

Translating Love: An Analysis of Love Languages and Translation Techniques in *Aku Jati Aku Asperger*

Arbain

Universitas Widya Gama Mahakam Samarinda

baintigers@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines how love languages are expressed and translated in the Indonesian film *Aku Jati Aku Asperger*, focusing on the maintenance of emotional meaning across cultural and linguistic boundaries. The research aims to identify how different forms of affection are represented in the film and how translation techniques contribute to preserving emotional authenticity in the English subtitles. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the study analyzes Indonesian dialogues and their English translations to examine the relationship between linguistic choice and emotional expression. A total of 110 dialogue units were selected and categorized based on five types of love languages: Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Receiving Gifts, Quality Time, and Physical Touch. The analysis reveals that Words of Affirmation appear most frequently, reflecting the direct and sincere emotional style of the main character, followed by Acts of Service and Quality Time. The most frequently applied translation techniques are literal translation, established equivalent, and modulation, which help maintain both linguistic clarity and emotional resonance. These techniques ensure that the translated dialogues convey similar levels of empathy and intimacy as the original. The study highlights that effective film translation requires not only linguistic accuracy but also emotional sensitivity to achieve meaningful cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: Love Languages, Film Translation, Emotional Expression, Cross-Cultural Communication.

1. Introduction

Film functions as a powerful cultural and communicative medium that transcends linguistic and geographical boundaries, carrying within it emotional depth and social meaning that reflect human universality. As Wong (2019) argues, emotions such as love, joy, and sorrow operate as a universal language capable of fostering dialogue among individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Through visual and auditory storytelling, films become vessels of emotion, inviting audiences to experience affection, empathy, and conflict through both verbal and nonverbal cues. This intrinsic emotional universality allows films to engage audiences across cultures, generating a shared sense of humanity while preserving unique cultural contexts. The portrayal of love, in particular, occupies a central position in cinema, as it encapsulates values, moral perspectives, and communicative practices that define human relationships across societies. In this way, film translation, especially through subtitles, plays an essential role in ensuring that audiences in different linguistic environments can access these emotional dimensions without compromising the original cultural meaning (Abdulrahman, 2022; Potočárová, 2020; Wong, 2019).

Cross-cultural studies of emotional expression have shown that while different societies conceptualize and express love in varied ways, the essence of emotional experience remains constant. Insani & Agustin (2025) compared expressions of love in Indonesian and Turkish languages and found that while Indonesian speakers tend to express affection directly, Turkish expressions often rely on poetic metaphor, yet both

cultures share a deep appreciation for the beauty of love. This demonstrates that even when linguistic strategies differ, the affective intention behind them can be mutually understood. Similarly, Rostami et al. (2025) emphasize that love languages, including acts of service, words of affirmation, quality time, gifts, and physical touch, constitute a framework for understanding how individuals express and perceive affection. These categories provide insight into interpersonal communication not only within romantic contexts but also across familial and social relationships. The recognition of love languages in film narratives enhances emotional realism, allowing characters to embody universal yet culturally specific modes of affection. Consequently, translating such expressions in audiovisual media requires sensitivity to both linguistic form and cultural meaning to preserve emotional authenticity for audiences of diverse cultural backgrounds.

Translating Indonesian films into English presents challenges that extend beyond linguistic conversion and touch upon the representation of local identity, emotional nuance, and cultural value systems. Film as a cultural artifact encapsulates traditions, norms, and emotional frameworks that are deeply embedded in the language used by its characters. When subtitled for international audiences, the translator must navigate between maintaining fidelity to the source text and ensuring readability and resonance for target viewers. Nan (2023) underscores that the purpose of translation is to achieve communicative alignment with the target audience, yet this process may lead to simplification or adaptation that risks reducing the original emotional complexity. Georgiou & Perdikaki (2020) observe a tendency toward neutralization when translating culture-specific references, a process that may inadvertently strip dialogues of their cultural richness and emotional undertones. This issue is particularly acute when dealing with expressions of affection, empathy, or intimacy that do not have direct equivalents in English. Sun (2022) similarly notes that neutralizing culturally grounded expressions in subtitling diminishes the viewer's engagement with emotional authenticity. These findings collectively indicate that translation strategies must strike a careful balance between linguistic accessibility and cultural preservation.

The problem becomes even more intricate when emotional expressions are tied to idiomatic or context-bound elements. According to Li & Chen (2024), subtitling must account not only for the lexical meaning of dialogue but also for the multimodal cues such as intonation, gesture, and facial expression that convey emotion. Translators are therefore responsible for interpreting both verbal and visual layers of meaning to ensure that the affective essence is transmitted faithfully. Szarkowska et al. (2016) demonstrate that the omission or alteration of discourse markers for the sake of brevity or readability can disrupt emotional coherence, weakening the viewer's immersion. Consequently, translators must employ strategies that integrate linguistic precision with sensitivity to the film's audiovisual rhythm, enabling an emotional experience that mirrors that of the source audience. Translating emotion, therefore, is not simply a linguistic task but a complex interpretive process that involves decoding cultural semiotics and affective intent.

The intricacies of translating emotional content are further amplified in films featuring neurodivergent characters. *Aku Jati Aku Asperger* introduces a narrative perspective that challenges conventional portrayals of love and emotion, as the protagonist's expressions of affection diverge from neurotypical norms. Leadbitter et al. (2021) explain that the neurodiversity movement has reframed autism as a variation of human experience rather than a disorder, emphasizing the importance of authentic representation. Howes (2023) adds that individuals with autism often express emotional intelligence differently, relying on literal or unconventional cues to demonstrate affection or empathy. In cinematic storytelling,

these patterns create new modes of emotional communication that invite audiences to reconsider what constitutes genuine expression. By presenting neurodivergent love as both authentic and complex, the film opens a space for understanding emotional diversity and challenges translators to capture these subtleties without distortion.

