Translation Techniques and Appropriateness of English Idioms in *The Founder*

Nadeline Calista Modesty[1], Ivonne Muliawati Harsono[2]
English Department, Faculty of Humanities and Creative Industries, Petra Christian University, Siwalankerto 121- 131, Surabaya, 60236, INDONESIA
E-mail: a11190047@john.petra.ac.id, iharsono@petra.ac.id[2]

ABSTRACT

This thesis is about the idiom translation of the movie *The Founder* by John Lee Hancock. In this thesis, the writer analyzes the techniques and appropriateness of the idiom translation by using Molina and Albir (2002) and Larson's accuracy, clarity, and naturalness (1984) theory. The writer seeks to disclose the most common technique used for translating idioms and how to make a good-quality translation. This study was done using a qualitative approach. The data analysis showed that out of 18 techniques proposed by Molina and Albir (2002) only 5 were utilized by the translator and out of five techniques, the established equivalent was used the most. The data analysis also shows that among 20 idioms, 10 idioms are appropriately translated. The writer suggests that future studies could be conducted on other aspects of the subtitles of *The Founder*.

Keywords: idioms, *the Founder*, translation, translation appropriateness, translation techniques

INTRODUCTION

Many people watch movies as a source of entertainment and hobby. To enjoy the movie, one must first be able to understand them. Considering the fact that people worldwide do not share the same language, translation is often needed to help people to understand movies in other languages. As per Catford's (1965) definition, translation refers to the act of substituting text in a source language (SL) with text in a target language (TL) that conveys an equivalent meaning. Larson (1984) provides a comparable definition of translation, wherein the act of translation involves modifying the arrangement of words, clauses, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and other linguistic elements from the Source Language (SL) to the Target Language (TL). According to Larson (1984), the objective of the translator is to generate an idiomatic translation, which entails producing a translation in the target language that is as natural as possible.

Translating idioms is considered to be one of the most challenging tasks. According to O'Dell and McCarthy (2017), idioms are lexical units that pose a considerable challenge in terms of their interpretation, as their meaning cannot be inferred from the literal meaning of the individual words. Julie (2020) stated that a thorough understanding of idiomatic expressions is essential in translation. This is because an inaccurate translation of an idiom into the target language can result in confusion. In the best-case scenario, idiomatic expressions should be rendered in culture-neutral languages as they are more comprehensible when translated into such languages. Consequently, the translator is required to locate the appropriate vocabulary from the source text and employ it proficiently in the target language.

The writer of this study decided to do an analysis of *The Founder*. *The Founder* is a biographical drama film that was written by Robert Siegel and directed by John Lee Hancock. The film was produced in the United States. The film was presented to the general public for the first

time on December 7, 2016, at the Arclight Hollywood, and on January 20, 2017, the Weinstein Company released it in theaters across the United States (IMDb, 2017). This motion picture has a total running time of 1 hour and 55 minutes.

The Founder was based on the real story of the famous fast food restaurant chain McDonald's. Ray Kroc was a small-time salesman who met brothers Dick McDonald and Mac McDonald. After looking at how McDonald's worked, Ray could predict McDonald's success and evolution into a company worth a billion dollars. The brothers, along with Ray, then decided to redesign the entire concept of McDonald's from the menu to the target market. As a result of Ray's contributions, McDonald's has developed into one of the most well-known fast-food restaurants in the world up until the present day, with over 38,000 outlets in around 100 countries (Investopedia, 2023). In addition to Ray Kroc, Dick McDonald, and Mac McDonald, who play the main characters in "The Founder," the movie also included supporting characters such as Joan Smith, Harry J. Sonneborn, Ethel Kroc, Fred Turner, June Martino, Rollie Smith, Jim Zien, Jerry Cullen, Jack Horford, Leonard Rosenblatt, Myra Rosenblatt, Owner, Dennis, and Car Hop Girl (IMDb, 2017).

The writer uses *The Founder* as the source of data because, first, the writer finds many valuable lessons as this movie contains moral and entrepreneurship lessons. Second, the writer finds many idioms contained in this movie. Furthermore, *The Founder* brought in a total of $24.1 million from ticket sales worldwide, including $12.8 million in the United States and Canada and $11.3 million from other regions outside of America. This movie has received AARP Movies for Grownups Awards 2017 (IMDb, 2017). *The Founder* also aired in *TransTV* cinemas on July 5, 2021.

