



Translation Strategies Of Idiomatic Expressions In Adele's Album 25

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Abstract

This study aims at identifying the types of idiom and analyzing the translation strategies used to render idiomatic expressions from English into Indonesian in Adele's album 25. A descriptive qualitative method was employed in this study. The data were collected through documentation method and note-taking techniques. Based on the findings, two types of idiom found in the song lyrics namely phrasal verb idiom and tournure verb idiom. In addition, three translation strategies were identified there are: using an idiom of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, and translation by paraphrase.

Keywords: *Idiomatic Expressions, Song Lyrics, Translation Strategies.*

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INTRODUCTION

Translation plays an essential role in connecting people across languages and cultures. It allows meaning, emotion, and intention to be conveyed from one language to another. Determined by Newmark (1988) "Translation as rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text". However, this task becomes more complex when dealing with idiomatic expressions, which often cannot be understood literally and are deeply tied to the culture of the source language. These challenges highlight the importance of applying appropriate translation strategies that not only transfer meaning but also maintain the emotional and cultural impact of the original text.

Nida and Taber (1982) explain that although idioms follow regular grammatical patterns, their full meaning cannot be understood just by interpreting each word on its own. Idioms are a unique part of language, reflecting the speaker's background, culture, and worldview. As such, translating idioms requires more than just linguistic knowledge, it also demands cultural sensitivity. Baker (1992) proposed several strategies for translating idioms, including using an idiom of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but different form, paraphrasing, and omission. Each strategy offers different benefits depending on the context, idiom type, and cultural gap between languages.

One medium where idiomatic expressions are commonly found is in the song lyrics. Lyrics often express deep emotions and cultural messages, making the translation of idioms within songs both a creative and complex task that requires both language expertise and strategic thinking. As defined by Dallin (1994) lyrics are written as a means of communication between the writer and the audience. Adele's album 25 features a number of idioms that reflect strong emotions like loss, love, and hope. These idioms add depth and authenticity to her songs but also pose challenges for translators, especially when there's no direct equivalent, the meaning changes with context, or the idiom has both literal and figurative meanings, and the

way idioms are used and how often they appear can also differ between languages (Baker, 1992).

Several previous studies support this research. Kristina (2021), in her undergraduate thesis, applied Palmer's (1981) theory to categorize idiom types and used Baker's (1992) framework to examine translation strategies in a movie. The results show that three kinds of idiomatic expressions such as phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs, and partial idioms were found in the script. The translator applied several strategies, including using idioms with similar meaning and form, paraphrasing, and omitting the idiom entirely. Similarly, Dewanti (2023) explored the translation of English idioms into Indonesian, using Hockett's classification of idioms and the translation procedures outlined by Vinay and Darbelnet in her analysis of a novel. The findings of the study indicate that four of the six types of idiomatic expressions outlined by Hockett are found in the data, these include substitutes, English phrasal compound, figure of speech, and slang. In terms of translation procedures, four out of the seven methods proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet are used: borrowing, literal translation, transposition, and equivalence. Previous studies have explored idiomatic expression translation in various media, such as films and novels. However, there is limited research focused on the translation of idioms in global music albums, especially Adele's 25. This makes the album a valuable subject for studying how such expressions are translated into Indonesian. Therefore, this study aims to address that gap by identifying the types of idioms in the album using Makkai's (1972) theory and analyzing the translation strategies applied using Baker's (1992) framework.

THEORY

The theories used in this research were selected to effectively achieve the study's objectives, which are to identify the types of idiomatic expressions and to analyze the translation strategies applied in rendering English idioms into Indonesian in Adele's 25 album. This study applies Makkai's (1972) classification of idiom types and Baker's (1992) framework of idiom translation strategies as the primary theoretical foundation. Makkai (1972) classifies idioms into two main types: sememic and lexemic. This study focuses on lexemic idioms, which are grouped into six categories:

