

EFL Students` Strategies in Translating English Phrasal Verbs

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ABSTRACT - This research aims at investigating the mostly used strategies applied by six EFL students, in translating English Phrasal verbs into Indonesian. The research tries to serve its purpose by making use of several underlying strategies proposed by Mona Baker, namely similar meaning and form, dissimilar meaning and form, paraphrase and omission. The students were asked to translate political news from an English article containing a total of 9. Further, the retrospective interview was applied after they finished completing the text. It was found that the most used strategy was similar meaning and form, with paraphrasing standing on the second. The absence of other strategies indicated that the students could not come up with higher creativity in trying to produce natural meanings. This is different from Baker's concept stating they were four strategies found. The findings showed the existence of the strategies in translating idiomatic expressions could help the students translate the text and, therefore, these strategies need to be further emphasized to extend students` knowledge.

Keywords: *Strategies, translation, idioms, phrasal verbs*

INTRODUCTION

Language as a means of communication has been a significant part of the whole life of human beings. It is used to transfer every word uttered verbally, either in spoken or written forms. People have to convey their thoughts and views to others who live around them. In a certain context, they need to convey knowledge which requires language.

Such emerging facts show that how a language is uttered and developed depends on contextual

values, including moral and customs that one society brings about. English, as one of mostly learned and influential languages in this world has taken this central part in communication. It is necessary for us, as a member of international community, to capture its meanings precisely since in reality, a wide variety of information is shared in English in order to be spread internationally. As English has been widely used and spoken, there is a necessity to engage it in wider areas through translation works.

In his book *A Textbook of Translation*, Peter Newmark suggests the following thought:

As a means of communication, translation is used for multilingual notices, which have at last appeared increasingly conspicuously in public places; for instructions issued by exporting companies; for tourist publicity, where it is too often produced from the native into the 'foreign' language by natives as a matter of national pride; for official documents, such as treaties and contracts; for reports, papers, articles, correspondence? Textbooks to convey information, advice and recommendations for every branch of knowledge. (Newmark, 1988).

Translation could be understood as rather a scientific combination of the process of transforming one language to another. As more speakers discover breakthrough to the language, translation respectively creates rooms whose meanings deliver extended messages from one to another, which lead to the introduction of innovative patterns in linguistic components.

Translation does not give the exact thought of one's opinion. It should be seen as how shifting in translation may exist.

However, embarking on translation work is not like a piece of cake. A few years of intensive course in translation does not necessarily result in forming a professional translator. The problem is a translator should be forced to find a "Map" where he or she could work appropriately on translation as "In the context of The Map, 'Translation Studies' is defined as the field of study devoted to describing, analyzing and theorizing the processes, contexts and products of the act of translation as well as the (role of the) agents involved." (William & Chesterman, 2002)

In addition to paying attention to translation itself, a translator has to be concerned about some aspects in communicating the translated language. Two of those main parts are grammar and vocabulary. As he or she starts to focus on translation, it could be noticed that grammar is the basic foundation of a language and, hence, it is a must to learn it. Another component of processing a translation in a language is vocabulary having a huge variety of forms. It has many important aspects as well, yet the one that often appears in speaking is idiom. Idioms are present in all languages. They play as an important role of everyone's vocabulary and are used both in formal and informal languages. Idioms are mostly used to differentiate the shape of a language than the one which is common. We cannot help but be concerned with idioms that are all set in every other language. English, for instance, has developed so many interesting forms of word to analyze. Such a fact makes it challenging to know how meanings change as words are translated from English into other languages.

Forms of idiomatic expressions such as phrasal verbs are particularly made to be used as a unit of words, cannot be translated literally or word for word translation. Hence, they have characteristics to specify them among English words. This is explained in The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English which

reads that idiom is succession of words whose meaning must be learnt as a whole (1963, p.487).

The defined explanation goes along with the fact that English language learners find complexities in translating phrasal verbs. They, when translating from English into Indonesian, are less capable of giving the right, exact or even a closer equivalence for phrasal verbs. Since phrasal verbs are difficult to be comprehended from the context which set them apart from simple words, learners tend to translate them inappropriately. One possible explanation to this is that learners ignore the meaning of phrasal verbs in the source language i.e. English. In other words, EFL The learners are not able to know the meaning of phrasal verbs because of their insufficient practice.

There are a lot of critical texts require high level of translation which may include rendering the meanings of phrasal verbs, especially when put in article of a magazine or newspaper. Newspaper could have extensive use of phrasal verbs, and if improperly translated, there may significant influence to countries' relationship. The case of Japanese expression *Mokusatsu*, a word that we could very well translate as "no comment" nowadays, or "let me withhold comments for now" was translated as "let's ignore it" The translation error led to the drop of atomic bomb in Hiroshima 10 days later and straightly killed more than 70,000 people and some 100,000 as a result of the destruction and radiation.

