Strategies in Subtitling Javanese Speech in *"Sultan Agung: Tahta, Perjuangan, Cinta"* into English

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ABSTRACT
This research discusses the subtitling strategy in translating Javanese speech levels into English subtitles in the film "*Sultan Agung: Tahta, Perjuangan, Cinta.*" The Javanese speech level reflects the social hierarchy of speakers and their speech partners, while subtitling has space and time limitations that make it challenging to maintain this complexity. This study aims to analyze the relationship between the subtitling strategy proposed by Henrik Gottlieb and the nine sublevels of Javanese speech levels, as outlined by Soepomo. The research data comprise 171 Javanese utterances from movie transcripts and their corresponding English subtitles. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the classification of speech levels and identify subtitling strategies. The findings show that the most dominant speech level is *Ngoko Lugu* (61.99%), while the most used subtitling strategy is paraphrasing (35.45%). The findings also show different patterns of strategy use according to the sublevel of speech: *Ngoko Lugu* tends to be transferred through condensation, decimation, or resignation; *Antyo-boso* and *Boso-antyo* through paraphrase; *Madyo-ngoko*, *Madyantoro*, and *Madyo-kromo* through transfer and condensation; *Wredo-kromo* and *Mudo-kromo* through imitation and paraphrase; and *Kramantoro* through paraphrase and condensation. This study confirms that subtitling strategies are influenced not only by the technical

limitations of subtitles, but also by the type of speech level. The higher the level of speech, the greater the tendency to use paraphrase, transfer, and imitation, while the lower level of speech is more often transferred with condensation, decimation, and resignation. This indicates that subtitling serves as a form of negotiation between the technical requirements of audiovisual media and the socio-cultural complexities of Javanese *unggah-ungguh*.

INTRODUCTION

Film plays a prominent role in acquainting people with language and culture. Hari Suryanto and Mariani Amri (2018) found in their research that film can be a medium for literacy that strengthens the nation's character by exploring its ancestral values amid the flow of foreign information. Rafli H. P. et al. (2025) found that documentary films can record and visualize endangered local cultural traditions and practices. They can also reach and engage diverse groups of audiences, so documentary films are an effective educational and reflective medium in cultural preservation and representation efforts. The same goes for historical films. The scenes represent a culture's values, language, and social system, making films not just entertainment but a cultural mirror and a bridge between cultures.

Language becomes a barrier for this purpose. So, subtitles are here to break down those barriers and the limitations of audience coverage so that they can reach international audiences. Subtitling is a form of audiovisual translation that connects audiences across different languages and cultures. Subtitling aims to transfer meaning from one language to another and preserve film dialogue's cultural aspects and social values (Gotlieb, 2001). In line with Evgeniya D. Malenova (2015), subtitle translation is not only a transfer of language but also a transfer of culture. Translation in films preserves the film's meaning, culture, and nuances. With good

translation, cultural elements can be conveyed to foreign audiences, thus encouraging appreciation of the world's cultural diversity. That is why films are a global communication tool that strengthens intercultural understanding. *Sultan Agung: Tahta, Perjuangan, Cinta* is an Indonesian historical film directed by Hanung Bramantyo. It depicts the life and reign of Sultan Agung Hanyakrakusuma, the third ruler of the Mataram Sultanate. The film highlights Sultan Agung's leadership, his resistance against the Dutch colonial forces, and the cultural values of Javanese society. The film is an artistic and educational tool, showcasing Javanese traditions, social hierarchy, speech levels, and historical narrative. The film revives many of the important values of Javanese life and society in the 17th century. The elements of Javanese culture shown include traditional clothing and architecture, traditional arts such as *karawitan* and *wayang*, the Islamic education system, manners, and the Javanese language, which represents social hierarchy.

According to Soepomo Poedjosoedarmo (1968), Javanese speech levels reflect the level of formality and the degree of respect that the speaker feels towards the addressee. These speech levels indicate social relationships, age, and status between the speaker and the addressee. It also indicates that Javanese people have a code system that regulates the relation between speakers (O1), the addressee (O2), and the person being spoken to (Novia Ayu & Dwi Puspitorini, 2019). The higher the degree of respect and formality conveyed in an utterance, the more polite the language. Therefore, it is essential to understand how language and culture are translated, especially when the film is presented to an international audience that needs help understanding Javanese. Pratama (2017) suggests that translators think twice before omitting taboo words or offensive words in movies to introduce the culture of a community in a specific period. It does not only apply to taboo words or offensive words. Translators should always pay attention to the strategies they use, especially when it comes to cultural elements such as speech level.

