# Loss and Gain in English Subtitle Translation of Tilik Movie's Culture-specific Items

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**Abstract.** Culture-specific item or CSIs are languages unique features which differentiate a language to another. The Javanese language and English are two languages which has a big gap in the lexical, social, and cultural. In producing the translation from Javanese to English and vice versa, the translator must consider a lot of things mainly the CSIs feature of the text to avoid a misleading information. The equivalence of SL to TL must met so that the audience get the exact information that the writer in SL wants to employ. This study aims to analyze the cultural loss and gain in some words related to the words in ST and TT in order to see the significance of those words to each of the language. The language used in this movie is Javanese language with English subtitle. This study applied descriptive qualitative research methodology which does not use any numerical data counting. Documentation, transcription, and note-taking are used to collect the data. This study used Aixelá's term of CSIs and applied Newmark's categorization of CSIs. Five categories are found in the data of the study which has ecology with geographical features, material cultures with time, social culture with addressing term, social norm, social activity and religious term, organization with political term, and gestures and habit with interjection and politeness manner. The loss and gain in the translation is bound to happen, to cope with the loss and gain, reduction, addition, generalization, compensation, and deletion is used by the translator.

**Keywords:** *Culture-Specific Items, Tilik, Loss, Gain, Translation*

**https://ojs.unm.ac.id/eralingua**

**INTRODUCTION**

In translating literary works, especially one with local language, a translator must be aware of the lexical gaps of languages mainly in terms of the target culture's background especially the culture-specific items (hereafter CSIs). If things are not handled well, several misunderstanding might happen. To take CSIs into considerations in translating, it requires a lot of efforts and deeper understanding because it involves not only the language but also the cultural and social background of the CSIs. The term CSIs was first proposed by Aixelá (1996) and was widely used and known as it is up until now. Several experts have also studied this CSIs with different terms namely Newmark (1988) with "*cultural words*", Baker (1992) with "*culture-specific concepts*"". The difference of this terms' name was united by Aixelá's (1996) term "*culture-specific items*" (CSIs) which is now used generally and widely to call the culture related words, concepts, and items in language study.

Cultural words or culture related items or CSIs are not something that can be easily translated because they indulge specific materials that belongs to the particular culture (Nida, 2015). CSIs are terms that is considered as unknown in the target language (Baker, 2018). Chesterman (2012) gave a further explanation of CSIs: "*SL might express a concept which is truly unknown in the TL's culture. The concept in question may be abstract or concrete; it may relate to a religious belief, a social custom, or even a type of food. Such concepts are often referred to as 'culture specific'*" (Chesterman, 2012). The main reason as to why CSIs are hard to approach and to match the equivalence may be caused by the peculiarities of each language's system (Maasoum & Davtalab, 2011). In translating CSIs, translator may face a hardship in finding the equivalence because the cultural word brought from Source Language (henceforth SL) could encounter inequivalence due to the absence of the culture in the Target Language (hereinafter TL) (Aixelá, 1996). Newmark (1988) provided categorization of CSIs and divided it into five (5), they are: 1) ecology which includes geographical features like place, flora, fauna et cetera, 2) material culture which includes time, food, traditional clothes, clothes, buildings, houses, et cetera, 3) social culture which employs social norms, leisures, works, social activities, et cetera, 4) organizations which includes political organizations, customs, religious, historical, et cetera, and 5) specific cultural gestures and habits of certain culture.

