

TRANSLATING TRADITIONAL CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS: ANALYSIS OF STRATEGY, ACCURACY AND READABILITY

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Abstract

Traditional cultural expressions (TCEs) form part of the identity and heritage of a traditional or indigenous community passed down from generation to generation. This study aims to analyze the translation strategies and to evaluate the accuracy and readability of the TCEs in the tourism texts entitled *Solo and Padang of Spice and Legends* taken from the Garuda Indonesia Inflight Magazine *Colors* (2019). The study is intended to be a descriptive and qualitative nature. The data collection applied a content analysis, in-depth interview, and questionnaires. To reveal the types of strategies, the English and Indonesian texts were analyzed by the researcher based on the criteria of translation strategies. To know the accuracy of the translations, they were rated by three expert raters. To analyze the readability of translations, they were rated by 50 English speaking passengers of Garuda Indonesia. The research findings show that (1) the translation strategies used include addition, subtraction, transposition, borrowing, cultural equivalent, synonym, specification and generalization, gain, deletion, and modulation and (2) the Indonesian traditional cultural expressions translated into English are generally less accurate but readable. The findings imply that translation strategies for traditional cultural expressions are fundamental to obtain translation products that have equivalent to their source language, easy to understand and meet the readers' desires.

Keywords: Traditional Cultural Expressions, Translation Strategy, Accuracy, Readability

INTRODUCTION

When translating a text, a translator often finds a culture-specific word, term, or expression in a language does often not have its meaning equivalence in another language. It may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture. Baker (1995) states that the concept in question may be abstract or concrete; it may relate to a religious belief, or social custom, or even a type of food. Especially in the tourism texts

in Indonesia, there are many tourism objects which have traditional cultural expressions.

Linguists have named cultural expressions differently. Foreman (1992) uses the term "cultural references" which does not limit itself to the lexicon market culturally, but it allows the inclusion of symbols, icons, gestures, etc. Baker (1995) labels them "culture-specific concepts." Aixela (1996) uses terminology "culture-specific item"/CSI by the definition that those textually

actualized items whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the not existence of the referred item or of its different inter-textual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target text. Newmark (1998a) prefers “cultural words.” Nida (2004) speaks about “cultural foreign words.” Then, World Intellectual Property Organization (2019) states traditional cultural expressions (TCE) as the forms in which traditional culture is expressed; form part of the identity and heritage of a traditional or indigenous community; and are passed down from generation to generation. TCEs are integral to the cultural and social identities of indigenous and local communities, embody know-how and skills, and transmit core values and beliefs. Their protection is related to the promotion of creativity, enhanced cultural diversity and the preservation of cultural heritage. The TCEs may include music, dance, art, designs, names, signs and symbols, performances, ceremonies, architectural forms, handicrafts and narratives, or many other artistic or cultural expressions.

Newmark (1998) categorized cultural expressions into (1) ecology, (2) material culture, (3) social culture, (4) organizations customs and (5) gestures and habits.

Suryawinata & Haryanto (2003) defined translation strategy as a technical guidance

for translating word by word, phrase by phrase or sentence by sentence. Then, Kardimin (2013) divided the translation strategy into two types, i.e. structural strategy and semantic strategy. Furthermore he divided the structural strategy into addition, subtraction and transposition and the semantic strategy into borrowing, cultural equivalent, descriptive equivalent and component analysis, synonym, official translation, constriction and expansion, addition, deletion and modulation.

This study aims to analyze the translation strategies and to evaluate the accuracy and readability of the TCEs in the tourism texts entitled *Solo and Padang of Spice and Legends* taken from the Garuda Indonesia Inflight Magazine *Colors* (2019).

METHODOLOGY

The study is intended to be a descriptive and qualitative nature. The data collection applied a content analysis, in-depth interview, and questionnaires. To reveal the types of strategies, the English and Indonesian texts were analyzed by the researcher based on Kardimin’s translation strategies (2013). To know the accuracy of the translations, they were rated by three expert raters. To analyze the readability of translations, they were rated by 50 English speaking passengers of Garuda Indonesia.

The category of assessing accuracy are accurate, less accurate, and inaccurate with the criteria which can described into the following diagram (Purnomo, 2015):

Diagram 1. Assessment Criteria for Translation Accuracy

Category	Criteria
Accurate	(1) Use of words or expressions in TL that have equivalent meaning with SL and (2) equivalence seems natural and commonly used by TL speakers.
Less accurate	(1) Use of words or expressions in TL that have no equivalent meaning with SL and (2) equivalence seems less natural and less commonly used by TL speakers.
Inaccurate	(1) Use of words or expressions in TL that have no equivalent meaning with SL and the message has not been transferred and (2) equivalence seems unnatural and uncommonly used by TL speakers.

