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Translation Accuracy of English Idiomatic Expression into Indonesian in Soul Film Subtitle by Disney+ Retail

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ABSTRACT

The difficulty of translating idiomatic expressions arises when there is no direct equivalent between the source and target languages. In order to discover how translators deal with those issues, this study aims to identify types of idiomatic expressions and examine the accuracy of Soul film subtitle with the inspection of strategies used by the translator. This study used a qualitative descriptive method by applying the classification of idioms based on McCarthy and O'dell's theory, the strategy in translating idioms by Mona Baker, and the translation accuracy level by Nababan. The data was gathered by watching the film, reading the subtitles, and noting the idiomatic expressions present in the film. This study took 14 samples to be analyzed from the 98 data found in the source text. From all data, there are 8 types of idioms which are verb + object, prepositional phrases, compound, simile/simili, binomial, whole clause/sentence, cliché/fixed statements, and euphemisms. The translator used 5 strategies in translating the idioms which are using an idiom of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, translation by paraphrase, translation by omitting the play of the idiom, and translation by omitting the entire idiom. As for the accuracy, this study found 94 data of accurate translation, 2 translations of almost accurate, and 2 translations not accurate. However, it can be concluded that the translation has a high-level accuracy making the quality of the translated idioms in the subtitle is good, although it can be still improved.

Keyword: Idiomatic expressions, translation strategy, and accuracy level



1. Introduction

The demand for translational text has increased due to its role in acquiring knowledge across various fields. Translational text is a product of the translation process, which involves rendering the meaning of a text into another language. Translators face challenges in accurately conveying the meaning from the source language to the target language, requiring attention to linguistic aspects. Equivalence in translational text is crucial, as the absence of it may result in untranslatability issues. Accuracy in translation refers to effectively reconstructing the message of the source text in the

target language. In the era of rapid globalization, translation extends beyond textbooks to include multimedia such as music, film, and advertisements. Multimedia translation, including subtitling, deals with transferring multimodal and multimedial texts into another language and culture (Gonzalez, 2020, p. 30). The research focuses on analyzing idiomatic expressions in film subtitles as a specific form of multimedia translation.

The film "Soul" by Pixar Animation Studios serves as the corpus for analysis. The animated film tells the story of Joe Gardner, a middle school band teacher trying to reunite his soul and body while discovering the meaning of having a soul. The researcher chose this film due to its interesting plot, availability of subtitles provided by Disney+, and the opportunity to identify and assess the accuracy of idiomatic expressions in the film.

Translating film subtitles involves the complexity of interpreting idiomatic expressions, which can distort nuances of meaning if translated literally. The translator must grasp the content and carefully convey the idiomatic expressions in an equivalent manner to ensure understanding among the audience. This study focuses on the accuracy of translating idiomatic expressions in film subtitles, as it poses a significant challenge for translators to achieve parity with the original text.

2. Method

With the study focusing on translation accuracy, it aims to investigate the following research questions: What types of idiomatic expressions are utilized by the translator in the Soul film subtitle? How does the translator select the translation strategies employed in the Soul film subtitle? Lastly, what is the level of accuracy in translating idiomatic expressions in the Soul film subtitle? To answer these questions, the study used the method of a qualitative approach. Qualitative methods rely on text and image data, encompass unique steps in data analysis, and utilize diverse designs, according to Creswell (2014, p. 232). The qualitative method employed in this study has an interpretative nature, aiming to understand and depict social actions. Additionally, the study utilizes a descriptive approach to gather data and reach conclusions through verbal descriptions. The analysis of accuracy in the film subtitle of "Soul" will be conducted using this qualitative and descriptive method. Since the data for this analysis consists of words and requires interpretation, this methodology is suitable for the research.

The data for this study will be collected using the technique of documentation, which involves obtaining data from written materials. According to Sugiyono (2012, p. 240), Nawawi and Hadari (2006, p. 69), documentation encompasses various forms such as writings, texts, pictures, scripts, or monumental works. In this study, the data collection process involves carefully reading the subtitle of the "Soul" film and marking the idiomatic expressions found within it. The idiomatic expressions are then categorized based on McCarthy and O'Dell's theory. The subsequent data analysis procedures include sorting the types of idiomatic expressions, applying Mona Baker's translation strategies theory, analyzing the meaning accuracy of idiomatic expressions through descriptive analysis using accuracy-rating instruments by Nababan, and selecting a sample of data for detailed description based on accurate and inaccurate translations.

