” (engaging in sex) or “tidur bersama” (sleeping together). While these translations soften the bluntness of the original English term, they maintain the core idea of the expression. However, the translation must take into account the context in which the phrase is used. For example, if the phrase is used in a lighthearted or humorous context, the translator may opt for a less formal term, while a more serious or intimate context might call

for a term with a slightly different nuance. This careful consideration of context is a key aspect of cultural sensitivity in translation.

Tabel 1. Ethical Sensitivity in Translation Works of Sex Education Season 1

No	English Term	Indonesian Translation	Translation Technique	Cultural Sensitivity
1	"Fuck"	"Sialan" / "Brengsek"	Adaptation	Avoiding direct vulgarity by adapting to local cultural norms.
2	"To get laid"	"Tidur bersama" / "Berhubungan seks"	Modulation	Softening overly blunt terms to make them more polite.
3	"Virgin"	"Perawan" / "Belum pernah berhubungan seks"	Explicitation	Providing explicit meanings to avoid negative stigmas.
4	"Dick"	"Penis"	Generalization	Using neutral medical terms to prevent explicit vulgarity.
5	"Pussy"	"Vagina"	Generalization	Replacing informal terms with medical terminology.
6	"Blow job"	"Oralsex"	Borrowing	Preserving technical meaning while avoiding explicit vulgar expressions.
7	"Shag"	"Berhubungan intim"	Modulation	Adjusting harsh terms to make them more neutral and polite.
8	"Slut"	"Wanita nakal"	Equivalence	Providing milder equivalents to avoid offensive connotations.
9	"Screw you"	"Persetan denganmu"	Adaptation	Adapting insults to make them relevant in the local context.
10	"Bastard"	"Bajingan" / "Kurang ajar"	Equivalence	Reducing offensive connotations while maintaining emotional intensity.

The translation of terms like “virgin” also reveals the role of cultural sensitivity. In English, the word “virgin” is a straightforward reference to someone who has not engaged in sexual intercourse. In Indonesian, however, the term carries additional cultural weight. Virginity is often associated with purity and moral integrity, particularly for women, and the loss of virginity can carry significant social and cultural implications. As such, the translator must be mindful of the connotations the word may evoke in Indonesian culture. While “perawan” is a direct translation of “virgin,” it is a term that may be laden with cultural expectations and judgment. To avoid reinforcing these potentially harmful stereotypes, translators may opt for a more neutral expression like “belum pernah berhubungan seks” (has never had sex). This translation avoids the moral implications that might be attached to the term “perawan” and focuses solely on the factual aspect of virginity.

In addition to these examples, other taboo terms from *Sex Education*, such as “dick” and “pussy,” require careful translation. In English, these words are commonly used as slang for male and female genitalia, respectively, and are often used in informal or vulgar contexts. However, in Indonesian, these terms are considered highly explicit and offensive. Translators,

therefore, must choose more neutral, medically accurate terms like “penis” and “vagina.” While these words lack the casual, colloquial tone of the original English terms, they are more appropriate for the Indonesian audience and help to avoid offending sensibilities. The translation of more explicit terms, such as “blow job,” also requires cultural sensitivity. In Indonesian, this term might be translated as “oralsex” (oral sex), which is a more clinical and neutral term. This translation helps maintain clarity while adhering to cultural expectations around the portrayal of sexual acts.

The process of translating these taboo terms demonstrates the need for a translator to be not only linguistically proficient but also culturally aware. Cultural sensitivity in translation, as noted by Zahra (2022) and Lubis et al. (2022), is not just about finding equivalent words in the target language; it is about understanding how those words will be perceived by the target audience and ensuring that the translation does not inadvertently cause offense or misinterpret the original intent. In the case of *Sex Education*, the challenge is particularly pronounced because the series addresses controversial and often taboo topics that can provoke strong reactions in different cultural contexts.