In other words, taken from the definition of CSIs by several experts, it sure is not an easy task to produce a translation from CSIs. Such lexical, cultural gaps, and difficulties are faced. To take a simple example some words which got translated from a certain language to another may experience a certain cultural loss and gain. In English, rice only has one meaning but if it is to be translated into Javanese, some CSIs are faced such as *sega, gabah, and beras*. What makes them different is the process of making them and the appearance. This causes translation loss which the CSIs cannot be find the equivalence. The loss in translation is something that must be taken consideration of. The problem of translation loss exists when translator is not able to find the equivalence of the words found in SL (Nida, 1991). Basnett (2006) clarified that "*The translator has the control to at times*

*enrich or clarify the SL text as a direct result of the translation process. Moreover, what is often seen 'as lost' from the source language context maybe replaced in the TL context.*" In the translation practice, loss is more likely to be found due to the unique and particularities of languages while gain occurs when the translation product (TL) indulges more richness in the translation. It is due to the translator's will to exaggerate the translation product in order to give a better explanation about a specific term in SL. Gain is the adding of richness of the terms in TL (Bassnett, 2006). Translator has the ability to choose the translation he/she prefers and to add additional information which most likely employing cultural terms (Newmark, 1988). Both loss and gain terms are an undeniably proofing that translation products may not always be perfectly delivered as how the SL desire.

*Tilik* is a 2018 popular short movie by Ravacana Films. The movie uses Javanese language in the dialogues but the production house provides bahasa Indonesia and English subtitle in their *YouTube* channel. The movie delivers a story about a group of middle-aged women who travel around the city to visit the sick mayor (namely *Lurah* in Javanese language) and their story which is full of gossips throughout the journey. This movie employs a strong cultural value of Indonesian people especially the Javanese tribe in their social interactions between others. The title alone has already given the audience a sense of a deep Javanese culture. In the Javanese traditional culture, when somebody from the village is sick and being hospitalized then the villagers will go together to make a visit as a tribute for them. The term of visiting someone who is sick is called "*Tilik*" in Javanese language. Usually, they come in groups by renting buses, cars, and the flashiest way but counted as efficient is by renting a truck. Although this culture is no longer easily to be found because nowadays people will just go on their own vehicles, but some rural villages are still continuing this culture.

English is an international language in which with the effect of globalization, its use become unlimited. English today has emerged its use as a lingua franca to the people all around the world (Nagy, 2016). While Javanese is a local language of people in Java, mainly central and eastern Java, which needs to be maintained and preserved. Considering the above mentioned factors and researches in translation, this research attempts to discover the significance of loss and gain and its effect on both language in the ST and TT. Using Newmark's classification to analyze the CSIs items and applying Nida and Taber's loss and gain terminology. Regarding the difference in each language, both English and Javanese, loss and gain are inevitable. Considering Javanese language uses more politeness remarks rather than today's English, this study attempts to unveil the uniqueness of both languages by the application of Loss and Gain in the movie's English subtitle.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This study is done by analyzing the translation of Javanese to English in order to obtain the loss and gain in the movie subtitle translation. The movie that is being analyzed is a Javanese local short movie named *Tilik* by Ravacana Films in 2018. In collecting the data, the researcher used documentation along with note-taking in the particular significant information in transcribing the movie's dialogue. Descriptive qualitative is used to commonly actual facts, events, and the meaning of

the thing being studied (Seixas et al., 2018). Descriptive qualitative analysis is applied in the analysis of this study because this study focuses more on reasoning and opinion rather than in numerical data. In analyzing and obtaining the movie's data, the writer watched the 30 minutes long movie and then made the transcript of the movie's Javanese dialogues and extracted the English subtitle that was attached in the movie's YouTube channel. The writer then categorizes the data into several categorization related to CSIs according to Newmark (1988) and then the data was analyzed based on Newmark's classification.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Culture-specific Items Categorization

Before heading to the discussion, the writer provides a table of CSIs categorizations according to Newmark's (1988) theory.

