



Equivalent Issues in Translating Proverbs and the Strategies used

Komang Astiari^{1*}, I Putu Eka Suardana² 

^{1,2} English Department, Bali Dwipa University, Denpasar, Indonesia

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menyelidiki beberapa permasalahan serupa dalam menerjemahkan peribahasa bahasa Inggris ke bahasa Indonesia dan strategi yang diterapkan untuk mengatasinya. Peribahasa adalah pernyataan yang mengandung nilai moral dan pandangan tradisional untuk menggambarkan situasi dalam kehidupan sehari-hari, maka ada beberapa sifat yang dimiliki antara bahasa sumber dan bahasa sasaran. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi kendala yang dihadapi penerjemah ketika menerjemahkan peribahasa Inggris ke bahasa Indonesia karena kurangnya padanannya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Penelitian kualitatif adalah jenis penelitian yang didasarkan pada pengumpulan, analisis, dan interpretasi data dalam bentuk naratif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan mencari peribahasa bahasa Inggris yang terdapat dalam buku "101 American English Proverbs, Understanding Language and Culture Through Commonly Used Sayings" kemudian memahami setiap makna dari peribahasa tersebut. Permasalahan yang muncul karena adanya ketidaksetaraan dan penelitian ini menemukan beberapa permasalahan yaitu konsep yang bersifat spesifik budaya, konsep Bsu yang tidak terleksikalisasi dalam BSA, BSA yang kompleks secara semantik, bahasa sumber dan bahasa sasaran membeda-bedakan makna, BSA kurang istilah tertentu (hiponim), perbedaan cara pandang fisik atau interpersonal, perbedaan makna ekspresif, dan penggunaan kata serapan dalam Bsu. Kesimpulannya, strategi yang perlu diterapkan dalam menerjemahkan peribahasa yaitu menggunakan idiom yang memiliki kesamaan makna dan bentuk, menggunakan idiom yang memiliki makna serupa tetapi bentuk berbeda, dan penerjemahan dengan parafrase.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated some equivalent issues in translating English proverbs into Indonesian and strategies applied to deal with it. As proverbs are statement that consist of moral value and traditional views to describe situation in daily life, several properties between source language and target language are shared. This study explores the constraints translators face when translating English proverbs into Indonesian due to the lack of equivalents. This research uses qualitative methods. Qualitative research is a type of research based on the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data in narrative form. Data collection is done by looking for English proverbs contained in the book "101 American English Proverbs, Understanding Language and Culture Through Commonly Used Sayings" then understanding each meaning of the proverbs. The problems that appear because of non-equivalence and this study found some issues namely culture-specific concept, the SL concept is not lexicalized in the TL, the SL is semantically complex, the source and target language make distinction in meaning, the TL lacks a specific term (hyponym), differences in physical or interpersonal perspective, differences in expressive meaning, and the use of loan words on the SL. Conclusion, strategies need to be applied in translating proverbs namely using an idiom of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, and translation by paraphrase.

1. INTRODUCTION

As a crucial activity, translation has become an interesting topic and discussion by some experts. Translation is a changing of form. Translation is a study of examining grammatical structure, the lexicon, cultural context and communication situation of source language text, to decide its meaning, then

*Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: astikomang4@gmail.com (Komang Astiari)

reconstructing the same meaning using the lexicon and grammatical structure which are appropriate in the cultural context of the receptor language. In addition, translation is a transfer of meaning of the source language into the receptor language by way of semantic structure. The process is going from the form of the first language to the form of a second language (Mezmir, 2020; Morgan & Nica, 2020). Another definition of translation is about finding the closest natural equivalent of the message in the source language both in terms of meaning and style to be conveyed in the receptor language (Kadwa & Alshenqeeti, 2020; Novawan, 2023). What it is meant by "natural equivalent" is that the equivalent forms should not be "foreign" both in the form and meaning, therefore the translation will be good and alike the original. In other words, we do not translate the text literally but idiomatically. The style in translation should produce similar effect by finding similarity whether in form or in function. Translation is the textual material replacement in one language by finding equivalent textual material in another language (Al-Awawdeh, 2021; Junining & Kusuma, 2020).

