

**STRATEGIES IN TRANSLATING IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS
FOUND IN DAVE PELZER'S NOVEL *A CHILD CALLED 'IT'* INTO
A CHILD CALLED 'IT' BY DANAN PRIATMOKO**

**Lilik Sugiarti¹
Thathit Manon Andini²**

Abstract: Translating idiomatic expressions may become the most complicated task for translator in translating process. A translator must recognize, understand, and analyze the idiomatic expressions before selecting the most appropriate strategy to transfer a source idiom into target language. Dave Pelzer's novel *A Child Called 'It'* which is translated by Danan Priatmoko covers some idiomatic expressions to describe the story. The objectives of this study are to describe the idioms found and to analyze the translation strategies used in translating idiomatic expressions in English text of Dave Pelzer's novel *A Child Called 'It'* into *A Child Called 'It'* by Danan Priatmoko.

This research employs descriptive qualitative with content analysis method. The data of this study were idiomatic expressions occurring in English and Bahasa Indonesia text of novel *A Child Called 'It'* with sentences containing idiomatic expressions. The instrument of this study was the researcher herself and a table numbering of the translation units in ST and TT as the supporting instruments to collect and analyze the data. The current project was going to concentrate mainly on idiomatic expression form of noun phrase, verb phrase, and adjective phrase and the strategies of translating idiomatic expressions. To gain the trustworthiness of the research, this study applied detailed analysis of the data, applied theories of strategies in translating idioms by Mona Baker, and examined the process and the result of the research.

Based on the data analysis, in the novel of English version, it was found that there were 90 idioms; meanwhile, in Bahasa Indonesia version, there were 12 idiomatic expressions. Even though a case of translation was not covered by the strategies above, it can be assumed that all of five translation strategies suggested by Baker were applied in process of translating idiomatic expression from English into Bahasa Indonesia.

Key words: Translation Strategies, Idiomatic Expressions

¹ Lilik Sugiarti is an alumna of the English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, The University of Muhammadiyah Malang.

² Dra. Thathit Manon Andini, M.Hum

INTRODUCTION

Idiomatic expressions perhaps become the most difficult part for translator in translating process. A translator must recognize, understand, and analyze the idiomatic expressions before selecting the most appropriate strategy to transfer a source idiom into target language. The ability to identify idiomatic expressions and appropriate strategy is enormous importance. Therefore, the researcher considers strategy in translating idiomatic expression became an interesting issue to discuss.

Meanwhile, a lot of idioms are used in the literary texts (Baker, 2001), one of them is novel. Novels from foreign author present story in different setting, condition, and culture which the readers indirectly get some new knowledge about overseas. These are interesting and also challenging for the translator to translate. Therefore, this research uses The Dave Pelzer's novel *A Child Called 'It'* and its Bahasa Indonesia novel *A Child Called 'It'* by Danan Priatmoko to as the data. It covers some idiomatic expressions as long as the story. It is important because idiom is common expression in source language and becomes the main discussion of this study.

Strategy in translating idiomatic expressions has been analyzed by several researchers. They mostly used Mona Baker's idiomatic translation strategies theory which consists of five categories. Accordingly, the four categories of Baker's

strategies are possible to cope with idiomatic expressions (Hradilová, 2011; Salim & Mehawes, 2013). Meanwhile, compensation is also workable strategy in translating idiom text (Motallebzadeh, 2011:9). In addition, the research conducted by Sari (2013) with her thesis entitled *Strategies in Translating Idiomatic Expressions of Phrasal Verb in Terence Blacker's Bilingual Novel Ms Wiz Goes Live into Ms Wiz Jadi Bintang Televisi by Mala Suhendra*. The idioms which become data are limited to phrasal verb form of idiomatic expressions found in the novel by using Fernando's idioms class theory. Then, they are focused on the source text, English version novel. Another earlier study is conducted by Novianti entitled *An Analysis of The Translation Strategies of Idiomatic Expressions in Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland in Its Translation by Khairi Rumantati*. It also involves the fours strategies in tyranslating idiomatic expressions which are suggested by Mona Baker. Nevertheless, it uses Seidl and McMordie's classification of English idiom to verify the type of idiom in the source text and target text. Then, this study shows that translation by paraphrasing is the most applied strategy (2012).

While the previews study by Sari (2013) put its data just from source language, the researcher believes that the study should analyze both novels in source and target language to find idiomatic expressions. This study will be done similar

to the process by Novianti (2012) which focuses on source text and target text. It is required, idiomatic phrases in source text sometimes are translated into idioms in target text. It means that it is possible to find idioms in target text even though there is no idiom in source text. Besides, the researcher takes this discussion because of her curiosity in the finding other idiomatic *phrasal verbs* such as *noun phrase* and *adjective phrase* which are translated by using the strategies suggested by Baker in the novel *A Child Called 'It'* and its translated version in Bahasa Indonesia *A Child Called 'It'*.

