

THE TRANSLATION OF MALAY SONG LYRIC IN UPIN & IPIN: THE LONE GIBBON KRIS FILM: LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL SIMILARITY

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate language and cultural similarities in English subtitles of a Malay song lyric from a well-known local animated film, Upin & Ipin: The Lone Gibbon Kris. The Malay culture portrayed in the source language (Malay) which is translated into the target language (English), may not be understood or misinterpreted by the target audiences if the translation is not correctly translated. In this study, a qualitative descriptive method is applied. The research instrument is a selected Malay song lyric in Upin & Ipin: The Lone Gibbon Kris film from the Netflix platform, namely “Keris Sakti” along with its English subtitles, which are extracted and analyzed comprehensively. Moreover, the procedure of this study comprises data collection, comparing data, and evaluating Malay culture translation. This study found that the translation of the target language (English) has many inaccuracies from the source language (Malay). This is due to the fact that cultural differences are the main factor that contributes to misunderstandings and misinterpretations of meaning. Hence, accurate translation is worthy of attention especially when the film is on the global stage, yet the translations from the selected Malay song lyric in Upin & Ipin: The Lone Gibbon Kris film is very significant to expose the richness of Malay culture as well as offer a new perspective in the eyes of the Western world.

Keywords: translation, culture, subtitling, language equality

INTRODUCTION

With the advent of new technologies and new means of global and intercultural communication, the world today is significantly impacted by media. This has led to the emergence of translation forms, that is, dubbing and subtitling. In this study, subtitling is emphasized in investigating its accuracy in one of the Malaysian animations through Malay song lyrics. Pertaining to the quality of animation, Yasa (2019) expresses the view that the animation itself is a form of cultural preservation. The existence of animation media is one of the options for introducing a place or a larger area's culture. Through animation, the audiences can learn about a variety of cultures without having to travel over the country to spot traditional attractions because animation has the ability to promote a culture across the globe (Yasa, 2019). Particularly, the Malay culture can be recognized through Malay songs as the lyrics of a song reflect societal attitudes and beliefs. To a significant extent, the animation production can be expanded not only for the local society but also through the lens of foreign audiences with the assistance of Malay songs.

Definitely, the research is conducted purposefully to scrutinize the accuracy of language usage containing cultural elements in Malaysian animation. Owing to the fact that there are some issues circulating around regarding translations of subtitling in films on the Netflix platform. For instance, a careful exploration of the mistranslations in *Squid Game* reveals the actual significance of some of the show's most pivotal scenes and characters. These inaccuracies encompass not only the conversation in the film but also specific words, nuanced details, and even episode titles that are inaccessible to audiences who do not know Korean (Mutuc, 2021). In addition, the problem of language translation through subtitling concerning Malay culture in Malaysian animation at the international level is examined as well as dealing with language and cultural similarities.

Despite the long history of song translation, there is less scholarly research on the subject, particularly when it comes to songs in films. One possible explanation for this is the lack of clarity as to the professional identity of the individuals who actually translate songs (Franzon, 2008, as cited in Aminoroaya & Amirian, 2016). To emphasize, many scholars have carried out studies regarding translation from different aspects and viewpoints. Studies on the translation of song lyrics in animation have been conducted (Aminoroaya & Amirian, 2016; Paramaswari, Oeinada & Wiriani, 2017). The linguistic qualities of the source language and the target language must be understood at a high level by the translator, who also must possess a good vocabulary and be an expert in the field of translation (Aminoroaya & Amirian, 2016). A semantic shift occurs in the translation of Japanese soundtrack lyrics into the Indonesian language (Paramaswari, Oeinada & Wiriani, 2017). Besides, other researchers also carried out studies on the translation of dubbing and subtitling in animation (Debbas & Haider, 2020; Minutella, 2020). In animated films, foreign-accented English and other languages are used to indicate place, establish identities, express otherness, and elicit humour. Dubbing professionals can address these languages in a variety of ways (Debbas & Haider, 2020). Minutella (2020) states that "The target audience has a vital role in determining the appropriate constraints on translation that go in line with their ideology and culture" (p. 1). Hence, no study to date has been conducted on investigating the translation of Malay song lyrics into Malaysian animation. Besides, no attention is given to examining translations

containing Malay culture from language and cultural similarity aspect in Malaysian animation by Malaysian scholars.

