

Indonesian YouTube Viewers' Interpretation of the Law of Assumption: A Reception Analysis of Audience Comments

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how Indonesian YouTube audiences interpret Neville Goddard's Law of Assumption and explores how creators' creative domestication strategies shape audience reception. Using a descriptive qualitative approach and content analysis of 250 comments extracted from three YouTube channels, the study applies Venuti's domestication and foreignization framework. The findings indicate that Republic Creator achieves procedural effectiveness although this is accompanied by a reduction in meaning. Manifest with Lang demonstrates a balance between conceptual understanding and practical application, while *Kunci Hidup* reveals conceptual and technical gaps in audience comprehension. Based on the sampled Indonesian YouTube channels analyzed, the results suggest a trade-off between accessibility and depth of understanding when the Law of Assumption is simplified in digital spaces.

Keywords: audience reception, domestication strategy, law of assumption, YouTube discourse

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, mental health has become a growing concern in Indonesia, particularly among young people. Public attention to this topic is mainly expressed through non-formal approaches, including creative activities (49%), talking to family members (22%), self-care practices (10%), and holistic approaches such as meditation and yoga (6%). Meanwhile, only 5% of individuals seek professional therapy. This pattern suggests that adolescents tend to rely on personal and alternative strategies to manage their emotional wellbeing (Rizti, 2024).

This growing preference for strengthening mental health through non-clinical pathways has created space for accessible spiritual practices, particularly through digital media. One spiritual figure frequently discussed in Indonesia's digital landscape is Neville Goddard, a spiritual teacher whose ideas emphasize the role of consciousness in shaping individual reality. Across his works, Goddard highlights inner states and internal beliefs are the foundation for transforming realities. These teachings have since been translated and circulated widely through various media platforms. A central concept in his teaching is the Law of Assumption, which emphasizes that personal reality is shaped by assumptions consistently held in consciousness, as articulated in *The Power of Awareness* (1952). The growing presence of Law of Assumption content on YouTube highlights how spiritual ideas circulate and are reinterpreted in digital spaces.

Indonesia's cultural diversity further complicates the process through which audiences interpret newly introduced spiritual concepts. Culture is shaped by normative patterns of behavior that influence how individuals think, feel, and act (Soekanto, 2012). In addition, Indonesia's cultural diversity is closely linked to its vast and layered geographical conditions (Koentjaraningrat, 2002). Within this context, terms such as *assumption* and *state of consciousness*, which are central to Goddard's framework in *The Power of Awareness*, do not have direct equivalents in Indonesian linguistic and cultural discourse.

Previous studies on the translation of the Law of Assumption in Indonesian YouTube content have primarily examined creators' translation strategies. These studies suggest that creators tend to employ domestication approaches when communicating Neville Goddard's teachings, although they do so through different narrative styles. However, this body of work remains focused on creators and has not explicitly examined how audiences, as message recipients, understand and interpret the concepts being conveyed. This study therefore shifts attention to the audience perspective, which is critical because reception determines whether spiritual concepts are understood accurately or become vulnerable to misinterpretation.

Although research on digital spiritual content and the translation of the Law of Assumption has begun to develop, studies that directly connect translation strategies with audience reception remain limited. To date, few references examine how translation choices and creator narratives in digital media, particularly on YouTube, influence how audiences interpret the concept within the Indonesian cultural context. This gap highlights the need for research that not only addresses content production but also investigates how audiences understand and respond to spiritual concepts translated and mediated through digital platforms.

THEORY

In *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (1995), Lawrence Venuti argues that translation is not a neutral act. Rather, it is an ideologically charged practice that reflects power relations between the source and target cultures. Within this framework, he introduces two major strategies, domestication and foreignization. Venuti defines domestication as "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home," whereas foreignization is described as "an ethno-deviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad" (Venuti, 1995, as cited in Munday, 2016, p. 20).

