

## Research Article

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# The Equivalence in The Translation of English Idiomatic Expression into Indonesian by Students of English Education Department University of Mataram

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## Abstract

The aims of this study are: 1) to find out frequently used types of equivalence by the seventh semester students of English Education Department at University of Mataram in translating English idiomatic expression into Indonesia according to Nida's equivalence theory, and 2) to find out the problem faced by the English students in the translating of the idiomatic expression of English into Indonesia. This study used mixed-method. The participant of this study were from the seventh semester English students of University of Mataram. To collect the data, this study used two types of instruments: translation test and questionnaires. The research findings showed that among 240 datas of students translation result, 73,64% of the datas categorized as dynamic equivalence and only 5,85% of the datas categorized as formal equivalence. Furthermore, based on close-ended and open-ended questionnaires answers about students difficulty in the translating of the idiomatic expressions, it reveals that students faced difficulty in translating process for the cultural background differences, minim exposure to idioms, and how the idioms were used. three strategies were available to students to use in encountering the difficulties in translating English idioms into Indonesian: 1) giving their selves more familiar to idioms through reading and using various medias, 2) paying more attention to the context which the idioms being served, 3) and looking for the meaning in dictionary or google. It could be infered that the most frequently used types of equivalence by the students was dynamic equivalence and the students still faced some problem in translating English idiomatic expression into Indonesia.

**Keywords:** *idiomatic expression; translation equivalence; difficulties.*

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## 1. Background of the Study

Translation ability is well documented as a crucial skill in learning a new language as a backup of the other main four skills such as reading, speaking, listening, and writing. The translation process is always needed behind those four skills so the message conveyed or obtained can be comprehended clearly. Along with the statement above, the mastery of translation skill also needs to be considered. Translation is one of certain issues which needs to be discussed inside the scope of foreign language learning. As per Catford, interpretation is the substitution of printed material in one language (SL) by identical literary material in another dialect (TL) [1]. In wider explanation, translation is not only about changing the word to word or sentence to sentence in source language into target language. It is said so because translating needs knowledge and understanding to decide on the nearest meaning. Therefore, the most appropriate equivalence in target language to transfer the message or meaning contained in source language into target language.

Moreover, since meaning takes an important part in translation, the translator needs to focus on how to get the meaning while translating a word, sentence, or an expression especially in a text correctly. But in some situation, a meaning is difficult to be determined because of the style of language, cultural differences, and the purpose of the author or the speaker. Especially in the translating of the idiomatic expression.

Translating idiom is one of common problems in translation. Comprehending idiom is sometimes the toughest part in mastering a new language. Sometimes, it is even difficult for native speakers to understand and use idiomatic expression [2]. Idiom as one type of figurative languages that involves the use of words differ from their literal meaning [3]. For instance, in a sentence "None of us have finish the assignment, so we are all in the same boat". The individuals who are curious about this figure of speech would believe that it is connected with boats, ships, outing, water, etc. To be sure, we are all in a comparable situation implies we are in a similar condition or circumstance. Occasionally, translating idiom would lead people especially non-native speaker to misinterpretation in choosing the most appropriate word with the closest equivalence meaning from the source text to the target text.

English department students of university of mataram also faced the phenomenon above. Since translation of idiom is dealing with style of language, cultural background and also the purpose of the author incase to get the equivalent translation of an expression. So, it is necessary for the students to use the appropriate types of translation method to accomplish the equivalence in translating idiom in the target text. Thus, there is a concept of equivalence proposed by Nida which divides equivalence into two types, which consist of formal and dynamic equivalence [4]. Formal equivalence focuses on the message in both form and content. The message from the source language should match the different component in the target language as close as could really be expected. Likewise, dynamic comparability is delivering each sentence from the source language into a sentence in the objective language that conveys a similar importance.