Translating proverbs from English into Indonesian requires consideration in linguistic aspects like semantic, syntax, pragmatic, and culture. Cultural issues that may affect translation consist of ecological, religion, and material aspects of English and Indonesian. For example, east culture tends to be affected more by religion compared to that in the west. Furthermore, concepts in food, clothes, and transport are also different among the two; therefore, a translator needs to consider those elements before doing the translation job (Amenador & Wang, 2022; Qawasmeh, 2022). There are also various linguistic issues that a translator has when translating proverbs such as little knowledge in grammar, style, lexical words, collocations and idioms so the translator does not have proper competence and common sense that results in an awkward or wrong translation result. A wrong use of vocabulary is also one of the causes that commonly arise (Imami et al., 2021; World et al., 2020).

As proverbs are one of the important elements in people's speech that have various themes such as women, professions, money, love, money, or even education, its translation requires a good understanding between the two cultures. Proverbs are significant in grasping the social construction of their meaning because they have specific forms and segments that are different between one language and others (Dickins, 2020; Wu, 2020). Thus, the translator must be aware of the closest equivalence in the target language culture and the right strategies must be applied in order to convey the messages well. Translating proverbs requires equivalence whereas the translator focuses on the form and the content between the SL and the TL and cultural knowledge like beliefs, lifestyle, traditions, food, and moral values. In other words, translators must not only need to be familiar with the strategies of translation, but also the fixed expressions in particular (Ryan, 2020; Schleiermacher, 2021).

In addition, the translators must be familiar with the strategies of translation in general and translating proverbs and fixed expressions in particular. Translation strategy is "a conceivably intentional procedure to solve a problem which a translator faces when translating a text component from one language into another". It is clear from this definition that every translator should have a prior knowledge of translation strategies theoretically and practically to translate properly (Al-Khanji & Ennasser, 2022; Gebbia, 2023). This study aims to explore the obstacles encountered by translators when translating English proverbs into Indonesian in regards to lacks of equivalence. Moreover, translation strategies will be explained to help translators in translating proverbs appropriately.

2. METHOD

This study was conducted by analyzing and interpreting texts that aim to find out meaningful patterns and phenomenon (Mezmir, 2020; Morgan & Nica, 2020). In other words, this research used a qualitative method. Qualitative research is the type of research that is based on collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data with a narrative form. It aims to obtain a full picture of a matter according to human perspective studied and relates to ideas, perceptions, opinions, or beliefs of the person that cannot be explained by numbers. It is a means to explore and understand the assumption to social human issues that involves emerging questions, emerging procedures, collecting the data, analyzing the data, building perception from general themes, and making interpretation (Morgan & Nica, 2020; Peel, 2020).

This study analyzed the non-equivalence found in translating English proverbs into Indonesian and strategies to cope with this problems. The English proverbs were taken from a book written by Harry Collis entitled "101 American English Proverbs, Understanding Language and Culture Through Commonly Used Saying". Then, the translation of the proverbs were found in a book written by Aman entitled "500 Pepatah". Both the equivalent issues and strategies applied to do this study were proposed by Baker. The data collection was done by finding English proverbs found in the book "101 American English Proverbs, Understanding Language and Culture Through Commonly Used Saying" then understanding each of the meaning of the proverbs. The next step was identifying the equivalent issues that may arise on the proverbs

found. After that, the problems were analyzed based on the equivalent issues proposed by Baker; are they are caused by culture-specific concept, the SL concept is not lexicalized in the TL, the SL is semantically complex, the source and target language make distinction in meaning, the TL lacks a specific term (hyponym), differences in physical or interpersonal perspective, differences in expressive meaning, or the use of loan words on the SL. Then the last step of the research was to analyze the data, compared the SL and TL proverbs based on their meaning in regard to the purpose of the translation. The conceptual framework drawn at Figure 1.

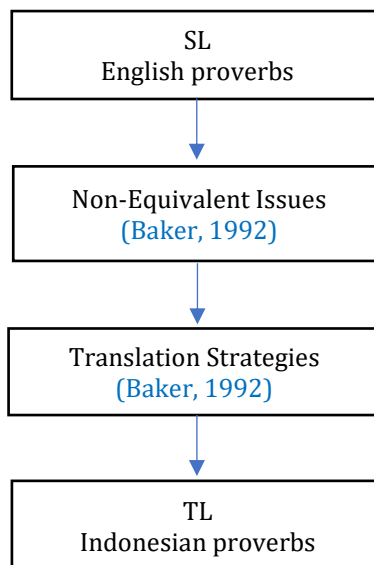


Figure 1. Research Concept

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Stated that proverbs are fixed expressions that have fairly transparent meaning so translators should be careful for words that have no equivalence. The equivalent problems include Culture specific concept, The SL concept is not lexicalized in the TL, The SL word is semantically complex, The source and target language make different distinction in meaning, The TL lacks a specific term (hyponym), Differences in physical or interpersonal perspective, Differences in expressive meaning, and The use of the loan words on the SL.