3. Theoritical Framework

For further explanation of the theory, this study uses three main theory of acquiring and analysing the data.

3. 1 Types of Idiomatic Expressions

The study utilizes the theory of idiomatic expression categorization based on McCarthy and O'Dell's books. In their series, "English Idioms in Use Intermediate" (2017) and "English Idioms in Use Advanced" (2010), they identify and describe 11 types of idioms which are verb + object/complement, prepositional phrases, compound, simile/simili, binomial, trinomial, whole clause or sentence, proverbs, euphemisms, cliché and fixed statements, and other languages. These different types of idiomatic expressions add variety and depth to language use and communication.

3. 2 The Strategy of Translating Idioms

Another theory that are mentioned in the analysis is the strategies of translating idiomatic translation by Mona Baker. In the book of "In other words: A coursebook on translation" Baker stated 6 strategies of translating idioms (2018, pp. 77–86). The first strategy is using an idiom of similar meaning and form which involves finding an idiom in the target language that has the same meaning and contains equivalent lexical

elements as the source-language idiom. The second strategy is using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form which finds an idiom or fixed phrase in the target language that has a different lexical composition but carries the same meaning as the source-language idiom. The next one is the strategy of borrowing the source language idiom in their original form which similar to the use of loan words when dealing with culturally specific items. The popular strategy is translation by paraphrasing which is used when a direct match cannot be found due to stylistic differences between the source and target languages, this strategy involves translating idioms by expressing their meaning in a different way. The next in line is the strategy of omitting a play on idiom which is used to translate idioms literally in order to maintain a concrete interpretation and to avoid the playful use of language. The last strategy that Mona Baker proposed is the strategy of omitting the entire idiom which is used due to the lack of a close equivalent, difficulties in paraphrasing its meaning, or for stylistic reasons.

3. 3 The Accuracy Rating

To complete the study purposes, the theory of accuracy rating by Nababan is used in analyzing the data. Nababan proposed 3 accuracy rating which differs from accurate, almost accurate, and not accurate (2012, p. 51). An accurate translation means that the meanings of words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, sentences or source language texts are accurately transferred to the target language; there is absolutely no distortion of meaning. The evaluator understands the translated statement, and no rewriting is needed. Meanwhile, an almost accurate translation is defined as most of the meanings of words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, sentences or source language texts have been transferred accurately to the target language. However, there are still distortions of meaning or double meaning translations (taxa) or omitted meanings which disturb the integrity of the message. Lastly, a not accurate translation indicates that the meanings are inaccurately transferred or deleted, with various flaws in the relationships between phrases, clauses, and sentence elements.

4. Result and Discussion

The data for this research is collected from the English subtitle of the movie "Soul" and its Indonesian translation by Nazaret Setiabudi, which has been approved by Disney+. A total of 98 idioms are found in the film subtitle, but to avoid redundancy, 14 samples are selected using a random sampling method. During the analysis, the idiomatic expressions are classified based on McCarthy and O'Dell's theory, and dictionaries are consulted for a deeper understanding of their meanings. The translation strategies for the idioms are analyzed using Mona Baker's approach, and the quality of the translations is assessed using Nababan's theory of accuracy. This process narrows down the data from 98 to 14 samples, considering the similarities and likelihood within the categories and strategies of translating idiomatic language.

The 14 samples are going to be explained as followed:

Datum 1

SL: -Sorry to interrupt Mr. Gardner. -You're doing my ears a favor.

TL: -Maaf mengganggu, Pak Gardner. -Kau menolong telingaku.