Therefore, for the explanation above, this research was aimed at finding out the seventh semester English students' frequently used types of translation equivalence as proposed by Nida as the concept of equivalence focusing on the translating of idiomatic

expression of English into Indonesia. Besides, this research also purposed to find out the difficulties encounter by the students in the translating of idiomatic expression.

## **2. Methods**

This study employed mixed methods that is the mix of qualitative resaerch and quantitative one. A translation test that was presented in a context of written short story applied in gathering the qualitative data related to the kinds of equivalence that are frequently used in translating English idiomatic expression into Indoesian. Meanwhile, the quantitaive data related to students' oinion was collected using open-ended and close-ended questionnaire adapted from questionnaire by Alhasony in relation to students' difficulties in translating English idiomatic expression [5].

The students involved in this research are all the seventh semester students joining the translation class of English Department of University of Mataram. Twenty class members were selected with purposive sampling in accordance with the criteria; 1) the participants are students registered in English Department University of Mataram, 2) the participants already got grade at least B and passed the translation class.

The data of this study were gathered in several steps. First, preparing and arranging the instruments consisting of a short story and questionnaires. Second, arranging the time for doing the test via Google Meet and the questionnaire was used Google Form, due to pandemic situation of Covid-19. And then collecting the translation result and questionnaires answers via WhatsApp and Google Form.

To answer the first research question the researcher used several steps in data analysis procedure. First, identifying the students translation test result by marking whether the translation of idiom is categorized as equivalence, literal, and un-translated. Second, classifying the students equivalence answer in translating idiom into dynamic and formal equivalence according to Nida's equivalence theory. Third, counting the percentage of formal equivalence, dynamic equivalence, literal, and un-translated answers in order to find out the frequency of each category. And then displaying the total percentage of each category. Meanwhile, the data analysis procedure to answer the second research question were collecting the data of the students' questionnaires answers first. And then identifying the answers then explaining and drawing representative conclusion based on the students' answers.

## **3. Findings and Discussion**

### *3.1 Findings*

#### **3.1.1 Frequently Used Types of Equivalence by the Students in Translating English Idiomatic Expressions into Indonesia**

A translation test that consists of 18 English idiomatic expressions. It is assisted in a context of short story and given to the students to be translated into Indonesia. The table

below showed the total answer of 20 students as this research sample. After classifying and categorizing the idiom translation results of each students, it can be seen that the highest percentage is the dynamic equivalence category (73,33%). And followed by literal and un-translated category (10,41%), and the lowest percentage is the formal equivalence category (5,83%). The result of each category displayed in the table below.

**Table 1.** Frequency of Each Category

No	Source text	Translated			Un-translated	Total Answer
		Equivalence		Literal		
		Formal	Dynamic			
1	Strike it rich.	-	16	-	1	17
2	Dog eat dog	-	14	3	1	18
3	Fits the bill	-	5	3	1	9
4	Start from scratch	-	16	-	1	17
5	Putting his nose to the grindstone	-	7	5	-	13
6	Take the bull by the horns	-	12	1	-	13
7	Inside out	7	11	-	1	19
8	At the drop of a hat	-	13	-	3	16
9	Reaching for pie in the sky	-	4	2	1	7
10	Early birds	-	11	1	1	13
11	Sink or swim	-	8	4	2	14
12	Play things by ear	-	1	2	1	4
13	Kept their ears to the ground	-	9	2	2	13
14	Full steam ahead	-	6	-	2	8
15	Drove hard bargains	4	2	-	5	11
16	By leaps and bounds	-	16	-	1	17
17	Stumbling blocks	3	16	-	1	20
18	Got the jump on	-	9	2	1	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>240</b>
<b>Percentage</b>		<b>5,83%</b>	<b>73,33%</b>	<b>10,41%</b>	<b>10,41%</b>	