Culture specific concept, some proverbs may contain cultural words that do not exist in the target language as a result of cultural background, beliefs, or even traditions of the source languages. The concept may be abstract and 'culture specific. The SL concept is not lexicalized in the TL, the SL words may express a concept which is known in the TL culture; however, they cannot be lexicalized and allocated as they do not have equivalence. The fact that the words are understandable does not make the words can be rendered into the TL. The SL word is semantically complex, the semantically complex words is one of the common issues in translating proverbs. Words do not have to be morphologically complex to be semantically complex (Bolinger and Sears, 1968). A word which consists of two morphemes, for example, may express a more complex set of meanings than a sentence. The source and target language make different distinction in meaning, the SL may have less or more differences in meaning than the TL. There are some irrelevant definition to represent some words. The TL lacks a specific term (hyponym), languages are likely to have general words (superordinate) but lack specific ones (hyponyms) since languages make only distinctions in meaning which seem relevant to its particular environment. Differences in physical or interpersonal perspective, some languages take physical perspective prominent compared to others. This perspective is related to where things or people are in relation to one another or to a place so one word in the TL may have more than one equivalence in the SL. Differences in expressive meaning, some propositional meaning between the SL and TL may be the same; however, the expressive one is different. The distinction may be subtle but significant enough to pose a translation problem in a given context. The use of the loan words on the SL, even when some specific forms does not possess a ready equivalence in the TL, there may be a difference in the frequency with which it is used or the purpose for which it is used.

As proverbs contain wisdoms and truths conveyed by old people that are described in such a way that is based on the reality and culture, they cannot be translated literally (word per word or sentence-per-

sentence). Proverbs are short sentences or statements which come from a general truth and the equivalence of it cannot be found easily by the target language. For instance, English proverb “never buy a pig in a poke” is translated to be “seperti membeli kucing dalam karung”; whereas, ‘kucing’ is not a translation of ‘pig’.

Several strategies are required in translating proverbs and these strategies require a translator to delve deeper into the culture of both SL and TL in order to catch the meaning and achieve idiomatic translation. As proverbs are based on one’s culture, even when the equivalence exists, there may be cultural distinctions to consider such as societal customs, traditions, local wisdom, weather, characteristics, and so on. Proposed some strategies to translate proverbs namely using an idiom of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, and translation by paraphrase.

Using an idiom of similar meaning and form, a translator often use an idiom in the TL which has a similar meaning and lexical items to those in the SL. This strategy is done in order to create a natural translation and result in a good understanding of the TL readers. Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form. In contrast to the first strategy, in this strategy, the translator uses an idiom of similar meaning but the lexical forms are different. Translation by paraphrase, translation by paraphrase is applied once the translator could not match the SL idiom or style with the ones in the TL. Therefore, the translator paraphrases the proverbs; using different forms or expressions but the meaning remains the same. The result of this study is illustrated in the [Table 1](#).

Table 1. The Result of the Study

The equivalent issues	SL	Strategies	TL
Culture specific concept	It takes two to tango	Using an idiom of similar meaning and form.	Membutuhkan dua orang untuk menari tango
The SL concept is not lexicalized in the TL	One man’s gravy is another man’s poison	Translation by paraphrase	Orang tidak selalu menyukai hal yang sama
The SL word is semantically complex	When in Rome, do as the Romans do	Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form	Dimana bumi dipijak disana bumi dijunjung
The source and target language make different distinction in meaning	A bad workman blames his tools	Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form	Buruk rupa cermin dibelah
The TL lacks a specific term (hyponym)	The bigger they are, the harder they fall	Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form	Semakin tinggi pohon semakin kencang angin menerpa
Differences in physical or interpersonal perspective	East and west, home is best	Translation by paraphrase	Manusia yang merencanakan, Tuhan yang menentukan
Differences in expressive meaning	The early bird	Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form	Bangun pagi agar rejeki tidak dipatok ayam
The use of the loan words on the SL	Don’t judge a man until you’ve walked in his boots	Translation by paraphrase	jangan menilai seseorang sampai anda berjalan satu mil di posisi mereka