- a. Phrasal Verb Idioms is formed by a verb and a particle (preposition or adverb) that create a new meaning, such as *fall down* (to fail).
- b. Tournure Verb Idioms means multi-word expressions (three or more words) often involving articles or the pronoun. tournure verb idioms can be grouped into several types:
 - a) Idioms requiring "it" (e.g., *break it up*);
 - b) Idioms with definite/indefinite articles (e.g., *kick the bucket*);
 - c) Idioms with binomials starting with a preposition (e.g., *rain cats and dogs*);
 - d) Idioms with a verb followed by a direct object (e.g., *build castles in the air*);
 - e) Idioms with a verb followed by a preposition or no object (e.g., *dance on air*);
 - f) Idioms using "be" as the main verb (e.g., *be well off*).
- c. Irreversible Binomial Idiom refers to fixed word pairs joined by a conjunction that cannot be reversed, like *sink or swim* or *bag and baggage*.
- d. Phrasal Compound Idiom means idiomatic phrases formed by combining words like adjectives, nouns, and verbs. Common patterns include:
 - a) Adjective + Noun (*blackbird*);
 - b) Noun + Noun (*bookworm*);
 - c) Preposition/Adverb + Noun (*backfield*);
 - d) Noun + Verb (*fish fry*);
 - e) Adjective + Adjective (*redhot*);
 - f) Adjective + Verb (*small fry*);
 - g) Adverb + Preposition/Adverb (*once-over*);
 - h) Verb + Noun (*hangnail*).

- e. Incorporating verb idiom is combine words to form new verb meanings, such as: a) Noun + Verb (*sight-see*); b) Adjective + Noun (*brown-nose*); c) Noun + Noun (*bootleg*); d) Adjective + Verb (*whitewash*).
- f. Pseudo-Idiom contains elements with no standalone meaning (cranberry morphemes), such as *chit-chat* or *dilly-dally*.

Translating idioms is known to be a complex task due to several challenges. Baker (1992) proposes four main strategies commonly applied in idiom translation, which serve as the theoretical framework for this study:

a. Using an Idiom of Similar Meaning and Form

This strategy involves selecting an idiomatic expression in the target language that closely matches both the meaning and the structure of the original idiom. Although this method strives to preserve the exact content and form, it is rarely possible because idioms are often unique to each language's culture and usage.

b. Using an Idiom of Similar Meaning but Dissimilar Form

Here, the translator finds an idiom in the target language that conveys the same meaning as the source idiom but uses different words or structure. This approach prioritizes meaning and cultural relevance over literal form, making it a practical choice when exact matches do not exist.

c. Translation by Paraphrase

When idiomatic expressions are difficult to translate directly or may sound unnatural in the target language, paraphrasing is used. This involves rewording the idiom's meaning without relying on an idiomatic form, helping the translation sound natural while preserving the original message.

d. Omission

Sometimes an idiom is omitted in translation if no equivalent or suitable paraphrase is possible, or if including it would disrupt the text's flow or meaning. Omission is acceptable in certain cases, such as when no close target-language equivalent exists, paraphrasing is difficult, or for stylistic reasons.

This study uses Makkai's theory to identified the types of idioms and Baker's framework to analyze how idiomatic expressions in Adele's album 25 are translated into Indonesian, providing insight into the practical application of these strategies in Indonesian music translation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach, which emphasizes detailed, non-numerical data analysis. The data source consists of idiomatic expressions taken from Adele's song lyrics in the album 25, in both English and their Indonesian translations, as provided by the Musixmatch application. Adele's album 25, which was released on November 20, 2015, by XL Recordings and Columbia Records, features eleven songs in the pop, soul, and R&B genres. This study focuses on four of those eleven songs.

This study collected data using a documentation method supported by note-taking techniques. Documentation involves gathering information from written sources, such as song lyrics, and written notes to offer proof from literary sources and strengthen the outcomes of the research. Since the focus is on idiomatic expressions in both English and Indonesian, several online dictionaries like The Free Online Dictionary by Farlex, Cambridge Online Dictionary, and *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia Online* were used to clarify idiom meanings. The data

collection process involved several steps: first, obtaining accurate lyrics in both languages from the Musixmatch app; second, listening to the songs carefully and repeatedly while reading the lyrics to grasp their meaning; and third, noting down each idiomatic expression found and pairing it with its Indonesian translation for further analysis

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

After the data were collected, the analysis revealed that two types of idioms identified, such as phrasal verb idiom and tournure verb idiom. There are three translation strategies were applied in rendering the idiomatic expressions found in Adele's album *25* into Indonesian. These strategies include: using an idiom of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, and translating by paraphrasing. Each strategy shows a different way to keep the original meaning and emotion of the lyrics, explained in detail in the following sections.

