THE SUBTITLING STRATEGIES OF CULTURE-RELATED TERMS IN KISAH TANAH JAWA: MERAPI

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Abstract

The audiences' need for subtitles has increased as the interest in global streaming platforms has skyrocketed. Understanding the Source Language (SL) and subtitling strategies is required to produce an equivalent subtitle of a culture's expressions in the Target Language (TL), notably in the subtitling of terms related to Javanese and Indonesian culture. Moreover, culture-related terms are part of a group's identity, as to why the problems of this topic are challenging, therefore, worth researching. Besides, there are several things to be considered in making subtitles to help build a better understanding of the plot, such as the speaker's screen duration. Thus, this study aims to analyze the types of subtitling strategies used in Iflix's original series *Kisah Tanah Jawa: Merapi* (KTJ). Furthermore, descriptive qualitative methods and textual analysis approaches are used to analyze the data, which require in-depth data analysis. As for the data collection, it applied observation and library research. The object is examined utilizing reputable sources to disclose its respective types of cultural terms and subtitling strategies. Based on the cultural terms classified by Newmark plus Tomalin and Stempleski, the research reveals the terms in the KTJ series, which are divided into seven categories, namely beliefs, institutions, customs, art, ecology, religious terms, and foods. By using Gottlieb's theory on subtitling strategies, six types of strategies are found in the data. It includes transfer, imitation, expansion, paraphrase, condensation, and decimation, with transfer being the most dominant strategy.

Keywords – translation, subtitling strategies, culture-related terms, Kisah Tanah Jawa

Introduction

As the number of global streaming platforms increases, the works of translators are indispensable for viewers to comprehend audiovisual content adequately. One of the branch in translation, audiovisual translation (AVT), is used to transfer language or culture from one another using audiovisual works as objects (Chiaro, 2020). AVT is made to be seen and heard simultaneously, therefore audiovisual (Chiaro, 2020). Many types of AVT can be produced; however, according to Williams & Chesterman (2002), AVT is divided into two main categories: revoicing and sur-/subtitling.

Iflix, one of the global streaming platforms, uses AVT for most of its content to provide convenience to its viewers. As both a free and subscription platform that provides thousands of audiovisual broadcasts in any language, Iflix uses the AVT type of subtitles. As Baker and Hochel (1998) stated, subtitling is the process of superimposing a written text onto a screen. Even so, it is not merely transferring a language and looking for the equivalent meaning of the source language (SL) into target language (TL) as it has many other things to consider, mainly when translating cultural terms.

Cultural terms have become one of the translation challenges as each region has its different and unique culture; thus, it cannot be translated arbitrarily. Some essential factors that assist decoding a message enable a translator to translate most cultural terms accurately and effectively (Chahrour, 2018). When translating cultural expressions, extra caution and attention is required to ensure that the essence and meaning are not compromised.

As a country with a variety of cultures and languages, Indonesia has a myriad of cultural expressions. One example is in Iflix's original TV series entitled *Kisah Tanah Jawa: Merapi* (KTJ). KTJ is a 2019 Indonesian horror TV series that consists of six episodes. KTJ has four built-in subtitles provided by Iflix. Hence, the Javanese, Indonesian, and English subtitles would be used as the primary data.

This series uses two spoken languages in the dialogues within the characters: Indonesian as the primary language and the regional language, Javanese as a side language. The use of these two languages creates problems in the translation process into English. Because many Javanese terms do not share the same terms as TL, the translation requires a reasonably complex process. Thus, the appraisal of the strategies used by subtitlers is worth researching. The study was carried out by considering the culture-related terms classification by Newmark plus Tomalin and Stempleski, followed by Gottlieb's ten subtitling strategies. Moreover, this research is expected to be an additional source in enriching references for future cultural translation studies, especially in subtitling strategies.

Methodology
The study uses a qualitative method as it requires data in the form of words to help understand a phenomenon more efficiently and in-depth. Then, library research method is applied to develop the data, primarily since the research focuses on subtitling strategies of audiovisual products that require theoretical understanding.

Primary data is taken from the original Iflix series *Kisah Tanah Jawa: Merapi*. The 2019 series has one season and six episodes released simultaneously, with an average duration of 35 minutes. As

mentioned, Iflix provided the series with several supporting default subtitles, including English and Indonesian. As the ST is spoken in Indonesian and Javanese, TT is the default English subtitles provided by Iflix. The population data collected from both ST and TT consists of 32 culture-related terms that involve sentences, phrases, and words from all the episodes.

Finding and Discussion
The analysis results in the six episodes of *Kisah Tanah Jawa: Merapi* reveal that the data is divided into seven types of classification of cultural terms and six groups of subtitling strategies. The overall data from the cultural terms found were 32 divided into seven classifications according to Newmark's and Tomalin and Stempleski's theory. In addition, from the 32 cultural terms that have been grouped in the subtitling strategy according to Gottlieb, several terms go through two strategies. Therefore, the total amount of data on the subtitling strategy is 38 spread over six strategy groups.

