ENGLISH LEARNERS' INDONESIAN-ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS WITHIN "MALIN KUNDANG" FOLKLORE: STRATEGIES, LOSS, AND GAIN

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Abstract

Translating idiomatic expression has been considered a complex challenge in translation training, particularly for English language learners in Indonesia who must navigate both linguistic and cultural differences between source and target languages. Departing from this issue, this study aims to investigate the strategies employed by English learners of Indonesia in translating idiomatic expressions from Indonesian into English, while also identifying the loss and gain within the translation results. This research employed a descriptive qualitative method. The data consisted of (1) Indonesian idiomatic expressions taken from folklore "Malin Kundang" and (2) ten student-produced English translations of the folklore. Content Analysis was employed to analyze the data by applying Baker's (2018) framework of translation strategies for idioms and Larson's (1998) concept of loss and gain in translation. The finding shows that there are four strategies employed by English language learners, namely (1) translation by paraphrase, (2) using an idiomatic expression of similar meaning but dissimilar form, (3) translation by omission of entire idiomatic expression, and (4) using an idiomatic expression of similar meaning and form. Among these strategies, translation by paraphrase emerged as the most frequently applied one, implicating that learner may possess sufficient knowledge of Indonesian idiomatic expressions but limited knowledge of their English counterparts. In addition, the cultural loss and compensation are identified as the most prominent phenomena of translation loss and gain in translation, especially the cultural loss. This indicates implementing "translation by paraphrase" most likely leads to successful meaning transfer at the cost of losing cultural nuance. Finally, this research highlights what translation strategies are appropriate for transferring Indonesian idiomatic expressions into English.

Keywords: translation strategies; Indonesian-English translation; loss in translation; gain in translation; translation training; folklore

Abstrak

Menerjemahkan ungkapan idiomatis telah telah kerap dipandang sebagai tantangan yang kompleks dalam pelatihan penejemahan, khususnya bagi pembelajar Bahasa Inggris di Indonesia yang mengatasi perbedaan linguistik dan kultural antara bahasa sumber dan sasaran. Berangkat dari persoalan tersebut, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi strategi yang diterapkan oleh pembelajar Bahasa Inggris di Indonesia dalam proses menerjemahkan ungkapan idiomatis dari Bahasa Indonesia ke Bahasa Inggris, sekaligus mengidentifikasi fenomena "loss and gain in translation". Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif. Data yang digunakan mencakup (1) ungkapan idiomatis Bahasa Indonesia yang diambil dari cerita rakyat "Malin Kundang" dan (2) sepuluh terjemahan yang dihasilkan oleh para pembelajar Bahasa Inggris. Teknik Content Analysis diterapkan untuk menganalisa data dengan menggunakan kerangka teori dari Baker (2019) mengenai strategi penerjemahan dan Larson (1998) mengenai fenomena loss dan gain dalam penerjemahan. Hasil temuan menunjukkan adanya empat strategi penerjemahan yang diterapkan oleh para pembelajar Bahasa Inggris yakni (1) translation by paraphrase, (2) using an idiomatic expression of similar meaning but dissimilar form, (3) translation by omission of entire idiomatic expression, dan (4) using an idiomatic expression of similar meaning and form. Dari keempat strategi tersebut, "translation by paraphrase" menjadi strategi yang paling banyak diterapkan. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa para pembelajar

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kemungkinan besar memiliki pengetahuan yang baik mengenai ungkapan idiomatis dalam Bahasa Indonesia namun kurang mengenai ungkapan idiomatis dalam Bahasa Inggris. Selain itu, "cultural loss" dan "compensation" menjadi fenomena yang paling banyak muncul pada ranah loss dan gain dalam penerjemahan, khususnya "cultural loss". Oleh sebab itu, dapat disimpulkan bahwa penerapan "translation by paraphrase" berpeluang besar dalam menghilangkan nuasa kultural. Akhir kata, penelitian ini menggaris penelitian ini menggaris bawahi strategi penerjemahan apa saja yang sesuai untuk menerjemahan ungkapan idiomatis Bahasa Indonesia ke dalam Bahasa Inggris.

Kata Kunci: *strategi penerjemahan; penerjemahan Indonesia-Inggris; pengurangan dalam penerjemahan; penambahan dalam penerjemahan; pelatihan penerjemahan; cerita rakyat*

INTRODUCTION

Translation training plays essential roles in the holistic development of English Language Learners (ELLs), specifically in fostering metalinguistic awareness. To begin with, translation training provides various assignments and tasks that encourage learners to engage in a comparative analysis, where similarities and differences between two languages are examined (Gutiérrez, 2020; Rocha, 2011; Thani & Ageli, 2020), and to reflect on the nature of vocabulary, syntax, and how various languages convey ideas (Jiménez et al., 2015). Those translation-related activities require learners to deconstruct sentences, identify core meaning, and reconstruct equivalent expressions from one language to another (Imamuddin et al., 2020), leading them into a process of enhancing their comprehension toward linguistic intricacies, grammatical structures, and vocabulary nuance of both English and the other language involved (Akan et al., 2019; Rahmaniah & Anggriani, 2018). Such translation-related problem-solving activities aligns closely with the abilities encompassed in metalinguistic awareness, that include utilizing language not only as a medium of communication but also as an object of thought that can be consciously analyzed, manipulated, and evaluated (Witari & Mahardika, 2024). As learners strengthen this awareness through translation-related activities, they exert greater control over communicative abilities, improve their overall language performance, and develop a clearer comprehension of the messages that they interpret and produce (Mousa & Yahya, 2022). In addition, developing this awareness has been shown to positively influence learners' adherence to their dominant language in a way that ultimately reinforces their development of English language mastery (Almarshedi, 2022). Therefore, these connections illustrate how translation training contributes to development of metalinguistic awareness supporting cognitive, communicative, and linguistic development of ELLs.

Despite offering potential benefits for the English mastery development of ELLs, translation training also presents several challenges, particularly within various Indonesian educational contexts. Studies on translation practices within these contexts have highlighted a consistent set of challenges within the translation process involving Indonesian and English, namely lexical, grammatical, and cultural challenges. To begin with, Indonesian ELLs frequently face challenges related to lexical selection and dealing with semantic equivalence due to their limited mastery of English vocabulary. When translating from Indonesian to English, learners often struggle to find appropriate equivalents for domain-specific terms within specialized texts, for examples, religious terms (Muslem et al., 2021), or academic terminology in research abstracts (Jumiati & Bali G, 2020). Similarly, when translating from English to Indonesian, dealing with unfamiliar lexical items, for examples technical vocabularies or specific proper names in a report text (Rosyana et al., 2022) or terms about news items (Harto et al., 2021), is also identified as a major challenge learners encountered in translation practice. Secondly, Indonesian ELLs often encounter challenges involving their grammatical competence due to various factors. In translating from Indonesian to English, applying English grammatical rules was found challenging by Indonesian ELLs due to the grammatical differences between Indonesian and English, leading to unnatural sentence constructions that affect the translation quality (Setiani & Kuning, 2023; Sukaesih, 2023). On the other hand, in the process of translating from English to Indonesian, ELLs

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frequently misunderstand complex English syntax leading to omission, incomplete sentences, or distortion in meaning (Rosyana et al., 2022). Next, Indonesian ELLs also face challenges of dealing with cultural concepts and pragmatic equivalence. This issue is especially encountered in literary contexts, such as translating idiomatic expressions from source language to target language (Mulyani & Ardiansyah, 2021) or dealing with narrative texts where the implicit meaning and culturally grounded references require interpretation beyond literal translation (Umyati et al., 2022). In conclusion, those challenges underline the complexity of translation training for ELLs, and highlight the necessity for support to enhance lexical competence, grammatical accuracy, and cultural awareness.

