



## Intercultural Communication in *Miracle in Cell No. 7* Movie : Comparative Study Between Korea and Indonesia Version

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**Abstract.** Film serves as a vital medium for reflecting cultural values and functions as an effective tool for intercultural communication. This study explores the differences in communication styles between the Korean and Indonesian adaptations of *Miracle in Cell No. 7*, focusing on how culture influences the expression of emotions, authority, and moral values through verbal and nonverbal elements. Employing a mixed-method approach, this research integrates qualitative thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to examine key scenes, along with quantitative coding to statistically compare communicative elements. Hall's (1976) theory of high-context and low-context communication provides the main theoretical framework to understand the intercultural distinctions between the two versions. The results show that the Korean adaptation relies more heavily on gestures (53.33%), such as physical aggression and exaggerated movements, while the Indonesian version (42.86%) places greater emphasis on verbal articulation and religious expression. Dramatic tonal shifts are more common in the Korean version (26.67%), whereas the Indonesian adaptation (28.57%) maintains a more controlled tone of voice. Facial expressions are more exaggerated in the Korean version (6.67%), particularly in scenes involving authority, while the Indonesian characters (9.52%) display subtler and more restrained expressions. Implicit communication, including religious symbolism, is more prominent in the Indonesian adaptation (19.05%), incorporating Islamic prayers and teachings, whereas the Korean version (13.33%) subtly includes Christian elements. This study reveals that while both adaptations reflect high-context communication cultures, the Korean version emphasizes physical expressiveness and hierarchical interaction, while the Indonesian version highlights verbal communication, religious themes, and emotional restraint. These findings reinforce the role of cinema as a medium for identity representation and cross-cultural understanding.

**Keywords:** Cultural Identity, High-Context Culture, Intercultural Communication, Nonverbal Communication, Verbal Communication

### 1. INTRODUCTION

A movie is a form of visual storytelling that conveys narratives through moving images, sound, and dialogue (Monaco, 2009). As a powerful medium of communication, movies not only entertain but also serve as reflections of social realities, cultural values, and historical contexts (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013). Movies can influence audiences' perceptions, shape cultural identities, and facilitate cross-cultural understanding by presenting stories from diverse perspectives (Anderson, 2006). Movies are created through a structured process involving scriptwriting, directing, cinematography, editing, and sound design, all of which contribute to the overall impact on audiences. In the context of intercultural communication, movies serve as a bridge between different cultures, showcasing unique traditions, beliefs, and social norms while also revealing universal human emotions. Due to differences in language, traditions, and worldviews, intercultural communication can lead to both meaningful connections and misunderstandings. Understanding these differences is essential in today's globalized world,

where cultural exchanges frequently occur through travel, business, education, and media (Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2010). Movies, in particular, serve as a powerful medium for portraying intercultural communication, offering insights into how different cultures express emotions, relationships, and societal values. While the core narrative remains unchanged, the two adaptations reflect their respective cultural values, communication styles, and societal norms. These differences provide an excellent opportunity to examine how intercultural communication is embedded in storytelling and cinematic expression.

Culture is a complex and dynamic system according to Hofstede (2001), shared ideas, values, practices, behaviors, and artifacts that define a community and are passed down from generation to generation. It shapes individuals' perceptions, interactions, and communication styles, influencing how they interpret and respond to the world around them. In the context of intercultural communication, culture determines how messages are encoded, conveyed, and decoded between individuals from different backgrounds (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Based on Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory (2001), cultures can be analyzed based on factors Individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity vs. femininity, long-term vs. short-term orientation, indulgence vs. restraint are some examples. These cultural aspects, impact various aspects of communication, including storytelling in movies. For instance, the South Korean and Indonesian versions of *Miracle in Cell No. 7* reflect their respective cultures through narrative choices, character development, and emotional expressions. South Korea, a collectivist and high-context culture, emphasizes non-verbal communication, emotional depth, and hierarchical relationships in its storytelling. Meanwhile, Indonesia, also a collectivist society but with strong religious influences, integrates explicit moral and religious themes in its adaptation. By applying intercultural communication theories, this study examines how cultural values shape the differences in narrative and emotional delivery in both versions of the film, highlighting the role of culture in shaping cinematic experiences.