### 3.1.2 Problems Faced by the Students in Translating English Idiomatic Expressions into Indonesian

**Table 2.** Difficulties in translating English idioms

No	Difficulties	Yes		No	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Idioms are difficult due to the lack of cultural background behind the idioms.	20	100 %	-	-
2	Idioms are difficult because the lack of exposure dealing with idioms.	18	90 %	2	10 %
3	Idioms are difficult because they are not taught well in class.	15	75 %	5	25 %
4	Idioms are difficult because they have unfamiliar words.	17	85 %	3	15 %
5	Idioms are difficult because the cultural courses i studied were not efficient.	15	75 %	5	25 %
6	Idioms are difficult when they have no context.	19	95 %	1	5%

Table above showed the results obtained from the close-ended questionnaire related to the difficulties faced by students while translating and understanding English idioms. From the result of statements 1 till 6, 100% of the students got difficulty in the translating of the idiom because of the cultural setting of the idioms itself. And followed by the result of the statement 6 where 95% of the students agreed that idioms are difficult if not presented in a context. And then 90% agreed about the statement 2 that idioms are difficult because they are not exposed enough to it. Moreover, 85% of the students got difficult because of the unfamiliar words of idiom. And 75% of the students got difficult for cultural settings they studied in class related to idioms are not well instructed. It is inferred that the majority of the students seem to face difficulties in the translating and the understanding of English idioms.

Moreover, the students also were asked about their strategy to encounter their difficulty in translating and understanding English idiomatic expression in a form of open-ended questionnaire. Based on the students' answers, the first most frequently used strategy was doing practices by giving their selves more exposure to idioms through reading novel, comic, article, and watching movie. The second frequently used strategy was analyzing and understanding the context first and later finding the similar idioms in Indonesia. Some also stated that they translate the idioms word-to-word or guessing and interpreting the meaning of the idioms based on the context or situation occurred. The last frequent used strategy was simply looking for the meaning of the idiom in a dictionary or google.

### *3.2 Discussion*

#### *3.2.1 Frequently Used Types of Equivalence by the Students in Translating English Idiomatic Expressions into Indonesia*

From the data that have been displayed on the findings, it showed that between formal and dynamic equivalence, the students frequently used dynamic equivalence method in the translating of the idiomatic expression. It also supported by Pasangka in his study, among 14 idioms he had found in a movie, 11 idioms were translated by using dynamic equivalence [6]. Another study that supported the finding of this study was constructed by Putranto from 20 data of idioms, only 1 idioms translated by using formal equivalence, and the rest of the idioms were translated by using dynamic equivalence [7].

The fact that the percentage of dynamic equivalence was higher than the formal equivalence, this indicates the students could delivering the message of the source language into the closest natural equivalent meaning in the target language, especially in the translating of the idiomatic expression where the meaning is different with its words. Because, when an expression translated into the equivalent expression in the target language without changing the conveyed message, then the translation result is acceptable. It is also supported by Putranto statement that dynamic equivalence is suitable to translate idiomatic expression since it delivers the meaning of the source language into a natural form that conveys the same meaning of the target language [7].

Below are presented the description of several translation result of apparent types of equivalence according to Nida's theory made by the students in translating English idiomatic expression into Indonesia.

### 3.2.1.1 Dynamic Equivalence

**Table 3.** Data 1 of Dynamic Equivalence

<b>Source Language</b>	<b>Target Language</b>
...free of attachments to <b>strike it rich.</b>	Participant 1 : ...bebas dari segala macam keterikatan untuk bisa <b>menjadi kaya.</b>
	Participant 2 : ...bebas dari kekangan agar <b>dapat sukses.</b>

According to Oxford Learner's Dictionary Online, idiom above means earn a great deal of money in an unexpected way. Participant 1 and 2 translate the idiom using completely different wording. Participant 1 translate it into *menjadi kaya*, according to KBBI Online the word *menjadi* means *berubah keadaan* (becomes) and *kaya* (rich). So, it means 'becomes rich'. Meanwhile, participant 2 translate the idiom into *dapat sukses*, in KBBI Online the word *dapat* means *mampu/sanggup/bisa* (capable/able/can) and *sukses* means *berhasil/beruntung* (succeed/lucky). So, *dapat sukses* means 'can be successful'. Thus, it could be said that both of the participants answers are dynamic because *menjadi kaya* and *dapat sukses* has a close meaning with *strike it rich* and not being translated literally. But the translation of idiom could be more equivalent if translated into the exact same expression in Indonesia which is *mendapat durian runtuh*.