Translating idiomatic expressions is widely regarded as one of the most challenging tasks for ELLs. Studies have highlighted the linguistic, cultural, and cognitive difficulties associated with this task. The study from Mulyani and Ardiansyah (2021) on learner-produced Indonesian-English translation of idiomatic expressions identified two primary challenges, namely inability to find TL counterparts of the Source Language (SL) idiomatic expressions, and limited understanding toward the grammatical rules of the Target Language (TL). For example, one of the findings shows an idiomatic expression *"benang merah"* was literally and inaccurately translated into *"the red thread"* instead of its TL counterpart, while another finding shows a phrase *"Akibatnya, yang berhasil mereka bawa pulang hanya tubuh yang remuk redam"* was translated into the TL as *"As a result, they to bring home only the body crushed"*, in a way that does not reflect the correct TL grammatical structure. Similarly, the study from Idami et al. (2022) on learner-produced English-Indonesian translation of idiomatic expressions found that learners struggled to achieve an accurate and natural translation due to insufficient knowledge of idiomatic expressions, cultural differences between the two languages, and stylistic barrier. For example, one of its analysis results shows an idiomatic expression *"when hell freezes over"* was translated word-by-word into *"ketika neraka membeku"*, which is inappropriate. In addition, Abdalla (2023) highlighted that the major difficulty existed in learners' attempts to infer the appropriate interpretation of idiomatic expressions due to their unfamiliarity with the use of English idiomatic expressions as culture-specific items containing figurative meanings. For example, one of the findings shows that 35% of this research participants translated an idiomatic expression *"hunger is the best sauce"* incorrectly, while 30% of them translated it into the TL with incomplete meaning or message. In conclusion, those studies collectively suggest that the activity of translating idiomatic expressions poses complex challenges for English language learners primarily due to linguistic, cultural, and cognitive factors.

In addition to ELLs' limitations, the culturally bound and contextual nature of idiomatic expressions significantly contributes to the complexity of translating these expressions. First of all, there is an absence of direct equivalent of the SL idiomatic expressions in the TL. Since idiomatic expressions are deeply rooted in the SL culture, expecting identical counterparts in the TL is impractical and rarely feasible (Baker, 2018; Hashemian & Arezi, 2017). To deal with this complexity, translators are required to recreate the intended message in a culturally appropriate TL form or find near-equivalent expressions that convey similar meanings, although such expressions may not exist in the SL (Newmark, 1998). Furthermore, idiomatic expressions may have TL equivalents, but their contextual uses can differ significantly. An idiom in the SL may not carry the same connotations, tone, or appropriateness as its TL counterparts, making one-to-one substitution unreliable (Baker, 2018). In addition, many idiomatic expressions can be interpreted both literally and figuratively, depending on the context. This duality often enables wordplay in the SL, which are rarely translatable and replicable in the TL. In other words, the translation may prove impractical, supporting the view that translation often emphasizes its practical dimensions (Halim, 2022). Lastly, the usage frequency and manner of idiomatic expressions may vary across languages. While some languages may have recognizable and translatable idiomatic expressions, they can also exhibit a greater variety and frequency of idiomatic usage than others (Baker, 2018; Hanim & Hardjanto, 2021). These characteristics further complicates the task of achieving balance and equivalence in translation. In conclusion, the absence of direct equivalents, contextual variability, figurative

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ambiguity, and cross-linguistic differences in usage and manner show that translating idiomatic expressions requires a high level of linguistic expertise and cultural awareness.

In the context of translating idiomatic expressions from Indonesian into English within narrative texts or stories, studies consistently highlight how this translation practice involves challenges that extend far beyond substituting lexical items across languages. Instead of simply transferring meaning, this practice requires translators to negotiate meaning since idiomatic expressions are deeply embedded in cultural experience, stylistic preferences, and narrative convention. Initial evidence of these challenges is shown in a study on Indonesian legends (Wicaksono & Wahyuni, 2018). This study shows that translators frequently struggle with idiomatic expressions due to their semantic opacity and cultural exclusivity. The findings also reveal that paraphrasing dominates as the preferred strategy to aim for literary naturalness and narrative flow, while omission is used when cultural meanings cannot be sustained in translation. Similarly, a comparable pattern also appears in another study on the Indonesian novel *"Bumi Manusia"* (Floranti & Mubarok, 2020). This study demonstrates that translating idiomatic expressions requires careful interpretation of figurative meanings, contextual nuance, and connotative force. The findings further reveal that paraphrasing emerges as the most frequently used strategy because many Indonesian idiomatic expressions lack natural or register-appropriate English equivalents. In contrast to the two previous studies, the other study on a bilingual textbook about Indonesian folklore demonstrates that idiomatic expressions of similar form and meaning may be used more frequently when the TL equivalents can support pedagogical clarity (Raharjo, 2025). Despite this, the study also highlights that strategies such as translation by paraphrase or omission remain essential options when equivalence is unavailable. In conclusion, these studies illustrate that translating idiomatic expressions in narrative texts or stories involves prioritizing meaning and narrative effect over structural preservation and that it is also a culturally sensitive and audience-dependent process shaped by genre, purposes, and the availability of idiomatic counterparts.

Although the practice of translating idiomatic expressions poses considerable challenges, it also offers valuable learning opportunities for ELLs. Studies have found that difficulties in this task, such as unfamiliarity with the TL grammar, limited vocabulary mastery, and the lack of equivalent idiomatic expressions, often stem from insufficient exposure to both SL and TL cultures (Abdalla, 2023; Idami et al., 2022; Mulyani & Ardiansyah, 2021). Specifically, Indonesian ELLs frequently found certain grammatical rules (including determiners, verb forms, pronouns, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, and conjunctions) to be problematic because these features do not exist in their first language (Tanihardjo & Jovianto, 2023). These challenges, however, imply the need to strengthen learners' linguistic and cultural knowledge through integrated vocabulary-building and translation assignments. In line with this, translating idiomatic expressions may serve as a practical means to enhance both language proficiency and cultural awareness. Furthermore, translation training has been found to assist Indonesian ELLs in navigating linguistic and cultural gaps by encouraging them to adopt a range of techniques such as literal translation, borrowing, and semantic adjustment (Fitri & Wahyuni, 2020; Limantoro & Datu, 2021; Sapta et al., 2020). When dealing specifically with idiomatic expressions, learners also employ strategies such as paraphrasing, using similar TL idiomatic expressions, or applying omission (Ariyani et al., 2021; Nurdin et al., 2022; Pratiwi & Lubis, 2021; Salamah et al., 2020). These findings indicate that learners tend to prioritize conveying meaning and ensuring contextual relevance over achieving equivalence, reflecting their efforts to navigate linguistic and cultural complexities effectively and to master complex translation tasks. In conclusion, this evidence suggests that translating idiomatic expressions may serve as a meaningful pedagogical tool that supports ELLs' development of linguistic accuracy, cultural sensitivity, and strategic decision-making.