Discussion

English proverb “it takes two to tango” means when two people work as a team, they are both responsible for the team’s success and failures. This English proverb was once introduced by Al Hoffman and Dick Manning in 1952 in their song; “you can sail on a ship by yourself, take a nap or a nip by yourself, you can get into debt on your own, there’s a lot of things that you can do alone, but takes two to tango”. The word ‘tango’ is considered as a culture specific concept, whereas tango is a social dance originated from along the Rio de la plata, a border between Argentine and Uruguay. The movement is dynamic and well-known for clapping hands and fast foot movements, performed by one couple and has elements of percussion. This dance cannot be found anywhere else in the world as it is one of the dances with a special purpose. Thus, the translator translated this proverb by using an idiom of similar meaning and form. The translation is “anda bisa berlayar dengan kapal sendirian, tidur siang atau istirahat sendiri, anda bisa berhutan sendiri, ada banyak hal yang anda dapat lakukan sendiri, tetapi membutuhkan dua orang untuk

menari tango". This strategy was done in order to gain a good understanding towards the TL and readers will understand the meaning "membutuhkan dua orang untuk menari tango" by reading the preceding sentences and making assumption once 'tango', the type of dance, is mentioned (Ebrahimi, 2020; Unique, 2023).

The English proverb "one man's gravy is another man's poison" is explained as what is pleasing to one person may not be pleasing to another. The word "gravy" is one concept that is not lexicalized in the TL. Gravy is a brown sauce made by adding flour to the juices that come out of meat while it is cooking (Forsberg et al., 2022; Sorokina et al., 2020). This concept is different to the concept of "saus" in Indonesian whereas "saus" is used when cooking or served with other foods and can have a liquid, thick, or soft texture. Meanwhile gravy, which is not lexicalized in Indonesian is made from fat and meat juices that come out during the cooking process and it is a type of sauce (Al-hag et al., 2023; Almadhoun, 2020). To translate "one man's gravy is another man's poison", the translator used translation strategy by paraphrase by simply creating a new sentence "orang tidak selalu menyukai hal yang sama". The translator applied this strategy as there is no similar equivalence in the TL. Besides, gravy and poison are both different concept; the former is a type of food that can be consumed and make people alive while the latter is something that is not edible that makes people suffer or even die. Both concept can be a way to understand the meaning; thus, the strategy used is paraphrasing the proverb into Indonesian (Jibreel, 2023; World et al., 2020).

The proverb "when in Rome, do as the Romans do" has words Rome and Romans whereas both words have complex meaning. Rome, as one of the cities in Italy, has its own history, characters, climates, cultures, and so on. This word cannot be translated literally as "Roma" as the TL readers would find it confusing especially those who do not understand the meaning or things related to the city. Thus, the translator used an idiom of a similar meaning but dissimilar form. The translation is "dimana bumi dipijak disana bumi dijunjung". This strategy will create a brand sentence; however, the meaning in the TL is clear. The SL uses imperative sentence, whereas the sentence tends to request or order something (Ayu & Dian, 2021; Holvoet, 2023). The TL itself does not show exactly the same type of sentence; it uses two prepositional phrases. It is a totally different form as the SL.

The word "tools" in the English proverb "a bad workman blames his tools" has four different meaning in English. firstly, it is an instrument that you hold in your hand and use for making and repairing things like hammer, screwdriver, etc. Secondly, it is a thing that helps you to do your job or to achieve something. Thirdly, it also means a person who is used or controlled by another person or group. Lastly, it means a male genitalia (Fecha, 2021; Imami et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the translation in the TL (Indonesian) is 'peralatan' that is equivalent to 'equipment'. According to its various meaning in the SL, the complexity will lead to a confusion that it tends to be difficult to find its equivalence in the TL. Thus, the translator used a strategy of using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form. The translator is "buruk rupa cermin dibelah" whereas it represents the meaning conveyed in the SL that said a workman who prefer blaming his tools in his hand just because he could not repair something rather than improving his skill on that area. "buruk rupa" which means a bad face is a reality someone must accept and when he or she stands in front of the mirror ("cermin"), that person should not blame the mirror. The mirror is the reflexion of self. Both proverbs in the SL and TL have similar message that we cannot blame someone or something when we could not be able to do or achieve something (Ghasani, 2021; Khoa, 2021).