At the linguistic level, translation plays a decisive role in mediating how such emotional diversity is perceived across cultures. Nugraha (2023) argues that languages encode distinct emotional frameworks, and thus translating love related expressions requires deep cultural awareness. Karyani et al. (2020) highlights that when translators disregard cultural context, they risk producing interpretations that distort affective meaning or oversimplify nuanced expressions. Similarly, Rice et al. (2024) caution that misinterpretations in translation can perpetuate stereotypes and reduce the complexity of emotional communication. These insights reveal that in translating films like *Aku Jati Aku Asperger*, linguistic strategies must be informed by sociocultural and psychological awareness, particularly regarding how neurodivergent individuals articulate feelings of love, empathy, and self-acceptance.

Building on this foundation, Mogi et al. (2023) demonstrate how translation strategies like adaptation, modulation, and equivalence can retain emotional depth in multilingual film contexts. By integrating such techniques, translators can mitigate the risk of emotional loss while ensuring cultural intelligibility. These practices align with the goals of intercultural communication described by Abdulrahman (2022), who asserts that language serves as a bridge that connects people across diverse communities. Within Indonesian cinema, this bridging function becomes essential, as it allows local emotional expressions to resonate with global audiences without erasing cultural identity. In the context of neurodiverse representation, translation serves as both a linguistic and ethical responsibility, ensuring that marginalized voices are portrayed with empathy and authenticity.

Despite the growing attention to emotion and culture in translation studies, few investigations have systematically integrated the concept of love languages within the analysis of audiovisual translation. Prior works have examined cultural fidelity, linguistic adaptation, and emotional coherence, yet the psychological framework of love languages remains underexplored. This study aims to address that gap by examining how the five love languages are manifested in the Indonesian film *Aku Jati Aku Asperger* and how they are translated into English subtitles. By combining Chapman's model of love languages with Molina & Hurtado Albir (2004) In the taxonomy of translation techniques, the research aims to analyze how emotional expressions are preserved or transformed during the translation process. The study thus contributes to a deeper understanding of how language, culture, and psychology converge in the subtitling of emotionally charged narratives. It highlights the novelty of analyzing neurodivergent love within Indonesian cinema through the lens of translation strategies, offering both theoretical and practical insights into the dynamics of cross-cultural empathy and emotional authenticity in audiovisual media (Georgiou & Perdikaki, 2020; Nan, 2023; Rostami et al., 2025; Wong, 2019).

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the linguistic and emotional dimensions of translation in the Indonesian film *Aku Jati Aku Asperger*. This movie is an Indonesian drama with strong family and romantic themes. The film was chosen because it centers on Jati, a neurodivergent protagonist on the autism spectrum whose ways of giving and receiving affection differ from neurotypical norms. Here, neurodivergent refers to his autistic profile and atypical social communication, which shape his emotional style and

relationships. This situation creates many varied instances of love languages in everyday interaction. The film's original language is Indonesian, while English appears only in the official subtitles, making it a suitable site for examining how affective meaning is transferred across languages. The qualitative descriptive approach enables the researcher to explore language use within its natural context and to explain subtleties in meaning that emerge through cultural and emotional interpretation. As Arifin (2017), this approach allows for an in-depth examination of linguistic phenomena in social and cultural contexts, making it suitable for analyzing dialogue and subtitling in audiovisual texts. In line with Arbain's earlier research on pragmatic and emotional translation in films, this method prioritizes contextual understanding over quantitative generalization, ensuring that both the language and affective intent of the dialogues are interpreted holistically.

The primary data consist of Indonesian dialogues and their corresponding English subtitles taken directly from the official film version. Supporting materials such as the film script and subtitle files were used to verify accuracy and maintain alignment with the source text. Data were collected using the Live Transcript application, which facilitated timestamp accuracy for each dialogue unit, similar to the data retrieval process in Arbain (2023) study on audiovisual translation. The focus of analysis was limited to expressions that convey affection, empathy, and interpersonal connection, which correspond to Chapman (2009) Five Love Languages: Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Receiving Gifts, Quality Time, and Physical Touch.

Purposive sampling was employed to select approximately 110 subtitle utterances as the unit of analysis. Each subtitle utterance consists of one complete Indonesian dialogue line and its corresponding English subtitle, representing a single turn of speech. These utterances were chosen because they clearly instantiate one of the five love language categories. Each dialogue unit was coded according to its emotional function and the translation technique used. The analytical framework combined Chapman's love language theory with Molina & Hurtado Albir (2004) classification of translation techniques. The analysis involved several sequential steps: (1) identifying the love language category of each dialogue, (2) determining the translation technique applied, (3) evaluating the semantic and emotional equivalence between source and target texts.

Purposive sampling was employed to select approximately 110 utterances that represent the five love language categories. Each dialogue unit was coded according to the emotional function and translation technique used. The analytical framework combined Chapman's love language theory with Molina & Hurtado Albir (2004) taxonomy of translation techniques. The analysis involved several sequential steps: (1) identifying the love language category of each dialogue, (2) identifying the translation technique used in each selected love language utterance, and (3) evaluating the semantic and emotional equivalence between source and target texts

Data analysis was conducted through content analysis, which involved iterative reading and coding of both source and target texts. This process aimed to detect patterns of emotional transfer and identify how linguistic strategies maintain or modify the intended affective meaning. Consistent with Wulan et al. (2023), this method allows for the identification of recurring linguistic themes emerging from context. The analysis also took into account multimodal elements such as tone, gestures, and visual cues to ensure that emotional meaning was interpreted not only linguistically but also audiovisually (Li & Chen, 2024).