The idiom "doing my ears a favor" is classified as a **euphemism**, which is commonly used to avoid offensive or inappropriate words. In the context of the movie, it represents Mr. Gardner's relief from the background noise of students playing instruments. By using this euphemism, Mr. Gardner expresses his gratitude for being saved from the inappropriate noise. The phrase "doing my ears a favor" is actually a variation of the idiom "do (one) a favor," which means to help someone, often sarcastically, according to the Farlex Dictionary of idioms and the McGraw-Hill Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs. In the target language, "you're doing my ears a favor" is translated as "kau menolong telingaku" using the **paraphrasing strategy** by Mona Baker because there is no equivalent idiom in the target language. The translation is considered **almost accurate**, as it requires minor word changes to enhance precision. For example, "menyelamatkan pendengaranku" can be used instead of "menolong telingaku" to convey the intended meaning more accurately.

Datum 2

SL: Is it h-e double hockey sticks?

TL: Apakah ini tempat panas dan seram?

The idiom "h-e double hockey sticks" is categorized as a **euphemism**, which serves as a replacement for the word "hell" with "hockey sticks" representing each "L" in the word, which is in a less offensive manner. The origin of this phrase remains a mystery, but the oldest citation found dates back to a 1978 article from the Tampa Bay Times. The phrase was mentioned in an interview line, indicating that it may have been in use in the '70s or '80s in America. In the target language, no equivalent idiom exists, so the translator chooses to paraphrase the term as "tempat panas dan seram" (hot and eerie place) to convey the concept of hell. Although the metaphorical sense of the source language idiom is reduced in the translation, the message is successfully conveyed by describing the nature of hell. This demonstrates the application of Mona Baker's strategy of **paraphrasing idioms**, chosen by the translator to reproduce the meaning of the source language idiom in a more understandable phrase, rather than omitting it entirely. The accuracy of the translation can be considered **accurate**, as it effectively delivers the content of the source text without requiring any rewriting and is easily understood by the reader of the subtitle.

Datum 3

SL: Put me down. TL: Letakkan aku.

The phrase "put me down" is classified as a **compound** idiom. A compound idiom is a combination of two or more words that function as a single unit of meaning. In the context of the film, the phrase is uttered by 22 while being held by Counselor Jerry B. 22 is in this position because it was trying to escape from the counselor and avoid attending the seminar. In this context, the phrase means to physically lower 22's body to the ground. The phrase "put me down" is actually a variation of the idiomatic expression "put down" or "set down." According to various dictionaries, "put someone or something down" can mean to lower or set down someone or something, or to place something on the surface of something. In the film, the phrase specifically refers to placing 22's body into the ground. In the target language, the phrase "put me down" or "put down" has several meanings, including menindas, meletakkan, mencatat, and menurunkan. The translation in the target text subtitle, which uses "letakkan aku," follows the strategy of paraphrasing the idiom since there is no equivalent idiom in the target language. However, the selected translation word in the target language is ambiguous. It gives the impression that 22 is an inanimate object being placed in the ground, whereas 22 is actually a living entity (soul) that hasn't been born yet. As a result, the accuracy of this translation is considered almost accurate. The translation requires a word choice revision. An alternative way to translate the phrase "put me down" could be "turunkan aku," as it describes a person or living object being placed on a surface.

Datum 4

SL: Don't **get ahead of yourself**, pal. TL: Jangan **bertindak gegabah**.

The phrase "don't get ahead of yourself" is an idiomatic expression classified as a whole clause or sentence. This type of idiom consists of a set of words that includes at least one main clause representing a statement, question, instruction, or exclamation. In the given context, 22 exclaims "don't get ahead of yourself" to Joe, cautioning him not to rush or get too excited about jumping back to Earth. The original idiom in the phrase is "get ahead of yourself" or "get ahead of oneself," which means to plan or become overly excited for a possible future event or to act or speak prematurely without proper preparation. In the translation, the phrase "don't get ahead of yourself" is rendered as "jangan bertindak gegabah" in the target language. This translation follows Mona Baker's strategy of paraphrasing the idiom, as there is no direct equivalent idiom in the target language. However, the word "gegabah" in the target language carries the same meaning as the phrase "get ahead of oneself," conveying the idea of being too bold or daring, resulting in a lack of caution. According to the proposed accuracy level by Nababan, the translation of "don't get ahead of yourself" in this context is considered accurate. Despite not being in the form of an idiom, the target text maintains the same meaning and style, and it also employs a negative phrase such as the source text. It effectively conveys the message of the source language, making it an accurate translation.

