# THE ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ERROR IN TRANSLATING ENGLISH IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS INTO INDONESIAN LANGUAGE: A CASE STUDY AT AN ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM

**Thesis**

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**The Analysis of Students' Error in Translating English Idiomatic Expressions into Indonesian Language: A Case Study at an English Education Study Program**

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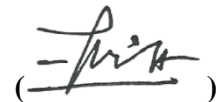1.  Chairperson  : Machdalena Vianty, M.Ed., M.Pd., Ed.D.          (                    )

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# DECLARATION

I, the undersigned,

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Certify that the thesis entitled "*The Analysis of Students' Error in Translating English Idiomatic Expressions into Indonesian Language: A Case Study at an English Education Study Program*" is my own work and I did not do any plagiarism or inappropriate quotation against the ethic and rules commended by Ministry of Education of Republic of Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I deserve to face court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

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# THESIS DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved family for always supporting and loving me anytime and anywhere. I also thank them for their advice to keep me motivated to complete this thesis.

# MOTTO

*"Whatever You Are, Be a Good One"*

-Abraham Lincoln-

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Indralaya, July 13th 2021

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# THE ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ERROR IN TRANSLATING ENGLISH IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS INTO INDONESIAN LANGUAGE: A CASE STUDY AT AN ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM

## ABSTRACT

This study focused on errors the students made in translating English idioms into the Indonesian language. Specifically, it was aimed at investigating the types of errors the students made and finding out the factors that could cause difficulty in translating English idioms into the Indonesian language. The participants of this study were seventy four of the sixth-semester English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students of the English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University. They were selected by using a purposive sampling technique. By applying the mixed-methods research design, this present study used a translation test and a semi-structured interview to collect the data. The seventy four participants were given the test, but only four students were invited to the interview session. The four interviewees were divided into two groups and were selected based on their test scores, two students with the highest scores and the other two with the lowest scores. The interview was conducted to compare the challenges faced by both groups. First, the findings of this study showed that from 1036 idiom translated by the seventy four students, 824 were incorrect. Second, based on the result of the test, six types of error were identified: textual meaning (65%), error from interpreting (20%), semantic error (6%), literal translation (4%), omission of meaning (3%), and addition of meaning (2%). Third, the result of the interview analysis showed that both students with high and low scores for their translation test experienced different challenges in translating the idioms such as the unfamiliarity with the idioms and selection of the appropriate words. However, the students with the lower score experienced more difficulties in translating the English idioms into the Indonesian language, such as lack of vocabulary, text complexity, and disapproval of idioms.

**Keywords:** *translation error, English idiomatic, Indonesian language*

# The Analysis of Students' Error in Translating English Idiomatic Expressions into Indonesian Language: A Case Study at an English Education Study Program

## CHAPTER I
## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

A translation is one of the activities that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students do in their language classrooms. A translation is about transferring the meaning from a source language into the target language (Ordudari, 2008). The translation is also defined as a procedure that leads from a written source language text to an optimally equivalent target-language text and requires the syntactic, semantic, and stylistic and text pragmatic comprehension by the translator of the original text (Choliludin, 2007, p.3). It is worth nothing that translation is not only about converting words or texts but also transferring the meaning of the language itself. The translation is needed to share information, knowledge, and ideas since most people prefer to read in their native languages (Burrow-Goldhahn, 2018; Morel, 2019).

Every language has its style in expressing words or texts; therefore, aspects of the target language such as idioms, slang, grammar, and pragmatic should be taken into consideration in the translation. Language cannot be separated from idioms since idioms are the aspect of language: English and Indonesian languages are no exception. All languages have idioms and are full of them (Boers, 2008). Idioms can be defined as several words which when taken together will have a different meaning from the individual meaning of each word (Seidl & McMordie, 1988, p.13).

All idioms have figurative meaning. They are usually used spontaneously either in both formal and informal conversations. Idiomatic expressions are also

mostly found in literary works such as poetry, prose, novel, and short story. As stated earlier at the beginning of this paragraph, each language has a particular word or phrase to express the idiomatic expressions. For instance, the English idiom "a piece of cake" means something easy, and the Indonesian idiom *membanting tulang* means *bekerja keras* (to work hard). These examples show that idioms do not contain any literal meaning. Therefore, if the non-native English speakers are not familiar with the idioms, it can be difficult to understand what the English native speaker is saying. Hence, non-native English speakers have to pay attention more to this aspect when communicating with native speakers.

As shown in the previous paragraph, English language has idioms so that learning and understanding English language idiom is important. Non-native speakers of English should learn idiomatic expressions to be able to communicate effectively and to make the interaction more natural and native-like (Dii, 2018). The more they know the English idiomatic expressions, the closer they are to the native proficiency of the English language (Idiomatic Expressions, 2015). English language learners who have a competency to produce and use idioms in different contexts of communication will lead to a better English proficiency and a higher fluency in the second or foreign language learning (Jabboori & Jazaa, 2013, p.9). Besides, idioms can help English language learners to express something in different ways. Instead of using a common expression, either native or non-native speakers may use an idiom to establish a more interesting interaction.

However, mastering English idioms is not enough. The English language learners need to be able to comprehend it as well. Translating English idiomatic expressions is not that simple. There are difficulties faced by the English language learners in doing the translation practice. Wright (2002, p.10) believes that translating idiom is considered to be difficult since idiom cannot be translated from word to word. Therefore, a translator cannot translate idioms in a literal way. A translator should understand the meaning first before translating the whole meaning. In the course of translation practice, a translator might deal with any

kind of difficulties. There are four classifications of translation difficulties, they are: (1) Lexical difficulties, (2) Stylistic difficulties, (3) Grammatical difficulties, and (4) Cultural difficulties (Hartono, 2009, pp.62-89). Hartono (2009) further explains that those difficulties can be revealed in the translation product. Lexical difficulties occur when the translator cannot identify the idiomatic expressions contained in a source text. Grammatical and cultural difficulties are usually found if there are any grammatical and cultural differences between the source language and the target language. Meanwhile, stylistic difficulties may be shown if a translator cannot find any equivalence forms to put into the translation product.