Thus, this study can give some high impacts to solve practical problems by certain parties:

a. Translation field

The present study will be able to contribute new knowledge to examining Malay culture through Malay song lyrics in terms of language and cultural similarities in Malaysian animation as they have never been on researchers' list of main observations. Hence, this research has added advantage to the study of Malaysian animation in a non-Western context by looking at language and cultural similarities of translation through subtitling in animation. This research fills up the lacuna in the translation field.

b. Understanding foreign culture

To prevent misunderstandings and misinterpretations among audiences of various languages and cultures, a translator must have a thorough understanding of foreign cultures; Western (American) and East (Arab), for instance.

c. Streaming media

Streaming media such as Netflix needs to be aware of translation problems that occur in videos or films by resolving the issue immediately. This is to ensure the audiences can be well-received and fully comprehended messages transferred from a specific film of different languages and cultures, accurately and correctly.

d. Animation industry

Les' Copaque Production can develop a "scrupulous" plan of action regarding the translation issue of subtitling in their animation. Given that animation can be a material culture for Malay businesspeople in the animation field, by means being a backbone or pillar to reinforce the efficacy of animation to spread Malay culture from a translation aspect.

e. Audiences

This research gives a practical significance to Malay audiences as they can play a role to preserve and spread their culture, by means of animation can be a material culture for the Malays. The accurateness of translation through subtitling is able to help international audiences to acknowledge and perceive the intended meanings underlying, especially Malay song lyrics which contain implicit meanings.

f. Translators

This study's findings can give an insight for translators to improve their translation skills by examining language and cultural similarities. Translators, on the other hand, can learn further and equip themselves with extensive vocabulary knowledge to provide suitable use of language which are concurrently suited to cultural elements in subtitles.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to investigate language and cultural similarities in English subtitles of a Malay song lyric from the Malaysian animation, *Upin & Ipin: The Lone Gibbon Kris*. The formulated objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the English subtitles of a Malay song lyric in the Malaysian animation.
2. To analyze language and cultural similarities between the Malay song lyric and English subtitles in the Malaysian animation.
3. To evaluate Malay culture translation based on the English subtitles of the Malay song lyric in the Malaysian animation.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative descriptive research design is employed in this study. This research design is utilized to evaluate cultural elements by presenting the researcher's viewpoints methodically and in a scientific manner. As a descriptive research design describes the phenomena selected for any research in great detail, it is highly convenient for this study in terms of clarification and addressing many questions; solely in language and cultural similarities based on the English subtitles of a selected Malay song lyric in the animated film, in order to answer the research inquiry which is primarily concerned with 'why' and 'how'. In this study, the research instrument is a selected Malay song lyric in *Upin & Ipin: The Lone Gibbon Kris* film from the Netflix platform, namely "Keris Sakti" along with its English subtitles that are juxtaposed with the Malay song lyric, which will be extracted and analyzed comprehensively. The international-level animation film has been released in 2019 in which the timeframe is not more than five years to obtain the current knowledge.

Text

The text was extracted from a Malay song lyric, "Keris Sakti" which stands as a theme song of the animated film, sung by Fakhrul Razi from Brunei Darussalam.

1	<i>Keris sahabat pada yang setia Seteru pada yang derhaka Siapa dia pahlawan perkasa Yang akan menegak keadilan.</i>
2	<i>Tujuh petala langit seru namanya Tujuh petala bumi gerun akannya Keris sakti kekuasaan raja Keris sakti kebesaran negara.</i>
3	<i>Jangan berkelana entah kemana Hilang takhta, hancur negara Pulanglah segera menghalau durjana Air mata, merungkai segalanya.</i>

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Malay Song Lyric, “Keris Sakti” and the English Translation

The table below shows the source language (Malay) and target language (English) that are extracted from a Malay song lyric, “Keris Sakti” and its English subtitles in *Upin & Ipin: The Lone Gibbon Kris* film, which is outlined accordingly with their own stanza. Every data (words and phrases) containing cultural elements that are identified, and may not be translated accurately will be underlined before being analyzed in the context of similarity.

