

The Impact of Cultural Nuances in the Translation of Indonesian Government Social Media Content on the Digital Literacy of Young Generations

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Abstract—This study examines the influence of cultural nuances in the translation of Indonesian government social media content on the digital literacy of young generations. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 243 respondents aged 17–22 years through an online questionnaire. The analysis covered cultural nuances (X1), translation strategies (STR) as mediator, machine translation (MT) and socio-political context (CTX) as moderators, message comprehension (X2), and digital literacy (Y). The results indicate that cultural nuances positively influence youth comprehension, while translation strategies play a limited mediating role. Machine translation and socio-political context significantly moderate how messages are interpreted. Furthermore, digital literacy is generally high in terms of ethics and safety but remains low in creation and participation. These findings highlight the need for more contextual translation strategies and greater efforts to empower youth as active digital participants or contributors.

Index Terms—translation, cultural nuances, social media, government communication, digital literacy

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has transformed how governments communicate with citizens. Public institutions increasingly rely on social media to disseminate information, promote transparency, and engage with diverse audiences (Arafah & Hasyim, 2019; Hasjim et al., 2026). In Indonesia, platforms such as Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, and YouTube have become central channels for policy dissemination, outreach, and civic participation. Within this multilingual and multicultural context, where linguistic diversity and cultural plurality are integral to national identity (Kaharuddin et al., 2024), the translation of government messages is not merely a technical exercise but a sociocultural process (Arafah et al., 2026). Numerous cultural studies have shown that local traditions, symbolic beliefs, and community-based practices strongly shape communication patterns and identity construction in Indonesian society (Arafah et al., 2022; Arifin et al., 2022; Effendy et al., 2025; Takwa et al., 2024a; Takwa et al., 2025). Language and texts do not merely communicate information, but also reflect social realities, ideological tensions, and unequal relations within society (Mutmainnah et al., 2022). Texts and communicative forms are often shaped by wider social structures, including hierarchy, class positioning, and culturally sanctioned roles (Rano et al., 2026). How these messages are translated determines how citizens interpret, respond to, and trust official communications, particularly among younger generations, who constitute the most active users of digital media (Arafah et al., 2025a; Hasyim & Arafah, 2023a).

Environment changes when the concept of cultural heritage is fading due to changes in lifestyle, modernization, and technological developments (Manugeren et al., 2023). The shift from what once traditional into a modern one is possible to perform both good and bad impacts (Suhadi et al., 2022). Effective translation in government communication is crucial for bridging the gap between official discourse and the cultural realities of its audience (Hasyim & Arafah, 2023b). Cultural nuances encompassing expressions, idioms, values, and historical references carry implicit meanings that influence the emotional and cognitive engagement of the reader (Arafah et al., 2023a; Arafah et al., 2025b). When these nuances are inadequately translated, messages risk appearing inauthentic, being misunderstood, or failing to engage audiences. The digital sphere amplifies these challenges, as communication on social media occurs rapidly, interactively,

and across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Moreover, the increasing reliance on machine translation in public communication raises concerns about the effectiveness of cultural meaning preservation, potentially compromising the authenticity and inclusiveness of government messages. Similar observations have been made in cross-cultural linguistic research, which highlights the importance of contextual interpretation and the negotiation of meaning in maintaining cultural coherence (Mokoginta & Arafah, 2022).

Beyond linguistic accuracy, cultural translation reflects how collective memory, moral values, and social worldviews are encoded in language. Research by Radjaban et al. (2025) reveals that historical background of Merap Language of Dayak community is used as a benchmark to determine a language using language mapping analysis. More by Halil et al (2024), it is stated that North Kolaka has districts that are rich culture and language. Studies in ethnolinguistics and cultural semiotics show that meaning in Indonesian local communities—such as the Tolaki Mekongga and Biak tribes—is inseparable from symbolic rituals, ecological wisdom, and moral communication (Mofu et al., 2024; Takwa et al., 2024). Value system, including rituals, symbols, and traditions is known to be a guideline of how a community acts and behaves to make their life better (Takwa et al., 2022a; Takwa et al., 2026; Abbas et al., 2024). These cultural models illustrate how social messages are transmitted through contextualized linguistic codes and nonverbal symbolism, reinforcing local identity while shaping intercultural understanding. In public communication, similar semiotic dynamics emerge when governments attempt to localize national values such as gotong royong and Pancasila through translated messages. Governments should know that general people as their audience will interpret a term based on the meaning they understand (Hasyim et al., 2020). As cultural symbols move across linguistic boundaries, they undergo reinterpretation that either strengthens or weakens audience trust and engagement. Thus, government translation can be seen as an act of cultural negotiation—mediating between institutional authority and the lived experience of its citizens (Takwa et al., 2022b).

