

**REVEALING THE CLASSIFICATION OF IDIOMS AND THE TRANSLATION STRATEGIES  
FROM ENGLISH INTO INDONESIAN IN “THE RECRUIT” SERIES MOVIE**

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**Abstract:** All languages have idioms. Idioms define as phrases or chunks which are identified as fixed expressions with a non-literal interpretation. In addition to its non-literal interpretation, some strategies are provided in order to be successfully render the messages into a target language. Thus, this research focuses on revealing (1) the classification of idioms proposed by Glucksberg (2001) and (2) the translation strategies of the idioms proposed by Baker (2018) from English into Indonesian in a series movie entitled “The Recruit” with 8 episodes. To reach the objectives, qualitative descriptive method is applied. The results show that there are 37 idioms found in 8 episodes. The revealing consists of 7 non-compositional idioms, 21 compositional transparent idioms, 5 compositional opaque idioms, and 4 quasi-metaphorical idioms are found. Further, the translation strategies used by the subtitler to translate the idioms from English into Indonesian based on Baker (2018) reveal that two (2) data that are translated using the strategy to translate the English idioms into idioms in Indonesian and 30 data that are translated using the paraphrase strategy from English into Indonesian. Moreover, there are five (5) idioms that are translated literally.

**Keywords:** idioms, classification, translation strategies.

**INTRODUCTION**

Advancing vocabulary for non-native English speakers is considered to be very important. As is known, learning vocabulary is not only about learning the word itself but also learning its advanced part known as multi-word units. Moreover, Thornbury (2002) emphasized that these multi-word units, which can be solely termed as lexical chunks, can function as a meaningful unit with a fixed or semi-fixed form. A fixed chunk can be idiomatic (e.g., out of the blue means unexpectedly) or less (e.g., well and truly means completely). Further, it can be seen that the meanings of the fixed chunk’s instances mentioned cannot be taken or inferred literally from each constituent and they are termed ‘idioms’ (Baker, 2018).

In Indonesia, English is a foreign language which also means that learning it is not easy. Many Indonesians are less familiar with English too. Therefore, it needs extra effort to recognize and to interpret word or phrases especially idioms as it conveys figurative meaning. Based on Hubers’ et.al. (2020) finding that revealed three key points that affected L2 idiom knowledge, they are familiarity, transparency, and imageability. Ultimately, in order to easily identify and interpret the English Idioms, it is suggested that someone must primarily familiarize him/herself with the idioms.

Technology makes things easier nowadays. It is faster and smarter. Thus, learning vocabulary, specifically idioms, through digital technologies are recommended because they are a powerful tool that can help learning English better in many ways (Haleem et.al., 2022). One of the tools to learn English is through movie. Utilizing online streaming services such as Netflix, Disney, Viu, and many more is the best choice because they are flexible and affordable. Furthermore, each of the services provides subtitles from different languages. The movie chosen for this research is an American TV Series entitled “The Recruit” which consists of eight (8) episodes. The terms used in this movie are related to the CIA which certainly use many idioms. Therefore, this present research aims at (1) finding out the classification of the idioms found using Glucksberg’s theory (2001) and (2) exploring the use of translation strategies of the English idioms and their translation in Indonesian using Baker’s theory (2018).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Idioms and the Classification

All languages have idioms. Idioms define as phrases or chunks which are identified as fixed expressions with a non-literal interpretation (Bruening, 2019). In other words, the meanings are not discoverable from each constituent (Alwi et.al., 2017). The same definition is also stated by Juknevičienė (2017) and added that the idiom as a whole part has its own distinct meaning compared to non-idiom phrases. Because idioms are unique, the interpreted meanings can be a surprise and they do give special effect to a language. For instance, an idiom “makan hati” in Indonesian cannot be interpreted literally from each constituent. “Makan hati” in this case means “suffer”. However, if it is seen from each constituent, the word “makan” is a verb that has similar meaning with “eat” and “hati” is a noun that has similar meaning with “heart”. It is also applied in English, for instance, the idiom “to be up in arms” which means “to be very angry”. By not knowing the meaning conveyed in an idiom, it might lead to misunderstanding. Thus, it is crucial not only to find out the meaning but also to familiarize oneself with it.