### **Case of Cultural Sensitivity in Translation of *Desperate Duchesses* Novel By Eloisa James**

In the study conducted by Anita et al. (2019), *Cultural Sensitivity in Translation Work* emerges as a pivotal factor when translating taboo expressions in *Desperate Duchesses* by Eloisa James from English to Indonesian. Cultural sensitivity in this context refers to the translator's ability to mediate cultural values embedded in both the source and target languages, ensuring that the translated terms resonate appropriately with the target audience while preserving the novel's thematic integrity. Translating taboo expressions, which often encompass sexual innuendos, profane language, and culturally stigmatized concepts, requires a careful and strategic approach to avoid alienating the target readers or distorting the intended meaning. Anita et al. emphasize that the Indonesian cultural context, shaped by its predominantly conservative and religious values, demands meticulous handling of such terms. As a result, translators must strike a balance between linguistic fidelity to the source text and cultural acceptability in the target language, often opting for euphemistic expressions, toned-down equivalents, or semantic shifts to align with socio-cultural norms.

The process of translation observed in Anita et al.'s analysis demonstrates how cultural sensitivity guides the treatment of taboo terms to minimize cultural dissonance while maintaining narrative coherence. For instance, sexually explicit expressions like "making love" are rendered as *bercinta*, which carries a softer, less overt connotation in Indonesian, thus

aligning with cultural propriety. Similarly, vulgar terms such as "damn it" are translated as *sialan*, a term that retains frustration but is less offensive within Indonesian norms. Such adjustments highlight the translators' sensitivity to audience expectations without stripping the original text of its emotive force. To illustrate this process further, the following are 10 representative samples from the 154 analyzed data points, each demonstrating the translators' application of cultural sensitivity principles:

Table 2. Ethical Cultural Sensitivity in Translation of *Desperate Duchesses* Novel By Eloisa James

No	English Term	Indonesian Translation	Translation Technique	Cultural Sensitivity
1	"You look like a bloody fool."	"Kau terlihat seperti orang bodoh."	Modulation	The removal of the harsh term "bloody" to maintain politeness.
2	"Damn it, I can't breathe!"	"Sialan, aku tidak bisa bernapas!"	Substitution	The phrase "damn it" is adapted to "sialan," which is more moderate.
3	"For God's sake, leave me alone!"	"Demi Tuhan, biarkan aku sendiri!"	Literal Translation	The expression "For God's sake" is translated literally but aligned with local norms.
4	"He's such a bastard."	"Dia benar-benar brengsek."	Equivalence	The word "bastard" is replaced with "brengsek," which carries a similar connotation.
5	"Don't be such a whore."	"Jangan bersikap seperti wanita murahan."	Adaptation	The term "whore" is softened to "wanita murahan" to suit cultural context.
6	"What the hell are you doing?"	"Apa yang kau lakukan ini?"	Reduction	The phrase "What the hell" is omitted to avoid harsh undertones.
7	"They were making love under the stars."	"Mereka bercinta di bawah bintang-bintang."	Borrowing + Adaptation	The expression "making love" is adapted to fit local cultural norms without vulgarity.
8	"Go to hell!"	"Pergi sana!"	Reduction	The harsh connotation of "hell" is removed to maintain politeness.
9	"She's so damn pretty."	"Dia sangat cantik sekali."	Modulation	The word "damn" is softened to "sangat" to avoid vulgarity.
10	"He cursed under his breath."	"Dia mengumpat pelan."	Transposition	The choice of "mengumpat" is more neutral and aligns with Indonesian cultural norms.

Based on table 2 we can conclude that these examples underscore the critical role of cultural sensitivity in translation, particularly when handling taboo or potentially offensive language. By employing strategies such as modulation, adaptation, and reduction, translators mitigate linguistic harshness while aligning the text with the cultural and social norms of the target audience. This process preserves the semantic essence and pragmatic intent of the source material without causing cultural dissonance or alienation. Acting as cultural mediators,



translators navigate complex linguistic and cultural boundaries, ensuring the narrative remains authentic, accessible, and relatable. Ultimately, cultural sensitivity enhances reader engagement and upholds the text's communicative integrity across diverse contexts.

### **Case of Cultural Sensitivity in Translation of *Desperate Duchesses* Novel By Eloisa James**

Cultural sensitivity in translation plays a pivotal role in ensuring that translated works remain respectful and appropriate for the target culture, particularly when dealing with taboo expressions or sensitive topics. This becomes especially evident in the translation of explicit content, such as the sexual language found in Christina Lauren's *Beautiful Bastard*, as analyzed by Riana Dewi, Puspani, & Mulyawan (2022). Similar to the challenges explored in the translations of *Sex Education* (Zahra, 2022) and *Desperate Duchess* (Anita et al., 2019), the research demonstrates how cultural sensitivity emerges as translators strive to balance the need for fidelity to the source text with the cultural expectations of the target audience. In each case, cultural differences necessitate strategic choices to avoid offending the target audience while maintaining the integrity of the original work.