Triangulation was applied to enhance the credibility of the findings. Multiple data

sources were compared, including the film dialogues, subtitle files, and relevant literature (Raskind et al., 2018). Expert validation was conducted through consultation with two professional translators and one academic specializing in audiovisual translation to confirm the contextual and emotional accuracy of the interpretations. This step ensured that the translation analysis reflected both linguistic precision and cultural sensitivity.

3. Results

3.1. Findings

The findings of this study reveal that the translation of dialogues in the film *Aku Jati Aku Asperger* demonstrates a close relationship between the expression of love languages and the translation techniques employed by the translator. Using Chapman's Five Love Languages and the 18 translation techniques of Molina & Albir as analytical frameworks, it was found that Words of Affirmation dominate as the primary means by which characters express and receive affection, followed by Acts of Service and Quality Time, while Gifts and Physical Touch appear only occasionally. In terms of translation strategies, Literal Translation and Established Equivalent emerged as the most frequently applied techniques, followed by Modulation, Amplification, and Borrowing, which were employed to preserve emotional nuance and cultural authenticity. The combination of these dominant love language categories and the preference for Literal Translation and Established Equivalent indicates that the translator consistently seeks to maintain the intended message of love while adapting it to the linguistic norms and cultural expectations of the target language, thereby ensuring both emotional integrity and the preservation of local identity.

3.1.1. Love Language used

The analysis of love languages in the film *Aku Jati Aku Asperger* shows that Words of Affirmation are the most dominant, reflecting the characters' reliance on verbal expressions of care, support, and encouragement to build emotional connections. Acts of Service appear as the second most frequent, emphasizing practical help and supportive actions, while Quality Time highlights the importance of shared moments and togetherness. Gifts are present in symbolic forms, such as traditional foods or small tokens of affection, and Physical Touch occurs only rarely, underscoring that verbal affirmation and supportive actions are the central ways love and care are expressed in the narrative.

Table 1. Kinds of love languages

No	Kinds of Love Languages	Total	Percentage (%)
1	Words of Affirmation	167	63.26%
2	Acts of Service	50	18.94%
3	Quality Time	30	11.36%
4	Gifts	16	6.06%
5	Physical Touch	1	0.38%
Total		264	100%

3.1.1.1 Words of Affirmation

Words of affirmation deliberately express love, gratitude, and emotional support communicated through speech. This love language emphasizes the power of verbal validation, encouragement, and recognition to strengthen relationships. In *Aku Jati Aku Asperger*, its predominance (63.3% of cases) highlights how much the film relies on dialogue to reassure Jati, nurture his sense of belonging, and resolve conflicts.

Data #40 (00:40:18)

Source: *Beneran? Terima kasih!*

Target: Are you sure? No, thanks!

Context: Jati receives verbal appreciation after showing his drawing to friends.

The phrase “Thank you” not only acknowledges kindness but also validates Jati’s efforts. The insertion of “Really?” amplifies sincerity, making the affirmation both responsive and emphatic. This interaction illustrates how small verbal reinforcements are central to Jati’s social acceptance.

Data #138 (01:15:07)

Source: *Terima kasih banyak, Jati.*

Target: *Thank you so much, Jati.*

Context: A character appreciates Jati’s thoughtful surprises during a family gathering.

By explicitly addressing Jati’s name in the gratitude, the affirmation is personalized and intimate. The intensifier “so much” magnifies appreciation, reinforcing Jati’s self-worth and showing that his efforts are meaningful. This direct verbal validation exemplifies the hallmark of Words of Affirmation, using language to strengthen emotional bonds.

3.1.1.2. Acts of Service

Acts of service represent love through helpful actions, assistance, and practical support. Rather than verbal appreciation, this love language emphasizes doing something to make another’s life easier or to show genuine care. In *Aku Jati Aku Asperger*, Acts of Service accounts for 18.9% of all identified data, revealing how characters frequently demonstrate love through small but meaningful deeds, such as helping Jati in daily routines, guiding his emotions, or providing physical assistance to maintain his comfort and dignity.

Data #27 (00:28:45)

Source: *Nanti ibu bantu buatkan, ya.*

Target: *I will help you fix it.*

Context: After Jati’s drawing is accidentally torn, a family member reassures him by offering immediate help.

This service-oriented response addresses Jati’s distress not only by comforting him verbally but by promising concrete assistance. The act of fixing demonstrates practical support, embodying love through action rather than sentiment. It reflects the principle of this love language, namely, easing burdens through care-driven behavior.

Data #129 (01:10:22)

Source: *Istri saya nggak bisa minum air dingin kalau Mas nggak benerin.*

Target: My wife can’t drink cold water if you don’t fix this

Context: A request is made to Jati to repair a household item so his sister-in-law can enjoy water normally.

Here, love is manifested through the act of repairing. While framed as a task, the subtext underscores trust in Jati’s ability to provide service and contribute to others’ well-being. By making Jati’s practical involvement central to comfort at home, the film emphasizes service as a form of connection and validation.

3.1.1.3. Quality Time

Quality time reflects love through presence, shared experiences, and undivided attention. This love language stresses being together in meaningful moments, where the act of spending time itself becomes a way of showing affection. In *Aku Jati Aku Asperger*, Quality Time accounts for 11.4% of the data, emphasizing that togetherness, such as eating meals,

riding trains, or simply sitting side by side, is an important way characters strengthen their bonds with Jati.

Data #70 (00:52:33)

Source: *Dek, malam ini kita makan spageti, ya.*

Target: *Jati, it's spaghetti for tonight, okay?*

Context: A family member invites Jati to join the dinner, highlighting the shared experience of eating together.