Datum 5

SL: **By the way**, why do you sound like a middle-aged white lady?

TL: Kenapa suaramu seperti wanita kulit putih paruh baya?

The phrase "by the way" is categorized as an idiom in the form of a prepositional phrase. The phrase is used to introduce additional information or to casually bring up a new subject in a conversation. It originated in the 10th century with a literal meaning of "being beside the road", but its figurative sense as "an incidental or side-topic remark" emerged in the 16th century. In the given context, Joe uses the phrase "by the way" to change the topic during a conversation with 22, asking about the sound 22 made in the realm. However, in the translation, the phrase is omitted from the target subtitle. According to Mona Baker's strategy, this is known as the omission of the entire idiom, which is rarely used when the idiom has no close equivalent in the target language or when its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased. Interestingly, the term "by the way" does have an equivalent phrase in the target language, Indonesian. M.J. Lado's bilingual dictionary of idioms suggests that "by the way" can be translated as "sambil lalu" or "omong-omong" in Indonesian. Although the form of the phrase "omong-omong" is different, it carries the same meaning as the source idiom. Therefore, an alternative subtitle could include the translation of the target language idiom: "Omong-omong, kenapa suaramu seperti wanita kulit putih paruh baya?" The omission of the idiom in the subtitle raises questions about the accuracy of the translation, as a suitable equivalent does exist in the target language. It would have been more accurate to include the target language idiom instead of omitting it. By choosing to omit the idiom, the translation loses the essence and impact of the source language expression, making it **not accurate**.

Datum 6

SL: Hey, you ask too many questions. How about you **zip it for a minute**, m'kay?

TL: Kau banyak Tanya. Diamlah sebentar.

The phrase "zip it for a minute" is categorized as an idiom of the verb + object type, where a word or phrase and an object or complement express an action with details. It is a variation of the phrase "zip it" or "zip your lip," which means to be quiet or stop talking. The origin of the phrase is unknown but is believed to have originated in the United States in the 1950s. In the context of the film, the phrase is used by 22 to tell Joe to be quiet because he was asking too many questions. 22 stated this phrase quite nicely, but it is still said in an informal way. In the translation, the phrase is rendered using paraphrasing strategy as "diamlah sebentar", which already conveys a similar meaning. The translator choses the strategy because the phrase "zip it for a minute" doesn't have an equal target text idiom in the target language. However, the translation still can be considered an accurate translation as it effectively conveys the content of the source idiom without requiring further rewriting.

Datum 7

SL: We'll have you back in no time.

TL: Kau akan segera kembali.

The idiom "in no time" is categorized as a **prepositional phrase**, constructed by the preposition "in" and the noun phrase "no time". The phrase believe to be arises in the first half of 1800s with the meaning of "almost instantly" or "immediately", though it can also means to be "very quickly". In this case, the character Moonwind uses this phrase to assure Joe that he will return to his body soon enough because they're already arrived at the thin spot Moonwind mentioned before. The translator choses the strategy of **paraphrasing** by rendering the phrase into a single word "segera" in the target language, which effectively conveys the same meaning as the translated word describes the situation in the target language. Although the translator chose to paraphrase the idiom into a single word, the translation is **accurate** as it clearly communicates the intended message without requiring further modifications.

Datum 8

SL: Let's just take a minute and, um...

TL: Mari ambil waktu dan ...

The phrase "take a minute" is classified as an idiomatic expression in the form of **verb** + **object**. It is constructed by the verb "take" and the object "a minute," which refers to a very short period of time. In the context of the film, the character 22 hesitates before leaving the hospital, prompting the phrase to be used. This idiom actually has the meaning to wait for a while, because 22 doubts the decision to leave in a hurry. The translator renders the phrase using **the strategy of paraphrasing** as "ambil waktu" in the target language subtitle. The translator used this strategy knowing that "take a minute" can't be translated literally.

However, the quality of the translation is not clear enough since the word "take" is still translated in a literal way. The phrase "ambil waktu" is not familiar in the target language, making it a **not accurate translation**, and a rewrite is needed to better connect the translation to the film's context. An alternative translation could be "berhenti sebentar," which maintains the essence of the idiom and aligns with the character's need to pause and reflect. This alternative conveys the intended meaning more effectively and utilizes the strategy of paraphrasing.