Soepome Poedjosoedarmo (1968) states that each Javanese sentence shows a certain level or degree of politeness,

especially by selecting vocabulary and affixes. The vocabulary items used are divided into four. Three of them, namely *Ngoko, Madyo*, and *Kromo*, have the primary function of indicating the level of formality between speakers and speech partners/addressee. The fourth is divided into *Kromo Inggil* and *Kromo Andap*, which can be used with three other types to express respect with a higher level or degree. The level or degree shows the relationship between speakers and speech partners. Factors influencing this phenomenon include age and power or social status differences. This linguistic system reflects a hierarchical social structure where speakers adjust speech levels based on social status, age, and relationship with the interlocutor. Isodarus (2020) revealed that one of the functions of speech levels in Javanese is as a social distance regulator related to the level of speech as a representation of power. Furthermore, it becomes a reference for someone to position themselves in social status with speech partners.

Nuryatiningsih and Hidayat (2022) in their research found that the use of speech levels teaches the values of *andhap asor* (low profile), *empan papan* (appropriateness in speaking), and *tepa selira* (mutual respect). These nuances of speech levels cannot always be transferred to English. For example, a conversation between a citizen and a king using *Kromo Inggil* shows deep respect. Majid Wajdi (2013) found an asymmetry in communication, for example, when a person speaks in *Ngoko* while the interlocutor uses *Kromo*. The biggest challenge is maintaining this nuance through proper word choice without losing the intensity of the emotion. In addition, historical aspects in the dialogue, such as the style of speech and word choice in royal conversations, must be maintained to keep it feeling authentic and not lose the essence of the era.

Film translation should be able to maintain the original meaning and cultural values to keep the message accurate for international audiences (Emirhan Ozturk, 2024). However, films translation has several stumbling blocks, such as space limitations, commercial needs, and accessibility, which translate more focused on general understanding rather than maintaining language and cultural authenticity. Another difficulty arises because Javanese has a complex level of speech related to social relationships and status. This aspect is often

lost when translated into English because English does not have a similar structure. As a result, cultural nuances, emotional depth, and expressions are reduced or even lost. Furthermore, it is almost impossible to keep the dialogue authentic to the time period depicted by a historical film; the language is likely outdated and no longer in use, making it difficult for today's audiences to understand (Yilei Yuan, 2018).

Language is a communication tool that contains meaning, expression, and nuances unique to a community. In line with what Noam Chomsky (2006) said, language is not only a means of communication but also a system that reflects the structure of human thinking and the culture of a community. Furthermore, language also functions as a marker of community group identity. Hence, subtitles are a conduit for conveying messages and emotions without losing their original meaning, just like idioms or typical expressions that must be adapted to have the same feel in the target language. The choice of words is also crucial so that the nuances of emotion can still be conveyed. Especially considering that the Javanese language used in this film is rich in speech levels, symbolism, and contextual meanings that make Javanese not only a means of communication but also reflect the social status and cultural values of a society.

Gottlieb (1992) proposed ten subtitling strategies translators use to adapt spoken language into written subtitles:

1. Expansion is used when information conveyed in the source dialogue (e.g., Javanese) must be added or expanded in the target subtitles to clarify the meaning. For example, add a brief explanation in parentheses or explain an acronym. This strategy is often used when cultural terms or contexts are unfamiliar to the audience.

2. Paraphrase, the most commonly used strategy. Paraphrase is changing the source dialogue's sentence structure or word choice while retaining its core meaning. This strategy is very useful when no direct equivalent or a direct translation sounds stiff and unnatural.

3. Transfer is a strategy that refers to literally translating (word for word) the source dialogue into the target

subtitles. It is often used for proper names, place names, or internationally recognized terms. This strategy is effective when linguistic similarity exists between the two languages or for common terms.

4. Imitation is a strategy of copying the style or form of the source dialogue. It is usually used for proper names, place names, or terms that cannot be translated and are better left as they are so that the original nuance is retained.

5. Transcription is writing down dialogue exactly as it is spoken, but is usually limited to interlingual subtitles (e.g., Indonesian dialogue with Indonesian subtitles). In cross-language translation, transcription is often only used for terms that cannot be translated and are written in Latin script.

