## An Analysis of Figurative Meaning Translation in "Just Give Me a Reason"

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**Abstract**

Figurative meaning often presents challenges in translation, especially in song lyrics where meaning, emotion, and artistic expression must be conveyed simultaneously. This study examines the translation methodology for the figurative meanings in the bilingual song lyrics "Just Give Me a Reason" by Pink featuring Nate Ruess and its Indonesian version, "Berilah Aku Satu Alasan." The objective of this research is to identify the types of figurative expressions used in the original lyrics and to analyze the translation methods used to render them into Indonesian. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method. The data consist of figurative expressions in English lyrics and their corresponding translations into Indonesian. The analysis focuses on how the figurative meanings are transferred and whether the original sense is maintained. The findings reveal that several translation methods are used, including literal translation, adaptation, and paraphrasing. While some figurative expressions are preserved, others are modified to achieve naturalness and clarity in the target language. In conclusion, the translator employs flexible methods to balance meaning accuracy and lyrical acceptability.

**Keywords:** figurative meaning, translation methodology, song lyrics, bilingual translation, translation analysis

## Introduction

Song lyrics often convey interpersonal conflict and emotion through figurative language, such as metaphors, idioms, and other nonliteral expressions, making the message more evocative than literal wording. In translation, these figurative elements are frequently the most difficult to transfer because the target language may not share the same imagery, idiomatic conventions, or pragmatic tone; consequently, a translation can be lexically accurate yet still shift the intended nuance, emotional force, or relational stance embedded in the original lyric.

In translation studies, research on idiom and fixed-expression translation commonly emphasizes the selection of strategies to maintain meaning and naturalness, including using an idiom of similar meaning (with similar or different form), paraphrasing, omission, and compensation when no close equivalent exists (Baker, 1992). Meanwhile, work on metaphor translation highlights procedural options for preserving or adapting figurative images, such as retaining the original metaphor, replacing it with a culturally appropriate one, or converting the metaphor into literal sense,

depending on the desired communicative effect and readability (Newmark, 1988). Studies focused on song translation add another layer of constraint: beyond semantic equivalence, translators must often consider singability and performance-related factors, requiring compromises between sense, naturalness, rhythm, and rhyme (Low, 2005; Franzon, 2008). However, only a few studies closely map figurative expressions within a single internationally popular song and systematically relate (a) figurative types, (b) translation strategies, and (c) the meaning/nuance shifts that follow, particularly in how such shifts may affect the relationship narrative conveyed by the lyrics.

Therefore, this research aims to analyze the translation of figurative meaning in "Just Give Me a Reason" by identifying figurative expressions in the source lyrics and examining how they are rendered in the target-language version from established perspectives on figurative translation and song translation (Baker, 1992; Low, 2005; Newmark, 1988). The novelty of this study lies in its song-specific, traceable mapping of figurative meaning linking figurative categories to translation strategies and evaluating the resulting shifts in meaning and emotional nuance under lyric-translation constraints (Franzon, 2008; Low, 2005). The objectives of this research are: (1) to identify the types of figurative meaning found in the lyrics of "Just Give Me a Reason," (2) to describe the strategies used to translate those figurative expressions into the target language, and (3) to analyze how the selected strategies affect meaning equivalence, emotional nuance, and the acceptability of the translated lyrics.

## Research Method

Newmark (1988;81) stated that translation procedures are "methods applied by translators when they formulate equivalence for the purpose of transferring elements of meaning from SL to TL". The sentences and smaller language units in that text are translated using these procedures. The difference between the translation method and the translation procedure is that while the translation method relates to the whole text, the translation procedure is used for sentences and the smaller units of language. Furthermore, Newmark divided translation into two parts: semantic and communicative. First, Semantic contents with word-for-word translation, literal translation, and faithful translation. Second, the communicative method includes adaptation, free translation, and idiomatic translation.