Venuti further criticizes the Anglo-American translation context, which strongly prioritizes fluency and readability as ideal standards. He argues that such standards may erase the cultural specificity of the source text and marginalize the visibility of the translator (Venuti, 1995, as cited in Munday, 2016, p. 242). As a form of resistance to this tendency, Venuti proposes foreignization as an approach that retains linguistic and cultural difference, allowing readers to encounter a productive sense of unfamiliarity (Venuti, 1995, as cited in Munday, 2016; Yang, 2010, p. 79).

Wenfeng Yang (2010) describes domestication and foreignization as strategies that provide both linguistic and cultural guidance. Yang (2010) also notes that debates surrounding these strategies have increasingly moved beyond a purely linguistic focus and have been approached through social, cultural, and historical perspectives. In this study, domestication is particularly relevant because the YouTube creators within the scope of analysis tend to simplify and adapt the Law of Assumption through narratives that are closely aligned with the reality of Indonesian audiences. This approach may increase accessibility and encourage practical engagement with the concept. However, it can also lead to a reduction in meaning or a shift away from the original teaching. Venuti's framework is employed to assess how domestication choices shape diversity in audience responses to the Law of Assumption. It also enables the study to examine whether the tendencies criticized by Venuti, particularly the loss of source-culture details and excessive simplification, are reflected in audience reception patterns.

To understand the impact of these translation strategies, the analysis should not be limited to textual choices or modes of presentation. It must also consider audience reception as a key dimension of meaning construction. In communication studies, audience reception is understood as an active and contextual process. Ademolu (2023) highlights that studies focusing only on textual content or delivery strategies often overlook the complexity of audience reception, which is heterogeneous and may not align with the meaning intended by message producers. Audiences are therefore treated as active subjects who negotiate meaning,

as reflected in the responses, interpretations, and reactions they express toward a message. This perspective is especially relevant in digital media contexts such as YouTube, where interaction between creators and audiences occurs openly through spaces such as comment sections, allowing multiple interpretations to emerge around the same message.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes descriptive qualitative approach and content analysis to examine the level to which Indonesian YouTube audiences understand the Law of Assumption. Analysis focuses on patterns of audience reception and interpretation across three YouTube videos on the Law of Assumption produced by different creators. The primary data consists of three YouTube videos that explicitly discuss the Law of Assumption. These videos were selected based on subscriber count, thematic relevance, publication period (2021–2025), and the volume of audience comments, which serve as the main unit of reception analysis. To capture variation in perspectives, the sampling strategy considered diversity in channel size. The channels analyzed include:

- Republic Creator (approximately 491,000 subscribers) through the video “Lebih Kuat dari Law of Attraction? Law of Assumption – Neville Goddard” (Republic Creator, 2024)
- Manifest with Lang (approximately 11,500 subscribers) through “Apakah Itu Hukum Asumsi? Inilah Praktek Hukum Asumsi Neville Goddard Pulang ke Barbados” (Manifest with Lang, 2023)
- *Kunci Hidup* (approximately 181,000 subscribers) through “Hukum Asumsi Buat Pemula” (Kunci Hidup, 2021).

These channels were selected because they communicate the Law of Assumption explicitly in Indonesian and use distinct narrative styles, allowing comparison of translation approaches and audience reception across a range of channel profiles. Secondary data include academic literature on translation theory, audience reception, the Law of Assumption, and digital spirituality, as well as publicly available information from YouTube such as video descriptions, metadata (upload dates, view counts, comment numbers), and creator profiles. These materials were used to support contextual interpretation of the findings.

Data collection was conducted in three stages. First, the researcher documented each video by viewing and producing transcripts to identify key terms, presentation structure, and the translation strategies used to communicate the concept. Second, audience comments were collected by selecting at least 50 of the most recent comments from each video. Comments were included if they contained interpretation, reflection, or responses to the content, and excluded if they were promotional in nature or merely one-way informational statements from creators. This approach was intended to balance qualitative depth with variation in audience responses, consistent with qualitative research aims that prioritize mapping interpretive patterns rather than statistical generalization. Third, relevant metadata, including view counts and comment timestamps, were recorded to provide additional analytical context.