In a world of communication, people are expected to create social interaction effectively despite all the implicit meanings the speaker assumes (Yulianti et al., 2022; Kuswanti et al., 2023; Asri et al., 2023). At the same time, digital communication has reshaped how meaning is created, shared, and contested. Scholars note that in the new media environment, multimodal signs—text, visuals, and emotive symbols—function collaboratively to construct meaning beyond linguistic boundaries (Hasyim & Arafah, 2023b; Arafah & Hasyim, 2023a). Semiotic multimodality plays a critical role in how audiences interpret official messages online, as emojis, imagery, and digital tone affect perceived sincerity and clarity. Research in digital literacy and media semiotics also suggests that communicative meaning on social platforms is increasingly shaped by audience participation, visual culture, and algorithmic mediation (Arafah et al., 2025c). Research by Iksora et al. (2022) shows that in the use of language, an error or mistake made by either human or program is unavoidable. Using metaphors, for instance, in order to convey ideas might just end up with misunderstanding (Baa et al., 2023). Consequently, translation in digital government communication must consider these multimodal dimensions to ensure that the emotional, cultural, and ethical layers of meaning are preserved. Learning a new language is not an easy job comparing to people's first language (Kaharuddin et al., 2023). The complexity of understanding translation from another language is an obstacle (Arnawa & Arafah, 2023). Mastering a foreign language remains a significant challenge (Kaharuddin et al., 2025). Failure to do so can result in the erosion of cultural resonance and the weakening of civic trust in digital public discourse.

Simultaneously, digital literacy has emerged as an essential skill for youth to access, evaluate, and interact with online information (Usman et al., 2024). According to UNESCO, digital literacy encompasses the ability to access, evaluate, create, and ethically use information in digital environments. In this context, government social media communication not only functions as a channel of information delivery but also serves as a medium for fostering citizens' critical digital engagement (CDE). A growing body of research emphasizes that integrating local wisdom and cultural perspectives into education and communication practices strengthens intercultural awareness and digital competence among young people (Misnah et al., 2024). Moreover, the modernization era also gives an impact to educational sphere to be able to access online effectively (Arafah et al., 2023b; Sunardi et al., 2018). Integrating cultural awareness to the teaching materials could be easily done since it is presented in many forms, literary work for instance (Yudith et al., 2023). Authors occasionally depict social background and phenomena around them, creating a close relationship between literature and social reality (Sunyoto et al., 2022; Arafah et al., 2023). In Indonesia, however, youth digital literacy levels vary widely, with gaps in evaluative and creative competencies despite high connectivity rates. Recent findings also show that Generation Z netizens demonstrate strong technological adaptability but tend to lack a deeper reflective and ethical understanding of digital content, indicating an uneven development of digital cultural literacy (Arafah et al., 2023c; Arafah & Hasyim, 2023b, 2023a).

Previous studies have mostly examined translation in government communication from linguistic or pragmatic perspectives, focusing on accuracy, equivalence, and politeness strategies (e.g., Venuti, 1995; Schäffner, 2012). Few studies address how translation interacts with cultural values and affects audience perception, especially in digital contexts. Recent research on digital government communication emphasizes that meaning-making in online spaces is co-constructed between institutions and citizens, mediated by sociocultural interpretation (Marwaha & Kvedar, 2021). Related studies on digital media and multimodal communication show that online meaning construction relies on semiotic, visual, and emotional cues shaping users' interpretive engagement (Arafah & Hasyim, 2023b; Hasyim & Arafah, 2023b). Research on digital literacy among youth (Arafah & Hasyim, 2023b) reveals that although young users are digitally active,

they often lack the critical and evaluative skills to interpret messages with ideological and cultural dimensions. This suggests a need to investigate how translation quality and cultural sensitivity shape comprehension and trust in official information sources.