The writer analyzes English idioms as found in subtitles that were translated into Indonesian in the film *The Founder*. In this study. The writer uses translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir (2002) as a guideline to analyze the movie. "Translation techniques are procedures to analyze and classify how translation equivalence works" (Molina and Albir, 2002, p. 509). Molina and Albir (2002) classify translation techniques into 18 types. They are adaptation, amplification, borrowing, calque, compensation, description, discursive creation, established equivalent, generalization, linguistic amplification, linguistic compression, literal translation, modulation, particularization, reduction, substitution, transposition, and variation.

In this study, the writer also used Larson's accuracy, clarity, and naturalness (1984) theory to analyze the appropriateness of the existing translation. By conducting this study, the writer hopes to disclose the most common technique used for translating idioms and how to make a good-quality translation.

METHODS

The writer uses a qualitative approach to analyze the data for this study. The data source for this study was English idioms and Indonesian translations, spoken by the characters in the movie The Founder. The writer was responsible for collecting the necessary data for the study, namely: English Idioms (SL) that were uttered by characters in the movie The Founder and Indonesian translation (TL) of the idioms. The data that would be analyzed in this study are the English Idioms that were spoken by Ray Kroc, Dick McDonald, and Mac McDonald as the main character of The Founder, and supporting characters such as Joan Smith, Ethel Kroc, and Art Wolodarsky.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section contains the writer's data analysis of *The Founder*. The following section explores translation techniques applied by the translator in *The Founder* subtitle and looks at ways to improve the existing translation. Each of the examples and analyses is detailed further below.

Translation Techniques

Out of the 18 Translation techniques listed by Molina and Albir (2002), the writer deduces that only 5 techniques are applied by the translator of The Founder to translate the idioms. The chosen techniques consist of established equivalent, generalization, reduction, particularization, and literal translation.

Translation with Established Equivalent Technique

No.1
SL: Mark my words
TL: Camkan perkataanku

The use of an established equivalent technique denotes that the translator makes use of a synonymous translation that is either accessible in the dictionaries of the target language or utilized in everyday life and conversation. In the first example (number 1), we can see the established equivalent technique being used. The expression "mark my words" means to listen carefully and make a mental note of what is being said since it is bound to happen eventually.

The translator utilized the established equivalent techniques when translating the word "Mark" into "Camkan." Mark translates literally to Tanda in Indonesian, however, the translator uses "Camkan," which in Bahasa Indonesia has the same meaning as "Mark my word." The definition of "Camkan" is to take note. It is frequently used to draw the listener's attention to words or actions. Therefore, the writer can conclude that the translator was using established equivalent technique.

Translation with Generalization Technique

No.5
SL: Going great guns
TL: Kami mendapat keuntungan besar

No. 8
SL: From sea to shining sea
TL: Di seluruh dunia

Generalization occurs when a word or phrase in the source language is translated into a broader and more general term in the target language. Because there is no phrase in Indonesian that is synonymous with "going great guns," the translator has opted to make use of the more general word "keuntungan yang besar," which literally translates to "big profit." Despite this, the word is still utilized in the same way that it would be in an idiom, and it maintains the same meaning (To go fast or successfully). Another example of generalization can be seen In number 8. From sea to shining sea means "form coast to another coast." The word "coast" should be translated into "pantai" in Indonesian, however instead of using "Dari pantai ke pantai" the translator used a more general and broader word "Di seluruh dunia" which means all around the world.

Translation with Reduction Technique

No.13   No.19
SL: Way out of the line   SL: Pain in the rear
TL: Keterlaluan   TL: Menyusahkan

Reduction technique is used by reducing the structure of the language unit while maintaining the integrity of the information that is ingrained within it. The use of reduction can be seen in number 13 when the translator uses "keterlaluan" to translate the idiom. The word "keterlaluan" means outrageous which is in line with the meaning of the idiom: doing something beyond what is considered acceptable behavior. The same technique is used by the translator to translate example number 19. The translator uses reduction techniques to translate pain in the rear. This expression refers to a person, thing, or situation that is particularly irritating, aggravating, or obnoxious. In this particular instance, the expression "pain in the rear" was used to refer to a person who is annoying by employing the word "menyusahkan" (troublesome).

