

**TYPES OF IDIOMS  
AND STRATEGIES IN TRANSLATING IDIOMS  
IN THE NOVEL *THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN* BY PAULA HAWKINS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The objectives of this research are to identify the types and strategies in translating idioms used in Paula Hawkins' novel *The Girl on the Train*. The research methodology applied is descriptive qualitative. The results show that the types of idioms (O'Dell and McCarthy 2010) found in the novel are similes, binomials, proverbs, euphemisms, cliché, and fixed statement and other language. Using the theory by Baker (2011), the idioms in the novel are mainly translated using the strategy; translation by phrase. Other strategies that are also applied are using idioms of similar meanings but dissimilar forms, using idioms of singular and form, translating by omission of entire idioms, and borrowing the source language.

**Keywords:** Idioms; Translation Strategy.

**I. BACKGROUND**

Language is the most common instrument of communication used by humans. There are thousands of languages spoken all over the world. This makes human socialization activities often limited only to certain environments; only to the people with the same language. As the result, translation is needed to connect one nation to another. According to Moentaha (2006: 11), translation is the process of replacing the text in the source language (SL) with text in the target language (TL) without change to the level of content of the text in the SL. Translation serves as to divert messages contained in one content from one language to another without changing the meaning.

In the translation process, translators certainly encounter obstacles. Cahyadi (in Sari: 2012) mentions that the differences of the socio-cultural of one

ethnic group from the socio-cultural of other ethnic groups lead to different ways of expressing the meaning of a word or sentence in a particular language. This condition causes very complicated problems for translators, especially if they are not familiar with the culture of the source and target languages.

According to Suyatno, idioms in one language are related to the culture of the people who use the language (Gusti, 2012). Idioms in one language do not always mean the same with the idioms in another language. The translation of idioms cannot always be translated literally. Even so, this strategy is often used as a 'way out' for translators because of the difficulty of finding the right equivalent. Moreover, there are also some cases where the translators are not aware of the existence of an idiom in a sentence

so they translate it literally (Lou, 2007: 222).

*The Girl on the Train*, a novel written by Paula Hawkins, was published in 2015. In 2016, this novel was translated into Indonesian with the same title by Ingrid Nimpoeno. Other novels that are translated by Ingrid Nimpoeno are *The Fault in Our Stars – Salahkan Bintang-Bintang*; *The Time Traveler's Wife – Istri Sang Penjelajah Waktu*; and *A Man Called Ove*. This research is interested in finding the types of idioms used in the novel, to then finding out the strategies applied in translating them.

Idioms are fixed combination of words whose meaning is often different from the meaning of each individual word. Idioms can consist of one or a combination of several words, phrases or a sentence. In some languages, idioms are often also called proverbs or dialects. In O'Dell and McCarthy (2010: 22-32) idioms are classified into eight. The types include (1) Similes, which compares two things and always include the words such 'as' or 'like'; (2) Binomials, a type of idioms in which two words are joined by a conjunction, usually 'and'; (3) Trinomials, which are similar to binomials, which three words are joined; (4) Proverbs, which are short sentences which refer to something most people have experienced and give advice or warnings; (5) Euphemisms, a type of idioms used to avoid saying words which may be offensive or considered unpleasant; (6) Cliché, often used in certain common, everyday situations, such as everyday conversation, advertising slogans and newspaper headlines; (7) Fixed Statement, an idiom that we can often hear and use in daily conversation; and (8) Other Languages; mostly from Latin or French.

The replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual

material in another language (TL) is the definition of translation. Baker (2011) suggested the strategies in translating idioms. The strategies are: (1) Using idioms of similar meaning and form, a strategy that involves using idioms in the TL which conveys roughly the same meaning as that of the SL idioms and, in addition, consists of equivalent lexical items; (2) Using idioms of similar meanings but dissimilar forms, in which idioms in the TL has a meaning similar to that of the idioms in SL but consists of different lexical items; (3) Borrowing the source language idioms, a common strategy in dealing with culture-specific idioms; (4) Translation by paraphrase, the most common way of translating idioms when a match cannot be found in TL or when it seems inappropriate because of differences in stylistic preferences of the SL and TL; (5) Translation by omission of a play on idioms, a strategy involves rendering only the literal meaning of idioms in a context that allows for a concrete reading of an otherwise playful use of language; and (6) Translating by omission of entire idioms, this may be because they have no close match in TL, they're meaning cannot be easily paraphrased, or for stylistic reasons.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this research is qualitative descriptive. The primary data source is Paula Hawkin's novel *The Girl on the Train* and the Indonesian version of it which were translated by Ingrid Nimpoeno. English idiom dictionaries are also used.

The data is obtained using note taking method, in which phrases that are suspected to be idioms were marked and put into a list. The next stage is to find the meaning of the idiom using the English

idiom dictionary. Next, the dividing-key factors technique is used. The data obtained then are classified according to the types of idioms based on O'Dell and McCarthy (2010). The translation of these idioms is searched in the Indonesian version of the novel. From here, the strategies in translating idioms are analyzed using the theory from Baker's (2011).