Despite the insights elaborated in the previous paragraphs, several important gaps remain underexplored within the context of Indonesian-English idiomatic expression translation. The first gap concerns the limited investigation of the translation process in the Indonesian-to-English direction. While most existing studies examine the strategies used to translate idiomatic expressions

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from English into Indonesian (Ariyani et al., 2021; Nurdin et al., 2022; Pratiwi & Lubis, 2021; Salamah et al., 2020), the reverse process has received considerably less attention. In addition, there is a lack of studies exploring idiomatic expressions embedded within rich narrative contexts, particularly when the translations are produced by learners. Although some research has examined idiomatic expression translation in narrative texts, these studies generally analyze translations produced by professional translators rather than learner-generated output (Floranti & Mubarok, 2020; Raharjo, 2025; Wicaksono & Wahyuni, 2018). Furthermore, prior studies involving learners tend to focus primarily on identifying translation challenges and errors when translating idiomatic expressions (Idami et al., 2022; Mulyani & Ardiansyah, 2021) rather than to the strategies or decision-making process. Addressing these gaps, this research analyzes English translations of Indonesian idiomatic expressions within a narrative text produced by English language learners in order to uncover their strategic choices and translational intentions. Drawing on Baker's (2018) categorization of translation strategies and Larson's (1998) framework of loss and gain, this study aims to (1) identify the strategies employed by learners in translating Indonesian idiomatic expressions into English and (2) examine the types of loss and gain present in their translation outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Idiomatic Expressions

The definitions of idiomatic expressions or idioms have been proposed by various experts as multi-word units characterized by both restricted form and figurative meaning. Lim (2004) emphasizes that an idiomatic expression is a combination of words in which the surface form conceals the intended figurative meaning. In line with this view, Makkai et al. (2004) suggests that an idiomatic expression is formed by assigning a new specific meaning to a group of words or lexical items, even though each item already carries its own literal meaning. Furthermore, Baker (2018) defines idiomatic expressions as fixed multi-word units that allow little or no variation in form in which the overall meaning cannot be inferred from the literal meanings of their individual components. In summary, these definitions highlight idiomatic expressions as conventionalized units with restricted form and figurative meanings that override the literal lexical interpretation of its constituents.

In multilingual contexts, idiomatic expressions exist in many languages (Wicaksono & Wahyuni, 2018), although they vary significantly in terms of frequency, usage conventions, and rhetorical function (Baker, 2018; Hanim & Hardjanto, 2021). For example, in English, idiomatic expressions are extensively used across both formal and informal contexts, including journalism and advertising (Baker, 2018). By contrast, in Indonesian, idiomatic expressions appear predominantly in literary works, where they serve as stylistic devices to express creativity, convey messages implicitly, incite emotion, and develop the narrative and storytelling nuance (Amanda, 2024; Sari, 2015). These contrasting patterns demonstrate that idiomatic expressions function differently across languages, reflecting distinct cultural practices and communicative traditions.

Translating Idiomatic Expressions

In the context of translation training, idiomatic expressions have been understood through the perspectives of linguistic, Second Language (L2) learning, and translation. From the linguistic perspective, the prominent feature of idiomatic expressions is their fixed or semi-fixed form consisting of one or several words and containing a meaning different from the literal meaning of its individual words (Redman, 1997). This feature makes idiomatic expressions unable to be altered without influencing the overall meaning and cannot be understood from their individual words. Furthermore, from the perspective of L2 learning, idiomatic expressions have a feature in which require contextual prompt to be correctly understood. Due to this feature L2 learners may initially

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attempt to process idiomatic expression in a literal way that results in comprehension difficulty (Cooper, 1999). This underlines that frequently-used idiomatic expressions are easier for L2 learners to recognize and understand. Finally, the translation perspective highlights those idiomatic expressions have a fixed and culturally embedded structure with uncertain meanings (Baker, 2018). Thus, altering the lexical or grammatical components of an idiomatic expressions potentially results in a loss of its idiomatic meaning. Therefore, these characteristics demonstrate that understanding idiomatic expressions requires linguistic knowledge, contextual awareness, and cultural familiarity, particularly for L2 learners and translators.

In translating idiomatic expressions, many factors should be taken into account. The factor is not limited to whether an idiomatic expression with a similar meaning also exists in the target language (Baker, 2018). However, some factors such as style, register, and rhetorical effect also needs to be considered since translators often have a tendency to look for near-equivalent idiomatic expressions in the target language, although it is not always suitable (Fernando & Flavell, 1981). Furthermore, the translation orientation is also an important factor that must not be overlooked. This refers to priorities in translating a text including Source Language (SL) emphasis focusing on accuracy and form, and Target Language (TL) emphasis focusing on clarity and naturalness (Newmark, 1998). As a result, the translation of idiomatic expression is possibly influenced by either prioritizing SL emphasis or TL emphasis in the target text. Therefore, the translation of idiomatic expressions requires careful consideration of both linguistic and functional factors to ensure that the intended meaning and effect are successfully conveyed in the target language.

Considering many factors in translating idiomatic expressions, several strategies are required to deal with those factors. Based on the existing theory on translating idiomatic expressions (Baker, 2018), there are six possible strategies to deal with this phenomenon:

1) **Using an idiomatic expression of similar meaning and form:** In this strategy, the SL idiomatic expression is rendered to its TL counterpart which shares the same contextual and connotative meaning as well as equivalent lexical features (forms). As a result, the translation is highly expected to deliver the similar impact and nuance as its SL counterpart. For example, an English idiomatic expression *"turn over a new leaf"* was translated into its Indonesian equivalent *"membuka lembaran baru"*, having similar meaning and verb form (Hanim & Hardjanto, 2021).

2) **Using an idiomatic expression of similar meaning but dissimilar form:** This strategy involves using the TL idiomatic expression sharing a similar meaning to its SL counterpart although they do not share similarities in terms of lexical aspects. In addition, the translation may be able to successfully retain the message and idiomatic aspects despite not staying faithfully to the SL. For example, an English idiomatic expression *"beat about the bush"* which is a verb in the sentence was translated into its Indonesian equivalent *"basa-basi"* which is a noun (Ariyani et al., 2021).