**Table 4.** Data 2 of dynamic equivalence

Source Language	Target Language
They kept their ears to the ground,...	Participant 1 : Mereka memperhatikan informasi terbaru,...
	Participant 5 : Mereka selalu mendengarkan rumor terkini,...
	Participant 6 : Mereka selalu mengikuti perkembangan zaman,...

Based on Oxford Learner's Dictionary Online, idiom above means pay attention to anything happening or changing around. All the three participants mentioned above translate the idiom differently. Participant 1 translate it into *memperhatikan informasi terbaru*. According to KBBI online, *memperhatikan* means *mengamati* (observing/paying attention), *informasi* (information) means *pesan/berita* (message/news), and *terbaru* means *paling baru* (newest). So, *memperhatikan informasi terbaru* means paying attention to the newest information or news. And then participant 5 translate the idiom into *mendengarkan rumor terkini*, in KBBI Online *mendengarkan* means *memperhatikan/mendengarkan dengan sungguh-sungguh* (pay a close attention), *rumor* means *gunjingan* (rumour), and *terkini* means *mutakhir* (current). So, it means 'pay attention to a current rumour'. Meanwhile participant 6, translated the idiom into *mengikuti perkembangan zaman*, in KBBI Online *mengikuti* could means *mengiringi/menyertai/memperhatikan baik-baik* (accompany/participate/pay a close attention). So, the suitable meaning of the word *mengikuti* based on the context is *memperhatikan baik-baik* (pay a close attention). And then, *perkembangan* means *menjadi besar dan bertambah sempurna* (evolution). And *zaman* means *masa* (era). So, *mengikuti perkembangan zaman* means 'paying a close attention to the evolution or changing situation of a current period of time'.

Moreover, it could be seen that even the three participants translated the idiom kept their ears to the ground into three different phrases but the meaning are similiar and transfered well by using completely different wording from the source language idiom. Thus, it could be state that the translation of the idiom by the participants are dynamic. However, it would be more equivalent if the idiom translated into *membuka telinga lebar-lebar* in the target language.

**Table 5.** Data 3 of Dynamic Equivalence

Source Language	Target Language
..growing by <b>leaps and bounds</b> .	Participant 8 : ...berkembang <b>pesat</b> .

According to Oxford Learner's Dictionary Online, leaps and bounds means very quickly. As can be seen from the table above participant 8 translate the idiom into *pesat* which means *cepat sekali* (very quickly) according to *KBBI* Online. It clearly shown that leaps and bounds and *pesat* has the same meaning. Since the participant could equally transferred the meaning into the target language, it could be stated that the types of equivalence used by the participant categorized as dynamic. However, it could be more equivalent if the idiom translated into *bagai belut digetil ekor*.

### 3.2.1.2 Formal Equivalence

**Table 6.** Data 1 of Formal Equivalence

Source Language	Target Language
...software developer who knew the internet <b>inside out</b> .	Participant 14 : ...pengembang perangkat lunak yang tahu internet <b>luar dalam</b> .

As can be seen from the table above the participant used *luar dalam* as the translation of the source language idiom inside out. In Oxford Dictionary Online, inside out means knowing something throughly, as can be seen participant 14 translated the idiom according to the form, where *dalam* means inside and *luar* means out. The meaning of *luar dalam* in *KBBI* Online is lahir *batin/seluk beluk* (details). Thus, the translation categorized as formal equivalence since the meaning could be transferred in both form and content.