Despite interest, little is known about how cultural nuances in translation affect digital literacy in multilingual societies like Indonesia. Most studies treat translation and digital literacy separately, ignoring how language, culture, and technology influence digital participation. Increasing machine translation use for official communication complicates preserving cultural meaning. This study integrates translation studies, intercultural communication, and media literacy research, contributing to discourse on culturally responsive translation enhancing young people's critical engagement with government social media. It examines relationships among cultural nuances, comprehension, and digital literacy, offering insights for improving public digital communication. This study investigates (1) how cultural nuances affect comprehension, (2) if translation strategies mediate this, (3) if machine translation and socio-political context moderate comprehension, and (4) how these factors shape youth digital literacy.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Translation and Cultural Nuances*

Translation is a cultural act (Jamiluddin et al., 2026). Venuti (1995) argues translation is not neutral linguistic substitution but a cultural negotiation reflecting power, ideology, and identity. Translators mediate between languages and cultures through domestication—adapting expressions to target-culture norms—and foreignization—preserving source-culture specificity. Domestication makes messages accessible but risks erasing cultural distinctiveness; foreignization maintains authenticity but may hinder comprehension for readers unfamiliar with the source culture (Venuti, 1998; House, 2015).

Recent studies on cultural representation emphasize that translation and educational media often reproduce cultural hierarchies rather than challenge them (Taqdir et al., 2026). Visual and textual representations in foreign language textbooks, for example, reinforce cultural and gender stereotypes by privileging dominant cultures while marginalizing local ones (Taqdir, 2025). This highlights that translation and representation are not neutral acts but embedded in ideological systems shaping how meaning and identity are negotiated across languages.

In Indonesia, studies of linguistic and cultural expression in education and communication show that negotiation and meaning-making are rooted in cultural values like harmony, politeness, and collective respect. Mokoginto and Arafah (2022) show that Indonesian communication patterns are shaped by cultural schemas emphasizing indirectness and social harmony. These findings align with translation studies stressing how cultural knowledge informs lexical choice and pragmatic tone in intercultural communication.

Nida's (1964) dynamic equivalence theory and Hall's (1976) high- and low-context communication highlight that meaning relies on shared cultural background and implicit values. In multilingual contexts like Indonesia, cultural nuances—idioms, values, and symbols in local discourse—determine how messages are emotionally and cognitively received (Takwa et al., 2026). In multilingual and multicultural settings, meaning is influenced by lexical choice, socially constructed expectations, gendered norms, and culturally embedded values (Yudith et al., 2024). Similarly, Arafah et al. (2023b) argue that effective communication among speakers of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds requires mutual cultural understanding and empathy, shaping how messages are interpreted in multilingual societies. Failure to convey these nuances may result in misinterpretation or perceived insincerity, especially when messages are translated for public dissemination. In government communication, this may lead to a decline in public trust or engagement, as language becomes a marker of inclusivity and representation (Schäffner, 2012; Hatim & Mason, 2014). Thus, culturally informed translation strategies are essential for preserving message integrity and ensuring communicative resonance across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

B. *Government Communication in Social Media*

Governments worldwide increasingly use social media to interact with citizens, share information, and promote transparency (Bonsón et al., 2012). The shift from broadcasting to dialogue has redefined public communication. However, effective engagement relies on technological access, linguistic clarity, cultural sensitivity, and contextual framing (Criado & Villodre, 2022). Social media creates new expectations for authenticity and immediacy, making tone, wording, and cultural relevance critical for message perception and sharing. In multilingual societies like Indonesia, government communication is tied to cultural representation. Translation must account for local expressions, cultural hierarchies, and sociopolitical nuances to maintain credibility. Overly formal, literal, or culturally detached messages, often due to machine translation, may seem impersonal or unrelatable, reducing trust and civic participation (Nittas et al., 2024). Therefore, government communicators must balance linguistic precision with cultural adaptability to sustain digital citizen engagement.

C. *Digital Literacy*

Digital literacy has shifted from technical skills to include critical, creative, and ethical engagement with online content (Ng, 2012). UNESCO defines it as the ability to access, evaluate, create, and ethically use digital information. These skills enable individuals to navigate online, assess message credibility, and contribute to digital discourse. In Indonesia, digital

literacy addresses misinformation and communication challenges on social media, where users' interpretive skills are shaped by culture and online exposure (Arafah & Hasyim, 2023b). Studies show young users have high connectivity but uneven digital literacy (Idhan et al., 2026). While proficient in consuming digital content, their evaluation, creation, and civic skills are limited. This imbalance challenges interpretation of government messages, requiring critical understanding of sociocultural and political nuances. As Yotha (2025) notes, digital literacy involves accessing information and developing reflective, participatory capacities shaping democratic engagement. Thus, fostering digital literacy among youth is crucial for building informed, critically aware digital citizens.