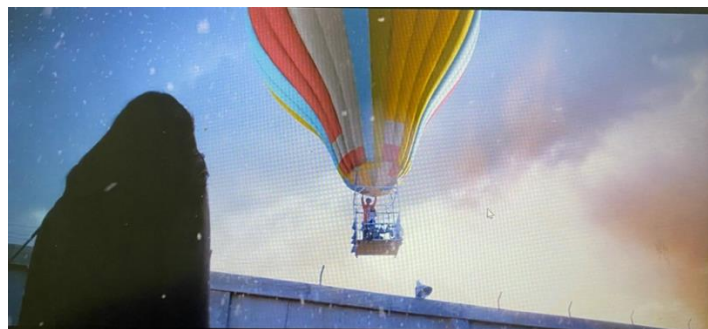
Intercultural communication is the process of transferring information between persons from various cultural backgrounds, where differences in language, values, beliefs, and communication styles influence how messages are interpreted and understood (Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2010). Edward T. Hall (1976) developed the notion of high and low context cultures, which explains how different societies communicate implicitly or explicitly. High-context cultures, such as South Korea and Indonesia, rely heavily on nonverbal cues, indirect expressions, and shared cultural understanding to convey meaning. The film *Miracle in Cell No. 7*, originally a South Korean production (2013) and later adapted in Indonesia

(2022), provides a compelling case study for examining high-context communication through storytelling. Both versions depict the deep emotional bond between a mentally challenged father, Lee Yong-gu (Korea) or Dodo Rozak (Indonesia), and his daughter, who fights for justice after his wrongful imprisonment. A key example of Hall's high-context culture can be observed in the Korean version when the father's love for his daughter is conveyed through subtle gestures, prolonged silences, and indirect expressions of affection. Similarly, the Indonesian adaptation maintains nonverbal cues, incorporating emotional depth through facial expressions, religious undertones, and cultural traditions, reinforcing Indonesia's status as a high-context culture.

Edward T. Hall's (1976) idea of high-context communication describes how certain cultures convey meaning primarily through implicit cues rather than direct verbal expression. In a high-context culture, messages are understood through shared experiences, body language, tone, and contextual cues. These cultures prioritize indirect communication, strong in-group relationships, and traditions, making interpretation dependent on social norms and emotional depth. Countries such as South Korea, Japan, and Indonesia exemplify high-context communication, where unspoken social rules and subtle emotional expressions are crucial for understanding meaning. Applying this theory to *Miracle in Cell No. 7*, the South Korean version reflects high-context communication by relying on emotional expressions, silence, and subtle interactions to convey the depth of relationships and conflicts. The Indonesian adaptation similarly employs nonverbal communication and cultural symbolism, such as religious expressions and community interactions, to enhance emotional engagement. By analyzing these aspects, this study highlights how high-context communication styles shape storytelling, emotional depth, and audience connection in different cultural contexts. Applying this theory to *Miracle in Cell No. 7*, the South Korean version reflects high-context communication by relying on emotional expressions, silence, and subtle interactions to convey the depth of relationships and conflicts. The Indonesian adaptation similarly employs nonverbal communication and cultural symbolism, such as religious expressions and community interactions, to enhance emotional engagement. By analyzing these aspects, this study highlights how high-context communication styles shape storytelling, emotional depth, and audience connection in different cultural contexts.

According to Falcon Pictures (2022), the Indonesian adaptation of *Miracle in Cell No. 7* is a retelling of the widely acclaimed South Korean film directed by Lee Hwan-kyung (2013). The movie follows the heartwarming yet tragic the story of a mentally challenged father, Dodo Rozak, who is unfairly imprisoned for a crime he did not commit, and his close relationship

with his daughter, Kartika. According to experts, the movie beautifully portrays the themes of love, sacrifice, and injustice, reflecting Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions, particularly the aspects of collectivism and power distance. The central relationship between Dodo Rozak and Kartika highlights the strong familial bonds and emotional attachment that are deeply embedded in Indonesian cultural values. Movie analyst Dr. Rahmawati notes that "the unwavering love between Dodo and Kartika transcends barriers, demonstrating the resilience of parental love in the face of injustice" (2022). In *Miracle in Cell No. 7*, the father-daughter relationship is a key element that resonates with audiences, emphasizing emotional closeness, loyalty, and devotio. High-context communication relies on nonverbal cues, implicit meanings, and shared cultural understanding rather than explicit dialogue (Hall, 1976). In such cultures, emotions and ideas are often conveyed through gestures, expressions, and environmental symbolism rather than direct verbal exchanges. This is evident in the final scene of *Miracle in Cell No. 7*, where the South Korean version (2:02:11 – 2:03:09) depicts the daughter envisioning herself as a child, riding a hot air balloon with her father amidst falling snow. The presence of snow and the imagined reunion serve as subtle symbols of warmth, nostalgia, and an emotional farewell, reinforcing their deep bond without relying on words.