Stanza	Source Language (Malay)	Target Language (English)
1	<i>Keris sahabat pada yang setia Seteru pada yang <u>derhaka</u> Siapa dia <u>pahlawan perkasa</u> Yang akan menegak keadilan.</i>	The kris will aid the one that’s true To deliver the <u>traitors</u> their due Who is this one, our <u>champion of heroes</u> Who will rise and bring prosperity.
2	<i>Tujuh petala langit seru namanya <u>Tujuh petala bumi</u> gerun akannya Keris sakti kekuasaan raja Keris sakti <u>kebesaran negara</u>.</i>	Seven heavens call upon its name <u>Seven lands</u> tremble at its fame The sacred kris with the power of kings The sacred kris <u>gives the nation hope to sing</u> .
3	<i>Jangan berkelana entah kemana Hilang <u>takhta</u>, hancur negara Pulanglah segera menghalau durjana Air mata, merungkai segalanya.</i>	Be not one to wander, lost in tragedy The <u>crown</u> ’s fallen, the kingdom in defeat Rise up to the throne now, set your people free Tears will reveal your true identity.

Data 1: Derhaka (traitors)

Source language	Target language	Similarity
<i>Seteru pada yang <u>derhaka</u></i>	To deliver the traitors their due	Almost accurate

The finding above shows Data 1, *derhaka* in which the meaning of its translation, *traitors* still can be understood because the translation is more to literal translation. According to Kamus Dewan Edisi Ketiga (1998), *derhaka* refers to disobedience or treacherous to the country, in other words, towards God, parents, husband, and others. In particular, the Malay sentence deals with disobedience towards the king of a country whilst the English translation uses the word *traitors*. To emphasize, *traitors* (noun) is a word that is synonymous with treacherous (adjective) or betrayal (adjective) but it cannot be implied with *derhaka*, by reason *traitors* do not necessarily conduct an act to betray their country, by means of an act of betrayal towards the king. It should be noted that the meaning of *traitors* is the people who violate a duty or responsibility or breach the

trustworthiness of someone, that is, a more general one to describe a person to be disobedient. In simple terms, the context of the Malay sentence is focalized on the disobedience toward the king of a country. This is because the attitude of *derhaka* can be traced down from Stanza 1 by understanding the implicit meaning of the whole tercets.

Besides, Western society commonly uses the word *traitor* to express someone's characterization to betray his nation by engaging in treason, such as rebelling against the government or disseminating confidential information. In addition, a friend who is a back-stabber also can be called a traitor. Absolutely, international audiences and mainly native English speakers would be confused with the word usage definitely, nevertheless, Malaysian audiences might have no issue understanding it. The translation is intimately connected to the source language, leading to a direct translation rather than one that has been modified. A word's exact meaning will be less likely, or merely to be conveyed if it is used in a way that is too closely related to the source language. Thus, the word usage of *traitor* or *traitors* (plural form) is considered almost accurate with regard to its meaning and language, whilst *betrayers* can be suggested to replace the word *traitors*. *Betrayers* means a person who is disloyal to their country or another individual, frequently engaging in irresponsible behaviour like providing information to a foe. Apart from this, the suggested word is to maintain the major word class, the noun which is similar to the source language, as well as preserving the meaning, that is, disobedience toward the king.

