
RESEARCH ARTICLE

An Analysis of Students' Strategies in Translating Idioms: A Case Study of English Department of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research are to find out (1) the strategies that students used by the 6th semester of the English Department of Teacher Training and Education faculty of UNTIRTA in translating idioms and (2) the accuracy of translating idioms by students in the 6th semester of English Department of Teacher Training and Education faculty of UNTIRTA. The researcher used the qualitative research method by applying content analysis research design in conducting the research. In analyzing the idioms and students' translation, theories by Baker (2011) and Nababan (2012) were used. The result of this research showed that: First, there are 3 out of 5 strategies in translating idioms by Baker's theory used by the students (1) using an idiom with similar meaning but different form (1.5%), (2) translation by paraphrase (85.4%), and (3) translation by omission (13%). The most frequent translation strategies used in translating the idioms are translation by paraphrase. Second, the accuracy of translated results by the students showed that 78 data (23.6%) were accurate, 126 data (38.2%) were less accurate, and 126 data (38.2%) were less accurate. So, the accuracy of translation of idioms in *A Little Life Philosophy* text by students is less accurate and not accurate.

KEYWORDS

Translation, idioms, translation strategy, accuracy level

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1. Introduction

Translating data from SL into TL is not easy, especially in translating idioms. Translating idioms has been a puzzling problem for many people. Someone must comprehend translation and idiomatic expression because they are interconnected. As Adelnia and Dastjerdi (2011) said, "not all idioms have direct equivalents in another language because they are linguistic expressions which are typical for a language and specific to a single culture." Translating idioms is a challenging task for the translator. The meaning of each word in idioms can be different from the meaning that usually we find in daily life. Baker (2011:69) believes the first difficulty that a translator comes across is being able to recognize that he or she is dealing with an idiomatic expression. There is some misinterpretation that occurs when students translate the idioms. They do not notice the idiomatic expression in the text, and they do not know the appropriate strategies that will be used in translating idioms. On the other hand, knowing the strategies for translating idioms is important for the students to get the correct meaning from what they are going to translate. Based on the problem above, the researcher will use the text "*A Little Life Philosophy*", which contains idiomatic expressions to translate by students. Perhaps the students know the knowledge strategies of translation and can translate the text into the good one. So, the researcher will know how the quality of the translation result and what strategies are used by students.

The aims of this research are to find out the strategies that students used in translating the idioms in *A Little of Philosophy* text and to find out the accuracy of translating idioms in *A Little Life Philosophy* text by students in the 6th semester of the English Department of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University.

2. Literature Review

Translation is a process of communication. The objective of translating is to import the knowledge of the original to the foreign reader. Transferring the idea from one language to another language or as we call translating, is not an easy thing to do. Language from one to another society is different, and it also contains different cultures, which is a must for the translator to understand. Translation can refer to the general subject field, the translated text, or the translating process. Munday (2004) defines translation as an incredibly broad notion that can be understood in many different ways. For example, one may talk of translation as a process or a product and identify such sub-types as literary translation, technical translation, subtitling and machine translation; moreover, while more typically, it just refers to the transfer of written texts, the term sometimes also includes interpreting. The translation is not as simple as it seems. It is not only a process of finding equivalence from one language to another using dictionary but also a process of adapting the style and the culture without changing the meaning. The content should be transferred from SL to TL accurately; thus, the readers can easily understand the message, which is in context to be the same as when the original readers understand the SL text.

McCarthy and O'Dell (2003:148) said idioms are fixed expressions with meanings that are usually not clear or obvious. The individual words often give you no help in deciding the meaning. The expression to feel under the weather, which means 'to feel unwell' is a typical idiom. The words do not tell us what it means, but the context usually helps. So, the best way to understand an idiom is to see it in the context because some idioms are fixed in their form and cannot be changed or varied. Halliday (2007:154) says, "an idiom in the language being described is anything for which no equivalent is found in the mother tongue." Many linguists define an idiom as an expression that is fixed and cannot be understood literally, and its meaning cannot be found in the common dictionary. Besides, Jackson and Amvela (2001:65) state that an idiom can be defined as "a phrase, the meaning of which cannot be predicted from the individual meanings of the morphemes it comprises".

To understand the meaning of idioms, the students cannot translate idioms word by word because the meaning of the idiom can be interpreted by interrelating the words. For example, if the students translate the sentence that contains the idiom "*these works are a piece of cake for me*" word by word, it can be has a weird meaning, but when the idiom is translated as a whole sentence, it can be interpreted as "*these works are easy for me*". Baker (2011) said in her book that idioms frequently convey meanings that cannot be comprehended from their individual component. That is why idioms are needed to be understood as a whole. Those make the idioms hard to be translated.

