Exploring Students' Translation Strategies in Translating English Phrasal Verbs in Song Lyrics: A Case Study

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Abstract

This study analyzed the translation strategies used by 4th-semester students in translating English phrasal verbs found in song lyrics into Indonesian. A qualitative method was applied to analyse students' translations using Baker's (2018) idiom translation strategies as the primary theoretical framework. In addition to Baker's framework, the study identified other strategies in students' translation, including direct equivalent, translation by a more general word, and mistranslation. The data of the study were gathered from 50 phrasal verbs in English song lines chosen by the students for their translation practice. Students' translation was categorized as accurate translation, partially accurate translation, and mistranslation based on its semantic accuracy and contextual appropriateness. The findings show that the most common used of translation strategies were miss Mistranslation (32%), direct equivalent (26%), translation by a more general word (18%), using an idiom of similar meaning and form (8%), using idiom of similar meaning but different form (8%), translation by paraphrasing (4%) and translation by omission of the entire idiom (4%). In translation accuracy, 50% of the translations were accurate, 18% partially accurate, and 32% were mistranslated. It has been demonstrated that a large number of students translate texts literally and frequently misinterpret the phrasal verbs' figurative meaning. The difficulties students encounter when translating idiomatic expressions are highlighted in this study. It highlights how important it is to understand how to translate idiomatic or figurative language in literary or creative texts, especially phrasal verbs.

Keywords: *translation, translation strategies, phrasal verbs*

Introduction

Beyond its roles as a communication medium, English is mainly used or appears in cultural creative industries such as music, film, social media, television, digital content, and literature. As a result, non-native speakers are frequently used to English both in academic and informal settings. To fully understand the messages or ideas in English content, especially for countries with English as a second or third language, translation becomes an essential tool for overcoming this language barrier. This is because translation bridges the gap in the situation, where there is no way for the speakers to communicate effectively with those who are members of different cultural communities (Nord, 1997).

According to Newmark (1988), translation is the process of conveying the meaning from the source language to the target language to reproduce the original message in the source text. Translation is more than just transferring the messages from one language to another. It involves transferring meaning, style, intention, and cultural nuance in the source language (SL) to be conveyed accurately and naturally into the target language (TL) (Baker, 2018). Nida and Taber (1969) defined translation as The translation of the message from the source language into the target language must be done with attention to style and meaning. This definition emphasizes the importance of stylistic equivalency and semantic accuracy in translation. A translator must understand the source text's underlying context and emotional tone so that the

content of the source language can be accurate and acceptable in the target language (Ghazala, 2008).

One particular challenge in English-Indonesian translation appears in the translation of English phrasal verbs. A phrasal verb is a word combination of a base verb and one or more particles, such as adverbs or prepositions (McCarthy & Dell, F.O., 2017). Examples such as "break out", jump into, and pick up" illustrate how these word combinations form expressions whose meaning differs significantly from those of individual components. When the words are stand-alone, they typically carry straightforward, literal meanings. However, the individual words are combined into phrasal verbs, and the meanings are often idiomatic, which cannot be easily inferred from the meanings of the individual words. According to Crowell (1964), a phrasal verb consists of a main verb combined with one or more particles or prepositions, forming a single semantic unit. It makes the meaning of the phrasal verb frequently idiomatic and may be unpredictable when combined. For example, "break out" does not simply mean "to break something"; in context, it means "to escape", which in Indonesian is translated as *melarikan diri*. This example demonstrates how phrasal verbs can be complex to translate accurately, especially for language learners and translators, due to their idiomatic and context-dependent nature (not always clear from the words themselves).