Culture-related Terms Classification of *Kisah Tanah Jawa: Merapi*

In determining the cultural terms classification, two theories were taken from Newmark (1988) and Tomalin and Stempleski (1993). Newmark suggests that cultural terms can be divided into five categories. Furthermore, according to their book, Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) divide the term culture into three broad categories: products, ideas, and behavior. After the data is categorized, 32 terms in the KTJ are spread over seven categories of terms classification. They are distributed as follows:

Table 1. Cultural Terms Classification

No.	Types of Terms	Frequency	Percentages (%)
1	Institutions	3	9.37%
2	Religious terms	5	15.62%

3	Ecology	6	18.75%
4	Food	1	3.12%
5	Beliefs	8	25%
6	Custom	8	25%
7	Art	1	3.12%
	Total	**32**	

The table above shows that the categories of beliefs and customs are the most dominant cultural terms, with a percentage of 25% or eight terms. It is followed by ecology, religious terms, institutions, food, and art. The categories of beliefs and customs are the most dominant terms used because of the different cultures of ST and TT. Because beliefs and customs are closely related to the speaker's culture, it is natural that ST and TT do not share the same similarities.

1. Institutions

Institutions are a big organization that has lasted for a long time and is regarded as an integral part of a particular society. Accordingly, data on institution terms found in KTJ are local institutions. Espindola and Vasconcellos (2006, p. 50) stated that a local institution is an organization that assists people in a particular field, such as health and education. Of the three data found, here is one example:

Table 2. Datum 1

No.	Source Text	No.	Target Text
3/ST/ KTJ/ Ep1/0 3:18	**Barameru Merapi**, dan **Alap-alap Merbabu**.	3/TT/ KTJ/E p1/03: 18	**Merapi Climbing Club**, and **Merbabu Climbing Club**.

"Barameru Merapi" is a term for a nature lover organization engaged in Search and Rescue (SAR) and ecosystem monitoring on Mount Merapi. Moreover, "Alap-alap Merbabu" is also a nature lovers organization. According to the *KBBI*, "alap-alap" is a term for a small bird-eating eagle, while "Merbabu" is the name of a mountain in Semarang, Central Java. Furthermore, according to *junglekita.com*, one of the faunas that live in the Mount Merbabu National Park area is the "alap-alap sapi." Thus, the organization was named after the bird. Then, the two institutional terms cannot be translated accurately in English as the ST and TT do not share cultural similarities.

2. Religious terms

Religious terms are terms used relating to or involved with religion. It is according to the beliefs of a particular religion. As reported from *britannica.com*, most of Indonesia's population, almost nine-tenths, embraces Islam. Arabic is part of the religion of Islam as there are many sources of religious knowledge written in Arabic.

Table 3. Datum 2

No.	Source Text	No.	Target Text
8/ST/ KTJ/ Ep1/2 8:27	**Asalamualaik um,** sugeng ndalu, Mbak.	8/TT/ KTJ/ Ep1/2 8:27	**Peace to be unto you.** Excuse me, Miss.

In the data above, "Asalamualaikum" is one of the expressions used by Muslims to greet each other. According to the *Merriam-Webster dictionary*, this expression means "peace to you." The activity of "salam," or greeting fellow Muslims and other people, is part of the cultural tradition in society.

3. Ecology

According to Newmark (1988), ecology describes geographical and environmental phenomena. *Cambridge dictionary* stated that it is also related to the relationship of living things to their environment.

Table 4. Datum 3

No.	Source Text	No.	Target Text

| 27/ST/KTJ/Ep3/24:17 | Sanding sing **damen garing** kuwi ya. | 27/TT/KTJ/Ep3/4:17 | Next to the **dried grass.** |

The term "damen" is the Javanese term for straw. Ordinarily, people use it for animal feed and compost material. This term is included in the cultural terms because Indonesia, as an agricultural country with abundant rice production, uses rice as its staple food. In addition, since ancient times and even now, there are still many Indonesian people who work as farmers. Therefore, there are still many rice fields found in the suburbs. Moreover, this culture is not widely found in other countries. In Indonesia, there are many terms related to rice, especially in the Javanese language, for example: "beras," "pari," "damen," "gabah," and others. Hence why not many of these terms can be translated into TT because of cultural limitations.

4. Food

Food is something that living things can eat for survival. Thus, food is a solid substance eaten by living things as a source of life. Food names can be considered a cultural term as each region has its unique food.

Table 5. Datum 4

No.	Source Text	No.	Target Text
7/ST/KTJ/Ep1/27:28	**Jadah tempe**ne ada?	7/TT/KTJ/Ep1/27:28	Do we still have **the tempeh**?