Riana Dewi, Puspani, & Mulyawan (2022) examine how taboo language in *Beautiful Bastard* is adapted from English into Indonesian. They identify strategies such as euphemism, substitution, and censorship, which help navigate the translation of taboo expressions like those related to sexuality and profanity. This process of translation is closely aligned with Zahra's (2022) study of *Sex Education*, where cultural sensitivity required the softening or altering of explicit sexual references to fit within the more conservative norms of the Indonesian culture. In *Sex Education*, euphemisms are employed to modify direct sexual language while maintaining the narrative's themes. A similar approach is seen in *Desperate Duchess* (Anita et al., 2019), where explicit sexual references are substituted with milder language to avoid cultural offense, a strategy that also applies in *Beautiful Bastard*.

The research by Riana Dewi, Puspani, & Mulyawan (2022) illustrates how the need for cultural sensitivity is integral when translating taboo language, especially in a context like that of *Beautiful Bastard*. For instance, strong expletives or sexual references such as "What the fuck" are often rendered more mildly in Indonesian to avoid offending local sensitivities. This technique is comparable to the strategies used in *Sex Education* and *Desperate Duchess*, where explicit terms are replaced with softer, culturally appropriate language. This adaptation process highlights the challenge of preserving the original intent and emotional tone of the dialogue while ensuring that the text is socially acceptable in the target culture. The application of

cultural sensitivity ensures that the message is effectively communicated without alienating the target audience.

Table 3. Cultural Sensitivity in Translation of Desperate Duchesses Novel By Eloisa  
James

No.	English Term	Indonesian Translation	Translation Strategy	Cultural Sensitivity Explanation
1	"Damn you, Bennet. I worked my ass off for you."	"Sialan kau, Bennet. Aku bekerja keras untukmu."	Euphemism	The expletive "Damn" is softened to "Sialan," which retains the emotional intensity but avoids a more vulgar expression.
2	"What the fuck do you think you are doing?"	"Kaupikir apa yang sedang kau lakukan?"	Substitution	"What the fuck" is toned down to a neutral, non-offensive phrase that maintains the questioning tone.
3	"He's such a bastard."	"Dia benar-benar menyebalkan."	Substitution	The derogatory term "bastard" is replaced with "menyebalkan" ("annoying"), reducing the harshness of the insult.
4	"I could fuck you right now."	"Aku ingin mencium kamu sekarang juga."	Euphemism /Substitution	"Fuck" is replaced by "mencium" ("kiss"), making the phrase culturally appropriate while still expressing strong attraction.
5	"Shut the fuck up!"	"Diam kau!"	Substitution	The crude "shut the fuck up" is replaced with "Diam kau" ("Be quiet"), a direct but more socially acceptable command.
6	"You're such a slut."	"Kamu benar-benar sembrono."	Substitution	"Slut" is replaced with "sembrono" ("reckless"), a milder term that avoids vulgar language while keeping the negative tone.
7	"I'm fucking serious!"	"Aku benar-benar serius!"	Substitution	"Fucking serious" is softened to "benar-benar serius," maintaining the seriousness without using offensive language.
8	"You're a fucking idiot."	"Kau bodoh sekali."	Substitution	The harsh term "fucking idiot" is translated to "bodoh sekali" ("so stupid"), making it less offensive but still impactful.
9	"She's a fucking goddess."	"Dia benar-benar luar biasa."	Substitution	The expression "fucking goddess" is translated as "luar biasa" ("amazing"), conveying admiration without using profanity.
10	"You're making me crazy with that."	"Kau membuatku gila dengan itu."	Direct Translation	The phrase is translated directly without vulgarity, making it acceptable while maintaining emotional expression.

### Ethical Cultural Sensitivity in Translation Work

Cultural sensitivity is a key ethical principle in translation, ensuring the original text's meaning is preserved while respecting the target culture's norms. Tursunovich (2022)

highlights the need for translators to understand cultural contexts deeply to avoid misrepresentation and offense. This principle is crucial in translating sensitive content, such as taboo language and sexual expressions, where adjustments must align with cultural expectations.