Datum 9

SL: Terry's got this **under control**. I'll handle it. TL: Terry **pegang kendali**. Akan kutangani.

The phrase "under control" is classified as a **compound** idiom, which consists of the preposition word "under" and the noun "control" functioning as a single unit. The phrase has the meaning of "a state in which the elements of a situation are functioning or occurring as they are desired or required; managed or handled such that the desired conditions continue" or to be "manageable; restrained and controlled; not out of control". In the film's context, Terry uses this phrase to address an issue with the count of souls. The translation in the target language renders it as "pegang kendali," which aligns with the meaning provided in a bilingual dictionary by Slamet Riyanto that stated under control has the meaning of dibawah kendali, terkendali, or beres. The strategy used in this translation is **paraphrasing**, as the translated phrase describes the condition mentioned by Terry. According to Nababan's theory of accuracy rating, this translation is considered **accurate** since it effectively conveys the meaning of the source phrase and employs an appropriate strategy. Therefore, based on this theory, the translation of "under control" is accurate.

Datum 10

SL: I'll go down there and get him. Set the count right, lickety-split.

TL: Aku akan turun menjemputnya. Aku akan segera perbaiki hitungannya.

The phrase "lickety-split" is an idiom classified as a **compound** word, consisting of an alteration of the word "lick" and the verb "split." Its origin is uncertain, but it has been known in the United States since the mid-19th century. It also has an earlier variations such as lickety-cut, lickety-click, and simply licketie in the year of 1817. The phrase is commonly understood to mean "very quickly or efficiently." In the film, the phrase lickety-split was said by Terry who found out that Joe is a false mentor that is being paired up with 22, so Terry said that he wanted to fix the count in a lickety-split way or so it meant fixing the count very quickly. In the target language subtitle, the phrase is translated using **paraphrased** as "segera" (meaning quickly) since there is no equivalent idiom. The translator also adjusts the sentence style for better comprehension. According to Nababan's accuracy rating, the translation is considered **accurate** because "segera" effectively conveys the meaning of "lickety-split" in English. Despite the sentence's stylistic changes, the translation accurately captures the intended meaning.

Datum 11

SL: You know he, Mr. Close-But-No-Cigar.

TL: Kau tahu dia tak berhasil.

The idiom "close-but-no-cigar" falls into the category of cliché, which refers to a commonly used phrase or opinion to describe people who are near success or almost succeeded. The phrase has been known for centuries and is used to indicate that an effort came close to succeeding but ultimately fell short. Its origin can be traced back to the 1920s when cigars were given out as prizes at fairs and carnivals. However, the phrase became popular as the carnivals started to travel across the United States. In the film's context, the character Paul uses the phrase to comment on Joe's lack of success in his career. The phrase was translated using paraphrasing strategy as "tak berhasil" in the target language, which conveys the intended meaning of the source idiom. According to the proposed accuracy level by Nababan, the translation is considered accurate as it effectively conveys the intended message, even though it is not in the form of an idiom.

Datum 12

SL: I'm happy as a clam, my man.

TL: Aku bahagia.

The phrase "happy as a clam" or often said "as happy as a clam" is as+adjective+article a+as which can be categorized as a **simile/simili**. The phrase compares someone's happiness to that of a clam. It is categorized as an idiom and is commonly used to express extreme happiness or contentment. The phrase originates from the idea that clams are happy during high tide because they are safe from being caught. The expression became popular in the nineteenth century, particularly in the northeastern United States. In the film, the phrase is spoken by Dez, who is a barber that Joe usually goes to. Dez was saying his dream about being a vet, but then 22 –that is in Joe's body, interrupted him by saying he was unhappy that he was stuck being a barber. Then, Dez cut 22 quickly and said that "I'm happy as a clam, my man." This phrase was used by Dez to clarify his happy feeling about being a barber to 22. In the translation, the phrase is translated using paraphrasing into a word as "bahagia" in the target language, which accurately captures the concept of extreme happiness. The translator chose to **paraphrase the idiom** to ensure clarity and because an equivalent idiom was not readily available. Overall, the translation is considered **accurate** according to Nababan's theory of accuracy rating, as it effectively conveys the intended meaning and is understandable to the audience.