Data 2: Pahlawan perkasa (champion of heroes)

Source language	Target language	Similarity
<i>Siapa dia pahlawan perkasa</i>	Who is this one, our champion of heroes	Less accurate

The finding above highlights Data 2, *pahlawan perkasa* and its translation, *champion of heroes*. Due to the translation's emphasis on literal translation, the meaning of *champion of heroes* still can be comprehended. Although the translator takes liberty by applying connotative meaning, it may contribute to misinterpretation among audiences, especially international audiences. It conveys a different denotation rather than the *champion of heroes* context, that is, ambiguity becomes apparent. This can be observed in the selected words on *pahlawan* (*heroes*) and *perkasa* (*champion*). According to Kamus Dewan Edisi Ketiga (1998), *pahlawan* is a gallant and brave fighter whilst *perkasa* refers to a powerful, great and strong person (warrior).

To clarify, the translation is considered less accurate. It should be noted that Westerners use the word *champion* (adjective) to give a description of a competitor who has won first place and outclassed all opponents in a sporting event or other competition. In addition, *heroes* (noun) is used to a person of exceptional bravery or talent, praised for their selflessness and noble attributes. Definitely, the translation is not concurrently related to each other with the source language, in which it is concerned with providing some very suitable meanings. Moreover, Malaysian audiences may understand the intended meaning of the translation but international audiences might receive inaccurate ideas or messages in a more particular context. *Pahlawan perkasa*, on the other hand,

can be replaced with *mighty warrior*, which means a strong and powerful person with combat training and expertise.

Data 3: Tujuh petala bumi (seven lands)

Source language	Target language	Similarity
<i>Tujuh petala bumi gerun akannya</i>	Seven lands tremble at its fame	Almost accurate

The finding above presents Data 3, *tujuh petala bumi* and its translation, *seven lands*. Based on the translation provided, the meaning still can be understood because the translator applies literal translation. Above all, the translation is almost accurate and can be examined in terms of the word chosen, *lands*. Specifically, *bumi* refers to the planet that we live on and it is the third planet from the Sun in the Solar system; and also makes reference to the surface of Earth (the land) (Kamus Dewan Edisi Ketiga, 1998). Nonetheless, *lands* is used in the translation which can lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding among audiences. This is because *lands* (plural form) is commonly referred to as the substantial portion of the earth's surface as well as a region of soil or terrain that is particularly fertile. Thus, the meanings between *bumi* and *lands* are quite the opposite of the context of the source language, yet it remains in the same scope.

Additionally, narrowing down to the context of *tujuh petala bumi* phrase, it is related to Islamic beliefs regarding cosmology. To clarify, it is believed that Allah creates seven Earths. Granted that numerous hadiths and tafsir commentaries genuinely agree with this as a proper explanation (WikiIslam, 2022). With this intention, the usage of the phrase is an indirect indication or covertly alluding to the Malay identity as Muslim, that is, incorporating the essence of Islamic life. The Malays and Islam have developed a tight relationship, as the Malays have profound faith in Allah, the Almighty, as the Supreme Being (Awang, Maros & Ibrahim, 2012). With this in mind, a specific term should be accentuated to customize with Malay culture through translation to avoid inaccuracies regarding meanings as well as its suitable word selection. Seven Earths, is a general term used in the Islamic cosmology field meanwhile *seven lands* can be replaced with the apropos term. Moreover, it is not only the word selection but also the way the source language is translated as it is not intimately connected. It can be detected in the word *petala* which is not being translated, yet the translator undoubtedly brings up the translation with *seven lands*.

Data 4: Kebesaran negara (gives the nation hope to sing)

Source language	Target language	Similarity
<i>Keris sakti kebesaran negara</i>	The sacred kris gives the nation hope to sing	Inaccurate

The finding above shows Data 4, *kebesaran negara* in which the meaning of its translation, *gives the nation hope to sing* definitely, cannot be understood by audiences. This is because the literal translation is applied and the translator takes the liberty by using connotative meanings. *Kebesaran negara* can be referred to as a national symbol. Symbols or emblems used to symbolize a national community, in a way that unites its citizens are referred to as national symbols. This harmony is based on a shared sense of pride that is generated through many representations. The usage of these symbols in national events and festivals fosters patriotism since they represent all members of that particular community, regardless of race or religion (England, 2012).