Baker (2011:68) states that the main problems that idiomatic and fixed expressions pose in translation relate to two main areas: the ability to recognize and interpret an idiom correctly; and the difficulties involved in rendering the various aspects of meaning that an idiom or a fixed expression conveys into the target language. These difficulties are much more pronounced in the case of idioms than they are in the case of fixed expression.

According to Baker (2011:71-75), there are main difficulties involved in translating idioms and fixed expressions:

- a. An idiom or fixed expression may have no equivalent in the target language. The way a language chooses to express, or not express, various meanings cannot be predicted and only occasionally matches the way another language chooses to express the same meaning.
- b. An idiom or fixed expression may have a similar counterpart in the target language, but its context of use may be different; the two expressions may have different connotations, for instance, or they may not be pragmatically transferable.
- c. An idiom may be used in the source text in both its literal and idiomatic senses at the same time.
- d. The very convention of using idioms in written discourse, the contexts in which they can be used, and their frequency of use may be different in the source and target language.

So, the main problems in translating idioms are the translator cannot recognize and interpret the idiomatic expressions correctly. It caused that idioms may have no equivalent in the target language, may have a similar pair in the target language, but different use may be used in the source text, both literal and idiomatic, at the same time and the difference between convention, contexts and frequency of use in TL and SL.

Translation strategies are problem-solving tools that can be used by students or translators when they are translating idioms. Baker (2011) shows the kinds of strategies for translating idioms by means of distinguishing the strategies of translating idioms. Here are five translation strategies proposed by Baker:

Table 1 Translation Strategies by Baker (2011)

Strategy	Description
Using an idiom with a similar meaning and form	This strategy involves using an idiom in the target language which conveys roughly the same meaning as that of the source language idiom and, in addition, consists of equivalent lexical items.
Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form	It is often possible to find an idiom or fixed expression in the target language which has a meaning similar to that of the source idiom or expression but which consists of a different lexical item.
Paraphrase	This strategy is the most common way used in translating idioms when a match cannot be found in the target language or when it seems inappropriate to use idiomatic language in the target text because of differences in stylistic preferences of the source and target language.
Omission	An omission is used when Idiom has no close match in Target Language (TL), its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased, or for stylistic reasons.
Compensation	This strategy has two steps: omit the idiom, then replace and insert the other idiom in another position. This strategy is used if the translator cannot use another strategy to translate an idiom, then he/she omits the idiom, replaces and inserts it in another place.

Nababan (2012) proposed a parameter for assessing the quality of translation. This research used an accuracy assessment instrument for assessing the quality of translation.

Table 2 Nababan's Translation Accuracy Assessment Instrument

Translation Category	Score	Assessment Category
Accurate	3	The meaning of words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, sentences or source language texts are transferred accurately into the target language; there is absolutely no distortion of meaning.
Less Accurate	2	The vast majority of the words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, sentences or source language texts have been accurately transposed into the target language. But there is still a distortion of meaning translations, or there is a meaning that is omitted, disturbing the integrity of the message.
Not Accurate	1	The meaning of words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, sentences or source language texts are transferred inaccurately into the target language or deleted.

3. Methodology

This research used the qualitative research method by implementing content analysis. According to Creswell (2012:19), qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. Content analysis is applied because, in this research, the researcher analyzed the data from students' translation results. Content analysis is one of many types of analyzing data in qualitative research. There are several steps in conducting

qualitative content analysis by Creswell (2012:237). The researcher collects data, prepares data for analysis, reads through data, codes the data, and codes the text for description to be used in the research report. This method is used in identifying the translation strategies used and known the quality of translating idiom by students. Besides, it is used in analyzing the accuracy of the idiom translation of the text by students.

The subject of this research was the students in the sixth semester at the English Department of Teacher Training and Education Faculty of UNTIRTA who have passed Translation I and Translation II as well. The data of this research are the idioms found in *A Little Life Philosophy* text. The text was written by Kenneth Beare from <https://www.thoughtco.com/little-life-philosophy-idioms-in-context-4106567>.

There were several steps to analyze the data. The researcher used qualitative data analysis from Miles & Huberman (1994: 10) defined that analysis as consisting of three con-current flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion or drawing verification. In data reduction, the data were collected through a test, which means that the data source was delivered from the students by translating the text given to them, and then being analyzed by the researcher to identify the strategies of translating idioms Baker used in translating text by students and validated by an expert in translation. Data display, the researcher categorises the result of translation based on the strategies that students used in translating idioms and scoring the accuracy level of the translation result. The conclusion is from the findings of this research will answer the questions in the research question.