This line is not merely about the food but about inviting Jati to be part of a communal moment. Offering spaghetti frames dinner as an occasion of inclusion and shared happiness, reflecting the essence of quality time where love is expressed through togetherness.

Data #121 (01:05:10)

Source: *Sekarang, Jati lihat ke depan nikmatin pemandangannya.*

Target: *Now, look ahead and enjoy the view.*

Context: During a train ride, Jati is encouraged to appreciate the scenery with his loved ones.

By directing Jati to share the act of enjoying the landscape, the dialogue underscores the intimacy of spending time together in a meaningful environment. The focus is not on conversation but on the shared moment of quiet appreciation, a hallmark of quality time as a love language.

3.1.1.4. Gifts

Gifts express love through tangible symbols that carry emotional significance. This love language emphasizes giving and receiving items that serve as reminders of affection, appreciation, and thoughtfulness. In *Aku Jati Aku Asperger*, Gifts account for 6.1% of the data. While less frequent than other categories, moments involving traditional food or small presents reveal how material tokens are used to communicate care and strengthen bonds.

Data #41 (00:41:12)

Source: *Mas, mau getuk?*

Target: *You want some gethuk?*

Context: A character offers Jati a piece of traditional cassava cake during a casual interaction.

Although simple, the act of offering food functions as a symbolic gift. The local snack represents familiarity and affection, allowing the giver to express love in a culturally grounded way. This gesture reflects how even modest items can embody emotional value when shared with sincerity.

Data #77 (01:08:05)

Source: *Nih, bolu kukus. Mas Daru beli.*

Target: *Here, steamed cake. I bought it earlier.*

Context: A family member hands Jati a bolu kukus that was purchased with him in mind.

The act of giving food, explicitly framed as something bought for Jati, transforms the cake into a token of care. It highlights intentionality in giving, where the item is less important than the thought behind it. This illustrates the love language of gifts, showing how physical objects become carriers of affection and connection.

3.1.1.5. Physical Touch

Physical touch conveys love through closeness, gestures, and bodily connection. This love language highlights how affectionate contact, such as holding, guiding, or touching, becomes a direct channel for reassurance and intimacy. In *Aku Jati Aku Asperger*, Physical Touch appears least frequently, with only 0.4% of the data. Its rarity underlines that love in the film is primarily expressed verbally and through actions, while physical contact emerges only in key moments where emotions require stronger, nonverbal affirmation.

Data #61 (00:46:30)

Source: *Pelan-pelan. Aduh.*

Target: *Careful.*

Context: A family member steadies Jati by physically holding his arm as he nearly stumbles.

Although the dialogue is brief, the interaction involves protective physical contact. The act of guiding and steadyng Jati embodies love through touch, signaling care and security in a way words alone could not convey.

Data #65 (00:47:10)

Source: *Jangan marah dulu. Sini, relaks dulu.*

Target: *Don't be mad. Relax*

Context: While calming Jati, a hand is placed gently on his shoulder to ease his agitation. Here, the verbal reassurance is paired with physical touch, making the comfort more immediate and effective. The gesture exemplifies how physical contact, even when minimal, strengthens the emotional force of the words and represents love through bodily presence.

3.1.2. Translation Technique used in *Aku Jati Aku Asperger*

The results indicate that the subtitling of *Aku Jati Aku Asperger* relies on a limited set of dominant translation techniques. Based on a total of 433 identified instances, Established Equivalent and Modulation are the most frequently used strategies, showing a strong preference for natural and idiomatic rendering. Amplification also appears regularly, suggesting the need to clarify the meaning for the target audience. In contrast, Literal Translation, Borrowing, and Reduction are used more selectively, while Discursive Creation, Generalization, and Adaptation occur only occasionally. Overall, the distribution reflects a tendency to balance emotional accuracy, cultural accessibility, and subtitle readability rather than strict formal equivalence.

Table 2. Translation technique used

No	Technique	Total	Percentages (%)
1	Established Equivalent	127	27.91%
2	Modulation	120	26.37%
3	Amplification	85	18.68%
4	Literal Translation	35	7.69%
5	Borrowing	31	6.81%
6	Reduction	25	5.49%
7	Discursive Creation	4	0.88%
8	Generalization	4	0.88%
9	Adaptation	2	0.29%
Total		433	100%

3.1.2.1. Established Equivalent

Data #5 (00:15:12)

Source: *Makasih!*

Target: Thank you!

Context: In an early everyday interaction, a character briefly thanks another after receiving a small favor. The exchange is casual and friendly, showing spontaneous gratitude rather than formal politeness.

Established Equivalent is used here because “Makasih” in Indonesian has a widely accepted and standardized equivalent in English, “Thank you.” The equivalence preserves both the meaning and the social function of the utterance. The informality of “Makasih” is slightly more casual than “Thank you,” but the use of this established expression guarantees comprehensibility for English-speaking audiences without losing the polite intent.

Data #241 (01:36:42)

Source: *Selamat ulang tahun, Jati!*

Target: Happy birthday, Jati!

Context: In a late scene during Jati’s birthday celebration, a close character publicly congratulates him in front of family and friends.

This translation employs Established Equivalent by using a direct and conventional English expression for birthdays. “Selamat ulang tahun” has an exact set phrase in English, “Happy birthday,” which makes this a straightforward application of the technique. The translation maintains both the ritualistic tone and the emotional intent of the original, ensuring the utterance resonates with the same cultural force in the target language.

3.1.2.2. Modulation

Data #9 (00:21:07)

Source: *Jati, pas banget!*

Target: Jati, what a coincidence!

Context: In this scene, a character reacts when Jati shows up at exactly the right moment. The speaker’s surprise and excitement highlight an unplanned but welcome encounter that strengthens their interpersonal connection.