**Picture 1.** Example

- 이용구 : "하이, 이 아빠야!! 예승아, 아빠 여기 있어!" (손을 흔들며) "*Hi, it's Daddy!! Ye-seung, Daddy is here!*" (waving his hand)
- 예승 : "안녕히 계세요, 아빠." "*Goodbye, Daddy.*"
- 이용구 : "안녕, 예승아. 또 만나자. 사랑해. 또 만나자. 땅콩 잘 먹고 비타민도 챙겨 먹어. 사랑해." "*Goodbye, Ye-seung. See you again. I love you. See you again. Eat your peanuts and take your vitamins. I love you.*"

This scene exemplifies high-context communication through its reliance on non-verbal cues, subtle emotional delivery, and environmental symbolism rather than direct verbal

expression. The tone remains soft, warm, and restrained, avoiding excessive dramatization while still conveying deep emotions. Instead of explicitly stating his sadness, Lee Yong-go expresses love and care through everyday reminders like eating peanuts and taking vitamins an indirect way of showing affection common in Korean culture. The visual elements, such as the falling snow and the imagined reunion in the hot air balloon, further reinforce nostalgia and emotional depth without the need for explicit dialogue. This approach aligns with high-context communication, where meaning is often embedded in gestures, facial expressions, and shared cultural understanding rather than spoken words.



**Picture 2.** Example

- Dodo Rozak : "Ble blee." (membuat lelucon menenangkan) *"Ble blee." (making a comforting joke)*
- Dodo Rozak : "Dada Ika, dada. Bapak terbang ya... Bapak terbang." *"Bye-bye, Ika, bye-bye. Daddy is flying, Daddy is flying."*
- Tika : "Iya... Pak." (sambil menangis) *"Yes, Dad..." (crying)*
- Dodo Rozak : "Dada Tika, Bapak sayang Tika." *"Bye-bye, Tika. Daddy loves you."*
- Tika : "Selamat tinggal, Pak." (melambaikan tangan) *"Goodbye, Dad." (waving her hand)*
- Dodo Rozak : "Bapak sayang sama Tika!" (dengan suara yang sangat lantang dan keras) *"Daddy loves Tika so much!" (in a very loud and intense voice)*

In contrast, the Indonesian of *Miracle in Cell No. 7* demonstrates a more direct and verbal emotional expression compared to the Korean version. Unlike the Korean adaptation, where emotions are conveyed subtly through non-verbal cues and soft tones, the Indonesian version relies on clear verbal articulation and volume to express deep emotions. Dodo Rozak's farewell begins with a light-hearted joke, attempting to ease the emotional weight of the moment, which reflects the Indonesian cultural tendency to maintain warmth and positivity even in difficult situations. However, as the farewell intensifies, his tone shifts dramatically he shouts his love for Tika in a high-volume, emotionally charged voice, making his feelings explicitly clear. This direct and vocalized expression of affection aligns with Indonesia's

preference for spoken reassurance and emotional clarity, distinguishing it from the more restrained, high-context approach in the Korean adaptation. The contrast between Tika's quiet, tearful response and Dodo Rozak's loud declaration emphasizes the heightened emotional intensity of the scene, making the farewell feel raw and deeply personal. This divergence underscores the nuanced variations within high-context cultures, where the degree of indirectness in storytelling can be influenced by societal expectations and cultural norms. By analyzing these adaptations, it becomes evident that high-context communication plays a pivotal role in shaping narrative techniques, emphasizing the use of visual metaphors and nonverbal elements to evoke emotional resonance and deepen audience engagement. Based on the explanation above it can be known that gesture and artistic movement can have meaning that are not shown directly to the audience. As for related research such as:

Mei Li (20). Highlights, Trends in categories and Mechanisms in Asian Global Communication Research for the Twenty-First Century. *The Journal of Intercultural Communication*: Taylor & Francis. 2. Mingyan Wu (2023). *Cross-Cultural Communication of Japanese Animated Films in China Within the New Media Context*. *Journal of The International Symposium on Worldwide Politics and Socio-Humanities: Proceedings*. 3. David Deterding, 2019. *Intercultural communication in Asia: education, language, and values*. Taylor and Francis publish Asian Englishes. 4. Sajid Ali, Prof. Dr. Sayeda Daud, and Dr. Muhammad Ibrar (2021). *Connectivity and Communication in South Asia: A BRI Case Study*. *Pakistan Journal of International Relations*. 5. Jim Macnamara (2021). *Communication Practice Trends in Asia-Pacific: Focus on New Technologies, but Concerns about Trust and Ethics*. *Journal of Communication and Media in Asia Pacific (CMAP)*. By conducting a detailed analysis of *Miracle in Cell No. 7*, we illustrate how cultural communication styles shape audience perception and emotional engagement, providing an in-depth understanding of the unique narrative strategies employed in high-context cultures. This viewpoint not only distinguishes our research from current literature, but it also provides useful insights into the junction of intercultural communication and cinematic expression.