4. Result and Discussion

The research has been conducted with the purpose of 1) to find out the strategies that students used by the sixth semester of the English Department of Teacher Training and Education Faculty of UNTIRTA in translating idioms, and 2) to find out the accuracy of translating idioms by students at the sixth semester of English Department of Teacher Training and Education Faculty of UNTIRTA.

4.1 The Students' Strategies in Translating Idioms

The researcher found 11 idioms in *the "A Little Life Philosophy"* text. Those idioms are categorised based on the translation strategies proposed by Baker (2011) from students' test results. The researcher only conducted the test on one class, which was the A class in the 6th semester, which consisted of 30 students at the time. To know more detail about those strategies, the frequency of the used strategies by students in each idiom is shown in the table. The example of translated results will show based on the correct and the closest meaning by the students in translating the idioms based on the strategies that students used.

Table 3 Translation Strategies used by Students

No.	Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
1	Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form	5	1.5%
2	By Paraphrase	282	85.4%
3	By Omission	43	13%
	Total	330	100%

Based on the table above, the data showed that paraphrase is a strategy with the highest percentage. It means that the students often used the paraphrase strategy to translate idioms into TL or *Bahasa Indonesia*. This happens because equivalence in the idiom cannot be found in the target language. The differences in stylistic preferences are the reason that no exact idiom is equivalent in the TL.

There are 5 frequent (1.5%) idioms translated by using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form by 30 students. Here is the example of translating an idiom by using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form:

Source Language	Target Language
It is helpful to always keep the presence of mind about you when shopping.	<i>Akan sangat membantu untuk berpikir dengan kepala dingin ketika berbelanja.</i>

From the result above, 5 students used translating idiom by using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form for translating the idiom "presence of mind". In Oxford Dictionary 7th edition, the idiom "presence of mind" means "the ability to remain calm and take quick, sensible action in a difficult situation", which is equally in meaning with the idiom in TL *kepala dingin*. Student number 12 translated "presence of mind" into *kepala dingin* in TL. Therefore, both expressions in the SL and TL refer to the same meaning. In terms of form, both expressions cannot be said as equivalent.

Moreover, there are 282 frequent (85.4%) idioms translated by paraphrase from 30 students. Here is an example of translating an idiom by paraphrase:

Source Language	Target Language
That's truly a horrible feeling! It's also a good idea to find people who aren't going to press your buttons too much.	<i>Itu adalah perasaan yang sangat mengerikan! Sebuah ide bagus untuk mencari seseorang yang tidak akan menekanmu secara berlebihan.</i>

The data above is an example of translation by paraphrase, one out of 30 results. Translation by paraphrase is when there is no equal utterance in the TL that conveys the meaning as in the SL. In Oxford Learners Dictionary, the idiom "push somebody's buttons" means "to make somebody react in either a positive or negative way". Meanwhile, student number 8 used the utterance *menekanmu*, which is not an idiom in TL.

Besides, there are 43 frequent (13%) idioms translated by omission. Here is an example of translating an idiom by omission:

Source Language	Target Language
Rather than fall into the trap of using your credit card too much, wait a day or two.	<i>Dari pada harus menggunakan kartu kredit terlalu sering, tunggu saja satu sampai dua hari.</i>

In Oxford Learners Dictionary, the idiom "the happy medium" means "something that is in the middle between two choices or two ways of doing something". An example, student number 11 did not translate the idiom into the target language. She omitted the idiom without changing the meaning, and the message can still be delivered.

4.2 The Accuracy of Translation Result

In this stage, the researcher will show some result that has been scored by the raters. The researcher counts the mean of the accuracy score or the average score given by two raters. For more description, below are analysis of the accuracy of translation based on raters scoring.

1) Accurate Translation

Accurate translation is the meaning of words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, sentences or source language texts that are transferred accurately into the target language; there is absolutely no distortion of meaning. The score of an accurate translation is 3. The researcher took 2 examples that have accurate scores. There are presented below.

S1/I2
Source Language Friends will kid around, but good friends will hit a happy medium between joking and respecting each other.
Target Language <i>Teman-teman akan bermain-main, tetapi teman-teman yang baik akan menjadi media yang menyenangkan antara bercanda dan saling menghormati.</i>
S11/I3
Source Language Friends will kid around, but good friends will hit a happy medium between joking and respecting each other.
Target Language <i>Seorang teman akan selalu bersenang-senang, tetapi teman yang baik akan berada di antara keduanya, bersenang-senang dan saling menghormati.</i>

From the data above, the translation results have an accurate score. The messages from the SL have been interpreted well into TL, and the meaning of the idioms above is conveyed well. Thus, the researcher consulted the data with the raters to know the score accuracy level in translating to validating this data. Both raters gave a score of 3 toward these data, and the average score is 3. It means the result of the students' translation above is an accurate translation.