This translation applies Modulation by shifting the point of view. The Indonesian phrase *pas banget* literally means “exactly right,” but in context it conveys the sense of something happening coincidentally. The English expression *what a coincidence* captures the intended meaning rather than the literal wording. This change maintains naturalness in the target language and ensures the emotional effect is accurately delivered.

Data #10 (00:21:22)

Source: *Aku pengin banget wawancara kamu!*

Target: And I’m dying to interview you!

Context: In this campus scene, a student journalist eagerly approaches Jati after noticing his unique way of thinking. She expresses intense enthusiasm about learning his perspective and gives him special attention compared to other students.

Here Modulation is used to render *pengin banget* (“really want”) as *dying to*, which is an idiomatic English equivalent expressing strong desire. While the literal translation would be I really want to interview you, the modulation to I’m dying to creates a more dynamic and expressive tone, matching the intensity of the speaker’s enthusiasm.

3.1.2.3. Amplification

Data #8 (00:20:55)

Source: *Aku Asperger*.

Target: I have Asperger's.

Context: In an early campus conversation, Jati directly introduces himself to a new acquaintance. He discloses his diagnosis in a brief, matter-of-fact way, reflecting his straightforward neurodivergent communication style.

Amplification is applied here by adding linguistic information that is implied but not explicit in the source. The Indonesian phrase *Aku Asperger* is concise and elliptical, but in English, such a construction would sound incomplete. By rendering it as I have Asperger's, the translator makes the expression more explicit and grammatically natural, clarifying the condition for the target audience without altering the intended meaning.

Data #29 (00:29:30)

Source: *Jati, tenang, Nak. Ibu bantu bikin lagi.*

Target: Calm down, let's make another drawing.

Context: At home, Jati becomes very upset after his drawing is accidentally damaged. His mother comforts him, tries to soothe his anxiety, and offers practical help by suggesting they redo the drawing together.

The translation demonstrates Amplification because *Ibu bantu bikin lagi* (literally "Mom will help make again") is rephrased as let's make another drawing. The addition of "another drawing" specifies the implied object, which was not directly mentioned in the source line. This helps the target audience fully understand the context while still reflecting the supportive tone of the original.

3.1.2.4. Literal Translation

Data #6 (00:16:01)

Source: *Halo. Aku Jenar.*

Target: Hello, I'm Jenar.

Context: On campus, Jati meets a new classmate for the first time. She approaches him in a friendly way and introduces herself, initiating their relationship and opening space for later, more personal exchanges.

This is a clear case of Literal Translation, where the Indonesian greeting *Halo* is rendered directly as Hello, and *Aku Jenar* becomes I'm Jenar. The structure and lexical choices remain almost identical in both languages. This technique ensures accuracy and preserves the natural flow of an introductory exchange without the need for stylistic shifts.

Data #42 (00:42:05)

Source: *Bekri suka kepada Ambar.*

Target: Bekri likes Ambar.

Context: During a casual conversation, a character openly explains Bekri's feelings toward Ambar.

Literal Translation is used here to maintain the straightforward structure of the Indonesian clause. The verb *suka kepada* is rendered literally as likes, and the subject-object order is preserved. The result is simple, clear, and faithful to the source, showing how literal rendering works effectively when both languages share similar grammatical structures.

3.1.2.5. Borrowing

Data #41 (00:41:12)

Source: *Mas, mau getuk?*

Target: You want some getuk?

Context: In a homely kitchen scene, a family member offers Jati a traditional snack.

This translation demonstrates Pure Borrowing because the Indonesian word *getuk* (a traditional cassava cake) is retained in the English version. Instead of replacing it with a generic equivalent such as cake or snack, the translator preserves the cultural specificity of the item. By doing so, the target audience gains exposure to the local context, and the uniqueness of Indonesian culture remains visible in the film.

Data #205 (01:20:02)

Source: *Waktunya makan serabi Ngampin!*

Target: It's time to eat serabi Ngampin!

Context: During a relaxed family moment, a caregiver cheerfully invites everyone to enjoy a local treat together.

Here, Pure Borrowing is again employed with the term *serabi Ngampin*, a traditional dish with cultural and regional identity. Retaining the original phrase introduces the target audience to a cultural reference that may not have a direct English equivalent. The use of borrowing in this context emphasizes cultural authenticity, while the rest of the sentence is translated using an established equivalent.

3.1.2.6. Reduction

Data #2 (00:12:50)

Source: *Pelan-pelan kenalan, terus ngobrol sama Jati-nya.*

Target: You know, talk to Jati.

Context: In an early social setting, a caregiver encourages someone to approach Jati gently. Reduction is applied because the Indonesian source line contains two actions (*pelan-pelan kenalan* and *ngobrol*), but only the second is retained in the English translation. The reduction simplifies the utterance without altering the core intent, namely, encouraging interaction with Jati. This keeps the subtitle concise and natural while still serving the communicative purpose.

Data #44 (00:42:30)

Source: *Makasih, lo.*

Target: Thank you.

Context: After receiving casual help from a close friend, the speaker expresses brief, informal gratitude.

In this case, Reduction is used by omitting the colloquial particle *lo*, which has no direct equivalent in English. The translation keeps the central meaning of gratitude while removing the informal nuance. This strategy prioritizes clarity and readability for the target audience, even if some local flavor is lost.

3.1.2.7. Discursive Creation

Data #14 (00:22:05)

Source: *Ini dia, Jati!*

Target: Give it up... Jati!

Context: During a public event, the host enthusiastically introduces Jati to the audience.

Discursive Creation is applied because the Indonesian phrase *Ini dia* literally means Here he is, but the translator opted for a more creative English equivalent, Give it up... Jati! This phrase invokes an audience's cheering response, making it more engaging in the target culture. The choice reflects creativity beyond direct equivalence and adapts the function of the utterance to fit the cinematic context.