Datum 13

SL: Every day the same thing, day in and day out.

TL: Setiap hari sama, pagi dan malam.

The phrase "day in and day out" is classified as an idiomatic expression in the form of a binomial. It consists of two words connected by the conjunction "and." The phrase is considered a binomial because it meets the criteria of having opposite words and rhyming. In the context of the film, Joe uses the phrase to describe the everyday conditions of the subway in New York City. He explains to 22 that the subway is consistently unpleasant, with a strong odor, heat, and overcrowding. The phrase "day in and day out" is used to convey something that happens routinely or regularly. In the translation, the phrase is rendered as "pagi dan malam," which captures the literal meaning of the source phrase. The translator chose the strategy to omit the playfulness of the idiom and provide a straightforward translation. While there are alternative phrases in the target language such as "siang malam terus-menerus" or "rutin seperti biasa", the translation remains accurate as it effectively conveys the intended meaning. The bilingual dictionary offers slightly different alternatives, but the chosen translation is still considered accurate without the need for further revisions.

Datum 14

SL: Fine, we'll get the suit off the rack somewhere.

TL: Baik, kita ambil setelan lain.

The idiom "off the rack" is classified as a **fixed statement** type of idiom. It is commonly used in everyday conversation and refers to clothes that are ready to wear and mass-produced. These clothes are different from custom-made or designer clothes. The phrase "off the rack" means ready-made, with the rack referring to the frame from which clothes are hung. The use of this phrase became popular in the 1950s, but the word "rack" has had a similar meaning since the 14th century. In the film, the phrase "off the rack" was said by Joe and 22 when they're talking to Joe's mom. Joe said it first while in the forms of cat, then 22 talked it out in Joe's body, but the phrase is not translated in the target subtitle. The translator chose to **omit the idiom** to simplify the translation. While there is an alternative paraphrased translation available that written "Baik, kita ambil setelan dari rak/gantungan lain." using paraphrasing to obtain the translation, the chosen omission is still considered **accurate** as it conveys the meaning clearly without the need for rewriting. According to Nababan's theory of accuracy, a translation is accurate if it effectively conveys the meaning of the source language and is understood by the target audience without requiring further revisions.

5. Conclusion

This study analyzed the strategies and accuracy of translating idiomatic expressions in the movie Soul and its Indonesian subtitle. The conclusion is that translating idiomatic expressions can be challenging due to the lack of direct equivalents in the target language. Translators need to be familiar with the types and strategies of translating idioms to ensure accurate translations. The selection of appropriate strategies helps the target audience understand the subtitles better. The context of translation also plays a crucial role in making idiom expressions clear and understandable.

The research found 98 English idiom expressions in the movie, categorized into eight types: verb +

object, prepositional phrase, compound, simile/simili, binomial, whole clause or sentence, euphemisms, and cliché/fixed statements. The most frequently encountered type in the subtitle was compound idioms.

The translator used four strategies by Mona Baker to interpret the idioms: using an idiom of similar meaning and forms, using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar forms, translation by paraphrase, and translation by omission of the idiom or the entire idiom. The most commonly applied strategy was paraphrasing the idiom, as it allows the translator to recreate non-equivalent idioms while preserving the intended meaning. This strategy is also adaptable to different styles.

Regarding accuracy, there were four instances where the translation was not fully accurate, while 94 data points were considered accurate. Overall, the translated subtitle exhibited a high level of accuracy. Translators need to recognize idioms and deliver them successfully in the target language, along with understanding the cultural and customs of the language. Knowing the origin of an idiom can also contribute to better results.

The suggestion for translators is to deepen their knowledge of idioms and their equivalents in the target language, as well as understanding which strategies to employ for accurate translations. Familiarity with the origin and concrete meaning of idioms is crucial. Researchers interested in the same topic should include more knowledge and references on translation strategies and accuracy. The research aims to provide valuable references for students seeking to enhance their understanding of idiom translation.

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