Conversely, the translator is discovered to be out of context whenever providing a translation for a national symbol, that is, *gives the nation hope to sing*. Obviously, the meaning is only can be understood by the translator, and to translate what message the translator intends to convey based on his or her own understanding, for instance; *gives the nation hope to sing* can be suggested as inspiring people, specifically the nation of a kingdom or country to have a powerful symbol that represents their identity of Motherland (*Inderaloka*), precisely the sacred kris based on the animated film narrative. Correspondingly, the kris in the real world is simultaneously related to the coat of arms of Malaysia (*Jata Negara Malaysia*), as five of the erstwhile Unfederated Malay States are represented by the five krises (Johor, Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, and Terengganu) (MyGovernment, 2008). Indeed, the accurateness of language use is taken into account to preserve the meaning of the source language to the target language. Therefore, *national symbol* can be suggested as one of the word choices that can replace the phrase, *gives the nation hope to sing* by way of a representation of any entity that believes and indicates itself to be a national community in the eyes of the world.

Data 5: Takhta (crown)

Source language	Target language	Similarity
<i>Hilang takhta, hancur negara</i>	The crown 's fallen, the kingdom in defeat	Less accurate

The finding above shows Data 5, *takhta* with its translation, *crown*. The meaning of translation at the first glance seems can be understood because the translator applies literal translation. Nevertheless, the translation is less accurate with regard to the word usage. According to Kamus Dewan Edisi Ketiga (1998), *takhta* refers to a chair for a king; who possesses royal power. Meanwhile, the word *crown* is used in the translation, which leads to vagueness; indefinite meanings occur in audiences' minds. To emphasize, Western society uses the word *crown* to give a description of a round, decorative headpiece worn by monarchs as a symbol of their power. Crowns are sometimes composed of precious metals and diamonds or embellished with them. Clearly, international audiences may encounter confusion to understand the translation. In other words, *takhta* refers to a chair of a king, not simply the headpiece decorated with diamonds.

Hence, the translation is considered less accurate in terms of its meaning and language. It is a direct translation that is not properly fitting with the sentence. The meaning eventually does not equivalent

or inaccurate as the word usage is too intimately linked with the source language. Hence, *crown* is suggested to be substituted with *realm*. The meaning of *realm* is similar to the kingdom. The word is chosen because whenever the King or *Raja* loses his power, this matter indirectly caused the King to also lose his throne. In addition, it is not wrong to replace *crown* with a word, *throne* because it refers to the chair or seat that a monarch, bishop, or other exalted personage occupies during ceremonial events; it is often raised on a dais and covered with a canopy (Cambridge International Dictionary of English, 1995), in which the meaning is correctly juxtaposed with *takhta*. In the case of the underlying meaning for *hilang takhta*, *hancur negara* phrase, the real meaning can be traced down and grasped through the narrative of the animated film. *Raja Bersiong* (The Fanged King) had murdered *Raja Inderaloka* by aiming of seizing the throne. Eventually, *Raja Inderaloka* passed away whilst the barbaric *Raja Bersiong* took possession of ruling the state and its people for decades. With this in mind, *realm* can be acceptable to replace the word *crown*, which more complies with the meaning of message delivery.

CONCLUSION

Translation through subtitling is pivotal not only for preserving the culture but also to expose as well as enhancing the understanding among audiences, especially international audiences of foreign culture (Malay culture) presented in the Malaysian animation. It is notable that Malaysian animation, specifically *Upin & Ipin: The Lone Gibbon Kris* film has won audiences' hearts, with its unique representation of local values, especially Malay culture through Malay song lyrics on the global stage. Granted that the role of translators is important to preserve the meaning intended underlying the songs with the aim that no misinterpretation and misunderstanding occur among audiences. The focal point here is the words, phrases, and sentences should be correctly and relevantly translated from the source language into the target language. Other parties, as the aforesaid also have their essence of significance in preserving Malay culture through translation of subtitles to the global community. Hence, this study's findings can be a cornerstone for other researchers to delve deeper into the translation of Malay song lyrics in Malaysian animation, from a language and cultural similarity perspective.

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