Vinay and Darbelnet, as cited in Venuti (2000), explained that translation methodology is divided into two parts: direct and Oblique. First, the direct method involves borrowing, calquing, and literal translation; the second involves oblique content with transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation.

Larson (1984:121-127) explained that figurative sense is divided into various classes. They are metonymy, synecdoche, idioms, euphemism, and hyperbole. First, Metonymy is the use of words in a figurative sense involving association. Second, Synecdoche is a figurative device based on a part-whole relationship and is quite common in some languages. Third, idioms are a class of figurative expressions that occur in all languages but are highly language-specific; moreover, they cannot be understood literally and function as a unit at the semantic level. Fourth, an euphemism is a figurative expression

that is in some ways like a metonymy. Moreover, the last one: hyperbole is a metonym or synecdoche, conveying more than the writer intended the reader to understand.

## Results and Discussion

In this study, the writer is going to analyse the figurative sense which occurred in bilingual song lyrics entitled "Just Give Me A Reason by Pink Ft. Nate, which translates into "Berilah Aku Satu Alasan". Those data are put in the table below;

### Table 1. Song Lyrics

| No | Source Language Text | Target Language Text |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Right from the start, you were a thief | Sejak awal, kau adalah pencuri |
| 2 | You stole my heart and | Kau curi hatiku dan |
| 3 | I am your willing victim | Akulah korbanmu yang rela |
| 4 | You fixed them | Kau membuat semuanya jadi indah |
| 5 | Now, you have been talking in your sleep | Kini kau sering ngelindur |
| 6 | Just a second, we are not broken | Sedetik saja, kita tak hancur |
| 7 | Just bent, we can learn to LOVE again | Hanya bengkok, kita bisa belajar mencinta lagi |
| 8 | Oh, it is in the stars | Oh, tertulis di bintang |
| 9 | It has been written in the scars on our hearts. | Telah tertulis pada luka-luka di hati kita |
| 10 | Your head is running wild again | Kepalamu  menggila lagi |
| 11 | Oh, there is nothing more than empty sheets. | Oh oh, kini hanya ada selimut hampa |
| 12 | Oh, tear ducts and rust | Oh air mata mengalir dan berkarat |
| 13 | We are collecting dust | Kita kan kumpulkan debu |
| 14 | We will come clean | Kita kan membereskannya |

**Metonymy**

Metonymy is the use of words in a figurative sense that involves the association of a specific lexical item. In translation, it was suggested that each sense will likely be translated with a different word in the target language, since there is usually no correspondence of secondary senses between languages.

Here are some data that are categorized as metonymy of figurative sense:

### Table 2. Analysis of Lyric 1

| Source Language Text | Target Language Text |
|---|---|
| Oh, it is in the stars. | Oh, tertulis di bintang |

The data above showed that the word " *its in the stars* is translated into *tertulis di bintang*. Here, we may see that the word "it is" is translated as tertulis; in fact, it could be literally translated as "itu di dalam." Still, the translator transferred the different point of view of the original sense, which is acceptable and fits the whole expression. Thus, it may be classified as a metonym and as an oblique methodology.

Table 3. Analysis of Lyric 2

| Source Language Text | Target Language Text |
| --- | --- |
| Your head is running wild again. | Kepalamu  menggila lagi |

The data above show that the word "running wild" is translated as "menggila." In this sequence, the associative relation occurs in the secondary sense. If we translated the word "running wild" literally in Indonesian, it could be "liar." In fact, the translator used the lexical item menggila rather than the target-language term "liar". In short, it can be concluded as a translation procedure of modulation, which is also part of an oblique methodology.

**Synecdoche**

Table 4. Analysis of Lyric 3

| Source Language Text | Target Language Text |
| --- | --- |
| You stole my heart and | Kau curi hatiku dan |

The data showed that the word 'my heart' is translated as 'hatiku'. In this sequence, the word of my heart is substituted into the *haiku*. It is part of the modulation procedure. Because literally the meaning of *heart* in Indonesian is jantung, the modulation is so-called, since the equivalent sense in the target text is conveyed from a different point of view. Based on the translation procedure, this is an oblique translation methodology.