In addition to exploring more about the idioms, the classification is to be discussed in this present research. According to Glucksberg (2001), the idioms are classified into four types, they are (1) non-compositional means each constituent is not transparent or there are no relations that can be detected between the idiom’s constituents and the meaning conveyed. For instance, by and large which means generally. It can be seen clearly that each constituent and the meaning are completely different. (2) Compositional opaque means some relationships between an idiom’s constituent and its idiomatic meaning can be detected as well as exploited. For instance, kick the bucket which means to die or to stop living. In this case, if it is going to be analysed from each constituent, it is crystal clear that the idiom is opaque. However, the usage is limited. One may be able to identify it easily as an idiom because this chunk can mean something. (3) Compositional transparent means an idiom’s meaning can be inferred from the meanings of its constituents. For instance, spill the beans which means to tell people secret information. It is said transparent because the meaning of the idiom can be interpreted from a constituent “spill” which means to let out, in this case a secret. Finally, (4) quasi-metaphorical is an idiom that exploits the same communicative strategy as do the metaphor vehicles in nominal metaphors. For instance, Kenneth Starr is a bulldozer. It can be seen that the metaphor attributive given is “a bulldozer”—a heavy vehicle with a large blade in front used for moving dirt and rocks and making the ground level, characterizes Kenneth Starr.

### Translation

Translation is a process of transferring meanings and conveying messages (Asgarian, 2012) from a source language into a target language. Pym (2014) emphasizes whenever this process occurs, the equivalence in both languages (source and target) must have equal values such as the form, function or in between. Baker (2018) discusses two equivalences such as equivalence at word level and above word level. In addition to “equal values”, it is stated that during the process of translation, there could be a case where a target language has no direct equivalence both at word level and above word level (Baker, 2018). In this case, strategies are needed.

### The Translation Strategies of Idioms

Translating idioms obliges a translator to employ some strategies to provide a good translation of an idiom because it cannot be translated literally or word-for-word (Venuti, 2000). Yet, problems cannot be avoided and a translator needs strategies in order to be successfully transfer the meanings and convey the messages accurately. Thus, the strategies existed in order to solve the problems arisen. Fortunately, to be familiar why the strategies must be discussed and applied, Baker (2018) firstly emphasized that either interpreting and translating idioms are very difficult and challenging even though the process is completely distinct. Therefore, the main difficulties in translating idioms are (1) when the equivalence cannot be found in the target language, (2) similar equivalent is found but the use and the context are dissimilar, (3) an idiom may be used in the source text in both its literal and idiomatic senses, literal and idiomatic senses, and the frequency of use both in the source and target languages, and (4) 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 languages.

Baker (2018) suggested six strategies to translate idioms and fixed expressions from a source language into a target language. The first strategy is translating an idiom in a source language by using an idiom with similar meaning and form in the target language. The second strategy is translating an idiom in a source language by using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form in the target language. The third strategy is translating an idiom by borrowing the source language idiom in the target language. The fourth strategy is translating an idiom in a source language by paraphrasing it in the target language. This strategy

is applied when no match can be found in the target language. The fourth strategy is translating an idiom in the source language by omission of a play on idiom. Lastly, the fifth strategy is translating an idiom in the source language by omission of entire idiom.

Although a literal translation is not allowed in translating an idiom, this present research will include a theory from Sumarni (2016) that explained how a literal translation is applied. It is mentioned that literal translation can be completely literal—the result of the translation sounds like nonsense and partially modified—by changing the structure, however, each constituent is translated literally. In contrast to what is highlighted by Hatim and Munday (2004), a method of creating equivalences is also frequently applied to idioms. All idioms cannot be translated using a calque. The researcher agrees that idioms must be translated as much as closely related to the meanings conveyed both in source and target languages in order to avoid obscurity or unclearness. This is supported by Andrew & Maksimova (2010) that stated “literal translation may not produce any real meaning in the TL”.