"Jadah tempe" is one of the typical snacks from Yogyakarta. It consists of "jadah" and "tempe." "Jadah" is a processed food made from sticky rice, while tempeh is a processed food made from soybeans. As for the packaging, these two foods will be stacked and wrapped in banana leaves. It is a combination of savory and sweet food. Because of this distinctiveness, "jadah tempe" is a cultural term.

5. Beliefs

According to the *Oxford dictionary*, belief means the feeling that something is accurate, especially as part of religion. The *Mirriam-Webster* dictionary adds it is a principle held by a group of people. In addition, it can also be tenets about supernatural aspects. In Indonesia, there are still many people who believe in supernatural powers.

Table 6. Datum 5

No.	Source Text	No.	Target Text
14/ST/KTJ/Ep2/28:02	Itu **ketempelan**, itu.	14/TT/KTJ/Ep2/28:02	Something's **attached** to it.

The phenomenon of "ketempelan" is a prevalent thing to be discussed in Indonesian culture. Although in other countries, it may also be believed, such as summoning ghost games and haunted houses. This "ketempelan" phenomenon, according to Sara Wijayanto via *solopos.com*, is an experience where an invisible creature attaches itself to waste the body's owner's energy thence, they become angry easily.

6. Custom

Quoted from the *Cambridge dictionary*, customs is a long-term way of behaving of a group of people. The *Oxford dictionary* adds that it is accepted and considered normal by the society.

Table 7. Datum 6

No.	Source Text	No.	Target Text
13/ST/KTJ/Ep2/25:33	Ora ora ora. Merapi agek ono sing duwe **gawe**.	13/TT/KTJ/Ep2/25:33	No. Merapi is going to have a **party**.

"Gawe" has been done from generation to generation by a group of people; thus, become part of a culture, especially in Java. "Gawe" in this case, is a Javanese term that refers to conducting a celebration. It is usually carried out for

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generations and has even become a culture for people who want to have weddings or other significant events.

7. Art

Art is an activity where people express unique ideas, such as painting, drawing, making music, performing, and making sculptures. Making a work of art requires special skills or abilities, and feelings. A work of art is unique as it reflects the creator and can indirectly be influenced by the surrounding culture.

Table 8. Datum 7

No.	Source Text	No.	Target Text
21/ST /KTJ/ Ep2/4 0:15	Wong namanya cuma kawinan kok, biasa **tanggapan**.	21/TT/ KTJ/Ep 2/40:15	It's a common **reaction** on a wedding party.

The expression "tanggapan" is an example of cultural terms. It literally means to organize. This term is frequently connected with a manner of celebrating an accomplishment in Javanese culture in Indonesia. It is utilized as a form of entertainment to commemorate a significant event. Local arts, such as "wayang" or "jathilan," could be organized for the occasion.

Subtitling Strategies Classification of *Kisah Tanah Jawa: Merapi*

Gottlieb's subtitling strategies category in 1992 was applied in this study to identify the translators' strategies. As quoted from the journal article by Michael (2012), Gottlieb categorizes subtitling strategies into ten: transfer, imitation, transcription, expansion, paraphrase, dislocation, condensation, deletion, decimation, and resignation. Thus, after the cultural terms are identified, they fall into seven categories as follows:

Table 9. Types of Subtitling Strategies

No.	Types of Strategies	Frequency	Percentages (%)
1	Imitation	10	26.3%
2	Transfer	16	42.1%
3	Expansion	4	10.5%
4	Paraphrase	6	15.7%
5	Decimation	1	2.6%
6	Condensation	1	2.6%
	Total	**38**	

There are a total of 38 subtitling strategies data found in this study. The data exceeds the total population of the findings from the cultural terms as some terms go through more than one strategy. From the table above, it can be concluded that transfer is the most dominant subtitling strategy, with a percentage of 42.1% or 16 terms. It is followed by imitation, paraphrase, expansion, decimation, and condensation. Many data in the ST cannot be adequately translated since they are not found in the TT culture, as per the classification of cultural terms aforementioned. Further explanation of the strategy categories and discussion of some examples are explained as follows:

1. Imitation

Imitation is the process of adapting foreign expressions from SL (Michael, 2012). It adapts place names or people's names. In KTJ, it mainly occurs in the translation of regional names and institutions, as below:

ST: …diantaranya **Basarnas Jawa Tengah, Basarnas DIY, BPD** *[sic]* **Boyolali**,
TT: …such as **Central Java Basarnas, Yogyakarta Basarnas, Boyolali BPD** *[sic]*,

"Basarnas" is an abbreviation of the National Search and Rescue Agency, in English. This institution carries out guidance and control of the potential for SAR in the community.

