

## IDIOMATIC TRANSLATION IN THE STORY OF SOME WORDS WITH A MUMMY

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### ABSTRACT

One issue faced in translating a text is idioms. Idiomatic expressions are special which required extra work and cautiousness to discover the true meaning of the authors' intentions. This study aims to analyse the translation of idioms which found in Edgar Allan Poe's short story *Some Words With A Mummy*, translated by Maggie Tiojakin under the translation title *Obrolan Dengan Mummy*. This research is a qualitative descriptive study. The data are English idioms and their translation in Indonesian. There are 15 data. Those are analyzed based on Nida and Taber's idiom translation strategies. They are (1) idioms are translated into non-idioms, (2) idioms are translated into idioms, and (3) non-idioms are translated into idioms. The result shows that there are three strategies of English idioms translation in Edgar Allan Poe's short story *Some Words With A Mummy*. They are (1) translation idioms to idioms (27 %), (2) translation idioms to non-idioms (67 %), and (3) translation non-idioms to idioms (7 %) and the most dominant strategy is a translation by idioms to non-idioms.

*Keywords:* idioms, translation, short story

### ABSTRAK

*Salah satu permasalahan yang sering dihadapi dalam penerjemahan teks adalah idiom. Ekspresi idiomatik merupakan ungkapan khusus yang tidak bisa diterjemahkan secara harfiah, sehingga memerlukan kerja ekstra dan kehati-hatian untuk mengungkap makna sebenarnya sesuai dengan maksud penulis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penerjemahan idiom yang terdapat dalam cerpen karya Edgar Allan Poe berjudul *Some Words With A Mummy*, yang diterjemahkan ke dalam bahasa Indonesia oleh Maggie Tiojakin dengan judul *Obrolan Dengan Mummy*. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, dengan data berupa idiom dalam bahasa Inggris dan padanan terjemahannya dalam bahasa Indonesia. Sebanyak 15 data idiom dianalisis berdasarkan strategi penerjemahan idiom menurut teori Nida dan Taber, yaitu: (1) idiom diterjemahkan menjadi non-idiom, (2) idiom diterjemahkan menjadi idiom, dan (3) non-idiom diterjemahkan menjadi idiom. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa terdapat tiga strategi yang digunakan dalam penerjemahan idiom pada cerpen tersebut, yakni: penerjemahan idiom ke idiom sebanyak 27%, penerjemahan idiom ke non-idiom sebanyak 67%, dan penerjemahan non-idiom ke idiom sebanyak 7%. Strategi yang paling dominan adalah penerjemahan idiom ke dalam bentuk non-idiom, yang menunjukkan bahwa penerjemah lebih memilih menyampaikan makna secara eksplisit dan mudah dipahami oleh pembaca bahasa sasaran.*

*Kata kunci:* idiom, penerjemahan, cerita pendek

## INTRODUCTION

Language is often defined as an arbitrary vocal system used by human beings to communicate with one another (Edward Finegan, 2017). There are many different languages in the world, besides English. In the world there are 7.146 language (Yuli N, 2024). Communities take various measures to communicate with other communities. This involves learning the foreign language of the other person. Translation is necessary in facilitating communication between different communities.

Translation is a crucial study as it can help us understand different languages. The word "translation" comes from the Latin translation (which comes from the words trans- and fero, which together mean "to carry" or "to cross over"). "to carry" or "to bring across"). Translation is the process of transferring messages from the source language into the target language. And, the messages must be understood by the reader (Pym, 1992).

Various forms of translation have been studied since Classical Greek times. Translators began sharing stories from one language to another through spoken or written word. Historical tales, local stories, or myths were translated and shared across the world. This led to one community learning another language to communicate (Bassnett, 2013).

Idiomatic translation is a one of the many translation techniques. Idioms are sets expression of two or more words that means something other than the literal meaning of its individual words (Munday, 2001). As far as idioms are concerned, the first difficulty that a translator comes across is being able to

recognize that she/he is dealing with an idiomatic expression.

Idioms are a form of language consisting of a combination of words whose meaning alone cannot be explained from the content of the combined words (Dr. H. Pauzan, S.Pd, S.IPI, M.Hum, 2021). Idiomatic are problematic because it is difficult to understand their meaning directly into the target language. Therefore, translation is necessary, especially in translating idiomatic expressions. One of the translation methods is the method or steps used by the translator in translating words or phrases including translating idioms.

To achieve a high-quality translation process, a translator is bound to improve their knowledge of translation. Translation method is a way to conduct translation to plan in the translation process. The translation method is a widely used form of foreign language teaching. The principle of translation method is that the mastery of a foreign language can be achieved by interpreting the language. This translation exercise is the main exercise in this method. There are many different types of translation methods known in the world.