Idiomatic Expressions

Some theories define idiom expression such "a number of words which when taken together have different meaning from the individual meaning of each word" (Seidl and Mc.Modie, 1988). Moreover, Makai et al. (1995) argues "idiom is the assigning of a new meaning to a group of words which already have their own meaning". Then idiom is also defined as "expression which meaning cannot be found out from the constituent words" (Trask, 1999). Other theorist describes translation as "frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form and in the case of idiom, often carry meaning which cannot be deduce from their individual components" (Baker, 2001).

From definitions above, it means

that idiom is an expression which consists of a group of word with their own meaning which cannot be understood from the literal meanings of its words composition.

Types Of Idiom

Makkai et al. (1995) categorizes idiomatic expressions into some aspects: based on idiom simplicity, grammatical form, idiom pairs, idiom with prepositions, verbal idiom, idiom with key words from special categories, and idiom with comparison. Based on grammatical form, Makkai suggests idiomatic expressions into three: noun phrase, verb phrase, and adjective phrase.

Noun phrase idiomatic expression is used, such as in "This is **another cup of tea**". *Another cup of tea* means something to think about or think matter (1995).

Verb phrase is typified such as in "Sir, I came to **ask for your daughter's hand**" John said timidly to Marry's father. *Ask for one's hand* means to ask permission to marry someone (1995).

Then, adjective phrase is used such as in "She was **beside herself** with fear", "He was **beside himself**, he was so angry". *Beside oneself* means very much exited or somewhat crazy (1995).

The Types Of Idioms In Bahasa Indonesia

Khak in *Idiom Dalam Bahasa Indonesia: Struktur Dan Makna* classifies the idiom in Bahasa Indonesia into three

types: complex idiom, phrasal idiom and proverb.

Firstly, it is complex idiom. Complex idiom consists of affixation and reduplication. Affixation has two forms of prefix and affix. Affixation with form of prefix is followed by noun or verb (prefix+noun/verb) such as *mengekor* which constructed from prefix-*meng* + *ekor* (a tail), then has a meaning "have no attitude or point of view". Another one is like *tersemat* (means on sticking), compiled from prefix-*ter* + *semat* which means "thing uses to attach". The form of affix (combination) is followed by noun (affix+noun) as like in *bersemuka* (face to face) compiled from affix-*berse* + *muka* (face). And, *bersebadan* means "to have sexual intercourse" compiled from affix-*berse* + *badan* (body). Then, reduplication is the repeating word. For example: *mata-mata* which means "the spy" reduplication of *mata* (eye). *Kuda-kuda* means "wooden block to brace a roof" which is repeating of *kuda* (horse) (2006).

Secondly, there is phrasal idiom. This form of idiom consists of *verba idiom* and *nomina idiom* which is divided into two phrases. *Verba idiom* is constructed from verb followed by noun (verb+noun) such as *naik darah* means "be angry", in which *naik* (go up) + *darah* (blood). *Adverb* is followed by verb (adverb+verb); like in *sudah berpulang kerahmatullah* means "to be died". Afterward, *nomina idiom* is constructed from noun followed by noun

(noun+noun). For example, a phrase *buaya darat* means "a man who is actively chasing after women". Whereas, it is compiled from *buaya* (crocodile) + *darat* (land). There is also noun followed by adjective (noun+adjective) such as *kuda hitam* which is compiled from *kuda* (horse) followed by *hitam* (black), but has a meaning "a strong rival". Then, *air besar* compiled from *air* (water) and *besar* (big), means "disaster caused by an overflow" (2006).

The last type is proverb. This idiom is also well known as *peribahasa* in Bahasa Indonesia. *Peribahasa* itself means fixed form of a group of words or sentence which generally analogizes a certain meaning (*Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* offline version 1.5.1, 2010). For instance, *sambil menyelam minum air* means "to do more than one work in a time", and *galil lubang tutup lubang* means "to handle a problem by making a new problem" (2006).

Strategies In Translating Idiom

Mona Baker in her book *In Other Word* (2001) suggests five strategies in translating idioms, namely: translation by using an idiom of similar meaning and form, translation by using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, translation by paraphrase, translation by omission, and translation by compensation.