Data #158 (01:23:12)

Source: *Gas pol!*

Target: Chop-chop!

Context: In a tense moment near the climax, a close friend urges Jati to move quickly and not hesitate.

This is another example of Discursive Creation. The Indonesian slang Gas pol literally refers to “full throttle” or “go all out,” but it was translated as Chop-chop!, an English colloquial command meaning “hurry up.” While the literal meaning is not preserved, the translation maintains the energetic, imperative force. This technique shows how discursive creation provides a functional, culturally resonant equivalent rather than a literal one.

3.1.2.8. Generalization

Data #71 (00:53:12)

Source: *Besok malam, baru kita makan kwetiau, oke?*

Target: We'll eat rice noodles tomorrow night, okay?

Context: During a relaxed family chat, a caregiver plans a simple dinner for the next evening together.

Generalization is applied here because the specific Indonesian term kwetiau (a particular type of flat rice noodle) is translated into the broader English category rice noodles. The translation sacrifices specificity but ensures clarity for an international audience unfamiliar with the dish.

Data #165 (01:12:44)
Source: Kok yang punya Bekri lebih bagus?

Target: Why is his nicer?

Context: In a casual scene, a character compares their own item with Bekri's and feels slightly dissatisfied.

In this case, *lebih bagus* (literally “better in quality or appearance”) is generalized to nicer, which is less specific and more colloquial in English. The shift maintains the intended comparison but with a more general evaluative term, making the translation sound natural and accessible.

3.1.2.9. Adaptation

Data #147 (01:18:25)

Source: *Ini tuh namanya bergaul.*

Target: This is called networking! A new friend.

Context: After Jati manages to talk with several people at a gathering, a friend reassures him. The speaker jokingly explains that what he just did is normal socializing, encouraging his confidence in interacting with others.

Adaptation is applied here because the Indonesian word bergaul refers to casual socializing, often in everyday or community settings. Instead of a literal equivalent like to socialize, the translator chose networking, which better captures the intended meaning for an international audience. This choice adapts the cultural context, ensuring the idea of building relationships is understood in a way that resonates with target viewers.

Data #156 (01:21:30)

Source: *Dia tuh cowok penyayang banget.*

Target: He's such a family man!

Context: In a reflective conversation, someone defends Jati's character by emphasizing his deep, caring nature.

This example also illustrates Adaptation. The Indonesian phrase cowok penyayang literally means “a very affectionate guy,” but it was adapted as family man, an English expression that conveys similar qualities of warmth, care, and responsibility. Although the wording shifts, the translation maintains the positive connotations of affection and dependability that are central to the source expression.

3.2. Discussion

The findings reveal that Words of Affirmation emerged as the most dominant love language in *Aku Jati Aku Asperger*, followed by Acts of Service and Quality Time. This distribution highlights that verbal reassurance and supportive actions are central to emotional expression in the film, particularly as they align with the protagonist's direct and honest communication style typical of neurodivergent representation. The frequent use of **established equivalents, modulation, and amplification** reflects the translator's effort to balance emotional accuracy with linguistic naturalness and subtitle clarity. The frequent use of literal translation, established equivalents, and modulation reflects the translator's effort to balance emotional accuracy with linguistic naturalness. These strategies ensured that affective meaning was retained while maintaining fluency for target viewers, a result consistent with Molina & Albir (2004) argument that functional equivalence should prioritize communicative impact over form. The pattern also mirrors findings by Chen & Chen (2023a), who emphasize that culturally adapted emotional expressions enhance relational understanding. By applying literal and modulation techniques to dialogues expressing empathy, affection, and self-acceptance, the translation preserved the emotional resonance that defines the film's interpersonal dynamics. This outcome confirms that emotional authenticity can coexist with cultural adaptation, supporting Apriliani et al. (2024), who argue that awareness of love languages strengthens interpersonal communication across linguistic boundaries.

The findings of this study align with previous research highlighting the intricate relationship between emotional expression, translation techniques, and cultural adaptation in audiovisual translation. Similar to Chen & Chen (2023), who found that culturally sensitive approaches foster greater emotional understanding in collectivist contexts, this study demonstrates that the translator's preference for established equivalents and modulation techniques allowed emotional meaning to remain intact while aligning with Indonesian sociocultural norms. Rather than balancing literal translation and adaptation, the subtitles rely mostly on established equivalents and modulation, while adaptation appears only minimally. This suggests emotional meaning is preserved through natural phrasing, aligning with Bunt & Hazelwood (2017), who noted that emotional alignment based on love languages does not always guarantee relational satisfaction. The balance between literal translation and adaptation observed here contrasts with the findings of Bunt & Hazelwood (2017), who noted that emotional alignment based on love languages does not always guarantee relational satisfaction. In this film, literal translation preserved the sincerity of direct verbal expressions characteristic of the neurodivergent protagonist, while modulation provided flexibility to convey emotional subtleties naturally in English. This pattern of translation choices. This hybrid method supports Zabalbeascoa & Corrius (2019), who emphasized that multilingual audiovisual texts require translators to consider not only linguistic accuracy but also emotional coherence within cross-cultural contexts. It also reflects Pan's (2020) notion that translation involves framing practices that shape audience perception, suggesting that translation decisions are interpretative acts rather than mechanical transfers of meaning.