6. Dislocation is a strategy of shifting the focus from the original meaning of the dialogue. It occurs when there is a deep mismatch in meaning between the source and target languages. The translator must change the original meaning to remain relevant and make sense to the audience.

7. Condensation is summarizing or condensing overly long source dialogue to fit within the space and time limits of subtitles. This strategy removes non-essential information without changing the main meaning of the dialogue.

8. Decimation is breaking a long line of dialogue into two or more shorter lines of subtitles to maintain readability. Each line must begin with a new idea, helping viewers quickly digest information.

9. Deletion is a strategy to remove a small portion of the source dialogue. It is used when information is considered excessive, irrelevant, or impossible to translate within the subtitles' strict time and space constraints. This strategy is rarely used, so important information is not lost.

10. Resignation, the translator's acknowledgment that certain aspects of dialogue, such as humor, wordplay, or deeply cultural nuances, cannot be translated into the target language. Rather than produce a poor translation,

the translator sacrifices those parts.

Transfer, paraphrase, expansion, condensation, imitation, and deletion are often used in translating local-language films.

Several studies have examined subtitling strategies in various film translation contexts. For instance, Kristianto Setiawan (2019) find that transfer, paraphrase, and condensation only partially successfully retain the nuances of the *Ngapak* Javanese dialect. The study emphasizes how the constraints of subtitling—such as space and time—complicate the representation of speech levels. There is room for improvement to achieve a better level of equivalence. In contrast, they found that various translation strategies have helped keep the message of the source language conveyed in the target language. Ria Saraswati (2022) found that adding descriptions when using paraphrase strategies can help readers imagine a Balinese cultural word, and the main point is that they can capture its meaning. Likewise, Wicaksono and Wahyuni (2018) found that paraphrasing is the most widely used strategy for translating idioms in Indonesian legendary stories.

Subtitle analysis should not only focus on what is missing from the source language (Siwen Lu, 2023). Nonverbal channels that cannot be fully transferred to the text will be problematic for the "perfect translation." Aligns with Irawan Saleh Wijaya (2021), who concludes that there is no perfect strategy for translating Indonesian cultural terms accurately and in a way acceptable to the target audience, English speakers. The study evaluates the quality of translations of Indonesian cultural terms into English, particularly regarding the acceptability of translations.

Hilmi and Syihabbuddin (2024) examined the subtitling of Minangkabau utterances into English. The findings show that most Minangkabau utterances with a subject-verb-object pattern are rendered completely using the transfer strategy. In line with Immanuel (2023), who researched subtitling strategies for cultural terms in the Minangkabau language. The study discovered one strategy that can accurately translate cultural terms from the source language without sacrificing information: transfer. At the same time, subtitling Javanese

speech into English becomes more complicated. Speech level is not only about lexical meaning but also encodes social relationships, politeness, and power distance. Using a transfer strategy might preserve the semantic meaning of the sentence but lose the sociolinguistic meaning (the respect level, hierarchy, or intimacy implied). Ulrikayanti (2019) found that young speakers often switch to a more neutral or informal register within the Javanese-speaking community. It indicates a broader sociolinguistic shift that affects both natural usage and translation. Therefore, careful mediation between linguistic form, social meaning, and technical constraints is needed.

The difference in the systems of the source language and the target language is one of the barriers in subtitling. Those differences cannot accommodate all linguistic aspects (Kholifah, 2022). The honorific forms in Javanese are not accommodated when translated into Indonesian; they are lost. Fortunately, the audience can still enjoy the movie's visuals, allowing them to capture the nuances of the honorifics. Priska Meilasari (2022) also found difficulties due to the absence of similar politeness rules in Javanese and English. The study found the words "*Mas*" and "*Bu*" were difficult to translate, even though that cultural-specific term is one of the characteristics of politeness in Javanese, which is shown through how speakers address each other. The absence of similar equivalents for certain cultural terms can also be a reason for translators to generalise the specific terms of the source text (Hardiyanti et al, 2021). In subtitling cultural terms, Subrata and Jumanto (2023) and Wikandyani (2021) in their research found that the transfer strategy is most widely used. While Putriani and Basari (2023), Obeidat and Abbadi (2024) found the paraphrase strategy to be the most frequently used. Cultural context cannot be ignored when translating implicatures (Aziez, 2024). Maintaining the implicit form risks pragmatic shifts. However, if translated into explicit form, it can change the actor's characterization in terms of language and speaking style.