The analysis was conducted iteratively by reading all selected comments, coding them according to types of audience responses to the Law of Assumption, and grouping them into thematic categories such as conceptual understanding, practical application, confusion or resistance, appreciation of the creator, and unrelated responses. The thematic structure was reviewed by comparing comment distribution across categories and refining the categories through merging or splitting where necessary. This process continued until comments could be categorized consistently and remaining variations no longer indicated sufficiently coherent patterns to justify additional thematic categories. The categories were used to identify dominant reception patterns, including interpretive tendencies and areas where misunderstanding frequently emerged. These patterns were then examined in relation to creators’ narrative styles and analyzed using Venuti’s

domestication and foreignization framework to understand how a Western spiritual concept is interpreted within the Indonesian digital context.

To maintain analytical focus, several limitations were applied.

1. The study analyzes only publicly accessible comments on the selected videos and includes only Indonesian language content produced by local creators.
2. Analysis is based solely on textual comments and does not involve interviews or surveys with viewers.
3. Study focuses on audience understanding and misunderstanding of the Law of Assumption rather than evaluating the effectiveness, theological validity, or doctrinal accuracy of the teaching.

Ethical considerations were also considered. Since the data consists of publicly accessible YouTube comments, user identities were not treated as personal data, and account names were not reported in full when comments were cited. Comments were quoted without modifying their content and were used solely for academic analysis.

ANALYSIS

The Manifest with Lang channel had 50 comments as of November 18, 2025, and all comments were included in this analysis. The distribution of audience responses is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Comment Categories in the Manifest with Lang Channel

Category	Total	Composition
Appreciation towards Creator	17 (34%)	
Reply from Creator	15 (30%)	8 Appreciation 5 Answering questions 2 Suggestion
Concept Application	8 (16%)	6 Questions, Confusions or Challenges 1 Statement - Explicit
Concept Understanding	6 (12%)	2 Questions, Confusions or Challenges 4 Statement - Implicit 1 Statement - Explicit

The dominance of creator appreciation (34%) and the high proportion of creator replies (30%) suggest both emotional engagement and active interactions between the creator and the audience. Domestication through narrative storytelling and conversational Indonesian appears effective in communicating the basic principles of the Law of Assumption, as reflected in the relatively balanced presence of concept application (16%) and conceptual understanding (12%), with limited signs of conceptual confusion. Questions raised by viewers mostly concern practical details, such as requests for specific affirmations or how long an assumption should be repeated. Comments such as “Iman adalah dasar dari segala yng kita percaya” (“Faith is the foundation of everything we believe,” author’s translation) indicate conceptual alignment with the Law of Assumption’s core emphasis on internal belief. This quotation is presented as a representative example, while a full dataset is provided in the Appendices.

Kunci Hidup channel had a total of 353 comments as of November 18, 2025. From this pool, 100 comments were analyzed as a sample, representing 28.3% coverage. The category distribution is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Comment Categories in *Kunci Hidup* Channel

Category	Total	Composition
Appreciation towards Creator	29 (29%)	
Others	28 (28%)	
Concept Application	28 (28%)	18 Questions, Confusions or Challenges 7 Statement - Implicit 3 Statement - Explicit
Concept Understanding	15 (15%)	4 Questions, Confusions or Challenges 6 Statement - Implicit 5 Statement - Explicit