Compared to previous studies on Asian film translation, the present findings highlight a unique equilibrium between domestication and foreignization. While many studies in East Asian contexts tend to favor linguistic preservation, this research indicates that translators of Indonesian films often adopt context-based adjustments to maintain both clarity and emotional resonance. Apriliani et al. (2024) note that recognizing diverse love languages

enhances empathy and interpersonal connection, a concept reflected in how Indonesian emotional expressions were translated into culturally accessible yet affectively rich English utterances. Meng (2021) also supports this approach by advocating corpus-aided translation training that integrates critical and creative reasoning to sustain emotional depth. These results collectively suggest that the translation of *Aku Jati Aku Asperger* occupies a middle ground between maintaining source authenticity and ensuring audience relatability, thereby reinforcing the dynamic interplay of language, emotion, and culture within the framework of audiovisual translation.

The cultural and emotional nuances identified in *Aku Jati Aku Asperger* reveal how translation decisions are shaped by the intersection of Indonesian collectivist values, neurodivergent expression, and cinematic representation. The dominance of Words of Affirmation demonstrates the Indonesian emphasis on verbal reassurance as a socially acceptable means of emotional articulation, while the selective use of Acts of Service reflects cultural norms that prioritize empathy through action rather than overt romantic display. This pattern resonates with Chen & Chen (2023a) argument that collectivistic cultures privilege emotional communication rooted in relational harmony, while Apriliani et al. (2024) emphasize that recognizing different love languages fosters relational empathy. The translator's decision to maintain literal sincerity in certain dialogues while applying modulation in others reflects a sensitivity to both cultural propriety and emotional transparency, aligning with Bunt & Hazelwood (2017) observation that love language alignment is contextually influenced rather than universally effective.

In this context, the film's portrayal of a neurodivergent protagonist challenges conventional emotional norms by foregrounding directness and honesty as expressions of care, traits often understated in Indonesian social discourse. Such representation underscores the translator's task of preserving authenticity without compromising cultural intelligibility. Meng (2021) supports this approach by emphasizing the pedagogical value of corpus-aided translation in developing emotional discernment, while Pan (2020) and Zabalbeascoa & Corrius (2019) highlight the importance of contextual interpretation in maintaining affective depth within audiovisual narratives. The translator's overall approach, the translator's balanced strategy, illustrates that cultural and emotional contextualization in subtitling requires a nuanced understanding of empathy, social norms, and communicative purpose, reaffirming that translation operates as both linguistic mediation and emotional negotiation.

While many previous studies have explored translation from either a linguistic or cultural perspective, few have integrated psychological constructs such as love languages into audiovisual translation analysis. Earlier research often emphasized lexical equivalence and textual coherence but neglected the emotional dynamics underpinning interpersonal communication. This study bridges that gap by merging Chapman's theoretical framework with Molina and Albir's translation taxonomy to analyze how emotional expressions are conveyed in Indonesian-to-English subtitles. Such integration provides a more comprehensive view of how translators navigate affective meaning within socio-cultural boundaries, an aspect often overlooked in translation studies focusing solely on structural accuracy. The methodological design, which combines linguistic analysis with emotional classification, extends the discourse beyond traditional translation parameters toward a more human-centered perspective (Bunt & Hazelwood, 2017; Chen & Chen, 2023b; Meng, 2021).

A further strength of this study lies in its focus on an Indonesian film featuring a neurodivergent protagonist, a context rarely examined in previous translation research. By

analyzing the representation of emotional honesty and communication barriers within this unique narrative, the research contributes to the growing body of literature emphasizing inclusivity and empathy in translation. In contrast, many earlier studies, including those centered on Western media, often disregard cultural and psychological diversity, leading to limited generalizability. The triangulation of expert validation in this study also enhances reliability, aligning with calls for data-informed and context-sensitive approaches to translation practice. This focus on multidimensional empathy and intercultural understanding positions the research as a meaningful advancement in audiovisual translation studies (Apriliani et al., 2024; Bunt & Hazelwood, 2017; Zabalbeascoa & Attardo, 2023; Zabalbeascoa & Corrius, 2019).

The implications of this study extend to translator education, intercultural communication, and inclusive media production. Training programs should emphasize emotional literacy and cultural empathy, equipping translators to interpret affective nuance with contextual awareness. Future research could employ mixed-method approaches combining linguistic analysis and audience reception to examine how translated emotional expressions influence viewer perception. Comparative studies across languages and cultural settings would further reveal how translation mediates empathy and authenticity, contributing to a more inclusive understanding of love language representation in global audiovisual storytelling.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the translation of emotional expressions in *Aku Jati Aku Asperger* requires a balance between linguistic accuracy and cultural empathy. The preservation of love languages in the film's English subtitles reflects the translator's ability to convey sincerity, care, and understanding across different cultural contexts. The findings suggest that emotional translation is not limited to linguistic transfer but also involves interpreting cultural and psychological dimensions of communication. Translators should therefore approach emotionally charged texts with awareness of both cultural norms and character intent to ensure authenticity. The study encourages future translation practices to integrate emotional literacy and intercultural awareness, particularly when dealing with sensitive narratives such as neurodivergent representation. These insights can inform translator training and audiovisual translation practices aimed at enhancing empathy and maintaining the emotional integrity of global film communication.

References

Abdulrahman, S. S. (2022). How language creates bonds among cross-cultural communities. *Cihan University-Erbil Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 6(1), 59–63. <https://doi.org/10.24086/cuejhs.v6n1y2022.pp59-63>

Apriliani, T., Wulandari, D., & Hamzah, I. F. (2024). The reasons why love languages are quite influential on marital harmony. *Proceedings* (Conference paper). <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.18-7-2023.2343417>

Arbain, A. (2023). An expression of fear realized in the form of sentences in the *Stranger Things* movie. *IJELTAL (Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics)*, 7(2), 277–288.