### **Previous Research**

To support this research, some researchers have conducted the same topic. The first has conducted by Fitri et al. (2019). It aimed at describing the types of idioms and the translation strategies found in “Crazy Rich Asians” novel. They found a total of 325 data and analysed using qualitative method. Five types idioms were found such as opaque phrases, semi-transparent phrase, semi-opaque phrase, and transparent expression. The idioms found were translated using an idiom of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, translation by paraphrase, translation by omission and literal translation. The second has been conducted by Seifi et al. (2022). The aims are to investigate and analyse the translation of idioms in dubbing of two comedy movies entitled “The Grand Budapest Hotel” and “21 Jump Street” from English into Persian according to Baker's (1992) strategies. Their results showed that paraphrasing was the most frequent applied strategy, and the least frequent applied strategy is by using an idiom of similar meaning and form. Lastly, Abdi & Munandar (2019) that discussed about the classification of idioms using Adam Makkai's (1972) theory and the translation strategies using Mona Baker (1992) and Newmark (1991). Their results showed that 156 idioms were found. Further, they were classified into phrasal verb idioms (39%), tournure idioms (34%), irreversible binomials (11%), phrasal compound idioms (14%), and incorporating verb idioms (2%). Four strategies were applied such as translating an idiom by using an idiom of similar meaning and form (1.92%), using an idiom of similar meaning but different form (1.92%), using paraphrase (85.90%), using omission (0.64%), and literal translation strategy (9.62%).

This present research and two previous researchers have the same objectives to find the classification of idioms and the translation strategies. However, the theory chosen for both objectives are different. Moreover, Seifi et al. (2022) focused only on investigating the translation strategies of the idioms found. Thus, the explanation of the theories and the results of this present research undeniably distinct from all of the previous researchers.

### **METHOD**

In addition to identifying the classification and the strategies used in the translating the idioms into Indonesian, descriptive qualitative method is applied. Moreover, the research findings are not reached through statistical procedures or other methods of quantification (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, as cited in Abdelaal & Sarhani, 2021). The source of data is a series movie entitled “The Recruit” which consists of eight (8) episodes. The data are English idioms and the translation in Indonesian extracted from both the English and Indonesian subtitles and uttered by each of the characters from episode 1 until 8. In order to help the researcher to find the idioms and the meanings, some dictionaries are used such as online Cambridge English Dictionary, Collins English Dictionary, Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), and Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (pdf version).

To gather the data, some steps are applied such as studying and comprehending the theory about the classification of idioms by Glucksberg (2001) and the idioms translation strategies proposed by Baker (2018), collecting and listing phrases or utterances manually that can be categorized as idioms, checking all listed phrases in the dictionary manually to confirm whether they are categorized into idioms or not, listing all of the confirmed idioms along with the meanings and the result of the translation in Indonesian, and finally classifying them based on Glucksberg's theory as well as the strategies used in translating the idioms into Indonesian based on Baker's theory. To analyse the data found, some steps are also applied such as classifying the idioms found based on Glucksberg's theory, choosing the representation from the classification, analysing them based on each constituent. For the translation strategies' part, choosing the representation based on the classification of the strategies used.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, the English idioms found are classified into two sections. The first section is the classification of the idioms found in a series entitled “The Recruit”. The findings show that, from 8 episodes, there are 37 data of idioms found. The classification is based on Glucksberg (2001) that states four types of idioms such as non-compositional idioms (7 data), compositional transparent (21 data), compositional opaque (5 data), and quasi-metaphorical (4 data). The second section is the used of translation strategies that is used by the subtitler to translate the idioms from English into Indonesian based on Baker (2018). The findings show that there two (2) data that are translated using the strategy to translate the English idioms into idioms in Indonesian. There are 30 data that are translated using the paraphrase strategy from English into Indonesian. Moreover, there are six (5) idioms that are translated literally.

### Discussion

The first section will discuss the representatives or examples of the classification of each idiom found in a series entitled “The Recruit”. Further, the second section will discuss about the strategies used in translating the idioms found from English into Indonesian.

### The Classification of Idioms

#### *Non-compositional Idioms*

Non-compositional idioms are idioms where each constituent is not transparent. In other words, when they are interpreted, there are no relations that can be detected between the idiom’s constituents and the meaning conveyed. Based on the findings, there are seven (7) non-compositional idioms found. The representative is depicted as follow:

SL: Such an overachiever. **Way to go**, buddy.