Although some studies have addressed the translation of regional languages in audiovisual media, there remains a significant gap in research that analyzes explicitly the

strategies used in translating Javanese dialogue into English subtitles. O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013) underscore the scarcity of research in subtitling non-European regional languages and call for further exploration, particularly in Asian contexts. While subtitling strategies—such as those proposed by Gottlieb (1992)—have been widely applied, their implementation in regional languages with complex speech-level systems like Javanese has received little critical attention. Furthermore, most studies on Indonesian film translation concentrate on films in Bahasa Indonesia, not those like *Sultan Agung: Tahta, Perjuangan, Cinta,* where Javanese dialogue dominates. This present research focuses on the translation strategy of the local language, Javanese, with consideration of cultural and social equivalence in English subtitling. Using Gottlieb's subtitling strategy, this research aims to provide new insights into audiovisual translation and cultural transfer in local language films, especially Javanese.

METHODS

This research is conducted within the scope of audiovisual translation studies, focusing on the subtitling of Javanese speech levels into English in the film *Sultan Agung: Tahta, Perjuangan, Cinta*. This study analyze the translation of Javanese speech into English subtitles. The film employs various Javanese speech levels—*ngoko*, *madya*, and *krama*—with significant cultural and social meanings. This film is selected due to its rich portrayal of Javanese historical and cultural identity through language and social interactions.

The research data is in the form of transcription documents of the original dialogue in Javanese and the translation in English subtitles. As a comparison, this study uses literal translation/gloss, which is a translation that maintains the original structure of the source language before being adjusted in the subtitling. Data was collected by watching and recording the original dialogue and the resulting English subtitles, and then making a gloss (literal translation). The data analysis method compares the original dialogue, gloss (literal translation), and English subtitles to determine the strategies applied. Dialogues were selected from interactions involving nobility, commoners, or cross-status conversations. Each

source-target dialogue pair was recorded in a table format for further analysis.

The analysis is conducted using a qualitative descriptive method. Each dialogue is examined to determine its speech level based on Poedjosoedarmo's (1968) classification: *ngoko, madya, krama, krama andhap*, and *krama inggil*. The corresponding English subtitles are analyzed using Gottlieb's (1992) ten subtitling strategies, and the analysis results will show the frequency of use of each strategy and the patterns that emerge in the translation of local language historical films. The primary focus of this study is to identify the patterns of subtitling strategy usage and see how translators handle the linguistic characteristics of Javanese in the context of subtitling. With this approach, the study is expected to provide insight into the techniques used in maintaining the meaning and cultural nuances in audiovisual translation from local languages, especially Javanese.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study analyzes 171 Javanese utterances from the film *Sultan Agung: Tahta, Perjuangan, Cinta*, which are subtitled into English. Its speech level and subtitling strategy identify each utterance based on Henrik Gottlieb's classification.

Distribution of Speech Levels

According to Soepomo (1968), the Javanese speech level system not only consists of the main levels (*ngoko, madya, krama*), but is also divided into nine sublevels that describe variations in language use according to social context and relationships between characters. The first sublevel is *Ngoko Lugu*, a form of plain *ngoko* that incorporates *ngoko* affixes, lacking the content of formality or respect, and is commonly used by parents to children, superiors and subordinates, or between friends. Second, *Antyo-boso* is a variety of *krama* that still incorporates *ngoko* vocabulary, indicating a transition from a high variety to a lower form, used to address someone with a close relationship to the speaker and a higher social status. Third, *Boso-antyo*, *ngoko* interjected with *kama* vocabulary, typically to convey a polite tone in an informal context. The higher the status of the interlocutor, the more

often the *krama* words appear. *Boso-antyo* is used when addressing someone of very high status who has a close relationship with the speaker. The fourth level is *Madyo-ngoko*, which combines *ngoko* affixes with *madya* vocabulary, along with elements of *krama* when *madya* vocabulary is not available. This level is used to speak to people who are older or of lower status, but still contains nuances of politeness. Fifth, *Madyantoro*, a pure *madya* variety with *ngoko* affixes and *madya* vocabulary (excluding *krama inggil*), is used in interactions with *wong cilik* who are not too familiar, such as older farmer neighbors. Sixth, *Madyo-kromo* is a mixture of *ngoko* affixes and *madya* vocabulary, with the addition of *krama inggil* to address the interlocutor, used by young people to older people or subordinates to superiors in non-formal situations.