The word "fall" in the English proverb "The bigger they are, the harder they fall" is lacks a specific term in the TL as the translation of "fall" is "jatuh" in the TL and does not explain how someone or something falls; extremelly, dramatically, or slightly. In the SL (English), the way how something or someone "fall" has other specific terms namely "plummet", "Plunge", "halve", "decline", or "decrease" at which do not exist in the TL. Therefore, the strategy used was a strategy of using idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form. The translator translated the proverb to be "semakin tinggi pohon, semakin kencang angin menerpa" whereas the proverb also means the same; the higher the tree, the stronger the wind hits. When the tree is getting higher (someone is having a high position), the wind will hit him or her stronger (that person will tend to fall harder as his or her position is high). This translation in the TL has the closest equivalence to the SL although the form of the sentences are different but both use comparative sentences to express the ideas.

The English proverb "east and west, home is best" has one word, home, that has both physical and emotional sense. Home does not only mean a dwelling place but also means someone's or something's place of origin, or the place where a person feels they belong (Boccagni & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2023; Cuerdo-Vilches et al., 2021). Therefore, the proverb cannot have an equivalence in the TL as the meaning of home in the TL is 'tempat tinggal' that represents a place where a family lives. This non-equivalence led to a translation with paraphrase "Manusia yang merencanakan, Tuhan yang menentukan". The TL describes "home is best" as a representation of the Almighty God that brings faith no matter it is in the "east or west" or "manusia yang merencanakan" (Humans can only make plans). The SL proverb uses rhyme to express its

idea whereas three words at the front are separated by comma with the rest three words. Although the TL also uses three words in each clause and also separated by comma, the words in the TL are not translated literally or the same, the translator chose different words instead. This strategy was applied in order to create a good understanding towards the TL readers.

One of the English proverbs that has an expressive meaning is “the early bird catches the worm”. In this proverb, there is a phrase “the early bird” whereas it is usually used to explain someone habitually gets up from sleep or rest early in the morning. It also means someone who arrives early or does something before other people do (Fecha, 2021; Imami et al., 2021). Since this phrase has more than just one meaning, whereas it is commonly used to explain someone who register to something earlier and catch a discount, the phrase does not have the same equivalence to that in the TL. The translator used strategy of using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form. The phrase “early bird” does not only mean “burung awal”, but it also means someone who comes earlier (seorang yang cepat datang). Thus, the translation is “bangun pagi agar rejeki tidak dipatok ayam” whereas “early bird” is considered as getting up early and “catches the worm” is equivalent to “agar rejeki tidak dipatok ayam” or to avoid loss of fortune. The TL expresses the SL meaning closely as people who get up or arrive earlier tend to catch more opportunities and those who get up or arrive later are more likely to miss some good changes.

One of the English proverbs that uses a loan word is “don’t judge a man until you’ve walked in his boots”. “Boots” is taken from a french word “bote” whereas it has no equivalence in the TL, therefore the translation is “jangan menilai seseorang sampai anda berjalan satu mil di posisi mereka”. The SL explains that people will not understand how other people feel until they live those persons’ life. They do not know exactly what other people experience as they never share it. Therefore, judgement is not something that people must do towards others as people do not know everything. The word boots is an analogy to a life of someone and this loan word is translated to be “satu mil di posisi mereka”. The translator applied a translation by paraphrase as it is the best way to convey the message. It is not translated literally because the literal meaning is not enough to explain the proverb. The phrase “satu mil di posisi mereka” explains that when people have already experienced conditions of other people, they consider to understand the situation of those people (Ebrahimi, 2020).

This research has the advantage of helping to understand the cultural differences between the source and target languages. Proverbs often contain cultural values and local knowledge that are important to learn and explain appropriately. The implication is that by understanding the problems that may arise in translating proverbs, this research can help improve the overall quality of translation. A more accurate and precise translation of proverbs will ensure the original message and cultural meaning of the source text are preserved. However, this study is limited in that proverb translation often involves complex linguistic aspects, such as symbolic meanings, cultural references and language nuances that are difficult to express directly in another language. This can make researchers face difficulties in fully capturing the meaning of the proverbs.

4. CONCLUSION

Translating proverbs is more likely to face some equivalent issues as proverbs contain beliefs and morals that carry out lots of values and the values tend to be different between the SL and TL. The equivalent issues that may arise are culture-specific concept, the SL concept is not lexicalized in the TL, the SL is semantically complex, the source and target language make distinction in meaning, the TL lacks a specific term (hyponym), differences in physical or interpersonal perspective, differences in expressive meaning, and the use of loan words on the SL. These equivalence can be solved by applying translation strategies namely using an idiom of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, and translation by paraphrase. Those three strategies are mostly used by professional translators in translating proverbs; thus, the TL readers will be able to understand the meaning because of their familiarity towards the expressions.

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