D. Interconnection Between Translation, Culture, and Digital Literacy

Although translation and digital literacy have been extensively studied, their combined examination is rare. The interplay between cultural translation and digital engagement is underexplored, especially in governmental communication. Cultural nuances in translated texts influence audience comprehension and evaluation, shaping digital literacy practices (Da Silva, 2014; Shifman, 2013). Inaccurate or culturally insensitive translations can distort meaning, reduce trust, and limit critical engagement with official messages. Conversely, culturally responsive translation enhances interpretive depth, inclusivity, and empowers youth in digital governance. Takwa et al. (2025) emphasized that language in ritual communication reflects cultural values like respect, ethics, and harmony, guiding interpretation and behavior. Arafah et al. (2023) illustrated that cultural imagery and symbolism in rituals function as frameworks sustaining identity and moral cohesion. These findings suggest cultural meaning in local discourse, oral or digital, shapes interpretive behavior and engagement similarly. This study is at the intersection of translation studies, intercultural communication, and media literacy. By integrating these perspectives, it examines how translation strategies and cultural nuances contribute to message comprehension and digital literacy among young Indonesians. This integration offers a comprehensive lens for understanding how linguistic, cultural, and technological factors shape digital participation in governance.

E. Research Gap

Despite increasing attention paid to digital government communication and literacy, three major gaps persist. First, most studies address translation or digital literacy separately, neglecting their interconnection within sociocultural communication processes. Second, limited research has examined these relationships empirically, particularly using quantitative models that test mediating and moderating factors such as translation strategy, machine translation, and socio-political context. Third, there is little evidence from Southeast Asia, where multilingualism and cultural diversity significantly affect message reception. Recent bibliometric evidence also shows that, while global research in language education has increasingly explored intersections among technology, culture, and identity, studies rarely extend these insights to public or governmental digital communication (Taqdir et al., 2025). This study fills these gaps by empirically investigating how cultural nuances in the translation of Indonesian government social media content influence youth digital literacy with message comprehension as a key intermediary variable.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design using a cross-sectional online survey to examine the relationships among cultural nuances, translation strategies, machine translation, socio-political context, message comprehension, and digital literacy. A quantitative approach was appropriate because the study sought to identify causal associations and test the mediating and moderating effects among constructs. A quantitative approach was appropriate because the study aimed to examine relationships among variables and to test indirect effects within a language-education context (Suparti et al., 2025). The cross-sectional design allowed data to be collected at a single point in time, reflecting participants' perceptions and experiences in the natural context of social media engagement. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were conducted to interpret both the general patterns and the hypothesized relationships among variables.

B. Respondents

A total of 243 respondents aged between 17 and 22 years participated through purposive sampling. The sample size was considered adequate according to statistical requirements for multiple regression analysis (Hair et al., 2019). Female respondents constituted 138 (56.79%) and male respondents 105 (43.21%). Regarding educational background, 216 participants (88.89%) had completed senior high school or its equivalent, followed by 24 (9.88%) bachelor's degree, and 3 (1.23%) diploma holders.

Participants were selected based on two main criteria: (1) active engagement with social media platforms such as Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, or YouTube, and (2) exposure to translated government communication online. The data were collected using an online questionnaire distributed through social media and university networks. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to participation. All responses were anonymized to ensure ethical compliance and data confidentiality.

C. Instrument

The questionnaire was structured into three main sections: (1) demographic information, (2) items measuring cultural nuances, translation strategies, machine translation, socio-political context, and message comprehension, and (3) digital literacy dimensions adapted from UNESCO's (2018) framework. Each construct was operationalized using multiple indicators derived from established theories (Venuti, 1995; Nida, 1964; Hall, 1976; UNESCO, 2018). All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree").

A pilot test with 30 participants was conducted to ensure clarity and content validity of the items. Cronbach's Alpha values from the pilot test indicated satisfactory internal consistency ($\alpha > 0.70$). Minor adjustments were made to item wording to improve readability and contextual relevance. The final instrument contained 33 items across six variables.

D. Variables

(a) Independent Variable (X1): Cultural nuances in translation (5 items).

1. The translation of government content retains uniquely Indonesian cultural terms (e.g., *gotong royong*, *Pancasila*). (X1_1)
2. The translation explains the meaning of cultural terms that may be unclear to non-local audiences. (X1_2)
3. The translation style feels appropriate to the Indonesian cultural context (not rigid or awkward). (X1_3)
4. The translation preserves important historical or cultural symbols/references. (X1_4)
5. I feel that the translation successfully maintains the emotional nuances of Indonesian culture (e.g., respect, togetherness). (X1_5)

(b) Mediator: Translation strategies (STR, 5 items).

