

MORE THAN WORDS: STRATEGIES USED BY INDONESIAN TOURIST GUIDES TO INTERPRET CULTURAL TERMS IN SURAKARTA AND YOGYAKARTA ROYAL PALACES

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Abstract

Interpretation of cultural terms meaning between spoken languages is not often simply a word to word transference from a source language into a target language. This research is intended to investigate the strategies used by Indonesian tourist guides to interpret cultural terms during providing assistance and information to English speaking tourists visiting four royal palaces in Surakarta and Yogyakarta Cities. This study is of a qualitative and descriptive nature. The data were collected through joining twenty guided group tours in Kasunanan Palace, Mangkunegaran Palace (Surakarta City), Kasultanan Palace and Pakualaman Palace (Yogyakarta City) and recording the tourist guides' interpretation of cultural terms to tourists. The cultural terms were classified into five categories: palace properties, royal heirlooms, ancient weapons, precious antiques and cultural ceremonies. The research findings show that the interpretation strategies used by tourist guides to interpret cultural terms are: addition, borrowing, synonymy, descriptive equivalent and componential analysis. The findings indicate strongly that the Indonesian tourist guides should improve their interpretation skills in order that their guiding services become more meaningful, especially to overcome cultural obstacles.

Keywords: interpretation strategies, tourist guides, cultural terms

Introduction

Tourism is currently the second-largest source of income for Indonesia after the oil and gas sector. Since 2015 the growth rate of Indonesian tourism is above 10%, far higher than the average national economy growth rate which is only 5.2%. Therefore, in 2017 the Ministry of Tourism targeted tourism as a leading sector in the next decades. In other words, the sector will be tourism and non-tourism instead of oil and non-oil. That is way the development of tourism in this country is so important.

As the main tourism centers in Indonesia, Surakarta and Yogyakarta Cities are destinations with many places of interest for tourists. They have Kasunanan, Mangkunegaran, Kasultanan and Pakualaman Royal Palaces as the main tourist destinations which were built in the 18th century.

As one of the tourism service providers, a tour guide is a person who escorts tourists with a language chosen by them for a specific purpose about tourism objects and interprets history of cultural heritage and local interest. In interpreting cultural terms, a tour guide needs a strategy. Baker (2011) identified unknown concepts in a target language, such as culture-specific concepts. Adapted from translation strategies, Suryawinata & Haryanto (2003) classified interpretation strategies into ten kinds: (1) borrowing, (2) cultural equivalent, (3) descriptive equivalent, (4) componential analysis, (5) synonymy, (6) formal interpretation, (7) specification and generalization, (8) gain, (9) omission or deletion and (10) modulation.

Up to now there are some interesting studies have been done on interpretation strategies. Thompson et all (2001) described that errors occur frequently in interpretations provided by untrained nurse-interpreters during cross-language encounters, so complaints of many non-

English-speaking patients may be misunderstood by their physicians. Sutopo (2006) found that interpreting has a great role in developing international trading, especially for businessmen who do not master English. There are four roles of interpreter: as inspirator, mediator, explanator and guide. The interpreter applies two types of interpreting: sight and consecutive interpreting. Magablih et al (2010) investigated interpretation strategies used by Jordanian tourist guides to handle cultural specificity in tourism material. They found that strategies used by the Jordanian tourist guides to overcome cultural obstacles are: transliteration, paraphrasing, expansion, providing cultural equivalent, neutralization, literal translation, reduction and recognized translation. Widyahening and Sitoesmi (2016) concluded that it was not an easy work to search an appropriate equivalent for a sentence, a word, a phrase, a clause which has relationship with a Javanese culture from source language text into target language text.

The main purpose of this paper is to investigate the strategies used by Indonesian tourist guides to interpret cultural terms during providing assistance and information to English speaking tourists visiting four royal palaces in Surakarta and Yogyakarta Cities.

Methodology

This research is of a qualitative and descriptive nature. It was done in Surakarta and Yogyakarta Royal Palaces which are not only homes to the kings and their families, but also become the flame guard of Javanese culture. In these palaces the tourists can learn from seeing directly on how culture still being preserved in the pace development of the world. The data were collected through joining twenty guided group tours in Kasunanan Palace, Mangkunegaran Palace (Surakarta City), Kasultanan Palace and Pakualaman Palace

(Yogyakarta City) and recording the tourist guides' interpretation of cultural terms to English speaking tourists. The structure of tour participants include people from all walks of life, of different levels of education and of all ages (except for children). The guided group tours formed the arena where expressions of interaction between tourist guides and tourists could be observed. The cultural terms were classified into five categories: palace properties, royal heirlooms, ancient weapons, precious antiques and cultural ceremonies. These categories are the main components of the cultural heritage promoted by the Ministry of Tourism to be continuously preserved. The collected data were categorized in terms of the strategies used in interpreting cultural terms.