Table 5. Analysis of Lyric 4

| Source Language Text | Target Language Text |
| --- | --- |
| We will come clean | Kita kan membereskannya |

The data above showed that the word " *come clean* is translated into *membereskan*. If we examine the source text in Indonesian, it may translate as menjadi bersih or datang *bersih*. In fact, the source-language text is substituted with "membereskan," the secondary meaning of "clean." For example, when we clean the table, we remove the dirty plates, forks, and other items from it. Hence, the table appears to be free of the dirty stuff. Here, the translator employed modulation techniques, rendering the translation method oblique.

**Idioms**

One class of figurative expressions that occurs in all languages but is highly language-specific is idioms. As stated by Beekman and Callow 1974:12 as follows;

"Idioms are expressions of at least two words which cannot be understood literally and which function as a unit semantically."

The statement describes idioms whose meanings are hidden behind their expressions. To understand the meaning, we insist on grasping the entire sense of the expressions.

### Table 6. Analysis of Lyric 5

| Source Language Text | Target Language Text |
|---|---|
| I am your willing victim. | Akulah korbanmu yang rela |

The data above indicate that the expression means that the subject is voluntarily able to surrender to being a willing victim. As we know, in real life, there are no willing victims, because victims are usually affected by circumstances they did not choose. If it is related to the previous line, this expression actually showed that the lover who is falling in love does not care about anything and wants to be a willing victim. Here, the translator rendered the source text literally, a method also classified as the direct method of translation.

### Table 7. Analysis of Lyric 6

| Source Language Text | Target Language Text |
|---|---|
| Now, you have been talking in your sleep | Kini kau sering ngelindur |

The data above indicate that the expression "talking in your sleep" is translated into *ngelindur*. In this expression, it is classified as an idiom. This expression actually has a meaning as a condition where someone has a big burden that causes them to develop a mental problem. The translator translated the source text by using the transposition procedure. Here, we may see a shift between the source and target texts: in the source, it is a verb phrase, but in the target, it is only a noun. It may also be said that this is part of an oblique methodology of translation.

### Table 8. Analysis of Lyric 7

| Source Language Text | Target Language Text |
|---|---|
| Just a second, we are not broken. | Sedetik saja, kita tak hancur |

The data above indicate that the phrase "we are not broken" is translated as "kita tak hancur". In this expression, the writer does not mean that the body of the subject has broken; rather, it refers to the feeling of two individuals (a woman and a man) who have already broken. In this data analysis, the translator used a literal translation procedure to translate the source-language text. Therefore, this data can be categorized as a direct translation method.

### Table 9. Analysis of Lyric 8

| Source Language Text | Target Language Text |
|---|---|
| Just bent, we can learn to LOVE again | Hanya bengkok, kita bisa belajar mencinta lagi |

The expression above showed that the real meaning of the expression does not refer to something or a thing that becomes bent. However, if we correlate this with the previous lyric-"Just a second, we are not broken"-the expression becomes clear from its meaning. The expression indicates that their relationship is not fundamentally broken, but that there is still a chance to repair it. According to the data above, the translator employed a literal translation strategy. Therefore, the data constitute part of the direct translation method.

### Table 10. Analysis of Lyric 9

| Source Language Text | Target Language Text |
|---|---|
| It has been written in the scars on our hearts. | Telah tertulis pada luka-luka di hati kita |

In fact, a heart cannot be written on because it is inside our body, which is impossible to touch, so the expression above means that the feeling of a broken heart has remained in their heart. The translator employed a literal translation procedure. Moreover, the data can also be categorized as a direct translation method.