1. The translation tends to make foreign terms sound more "familiar" (domestication). (STR_1)
2. The translation often retains foreign elements without significant modification (foreignization). (STR_2)
3. The translation focuses on the meaning and communicative effect (dynamic approach) rather than word-for-word structure. (STR_3)
4. The translation maintains the formal style typical of government communication. (STR_4)
5. I often find additional notes or explanations (footnotes or captions) for cultural terms in the translation. (STR_5)

(c) Moderator 1: Machine translation (MT, 5 items).

1. I believe that much of the government's translated content is produced/translated by machines (e.g., Google Translate). (MT_1)
2. Automatically labeled translations (e.g., "auto-translated") tend to miss cultural nuances. (MT_2)
3. When the translation is done by humans, I feel that cultural quality and meaning are better preserved. (MT_3)
4. I have encountered clear meaning errors caused by machine translation. (MT_4)
5. I trust translations that are edited/reviewed by humans more than purely machine-generated ones. (MT_5)

(d) Moderator 2: Socio-political context (CTX, 5 items).

1. I tend to accept government messages when the political or social context is stable. (CTX_1)
2. The sensitivity of social or political issues affects how I interpret government messages. (CTX_2)
3. My level of trust in government institutions influences how clearly I understand the message. (CTX_3)
4. Social media often displays public reactions (positive or negative) that affect my interpretation of the message. (CTX_4)
5. Issues of identity or culture (ethnicity, religion, locality) influence my reception of the government's translated messages. (CTX_5)

(e) Intervening Variable (X2): Message comprehension (5 items).

1. I find translated government messages easy to understand. (X2_1)
2. The translation helps me grasp the implied meaning (beyond the literal meaning). (X2_2)
3. I feel that the relevance of the message to my life as a young person is clear. (X2_3)
4. After reading the translation, I am able to explain the main idea of the message to others. (X2_4)
5. I tend to trust official messages when the translation feels clear and contextual. (X2_5)

(f) Dependent Variable (Y): Digital literacy (8 items).

Access & Navigation

1. I can easily find official government information on digital platforms. (Y_Akses1)
2. I know how to use platform features (search, filter) to access official content. (Y_Akses2)

Information Evaluation

1. I am able to assess the credibility of government messages I find online. (Y_Eval1)
2. I can distinguish between official information and rumors on social media. (Y_Eval2)

Creation & Participation

1. I have created or shared content in response to government messages (comments, reposts, videos). (Y_Kreasi1)
2. I have participated in online discussions related to official government content. (Y_Kreasi2)

Digital Safety & Ethics

1. I am aware of the importance of checking sources before sharing information. (Y_Etika1)
2. I am careful about privacy and personal data when interacting with government content. (Y_Etika2)

E. Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS 26 and SmartPLS 4. The analytical procedures included three stages.

First, descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency) were computed to summarize respondent profiles and variable tendencies.

Second, reliability and validity tests were conducted, including Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) to ensure measurement quality.

Third, inferential analysis was performed using multiple regression and structural equation modeling (SEM-PLS) to test direct, mediating, and moderating relationships. Mediation effects were assessed using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples, while moderation effects of machine translation (MT) and socio-political context (CTX) were examined through interaction terms.

All analyses adopted a 95% confidence interval ($\alpha = 0.05$). Model fit and multicollinearity were checked prior to interpretation.

IV. RESULTS

This section presents the main findings of the study, beginning with the respondents' social media usage patterns, followed by descriptive statistics for each variable, reliability analysis, and inferential testing of the proposed relationships.

A. The Social Media Usage

Most respondents reported spending more than four hours per day (62.14%) on social media, indicating a high degree of digital engagement among Indonesian youth. Only 0.41% of the participants reported never using social media. The most frequently used platforms were Instagram (37.95%) and TikTok (32.55%), followed by YouTube (19.78%), Twitter/X (5.58%) and Facebook (4.14%). This distribution suggests that visual and short video platforms dominate youth online activity, aligning with trends observed in recent Indonesian digital reports (We Are Social, 2024). Consequently, social media serves as a strategic medium for government communication targeting younger audiences.

B. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

The descriptive analysis provided insights into participants' perceptions regarding the key variables of the study.

(a) Cultural Nuances in Translation (X1)

The overall mean score for cultural nuances was 3.62 (SD = 0.92), indicating a moderately positive perception. Respondents generally agreed that translations of government content retained important Indonesian cultural expressions and historical references. However, explanatory elaboration for cultural terms received relatively lower agreement (M = 3.24), suggesting that contextual clarification remains limited. This finding implies that while government translations maintain symbolic authenticity, they may lack cultural explicitation strategies that enhance understanding across diverse audiences.

TABLE 1
CULTURAL NUANCES IN TRANSLATION (X1)

Code	Items	Mean	SD	Category
X1_1	The translation retains uniquely Indonesian cultural terms	3.73	0.91	Positive
X1_2	The translation clarifies the meaning of foreign cultural terms.	3.24	0.94	Neutral
X1_3	The translation's style is appropriate to the cultural context.	3.58	0.90	Positive
X1_4	The translation preserves historical-cultural symbols/references.	3.68	0.87	Positive
X1_5	The translation preserves the emotional nuances of the culture.	3.68	0.87	Positive
Average X1		3.62	0.92	Positive

(b) Translation Strategies (STR)

The mean for translation strategies was 3.47 (SD = 0.84), indicating moderate implementation of cultural translation approaches. While respondents observed domestication and dynamic equivalence strategies, the lower mean for explanatory notes (M = 3.43) implies that translators seldom supplement texts with clarifying annotations. This limited visibility of cultural mediation techniques may contribute to partial comprehension among readers.

TABLE 2
TRANSLATION STRATEGIES (STR)

Code	Items	Mean	SD	Category
STR_1	Translation makes foreign terms sound familiar (domestication)	3.58	0.86	Positive
STR_2	Translation retains foreign elements (foreignization)	3.27	0.83	Neutral
STR_3	Focuses on meaning and message effect (dynamic)	3.53	0.84	Positive
STR_4	Maintains formal government style	3.52	0.81	Positive
STR_5	Provides additional notes/explanations	3.43	0.85	Positive
Average STR		3.47	0.84	Positive

(c) Machine Translation (MT)

The construct of machine translation yielded a mean of 3.77 (SD = 0.94), reflecting respondents' awareness of the increasing use of automated translation tools in government communication. They expressed greater trust in human-edited translations (M = 3.84), which they perceived as more reliable in preserving cultural nuances. This finding aligns with global concerns that machine translation, despite its efficiency, often overlooks socio-pragmatic subtleties crucial to public trust.

TABLE 3
MACHINE TRANSLATION (MT)

Code	Items	Mean	SD	Category
MT_1	Much government content is machine translated.	3.79	0.93	Positive
MT_2	Auto-translation doesn't capture cultural nuances well.	3.60	0.95	Positive
MT_3	Human translation is more culturally sound.	3.84	0.91	Positive
MT_4	I've encountered errors in meaning due to machine translation.	3.86	0.95	Positive
MT_5	I trust human translation more than machine translation.	3.77	0.94	Positive
Average MT		3.77	0.94	Positive

(d) Socio-Political Context (CTX)

The mean score for socio-political context was 3.52 (SD = 0.84). Respondents indicated that political stability, public trust, and social media discourse significantly shape how they interpret government messages. This suggests that message comprehension is not only influenced by linguistic clarity but also by contextual and affective factors, consistent with communication models emphasizing contextual framing (Criado & Villodre, 2022).

TABLE 4
SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT (CTX)

Code	Items	Mean	SD	Category
CTX_1	Messages are better received when the context is stable.	3.43	0.85	Positive
CTX_2	Social/political issues influence interpretation.	3.54	0.82	Positive
CTX_3	Trust in government influences understanding.	3.62	0.86	Positive
CTX_4	Public reaction on social media influences interpretation.	3.71	0.87	Positive
CTX_5	Identity/cultural issues influence message reception.	3.31	0.82	Positive
Average CTX		3.52	0.84	Positive

(e) Message Comprehension (X2)

Message comprehension averaged 3.58 (SD = 0.85). Respondents reported understanding the general meaning of translated government messages but perceived limitations in grasping implicit meanings. This suggests that translations succeed at conveying literal content but may fall short in transmitting nuanced, culture-bound messages that require deeper interpretation.