Translation with Particularization Technique

No. 20
SL: Fortune favors the bold
TL: Uang menghampiri pemberani

Generalization and particularization are two sides of the same coin: generalization happens when a word or phrase in the source language is translated into a broader and more general term in the TL. On the other hand, particularization happens when a word or phrase in the SL is translated into a more specific and particular term in the target language. The use of particularization can be found in number 20. In general, the term "fortune" can have a variety of meanings, including luck, success, money, assets, wealth, and prosperity, amongst others; however, the translator chose to translate the word "fortune" into the specific word "uang," which in English means money. Therefore the writer can conclude that the translator used particularization in translating this idiom.

Translation with Literal Translation Technique

No. 14   No. 18
SL: Dog eat dog   SL: The sky is the limit
TL: Anjing makan anjing   TL: Langitlah batasnya

A literal translation is a technique that maintains the original material without making any alterations to the structure, form, or style of the original text. The use of literal translation can be seen in numbers 14 and 18. Both numbers 14 and 18 are translated word by word without changing the structure. Anjing (Dog) Makan (eat) Anjing (dog) and Langitlah (The sky) batasnya (is the limit).

The Appropriateness of the Idioms Translation

There are several idioms inside the movie that cannot be classified into Molina and Albir's (2002) 18 categories because the translation is completely different from the meaning of the SL. Therefore, in this section, the writer measures the appropriateness of the translation and offers some recommendations on how to improve the translation.

Table 4.1
Analysis of idiom "Dollars to donut" Translation Appropriateness

No	Source Language	Target Language	Context	A	C	N	Suggested Translation
2	Dollars to donut	Uang berbanding lurus dengan penghasilan	And before long, ***mark my words***, ***dollars to donuts***, you'd be selling more of those suckers than you can **shake a stick at**. "	-	-	-	Aku berani bertaruh

This translation is inappropriate because it is not accurate, clear, or natural. It is not accurate because dollars to doughnuts is a betting expression that has nothing to do with actual betting on doughnuts. People say it when they are confident in themselves. They bet a valuable item (dollars) on something less valuable (donuts). Table 4.1 shows that the source and target language makes very different distinctions in terms of the meaning. The translator translates this idiom into "Money is directly proportional to earnings" which has no correlation with the actual meaning of the idiom. Moreover, "uang berbanding lurus dengan penghasilan" is unnatural to the Indonesian audience because this term is unfamiliar and rarely used in daily conversations.

Given the absence of an equivalent idiom in Bahasa Indonesia, the author proposes the translation of the idiom as "Aku berani bertaruh" which can be interpreted in English as "I am willing to wager". By retaining the phrase "Aku berani bertaruh," the original connotation of the idiom can be conserved and the target language audience will have an easier time understanding what the expression means.

Table 4.5
Analysis of Idiom "Off to the Races" Translation Appropriateness

No.	Source Language	Target Language	Context	A	C	N	Suggested Translation
7	Off to the races	Dan kami berusaha mengimbangi pesanan	Before you know it, there's a line around the block. Word has spread. ***And it's off to the races***	-	-	-	Dan disitulah kompetisi dimulai.

This translation is not appropriate because it is not accurate, clear, or natural. The expression "off to the races" is a frequently employed idiom that describes an activity or enthusiasm that has just begun or is about to begin. The idiom was translated by the translator into *dan kami berusaha mengimbangi pesanan* that can be interpreted in English as "we attempt to balance the order", which has nothing to do with either the idiom itself or the meaning of the idiom. Therefore, the writer considered this to be an inappropriate translation, because the translator failed to communicate the meaning. The writer suggests that "off to the races" should be translated into *dan disitulah kompetisi dimulai*. This phrase denotes the commencement of the competition. The word *kompetisi* refers to the context of competing in a business, whereas *dimulai* denotes the initiation of said competition.