*Table 1.* CSIs categorization

| No | Category | Sub-category | Data |
|----|----------|--------------|------|
| 1 | Ecology | Geographical features | *Nggejlik, Pasar Gedhe,* |
| 2 | Material Culture | Time | *Duhur* |
| 3 | Social Culture | Addressing terms | *Yu, Jeng Mbak, Mas, Bu, Pak,* |
| | | Social term | *Fitnah Imbas imbis, Susuk, Semanak lan grapyak nyilikke bandane, attahiyat* |
| | | Social activity | *tilik* |
| | | Religious term | *Astaghfirullah, Alhamdulillah, Ya Allah* |
| 4 | Organization | Political term | *Lurah* |
| 5 | Gestures and habits | Interjections | *Lho, Hoo to, Ha tenane,* |
| | | Politeness marker | *Jenengan, Monggo,* |

Javanese culture and customs are different from English's culture and customs. Due to this gap, translator is demanded to translate with the most equivalent translation. The cultural gaps cause a lot of change in the Javanese to English and vice versa. In this study, the cultural gaps which is called as loss and gain in translation are explained. The loss and gain in translation are inevitable features in the translation process and gaps. The most important matter is that how the translator cope with the culture differences between languages so that equivalency and the same information can be delivered and understood perfectly in the TL audiences. Considerations must be taken in translating literary works due to the high variety of word choices and expressions. At the same time, translating literary works is not an easy task to do due to its uniqueness depending on the writers or author's abstract emotions (Khairiah, 2018).

**Loss and Gain in the CSIs Subtitle Translation**

The incapability of some words to be delivered in the same sense in the TL from TT, makes the translator to pick a TL that is the closest to the term in SL (Bassnett, 1991). The happening of loss and gain in translation, leaves translator no choice but to give a more detailed information (gain) or to put away the information from SL (loss) (Bassnett, 1991). Eugene Nida (1991) an infamous scholar in translation focused his work in the loss of translation especially in the cultural terms or cultural words or CSIs. He derived his definition of loss and gain and centered his interest in the loss of translation.

Derived from Tiwiyanti and Retnomurti (2018), loss in translation is divided into two (2) terms: inevitable and avertable loss. The inevitable loss occurs when the loss is not caused by the translator's competence but simply because the inexistence of the equivalence in TL (Tiwiyanti & Retnomurti, 2017). The avertable loss happens because the translator's incapability and failure to find the equivalence and closest information of the derived term and words in SL to TL. The loss in the film's translation is seen from its title. The title is "*Tilik*" which means "visiting someone for particular reason" usually the term *tilik* is used when visiting sick or hospitalized people. The translation cope with the cultural difference of this CSIs by borrowing the SL word and not translating it in the TL with words with the same sense and information but simply just using the word "tilik" as the English translation of this movie.

Strategy to comply the subtitle translations, the translator often use deletion (Irmawati, 2012). The usage of deletion in movie subtitling strategy is necessary. A translator may not include a part or a certain word of a source text in the target text because it is seen as something that does not have a profound effect on the TL. Which means the information can still be delivered fully with the deletion of certain words or part of the text. Molina and Albir (2002) proceed 18 strategies in translating such as 1) Adaptation, 2) Amplification, 3) Borrowing, 4) Calque, 5) Compensation, 6) Description, 7) Discursive creation, 8) Established Equivalent, 9) Generalization, 10) Linguistic Amplification, 11) Linguistic compression, 12) Reduction 13) Particularization, 14) Literal, 15) Substitution, 16) Variation. Those are the translation strategies but in the subtitling of a movie are often using compensation,

generalization, and deletion (Molina & Hurtado Albir, 2002). While Nida and Taber (1974) employ Addition and Deletion.

In the translation of the English subtitle, reduction is used to reduce the meaning and information of the SL by doing partial deletion and deletion is to completely delete the text in SL (Nida & Taber, 1974).

*Table 2.* Loss Found In Csis Addressing Term

| Source Text | Target Text | Translation Technique |
|---|---|---|
| **Yu sam** reti kabare seko sopo **lho?** **(00:56)** | Who said that? (00:56) | Deletion (deleting the CSIs item) |

In table 2, the CSIs found is within the gesture and habit category and in the addressing term sub-category. The word "*Yu Sam*", *Yu* means sister or sis and *Sam* is somebody's name (proper name). the translation loss occurred by the disappearance of the CSIs *Yu Sam* in the TT and the translator coped with deletion technique.