The lexical difficulties, stylistic difficulties, grammatical difficulties, and cultural difficulties may affect the quality of the translation product. The translation product might be inadequate, adequate, or successful. The more error is shown, the more inadequate the product is. Maghfur (2013) concluded that if only less than half of the translation results were successfully translated, it means that the students still have several difficulties in translating the meaning of idiomatic expressions.

The quality of translation that is done by Indonesian students, particularly in translating English idiomatic expressions into Indonesian language, is pretty low. This fact is supported by the result of an article written by Ayuningtyas et al. (2016). Their study focused on the difficulties faced by students in translating English idioms into Indonesian language. It also provided information about students'' translation quality. They involved 18 English Education students at the University of Muhammadiyah Semarang as their participants. Based on the finding of the study, they found that there was only 38% (N=6.84) of students' translations were successful. The other 14% (N=2.52) were almost successful, 10% (N=1.8) were adequate, 23% (N=4.14) were inadequate, and 15% (N=2.7) were totally inadequate. It means that the students did not make at least half of the translation successful. It is unfortunate that the students of English Education only result in the low quality of translation. As the students of English Education, they

should have got a better score since they must have learned about the concept of translation.

Another study that investigated the students' translation quality in English language learning in Indonesian context was the one conducted by Mustiana (2017). Her study focused on the translation quality in terms of three aspects, namely accuracy, clarity, and naturalness of 20 seventh-semester English Department students of IAIN Palopo. Mustiana (2017) reported that in terms of the accuracy aspect, 11.25% (N=2.25) of the students' translation results were excellent. Then, there were 44% (N=8.8) in good quality, 29.5% (N=5.9) in fair quality, and 15.25% (N=3.05) in bad quality. In terms of clarity aspect, the students' translation results were 10.75% (N=2.15) was excellent, 19.75% (N=3.95) was good, 53.25% (N=10.65) was fair, and 16.25% (N=3.25) was bad in quality. Finally, students' translation quality in the matter of naturalness aspect that was excellent was 14%. (N=2.8) The other 17.75% (N=3.55) was good, 52.5% (N=10.50) was fair, and 15.75% (N=3.15) was bad. Even the English Department students cannot reach at least 50% (N=10) in terms of excellent quality. The main problem the students had was that they did not know the meaning of the idiomatic expressions.

This present study is similar to the previous study conducted by Pratiwi (2017) who investigated the errors in translating idioms. Her participants are the third-year English Department students of Sunan Ampel State Islamic University. Pratiwi (2017) reported that the percentage of the error made by the students was 27.37%. She also found that the problems faced by the students in translating idioms were context, cultural differences, and lack of vocabulary. In her study, Pratiwi (2017) mainly focused on the translation error by counting the number of errors without including the types of error made by the students. Therefore, to fill the gap, the writer of this present study intends to conduct a similar study by not only investigating the translation quality made by the students but also finding out the types of errors that the students make and the factors that cause the errors in translating English idiomatic expressions into Indonesian language.

The main purpose of this present study was to analyze the types of errors made by students and also the factors that caused the difficulty in translating English idioms into Indonesian language. The participants of this study were the sixth-semester students of English Education Study Program in Sriwijaya University in Indralaya campus, which consisting of 74 students. They were selected for two reasons. Firstly, they had taken translation course and learned about idiomatic expressions in the previous semester. Before this study was conducted, the writer did a preliminary investigation by asking the students about their translation class, whether or not they had studied about English idioms and they faced any challenges. It turned out that 66 third-year students of English Education Study Program in Sriwijaya University had learned English idioms in the translation class. In addition, there were 62 students found that translating an English idiomatic expression is challenging. Since the students had already learned the idiomatic expressions and faced any challenges, the writer was able to investigate more about their translation practice.

The second reason the writer had to decide to involve the students in this present study was because they were easily accessible. Unfortunately, since there was a pandemic of COVID-19, the writer could not meet the participants face to face. Hence, the writer needed access through online platform. To complete this study, the writer intended to collect the data through social media. The writer did not find any difficulties to gain access to the participants.

## 1.2 Research Questions

**The problem of the study of this proposed research is formulated in the following research questions:**

1. What are the types of error made by the students of English Education Program in translating English idiomatic expressions into Indonesian language?

2. What is the factor that makes students difficult to translate English idiomatic expressions into Indonesian language?

**1.3 Objectives of the Study**

1. To find out the types of error made by the students of English Education Program in translating English idiomatic expressions into Indonesian language

2. To find out the factor that made students difficult to translate English idiomatic expressions into Indonesian language

**1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study is expected to be beneficial for students, teachers, and also the writer. It could be an additional knowledge for students about the kinds of errors in translation practice. The writer hopes that students would know the quality of their translation products. By knowing their quality, they would know their mistakes and this study could be an evaluation of their works in doing translation practice so that they would not make the same error next time. This study could be significant information for the teachers of English to find out what kinds of errors their students make in translating English idiomatic expressions into Indonesian language. After finding out, the writer hopes the teachers would improve their teaching quality so that they would be able to help their students increase the quality of their translation products. Finally, it is expected that this study could be beneficial information for the writer by knowing the kinds of errors in a translation product and some factors that might affect the quality of the translation product. In addition, this study could also be a renewal from the previous related studies and be a reference source for further studies.

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