Translating English Phrasal verbs into Indonesian is challenging since English phrasal verbs often carry other meanings behind the literal meaning of the individual words. As Courtney (1989) defines it, idiomatic expression in phrasal verbs creates a combination of a preposition or adverb that builds a meaning different from that of individual words. English phrasal verbs contain meaning that can be idiomatic, making it difficult for translators to find a suitable and accurate equivalent in Indonesian. To successfully translate such an expression, translators rely on various translation strategies. One of the translation strategies used by translators comes from Baker (2018). In her work, Baker identifies several translation strategies that translators can use when faced with idiomatic or complex expressions, especially those that cannot be translated directly into the target language. The translation strategies of Baker (2018) include using an idiom of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but different form, paraphrasing, translation by omission of the play on idiom, translation by omission of the entire idiom, and borrowing. These strategies help translators deal with the difficulty of translating fixed or figurative expressions, including phrasal verbs.

To deal with these translation problems, this study looks at how students translate English phrasal verbs found in song lyrics into Indonesian. Songs are categorized as parts of music that have words that produce music as sound (Griffee, D. T., 1992). This study chose song lyrics as the source material for several reasons. First, songs are a fun and familiar form of media for students, and they often include many idiomatic and figurative expressions, such as phrasal verbs. Second, song lyrics usually express strong feelings or emotions and use creative language, which means they must be careful and creative in translating. Third, by looking at how students translate songs, the researcher can see how they use their knowledge of English words, grammar, and culture in a real and meaningful context. With these reasons, the study aims to identify the translation strategies student use and to see the accuracy of their translation, especially when dealing with English phrasal verbs in song.

To explore this, the study analyses 50 lines of English song lyrics chosen and translated by students as part of their translation assignment. This setting provides an authentic picture of the students' translation abilities in everyday English expressions, especially in song lyrics. The study applies Mona Baker's (2018) well-known framework of idiom translation strategies to evaluate the students' work, since phrasal verbs are often idiomatic. Using this framework, the research identifies which strategies students apply, how accurately they apply them, and what common mistakes they make when translating sentences with phrasal verbs. The translation is checked based on how well the target language delivers the original meaning and

how well the translation strategies are used in the translated lyrics or phrasal verbs. The results are categorized as "Accurate Translation," "Partially Accurate Translation," and "Inaccurate Translation." Those categories help the researcher better understand how well students grasp idiomatic meaning and how confident they are in using translation strategies in their translation process. Ultimately, the study aims to give valuable insights for improving how translation is taught and learned, mainly when translating tricky English phrases like phrasal verbs and idioms into Indonesian.

Methodology

In order to investigate students' translation strategies and accuracy when translating English phrasal verbs into Indonesian, this study used a qualitative descriptive approach, using English song lyrics as the source text. A qualitative approach is suitable for this research since it enables detailed analysis of the linguistic features, translation strategies, and overall accuracy of the students' translations. The findings of this study were presented using a qualitative method, expressed in words and sentences. (Moleong, L.J., 2010). This study focuses on describing the strategies used by the students and seeing how well they convey the meaning of the source text through their translations.

The data for this study were collected from a translation assignment completed by fourth-semester undergraduate students in the Theory and Practices of Translation course at the English Language and Culture Department, Universitas Widya Dharma Pontianak. As part of the course activity, students were instructed to select English songs that contained phrasal verbs. For each song, they were required to identify the phrasal verbs found in the lyrics and provide an Indonesian translation for both the lyrics and the phrasal verbs. Each student also listed the song title and artist in their submission.

From the submitted assignments, 50 lines of lyrics containing phrasal verbs were selected at random. This selection highlighted various examples of phrasal verb usage and provided a reliable sample of the students' translations. The analysis of the translations was done in two steps. First, the translation strategies used by the students were identified based on Baker's (2018) translation strategies for idiomatic expressions. These strategies include: using an idiom with a similar meaning and form, using an idiom with a similar meaning but different form, paraphrasing, translating by omitting the play on the idiom, translating by omitting the entire idiom, and borrowing. Since phrasal verbs are often idiomatic, Baker's strategies provide valuable theoretical insights for understanding how students translate English expressions into Indonesian. Each phrasal verb translation was examined closely to determine which strategy the students applied and whether the chosen strategy was appropriate.