## **2. REVIEW RELATED LITERATURE**

Edward T. Hall (1976) established the high-context hypothesis, which describes how various civilizations communicate using contextual signals, indirectness, and explicitness. According to Hall, cultures may be classified along a continuum from high-context to low-context, which influences how communications are received, processed, and understood in different social circumstances.

## High-Context Communication

A high-context culture is strongly based on tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures and implicit communication.

- Tone of voice is vital for communicating emotions and intentions without explicitly stating them. The intonation of a character's voice can signal emotional shifts, such as a rising tone to express excitement or nervousness, or a flat tone to convey indifference or emotional numbness. The pitch of the voice further contributes to the emotional atmosphere, with a low pitch suggesting sadness or calmness, and a higher pitch indicating anger or joy.

Example: In *Miracle in Cell No. 7* (South Korean version), when Lee Yong-gu first interacts with his fellow inmates, his hesitant and trembling voice, combined with a rising intonation, conveys nervousness and fear despite his friendly demeanor. In contrast, when he speaks to his daughter, his voice adopts a soft, warm tone, emphasizing his deep affection and care for her.

- Facial expressions are another key form of nonverbal communication in high-context films, revealing emotions that are often not verbally expressed. The eyes, for instance, can convey a range of emotions, such as avoidance or guilt when a character avoids eye contact, or intimacy and confrontation when intense eye contact is made. The mouth and eyebrows also provide subtle clues to a character's feelings tight-lipped smiles can suggest awkwardness or politeness, while frowns may indicate disappointment or concern. In high-context films, the focus is often on fleeting expressions, where a character's true emotions may be masked quickly, requiring the audience to pay close attention to micro-expressions that reveal the underlying emotional state.

Example: During the courtroom scene in the South Korean adaptation of *Miracle in Cell No. 7*, Yong-gu remains mostly silent while his daughter tries to defend him. His lowered gaze and slight trembling of his lips subtly express his helplessness and sadness, demonstrating the emotional weight of the moment without needing dialogue. The Indonesian adaptation follows a similar pattern, with Dodo Rozak's teary eyes and downturned expression revealing his internal turmoil.

- Gestures are vital in high-context films, as they often carry cultural and symbolic meanings that go beyond verbal communication. Symbolic gestures, such as gesturing towards the sky or clasping hands together, can communicate profound emotions like

hope, spirituality, or respect. Additionally, body language and posture offer further insight into a character's emotional state or social status. For example, a character who slouches may appear defeated, while one who stands tall exudes confidence.

Example: In the South Korean version, a poignant moment occurs when Lee Yong-gu's cellmates clasp their hands together and bow slightly before him as he prepares for execution. This silent gesture signifies their respect and sorrow. Similarly, in the Indonesian version, the inmates place a comforting hand on Dodo Rozak's shoulder, a culturally familiar gesture of solidarity and support.

- Implicit communication to convey emotions, relationships, and cultural nuances. This type of communication is indirect, relying heavily on nonverbal cues and symbolic storytelling rather than clear-cut dialogue. In implicit (high-context) communication, films may use facial expressions and subtle body language to convey emotional states and interpersonal dynamics. For example, a character might avoid eye contact or twitch their lips to indicate guilt, tension, or nervousness, all without speaking a word.

Example: In the final scene of the South Korean version, when the daughter imagines herself in a hot air balloon with her father amidst falling snow, the moment is entirely silent, relying solely on imagery to convey their unbreakable bond and lingering love. In contrast, the Indonesian version presents the father alone in the balloon, symbolizing his departure in a more straightforward manner, reinforcing the implicit yet powerful nature of high-context storytelling.