At a higher level, there is *Wredo-kromo*, which represents *krama alus* with the dominance of alus vocabulary, generally used in official contexts, ceremonies, or noble orders. Next, there is *Kramantoro*, which is a standard krama without *krama inggil*, used for foreigners or new acquaintances who are not of the *priyayi* class. The next level is *Mudo-kromo*, which fully utilizes *krama* affixes, *krama* vocabulary, and *krama inggil* to address the interlocutor, typically used by young people to their parents or subordinates to superiors among the *priyayi*.

The analysis shows that the most dominant speech level is *Ngoko Lugu*, with 106 data (61.99%), followed by *Mudo-kromo* 33 data (19.30%), *Kramantoro* 17 data (9.94%), *Madyo-ngoko* 7 data (4.09%), *Madyo-kromo* 4 data (2.34%), *Boso-antyo* 2 data (1.17%), *Antyo-boso* and *Wredo-kromo* only 1 data (0.58%).

Table 1 Speech Levels Used

No.	Subtitling Strategies	Frequency	%
1	Ngoko Lugu	106	61.99%
2	Antyo-boso	1	0.58%
3	Boso-antyo	2	1.17%

4	Madyo-ngoko	7	4.09%
5	Madyo-kromo	4	2.34%
6	Wredo-kromo	1	0.58%
7	Kramantoro	17	9.94%
8	Mudo-kromo	33	19.30%
Total		171	

Distribution of Subtitling Strategies

The analysis of subtitling strategies shows that the most used strategy is paraphrase (106 times, 35.45%), followed by transfer (47 times, 15.72%), condensation (40 times, 13.38%), expansion (36 times, 12.04%), imitation (33 times, 11.604%), deletion (24 times, 8.03%), resignation (12 times, 4.01%), and decimation (1 time, 0.33%).

Table 2 Subtitling Strategies Used

No.	Subtitling Strategies	Frequency	%
1	Paraphrase	106	35.45%
2	Transfer	47	15.72%
3	Condensation	40	13.38%
4	Expansion	36	12.04%
5	Imitation	33	11.04%
6	Deletion	24	8.03%
7	Resignation	12	4.01%
8	Decimation	1	0.33%

Total	299

Relationship between Speech Level and Strategy

In general, *Ngoko Lugu* is translated with transfer and paraphrase. In contrast, while *Madyo-kromo* is often treated with condensation or paraphrase, this approach may simplify its social meaning. It early indicates different translation approaches depending on the level of speech.

Discussion

The findings show that the most dominant speech level in Javanese dialog is *Ngoko Lugu* (61.99%), followed by *Mudo-kromo* (19.30%) and *Kramantoro* (9.94%). The dominance of *Ngoko Lugu* shows that the text contains many straightforward and informal daily interactions. Utterances at this level are generally translated using transfer, condensation, or paraphrase strategies. These strategies make the utterances appear natural and communicative in English, while simultaneously reducing the hierarchical nuances inherent in the Javanese speech level system. For example, strong markers of familiarity or solidarity in *Ngoko* are often transferred to neutral conversational English forms so that the clear social level distinctions in the source language are lost.

In contrast, the presence of *Mudo-kromo* and *Kramantoro* suggests that there are parts of the dialogue that require politeness, respect, or a more majestic narrative tone. The strategies often employed at this level include paraphrase and expansion, such as adding "Your Highness" or "Majesty" to replace politeness utterances that do not exist in the target language. Similarly, the use of *Wredo-kromo* is very rare (0.58%): subtitlers tend to combine imitation and paraphrase to maintain the tone of high formality typical of royal orders, although the cultural depth of *krama inggil* remains challenging to maintain fully. Mixed forms, such as *Boso-antyo* and *Antyo-boso* (1.75% in total), are often simplified through paraphrase, so that the transition function between *ngoko* and *krama* is no longer apparent. Overall, the subtitling strategies employed tend to prioritize understandability and fairness for the target audience over maintaining the sociolinguistic

complexity of the Javanese speech system. Gottlieb's strategies, such as paraphrase, condensation, and expansion, proved effective in making the text accessible to international audiences. Still, the consequence was the normalization of register, where the hierarchical diversity of Javanese punctuation was flattened into fewer variations in English. Thus, subtitling Javanese texts into English often sacrifices socio-pragmatic nuances for the sake of clarity of communication.

The results show that of the eight subtitling strategies identified, paraphrase is the most dominant strategy, with a frequency of 106 times (35.45%). This strategy is used when translators change the form of speech to help viewers easily understand, without retaining the original structure.