First, strategy in translating idiom is using an idiom of similar meaning and form. This strategy uses an idiom in the target language, which conveys roughly the

same meaning as that of the source-language idiom. In addition, it consists of equivalent lexical items. This kind of match can only occasionally be achieved. For example:

SL: Perhaps Granamyr wanted to show us that things aren't always what they seem.

TL: *Mungkin Granamyr ingin menunjukkan kepada kita bahwa sesuatu hal tidak selalu apa adanya yang kita lihat.*

Back-Translation: Perhaps Granamyr wanted to show us that things are not always as what they are seemed.

The second, strategy in translating idiom is 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 different lexical items. For example:

SL: "Those idiots are letting her get into her stride." said George.

TL: "*Para idiot itu membiarkan dia menumpahkan kemarahannya," kata George.*

Back-translation: "those idiots are letting her to spill her angry," Gorge said.

After that, it is a strategy of translation by paraphrase. This is by far the most common way of 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. For example:

SL: "It was the first week after term ended" said Ron.

TL: "*Terjadinya pada minggu pertama liburan kita" kata Ron.*

Back-translation: "it was at the first week our holiday" Ron said.

Then, it is also translation by omission. As with single words, an idiom may sometimes be omitted altogether in the target text. This may be because it has no close match in the target language, its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased, or for stylistic reasons. For example:

SL: "**Look out!** There is a hole in front of you!"

TT: "*Adalah lubang di depanmu!*"

Back-translation: "There is a hole in front of you!"

The last, it is suggested to use translation by compensation. It is one strategy, which cannot be adequately illustrated simply, because it would take up a considerable amount of space. Briefly, this means that one may either omit or play

down a feature such as idiomatic at the point where it occurs in the source text and introduce it elsewhere in the target text. This strategy is not restricted to idiomatic or fixed expressions and may be used to make up for any loss or meaning, emotional force, or stylistic effect, which may not be possible to reproduce directly at a given point in the target text. Motallebzadeh (2011) concludes this strategy means that one may either omit or play down a feature such as idiomatic at the point where it occurs in the source text and introduce it in another position in the target text. It is not restricted to idiomatic or fixed expressions and may be used to make up for any loss or meaning, emotional force, or stylistic effect, which may not be possible to reproduce directly at a given point in the target text.

Meanwhile, this study uses the five strategies suggested by Baker to analyze the data. The strategies are believed to be workable with idiomatic expressions and also understandable in implying translating work. In this case, the strategies are the main case of the study in analyzing strategy of translating idiom expressions.

Research Method

This research employed descriptive qualitative with content analysis method. The data of this study were idiomatic expressions occurring in English and *Bahasa Indonesia* text of novel *A Child Called 'It'* with sentences containing

idiomatic expressions. The instrument of this study was the researcher herself and a table numbering of the translation units in ST and TT as the supporting instruments to collect and analyze the data. The current project was going to concentrate mainly on idiomatic expression form of noun phrase, verb phrase, and adjective phrase and the strategies of translating idiomatic expressions. To gain the trustworthiness of the research, this study applied detailed analysis of the data, applied theories of strategies in translating idioms by Mona Baker, and examined the process and the result of the research.

Findings and Discussion

The translation strategies theory which are mostly used consists of five categories suggested by Mona Baker (2001). Those strategies were exactly used by translator in translating idiomatic expressions found in Dave Pelzer's novel *A Child Called 'It'* into its translated version in *Bahasa Indonesia A Child Called 'It'*.

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher found that translation by paraphrase is the most applied strategies (73 out of 90 cases). It is suitable with Baker's statement that translating by paraphrase is the common way for translating idiom when equivalence cannot be found in the target language (Baker, 2001). Additionally, it has been proved that the most applied translation strategies of

idiomatic expressions in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* in its translation by Khairi Rumantati is translation by paraphrase.

Then, the second translation strategy frequently used was translation by using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form (8 cases). This strategy is possible to be used in some cases. Go to the fact that *Bahasa Indonesia* also has several idioms which have equivalent meanings in same purpose and situation. In fact, the result of the previews study found that translation by using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form was the most strategy used in translating idiomatic expressions of Terence Blacker's bilingual novel *Ms Wiz Goes Live* into *Ms Wiz Jadi Bintang Televisi* by Mala Suhendra (Sari, 2013).

Besides, there is also found translation by omission which is infrequently used in this study (3 cases). It goes in line with Aminah and Destjerdi

(2011) that this strategy is avoided in process of translating in order to find equivalences to transfer both the form and the meaning by not deleting the whole or eliminating the part of the idiom. However, the strategy is enabled to be used in this case for the reasons; it has no close match in the target language or for stylistic reason like what Baker has stated (Baker, 2001).