The quality of each translation was evaluated based on the selected strategies and classified into three categories: accurate, partially accurate, and inaccurate. An "accurate" translation means that the meaning of the phrasal verbs was fully and naturally conveyed in Indonesian. A translation can be partially accurate, meaning some nuances were lost or the phrasing in Indonesian may sound awkward and unnatural. An inaccurate translation means the phrasal verbs were mistranslated and misunderstood in the target language.

Findings and Discussion

The data analysis revealed various strategies to translate phrasal verbs found in translated English song lyrics. This study used Baker's (2018) translation strategies, the framework of idiom translation strategies. The strategies include using an idiom of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but different form, paraphrasing, translation by omission of the play on idiom, translation by omission of the entire idiom, and borrowing. In addition to Baker's translation strategies, several other observed strategies were

identified. Those additional strategies are direct equivalents, general word translation, and misinterpretation. The results are shown in the following table.

Table 1. The Frequency of Translation Strategy by Baker's (2018) in Translating Phrasal Verbs in English Songs

Baker's Translation Strategy (2018)			
No	Translation strategies	Frequency	Percentage
1	Using an idiom of similar meaning and form	4	8%
2	Using an idiom of similar meaning but different form	4	8%
3	Paraphrasing	2	4%
4	Translation by omission of the play on idiom	0	0%
5	Translation by omission of the entire idiom	2	4%
6	Borrowing the source language idiom	0	0%
Additional Translation Strategies			
7	Direct equivalent	13	26%
8	Translation by a more general word	9	18%
9	Mistranslation	16	32%

Based on Baker's (2018) translation strategies, one of the most frequently used strategies by the students in translating the phrasal verbs was using an idiom with a similar meaning but a different form in Indonesian. This strategy reflects the efforts made by the students to replace source language phrasal verbs with phrases in the target language that share the same meaning, both cultural and idiomatic expressions. For example, Data 30 "Late at night, you pour it out" was translated as *pada larut malam, kau keluarkan isi hatimu*. The phrasal verb "pour it out" conveys an emotional expression, and the student accurately expressed the meaning by using the natural Indonesian equivalent *keluarkan isi hati*, which effectively captures the figurative expression of the original lyric. Similarly, Data 41 "all your lies, they just caught up with you" was translated as *semua kebohonganmu, menyusulimu*. In this case, the phrasal verb "caught up" literally means telah tertangkap in Indonesian. However, in the context of the lyric, the translator used the idiom *menyusulimu* to capture the real meaning of the message in the original lyric. Another case, can be seen in Data 42 "you messed me up, yeah, real bad" was translated as *kamu mengacaukanku, ya sangat buruk*. The phrasal verb "messed up" was translated as *mengacaukanku*, which effectively conveys the emotional and intentional meaning in the original lyric. This differs from literal translation, such as *memberantakan*, which would be less natural to use in this context. In Data 46, "always lighting up every room" was translated into *selalu membuat terasa hidup*. The phrasal verb "lighting up," which means *menyalakan*, is interpreted figuratively in the lyric as *membuat terasa hidup* to show the real meaning of the original messages of bringing energy or life. These examples show the students' sensitivity to figurative and idiomatic meaning. Besides that, they can creatively reformulate phrasal verbs into natural and idiomatic expressions in Indonesian.

Another frequently used translation strategy was an idiom of similar meaning but a different form. This strategy involves substituting a source phrasal verb with an expression in the target language that conveys the same idea but is different in form. For example, Data 2 "All your lies, they just caught up with you" was translated as *semua kebohonganmu menyusulimu*. Here, the phrasal verb "caught up" is expressed as *menyusulimu*, conveying the original message's intended meaning. Similarly, Data 32 "you cut me off was translated as *kau memutuskan hubungan denganku* and Data 48 "pour my heart out" was translated as *kucurahkan semuaisi hatiku*. This translation strategy showed a deep understanding of figurative meaning and the flexibility to express the original message's meaning in Indonesian.