Table 4.6
Analysis of Idiom "Puts Food on the Table" Translation Appropriateness

No.	Source Language	Target Language	Context	A	C	N	Suggested Translation
10	Puts food on the table	Apapun yang menghasilkan uang	Golly. Plumbing, pianos, you're a regular jack of all trades Whatever **puts food on the table**	☐	☐	-	*Demi sesuap nasi dan sebongkah berlian* *Or* *Demi sesuap nasi dan segenggam garam*

This translation is overall accurate and clear, however, it is not commonly used by Indonesian in daily conversation so this translation is considered as inappropriate translation. An alternative phrasing for "*apapun yang menghasilkan uang*" is *yang penting jadi uang*. This phrase is commonly used in daily conversation and sounds more natural because *apapun yang mengahsilkan uang* sounds more formal and awkward. The Indonesian language offers a proverb that shares a similar connotation to the aforementioned idiom, which is *Demi sesuap nasi dan sebongkah berlian* or *Demi sesuap nasi dan segenggam garam*.

The historical context of this idiom suggests that in earlier times, a family could live well with just a grain of rice and a pinch of salt (*demi sesuap nasi dan segenggam garam*), However, as time progressed, the needs of families increased to the point where a mere pinch of salt was no longer sufficient to meet their daily requirements. As a result, a new proverb emerged which is for a bite of rice and a hunk of diamond (*demi sesuap nasi dan sebongkah berlian*). Since there's an equivalent idiom in Bahasa Indonesia, the writer recommends using it as the translation for whatever puts food on the table.

Table 4.4
Analysis of Idiom "It Takes Forever and a Day" Translation Appropriateness

No.	Source Language	Target Language	Context	A	C	N	Suggested Translation
6	It takes forever and a day	Butuh waktu yang lama	Then there's the service. ***It takes forever and a day*** for your food to arrive. And when it finally does-	☐	☐	☐	Butuh waktu yang sangat lama

Table 4.4 is a good example of an appropriate translation. The translation can be deemed appropriate as it accurately conveys the intended meaning, given that the phrase *butuh waktu yang lama* denotes an extended period of time. Moreover, this translation is also easy to understand and natural to the target language audience. The writer would like to suggest adding the term *sangat* in the translated text. The idiomatic expression "it takes forever and a day" means an extremely long period that felt like an endless amount of time. Therefore, the author proposes the addition of the word *sangat* in order to intensify and emphasize the long period of time.

CONCLUSION

The data analysis revealed that only 5 of the 18 translation techniques mentioned by Molina and Albir (2002) are used by the translator of The Founder to translate the idioms. The selected strategies include established equivalent, generalization, reduction, particularization, and literal translation.

This research's findings indicate that the most common method for translating idioms is established equivalent, which employs a phrase or term that is synonymous with another concept in the TL (as determined by dictionaries or common usage). In the majority of cases, the translator employs established equivalent techniques to help the audience understand the meaning of the idioms. Due to the fact that idioms are strongly influenced by culture, the translation will be easier to comprehend if it uses a phrase or term that is more common and frequently used by the target language audience.

The research also revealed that 10 of the 20 idioms under this research had an appropriate translation. According to Larson's (1984) theory, in order for a translation to be considered appropriate, it needs to be accurate, clear, and natural. Given these requirements, most of the idiom translation can be considered inappropriate because the idioms had not been translated accurately.

REFERENCES

Catford, J. C. (1965). *A linguistic theory of translation*. Oxford University Press.

Farlex. (n.d.). The free dictionary. https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/

IMDb.com. (2017, January 20). *The Founder*. IMDb.
        https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4276820/?ref_=ttrel_rel_tt

Julie, J. (2018). *Translation procedures of the Indonesian subtitles of English idiomatic expressions found in Inside Out* [Undergraduate Thesis, Petra Christian University].
        https://dewey.petra.ac.id/catalog/digital/detail?id=46244

Larson, M.L. (1984) *Meaning-based translation: A guide to cross-language equivalence*. University Press of America.

Molina, L. & Albir, A.H. (2002). Translation technique revisited: A dynamic and functionalist approach. *Meta*, *47*(4). Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona.
        https://doi.org/10.7202/008033ar

O'Dell, F. & McCarthy, M. (2017). *English idioms in use advanced book with answers: Vocabulary reference and practice* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Reiff, N. (2023). *10 biggest restaurant companies*. Investopedia.
        https://www.investopedia.com/articles/markets/012516/worlds-top-10-restaurant-companies -mcdsbux.asp