TABLE 5
MESSAGE COMPREHENSION (X2)

Code	Items	Mean	SD	Category
X2_1	Government messages are easy to understand	3.46	0.83	Positive
X2_2	Translations help capture the implied meaning	3.63	0.85	Positive
X2_3	Messages feel relevant to my life	3.49	0.84	Positive
X2_4	I am able to explain the essence of the message	3.69	0.86	Positive
X2_5	I trust the message if the translation is clear and contextual	3.62	0.87	Positive
Average X2		3.58	0.85	Positive

(f) Digital Literacy (Y)

Digital literacy scores across the UNESCO dimensions showed variability. The highest dimension was Ethics & Safety (M = 4.10), followed by Access & Navigation (M = 3.66) and Information Evaluation (M = 3.58), while Creation & Participation (M = 3.06) scored lowest. These findings indicate that Indonesian youth demonstrate strong ethical awareness but limited participatory and creative engagement. This imbalance highlights the need for interventions that move beyond access and safety toward critical and participatory literacy.

TABLE 6
DIGITAL LITERACY (Y)

Dimensions	Item Code	Mean	SD	Category
Access & Navigation	Y_Akses1, Y_Akses2	3.66	0.91	Positive
Information Evaluation	Y_Eval1, Y_Eval2	3.58	0.83	Positive
Creation & Participation	Y_Kreasi1, Y_Kreasi2	3.06	1.06	Negative
Ethics & Safety	Y_Etika1, Y_Etika2	4.10	0.94	Very Positive
Average Y		3.60	0.94	Positive

Overall, youth demonstrated stronger competencies in digital access and ethical use, while their participation and content creation remained underdeveloped.

C. Reliability Analysis

All constructs exhibited Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70, confirming internal consistency. Machine Translation ($\alpha = 0.88$) and Digital Literacy ($\alpha = 0.89$) showed particularly high reliability, indicating robust measurement across items.

TABLE 7
RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Variable	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
Cultural Nuances (X1)	3.62	0.92	0.84
Translation Strategies (STR)	3.47	0.84	0.82
Machine Translation (MT)	3.77	0.94	0.88
Socio-Political Context (CTX)	3.52	0.84	0.79
Message Comprehension (X2)	3.58	0.85	0.83
Digital Literacy (Y)	3.60	0.94	0.89

V. DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that cultural nuances crucially shape how young audiences interpret translated government messages, reinforcing Venuti's (1995) concept of translation as a cultural act rather than purely linguistic. Moderately positive perceptions of cultural nuances ($M = 3.62$) suggest Indonesian government translations preserve symbolic and emotional elements of national identity—such as gotong royong and Pancasila—contributing to authenticity and trust. However, the lower score for explanatory elaboration indicates limited contextual clarification. This aligns with Schäffner's (2012) argument that translation without cultural mediation risks partial understanding and weak engagement. It also resonates with Arafah and Hasyim (2023b) who argue misunderstanding in digital communication often arises from neglect of cultural symbols and contextual connotations. In government communication, similar issues occur when translations fail to explain culturally embedded meanings, reducing engagement.

The mediating analysis reveals translation strategies modestly enhance comprehension. Though domestication and dynamic equivalence were viewed positively, their limited mediating power ($\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$) suggests current public institution translation approaches may prioritize formality over accessibility. This echoes Nida's (1964) idea that communicative effectiveness relies on dynamic equivalence, where the target audience's response should mirror the source message's intended impact. In this study, strategies prioritizing literal accuracy or bureaucratic tone seem less effective in conveying socio-emotional meaning, especially to younger audiences favoring contextual, relatable communication on digital platforms. This aligns with Arafah et al. (2022) in "Semiotic Multimodality Communication in the Age of New Media", which emphasizes meaning-making in digital contexts depends on linguistic precision and multimodal interaction between text, visuals, and audience experience. Similarly, government translations need visual and emotional cues aligning with the audience's digital culture.

Machine translation emerged as a significant moderating variable, negatively influencing the relationship between cultural nuances and message comprehension. This supports concerns by Kenny et al. (2024) that automated systems often miss pragmatic subtleties and cultural connotations. Respondents' higher trust in human-edited translations confirms human translators are essential for preserving nuance, intent, and rhetorical tone in intercultural government communication. Moreover, the finding highlights the ethical implication of over-relying on AI-generated translations in public information dissemination—especially when cultural misinterpretation could reduce message credibility or reinforce misinformation. Arafah et al. (2023) further illustrate this, showing nonverbal and emotive signs like emojis carry essential paralinguistic meaning that technology-based systems often misinterpret. The absence of such affective and contextual cues in automated translations can lead to detached or mechanical communication in government messages.