This channel has a relatively high proportion of comments expressing questions, confusion, or challenges, which cumulatively reach 22% of the sample. Confusion appears in comments such as “*Jadi, kenyataan di luar itu sebenarnya tidak ada, alias tidak eksis?*” (“So does reality outside of this not actually exist?”, author’s translation), and “*Intinya positif thinking maksimal?*” (“So is it basically just extreme positive thinking?”, author’s translation). These quotations are presented as examples and are not intended to capture the full range of audience responses. Overall, the pattern suggests that viewers have difficulty distinguishing the Law of Assumption from more familiar ideas, such as the Law of Attraction or general principle of positive thinking. Technical confusion also arises, particularly in relation to visualization and practical implementation. Examples include “*aku kesusahan visualisasi... sering tiba tiba malah tanpa kontrolku ngebayangin hal yang ga kuinginkan*” (“I struggle with visualization... sometimes, without control, I end up imagining things I do not want,” author’s translation) and “*gimana cara membayangkan seolah sudah terjadi.. kok sulit kali*” (“How do I imagine it as if it has already happened? It feels so difficult,” author’s translation). Viewers also questioned whether the practice can be applied to multiple goals simultaneously. Collectively, these responses point to gaps at both the conceptual and procedural levels. Audiences appear to struggle to integrate the notion of assumption into their existing interpretive frameworks, while also lacking sufficiently clear practical guidance to navigate the metaphysical claims implied by the concept. Given that this channel reaches an audience at least ten times larger than Manifest with Lang, differences in spiritual literacy and audience background should be considered as a plausible factor contributing to diversity in reception.

The Republic Creator channel had 713 comments as of November 18, 2025. From this pool, 100 comments were analyzed as a sample, representing 14% coverage. The category distribution is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of Comment Categories in the Republic Creator

Category	Total	Composition
Others	54 (54%)	36 Affirmations/Prayers/Hopeful Statement without Contexts
Concept Application	22 (22%)	1 Questions, Confusions or Challenges 19 Statement - Implicit 2 Statement - Explicit
Concept Understanding	16 (16%)	4 Questions, Confusions or Challenges

		12 Statement - Implicit
Appreciation towards Creator	8 (8%)	

The “Others” category dominates at 54% of the sample and consists primarily of affirmations, prayers, or statements of desire expressed without contextual explanation. This pattern is far less prominent in the other two channels, as the comment section on Republic Creator often functions as a space for immediate affirmation practice. One example is “*Tuhan terima kasih penghasilan diatas 100 juta perbulan saat ini sudah terjadi*” (“God, thank you because an income of over 100 million rupiah per month has already happened for me,” author’s translation). This suggests that the comment section operates less as a forum for interpretive discussion and more as a ritualized space of participation. Within the dynamics of open social media, such engagement may also reflect trend-based participation, where users perform affirmation practices without necessarily articulating, or even possessing, an explicit conceptual understanding of the Law of Assumption.

The concept application category accounts for 22% of the sample and is largely composed of implied statements, indicating that audiences engage with techniques without explicitly situating them within Goddard’s conceptual framework. A comment such as “*Bismillah saya sedang melakukan teknik ini... saya yakin saya menerima apa yang saya inginkan*” (“In the name of God, I am practicing this technique... I believe I am receiving what I desire,” author’s translation) illustrates how practice-oriented participation can take place even when conceptual elaboration remains limited. Conceptual understanding accounts for 16% of the sample and is likewise dominated by implied statements. Questions raised tend to be philosophical rather than procedural, such as “*adakah perbedaan antara law of assumption ini dengan berkhayal?*” (“Is there a difference between the Law of Assumption and daydreaming?”, author’s translation), which points to a need for clearer conceptual boundaries. The limited presence of procedural questions may indicate that audiences perceive the practice as relatively easy to imitate, even if they do not fully grasp the metaphysical structure underlying assumption in Goddard’s teaching.

A comparative review of the three channels indicates that, although all rely on domestication, the form of domestication produces different outcomes in audience reception. This finding supports the view that domestication is not merely a linguistic strategy, but a process of cultural negotiation in which foreign concepts undergo adjustment, simplification, and transformation as they circulate within Indonesia’s social and cultural environment (Yang, 2010).

In Republic Creator, domestication appears to reduce the depth of Law of Assumption into a straightforward affirmation practice. This approach effectively lowers procedural barriers, reflected in the minimal proportion of technical questions, while a substantial share of comments takes the form of direct practice. However, the limited conceptual scaffolding provided by the creator may encourage some viewers to treat the concept as a visualization technique or as wishful statements detached from its underlying principle. This pattern illustrates a domestication outcome characterized by excessive simplification, aligning with Venuti’s critique that domestication can erase source specificity and produce ideological reduction. In this case, domestication does not only facilitate access, but also shifts the operational meaning of the concept, from assumption as an internal belief shaping reality to affirmation as a ritualized practice.