The following translation strategy that appeared in the students' translation was paraphrasing. This strategy involves translating the phrasal verbs in a more general or

descriptive way to convey the idiomatic meaning rather than using the direct equivalent. For example, Data 5 "you have come to show you go on" was translated as *Kamu Datang untuk menunjukkan jikan kamu sudah melanjutkan hidup*. In Indonesian, the phrasal verb "go on," if it is translated, will be "terus berjalan". In the translation, the translator translated this into *melanjutkan hidup*, which is not similar to the structure of the source text but effectively conveys its core message. Another similar example, Data 17 "it is tearing up my heart when I am with you" was rendered as *hatiku sakit ketika bersamamu*. In this case, the phrasal verb "tearing up my heart" was translated into *hatiku sakit* but not as *hatiku terkoyak* as a literal translation. Those two examples already appear as translation strategies using an idiom of similar meaning but different form, but both of those examples can be said as translations by paraphrasing. These cases demonstrate that paraphrasing can be a helpful alternative when direct idiomatic equivalents are lacking or culturally unrecognizable.

The last strategy that was identified in the translations was the omission of the entire idiom. This happened when the phrasal verbs were replaced with general expressions that failed to capture the nuance of the original ideas of the source text. For example, Data 7 "we could have had it all, rolling in the deep" translated as *kita bisa punya semua, tenggelam dalam perasaan*. In this case, the phrasal verb "rolling in" was translated as *tenggelam*, which simplifies the metaphor and omits the imagery of drowning as the original expression in the source language. This showed that the idiomatic meaning of rolling in the deep is lost in the translation. Similarly, Data 4 "I wanna know would you stick around" was translated as *saya ingin kamu tetap bersamaku*. Although the phrase *tetap bersama* conveys the general sense of the original message in the source language, it lacks the figurative and idiomatic tone of the original message "stick around". Although these explanations may convey the meaning literally, the idiomatic meaning was not delivered accurately in the translation.

The remaining two translation strategies, borrowing the source language idiom and translation by omission, played on the idiom were not observed in the students' translation. There were no examples where students directly borrowed the English phrasal verbs into Indonesian. The song lyrics are informal and do not include any special terms that require borrowing to be used in the target text. The same thing goes for other strategies where there were no translations used by omission, such as playing on idioms where the translators kept only the literal meaning and left out the figurative or emotional meaning of the idiom.

As previously mentioned, three additional translation strategies appeared in the analysis. Those strategies are direct equivalents, translation by a more general word, and mistranslation. Direct equivalent is a part of Bakers' (2018) translation strategies for non-equivalence at the word level. It refers to the use of target language expressions that directly and naturally match the meaning of the source word or phrase. This strategy works when the word or phrase in the source language has an exact or close match in the target language. The translations use an accurate Indonesian equivalent of English phrasal verbs in direct equivalents. In students' translation, they clearly understood both the literal and idiomatic meaning. For example, Data 1 "I hope I do not run out of time" was translated as *saya harap tidak kehabisan waktu*. This translation showed accurate captures of "having no more time". Another example, Data 26 "I hope this old train breaks down" was translated as *aku harap kereta tua ini rusak*. These examples showed the students' good recognition of common English phrasal verb and their ability to choose precise equivalents in an appropriate context in Indonesian.

The second additional translation strategy observed was translation by a more general word. This translation strategy is also discussed in Baker's (2018) translation strategies for dealing with non-equivalence at the word level. It involves replacing a specific term in the source language with a more general or broader term in the target language, especially when there is no direct equivalent. In this study, some translators generalized idiomatic or figurative phrasal verbs, which often resulted in a loss of nuance in the original message. For example, in

Data 45, "I would fade into the blue" was translated as *aku akan lenyap dalam kehampaan*. Another example Data 10 "I have been so caught up in my job" was translated into *saya telah terjebak dalam pekerjaan*. Similarly, Data 28, "I gave it all away" was rendered as *aku menyerah*. Another example, Data 37. "Doesn't mean I'm lonely when I'm getting over you" was translated as *tidak berarti aku kesepian ketika aku melupakanmu*. These translations demonstrate how using general words can show the message but also reduce the original figurative or idiomatic meaning.