Conversely, socio-political context positively moderated comprehension, showing that cultural translation interacts with factors like political trust and societal climate. In stable conditions, government messages with cultural references are more likely interpreted favorably. This aligns with Criado and Villodre (2022), who emphasize that public trust and

contextual framing mediate citizen perception of institutional messages. In Indonesia, where cultural and political legitimacy intertwine, translation effectiveness depends on linguistic accuracy and perceived communicative source integrity. Thus, sociopolitical harmony amplifies the interpretive potential of culturally nuanced messages (Mare et al., 2025).

The relationship between message comprehension and digital literacy offers important insights. Findings indicate that while youth display strong competencies in ethical and safe digital practices, their participation and content creation levels remain low. This pattern reflects a “consumption-oriented” digital literacy (Ng, 2012), where users excel at accessing and evaluating information but rarely engage as contributors. The limited participatory literacy observed ($M = 3.06$) suggests comprehension does not automatically translate into civic engagement. As Livingstone et al. (2021) argue, critical digital literacy entails not only interpreting information but also challenging, creating, and contributing to public discourse. Therefore, even when translation successfully conveys cultural nuances, its transformative impact on digital citizenship may remain constrained without participatory encouragement. Arafah and Hasyim (2023) stress that true digital literacy involves reflective interpretation and empathetic communication rather than passive consumption. Likewise, Arafah et al. (2022) point out that participatory engagement online depends on users’ ability to interpret multimodal signs—text, images, and symbols—critically and creatively. From a theoretical perspective, this study integrates translation studies, intercultural communication, and digital literacy frameworks. By showing that translation is mediated by socio-political trust and digital competence, the study bridges traditionally separate disciplines. This finding expands Venuti’s (1995) cultural model of translation into the digital sphere, illustrating how cultural negotiation occurs between texts, languages, institutions, and citizens online. The study also operationalizes a four-dimensional digital literacy framework—access, evaluation, creation, and ethics—within a sociocultural communication context, offering a novel view on how translation quality shapes youth digital engagement. The interplay of multimodal communication (Arafah et al., 2022) and paralinguistic meaning (Arafah et al., 2023d) highlights that digital comprehension is intertwined with cultural cues, visual literacy, and emotional intelligence—key components of intercultural translation effectiveness.

Results highlight the need for government institutions to adopt context-sensitive translation frameworks combining linguistic clarity with cultural depth. This involves training translators and digital communication officers to employ hybrid strategies—balancing domestication for accessibility with foreignization for authenticity. Editorial oversight should ensure machine-translated outputs undergo human post-editing to restore cultural and pragmatic coherence. Beyond translation, government agencies should promote digital literacy programs emphasizing participatory and creative competencies, encouraging youth to become informed consumers and active co-creators of digital civic discourse.

In sum, this study provides evidence that cultural nuances in translation significantly influence message comprehension and digital literacy among youth. The mediation of translation strategies and the contrasting roles of machine translation and socio-political context suggest effective government communication requires understanding language, culture, and trust. These findings contribute to the discourse on culturally responsive communication in the digital public sphere and call for collaboration between translators, policymakers, and educators to strengthen intercultural digital engagement. This conclusion reinforces the multimodal and semiotic perspectives proposed by Arafah et al. (2022) and Arafah et al. (2023), affirming that culturally embedded and visually expressive communication enhances clarity, empathy, and engagement in the digital sphere.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study examined how cultural nuances in translating Indonesian government social media content influence youth digital literacy, with translation strategies as a mediator and machine translation and socio-political context as moderators. Results show cultural nuances enhance message comprehension and digital literacy. Translations preserving cultural expressions improve trust and understanding, while excessive machine translation weakens interpretive depth. Translation strategies have a limited mediating effect, indicating government communication remains formal and less audience-centered. Socio-political stability enhances message interpretation, suggesting contextual trust supports cultural comprehension. Linguistic, cultural, and contextual dimensions shape citizen engagement with digital government messages.

Theoretically, this research bridges translation studies, intercultural communication, and digital literacy, showing effective translation as cultural negotiation within the digital public sphere. Practically, it calls for context-sensitive translation frameworks, human–AI collaboration in translation review, and digital literacy programs promoting active and critical youth participation. Effective digital government communication requires linguistic precision, cultural empathy, and contextual awareness to foster informed, engaged digital citizens.

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