### III. RESULT & DISCUSSION

#### Results

*The Girl on the Train* is a novel written by a British author, Paula Hawkins. This novel was first published in 2015 and has been translated into various languages, including Indonesian. Ingrid Nimpoeno translated this novel in 2016.

The result of the analysis shows that there are 74 idioms found in *The Girl on the Train*. Tabel 3.1 shows the types of idioms found in the novel.

**Table 3.1. Types of Idioms in the novel *The Girl on the Train***

No.	Types of Idioms	Total Data
1.	<i>Similes</i>	1
2.	<i>Binomials</i>	2
3.	<i>Proverbs</i>	1
4.	<i>Euphemisms</i>	14
5.	<i>Cliché</i>	19
6.	<i>Fixed Statement</i>	36
7.	<i>Other Language</i>	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>74</b>

The data in tabel 3.1 shows the strategies applied in translating the idioms.

**Tabel 3.2 Strategies in Translating Idioms**

No.	Strategies in Translating Idioms	Total Data
1.	Using idioms of similar meaning and form	6
2.	Using idioms of similar meanings but dissimilar forms	7
3.	Borrowing the source language idioms	1
4.	Translation by paraphrase	54
5.	Translating by omission of entire idioms	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>74</b>

#### Discussion

The discussion below will show data that are presented in table 3.1 and 3.2. The data are chosen which best represent the types and most importantly how it is translated into the target language.

#### Data 2

SL: ..., feel the carriage rock back and forth and back and forth, ... (Hawkins, 2015: 13)

TL: ..., *merasakan gerbong kereta berayun-ayun ke depan dan ke belakang dan ke depan dan ke belakang*, ... (Hawkins, 2015: 4)

In data 2, the idiom is 'back and forth' which means 'to and fro, moving in one direction and then the opposite and so making no progress in either' (*The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms: American English Idiomatic Expressions & Phrases*, 2013: 25). This idiom is a binomials (O'Dell & McCarthy, 2010: 24) because it uses the word 'and' as a conjunction.

The idiom is translated into '*ke depan dan ke belakang*' by using translation by paraphrase strategy. This strategy is considered the most common way of translating idioms when a match cannot be found in TL because of differences in SL's and TL's style preferences (Baker, 2011: 81).

#### Data 12

SL: ..., so I tell him about the gallery closing and that I feel at a loose end all the time, ... (Hawkins, 2015: 32)

TL: ..., jadi *kuceritakan mengenai penutupan galeri dan bahwa aku merasa kebingungan sepanjang waktu*, ... (Hawkins, 2015: 31)

In data 12, the idiom 'at a loose end' means 'having nothing to do; not knowing what to do' (*The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms*, 2004: 178). This idiom is an example of euphemism because it is often used to avoid unpleasant words in certain situations (O'Dell & McCarthy, 2010: 28). This idiom is translated into '*kebingungan*' using translation by paraphrase strategy because the word '*kebingungan*' is not an idiom but the meaning is close to the idiom in the SL.

#### Data 22

SL: I let the tears flow as far as Northcote, ... (Hawkins, 2015: 58)

TL: *Kubiarkan air mata mengalir hingga sejauh Northcote*, ... (Hawkins, 2015: 67)

In data 22, the idiom 'as far as' means 'to the extent, degree, or amount that' (*The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms: American English Idiomatic Expressions & Phrases*, 2013: 15). This idiom fall under similes type of idiom (O'Dell & McCarthy, 2010: 22) because it includes the word 'as ... as'

According to Baker (2011: 77), using idioms of similar meaning and form involves the use of idioms in the TL which have roughly the same meaning as the idiom in the SL and consist of lexical equivalents. In data 22, the idiom 'as far as' is translated as '*hingga sejauh*' which is a literal translation of the idiom in the SL. Therefore, data 22 uses the strategy using idioms of similar meaning and form.

#### Data 23

SL: Been in the wars, have we? (Hawkins, 2015: 59)

TL: *Pulang perang, ya?* (Hawkins, 2015: 68)

In data 23, the idiom 'have been in the wars' means 'have been hurt or injured' (*The Oxford Dictionary of Idiom*, 2004: 307). This idiom poses as a proverb idiom (O'Dell & McCarthy, 2010: 26) because it generally often used for people who has wounds all over their body. In the translated version, the translator used using idioms of similar meaning and form strategy, and translated the idiom into '*pulang perang, ya*' which is the literal translation.

#### Data 32

SL: Parents don't care about anything but their children. (Hawkins, 2015: 86)

TL: *Orang tua tidak memedulikan apa pun kecuali anak-anak mereka*. (Hawkins, 2015: 106)

The idiom 'anything but' in data 32 means 'by no means, not at all' (*The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms: American English Idiomatic Expressions & Phrases*, 2013: 17). This idiom poses as fixed statement type because it is often found in everyday conversation (O'Dell & McCarthy, 2010: 30). The translator then removed the word 'anything' in the SL's idiom and translated it into '*kecuali*' which only refers to the word 'but'. The translator removed the idiom in the sentence because the idiom cannot be translated literally. Thus, this strategy applies the translating by omission of entire idioms.