Newmark describes eight translation methods from two perspectives. The first perspective emphasises on the source language (SL) and the other on the target language (TL). The first perspective provides word-for-word translation, literal translation, faithful translation, and semantic translation. Then the second perspective gives adaptation translation, free translation, idiomatic translation, and communicative translation (Newmark, 1988).

In this context, one of the most prominent problems in translation is idioms. The idioms are unique in that their structure is not translatable literally and they tend to form new meanings. In addition, idioms have special characteristics, namely strangeness or deviation from the norm, regarding the meaning of the idiom. Although they are unique and tend to be difficult, the use of idioms is almost unavoidable. The idioms used can take many forms.

Newmark notes that idiomatic translation recreates the message in the target language text with a more natural and familiar expression than the source language text. Meanwhile, Baker confirms the above notion by declaring, "in the case of idioms, often the idiom has a meaning that cannot be deduced from their individual components (Hartono, 2020).

According to these opinions, the meaning of idioms cannot be derived from the meaning of the lexical elements that form them in accordance with the applicable grammatical rules. The idiom meaning must be seen as a whole, not from each of the components that make up the idiom.

Regarding their form, idioms are categorised based on differences in the level of semantic units and differences in structure, leading to a clearer view that idioms can be expressions, grammatical constructions, and phrases.

Prose is a literary work that is fictional or a made-up story with plot and characters derived from imagination. In prose, there are many idiomatic phrases that deserve attention in the translation process. Therefore, it is necessary to pay more serious attention to the specific problems in prose translation.

Among the many popular literary proeses have been published, Edgar Allan Poe's *Some Words With A Mummy* is of great interest to readers, especially classic story maniac (Masterpiece, n.d.). The researcher chooses this story because of its popularity and interesting plot, along with the setting of Ancient Egyptian Myths. Besides that, the use of idiom expressions in the book is quite diverse so the researcher is interested in analysing the translation (Poe, 1845).

The story of *Some Words With A Mummy* was translated by Maggie Tiojakin in 2010 under the translation title *Obrolan Dengan Mummy* and published by PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama. The resulting target text is easy to understand without changing some of the idiomatic translations intended by the author. Some idiomatic expressions from the source language are translated into idiomatic expressions in the target language with the same meaning.

Researcher has made several findings about idiomatic translation in recent years. According to them, idiomatic translation is quite complicated to translate from the source text into the target text. The translator must understand both languages extremely well. Therefore, the idiomatic translation process to be conveyed properly.

Based on the popularity of *Some Words With A Mummy*, the story is often used as research material by various parties. The story, published in 1845 by Edgar Allan Poe, has attracted the interest of young literature researchers. There are several researchers who examined several methods of translation into Indonesian.

In "An Analysis of Translation of Idioms Used In Conan Doyle's Novel ; A Study In

Scarlet" (Agoes, 2016), the researcher found that in idiomatic translation's results found are classified into three categories, namely pure idioms, semi-idioms, and literal idioms. The finding of the analysis shows that semi-idiom is the type of idiom which is frequently found in "A Study in Scarlet" with 31 idioms (52%). The second position is literal idioms with 15 idioms (25%), and on the third position there are pure idioms with 14 idioms (23%).

In "Idiomatic Expression Translation Strategy in Rhonda Byrne's Book *The Magic*" (Fitriyah, 2020), the researcher found the methods used by the translator are using an idiom of similar meaning and form (15%), Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form (31%), and Translation by paraphrase (54%). Based on the findings, the most dominant strategy used in "The Magic" is translation by paraphrase, because it is easier to make paraphrase when we do not find the appropriate or similar meaning in the target text.

In "The Translation of Idioms in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*" (Abdi & Munandar, 2019), 156 idioms are found which are then categorised into 61 (39%) belonging to phrasal verb idioms, 53 (34%) to tournure idioms, 17 (11%) to irreversible binomials, 22 (14%) to phrasal compound idioms, and 3 (2%) to incorporating verb idioms. The findings reveal that the paraphrasing strategy is dominantly used in the translation of idioms in "Animal Farm". By delivering the actual meaning, the translator helps the target text readers to understand the meaning more easily.

This research applies descriptive qualitative method to describe the ways

of translating idiomatic expressions and to find out the methods used by Indonesian translators in translating the story of *Some Words With A Mummy*. The researcher uses descriptive qualitative method to meet the research objectives (Fitria, 2018).

In translating the idioms, Nida and Taber (1969) divide it into three types of translation they are idioms are translated into non-idioms, this translation is done because there is an idiom that represents the source language. Idioms are translated into idioms, it happens because in the target language there is an idiom which has the same or similar meaning. Non-idioms are translated into idioms, the translation is done to make the target language translations become more alive.