The category of assessing readability are readable, less readable, and unreadable with the criteria which can be described into the following diagram (Nababan, 2010):

Diagram 2. Assessment Criteria for Translation Readability

Category	Criteria
Readable	The translation is very easy to understand
Less readable	The translation is quite easy to understand; the readers need to read some parts more than once in order to understand the translation.
Unreadable	The translation is difficult to understand.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This section presents a description and analysis after the data is coded and verified by inter-raters. All data is juxtaposed between SL and TL and analyzed based on (1) the use of translation strategies, (2) the accuracy of translation, and (3) the translation readability.

The following are examples of descriptions and analysis of the data.

Data 1/SL/TL:

SL: Tak terpisahkan dari budaya Jawa, rujak gobet disajikan pada upacara *tingkeban* atau *mitoni*, yaitu upacara syukuran atas kesehatan ibu dan anak di usia kehamilan tujuh bulan.

TL: An important part of Javanese culture, *rujak gobet* is served at the *tingkeban* or *mitoni* ceremony to celebrate the 7th month of pregnancy, a symbol of thanksgiving for the safety of the mother and baby.

In the above data, the cultural expressions *tingkeban* and *mitoni* are categorized into gestures and habits. The translation strategy used is naturalization. All of the three raters state that the translation is accurate. Thirty-nine readers state that the translation is readable.

Data 2/SL/TL:

SL: Pepaya, nanas, mangga, jambu air, kedondong, mentimun dan bengkuang adalah buah yang biasa digunakan.

TL: Favorite ingredients are papaya, pineapple, mango, water apple, June plum (also known as kedondong, a tropical plum widely available across the region and into Polynesia), cucumber and the jicama, a starchy vegetable likened to both turnips and potatoes and reputedly good for those who want to lose weight, seek to balance their blood sugar or suffer from diabetes.

In the above data, the cultural expressions *kedondong* is categorized into material culture. The translation strategies used are addition with *favorite ingredients*, a descriptive equivalent for *kedondong*, and expansion for a starchy vegetable *likened to both turnips and potatoes and reputedly good for those who want to lose weight, seek to balance their blood sugar or suffer from diabetes*. All of the three raters state that the translation is accurate. Forty-two readers state that the translation is readable.

Data 3/SL/TL:

SL: Ada gua karang dan pusara Sitti Nurbaya, gadis dalam novel terkenal Sitti Nurbaya (Kasih Tak Sampai) karya Marah Rusli.

TL: There is a coral cave and a tomb dedicated to Sitti Nurbaya, a fictional female character in the novel Kasih Tak Sampai (Unrequited Love) by well-known Indonesia author Marah Rusli.

In the above data, the cultural expressions *Kasih Tak Sampai* is categorized into social culture. The translation strategy used is borrowing. All of the three raters state that the translation is accurate. Forty-five readers state that the translation is readable.

As a summary, the use of translation strategies can be explained by the following table.

Table 1. Percentage of the Translation Strategies

Types of translation strategies	Frequency
Addition	15 (15%)
Subtraction	6 (6%)
Transposition	2 (2%)
Borrowing	11 (11%)
Cultural equivalent	8 (8%)
Descriptive equivalent & component analysis	9 (9%)
Synonym	18 (18%)
Official translation	2 (2%)
Constriction & expansion	5 (5%)
Addition	14 (14%)
Deletion	7 (7%)
Modulation	3 (3%)
Total	100 (100%)

The summary for the translation accuracy can be explained by the following table.

Table 2. Percentage of the Translation Accuracy

Translation Accuracy	Frequency
Accurate	44 (44%)
Less accurate	52 (52%)
Inaccurate	4 (4%)
Total	100 (100%)

Furthermore, the summary for the translation readability can be explained by the following table.

Table 3. Percentage of the Translation Readability

Translation Readability	Frequency
Readable	91 (91%)
Less readable	7 (7%)
Unreadable	2 (2%)
Total	100 (100%)

CONCLUSIONS

The research findings show that (1) the translation strategies used include addition, subtraction, transposition, borrowing, cultural equivalent, synonym,

specification and generalization, gain, deletion, and modulation and (2) the Indonesian traditional cultural expressions translated into English are generally less accurate but readable. The findings imply that translation strategies for traditional cultural expressions are fundamental to obtain translation products that have equivalent to their source language, easy to understand and meet the readers' desires.

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