Translation by using an idiom of similar meaning and form is also infrequently used (3 cases). The reason is the kind of match idiom which is exactly same meaning and their form can only occasionally be achieved as Baker has stated (Baker, 2001).

Moreover, translation by compensation is also found. This strategy is infrequent in used, for it found in 2 cases. As suggested by Baker, the reason is purposed to fix expressions and be used to make up for emotional force, or stylistic effect (Baker, 2001).

In this study, there were found an idiom *too good to be true* both in source text and in target text.

Source text	Ch6/pg.73/28	Things were happening too fast, and I felt that somehow it was too good to be true .
Target Text	Ch6/pg.100/28	Sepertinya keadaan begitu bertolak belakang, terlalu cepat berubah, dan entah mengapa sulit bagiku untuk menerima semua ini begitu saja too good to be true .

Too good too be true means "unbelievable". The idiom is left untranslated into target text; nevertheless, there is placed the same

form of English idiom in the target text. The process of inserting source text idiom into target text does not imply that it is

translated. However, it is also not included into omittance.

Target text (Bahasa Indonesia): *Sepertinya*

*keadaan begitu
bertolak
belakang, terlalu
cepat berubah,
dan entah mengapa
asulit bagiku untuk
menyerimase semua
ini begitu saja too
good to be true.*

Source text (English) : Things were
happening too
fast, and I felt that
somehow it was
**too good to be
true.**

The result shows that the idiom from target text and source text is constructed of its own idiom. It means that the idiom *too good to be true* is neither translated nor omitted in target text. Moreover, it does not convey the meaning into target language. Therefore, it becomes an interesting issue that the five strategies which is suggested by Baker does not cover the process of translating idiom "too good to be true" from source text into *too good to be true* in target text.

In conclusion, it shows that translators could alternate five strategies which are suggested by Baker were used in translating the idiomatic expressions in Dave Pelzer's novel *A Child Called 'It'* into *A Child Called 'It'* by Danan Priatmoko.

Conclusion

Accordingly, it was found that there were

five strategies used in translating idiom expressions from English into Indonesia, they included: (1) 3 cases of translation by using an idiom of similar meaning and form, (2) 8 cases of translation by using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, (3) 73 cases of translation by paraphrasing, (4) 3 cases of translation by omission, and (5) 2 cases of translation by compensation. Eventhough a case of translation was not covered by the strategies above, it can be assumed that all of five translation strategies suggested by Baker were applied in process of translating idiomatic expression from English into Bahasa Indonesia

References

- Baker, M. 2001. *In Other Words a Course Book on Translation*. New York: Taylor & Francis.
- Hradilová, M. 2011. *A Comparative Study of English, Czech and Russian Animal Idioms: Cat*. (Online), (http://is.muni.cz/th/330854/ff_b/?lang=en;id=194330), accessed on May 20, 2014.
- Khak, M. A. 5 Idiom Dalam Bahasa Indonesia: Structure dan Makna. 2006. (Online), (<http://www.balabahasa.org/5-idiom-dalam-Bahasa-Indonesia/>), accessed on March 31, 2014.
- Makkai, B, and Gates 1995. *A Dictionary of American Idioms*. 3rd Edition. Barron's Educational Series, Inc.
- Motellebzadeh, K. 2011. *Employing Compensation Strategy in Translation of Idioms: A Case Study of the Translation of Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn in Persian*. *International Journal of Linguistics*, Vol.3, No.1: E46. (Online), (<http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v3i1.1206>), accessed on March 27, 2014.
- Novianti, E. 2012. *An Analysis of The Translation Strategies of Idiomatic Expressions in Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland in Its Translation By Khairi Rumantati*. Thesis. Yogyakarta: Yogyakarta State University

Salim, J.A. & Mehawesh, M. 2013. *Color*

Idiomatic Expressions in the Translation of Naguib Mahfouz's Novel The Thief and the Dogs: A Case Study. *International Journal of English Linguistics* Vol. 3, No.4.(Online), (www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ijel/article/view/20057), accessed on March 7, 2014.

Sari, S. U. 2013. *Strategies In Translating Idiomatic Expressions Of Phrasal Verb In Terence Blacker's Bilingual Novel Ms Wiz Goes Live" Into Ms Wiz Jadi Bintang Televisi* By Mala Suhendra. Thesis. Semarang: Dian Nuswantoro University.

Seidl, J, and Mc.Mordie. W. 1988. *English Idioms*. New York: Oxford University Press

Trask, R.L. 1999. *Key Concepts in Language and Linguistics*. New York: Routledge