**Table 7.** Data 2 of formal equivalence

Source Language	Target Language
..., <b>drove hard bargains</b> .	Participant 14 : ..., <b>melakukan tawar-menawar yang sulit</b> .

According to Oxford Dictionary Online the meaning of drove hard bargain is negotiate forcefully. The participant 14 translate the idiom according to the form into *melakukan tawar-menawar yang sulit* which also means negotiate forcefully. It can be seen that the meaning of the idiom in both form and content are achieved. So, the types of equivalence used by the participant categorized as formal.



**Table 8.** Data 3 of Formal Equivalence

Source Language	Target Language
..., they had some <b>stumbling blocks</b> along the way.	Participant 3 : ..., mereka memiliki beberapa <b>batu sandungan</b> disepanjang jalan.

The idiom stumbling blocks in Oxford Learner's Dictionary Online means an obstacle that causes difficulty. And the third participant translated it into *batu sandungan* which according to *KBBI* Online means *sesuatu yang menjadi rintangan* (something that is an obstacle). so it could be state that stumbling block and *batu sandungan* has the same meaning and being translated in the same form. Thus, the translation result of the third participant categorized as formal equivalence.

### 3.2.2 Problems faced by the students in translating English idiomatic expressions into Indonesia.

This study also aims to find out the problem faced by the students in translating English idioms. It is clearly supported by the data that have been shown in the table 2. From the findings, it reveals that idioms were difficult because the lack of the cultural background behind idioms as well as the minim exposure to idioms. This finding is supported by Alrishan & Smady's previous studies which EFL students suffered to find the suitable translation of idiomatic expression because they are not exposed to the culture of the source language [8]. In accordance with the initial two issues made sense of beforehand, it flags that the maxims are not being shown well in class and the social courses review are not proficient. One might say that the understudies didn't get to find out about figures of speech appropriately in the class. This seeing as in accordance with Orfan which pointed that the sayings as a piece of metaphorical language definitely stand out in EFL classes [9]. The understudies additionally get challenges in deciphering phrases due to the new words and in the event that the colloquialisms are not in a specific circumstance. This finding is likewise upheld by Alrishan and Smady, which indicated the understudies can get the importance of the phrases effectively assuming the figures of speech are in setting [8].

In addition, from the findings, it shown that the students utilized various strategies to encounter the difficulties they faced in translating and understanding idioms. Most of the students would giving their selves more exposure to idioms through reading various types of text and movies. This could be a sign for teacher to give the students more exposure to idioms and encourage the students by reading different type of books or text. Also, using various medias in learning idiomatic expression is essential. However, in contrast with statement stated by Noor & Fatallah, some media such as movies and TV shows does not provide interactive situation which is sufficient for language acquisition [10]. The reason is the students did not get the opportunity to identify the meaning and receive acceptable feedback.

One more strategy regularly utilized by the understudies is focusing harder on the unique circumstance. Indeed, even the words are new, the understudies could figure and decipher the significance of the phrases in view of the specific circumstance. It demonstrated that the utilization of setting in learning informal articulation is required. Setting assumes a significant part in getting expressions, so the importance of the maxims could be sorted out effectively [11]. The last methodology utilized by the understudies was looking into the significance of the maxims in a word reference or google. This could be the aftereffects of the new expressions of phrases. Accordingly, it is fundamental for the instructors to zero in on showing regularly utilized phrases rather than colloquialisms with confounded jargon for EFL Learners [11].

#### 4. Conclusion

Among the two kinds of equivalence, the translations' result of the students are more dominant on dynamic equivalence rather than formal equivalence. Moreover, in translating and understanding idioms the students still face some problems that related to the cultural background of idioms, minim exposure to idioms, and the way idioms being served. Moreover, to encounter the difficulties mentioned before the students frequently used three strategies. First, giving their selves more exposure to idioms through reading and using various medias. Second, paying more attention to the context which the idioms being served. The third one is looking for the meaning on dictionary or google.

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