Mistranslation refers to cases where the translation misunderstood the original meaning in the source language. In this study, some mistranslations were made by the students. For example, Data 23, "I cannot walk out, because I love you too much" was translated as *Aku tidak bisa berjalan diluar, karna kau mencintaimu*. Here, "walk out" was translated as *berjalan diluar* (walking on the outside). There's no relation between the source and target meaning since "walk out" in this context is more like *keluar*. This creates a misinterpretation of the intended meaning. Another example is in Data 16, "I heard that you are settled down," which was translated as *aku dengar kamu datang*. In English, settled down refers to someone starting a stable life, often including someone's relationship with a partner. This is also captured in the lyric with the same context. However, the student's translation loses this meaning entirely and replaces it with a literal and unrelated idea of the original lyric. One more example is the mistranslation of "work out" as *bekerja* (to work). In the lyric "we can work it out", the phrasal verb "work it out" means to improve the situation, but not simply to work. The students relied on word-for-word translation without understanding the idiomatic meaning behind the original message. These examples obviously show poor idiomatic expression comprehension. Instead of taking into account the idiomatic and figurative meaning of the phrasal verbs, the students relied on direct translation. The translated lines are therefore considered to be a mistranslation since they do not accurately convey the original meaning of the song lyrics.

Another thing that is being revealed in this study is the result on how well the translations conveyed the messages the intended meaning of the original phrasal verbs. Based on the students' accuracy and ability to communicate the source language or English song lyrics, the 50 English song lines were examined and grouped. Three categories were established for the translations: accurate translation, partially accurate translation, and inaccurate translation.

There were 25 translated song lines were found to be accurate by the analysis, meaning that over half of the data were successfully translated using the right strategies. This shows that the translated phrasal verbs reflected a strong understanding of both literal and idiomatic meaning in the song context. Meanwhile, there are 9 translations that were categorized as partially accurate. Those translations captured the original lyric's ideas but lacked specific elements of the song, especially the context or other meaning behind it. The remaining 16 translations were categorized as inaccurate. It showed mistranslation of the original and translated phrasal verbs, resulting in an unrelated interpretation of the original song. Here is the table showing the findings.

Table 2. The Accuracy of the Translation Made by the Students

No	Category	Number of each category	Percentage
1.	Accurate translation	25	50%
2.	Partially Accurate Translation	9	18%
3.	Inaccurate Translation	16	32%

Accurate translation occurred when the phrasal verbs had a direct equivalent in Indonesian, for example, in line "shut up and dance with me" on Data 6, which was translated as *Diam dan menarilah denganku*. The phrasal verb "shut up" appears in this example, which was translated as *diam*, which reflects an accurate and natural equivalent in Indonesian.

Similarly, the line "pour my heart out" on Data 48, which was translated as *kucurahkan semua isi hatiku* with phrasal verbs "pour out" and translated into Indonesian as *kucurahkan*. These two examples showed the translator's awareness of emotional connotation and the appropriate form of the target language.

Partially accurate translation was typically characterized by some level of semantic accuracy but lacked complete elements in tone or nuance. The example is in the line "I feel like you are getting to me" on Data 43, rendered as *Aku merasa kamu memengaruhiku*. The phrasal verb in this line, "get to", was translated as *memengaruhiku*. Though the translation was already good, it does not fully capture the context or message in the line. In this line, it is shown that "getting to me" implies a negative influence (irritation, frustration, or annoyance). *Memengaruhiku* is more neutral and lacks the specific nuance of the phrasal verbs. Those examples show that the translation does not fully capture the meaning of the original ideas of the song line since the line often has harmful and irritating connotations.