In these cultures, most of the meaning is contained in the social environment, connections, and traditions, rather than being evident in language. This type of communication is often seen in collectivist societies, where maintaining harmony and understanding without direct confrontation is highly valued. High-context communication is characterized by indirectness, formality, and an emphasis on social hierarchy.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study adopts a mixed-method approach, using both qualitative and quantitative content analysis to analyze intercultural communication differences in *Miracle in Cell No. 7* between the Korean and Indonesian versions. Content analysis is an effective method for analyzing cultural representations in media, facilitating the discovery of reoccurring themes, storylines, and communication methods (Krippendorff, 2018). The qualitative aspect of this study explores how cultural norms, emotional expressions, and implicit communication styles shape storytelling, while the quantitative aspect involves a statistical comparison of



communicative elements, such as gestures, tone of voice, facial expressions, and implicit communication, to identify measurable differences between the two adaptations. Drawing on Hall's (1976) high-context and low-context communication theory, this study investigates how implicit and explicit communication is embedded in the films through verbal and nonverbal cues, emotional expression, and cultural norms. The primary data consists of both film adaptations, which will be analyzed through a comparative thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) by examining key scenes that highlight differences in language use, gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice. A quantitative coding system is used to categorize these elements, allowing for statistical comparisons between the two versions. Additionally, transcriptions of selected dialogues will be used for a detailed linguistic and semiotic comparison, supported by secondary sources such as journal articles and books on intercultural communication (Hofstede, 2001) and media representation (Creswell, 2013). This study, by integrating qualitative and quantitative data, guarantees a full explanation of how cultural origins impact narrative strategies and audience involvement. The qualitative analysis provides in-depth insights into narrative structure and emotional delivery, while the quantitative approach offers objective data on communicative patterns. Ultimately, this research contributes to a broader discourse on the role of cinema in fostering cross-cultural understanding, providing insights into how different societies adapt the same narrative while preserving their unique cultural identity.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the Korean and Indonesian adaptations of *Miracle in Cell No. 7* consists of 15 communicative elements from the Korean version and 21 from the Indonesian version. This data was analyzed to compare how each adaptation utilizes gestures, tone of voice, facial expressions, and implicit communication to convey emotions and cultural values. The results indicate that while both films belong to high-context cultures, they exhibit significant differences in their approach to storytelling and character interactions.

##### Percentage Analysis of High Context Communicative Elements

**Table 1.** Percentage Analysis of High Context

Element	Korean Version (%)	Indonesian Version (%)
Gestures	53.33% (8/15)	42.86% (9/21)
Tone of Voice	26.67% (4/15)	28.57% (6/21)
Facial Expressions	6.67% (1/15)	9.52% (2/21)

Implicit Communication	13.33% (2/15)	19.05% (4/21)
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The table above presents a comparative analysis of communicative elements between the Korean and Indonesian adaptations of *Miracle in Cell No. 7*, highlighting how each version employs different strategies in expressing emotions, delivering dialogue, and conveying implicit messages. The Korean adaptation relies heavily on gestures (53.33%), such as physical aggression, exaggerated movements, and bowing, which play a crucial role in expressing emotions and reinforcing social hierarchy and authority. This reflects Korea's high-context culture, where non-verbal communication is essential for conveying meaning. In contrast, the Indonesian adaptation has a lower percentage of gestures (42.86%), indicating a more restrained and controlled physical expression of emotions, in line with Indonesia's cultural preference for verbal articulation and emotional moderation.

The use of tone of voice is relatively balanced in both versions, with 26.67% in the Korean version and 28.57% in the Indonesian version, showing that vocal intonation is a crucial aspect of emotional storytelling in both cultures. However, the way tone is applied differs the Korean version uses dramatic shifts, from whispers to intense shouting, whereas the Indonesian version prefers a more controlled and formal delivery, reserving raised voices for moments of extreme emotional intensity. Regarding facial expressions, the Korean adaptation employs them less frequently (6.67%) but in an amplified and dramatic manner to intensify emotions, intimidate, or establish dominance, as seen in the courtroom interrogation scene (07:25). In contrast, the Indonesian version utilizes facial expressions slightly more (9.52%) but in a subtle and restrained way, aligning with Indonesia's cultural norms of emotional control and politeness. A significant difference is found in implicit communication, which includes religious influences and symbolic storytelling. The Indonesian version has a higher percentage (19.05%) compared to the Korean adaptation (13.33%), emphasizing Indonesia's strong integration of Islamic values through explicit prayers, Quranic recitations, and religious discussions. The Korean adaptation, while still incorporating Christian symbolism, does so in a more subtle, non-verbal manner, such as the Bible blessing scene (42:40). Edward T. Hall's high-context communication theory suggests that cultures like Korea and Indonesia rely heavily on non-verbal cues, implicit communication, tone, gestures, and expressions to convey meaning. Although both versions of *Miracle in Cell No. 7* exhibit these features, the Korean version tends to emphasize exaggerated physical gestures and tonal variations, whereas the

Indonesian version leans toward subtle expressions and indirect verbal cues. Below is a detailed comparison based on tone of voice, gestures, expressions, and implicit communication.