Arifin, E. Z. (2017). Perkembangan teori dan teknik analisis wacana: Dari teori konvensional ke teori modern. *Pujangga*, 3(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.47313/pujangga.v3i1.325>

Bunt, S., & Hazelwood, Z. (2017). Walking the walk, talking the talk: Love languages, self-regulation, and relationship satisfaction. *Personal Relationships*, 24(2), 280–290. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pere.12182>

Chapman, G. (2009). *The five love languages: Singles edition*. Moody Publishers.

Chen, G., & Chen, Y. (2023). The impact of a love language game intervention on relationship satisfaction among Chinese couples in China and Malaysia: Examining the role of individualism–collectivism. *Preprint*. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-2788087/v1>

Georgiou, N., & Perdikaki, K. (2020). Do you second that emotion? *Journal of Audiovisual Translation*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.47476/jat.v3i2.2020.125>

Howes, S. S. (2023). Emotional intelligence in autistic adults: A review with considerations for employers. *Sustainability*, 15(9), 7252. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15097252>

Insani, B. S., & Agustin, N. D. (2025). Perbandingan ungkapan cinta dalam bahasa Indonesia dan Turki pada lagu “Apalah Cinta” karya Ayu Ting Ting. *Komunikasi*, 2(1), 122–130. <https://doi.org/10.62383/komunikasi.v2i1.148>

Karyani, L., Nababan, M. R., & Marmanto, S. (2020). Translation analysis on Dayak cultural terms from Dayak Ngaju to Indonesian and English. *Langkawi: Journal of the Association for Arabic and English*, 6(1), 41. <https://doi.org/10.31332/lkw.v6i1.1676>

Leadbitter, K., Buckle, K. L., Ellis, C., & Dekker, M. (2021). Autistic self-advocacy and the neurodiversity movement: Implications for autism early intervention research and practice. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, Article 635690. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.635690>

Li, L., & Chen, H. (2024). Research on film subtitle translation from the perspective of multimodal discourse analysis. In *Proceedings* (pp. 335–340). https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-263-7_41

Meng, Q. (2021). The pedagogy of corpus-aided English–Chinese translation from a critical and creative perspective. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 11(1), 29–36. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1101.04>

Mogi, A. C., Tulung, G. J., & Ranuntu, G. C. (2023). Strategi penerjemahan lagu dalam sulih suara bahasa Indonesia di film *Moana*. *Jurnal Onoma Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra*, 9(1), 386–398. <https://doi.org/10.30605/onoma.v9i1.2452>

Molina, L., & Hurtado Albir, A. (2004). Translation techniques revisited: A dynamic and functionalist approach. *Meta*, 47(4), 498–512. <https://doi.org/10.7202/008033ar>

Nan, Y. (2023). An analysis of the translation strategy in the film *I Am the Destiny* from the lens of translation purpose. *Communications in Humanities Research*, 15(1), 198–203. <https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7064/15/20230700>

Nugraha, D. S. (2023). Comparing the depiction of love in English and Indonesian proverbs: An analysis using cognitive semantics and the contrastive method. *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research*, 6(11). <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v6-i11-41>

Pan, Y. (2020). Corpus linguistics approaches to trainee translators' framing practice in news translation. *The International Journal of Translation and Interpreting Research*, 12(1), 90–114. <https://doi.org/10.12807/ti.112201.2020.a06>

Potočárová, M. (2020). The importance of philosophical-anthropological knowledge in the culture and practice of verbal communication in the formation of family relationships. *Pedagogika: Studia i Rozprawy*, 29, 35–56. <https://doi.org/10.16926/p.2020.29.02>

Raskind, I. G., Shelton, R. C., Comeau, D. L., Cooper, H. L. F., Griffith, D. M., & Kegler, M. C. (2018). A review of qualitative data analysis practices in health education and

health behavior research. *Health Education & Behavior*, 46(1), 32–39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198118795019>

Rice, C., Chandler, E., Shanouda, F., Jones, C. T., & Mündel, I. (2024). Misfits meet art and technology: Crippling transmethodologies. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, 24(4), 219–231. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15327086241234705>

Rostami, M., Saadati, N., Parsakia, K., & Gharibian, F. (2025). The role of love languages in enhancing marital communication. *KMAN Counsel and Psych Nexus*, 3, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.fct.psynexus.3.14>

Sun, X. (2022). Neutralising tendency in subtitling Chinese culture-specific references into English. *International Journal of Chinese and English Translation & Interpreting*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.56395/ijceti.v2i2.45>

Szarkowska, A., Krejtz, I., Pilipczuk, O., Dutka, Ł., & Kruger, J. (2016). The effects of text editing and subtitle presentation rate on the comprehension and reading patterns of interlingual and intralingual subtitles among deaf, hard of hearing and hearing viewers. *Across Languages and Cultures*, 17(2), 183–204. <https://doi.org/10.1556/084.2016.17.2.3>

Wong, M. Y. (2019). Emotion as a language of universal dialogue. *Dialogue and Universalism*, 29(3), 41–56. <https://doi.org/10.5840/du201929336>

Wulan, S., Nurhasanah, N., & Sahri, Z. (2023). Ecocriticism on Kumandra as environmental sustainability in *Raya and the Last Dragon*. *Metathesis: Journal of English Language, Literature, and Teaching*, 7(1), 74–85. <https://doi.org/10.31002/metathesis.v7i1.339>

Zabalbeascoa, P., & Attardo, S. (2023). Humour translation theories and strategies. In *Transmedial perspectives on humour and translation: From page to screen to stage* (pp. 1–264). Taylor & Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003317104-2>

Zabalbeascoa, P., & Corrius, M. (2019). Conversation as a unit of film analysis: Databases of L3 translation and audiovisual samples of multilingualism. *Monti: Monografías de Traducción e Interpretación*, 57–85. <https://doi.org/10.6035/monti.2019.ne4.2>