Studies by Zahra (2022), Lubis et al. (2022), Anita et al. (2019), and Riana Dewi et al. (2022) collectively demonstrate how taboo language, profanity, and sexual expressions in works like *Sex Education* (Season 1), *Desperate Duchesses*, and *Beautiful Bastard* are strategically adapted into Indonesian to avoid cultural offense. Key techniques include euphemism, modulation, substitution, and reduction. For instance, terms like “fuck” are softened into “sialan” or “berhubungan seks,” while vulgar phrases like “to get laid” become “tidur bersama.” Explicit terms for genitalia, such as “dick” and “pussy,” are replaced with neutral medical equivalents like “penis” and “vagina.” Similarly, culturally charged words like “virgin” are rendered more neutrally as “belum pernah berhubungan seks.” These adjustments preserve the narrative’s intent and emotional tone while adhering to Indonesia’s conservative, religious values. Translators act as cultural mediators, ensuring accessibility and audience engagement without causing alienation. Overall, cultural sensitivity bridges linguistic and cultural gaps, allowing translations to retain thematic coherence while respecting local proprieties. This highlights the balance between fidelity to the original text and alignment with target cultural expectations.

By balancing fidelity to the source text with respect for target culture sensitivities, translators act as cultural mediators, bridging linguistic and cultural gaps. This ethical approach maintains thematic coherence, fosters inclusivity, and ensures effective cross-cultural communication.

### **Balancing Cultural Sensitivity and Ethical Responsibilities in Translation**

The results highlight that cultural sensitivity is a central principle in cross-cultural translation. Translators must not only focus on linguistic accuracy but also understand the norms and values of the target culture to ensure the message remains relevant and acceptable. In the case of *Sex Education*, cultural sensitivity was applied to adapt taboo terms such as “fuck,” which were translated into “sialan” or “berhubungan seks.” Strategies like euphemism, modulation, and substitution enabled translators to reduce vulgarity while preserving the emotional context of the narrative. A similar approach was observed in the novel *Desperate Duchesses*, where coarse or sexual terms like “making love” were translated into “bercinta,” a softer and more culturally appropriate term for Indonesia’s conservative audience.

These strategies underline the importance of a deep understanding of the target culture. Without cultural sensitivity, the risk of meaning distortion or misinterpretation increases significantly. Translation errors can have serious consequences, from damaging the source text's reputation to provoking negative reactions from the target audience, ultimately hindering effective cross-cultural communication.

In addition to cultural sensitivity, the social responsibility of translators is a key component of ethical translation practices. Drugan and Tipton (2017) emphasize that translators are accountable not only to the source text but also to the target audience, especially when the text involves vulnerable groups or sensitive issues. Poor linguistic choices can reinforce stereotypes or create biased representations of certain cultures.

This research also identifies the principle of "linguistic justice" as a crucial framework to ensure that minority languages are not overlooked on global translation platforms. Translators can actively promote fair and inclusive representation for marginalized cultural communities. Thus, a translator's social responsibility goes beyond fidelity to the source text, encompassing a commitment to inclusivity and cultural equity.

Applying ethical principles often faces challenges in different cultural contexts. A major issue is balancing the principle of "ethics of sameness" with the unique needs of the target audience. In the cases of *Sex Education* and *Desperate Duchesses*, translators had to carefully navigate between loyalty to the source text and the distinctive norms of the target culture.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Cultural sensitivity is a crucial element in cross-cultural translation. This study highlights the role of translators as cultural mediators who must balance fidelity to the source text with adaptation to the cultural norms of the target audience. Strategies such as euphemism, modulation, substitution, and reduction have proven effective in addressing taboo terms and vulgar language, as seen in the translations of *Sex Education* and *Desperate Duchesses*. For instance, terms like "fuck" being translated as "sialan" or "berhubungan seks" demonstrate how translators can preserve the original meaning while respecting local cultural norms.

The study also emphasizes the importance of social responsibility in translation to prevent meaning distortion and biased representation. By adhering to ethical translation practices, translators can enhance cross-cultural communication and promote respect for cultural diversity. These findings underscore the need for ethics training for translators, particularly in complex cultural contexts. Ultimately, cultural sensitivity in translation not only ensures

cultural relevance but also fosters inclusive and effective communication across diverse cultural settings.

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