In the TT culture, there is a save and rescue team, which is abbreviated as SAR. "Basarnas" has an abbreviation that uses SAR. Thus, an imitation subtitling strategy can occur as by adapting the foreign cultural terms in SL, the target audience still understands the context of the conversation.

2. Transfer

In this study, the transfer is the most dominant subtitling strategy used. Transfer is a subtitling strategy that translates messages in SL to TL wholly without adding and subtracting.

ST: Itu **ketempelan**, itu.
TT: Something's **attached** to it.

However, sometimes, the translation becomes less than equivalent to the true meaning due to SL and TL's cultural limitations. As in the data above, which translates "ketempelan" to "attached." The translation does go through a transfer process, but the essence of the expression in SL becomes different in TL. It is because, according to the *Cambridge dictionary*, attached means feeling close to emotionally or loving. Meanwhile, "ketempelan" refers more to supernatural events.

3. Expansion

Expansion translates messages in SL to TL by adding supplementary information (Michael, 2012). It is usually used when the translator cannot get the closest meaning of the term from SL to TL.

ST: **Barameru Merapi**, dan **Alap-alap Merbabu**.
TT: **Merapi Climbing Club**, and **Merbabu Climbing Club**.

The datum above uses expansion strategy because the translator pays attention to the target audience's knowledge. Instead of making the term "Barameru" or "Alap-alap" as it is or adapting it, translators render it as "climbing club" as additional information. This translation becomes acceptable in TL culture as the two terms share similarities. "Barameru" or "Alap-alap" and "climbing club" are both mountain-related nature-loving organizations.

4. Paraphrase

Paraphrase is a process of translating messages in SL to TL by rearranging them (Michael, 2012). Paraphrase completely replaces the translation so that a new expression is formed; however, that is more in line with the TL culture.

ST: **Astaghfirullah**.
TT: **Oh my, God**.

In the example above, TL culture shares similarities with SL, so the translator uses paraphrasing instead. According to *urbandictionary.com*, the expression "astaghfirullah" literally translates to "I seek forgiveness in Allah." It is usually expressed when one sees something inappropriate or shameful. On the other hand, the expression "oh my, God" is usually used to emphasize how surprised, angry, or shocked someone is. Although the two do not exactly share the same essence, the expression "oh my, God" is the best way possible for the audience to understand the expression in the SL.

5. Decimation

Decimation is the process of reducing essential parts of SL expression (Michael, 2012). Translators can apply it if they do not find the closest meaning of the term to the TL culture, as in the case below:

ST: **Jadah tempene** ada?

TT: Do we still have **the tempeh**?

As aforementioned, "jadah tempe" is an Indonesian local food consists of "jadah" and "tempe." Here, the translator applies a decimation strategy by eliminating the term "jadah." It is unfortunate as it is an essential part of the food name. It happens because TL culture does not share cultural similarities with SL; hence there is no appropriate word equivalent for it. Then, the term "tempe" is maintained into "tempeh" as it is more widely known by the target audience.

6. Condensation

The subtitling process that shortens a particular part of SL without changing the vital part is called condensation (Michael, 2012).

ST: Asal ada **kembang setaman**, ada rokok.
TT: As long as there are **flowers** and cigarettes.

In the example above, "kembang setaman" is translated to "flowers" by omitting the word "setaman." In this context, "kembang setaman" means a collection of various flowers that are as numerous as "one garden." This flower is usually used in rituals. Even so, the omission of the word "setaman" does not necessarily reduce the essence of the function of using flowers in ritual processions. Thus, to overcome the limitations, the term "setaman" is omitted.

Conclusions

Translating a cultural text requires extra care and extensive knowledge of both SL and TL cultures. In addition, applying the translation into subtitles also requires extra consideration as several things must be understood. Therefore, selecting a reasonable and appropriate strategy can help produce acceptable translations in the TL.

The research shows that in the TV series *Kisah Tanah Jawa: Merapi*, there are seven types of cultural terms and six types of subtitling strategies. Seven groups of cultural terms classification consist of 32 data. Beliefs and customs mostly dominate this with eight terms each. Then six for ecology, five for religious terms, three for institutions, and one for art and food. This result is not surprising considering that Indonesia is a country rich in culture and traditions. Moreover, the series' theme is about supernatural things, which are still strongly believed by most of its citizens. Hence, most of these cultural terms are terms related to supernatural things.

Furthermore, the six types of subtitling strategies found 38 total data. The transfer strategy was the most dominant, which was applied sixteen times. It is followed by imitation ten times, paraphrase six times, expansion four times, and one time each for decimation and condensation strategies. Despite the cultural differences, there are still many terms in SL which can surprisingly be translated through a transfer strategy. The translator managed to provide excellent and acceptable translation in TL. Finally, it is hoped that this research can be a helpful guide and a reference for analysis based on cultural terms and subtitling strategies in the future, especially in Javanese terms translation.

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