Inaccurate translations reflected either a mistranslation or a semantic mismatch in literal interpretation. For example, "every road lead back to the place I know" on Data 11, which translates as *setiap jalan menyusuli ke tempat yang kukenal*. The phrasal verb "leads back" is mistranslated as *menyusuli*, which is about to follow after or to catch up with someone or something, and is entirely unrelated to the intended meaning of the original line. Another example, Data 49 "can't nothing bring me down" was translated as *tidak ada yang membuatku jatuh*. The phrasal verb "bring me down" here means to make someone sad. The translation *membuatku jatuh* makes it sound like someone makes the person fall, which does not convey the real meaning of the original lyric. These examples show that some students translated the words directly without understanding the deeper or idiomatic meaning. Many songs chosen by the students where phrasal verbs often carry emotional or figurative meanings. It's important to understand the full context, not just individual words, when translating.

From these results, it is shown that many students were able to use good translation strategies, but still had difficulties in expressing sentences that have phrasal verbs or words that have figurative or multiple meanings. The accurate translations usually came from those who recognized common target words and knew their correct meaning in Indonesian. On the other hand, the partially accurate translations suggest that students need to understand connotations and figurative meanings more deeply. Meanwhile, the inaccurate translations happened since the students translated the words without paying attention to the meaning or context of the original message. This shows that accurate translations are closely linked to the availability of equivalent expressions of phrasal verbs in Indonesian and the students' familiarity with them. For example, when the students translated "run out of" or "break up", which have direct and commonly known word equivalents in Indonesian, accurate translations are more likely; however, when the phrasal verbs include deeper meanings, such as in "rolling the deep" or sticking around, the risk of mistranslating increases.

Conclusion

To sum up, the purpose of this study was to examine how students translated English phrasal verbs in songs into Indonesian. The analysis also included other strategies seen in the students' work, with Baker's (2018) idiom translation strategies serving as the main framework. The goal of this study was to identify the translation strategies the students used in their English phrasal verb translation and assess how accurately students could convey the idiomatic meaning of English phrasal verbs into Indonesian.

The finding revealed that the translation strategies observed in the students' analysis include using an idiom of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but different form, paraphrasing, and translation by omission of the play on idiom. The other two strategies, borrowing the source language idiom and translation by omission, were not observed in the data. Additionally, the analysis also identified three other translation strategies

frequently used by the students: direct equivalent, translation by a more general word, and mistranslation. From 50 data entries analysed, the most frequently used strategies were mistranslation (32%) indicating misunderstanding of idiomatic meaning in English phrasal verbs, direct equivalent (26%) used when a natural and accurate Indonesian expression matched the English phrasal verb, and Translation using a more general word (18 %) where students generalized the meaning and lost some of figurative or idiomatic meaning in the lyric. Other translation strategies, using an idiom of similar meaning and form (8%), using an idiom of similar meaning but different form (8%), translation by paraphrasing (4%), and translation by omission of the entire idiom (4%).

Regarding accuracy in translating English phrasal verbs, 50% of student translations were considered accurate, 18% were partially accurate, and 32% were mistranslations. This showed that accurate translation reflected the students' familiarity with common phrasal verbs and their ability to interpret the meaning based on the context, even in literal or idiomatic contexts. Partially accurate translation showed a general understanding, but could not understand the idiomatic expression in English phrasal verbs. Mistranslation occurred due to literal translation and incorrect use of an equivalent expression in the target language.

The result showed that some students were able to translate English phrasal verbs into natural and appropriate equivalents in Indonesian. However, other students faced challenges, especially in dealing with figurative or idiomatic meaning. This emphasizes how crucial it is for translation classes to include more practice translating idioms and phrasal verbs, particularly when using imaginative and expressive texts from literature or media.

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