*Table 3.* Loss In Csis Interjection Sub-Categorization

| Source Text | Target Text | Translation Technique |
|---|---|---|
| Tenane **lho?** **(00:51)** | Really? (00:51) | Deletion |

Table 3 shows the loss of CSIs translation in TT in the categorization of gestures and habits in interjections. This movie used a lot of interjections such as *lho, hoo to, yo ra, yo,* et cetera. This interjection is used to exclaim and to stress a particular information delivered by the speaker. This CSIs cannot be found the equivalence in English merely because the English typography does not have the correct and closest term to this. The translator applied deletion technique to cope with the gap by only translating the non-CSIs "*tenane*" into "*really*".

*Table 4.* Loss In Csis Addressing Term And Political Term

| Source Text | Target Text | Translation Technique |
|---|---|---|
| Padune ben **Pak Tejo** dadi **Lurah** yo ra (11:48) | That's you wanting **your husband** to replace **her**, isn't it | Reduction |

The loss in this data is the loss of CSIs addressing term and political term. The word '*Pak Tejo*', *Pak* means Sir and Tejo is the name of a person is replaced with the words 'your husband'. This reduction is because of the English typology which does not usually use somebody's name to refer to someone multiple times, instead in

English is used the pronoun. The reduction of *Pak Tejo* to be 'your husband' is because in this dialogue, the actor was talking to Bu Tejo, Pak Tejo's wife, who is present at the moment. In Javanese language, pronoun does not efficiently used like English's. Javanese people will just call people by their names instead of using pronoun. The political term of '*Lurah*' is also being reduced to 'her' which employs the meaning of the current mayoress.

*Table 5.* Loss In Interjection, Addressing Term, And Social Term

| Source Text | Target Text | Translation Technique |
|---|---|---|
| **Eh Yu Sam,** kiro-kiro menurutmu si Dian kui nganggo **susuk** ra? **(16:31)** | do you think that Dian has a **charm**? | Reduction, generalization |

Table 5 shows the loss in one line of subtitle in many categorizations. The loss in interjection, addressing term, and social term are bound to be found. The translator applied reduction on the interjections and addressing term then go straight to the next general words (generalization). Also, the translation of '*susuk*' into charm, charm in Javanese culture has many implementations such as *susuk, santet, jimat, aji aji*, et cetera.

*Table 6.* Gain in addressing term

| Source Text | Target Text | Translation Technique |
|---|---|---|
| Kasihan ya **bu lurah (00:21)** | I feel sorry for **our Mayoress (Bu Lurah)**. | Addition |

Gain in addressing term is to be seen in this table. the term *"Bu"* means ma'am or madam in English while Lurah means village head or the headman of the village. The term mayor in Javanese culture is usually used for somebody who is ruling the city. The gap is inevitable because in English's culture, a village does not necessarily have village head but rather a city ruler or mayor. For that reason, the term mayor is chosen by adding the Javanese term inside the brackets to give explanation about the term to Javanese target audience. The gain found in the data, even though it is being explained well above, cannot hinder from the loss of the information or sense given (Wijaya et al., 2020).

*Table 7.* Gain In English Addressing Term

| Source Text | Target Text | Translation Technique |
|---|---|---|
| Delok iki delok (02:01) | **Guys come here**, look at this. | Addition |

Gain in addressing term found in the English subtitle of the movie. The word 'guys come here' is added to the TT's translation. The addition in TT is used to emphasize the next sentence which said 'look at this'.