3) **Borrowing SL idiomatic expression:** This strategy involves borrowing the SL idiomatic expression and using it in the TL text without changing anything. Among strategies proposed by Baker (2018), this strategy may be considered as inapplicable in the translation process involving both English and Indonesian languages. Studies on idiomatic expression translation involving this language pair found this strategy to be rarely or even not implemented (Ariyani et al., 2021; Hanim & Hardjanto, 2021; Nurdin et al., 2022; Raharjo, 2025).

4) **Translation by paraphrase:** In this strategy, the translation involves transferring the intended/contextual meaning of the SL idiomatic expression to the TL text by using a more familiar/neutral expression. This results in delivering the meaning successfully to the TL while losing its idiomatic aspects at the same time. For example, an Indonesian idiomatic expression *"sebatang kara"* in the sentence *"orang tuanya yang sebatang kara"* was paraphrased and translated as its intended meaning *"only remaining"* in *"his only remaining parent"*, instead of being replaced with a possible TL equivalent (Raharjo, 2025).

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5) **Translation by omission of a play on idiomatic expression:** This strategy includes the process of omitting the playful aspect (playfulness, pun, or double meaning) of the SL idiomatic expression and leaving its literal meaning to be transferred into the TL text. For example, an English idiomatic expression *"take a back seat"* is translated into its literal Indonesian meaning *"mundur"*, losing its playfulness aspect within the TL (Hanim & Hardjanto, 2021)

6) **Translation by omission of entire idiomatic expressions:** In this strategy, the entire idiomatic expression is dropped because it does not have any equivalence, is very difficult to paraphrase, or may not be stylistically suitable. Despite omission of both idiomatic expression and its message, this strategy is deemed to possibly improve the readability of the TL text as a whole. For example, an Indonesian idiomatic expression *"bukan kepalang"* in the sentence *"Kali ini aku terkejut bukan kepalang"* was omitted and replaced with a more neutral expression *"stunned"* in *"I was stunned"*, which may serve similar purpose and tone but not in an idiomatic manner (Raharjo, 2025).

Loss and Gain in Translation

The phenomena of loss and gain in translation is common when translating culture-specific items from one language (SL) to another (TL). Loss in translation happens when a specific element that appears in the SL text is missing in the TL text due the differences particular elements (e.g. word choice, phrases, concepts, syntax, and culture) between both languages (Larson, 1998). In addition, loss can also happen when the rhetorical impacts such as emotion or excitement from SL are not appropriately translated to TL due to the translator's level of knowledge (Ariansyah S. et al., 2024; Lurisari, 2019). In contrast, gain in translation occurs when the elements presented within SL text appears also appears in the TL text in a similar or different way, and these elements improve the clarity of information for TL readers (Ariansyah S. et al., 2024; Larson, 1998). Besides, gain in translation may occur if the translator actively compensates for what might be lost. In short, loss in translation is likely to happen when certain cultural bound or stylistic elements are omitted or replaced with more neutral expression due to lack equivalence, while gain in translation occurs most when a successful attempt to compensate loss in translation is made.

There are three categories of loss in translation, namely (1) Grammatical, (2) Semantic, and (3) Cultural (Ariansyah S. et al., 2024; Larson, 1998). Firstly, Grammatical Loss occurs due to the differences in grammar system between SL and TL or when the grammatical elements existing in SL are missing in TL, leading to different interpretation between SL and TL messages (Larson, 1998). For example, a grammatical lost occurred when an SL (English) complex sentence was translated into TL (Indonesian) by also reordering the clauses and changing the voice as in Figure 1 below. This causes the TL to stray from its SL grammatical norm that potentially distorts the meaning.

SL: **Men in black suit with ear protrusions follow you** *wherever you go inside George Washington University*
TL: *Ke ruangan mana pun kau dibawa di George Washington University,* **lelaki-lelaki bersenjata hitam dengan alat kecil menempel di telinga terus mengikutimu.**

Figure 1. Example of Grammatical Loss (Ariansyah S. et al., 2024)

Then, Semantic Loss occurs when the translation changes the meaning entirely or partially due to several factors such as lack of direct equivalences in TL. The translation fails to convey contextual/intended meaning and demands toward specific interpretation, and it causes the loss of nuance (Larson, 1998). The example of this phenomenon can be seen in Figure 2 below, where a proper name of an object was partially translated into the TL, causing loss of meaning in the TL.

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> SL: Hiruk pikuk **Gamelan baleganjur** terus ditabuh.
> TL: **Gamelan** kept playing energetically.

Figure 2. Example of Grammatical Loss (Ariansyah S. et al., 2024)

Lastly, Cultural Loss mostly applies to culture-bound elements (e.g., terminologies and cultural expressions). It occurs when these elements are rendered to TL by using more neutral terms that approximate their meaning but lack original cultural significance (Larson, 1998). For example, the culture specific item *"bertayub"*, which generally means *"menari"* in its Source Language (Indonesian), was translated into *"dancing"* in English as its Target Language (Ariansyah S. et al., 2024).

Similarly, there are also three categories of gain in translation, namely (1) Compensation, (2) Addition, and (3) Using A Loan Word (Ariansyah S. et al., 2024; Larson, 1998). First of all, Compensation is a process applied when a certain element (meaning, style, or effect) from SL text cannot be rendered directly or fully into the TL text norm or culture. It is done by compensating this element in a different way in the TL text while also by applying improvement to comply with grammatical rules or cultural norms of the TL text (Larson, 1998). The example of Compensation is when an English proverb was translated into its Indonesian equivalent proverb as seen in Figure 3 below, although these two proverbs do not share similarities in terms of grammatical structure or literal meanings of their constituents.

> SL: To kill two birds with one stone.
> TL: Sekali mendayung dua pulau terlampaui.

Figure 3. Example of Compensation (Ariansyah S. et al., 2024)

Meanwhile, Addition refers to adding required elements such as words, phrases, or sentences with the aim to improve either grammatical or semantic naturalness in the TL text (Larson, 1998). The example of Addition is presented in Figure 4 below. In this case, the addition of *"inilah"* introduces an emphasis that is not present in the source text. The term functions as a deictic marker that highlights the identity of "the famous reporter" and strengthens the exclamatory tone in Indonesian, producing a more natural and expressive sentence in the TL.

> SL: So, the famous reporter!
> TL: Jadi **inilah** si wartawan terkenal!

Figure 4. Example of Addition (Ariansyah S. et al., 2024)

Finally, Using A Loan Word refers to the process of employing an exact duplication of the SL word in the TL text (Larson, 1998). This is similar to Borrowing, but it is occasionally added with a short explanation to clarify the meaning of that borrowed word. For example, the translator chose to not translate the term *"Thanksgiving"* within a particular sentence from English (SL) to Indonesian (TL), but borrowed the term and added explanation about it (*TL: Thanksgiving... perayaan hari besar...*), somewhere within the sentence (Ariansyah S. et al., 2024).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research aims to (1) identify the translation strategies employed by English language learners in translating Indonesian idiomatic expressions to English and (2) identify the loss and gain

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from the translation results. Descriptive qualitative research is employed in order to achieve these objectives. Since descriptive method in qualitative research is used when research involves interpreting and explaining the data based on a particular framework, and categorizing information into themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2023), this choice of methodology is deemed suitable. In this case, the framework refers to types of translation strategies proposed by Baker (2018).