### Tone of Voice



**Picture 3.** Example

기자 : "이 살인범은 경찰청장에게 복수를 했으며, 이는 국가 경찰의 이미지에 대한 공격입니다. 범인은 곧 이곳에서 재현을 위해 도착할 예정입니다."

*"This murderer took revenge on the police commissioner. This is an attack on the image of the national police. The perpetrator will soon arrive here to reenact the crime."*

Tone of voice plays a crucial role in high-context communication, as it conveys emotions, power dynamics, and social hierarchy. The Korean adaptation of *Miracle in Cell No. 7* effectively uses dramatic vocal variations to enhance emotional intensity, particularly in media coverage of Lee Yong-gu's case. The journalist's tone is sharp, high-pitched, and intimidating (14:04), emphasizing the public outrage and pressure surrounding the protagonist's trial. This reporting style aligns with South Korea's tendency for sensationalized media delivery, where news anchors often use high-energy speech patterns, fluctuating pitch, and an authoritative tone to engage audiences and evoke strong emotions. In this scene, the journalist's urgent and judgmental tone suggests a societal bias against Lee Yong-gu, reinforcing the public's perception of him as a guilty criminal before any trial proceedings take place. The intensity in vocal delivery also mirrors South Korean media's use of dramatic storytelling techniques, where reporters often raise their voices to highlight scandal and controversy.



**Picture 4.** Example

Reporter : "Saat ini polisi telah melakukan penangkapan terhadap pelaku pembunuhan kepada gadis cilik berusia 7 tahun bernama Melati, putri tunggal dari Ketua Partai Pembangunan Nasional. Pria berinisial DR tersebut telah ditetapkan menjadi tersangka." *"At this moment, the police have arrested the suspect in the murder of a 7-year-old girl named Melati, the only daughter of the Chairman of the National Development Party. The man, identified by the initials DR, has been officially named a suspect."*

In contrast to the Korean adaptation's intense and dramatic news coverage, the Indonesian version presents a more neutral and restrained tone when reporting on Dodo Rozak's case. The journalist's delivery is calm, formal, and factual (23:38), aligning with Indonesia's preference for polite and indirect communication. Unlike the Korean version, where reporters use a high-pitched and urgent tone to evoke outrage, the Indonesian journalist avoids sensationalism, making the news feel less judgmental and more objective. This difference reflects how Indonesian media tends to prioritize formality and controlled expression, even in emotionally charged situations. Rather than exaggerating the accusations, the report simply states the facts, allowing viewers to interpret the situation without being emotionally swayed by the journalist's tone. This aligns with Indonesia's high-context communication style, where subtlety and indirect messaging play a key role in information delivery.

### **Gestures**



**Picture 5.** Example

리더 : "이 개자식아!" (매우 강하게 뺨을 때린다.) "*You bastard!*" (*slaps very hard.*)

이용구 : (소리치며 울음) (*screaming and crying.*)

춘호 : "미성년자 성범죄." "*Sexual assault of a minor.*"

리더 : "이 개자식아!" (이용구를 주먹으로 때린다.) "*You bastard!*" (*punches Lee Yong-go.*)

In the Korean adaptation of *Miracle in Cell No. 7*, violence is immediately used as a means of expressing moral outrage when the prisoners learn about Lee Yong-gu's alleged crime (21:53). Instead of reacting with verbal insults alone, they physically attack him, demonstrating a strong cultural tendency to show extreme emotions through physical aggression in storytelling. This reaction is not just about punishing a criminal but also about reinforcing social hierarchy within the prison. The gang leader's slap and punch symbolize power and dominance, making it clear that prisoners enforce their own sense of justice through physical actions rather than words. This aligns with South Korean high-context communication, where non-verbal expressions such as gestures, tone shifts, and physical force carry deep emotional meaning.