2) Less Accurate Translation

The translation is less accurate when there is still a distortion of meaning translations, or there is a meaning that is omitted, disturbing the integrity of the message. Based on the raters scoring of the translation accuracy, the researcher provided an example below.

S12/I5
Source Language It is helpful to always keep the presence of mind about you when shopping.
Target Language <i>Itu akan membantu untuk berpikir dalam kepala dingin ketika berbelanja.</i>

From the data above, the researcher scored the data less accurate in translation. The meaning of *kepala dingin* is not suitable for the meaning in TL. The message is not conveyed well. Thus, the researcher makes sure the data was a less accurate translation by consulted to the raters. The first rater gave a score of 2, and the second rater gave a score of 3. So, the average score from the data above is 2.5, which is the result of TL having less accurate translation.

S26/I7
Source Language Try this trick the next time your heart skips a beat because some beautiful piece of technology calls to you from the shop window.
Target Language <i>Cobalah trik ini dan kamu akan dikejutkan sesuatu karena beberapa teknologi yang bagus memanggil kamu dari jendela toko.</i>

The average score from the data above is 2, which is the result in TL is a less accurate translation. All of the two raters give a score 2 for this translation. It means that the message from the SL is conveyed to the TL. The meaning of the idiom as *dikejutkan* has a distorted meaning from the real meaning of "heart a skip a beat" itself.

3) Not Accurate Translation

Not accurate translation is when the meaning of words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, sentences or source language texts are transferred inaccurately into the target language or deleted. According to the scoring result from two raters, there is an example of not accurate translation below.

S10.I8
Source Language Once you've got this technique under your belt, you'd be surprised how much you will save.
Target Language <i>Pertama kamu mendapatkan cara ini di bawah ikat pinggangmu, kamu akan kaget berapa banyak yang dapat kamu simpan.</i>

The researcher analyzed the data was not an accurate translation. Because *di bawah ikat pinggangmu* is not the real meaning of the idiom, it is transferred inaccurately in TL by the students. From the validation of the first rater and the second, the average score of the translation result above is 1. It means that the message from the SL is not accurate conveyed to the TL.

There were 330 translated results from the students, 23.6% or 78 data are accurate, 38.2% or 126 data are less accurate, and 38.2% or 126 data are not an accurate translation. The result is shown in the form of a table to make it easier to categorize. The table shows how much the data has an accurate translation, less accurate and not accurate translation. There are presented below.

Code Data	Accurate	Less Accurate	Not Accurate
I1	-	17	13
I2	10	15	5
I3	8	13	9
I4	2	15	13
I5	4	5	21
I6	25	-	5
I7	12	4	14
I8	1	28	1
I9	5	1	14
I10	4	26	-
I11	7	2	21
Total	78	126	126

Based on the table above, the data show that a less accurate and not accurate level in translation has a greater result than an accurate level in translation. So, the result of accuracy in translating idioms by students was a less accurate and not accurate translation.

5. Conclusion

In the previous chapter, the researcher analyzed the data and elaborated on the result of the research. From the result of the researcher, it can be concluded there were 11 idioms found in "*A Little Life Philosophy*", and the total of the translated results from 30 students were 330 translated results. There were three strategies out of five strategies by Baker (2011) used by the students in translating the idioms. They are (1) using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form (1.5%), (2) translation by paraphrase (85.4%), and (3) translation by omission (13%). Based on the research result, most of the idioms in "*A Little Life Philosophy*" text were translated by using paraphrase. This happens because equivalence in the idiom cannot be found in the target language. The differences in stylistic preferences are the reason that no exact idiom is equivalent in the target language.

Based on the research of the result of scoring accuracy level in Nababan (2012) instrument, from 330 translated results by the students there were 23.6%, or 78 data are accurate, 38.2% or 126 data are less accurate, and 38.2% or 126 data are not an accurate translation. It can be said that the quality of translation by students in translating idioms was less accurate translation and not accurate translation.

6. Suggestion

Based on the conclusion, the researcher gives some suggestions. Firstly, the English students in the English department should have more knowledge about idioms and translation. Do more exercise in order to improve the ability to recognize and interpret the idioms. So, there will be less misunderstanding in translating the idioms. Second, this research can also lead the next researcher who wants to conduct the same field of research as the reference or comparison that might be relevant to the researched subject. However, this research only focused on the strategies of idioms translation by students and the quality or accuracy of the translated result.

Last but not least, as a reader, we should habituate ourselves to identifying and recognising idioms. This can be done by practising and reading literature that contains idioms. We can learn the idioms in some ways from many sources, for example, by reading an English novel, watching English movies, reading a short text, and many more.

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