**Table 8.** Gain In Religious Term

| Source Text | Target Text | Translation Technique |
|---|---|---|
| Astaghfirullah, Ya Allah (18:38) | Astaghfirullah, **may God forgive you** | Deletion, Addition |

Gain in the religious term is found in the exclamation word of "Ya Allah". The translator added 'may God forgive you' which actually is the meaning of the word *Astaghfirullah* in English and deleting the exclamation of the religious term '*Ya Allah'.*

In dealing with the loss and gain, from the data that was analyzed, the translator coped with deletion and reduction. The deletion is applied to make the translation to be more efficient and suited to the TL's culture. While in gain, addition is applied to give more explanation and emphasize the letter's meaning in the TL. The addition is done to comply with the cultural gaps and to give a sense of understanding to the audience in TL about the culture from SL.

To deal with the loss and gain, Vinay and Dalbernet as cited in Munday (2016) proposed that translator can 'compensate' the text in TL (Munday, 2016). The compensation strategies delivered by Harvey (1998):

1. Compensation in Kind

To use compensation in kind is applied by making one type of textual effect in ST and replace it by another in the TT (Harvey, 1998). This type of compensation is found in the dialogues:

**Table 9.** Compensation in Kind Example

| Source Text | Target Text | Translation Technique |
|---|---|---|
| Wes tak lebokke amplop yo (00:32) | I'**ll** put it in the envelope, then. | Deletion, Addition |

The Javanese language does not have any tenses as in past, present, and future tenses but to comply with the textual sense and typology in English, the translator used 'will' by means to describe the action in textual.

2. Compensation in Merging

This compensation type focuses on the reduction of the word from SL to TL (Stiasih, 2013). The reduction and deletion are strategies that often be used in the translation of subtile. For the example:

*Table 10.* Compensation in Merging Example

| Source Text | Target Text | Translation Technique |
|---|---|---|
| aku ki bukane **nyilikke bandane** keluargane dian **lho** yo (03:57) | I'm not **saying anything** about their family. | Reduction, generalization |

The reduction here found in the interjection and social terms, the translator deals with the loss by compensate it with a more neutral language. '*nyilikke bandane'* is a metaphor used by Javanese people when somebody wants to drag the other down but the translator just cope with the translation in TT using generalization with '*not saying anything'*.

Dealing with loss and gain, which are considered as inevitable when we are faced to two different languages with different typologies, such strategies need to be applied in order to comply with the loss in the translation (Hadj Mohammed, 2018). In gain, the extra values did not distort the meaning of ST, instead the add more richness to create a better image in the TT (Hadj Mohammed, 2018). As for in the compensation methods, the way to deal with translation loss, the Javanese language does not have any tenses which signals the time but English does. The existence of loss and gain in translation are not a loss for the audience but an advantage given to the audience as they can grasp more a better suited meaning in from what is transformed from SL to TL. The use of loss and gain is a way to help the audiences to understand the meaning of what is given in TL (Rasyki et al., 2020).

**CONCLUSION**

All in all, CSIs are something that must be taken seriously. It employs both the SL and TL's specific and extraordinary culture which needs to be heed in order to create a well-produced translation. The CSIs found in the *Tilik* movie English subtitle is ecology which has geographical feature as its sub-category, material culture with time as its sub-category, social culture with addressing terms, social terms, social activity, and religious term in it, organizations which employs political terms, and gestures and habits with interjections and politeness marker.

The loss and gain in the translation of *Tilik* movie employs reduction, addition, generalization, compensation, and deletion as the technique of translation in order to cope with both SL and TL's culture. The big lexical gaps, culture gaps, and social gaps are what made the loss and gain are bound to happen in the translation process of movie with local language. Loss and gain are hard to avoid in the translation world. Considering the gap of both Javanese and English, Javanese experienced more loss than gain when it is translated to English. Interjections are the most common loss found in the Javanese to English translation. Javanese is a language with uncountable variety of language expression which made it unique. To deal with these loss and gain, translator's adequate skill and competence are needed. The CSIs must be taken more attention in translation, taking into account that every culture in every language is different. The loss and gain, as what we can

infer from this study, give a new but better insight to the audiences from TL which the transformation of SL sometimes is inadequate by the gap of both languages but by applying loss and gain, the translation product may turn out to be better than what we expected.

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