Data 1

SL: So desperate to **find a way out** of my world and finally breathe

TL: *Begitu putus asa untuk **menemukan jalan keluar** duniaku dan akhirnya bernafas*

BT: So desperate to **find a way out** of my world and finally breathe

In lyric data 1, it appears in the song *Remedy*. The phrase **find a way out** is considered a **tournure verb idiom** under Makkai's (1972) framework, specifically category (d), as it includes a verb (find), a direct object (a way), and a modifier (out) that together form a fixed, idiomatic expression. Figuratively, this phrase refers to escaping a difficult emotional situation or finding a solution to a personal struggle (Definition Discovery). In the context of the song lyric, the idiom reflects the speaker's emotional burden and her desire for peace and freedom. This aligns with Adele's explanation in a Rolling Stone interview, where she described *Remedy* as a turning point in her creative journey, inspired by her son and dedicated to her loved ones.

The English idiom is translated into Indonesian as **menemukan jalan keluar**, maintains both the figurative meaning and structure of the original. The verb *menemukan* means to find, and *jalan keluar* refers to a solution or way out, commonly used idiomatically in Indonesian (*Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) Online*). From a lexical perspective, the translation preserves a similar structure which the verb *find* is translated as *menemukan*, and the noun phrase *a way out* becomes *jalan keluar*. When back-translated into English, the phrase remains consistent as **find a way out**. Since the translation retains both the original meaning and structure, it effectively illustrates Baker's (1992) strategy of **using an idiom of similar meaning and form**.

Data 2

SL: Then how come I can **bring you to your knees**?

TL: *Maka bagaimana bisa aku kembali **membuatmu bertekuk lutut**?*

BT: So how can I **make you kneel** again?

The idiomatic expression in lyric data 2 found in the song *Water Under the Bridge*. The phrase **breaking your heart** fits Makkai's (1972) **tournure verb idiom** category (d), as it consists of a verb (breaking) followed by a direct object (your heart), forming a fixed multi-word expression. This idiom means causing someone deep emotional pain, often due to love or rejection (Cambridge Online Dictionary). In the song above, it reflects the speaker's regret and sorrow, as supported by Adele's interview where she spoke about reconnecting with her past and expressing apology.

In Indonesian, it is translated as *hatimu yang terluka*. The verb *membuat* means to cause, and *mu* is a clitic from *kamu* (you) serving as the object. The phrase *bertekuk lutut*, according to *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) Online*, means to surrender or give in emotionally or physically. Based on the lexical choices, the back-translation becomes **make you kneel**, where *membuatmu* translates to *make you*, and *bertekuk lutut* means *kneel*. Although both idioms carry the same figurative meaning, they are expressed using different words. This is a clear example of the strategy known as **using an idiom of similar meaning but different form**, as outlined by Baker (1992), which involves translating an idiom in the source language into one in the target language that has the same meaning but different wording.

Data 3

SL: It's no secret that the both of us are **running out of time**

TL: *Tak terbantahkan, kita berdua tak punya banyak waktu lagi*

BT: Undeniably, the two of us **do not have much time left**

This lyric is taken from the song *Hello* by Adele. The idiom **running out of time** is categorized as a **phrasal verb idiom**, formed by the verb *running*, the adverb *out*, and the preposition *of*, followed by the noun *time* which combine to create a meaning that differs from the literal meanings of the individual words. According to The Free Online Dictionary by Farlex, this idiom means to have used up most of the allotted time or to have no time left. In the context of the lyric, it suggests that the relationship between the speaker and the person addressed has reached a point of emotional or temporal exhaustion; they have been apart for a long time and may no longer have the opportunity to reconnect. This interpretation is supported by Adele's explanation in an interview with *i-D* magazine, where she revealed that *Hello* is about the pain of having hurt someone, but also about the struggle to reconnect with herself. She described the song as an emotional call to everyone she had ever hurt, including herself; a plea for reconciliation and self-forgiveness.

In the Indonesian translation, the English idiom is rendered as *tak punya banyak waktu lagi*, which literally means do not have much time left. It is formed from the words *tak* (do not), *punya* (have), *banyak* (much), *waktu* (time), and *lagi* (left/again), based on definitions from *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI)*. While this phrase conveys the same overall meaning as the English idiom, it is expressed in a more straightforward, non-idiomatic way. Therefore, the translation demonstrates Baker's (1992) strategy of **translation by paraphrase**, which is typically used when no equivalent idiom exists in the target language or when a literal translation would sound unnatural. In this case, the translator chooses clarity over form, preserving the meaning and emotional tone of the original while making it more accessible to the Indonesian audience.