Manifest with Lang demonstrates a comparatively stable form of domestication. The balance between conceptual understanding and application suggests that storytelling and engagement through dialog can preserve core ideas while maintaining practical accessibility. Most questions relate to technical execution rather than conceptual fundamentals, indicating that audiences generally comprehend the foundation. High levels of creator interaction may function as a corrective mechanism that supports domestication and prevents misunderstanding from escalating into sustained confusion.

Kunci Hidup, by contrast, exhibits the greatest reception barriers. The intensity of questions and confusion, spanning conceptual issues about reality, distinctions between related concepts, and basic technical difficulties, suggests that the domestication process remains insufficient to guide audiences through Goddard's metaphysical claims. Within Venuti's framework, this reflects domestication that does not effectively reduce resistance or bridge cultural distance. The finding also supports Yang's argument that concepts lacking adequate contextual adjustment may retain foreignness that remains difficult to integrate into local interpretive structures.

Differences in audience scale also appear to shape reception patterns. Large reach channels such as Republic Creator attract audiences with more diverse levels of spiritual literacy, making simplification more likely to produce meaning reduction. Smaller channels such as Manifest with Lang may benefit from a more cohesive community structure and higher interaction intensity, which supports interpretive alignment. This observation is consistent with Venuti's view that reception is shaped not only by translation strategies, but also by the social ecology in which texts circulate.

Overall, the findings suggest that domestication is not a neutral strategy. While it facilitates audience access to Goddard's ideas, it can also reduce conceptual depth and create interpretive shifts. The reception patterns identified in this study do not fully confirm Venuti's critique in an absolute sense, yet they indicate that some forms of meaning reduction can emerge when the metaphysical concept of the Law of Assumption is adapted within Indonesia's digital environment. At the same time, the findings reinforce Yang's perspective that translation in popular digital contexts operates as a form of cross-cultural negotiation, reshaping meaning in response to audience preferences, literacy levels, and interpretive frameworks. Domestication may therefore support the integration of new concepts, while simultaneously enabling transformations that extend beyond the boundaries of the original conceptual design.

CONCLUSION

This study examines how successfully Indonesian YouTube audiences understand the Law of Assumption through an analysis of 250 comments from three channels that utilize different domestication approaches. The findings indicate that creators' translation and delivery choices create distinct reception patterns, each marked by specific strengths and limitations.

On the Republic Creator channel, the Law of Assumption is largely presented as a set of affirmation and visualization practices that are easy to replicate. The comment patterns suggest that many viewers are able to follow the procedural steps, yet their engagement often remains at the level of ritualized practice. In many cases, the underlying conceptual emphasis in Goddard's teaching, namely assumption as an internal conviction that shapes reality, is not articulated explicitly. This points to a form of domestication that shifts attention from conceptual depth toward simplified affirmative routines.

On the Manifest with Lang channel, questions raised by audiences are predominantly technical, while several comments implicitly capture the core premise in ways that remain consistent with Goddard's framework. Unlike the Republic Creator pattern that is dominated by direct affirmation practice, the data suggests that some viewers not only imitate the techniques but also begin to grasp the conceptual logic underlying the notion of assumption. By contrast, *Kunci Hidup* channel exhibits higher levels of audience confusion across both conceptual understanding and procedural implementation, even though the creator similarly relies on everyday language.

Overall, based on the sampled comments across the three channels, the study concludes that domestication in translating the Law of Assumption within Indonesia's digital space consistently involves a trade-off between accessibility and depth of understanding. Approaches that prioritize ease of practice tend to reduce conceptual complexity, whereas translation practices that preserve conceptual depth require

greater cognitive challenges from audiences. These findings open the possibility for further research that examines how audience spiritual literacy shapes the effectiveness of domestication when metaphysical concepts circulate through digital media. The study also shows that YouTube comment sections function not only as spaces for feedback, but as sites of meaning negotiation, where audiences actively interpret, adapt, and enact the messages communicated by creators.

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