(1) ST: *Sampun, niki pitike mpun mendol-mendol.*

LT: Already, these chickens already plump and round.

TT: Yes, dear. They are overfed, even.

Speech Level: *Kramantoro* (Level 8)

Note: ST=Source Text, LT=Literal Translation, TT=Target Text

In this dialog, the subtitler does not maintain the literal translation because it sounds unnatural in English. Instead, through paraphrase, the denotative meaning of "already plump and round" is shifted to the idiomatic expression "overfed," which is more communicative to the audience. At the same time, the subtitler adds the relational element "dear" to create intimacy. However, this change also shifts the tone of speech: from *Kramantoro*'s formal politeness to a more intimate style of speech. This demonstrates that, in subtitling, the paraphrase strategy is chosen for the sake of fluency and acceptability of the target text—even though it implies the loss of the social hierarchy dimension marked by the Javanese speech level.

(2) ST: *Kowe kok sedih mikir sopo, nduk?*

LT: You, (why are you) sad? Thinking (about) who, daughter?

TT: Whom are you crying for, child?

Speech Level: *Ngoko Lugu* (Level 1)

The paraphrase strategy transforms informal *Ngoko*

Lugu expressions into more natural and communicative English. For example, "sedih mikir" (sad, thinking about…) becomes "crying," which better fits the emotional context. *Ngoko Lugu* signals intimacy and informality, conveyed by the use of the nickname "child." The paraphrase maintains clarity for the audience while reflecting *Ngoko Lugu*'s intimacy, albeit with a slight change in word choice.

Transfer, with a frequency of 47 times (15.72%), retains the whole meaning of the source text without adding or omitting information.

(3) ST: *Monggo, kulo ndereaken.*

LT: Please, I (will) accompany (you).

TT: Please, I'll accompany you.

Speech Level: *Mudo-kromo* (Level 9)

The Target Text (TT) retains the original form and meaning without significant changes. The strategy employed here is transfer, which involves directly transferring the message from the source language to the target language, making minor grammatical adjustments to accommodate the English structure. The *Mudo-kromo*, which represents the most refined manners with high nuances of respect, is not fully reflected in the subtitles because English does not have a speech stratification system as complex as Javanese. However, the use of the polite form "Please" can be seen as a minimal effort to maintain the impression of politeness. Thus, the transfer strategy results in subtitles that are faithful to the content of the message, although the socio-cultural dimension of *Mudo-kromo* is not fully represented. This choice allows the subtitles to remain concise, clear, and easy to read for international audiences, while the visual context-the relationship between Ki Juru Mertani, a political advisor to Mataram, and Mas Rangsang, a prince-helps to reinforce the sense of respect that cannot be fully conveyed through the target language.

(4) ST: *Sampun mboten wonten mergi sanes, Ndoro Lurah. Ulu wetu ingkang kedah dipunsowanaken inggil sanget. Kulo sak brayat mboten kiat. Pramilo, Ndoro Lurah….*

LT: There is no other way, Ndoro Lurah. The tax that must be paid is extremely high. My entire family isn't strong

enough. Therefore, Ndoro Lurah...

TT: We've nowhere to go, Chief. The tax is so high for us to pay. We can't bear the burden any longer. Please, Chief...

Speech Level: *Mudo-kromo* (Level 9)

"Ndoro Lurah", which culturally contains nuances of high social hierarchy: "Ndoro" signifies a noble/*priyayi* honorific title, while "Lurah" refers to an administrative position. In the literal translation, the term is retained as "Ndoro Lurah", whereas in the subtitle, it is translated as "Chief". This strategy demonstrates the use of transfer, as the basic meaning of "leader" or "chief" is still conveyed in the target language. However, when presented as "Chief", the typical *Mudo-kromo unggah-ungguh* nuances shift to a neutral, formal register, without indicating the social layers or hierarchical relationships typical of Javanese culture. Thus, while the transfer strategy successfully conveys the referential function of the greeting, it does not fully channel the values of honor and social stratification inherent in the use of "Ndoro Lurah".

Condensation was used 40 times (13.38%) to reduce redundant expressions that are considered unnecessary from the source language (Widayanti, 2025).

(5) ST: *Romomu kuwi wis pirso. Mulo kowe dititipke neng kene wiwit umur 10 taun.*

LT: Your father already knew. So, you (were) entrusted here since (the) age (of) 10.

TT: Your father had premonition. That's why he sent you here.