The data source of this research was taken from two types of sources. The first source is an Indonesian-written folklore entitled "Malin Kundang" taken from the book written by Davidsen and Yusep Cuandani (2021). This book contains several Indonesian folklores written in both English and Indonesian. In addition, the book already highlights the uncommon phrases which are categorized into Indonesian idiomatic expressions and provides both the glossary to explain the intended meaning and the translation in the English-written version. The data taken from this source are sentences containing idiomatic expressions, and are presented in the following Table 1.

Table 1. Data Source 1

No.	Sentence	Idiomatic Expression	English Translation within the text	Explanation from the Glossary
1	Setiap hari "banting tulang" keluar masuk bibir pantai untuk bekerja sebagai kuli angkut.	banting tulang	Every day he "worked his fingers to the bone" going to and from the water's edge to work as a dockside laborer carrying goods.	work one's fingers to the bone
2	Di satu sisi sangat sedih meninggalkan saya, orang tuanya yang "sebatang kara", namun di sisi lain dia sudah sangat bosan hidup dalam kesengsaraan.	sebatang kara	On the one hand, he was very sad to leave me, his "only remaining" parent, but on the other hand, he was very tired of living in misery.	one and only
3	Mungkin, harta yang berlimpah dan perlakuan orang-orang di sekeliling yang sedikit mendewakanku lambat laun telah membuatku "lupa diri".	lupa diri	Perhaps, abundant riches and the actions of those around me who somewhat deified me slowly made me "forget myself".	to forget oneself
4	Apakah dia sudah "beranak pinak"?	beranak pinak	Does he already "have a wife and children"?	to have (a wife and) children
5	Hatiku "berbunga-bunga".	berbunga-bunga	My heart was "joyful".	happy, joyful
6	Ketika melangkah keluar kapal dan berjalan melalui jembatan yang menghubungkan kapalku dengan darmaga, kali ini aku terkejut "bukan kepalang".	bukan kepalang	This time, when stepping off the boat, walking across the gangway connecting the boat to the wharf, I was "stunned".	indeed
7	Bertahun-tahun menanti dan berdoa untuk bisa bertemu dengan Malin "berbuah pahit'.	berbuah pahit	Years of waiting and praying to be able to meet him "had sown bitter fruit".	to end sadly (lit. to bear bitter fruit)

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Meanwhile, the second data source was taken from 10 English translation results of the folklore produced by English language learners. Prior to this research, they were assigned to translate an Indonesian-written folklore entitled "Malin Kundang" into English. This folklore contains several idiomatic expressions mentioned in Table 1 above. However, the idiomatic expressions were not being highlighted, so that the learners had to figure out whether they are idiomatic expressions and decided how to translate them. Each student produced one English version translation of the folklore served as the part of the second data source for this research. Furthermore, the data taken from this second source included the sentences containing an English translation of Indonesian idiomatic expression.

To comprehensively analyze the data, this research employed content analysis as its data analysis technique. This technique focuses on identifying, quantifying, and expounding upon the phenomenon within a textual material (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This technique was chosen because it supported the research purpose which is analyzing the textual material. Furthermore, this research applied translation strategies on idiomatic expressions proposed by Baker (2018) and the concept of loss and gain in translation by Larson (1998).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

1. Strategies in Translating Idiomatic Expressions
Based on the data analysis results of each Indonesian idiomatic expression and its English translation, it was found that there are four strategies employed by English language learners to produce the translation results. These strategies included (1) translation by paraphrase, (2) using an idiomatic expression of similar meaning but dissimilar form, (3) translation by omission of entire idiomatic expression, (4) using an idiomatic expression of similar meaning and form. Furthermore, the findings also showed that "translating by paraphrase" became the most frequently applied strategy as shown in the Table 2 below.

Table 2. Strategies in Translating Idiomatic Expressions from Indonesian to English

No.	Strategies	Frequency
1	translation by paraphrase	50
2	using an idiomatic expression of similar meaning but dissimilar form	13
3	translation by omission of entire idiomatic expression	4
4	using an idiomatic expression of similar meaning and form	3
5	translation by omission of a play on idiomatic expression	0
6	borrowing SL idiomatic expression	0

The finding presented in Table 2 provides several educational and practical highlights regarding the translation of Indonesian idiomatic expressions. The first one is an indication that both Indonesian and English may share similarities within their usage of idiomatic expressions to convey message. It is shown by the frequency of items identified as a result of the strategy "using an idiomatic expression of similar meaning but dissimilar form". Then, the next highlight is drawn from the finding addressing frequency of items identified as the results of the strategy "translation by paraphrase". This highlight indicates that English language learners of Indonesian possess a sufficient level of knowledge toward SL (Indonesian) idiomatic expressions, but most likely lack of knowledge toward TL (English) idiomatic expressions. Finally, the finding also indicates that both Indonesian and English share a number of idiomatic expressions that each of them shares similar meaning to its near-equivalence.

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2. Loss and Gain in Translation

The data analysis results showed that the English translation of idiomatic expressions produced by English language learners were most likely experience either loss or gain. In the phenomenon of loss in translation, the identified phenomena were categorized into (1) Cultural Loss and (2) Multiple Losses. This "Multiple Losses" category covered every phenomenon in which two or three types of translation loss occur simultaneously within a translation result. Meanwhile, two types of gain phenomenon were identified namely, (1) Compensation and (2) Addition.

Table 3. Loss and Gain in Translation

No.	Loss and Gain in Translation	Frequency
1	Neither Loss or Gain	3
	Losses in Translation	
2	Grammatical Loss	0
3	Semantic Loss	0
4	Cultural Loss	25
5	Multiple Losses (Grammatical and Cultural)	10
6	Multiple Losses (Semantic and Cultural)	10
7	Multiple Losses (Grammatical, Semantic, & Cultural)	4
	Gains in Translation	
8	Compensation	18
9	Addition	0
10	Using a Loan Word	0

Based on the findings presented in Table 3 above, it is shown that Cultural Loss is the most identified phenomenon of loss in translation. Meanwhile, both grammatical and semantic losses occurred simultaneously with other types of losses. This indicates loss in cultural aspect does not entirely affect the whole translation result because the translation may still retain its grammatical and semantic aspects within the TL text. However, both grammatical and semantic losses may affect the other aspects of the translation. This finding implies that English language learners who translated idiomatic expressions from Indonesian to English are most likely to understand the meaning and function of the idiomatic expressions, but may not have sufficient of knowledge of the English ones.

On the other hand, the data in Table 3 show that Compensation is the most identified phenomenon of gain in translation, while Addition and Using a Loan Word are not identified at all. This indicates that Compensation may be the most suitable way to translate Indonesian idiomatic expressions to English by retaining its semantic and cultural nuance. In addition, this finding also implies that most of the translators chose to retain the semantic and cultural aspects when rendering idiomatic expressions from SL to TL.