**Picture 6.** Example

Bewok : "Lho, bunuh anak kecil? HAH! HAH! KAU!" "*You killed a little kid? HAH! HAH! YOU!*"

Leader Geng : "**Diam! Memperkosa, membunuh?**" (**Pura-pura mencekik**) "*silence! Raping, killing?*" (*Pretends to strangle him.*)

Asrul : "Hukuman mati, bang!" "*Death penalty, bro!*"

The Indonesian adaptation of *Miracle in Cell No. 7* demonstrates a clear preference for verbal confrontation over physical aggression, aligning with Indonesia's cultural emphasis on politeness and emotional control. Instead of immediately resorting to physical violence, the prisoners express their anger through accusatory and aggressive language, repeatedly yelling at Dodo. This shift from physical to verbal aggression highlights Indonesia's indirect approach

to conflict resolution, where strong emotions are often conveyed through words rather than physical acts. A notable difference in this scene is how the leader of the gang pretends to strangle Dodo instead of actually attacking him. This performance of aggression serves as a symbolic punishment rather than a literal act of violence, reinforcing the idea that social condemnation in Indonesian culture is often expressed through collective verbal disapproval rather than immediate physical retaliation. The repeated use of rhetorical questions and exclamations ("Lho, bunuh anak kecil? HAH! HAH! KAU!") further enhances the emotional weight of the scene, making the accusations feel intense and forceful without physical brutality.

### Facial Expressions



**Picture 7.** Example

**검사** : "피고인 이영수가 어린 최지영을 유괴하고 성추행한 후, 벽돌로 그녀를 살해했습니다. 수사 기관이 이를 모두 입증했으며, 저는 이 사건이 재수사될 필요가 없다고 확신합니다. 감사합니다." *"The defendant, Lee Yong-soo, kidnapped little Choi Ji-young, sexually assaulted her, and killed her by striking her with a brick. The investigators have proven everything, and I am certain that this case does not need to be reinvestigated. Thank you."*

**변호사**: "검찰은 기존의 사실만을 근거로 증거를 제시하고 있으며, 그것이야말로 이 사건에서 가장 큰 오류입니다." *"The prosecutor is presenting evidence based only on the existing facts, and that is the biggest mistake in this case."*

In the Korean version of *Miracle in Cell No. 7*, facial expressions are exaggerated to enhance the emotional impact of intense scenes, especially in the courtroom interrogation of Yesung. One particularly striking example is when the prosecutor aggressively questions Yesung (07:25). Instead of merely raising his voice, he widens his eyes, furrows his brows, and

maintains an intense gaze while speaking in a low, menacing tone. These deliberate facial movements create a psychological sense of intimidation, reinforcing his dominance over the young girl. The use of exaggerated facial expressions in Korean storytelling is consistent with high-context communication, in which nonverbal clues play an important role in expressing power dynamics, emotions, and social hierarchy. By combining piercing eye contact, a clenched jaw, and furrowed brows, the prosecutor's expressions evoke a feeling of authority and fear, making Yesung's vulnerability even more apparent.



**Picture 8.** Example

**Jaksa Penuntut** : "Pada tanggal 22 Maret 2002, terdakwa Dodo Rozak telah melakukan tindakan memasuki pekarangan rumah tanpa izin. Tidak hanya itu, Yang Mulia, terdakwa juga melakukan pembunuhan dengan keji dan pelecehan seksual terhadap Melati Wibisono di halaman belakang rumah menggunakan tongkat kayu." *"On March 22, 2002, the defendant, Dodo Rozak, unlawfully entered private property without permission. Not only that, Your Honor, but the defendant also committed a brutal murder and sexual assault against Melati Wibisono in the backyard using a wooden stick."*

**Jaksa Pembela** : "Jaksa mengatakan bahwa keputusan yang diambil adalah sah karena proses peradilan yang sah dan juga bukti-bukti yang konkret. Namun, justru di situ masalahnya, Pak Hakim. Proses peradilan yang terjadi tidaklah sah dan bukti-bukti yang diajukan tidak valid." *"The prosecutor claims that the verdict is valid due to a proper legal process and concrete evidence. However, that is precisely where the problem lies, Your Honor. The legal process in this case was not legitimate, and the evidence presented is invalid."*

In contrast to the Korean adaptation, which relies on intense facial expressions to convey intimidation, the Indonesian version employs more controlled and subtle expressions,



reflecting Indonesia's cultural emphasis on emotional restraint and politeness. However, the Indonesian prosecutor's character is depicted as visibly arrogant and obnoxious, setting him apart from the colder, more intimidating figure in the Korean version. The Indonesian prosecutor's exaggerated facial expressions, such as eye-rolling, smirking, and sarcastic head tilts, make him appear overconfident, dismissive, and even mocking. His condescending demeanor and animated expressions suggest a sense of self-importance, reinforcing the idea that the trial is unfairly biased against Dodo Rozak. While the Korean version portrays legal professionals as authoritative and imposing through intense gazes and minimal movement, the Indonesian adaptation humanizes the lawyer by making him more expressive and outwardly disdainful. This difference highlights how the two cultures interpret power and legal authority differently Korea through intimidation and emotional suppression, Indonesia through exaggerated verbal and facial expressions to reflect a corrupt and unjust system.