Speech Level: *Ngoko Lugu* (Level 1)

This process shows the use of a condensation strategy, where the denotative information "*dititipke neng kene wiwit umur 10 taun*" (entrusted here since the age of 10) is condensed into "he sent you here" without mentioning the age details. Thus, the straightforward *Ngoko Lugu* speech retains its essence but is condensed to fit the limited space of the subtitles, remaining natural to the audience. This strategy confirms that the level of *Ngoko Lugu*, which does not demand high formality, is more easily transposed through condensation without compromising the main meaning of the conversation.

Expansion, which appeared 36 times (12.04%), is used when the language cannot convey some of the cultural nuances of the source language and thus requires additional explanation (Ratusmanga & Napu, 2018).

(6) ST: *Ning sliramu kuwi keturunane Senopati. Ksatria.*

LT: But you are a descendant of Senopati. A warrior.

TT: But you are a descendant of Senopati, our founding father. A knight.

Speech Level: *Ngoko Lugu* (Level 1)

Adding the phrase "our founding father" is a new element not present in the source text, providing a contextual explanation to international audiences who may not know who Senopati is. In Javanese culture, Senopati refers to the founder of the Mataram Sultanate, but this information was not explicitly explained in the original dialogue. This addition helps foreign audiences understand the historical relevance and the implied honor, which is not automatically read from the name Senopati alone. Thus, although the original speech is familiar and straightforward *Ngoko Lugu*, the subtitler expands the target text to convey the cultural content, so that the communicative function and sense of honor of the term are not lost in translation.

Imitation, with 33 occurrences (11.04%), maintains the source language elements such as characters' names, places, or special terms.

(7) ST: *Ingsun Panembahan Hanyokrowati paring dawuh marang putra ingsun, Raden Mas Rangsang supoyo nglintir keprabon jumeneng noto kang sinebutan asma Susuhunan Agung Hanyokrokusuma. Lan ingsun uga ngersaake putraku nambut silaning akrami karo putrine Adipati Batang kang sakmengkone bakal jumeneng garwa pati kang sinebutan Kanjeng Ratu Kencana.*

LT: I, Panembahan Hanyokrowati, give (a) decree to my son, Raden Mas Rangsang, so that (he) shifts power (and) enthroned (as) ruler, who is called (by the name) Susuhunan Agung Hanyokrokusuma. And I also wish my son to accept the marriage union with the daughter of the Duke of Batang, (who) later will become wife (until) death, (who is) called Kanjeng Ratu Kencana.

TT: Panembahan Hanyokrowati command my son, Raden Mas Rangsang to be crowned as king and hold title of Susuhunan Agung Hanyokrokusuma. And I order my son to tie a pledge with the daughter of Adipati Batang who shall be the Queen Consort and be endowed with the title of Kanjeng Ratu Kencana or Lady Batang.

Speech Level: *Wredo-kromo* (Level 7)

In the dialog spoken in Wredo-kromo (Level 7), the subtitler retains many cultural terms and titles through the imitation strategy. As defined by Vrancken and Delesalle (2023), a person's name is usually related to the language and culture of their heritage. For instance, in the TT, names and titles such as "Panembahan Hanyokrowati," "Raden Mas Rangsang," "Susuhunan Agung Hanyokrokusuma," and "Kanjeng Ratu Kencana" are not translated into English, but left in their original form. This strategy allows the cultural nuances and honorifics inherent in Wredo-kromo to remain present in the target text, even though the audience may not fully understand the socio-historical meanings behind the terms. As a result, imitation functions as a way to maintain the authenticity of the high register of *Wredo-kromo*. In this context, titles and terms of nobility are not replaced by foreign equivalents, but rather retained so that the subtitle reader still captures the formal and sacred atmosphere of the speech.

Deletion, used 24 times (8.03%), removes some or all information from the source text.

(8) ST: *Saking Brang Wetan, Ndoro Guru.*

LT: From Brang Wetan, Ndoro Guru.

TT: We are from the Eastern region.

Speech Level: *Mudo-kromo* (Level 9)

In the source language, an honorary greeting, "*Ndoro Guru,*" shows high respect to Ki Jejer as a teacher and respected figure. However, this greeting is wholly omitted in the English subtitles. The greeting in Mudo-kromo has an important function to mark social hierarchy and respect. Still, it is omitted for the sake of limited subtitle space as well as to maintain the comprehensibility of the audience who are not familiar with the Javanese *unggah-ungguh* system. Thus, although the locational meaning is still conveyed, the deletion strategy

results in the loss of the socio-cultural dimension typical of *Mudo-kromo*, so that the high register in the source language is reduced to a neutral statement in the target language.