Discussion

This section elaborates the way each translation strategy is possibly implemented by English language learners to translate idiomatic expressions from English to Indonesia. In addition, the elaboration also includes explanation on how implementation of each strategy is likely to cause either a translation loss or a translation gain. The discussion is organized based on the types of translation strategy identified in the analysis process, namely (1) translation by paraphrase, (2) using an idiomatic expression of similar meaning but dissimilar form, (3) translation by omission of entire idiomatic expression, and (4) using an idiomatic expression of similar meaning and form.

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1. Translation by Paraphrase

This strategy involves transferring the intended/contextual meaning of the SL idiomatic expression to the TL text with the high possibility of losing its idiomatic elements (Baker, 2018; Raharjo, 2025). The first examples of this strategy implementation are shown in Table 4 below. This table shows several translation results of idiomatic expression *"beranak pinak"*. In SL (Indonesian), this phrase comes from two words, namely *"beranak"* literally meaning *"giving birth"* and *"pinak"* literally meaning *"descendant"*. Based on its literal translation, this expression may be more suitable for describing women's action/condition. However, deviating from the literal meaning of its constituent words, this expression is frequently used to describe whether or not someone, either male or female, has already had children or offsprings (Badudu, 2008). As a result, this expression should not be rendered to the TL in a literal way.

Table 4. Examples of "Translation by Paraphrase"

Source Language	TL 1	TL 2	TL 3
Apakah dia sudah "beranak-pinak"?	Has he **"had any offspring"**?	Has he **"had children"** yet?	Had he **"had a child"**?

Based on the information from Table 4 above, the idiomatic expression *"beranak pinak"* appeared to be rendered and paraphrased into the TL text by using a more neutral expression that represents and matches its original uses existing in the SL text. This results in delivering the translation of SL idiomatic expression in form of the explanation about the intended meaning, rather than in form of its TL near-equivalent counterpart. Furthermore, these translations in Table 4 can also be considered as examples of Cultural Loss in translation. This type of loss occurs when culture-bound elements are rendered to TL by using more neutral expressions that approximate their meaning (Larson, 1998). In this case, while the meaning of *"beranak pinak"* is preserved because the intended meaning is delivered, its cultural and stylistic richness is diminished in the TL version. In addition, the translation results in Table 4 also share similar grammatical function with the SL item. The SL idiomatic expression functions as the verb of sentence, while each of translation results in Table 4 also functions as part of the "present tense" verb. Therefore, the idiomatic expression *"beranak pinak"* has been successfully translated in terms of meaning and lexical aspects, although it experiences Cultural Loss.

The other examples on how "Translation by Paraphrase" is implemented can be seen in Table 5 below. This table shows the translation of idiomatic expression *"sebatang kara"*. This expression consists of two words, namely *"sebatang"* literally meaning *"one trunk"*, and *"kara"* literally referring to *"a type of bean"*. However, when being used together, this expression is not to be interpreted based on the literal meaning of its constituent word. As stated in Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), it is used to describe a condition when someone does not have any relatives anymore (Badudu, 2008; Setiawan, 2013). In this case, the idiomatic expression functions as both an adjective and subject predicative modifying the word *"orang tuanya"*. Thus, the expression must not be rendered to the TL by using the literal meaning of its constituent words.

Table 5. Other Examples of "Translation by Paraphrase"

Source Language	TL 1	TL 2	TL 3
Di satu sisi sangat sedih meninggalkan saya, orang tuanya yang "sebatang kara", ...	*He eventually sailed away, his "only" family, all alone, ...*	On the one hand it was very sad to leave me, his **"lonely"** parent, ...	*On one side, he was sad to leave me, his mother who "lives alone", ...*

Based on information from Table 5 above, it is shown that the translators most likely rendered the idiomatic expression into the TL text by rewriting it in a more neutral expression that can replicate its original intention and message existing in the SL text. Thus, the intended message

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is delivered although the idiomatic style is not retained. Furthermore, these translation examples can also be categorized into items experiencing both grammatical and cultural losses. This grammatical loss occurs because the grammatical elements existing in SL are missing in TL and leads to different interpretation between SL and TL (Larson, 1998). Seen from Table 4, the expression *"sebatang kara"* does not share similar grammatical function with each of its translations. While it functions as a subject predicative for the noun *"orang tuanya"* in the SL, each of its translations carries different grammatical function because it is rendered into adjectives *"only"* and *"lonely"*, and a verb phrase *"lives alone"*. These differences potentially lead TL readers who are unaware of SL to have different interpretation toward the translation of *"sebatang kara"*. For the cultural loss, it can be seen that the translation results can deliver the intended or contextual meaning of this idiomatic expression, although it is not in form of idiomatic expression. In other words, the message is retained, but its cultural significance is diminished (Larson, 1998). Therefore, the expression *"sebatang kara"* has been successfully rendered in terms of meaning despite losing its cultural nuance.

Another set of examples regarding the implementation of *"Translation by Paraphrase"* are seen in Table 6 below. This table provides information about several translation results of idiomatic expression *"banting tulang"*. It is formed by combining two Indonesian words, *"banting"* and *"tulang"* into a phrase that can literally mean *"to slam a bone"*. However, this phrase is frequently used idiomatically rather than literally. It is used to describe that someone works very hard (Badudu, 2008; Setiawan, 2013). As a result, it is most likely not appropriate to translate that expression based on its literal meaning.

Table 6. Another Set of Examples of "Translation by Paraphrase"

Source Language	TL 1	TL 2	TL 3	TL 4
Setiap hari dia **"banting tulang"** *keluar masuk bibir pantai untuk bekerja sebagai kuli angkut.*	*Every day, he* **"works hard"** *as a porter in and out of the shoreline.*	*Every day he* **"worked hard"** *going in and out of the beach as a porter.*	*He* **"worked really hard"**, *going in and out of the beach everyday as a mere porter.*	*He* **"toils"** *daily as a porter getting in and out along the sandy shoreline.*

Based on the information from Table 6 above, each translator appears to most likely render the SL idiomatic expression into the TL text by paraphrasing it into a more neutral expression that replicates the intended message of the SL expression. As a result, the intended message is delivered while the idiomatic style is not retained. Furthermore, those translation examples can also be categorized into items experiencing only cultural loss because the translations do not retain the idiomatic aspects or are not in an idiomatic form. As seen in TL 1, 2, and 3, each of the translations uses the translation of the intended meaning or message of the SL idiomatic expression, while TL 4 uses a neutral expression/word that is a synonym of the words used in TL 1, 2, and 3. In addition, those three translations share the same grammatical function and form as its SL counterpart, which is a verb of the sentence. Therefore, those translations have successfully rendered the message from SL to TL while also retain the grammatical function and form similar to the SL one.