The data of this research are idiomatic expressions. The story of *Some Words With A Mummy* is selected because idiomatic expressions appear in the novel. The words of Edgar Allan Poe in the story are written in English and translated by Maggie Tiojakin into the Bahasa Indonesia text. The data of this research are idiomatic expressions in the source language and the text in the target language in the form of phrases, and the context of the data in the form of sentences. In collecting data for this research, the researcher uses several techniques. The techniques used by researcher are 1.) Downloading the story of *Some Words With A Mummy* in English and Indonesian; 2.) Reading the story from beginning to the end in English and Indonesian in both languages to get a good understanding between the two books; 3.) Codifying the data of idiomatic expressions; 4.) Gathering and

comparing the data with the English and Indonesian versions of idiomatic expressions and marking the words that are considered as idiomatic expressions. The next step, data analysis technique is the process of analysing the data related to the research problem to find the result of this research. The steps to analyse the data are as follows: 1). Classify the types of translation methods based on the theory of Newmark; 2). Analyse the translation methods used in the translation of idiomatic expressions contained in the novel text. 3). Present the results and calculate the percentage of the types of translation methods to find out the most dominant type of translation method of idiomatic expressions in the story of *Some Words With A Mummy*; 4). Assess the quality of the translation methods in idiomatic expressions; 5). Conclude the result of the research.

### FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the researcher analyzed the data based on the original text (*Some Words With A Mummy* by Edgar Allan Poe), called SL (source language) and the translated text (*Obrolan Dengan Mummy* that was translated by Maggie Tiojakin), called TL (target language). The findings are shown below:

No.	Strategy	Amount	Percentage (%)
1.	Idioms to idioms	4	27
2.	Idioms to non-idioms	10	67
3.	Non-idioms to idioms	1	7
	<b>Total Amount</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 Strategy Found in TL and SL

Based on the findings in table 1, the idiom expression translations are divided into three strategies as follows:

#### a. Idioms to idioms

This strategy involves using idioms in the target language that convey approximately the same meaning as the source language idioms. Based on table 1, there are 4 data that use the same meaning and form. These examples are as follows:

**SL :** In what light (to come to the point) am I to regard your aiding and abetting that miserable little villain, Doctor Ponnonner, in *pulling me by the nose?* (Poe, 1845)

**TL :** Lebih dari itu, bagaimana saya bisa menilai kalian jika kalian membantu seorang penjahat seperti Dokter Ponnonner dalam *menjadikan saya bulan - bulanan?*" (Maggie Tiojakin, 2010)

The idiom "pulling me by the nose" is a popular expression used to portray someone who is easy to control or manipulate. The origins of this phrase can be traced back to ancient times, where it was believed that animals could be led by their nose. This thought was later applied to humans, in the belief that those who were easily led could be controlled in the same way (James Anderson, 2024).

As a reference to someone who is often victimised or targeted, the idiom "bulan-bulanan" has an interesting origin. The term comes from a traditional game in Indonesia. In this game, children use round objects (such as stones or marbles) as "bulan-bulanan". This object becomes the target of a shot or throw, and the other players try to hit or

"sacrifice" the object. This analogy is then applied to situations where a person is often the target or victim (Ngaisah et al., 2023).

The researcher concludes that the source text and target text have similar idioms as victims. The source text represents the victim as an animal and the target text as an object. Despite the two objects being interpreted differently, they have the same concept of meaning, the definition of a victim.

**SL** : in Egypt, was to arrest indefinitely all the animal functions subjected to the process. I use the word animal in its widest sense, as including the physical not more than the moral and vital being. (Poe, 1845)

**TL**: di Mesir dilakukan untuk membekukan semua fungsi kebinatangan dalam tubuh jenazah. Saya menggunakan kata binatang untuk penafsiran yang sangat luas, dalam arti fungsi fisik, tak lebih dari kondisi moral dan vital. (Maggie Tiojakin, 2010)

An animal metaphor is a word, phrase, or sentence that expresses a resemblance or similarity between someone or something and a particular animal or animal class (Robert Palmatier, n.d.). Animal here is represented as the physical condition of being a living creature, not the animal itself. The character here tells us that it is the body that goes through the process not the morals or the mind.

"Kebintatangan" means animal characteristics or animal-like behaviour. Based on this definition, it is clear that humans and animals are different. What

distinguishes them is the nature of ethics. Good morals arise because of the awareness to do good deeds. Good deeds are done because of rationality in the essential characteristics of the human soul (Bangkit Sanjaya, 2019).

In the case of translation, translators usually get into trouble when translating texts from the source language into the target language, especially in translating idioms. So, translators usually find similar idioms that have almost the same meaning and form as the source language.