### Table 11. Analysis of Lyric 10

| Source Language Text | Target Language Text |
|---|---|
| Oh, oh, there is nothing more than empty sheets. | Oh oh, kini hanya ada **selimut hampa** |

The translator rendered the expression above through literal translation, which is also part of the direct method. The expression "empty sheets" (selimut hampa) denotes the loneliness felt by someone who usually sleeps with someone, but when that someone is gone, the sheets become empty.

### Table 12. Analysis of Lyric 11

| Source Language Text | Target Language Text |
|---|---|
| Oh, tear ducts and rust. | Oh air mata mengalir dan berkarat |

The expression above indicates that a lover may experience a range of emotions, such as being brokenhearted or regretful, in response to an unhappy situation. Despite this, the meaning of rust is a condition in which a bad feeling persists over a long period, which ultimately causes it to rust, or, in other words, a complicated feeling. In the data above, the translator employed a literal translation strategy, a direct method.

### Table 13. Analysis of Lyric 12

| Source Language Text | Target Language Text |
|---|---|
| **We are collecting dust.** | **Kita kan kumpulkan debu** |

The translator employs a literal procedure, translating words literally. The meaning of the expression is that the lovers try to build their relationship again by learning from their previous mistakes. Here, we observe that the data above are categorized as a direct translation method.

**Hyperbole**

Hyperbole is a form of metonymy or synecdoche in which more is said than the writer intended the reader to understand. The exaggeration is deliberately used for effect and is not to be understood as a literal description.

**Table 14. Analysis of Lyric 13**

| Source Language Text | Target Language Text |
|---|---|
| Right from the start, you were a thief | Sejak awal kau adalah pencuri |

The data above show that the phrase "you are a thief" is translated as "kau adalah pencuri". In this song, the lyrics are in a romantic genre; the word "thief" does not refer to a literal thief, such as a human being who takes something from others as part of a criminal act. As Larson explains, metonymy is a sequence in which the lexical item is associated with the primary sense. Therefore, we may say that *a thief is associated with someone who has made someone feel something*, e.g., falling in love. Despite this, "thief" is part of a deliberate exaggeration that affects its meaning. The data above indicate that the translator employed a literal translation, which is also part of a direct translation methodology.

**Table 15. Analysis of Lyric 14**

| Source Language Text | Target Language Text |
|---|---|
| You fixed them | Kau membuat semuanya jadi indah |

The data above indicate that it is hyperbole, in which the lexical fixed them is exaggerated; it could be translated simply as *memperbaikinya* rather than *membuat semuanya jadi indah.* The translator applied the modulation procedure, and it is part of the oblique method of translation.

In this discussion, it is the most important section of your article. Here, you have the opportunity to sell your data. Make the discussion correspond to the results, but do not reiterate them. It should often begin with a summary of the main scientific findings (not experimental results).

The following components should be covered in the discussion: (a) How do your results relate to the original question or objectives outlined in the Introduction section? What are your findings of the research? (what/how)? (b) Do you provide an interpretation scientifically for each of your results or findings presented? This scientific interpretation must be supported by valid analysis and characterization (why)? (c) Are your results consistent with what other investigators have reported (what else)? Or are there any differences? Comparing your results with those of other researchers is required.

## Conclusion

This study examined the translation of figurative meaning in the bilingual song lyrics "Just Give Me a Reason" and its Indonesian version, "Berilah Aku Satu Alasan." The findings demonstrate that various types of figurative expressions, such as metonymy, synecdoche, idioms, and hyperbole, are present in the source text and are rendered into the target language through both direct and oblique translation methods. Literal translation is frequently applied; however, modulation, transposition, and adaptation are also used to maintain naturalness and emotional nuance. These results confirm that translating song lyrics requires flexibility in balancing semantic accuracy and lyrical acceptability. The logical consequence for language and translation education is the need to emphasize figurative competence and contextual interpretation skills, particularly in literary and audiovisual translation courses, so that learners can make informed strategic decisions when handling figurative language across cultures.

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