Findings and Discussion

In the interaction between the tourist guides and tourists, it was found many cultural terms come from the source language-either Indonesian or Javanese-that should be interpreted into the target language, i.e. English by the tourist guides. There are five types of interpretation strategies used by the Indonesian tourist guides to interpret the cultural terms: addition, borrowing, synonymy, descriptive equivalent and componential analysis.

Addition

Addition is a strategy of interpretation through which adjustments are made to the content of the source language. The strategy serves stylistic as well as strategic purposes. The strategy needs to be used in order to compensate for the linguistic (structural, stylistic and rhetorical) differences that exist between any two languages.

The following is an example of addition strategy used by a tourist guide.

Tourist : What is this?

Guide : This is *gamelan music instrument*. It was made during

Majapahit Kingdom era around
fourteenth century.

In the above conversation, the tour
guide used *gamelan music instrument*
instead of *gamelan*. The words *music*
instrument should be added in order to be
acceptable in the target language.

Another example of addition strategy
used by a tourist guide is as follows:

Tourist : What is the center of this
palace?

Guide : The center of Mangkunegaran
Palace is the *pendopo*, a
pavilion built in a Javanese
architectural style.

In the above conversation, the tour
guide added a phrase *a pavilion built in a*
Javanese architectural style to clarify
pendopo which is different from a usual
pavilion.

One more example of addition
strategy used by a tourist guide is as
follows:

Tourist : Where can we see the archery
competition?

Guide : See over there. That's
Kemandhungan Kidul. You can
watch *jemparingan* or *archery*
competition in Mataraman style
there. The uniqueness of
jemparingan is that every
participant must wear Javanese
traditional clothing and archery
in a sitting position.

In the above conversation, the tour
guide added words *in Mataraman style* in
order that the competition is held referred
to the Mataram clothes worn and position
followed by the participants.

Borrowing

Borrowing is a translation strategy
that involves using the same word or
expression in original language in the
target language. In this sense, it is an
interpretation strategy that does not
actually interpret.

The following is an example of
borrowing strategy used by a tourist
guide.

Tourist : Who is standing in front of the
gate?

Guide : He is an *abdi dalem*. He wears a
black *batik* with *keris* motives.

In the above conversation, the tour
guide used the words *abdi dalem*, *batik*
and *keris* in the target language. Since
there is no equivalent expressions in the
target language, the tourist guide used
original expressions (transliteration
strategy) as in the source language.

Another example of borrowing
strategy used by a tourist guide is as
follows:

Tourist : Where would we go after this?

Guide : After passing the main gate,
then enter *baluwerti* yard.
Baluwerti formerly was made of
bamboo.

In the above conversation, the tour
guide used the word *bamboo* in the target
language, an adaptation of the original
word *bambu* in the source language
(naturalization strategy).

One more example of borrowing
strategy used by a tourist guide is as
follows:

Tourist : It seems many rooms inside?

Guide : You're right. This building is
separated into few rooms,
namely library, wardrobe room
on the left, bedroom on the
right, *gandok wetan* and *gandok*
kulon. *Gandok wetan* and
gandok kulon are where the
sultan family live.

In the above conversation, the tour
guide used the original words *gandok*
wetan and *gandok kulon* in the target
language (transliteration strategy)
because there is no equivalent
expressions in the target language.

Synonymy

Synonymy strategy is used to interpret an
expression in the source language into an
expression which has similar meaning in
the target language.

The following is an example of synonymy strategy used by a tourist guide.

Tourist : How is the existence of the royal palace?

Guide : The palace is used both as a home of the Susuhunan or King as well as for other important ceremonial and cultural functions of the Yogyakarta court.

In the above conversation, the tour guide used the word *King* after *Susuhunan* as a synonym of the *Susuhunan* to clarify the original word.

Another example of synonymy strategy used by a tourist guide is as follows:

Tourist : What is the name of building behind this one?

Guide : Behind the pendopo, stands Dalem Ageng Probayekso. Dalem is a term that refers to the main room of the palace.

In the above conversation, the tour guide interpreted the word *dalem* into the phrase *main room of the palace* in order to clarify the meaning.

One more example of cultural equivalent strategy used by a tourist guide is as follows:

Tourist : Where are we, now?

Guide : We arrive at pagelaran. It comes from the word gelar or arena, a place where battle tactics are decided.

In the above conversation, the tour guide used the word *arena* after *gelar* as a synonym to clarify the meaning of original word.

Descriptive equivalent

Descriptive equivalent strategy is used to interpret a source language using a description of the concept that refers to the target language.

The following is an example of descriptive equivalent strategy used by a tourist guide.

Tourist: What is the complete name of this palace?

Guide: This palace was named as Keraton Surakarta Hadiningrat, that was built in 1743 to 1746. Literally *suro* means brave, *karto* means prosperous, *hadi* means big and *rat* means country. So Surakarta Hadiningrat means a big country that is brave and prosperous.