2. Using an Idiomatic Expression of Similar Meaning but Dissimilar Form

In this strategy, the translation is expressed by using an idiomatic expression that shares similar message and idiomatic elements, but is written in a different form, such as different lexical choice (diction) and/or grammatical functions (Baker, 2018; Raharjo, 2025). Several examples of how this strategy is implemented are shown in Table 7 below. This table provides information about several translation results of idiomatic expression *"berbunga-bunga"*. This expression is constituted from the verb *"berbunga"* meaning *"to grow"* and the noun *"bunga"* meaning *"flower"* in literal way. However, as an idiomatic expression, this expression cannot be interpreted

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based on its literal meanings from its constituent words. Instead, it is frequently used to describe a condition when someone is experiencing a happy or (possibly) romantic moment, and is lexically categorized as both a verb and an idiomatic expression in *KBBI* (Badudu, 2008; Setiawan, 2013). Thus, a literal translation is not acceptable.

Table 7. Example of "Using an Idiomatic Expression of Similar Meaning but Dissimilar Form"

Source Language	TL 1	TL 2
Hatiku "berbunga-bunga".	*I was "head over heels".*	*I was "over the moon".*

The information in Table 7 shows that the expression *"berbunga-bunga"* is transferred into the TL text as an idiomatic expression sharing a similar message with the SL one, but having a distinct form. In TL 1, the TL idiomatic expression *"head over heels"* is used as the translation. This expression can be categorized into the sharing similar meaning to the SL idiomatic expression because its meaning refers to a condition of falling in love (Farlex, 2012). Similarly, TL 2 uses another idiomatic expression *"over the moon"*, meaning extremely happy (Farlex, 2012). Although both translations share meanings similar to their SL counterparts, they do not share a similarity with the SL in terms of form because they function as a subject predicative instead of a verb. Furthermore, these translations can also be considered as examples of Compensation. In this case, each translator had attempted to retained the idiomatic elements from the SL text although exact reproduction in terms of style was not possible. This, then, results in the translators compensated the elements in a different way within the TL while also complied to the TL textual norms. As a result, the expression *"berbunga-bunga"* can be appropriately translated into the TL as another idiomatic expression rather than a neutral expression.

Other examples of the second strategy are shown in Table 8 below. This table provides information about the translation of idiomatic expression *"bukan kepalang"*. If this expression is translated literally based on its constituent words, the translation will provide an information about *"insufficiency of something"* that is insensible to the context the sentence where it exists. However, as an idiomatic expression, the expression is frequently used to describe that something is happening in an extreme degree or hyperbolic manner (Badudu, 2008; Setiawan, 2013). In this case, this idiomatic expression is lexically categorized and functions as an adverb for the verb *"terkejut"* as seen in Table 7 below. Thus, it renders literal translation insufficient for this case.

Table 8. Other Examples of "Using an Idiomatic Expression of Similar Meaning but Dissimilar Form"

Source Language	TL 1	TL 2	TL 3
..., kali ini aku terkejut "bukan kepalang".	*..., this time I was shocked "beyond belief".*	*..., I was shocked "to death".*	*..., I was "taken aback" this time.*

Based on Table 8 above, there are three possible near-equivalent idiomatic expressions sharing a meaning similar to *"bukan kepalang"* and serving as its possible translations. In TL 1, it is translated into *"beyond belief"* containing a similar meaning to the SL used to describe that something is beyond expectation (Farlex, 2012). However, this translation has a different form compared to its SL counterpart because it functions as the complement for adjective *"shocked"* preceding it. Similar case also happens in TL 2, where the translation *"to death"* also functions as the adjective complement for word *"shocked"*, although its similarity in meaning is likely better since the expression *"to death"* is often used to describe excessiveness of something (Farlex, 2012). Furthermore, in terms of loss and gain, both translation results can be categorized into examples of gain in translation resulting from Compensation. In this case, the possible loss in translation is compensated through the use of idiomatic expressions sharing similar meaning (Larson, 1998), although the grammatical function of the translated expression is changed. Therefore, both

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translations have delivered the message and its communicative impact, although both are not faithful to the SL form.

On the other hand, TL 3 provides a slightly different finding where the idiomatic expression is translated to TL idiomatic expression *"taken aback"*. In terms of meaning, this translation represents not only the SL word *"bukan kepalang"* but also the word *"terkejut"* since the meaning of this translation refers an extreme degree of being shocked (Farlex, 2012). In terms of form, this translation appears to function as the subject predicative within the translated sentence. In addition, this translation can be considered as a form of Compensation. In this case, although *"bukan kepalang"* emphasizing an extreme degree of something is not directly translated, its function is retained through the *"taken aback"*. As a result, both SL and TL ones equally convey a similar idea and communicative effect.

3. Translation by Omission of Entire Idiomatic Expression

The implementation this strategy involves omitting the entire idiomatic expression due to lack of equivalence, difficulty in paraphrasing, or other stylistic reasons (Baker, 2018). Despite dropping the idiomatic expression and its message, this strategy may improve the readability of the whole text. The examples of this strategy implementation are shown in Table 9 below. This table shows several translation results of idiomatic expression *"bukan kepalang"*. This expression is constituted from two Indonesian words literally meaning *"insufficiency of something"*. Based on the SL sentence in Table 8 below, the literal meaning does not seem to fit the context of that sentence. Instead, this expression is frequently used grammatically and idiomatically as an intensifier to describe how something happens in an extreme degree or a hyperbolic manner (Badudu, 2008; Setiawan, 2013). In addition, this word can also be lexically categorized as an adverb modifying the verb *"terkejut"* in its SL sentence. Thus, literal translation may be insufficient to deal with this case.

Table 9. Examples of "Translation by Omission of Entire Idiomatic Expression"

Source Language	TL 1	TL 2
*…, kali ini aku terkejut **"bukan kepalang"**.*	*…, I was **"shocked"**.*	*…, I am **"completely"** stunned.*

Based on examples in Table 9, the idiomatic expression *"bukan kepalang"* appears to be entirely omitted within the TL text. In TL 1, the idiomatic expression is dropped and not translated. Instead, the word modified by this expression is translated into the TL text (*"terkejut"* into *"shocked"*). This results in only the core information is delivered without its intensifier. In addition, the translation can be categorized into experiencing losses in Semantic and Cultural aspects. Semantic Loss happens because the meaning of TL text becomes slightly different from its SL counterpart resulting from its missing idiomatic expression translation supposedly function as intensifier, while Cultural Loss happens because the culture-specific item existing in the SL text does not appear in its TL counterpart (Larson, 1998). Meanwhile, the translation in TL 2 appears to dropped the idiomatic expressions and instead renders its meaning through a plain intensifier (*"completely"*) that modifies the translation of the core message within the sentence (*"stunned"*). Despite sharing similar grammatical function with its SL counterpart, the word *"completely"* may not be appropriate because its meaning is too far from the meaning of the expression *"bukan kepalang"*. This potentially causes the translated message to produce a tone dissimilar from its SL message. Similar to translation in TL 1, the translation also undergoes losses in both Semantic and Cultural aspects.