#### Data 36

SL: ... - he was beautiful in the flesh, hollowed out and coiled like a spring, ... (Hawkins, 2015: 105)

TL: ... - *pada kenyataannya dia tampan, tampak kosong dan bungkuk seperti pegas, ...* (Hawkins, 2015: 131)

According to *The Oxford Dictionary of Idiom* (2004: 110), the idiom 'in the flesh' in data 36 has the meaning 'in person rather than via a telephone, film, article, etc'. This idiom belongs to the fixed statement type because it is commonly used in everyday conversation (O'Dell & McCarthy, 2010: 30). The translator then translated the idiom 'in the flesh' into '*pada kenyataannya*'. The translation was not done literally but it is close to the meaning of the idiom. It can be concluded that the strategy used in translating this idiom is translation by paraphrase.

#### Data 37

SL: ..., because the last thing Scott was going to be thinking about was what I looked like, but I couldn't help myself. (Hawkins, 2015: 116)

TL: ..., *karena Scott pasti tidak akan memikirkan seperti apa tampangku, tapi aku tidak bisa menahan diri*. (Hawkins, 2015: 148)

Fixed statement is an idiom that we often hear and use in daily conversation (O'Dell & McCarthy, 2010: 30). The idiom 'couldn't help' or 'can't help' in data 37, means 'be unable to do otherwise' (*The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms: American English Idiomatic Expressions & Phrases*, 2013: 71). Thus, this idiom is categorized as fixed statement. The idiom was then translated into '*menahan diri*' which at least can explain the intended message even though it is not an idiom. It

is evident that the strategy applied here is translation by paraphrase.

#### Data 38

SL: It was in the living room that the déjà vu hit me, ... (Hawkins, 2015: 117)

TL: *Di ruang duduk itulah aku dilanda déjà vu, ...* (Hawkins, 2015: 150)

In data 38, the idiom 'déjà vu' means 'the strange feeling that you have already seen or experienced something' (*Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms*, 2002: 95). The idiom 'déjà vu' comes from French which means '*sudah pernah melihat*'. Therefore, the idiom 'déjà vu' belongs to; the other language type of idiom (O'Dell & McCarthy, 2010: 32). Likewise, in the translated version, 'déjà vu' is maintained without any changes. It is therefore evident that data 38 uses the strategy borrowing the source language.

#### Data 45

SL: I'm on the back foot already, embarrassed, ashamed. (Hawkins, 2015: 151)

TL: *Aku sudah kalah telak, merasa malu, dan terhina*. (Hawkins, 2015: 198)

According to *The Farlex Idioms and Slang Dictionary*, the idiom 'on the back foot' in data 45 means 'on a position of disadvantage, retreat, or defeat'<sup>1</sup>. These idiom is included into euphemisms because it is often uses to avoid unpleasant words. The translator then translated the idiom into '*kalah telak*' which is also an idiom but has a different lexical form. Therefore, it can be concluded that the translator used using idioms of similar meanings but dissimilar forms strategy.

<sup>1</sup> On the back foot. (n.d.) Farlex Dictionary of Idioms. (2015).

<https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/on+the+back+foot>. Retrieved on June, 8<sup>th</sup> 2021, at 12.10 PM

## Data 62

SL: I try to think outside the box – ...  
(Hawkins, 2015: 239)

TL: *Aku mencoba berpikir kreatif* - ...  
(Hawkins, 2015: 322)

In data 62, the idiom 'think outside the box' means 'have ideas that are original, creative, or innovative' (*The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms*, 2004: 36). This idiom poses as cliché type of idiom because it generally uses in slogans or advertisements aimed for the public purpose (O'Dell & McCarthy, 2010: 30). The idiom is translated into '*berpikir kreatif*' which is more like the translation of the meaning of the idiom in the SL which indicates that the strategy applied for the translation is translation by paraphrase.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that there are 74 types of idioms that exist in the novel *The Girl on the Train*. Since this novel contain daily conversations, the majority of idioms found are fixed statements (36 data). Following that are clichés (19 data), euphemisms (14) and binomials (2). Proverbs, similes and other languages all showing similar results; 1 data.

The strategy mostly used in translating the idioms is translation by paraphrase (54 data). Other strategies such as using idioms of similar meanings but dissimilar forms, idioms of similar meaning, translating by omission of entire idioms, borrowing the source language are also applied to translate the types of idioms above. The strategy translation by paraphrase is the most prominently used because it is the safest or easiest option to use when the translator cannot find the

equivalent idiom in the target language. Although it is the simplest strategy, translators need to have a wide understanding of the idioms in both languages to find idioms which have similar meaning in the target language.

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