TL: *Mengejar prestasi. Bagus.*

Based on *online Cambridge English Dictionary*, it is stated that the expression “**way to go**” is an idiom that is **used to tell someone they have done well**. If each constituent is to be explored further, there is no relation between each of them. The expression is not related with a route or direction to go somewhere. Furthermore, the result of the interpretation and the meaning does not relate with each constituent which is about a praise of a great work.

#### *Compositional Opaque Idioms*

Compositional opaque idioms are idioms which have some relationships between an idiom’s constituent and its idiomatic meaning can be detected as well as exploited. Based on the findings, there are five (5) data found. The representative is depicted as follow:

SL: Can I **pick your brain** about next steps? How I get the feds to now drop the case?

TL: *Menurutmu, bagaimana selanjutnya? Bagaimana agar FBI menutup kasus ini?*

Based on *online Cambridge English Dictionary*, the expression “pick your brain” is an idiom of the original “pick someone’s brain” which means to ask someone’s advice about a subject the person knows a lot about. Undeniably, this expression cannot be interpreted literally. Thus, whoever find this expression, they will automatically think that each constituent is idiomatic and must be careful either to interpret or to translate it.

#### *Compositional Transparent Idioms*

Compositional transparent idioms are idioms where the meaning can be inferred from its constituents. This type is used frequently with the total of 21 idioms. The representative is depicted as follow:

SL: then I’m on a plane to D.C., and you are **back in the game**.

TL: *lalu aku terbang ke D.C., dan kau kembali dalam permainan.*

Based on *online Collins English Dictionary*, the expression “**back in the game**” is an idiom that means a person who decides to embark upon the mission of trying it again after an absence. Therefore, it is very transparent that each constituent represents the meaning.

#### *Quasi-metaphorical Idioms*

Quasi-metaphorical idioms are idioms that exploits the same communicative strategy as do the metaphor vehicles in nominal metaphors. They literally refer to situations, actions, or events that epitomize a class of situations, actions, or events. If an idiom is about a risky action, therefore, it can be used to refer to any activity that is as risky as that activity. Based on the findings, there four (4) idioms. The representative is depicted as follow:

SL: And give that shit-**storm-in-a-teacup** to Kitchens.  
TL: *Beri masalah besar yang tak penting itu ke Kitchens.*

Based on *online Cambridge English Dictionary*, the expression “storm in a teacup” is an idiom that means a lot of unnecessary anger and worry about a matter that is not important. Thus, this expression literally refers to a risen problem or matter that is not as important as it is.

### **The Strategies in Translating the English Idioms into Indonesian**

#### *Idioms of similar meaning and form*

This strategy is employed when the English idioms have their exact equivalent in the target language, from an idiom to an idiom. In this present research, there are two (2) idioms that are translated into idioms in the target language. Further, they are depicted as follow:

SL: Owen: I can fix this. Max: No. You can run or you can die. Owen: **End of the road**, Max.  
TL: Owen: *Kuperbaiki ini*. Max: *Kau bisa lari atau mati*. Owen: **Jalan buntu**, Max.

Based on *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (p. 483), the English idiom “**end of the road**” means to reach the point at which something can no longer continue in the same way. Moreover, this expression is translated into an idiom “*jalan buntu*” in the target language. Based on *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI)*, the online version, the noun phrase “*jalan buntu*” is an idiom and defined as “*masalah yang tidak dapat dipecahkan atau diteruskan hingga selesai*”. Thus, the representation of idiom above is translated into an idiom with similar meaning and form. The form of the source and target languages are both noun phrases. It can also be concluded that the use of the strategy is employed precisely and correctly as what Baker stated in the theory.

SL: **No hard feelings**.  
TL: **Jangan tersinggung**.

Based on *online Cambridge English Dictionary*, the English idiom “**no hard feelings**” means no feeling of being upset. Further, this idiom is translated into an idiom “**jangan tersinggung**” in the target language. This is considered as an idiom in the TL because the word “**tersinggung**” itself based on *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI)*, the online version, is an idiom that means “*merasa disakiti (dilukai dsb) hatinya*”. Additionally, both forms are similar. Thus, the idiom above is translated into an idiom with similar meaning and form. The form of the source and target languages are both phrases. It can also be concluded that the use of the strategy is employed precisely and correctly as what Baker stated in the theory.