The other example of how this strategy is implemented are shown in Table 10 below. This table provides information on the translation a sentence containing the idiomatic expression *"beranak pinak"*. This idiomatic expression is frequently used to describe whether someone has

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already had children or offsprings (Badudu, 2008). However, the translation in Table 10 below appears to entirely omit both idiomatic expression and its message.

Table 10. Examples of "Translation by Omission of Entire Idiomatic Expression"

Source Language	Translation Result
Apakah dia sudah "beranak pinak"?	*She was wondering on how her son looks like and lives now.*

As seen in Table 10, the translation appears to be on the sentence-level focus because the translator most likely decided to ignore the idiomatic expression and chose to deliver the translation of possible connotative meaning of the SL text. While the expression is commonly associated with an information regarding starting a family (Badudu, 2008), it is possible that the translator might have interpreted the text as a question asking for information of someone's well-being and life journey. Since starting a family is frequently considered as part of life journey and a way to pass down culture and conserving community within the SL (Indonesian) culture (Antama, 2024; Melati, 2025), this interpretation toward the SL text, which then became its translation, may be deemed appropriate. However, taking from the perspective of loss and gain in translation, the translation can be categorized as experiencing loss in its Grammatical, Semantic, and Cultural aspects (Larson, 1998). The Grammatical loss occurs because the translation is changed its form from a question form into a statement. Then, the Semantic loss occurs because the idiomatic expression is omitted entirely, which most likely alters the message and causes different interpretation for English speakers who are unfamiliar with Indonesian language and culture. Finally, the Cultural loss occurs because the culture-specific item is omitted within the translation, causing the loss of nuance and aesthetic. Therefore, the translation can be considered of being able to deliver the intended message within a textual (sentence) level, although several details within the message are entirely omitted.

4. Using an Idiomatic Expression of Similar Meaning and Form

This strategy involves replacing an idiomatic expression from SL with an idiomatic expression from TL sharing a similar meaning and form (Baker, 2018). In other words, the translation result contains exactly the same elements (form, meaning, function, style, and communicative impact) as its SL counterpart. The examples of how this strategy is implemented are shown in Table 11 below. This table shows several translation results of idiomatic expression *"banting tulang"*. This expression is constituted from two Indonesian words, namely the verb *"banting"* literally meaning *"slam"*, and the noun *"tulang"* literally meaning *"bone"*. However, when these two words are used together as a phrase, it is not considered as a common expression signifying the literal meaning of its constituent words. Instead, this expression is categorized as an idiomatic one *(kiasan)* and frequently used to tell others that someone works very hard (Badudu, 2008; Setiawan, 2013). Therefore, a direct and literal translation may be insufficient to transfer the meaning of this expression to other languages.

Table 11. Examples of "Using an Idiomatic Expression of Similar Meaning and Form"

Source Language	TL 1	TL 2	TL 3
Setiap hari dia "banting tulang" keluar masuk bibir pantai untuk bekerja sebagai kuli angkut.	*Every day, he "sweat blood" his way inside and outside the beach shore to work as a laborer.*	*Every day, he "knuckled down", went in and out of the beach to work as a porter.*	*He "worked like a dog" as a porter on the shoreline day and night.*

Based on examples in Table 11, the idiomatic expression *"banting tulang"* can possibly have three variations of an equivalent expression in the TL. In TL 1, it is translated into an idiomatic expression *"sweat blood"*. This expression contains a similar meaning to the SL used to

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describe that someone works very hard or intensely (Farlex, 2012; Oxford University, 2025). In addition, the translated version functions as same as its SL counterpart which functions as the verb for the subject of the sentence. In this case, the translation in the TL 1 can be deemed as an idiomatic expression sharing similar meaning and form with its SL counterpart.

Meanwhile, the translation in TL 2 also appears to be the counterpart of *"banting tulang"* although it consists of a different diction from the one in TL 1. This expression *"knuckled down"* are categorized as both an idiomatic expression and a phrasal verb (Farlex, 2012; Oxford University, 2025). This expression contains a meaning of getting busy doing something. Although the meaning is not as faithful as the one from the translation in TL 1, it can still be used to tell the readers or listeners that someone is working very hard. As a result, the expression *"knuckled down"* still achieves the similarity in terms of meaning to its SL counterpart. In addition, this expression has also achieved the similarity in terms of form because it is categorized as a phrasal verb and used as the verb for the subject (he), similar to its SL counterpart used as the verb for the subject (*dia*). Therefore, the translation in the TL 2 is likely to serve as an idiomatic expression of similar meaning and form with its SL counterpart.

Then, the translation in TL 3 can also be considered as the counterpart of *"banting tulang"*. The expression *"work like a dog"* also has a different diction from the ones from TL 1 and TL 2. However, the meaning of this expression more faithful than the one in TL 2 because it refers to working very hard that is sometimes in a demeaning situation (Farlex, 2012).. Hence, this expression can be deemed appropriate counterpart of *"banting tulang"*. Moreover, this expression has also achieved the similarity in terms of form since it also functions as a verb like its SL counterpart. Therefore, the translation in the TL 3 can be considered as an idiomatic expression having similar meaning and form with its SL counterpart.

Finally, taking from the perspective of loss and gain in translation, all of the translation results in Table 10 do not involve or experience either translation loss or gain. The translated versions have successfully maintained both idiomatic form and lexical form. Furthermore, each of TL idiomatic expressions contain a meaning representing the meaning contained by its SL counterpart. Therefore, the translations have achieved naturalness while still reflect the pragmatic effect similar to the SL one.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussion, there are several major conclusions. First, the strategy *"translation by paraphrase"* is mostly used by the participants (English language learners of Indonesia) to translate Indonesian idiomatic expressions into English. This indicates that the participants have an adequate level of knowledge toward SL (Indonesian idiomatic expressions, although they most likely lack of knowledge toward TL (English) idiomatic expressions. Then, the analysis result also shows a significant connection between the strategy of *"translation by paraphrase"* as the most potential contributor of *"cultural loss"* in the process of translating idiomatic expression. Since *"translation by paraphrase"* only delivers the intended meaning of the idiomatic expressions, while drops the idiomatic form, the cultural nuance in the translated versions is diminished, resulting in *"cultural loss"*. In addition, the finding of this research is also in line with from Hanim and Hardjanto (2021) and Raharjo (2025) regarding the use of *"Borrowing"* strategy. Similar to that two research, this research also found that the same strategy is not employed. This conclusion signifies that Baker's (2018) proposed translation strategy *"Borrowing"* is most likely not applicable for translating Indonesian idiomatic expressions to English language.

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Suggestions

There are several suggestions regarding the further studies involving translation theory and translation training for English language learners. First, it is suggested that the future researcher may conduct experimental research to investigate learners' ability to conduct translations within an Indonesian-English language pair. Second, it is also possible for the future researcher to conduct a study regarding the relevance of teaching translation theories toward learners' translation skill development. Lastly, it is suggested that future research may conduct research on learners' accuracy in translating culture-specific items, technical terms, etc.

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