#### b. Idioms to non-idioms

This method is employed due to the frequent occurrence of an idiom in the target language that is similar in meaning to the source idiom or expression. Based on table 1, there are 10 data that use the same meaning and form. These examples are as follows:

**SL** : I leaped out of bed in an ecstasy. (Poe, 1845)

**TL** : Aku melompat turun dari ranjang dengan perasaan girang luar biasa. (Maggie Tiojakin, 2010)

Ecstasy refers to a state of overwhelming emotion, often characterized by intense joy, rapture, or bliss. It can describe moments of profound happiness, spiritual transcendence (Andreas Kontokanis, 2024). Researchers also found the definition of ecstasy is an illegal drug commonly used by young people in a nightclub or party (Oxford Dictionary, 2024). These two definitions give the same definition, which results in excessive emotion.

"Girang" is a feeling of exuberance, joy. While the word "luar biasa" is something

special, not the same as others (Sugono, 2008). "Girang luar biasa" is a feeling of joy that is special and not the same as others.

The idiom an ecstasy, which should be interpreted as an illegal drug, is interpreted as a feeling of great excitement. In this idiomatic translation, the translator translates the idiom into non-idiom. This translation makes it easier for readers in the target text to easily understand the author's intention.

**SL** : What am I to think of your standing quietly by and seeing me thus *unhandsomely* used?  
(Poe, 1845)

**TL** : Sekarang saya harus berpikir apa terhadap kalian yang diam saja ketika jenazah saya *diperlakukan tidak senonoh*?

(Maggie Tiojakin, 2010)

The word *unhandsomely* can be interpreted as rude (Merriam Webster, 2024). The author aims to give the reader an understanding of the word *unhandsomely*, not about physical appearance. It is more about the inappropriate treatment experienced by one of the characters in the story.

"Senonoh" is a word that describes appropriate and polite behaviour or actions. (KBBI, 2024). Judging whether an action is considered "senonoh" involves considering social norms and context. Things that can help in assessing the act are norms of decency, context, impact on others, and law. "Tidak senonoh" has the reverse meaning of the above explanation.

There are language criteria that have a direct influence on translation principles.

The core is that in translating a text, a translator must consider the components of meaning the grammatical patterns, and the sentence as a whole, as all these forms are identified differently in other languages and all are expressed with different meanings or functions. Therefore, the translator will use words that have the same meaning, even though they have different forms.

### c. Non-idioms to idioms

The non-idioms to idioms strategy is used when the translator has a decent knowledge of both languages. With this strategy, the reader will understand more about what the author intended in his/her text. Based on table 1, there are 1 data that use the same meaning and form. These examples are as follows:

**SL** : I had *a wretched headache*, and was desperately drowsy.

(Poe, 1845)

**TL** : Kepalaku *berputar seperti gasing*, membuatku pening bukan kepalang.

(Maggie Tiojakin, 2010)

A wretched headache is a combination of two words, wretched being defined as feeling very ill or unhappy and headache referring to a pain you feel inside your head (Dictionary, 2024). A wretched headache refers to a deeply afflicted, dejected, or distressed feeling in the body or head. The author wants to describe the feeling of extreme pain in the head.

Gangsing or gasing is a traditional game found in a number of regions in Indonesia. Gasing is a game that rotates on its centre and has a balance at one point (Daniswari, 2022). On the other hand, the idiom "berputar seperti gasing"

describes a very fast movement or spinning with high intensity, similar to a gasing. This idiom refers to a speed or change that is very fast, and makes the head hurt.

In reading translated texts, various problems are encountered in understanding the content of the text. This is mainly due to various factors, such as cultural differences between the text writer and the reader, which can significantly affect the interpretation or insight into the concept of words or terms used by the writer. Sometimes the reader also encounters words or terms that are considered unfamiliar by the reader so that they do not understand the meaning contained in them. Therefore, in the process of transferring the content of the text, one must pay attention not only to the sentence structure, but also to the understanding of the meaning of the word or term as a whole.

Based on this finding, it can be said that the meaning of an idiom cannot be drawn from the meaning of the individual components that make up the idiom in accordance with the applicable grammatical rules. The meaning of an idiom must be seen as a whole, rather than from the individual components that make up the idiom. Idiomatic translation reproduces the message in the target language text with a more natural and familiar expression compared to the source language text.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research, there are 15 idioms in Edgar Allan Poe's Story Some Words With A Mummy. From the four Baker's idiom translation strategies, the researcher found only 3 strategies that used by the translator in translating idiom. They are (1) translation idioms to idioms (27 %), (2) translation idioms to non-idioms (67 %), and (3) translation non-idioms to idioms (7 %).

Based on the findings above, the most dominant strategy used in Some Words With A Mummy is translation idioms to non-idioms, because it is easier to translate an idiom in to some sentences are non-idioms. The translator often uses idioms or words related to objects that are easy to identify and understand by the readers. As found in the translations "*bulan - bulanan*", "*kebinatangan*", and "*berputar seperti gasing*".

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