### **Implicit Communication:**



**Picture 9.** Example

**목사** : "위대하시고 거룩하신 하늘 아버지." (설교하며) *Almighty Heavenly Father.*"  
(preaching)

In the Korean adaptation of *Miracle in Cell No. 7*, Christianity is subtly woven into the narrative as a symbol of faith, redemption, and emotional support for the characters. One of the most poignant moments occurs when a prisoner places a Bible on Yesung's head as a form of blessing (42:40), reinforcing the idea that divine guidance and protection are present even in the darkest moments. This religious reference is not overtly explained but is deeply embedded in the high-context storytelling of Korean culture, where spirituality is often expressed through gestures and symbolic objects rather than direct verbal messages. The Bible, as a silent yet powerful presence, signifies hope, forgiveness, and the belief that justice will ultimately prevail beyond human judgment. Christianity in the Korean version serves as an underlying force that influences the moral and emotional struggles of the characters, subtly shaping the audience's



perception of Lee Yong-gu's innocence. This contrasts with the Indonesian adaptation, which incorporates religious themes more explicitly through Islamic prayers and direct verbal expressions of faith. While both versions highlight the importance of religion in providing solace, the Korean film uses non-verbal cues and symbols, while the Indonesian version verbalizes religious devotion through prayers and sermons.



**Picture 10.** Example

**Pak Ustaz** : "Mengajar ngaji." (anak-anak sedang belajar mengaji dan membaca Al-Qur'an  
*"Teaching Quran recitation." (children are learning to recite and read the Quran)*

In contrast to the Korean adaptation, which subtly integrates Christianity through symbolic gestures, the Indonesian version adapts religious themes to align with Islamic values, which are deeply embedded in Indonesian culture and daily life. Instead of relying on Christian symbols like the Bible, the Indonesian adaptation incorporates Islamic expressions of faith through direct verbal prayers, Quranic recitations, and religious discussions. A key example of this occurs in scenes where Tika and other characters engage in explicit Islamic rituals, such as learning to recite the Quran, praying, and seeking guidance through spoken religious expressions. Unlike the Korean version, where faith is implied through silent gestures and objects, the Indonesian adaptation verbalizes spirituality to emphasize the role of Islam in shaping moral values and resilience. One of the most distinct differences is that Tika (Yesung's Indonesian counterpart) does not receive a Bible for blessings.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the intercultural communication differences between the Korean and Indonesian adaptations of *Miracle in Cell No. 7*, focusing on the use of gestures, tone of voice, facial expressions, and implicit communication. The findings indicate that while both adaptations belong to high-context cultures, they exhibit distinct approaches to storytelling and emotional delivery, shaped by their respective cultural

norms and communication styles. The integration of both qualitative and quantitative analysis offers a deeper understanding of how cinematic techniques reflect societal values, particularly in the expression of authority, emotions, and morality. The Korean adaptation heavily relies on gestures (53.33%), using physical aggression, exaggerated movements, and symbolic acts like bowing to communicate emotions and social hierarchy. This reflects Korea's collectivist and hierarchical society, where body language plays a significant role in establishing dominance, respect, and emotional intensity. In contrast, the Indonesian adaptation utilizes gestures less frequently (42.86%), favoring verbal articulation and religious reinforcement over physical expressiveness. While gestures are still present, they tend to be more controlled and reserved, reflecting Indonesia's cultural preference for politeness, emotional restraint, and verbal diplomacy.

The Korean and Indonesian versions of *Miracle in Cell No. 7* provide a fascinating case study in how high-context communication is adapted differently based on cultural, religious, and social influences. The Korean adaptation is visually expressive, physically intense, and emotionally dramatic, making use of body language, voice modulation, and exaggerated facial expressions to immerse the audience in the emotional stakes of the story. Meanwhile, the Indonesian adaptation prioritizes verbal communication, emotional restraint, and religious themes, reflecting Indonesia's collectivist, faith-centered, and harmonious communication style. Finally, this study's findings add to a larger conversation on intercultural communication and cinematic adaptation, revealing how the same narrative may be changed to match with diverse cultural frameworks. The Korean adaptation uses dramatic storytelling, physical intensity, and hierarchical expressions of authority, whereas the Indonesian adaptation relies on verbal clarity, religious devotion, and emotional composure. These variations underscore the deep connection between culture and storytelling, highlighting the ways in which cinema not only entertains but also reflects and reinforces the values of the societies it represents.

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