Resignation, appearing 12 times (4.01%), is used when the translator cannot find an adequate translation.

(9) ST: *Halah kemayu!*

LT: Ugh, so pretentious!

TT: -

Speech Level: *Ngoko Lugu* (Level 1)

The entire source language utterance, "*Halah kemayu!*" was not transferred into the English subtitles. In this context, the utterance is delivered between *cantrik* (students of the hermitage) and does not advance the story's plot. Narratively, the utterance functions more as a lighthearted comment that adds colour to the interaction, but does not affect the flow or development of the main characters. Considering the time limit of the subtitles and the focus of the audience's attention on the core dialogue, the translator chose to remove them completely. Since *Ngoko Lugu* is characterized by its expressive, emotional, and often spontaneous interjections, subtitlers may consider such utterances non-essential to the storyline and ignore them. As a result, the familiarity and emotional expressiveness of *Ngoko Lugu* are entirely lost in the target text, illustrating how the strategy of resignation can compromise the socio-pragmatic dimension of speech for the sake of subtitle efficiency.

Decimation, appearing only once (0.33%), significantly reduces the text.

(10) ST: *Lembayung, sing sabar yo nduk, ya. Sabar. Ojo mbok gawe susah yo, nduk.*

LT: Lembayung, be patient, daughter, okay? Patience. Don't make (things) difficult, okay, daughter.

TT: Be patient, child.

Speech Level: *Ngoko Lugu* (Level 1)

"Be patient, child," conveys only one core message— advice to be patient—and one element of a kinship greeting. The character Lembayung's name, which appears at the beginning of the speech, does not appear in the subtitles,

possibly because it is considered clear from the visual context. Repetition, interjections, and the familiar nuances of *Ngoko Lugu* were removed, as is the prohibition "*ojo mbok gawe susah yo, nduk*" (do not make things difficult, okay, daughter), which has a different communicative function from the previous advice. In addition, the particles "*yo*" and "*ya,*" which give an interpersonal feel, are also removed. As a result, of the three main messages in the source text - comforting, reinforcing advice, and giving prohibition - the subtitle only retains the first message. In comparison, the other two messages and their relational elements are lost. Aligns with Sadighi & Sevindik (2025), who found that the decimation strategy can change the meaning of translation when the use of words forced for idiomatic or religious situations is ignored.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the relationship between the nine sublevels of Javanese speech levels and Henrik Gottlieb's subtitling strategies is both complex and selective. At low levels, such as *Ngoko Lugu*, which is characterized by straightforward and emotional expressions, subtitlers tend to employ condensation, decimation, or even resignation strategies to condense or remove repetitive utterances considered non-essential in the subtitles. Meanwhile, in *Antyo-boso* and *Boso-antyo*, which contain familiar yet polite nuances, the paraphrase strategy is more dominant as it allows the transfer of politeness in the form of expressions that are natural to the global audience.

In the intermediate sublevels, such as *Madyo-ngoko, Madyantoro*, and Madyo-kromo, transfer and condensation strategies are often chosen to maintain the basic meaning while simplifying ambiguous language forms for non-Javanese audiences. This reflects how the intermediate level of politeness in the source language is more often neutralized into a common formal register in the target language. Meanwhile, at higher sublevels, such as *Wredo-kromo* and *Mudo-kromo*, the imitation strategy plays a crucial role in maintaining cultural terms and noble titles (e.g., Panembahan Hanyokrowati or

Kanjeng Ratu Kencana), although the element of deep respect cannot be fully conveyed. In *Kramantoro*, which is formally neutral, paraphrase and condensation strategies are used to maintain a balance between formality and readability.

Thus, it can be concluded that the application of subtitling strategies is not only determined by the technical limitations of subtitles, but also influenced by the type of sublevel of Javanese speech. The higher the level of speech, the greater the tendency for subtitlers to use paraphrase, transfer, and imitation to maintain formality and cultural terms. Conversely, the lower the speech level, the greater the likelihood of using condensation, decimation, and resignation to simplify or remove emotional expressions. These results confirm that subtitling strategies function as a negotiation mechanism between the technical needs of audiovisual media and the socio-cultural complexity of the Javanese *unggah-ungguh* system.

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