#### *Idioms with paraphrase*

This strategy is employed when a translator cannot find the exact equivalent in a source language (SL) into a target language (TL). In this case, it is from English into Indonesian. Additionally, whenever this strategy is employed, the idioms can be translated with non-idioms but the meaning must be akin with the original. Based on the findings, this strategy is the most frequently use by the subtitler with the total of 30 idioms. The representatives are depicted as follow:

SL: We can help you **steer clear of the loons**.  
TL: *Kami bisa membantumu menghindari orang gila*.

Based on *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (p.261), the original English idiom of the source language “**steer clear of the loons**” is “**steer clear of someone or something**”, which means to avoid someone or something because it may cause problems and is translated into “*menghindari orang gila*” in the source language by the subtitler. When it is back translated, the result conveyed and represented the same meaning even though the result of the translation is a non-idiom one or by paraphrase. Thus, it can be concluded that the use of the strategy is employed precisely as what Baker stated in the theory. The second representation can be seen in the following:

SL: The average Lebanese will give you **his shirt off his back**, ...  
TL: *Orang Lebanon biasa mau membantu apa pun*, ...

Based on *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (p.1364), the original English idiom of the source language “**his shirt off his back**” is “**the shirt off somebody's back**”, which means anything that somebody has, including the things they really need themselves, that somebody else takes from them or they are willing to give and is translated into non-idiom expression “*mau membantu apa pun*” in the

source language by the subtitle. When it is back translated, the result conveyed and represented the same meaning even though the expression is a non-idiom one or by paraphrase. Thus, it can be concluded that the use of the strategy is employed correctly to the same degree that Baker stated in the theory.

#### ***Literal Translation***

Literal Translation is a strategy with direct transfer of a text from a source language into the target language. There are 5 idioms found that are translated literally. The representative below is a literal translation by partially modified, which means by changing the structure, however, each constituent is translated literally. It is depicted as follow:

SL: There has got to be some way for you to use these to **muddy the waters** on our scandal.

TL: *Pasti ada cara menggunakan **air berlumpur** untuk skandal kita.*

Based on *online Cambridge English Dictionary*, the English idiom “**muddy the waters**” means to make a situation unnecessarily complicated and less clear. Unfortunately, it is translated literally into “**air berlumpur**” by a modification where the structure is changed but each constituent is translated literally. It does not have its idiomatic meaning in the target language. Undoubtedly, this will lead to obscurity or unclearness.

#### **CONCLUSION**

This research focused on revealing (1) the classification of the idioms found and (2) the translation strategies used in translating the idioms from English (SL) into Indonesian (TL) in a series entitled “The Recruit”. The classification of idioms is based on Glucksberg (2001). The findings revealed that compositional transparent is the most frequently used by the characters in the series with a total of 21 data. There are seven (7) data of non-compositional idioms, five (5) data of compositional opaque and lastly, four (4) data of quasi-metaphorical. Compositional transparent idioms are the easiest ones to reveal because they are transparent. While non-compositional and compositional opaque idioms sometimes lead to confusion because both classifications are opaque. The use of quasi-metaphorical idioms is the least because the usage is limited. Further, the translation strategies of the idioms are based on Baker (2018). The findings revealed that only two strategies are employed out of six (6), they are using an idiom with similar meaning and form and by paraphrasing. The most frequently strategies employed in translating the idioms from English into Indonesian is by paraphrasing with the total of 30 data. This happens because no match is found in the target language. Surprisingly, there are five (5) idioms that are also translated literally. Translating idioms is very difficult. Even though the meanings can be interpreted based on dictionary, it is still not easy to translate them especially when one is in a hurry. This is also in line with one of the main difficulties that a translator may face “when the equivalence cannot be found in the target language”. The idioms cannot be borrowed or even omitted. This research is still limited. The next researchers can conduct another research by assessing the translation quality of the idioms found or entire subtitles from English into Indonesian.

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