In the above conversation, the tour guide tried to describe meaning and function of words *suro*, *karto*, *hadi* and *rat* in the source language because the words are very closely related to specific culture in the source language and the use of cultural equivalence did not give accuracy needed.

Another example of descriptive equivalent strategy used by a tourist guide is as follows:

Tourist: What kind of gate is that?

Guide: We are passing the main gate, Kori Brojonolo. This gate was built in the period of Susuhunan Pakubuwono III. Literally, *brojo* means sharp weapon, and *nolo* means heart. Entering *brojonolo*, we should have the sharpness of heart or in Javanese '*landeping rasa*'.

In the above conversation, the tour guide tried to describe meaning and function of words *brojo* and *nolo* in the source language because the words are very closely related to specific culture in the source language and the use of cultural equivalence did not give accuracy needed.

One more example of descriptive equivalent strategy used by a tourist guide is as follows:

Tourist : Is this the Siti Hinggil?

Guide : Right. The Siti Hinggil also functions as a place where garebeg ritual is started. Garebeg is a big event held three times a year in Islam great days namely Maulud, Fasting month along with Idul Fitri and Idul Adha.

In the above conversation, the tour guide tried to describe meaning and function of words *garebeg* in the source

language because the words are very closely related to specific culture in the source language and the use of cultural equivalence did not give accuracy needed.

Componential analysis

Componential analysis strategy is used to split up a lexical unit into meaning elements and interpret those. The difference between descriptive equivalent strategy and componential analysis strategy is that the former is used to interpret expressions related to culture and the latter is used to interpret general expressions.

The following is an example of componential analysis strategy used by a tourist guide.

Tourist : What place is this?

Guide : We are passing supit urang. Supit is pincers and urang is crab, symbolizing a tactic to defeat the intruders.

In the above conversation, the tour guide splitted up the words *supit urang* into elements of *supit* and *urang*, interpreted them into elements in the target language (*crab* and *pincers*) and then explained the meaning.

Another example of componential analysis strategy used by a tourist guide is as follows:

Tourist : What is the next program?

Guide : From here we would enter Siti Hinggil to see a collection of some palace carriages. Siti means land and hinggil means high. We should step up around one meter. It is not like a highland in your country, a hill of a mountain. Don't worry, just one meter high.

In the above conversation, the tour guide splitted up the words *siti hinggil* into elements of *siti* and *hinggil*, interpreted them into elements in the target language (*land* and *high*) and then explained the meaning.

One more example of componential analysis strategy used by a tourist guide is as follows:

Tourist : What kind of ritual held in this room?

Guide : The ritual is held for the tingalan ageng of Prince Mangkunegara. Tingalan means annual birthday and ageng means big.

In the above conversation, the tour guide splitted up the words *tingalan ageng* into elements of *tingalan* and *ageng*, interpreted them into elements in the target language (annual birthday and big) and then explained the meaning.

From the above findings and discussion, it is inferred that the use of cultural terms can be shown in the following table.

Table 1. Distribution of the Use of Cultural Terms (N=100)

No	Categories of Cultural Terms	Sum	Percentage
1	Palace properties	36	36%
2	Royal heirlooms	27	27%
3	Ancient weapons	16	16%
4	Precious antiques	12	12%
5	Cultural ceremonies	9	9%
Total		100	100%

Moreover, it is inferred that the use of interpretation strategies can be shown in the following table.

Table 2. Distribution of the Use of Interpretation Strategies (N=100)

No	Interpretation Strategy	Sum	Percentage
1	Addition	29	29%
2	Borrowing	25	25%
3	Synonymy	18	18%
4	Descriptive equivalent	15	15%
5	Componential analysis	13	13%
Total		100	100%

Conclusion

Based on the above findings and discussion, it can be drawn conclusions as follows:

1. In interpreting cultural terms, the tourist guides in Surakarta and Yogyakarta Royal Palaces used interpretation strategies, such as addition, borrowing, synonymy, descriptive equivalent and componential analysis.
2. The interpretation strategies they used from the most to the least frequency are: borrowing, descriptive equivalent, componential analysis, addition and synonymy.
3. The cultural terms they interpreted from the most to the least frequency are: palace properties, royal heirlooms, cultural ceremonies, precious antiques and ancient weapons.
4. The expressions in the source languages (Indonesian and Javanese) were generally interpreted longer into the expressions of the target language (English). In other words, the interpretation of cultural terms is not merely the word(s) to word(s) interpretation, but meaning to meaning interpretation in order to be acceptable in the target language and easy to be understood by the tourists.

The findings indicate strongly that the Indonesian tourist guides should improve their interpretation skills in order that their guiding services become more meaningful, especially to overcome cultural obstacles.

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