Data 4

SL: And a part of me keeps **holding on**

TL: *Dan bagian diriku tetap ingin bertahan*

BT: And a part of me keeps **wanting to stay**

The idiomatic expression identified in data 4 is **holding on** which found in the song *When We Were Young*. This idiom is a **phrasal verb idiom** made of a verb *holding* and an adverb *on*, creating a figurative meaning beyond the literal words. According to the Cambridge Online Dictionary, *hold on* means to continue doing something or to endure, especially during difficult or challenging circumstances. The idiom in this lyric represents the singer's emotional struggle to keep believing in the relationship, staying hopeful, or refusing to let go despite the pain or uncertainty which Adele shared in an interview with Carson Daly that *When We Were Young*

is one of her favorites because of its nostalgic theme. The song reflects on meeting someone from the past and treasuring a brief moment of connection.

In the target language, the English idiom is rendered as *ingin bertahan*, which literally translates to want to endure or desire to persist. The word *ingin* means want to, and *bertahan* implies to endure or to hold out (*Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia Online*). While the translation does not preserve the idiomatic form, it effectively captures the emotional essence of the original. Since the translator chose to rephrase the idiom into a clear, non-idiomatic expression that conveys the same meaning, this example illustrates Baker's (1992) strategy of **translation by paraphrase**. This approach is commonly applied when a direct idiomatic equivalent does not exist in the target language or would sound unnatural.

Data 5

SL: If you're gonna **let me down**, let me down gently (Line 23)

TL: *Jika kamu ingin mengecewakan ku, kecewakan aku dengan lembut* (Line 24)

BT: If you want to **disappoint me**, disappoint me gently

The idiom in data 5, **let me down** appears in the lyric from the song *Water Under the Bridge*. This idiom is a **phrasal verb idiom** because it joins the verb *let* with the adverb *down*, and includes the pronoun *me* placed between them. This idiom acts transitively, meaning it has a direct object (in this case, *me*) that receives the emotional impact of the action. It is also known as a separable phrasal verb idiom because the pronoun can be inserted between the verb and the particle. According to The Free Online Dictionary by Farlex, the phrase *let someone down* means to disappoint someone or not meet their expectations. In the song lyric, the singer is asking not to be hurt too much. If her partner is going to leave or disappoint her, she wants him to do it in a gentle and kind way. This meaning matches what Adele said in her interview with NPR Music. She explained that *Water Under the Bridge* is not about a breakup, but about being honest and strong in a serious relationship. The lyric shows that she feels open and emotional, and she hopes her partner will treat her with care if something goes wrong. It shows how much she values their love and the respect they have for each other even when things are hard.

The Indonesian translation *mengecewakan ku* literally means disappoint me, derived from the word *mengecewakan* means to cause (make someone) disappointed and *ku* is a clitic derived from *aku*, which means *I* or *me* used to indicate the object of the action (*Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) Online*). While it is not an idiom in Indonesian, it accurately conveys the meaning of the original phrase. Because it uses a non-idiomatic form to preserve the idiomatic intent of the source, this translation fits under Baker's (1992) strategy of **translation by paraphrase**, which is used when an equivalent idiom is unavailable in the target language.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of idiomatic expressions found in Adele's album 25, it can be concluded two types of idioms using the theory by Makkai (1972) were found and the translation strategies proposed by Baker (1992) have been effectively applied to maintain the intended meaning and emotional nuance of the original lyrics in their Indonesian translations. There are three strategies used: using an idiom of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, and translation by paraphrase. These findings reflect the complexity of translating idiomatic language in song lyrics, especially when idioms are deeply rooted in cultural context. In several cases, the idioms were rendered naturally and meaningfully in the target language, while in others, paraphrasing was necessary due to a lack

of direct equivalents in Indonesian. This demonstrates the translator's efforts to balance fidelity to the source text with cultural appropriateness and naturalness in the target language. Although the study has successfully identified the idiom types and classified translation strategies used in rendering idiomatic expressions from English to Indonesian. This study is limited to Adele's album 25 and does not include idioms from other artists or genres. Future research could expand the scope by analyzing idioms translation in different objects and theory. It would be useful to see how people react to the translated idioms. Translators should always think about the culture and feelings behind the idioms to keep the meaning clear and natural into the target language.

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