Today's political news situation has been really influential in changing people's mind. This influence has been shared in various articles following the quick-paced transfer of information. In relation to this, however, the aim of an article does not necessarily change if the language changes. If a translated article is to fulfil its purpose, it is more important that the text is a good article than that it is an accurate documentation of what is said in the source text. This does not mean that the translator should alter the facts; rather, after the translation process itself the translator needs to edit the text to conform to the purpose of an article. Such a work may include things namely shortening

the story, making sure that the translated article is written in the target text style and that there are no statements that are unintentionally insulting or inappropriate in the target culture, especially English, the language which carries diverse interpretations and could contain ambiguity if not translated properly. An instant demand of news is increasing every day in the world and the aim of news translation is to make news articles available to the greater audience. Thus, one of the important areas of communicative translation is the translation of news article, especially the one written in English.

Combining all the facts stated beforehand indicates that learning phrasal verbs is somewhat difficult for EFL students studying English, even after years of university education. The lack of emphasis in applying proper strategies draw them from correctly comprehending the textual results, as what happens to the subject of this research, students of the faculty of letters at the Nasional University, especially those focusing on translation. Therefore, they sometimes avoid using this kind of idiomatic expression as there is the necessity to catch peculiar meaning of words in order. It takes serious consideration that they need to catch up more practices. Otherwise, the readers in TT will have hard time to render and understand the context of translation. That being said, this research is interested in broadening the extensive horizon of how EFL students use their most comfortable strategies in translating English news article into their local language, which is in this case, Indonesian.

This research made use the theories proposed by Mona Baker namely similar meaning and form, similar meaning and dissimilar form, paraphrase, and omission.

A. Using an idiom of similar meaning and form

By definition, Baker insists that this kind of translation strategy making use of an a fixed expression or idiom in target language so that it has the intended meaning which is the same meaning conveyed in source-language idiom, pertaining the presence of equivalent lexical items (2011:76).

B. Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form

Baker remarks that his thought related to this strategy is trying to find an idiom or fixed expression in the target language which has a meaning similar to that of the source idiom or expression, with the presence of different lexical items (2011:78). In this case, the translator uses an idiom in the TL which has the similar meaning as the SL idiom although the form is not similar.

C. Omission (Linguistic Compression)

In relation to idiomatic translation, the strategy called omission may be used to synthesize existing linguistic elements to be simpler because it is more understandable, which is also emphasized as linguistic compression (Molina & Albir, 2002, p. 509). This case could illustrated as as in the case of 'You must go away!', for instance, is translated into 'Pergilah!'

D. Translation by paraphrase

Paraphrasing, as Baker (2011:80) emphasizes, is the most possible way to translate idioms in the absent equivalent existing within the source and target language, especially when dealing with stylistic preferences of the two languages. By doing this, the translator is able to remake the translation into a more understandable context to the target language readers.

Now that the strategies are explained well from their basic understanding, it is clear that Baker has put distinguished insights of how idiomatic expressions are translated into several ways. The four strategies are used to identify the change in lexical items in the SL and their respective translated forms in the TL.

E. Definitions of Phrasal Verb

Before working on translating phrasal verbs, someone has to get what phrasal verbs are all about. A very experienced master of English Grammar, Azar, has come up a comprehensive understanding of phrasal verb stating that it is a combination of verb and preposition, joined together to deliver a certain meaning (Azar, 2009).

In line with the above definition, phrasal verbs can be understood as follows, they are also define as “basic verbs, which can combine with different preposition (or articles) to make verbs with completely new and often unguessable meaning” (McCarthy and O’Dell, 1996).

There are common types of phrasal verbs which provide different ways of use and understandings. Therefore, we should take a look at the following kinds of them stated by Hart in his book *The Ultimate Phrasal Verb* (1999).

a. Separable phrasal verbs

Separable phrasal verbs can be separated by their object. When the object is a noun, it is usually entirely optional whether the object is placed between the verb and the particle or placed after the particle. Both sentences below are correct:

I took my shoes off.

I took off my shoes.

However, when a pronoun is used instead of a noun, the pronoun must be placed between the verb and the particle:

I took them off.

I took off them.

But in one type of sentence, separable phrasal verbs must be separated — when the phrasal verb has two objects:

She put a blanket on.

She put on a blanket.

She put a blanket on the bed.

She put on a blanket the bed.

b. Nonseparable phrasal verbs

Non-separable phrasal verbs cannot be separated by their object as in the following instance:

He ran into a tree.

He ran a tree into

Thus, to sum up, a phrasal verb is derived from a combination of a verb and prepositions. It may be used in a separable form or non-separable one. The meaning will follow the forms and, therefore, could lead to confusion if not understood as a whole.

F. Translating News Article

Nowadays news articles might be said to be the basis of communication as they are the main source which delivers most up-to-date news on social life, culture, politics, etc. to the audience. The language of this type of media (news articles) is characterized by newspaper or journalistic style which is different from other styles both in writing strategies and functions.

While translation is very vital in transferring the message, the journalism itself has specific styles which aim to impose and legitimize valid representations of the social world. (Broersma: 2007). The constructions of new is vitally framed and the process of collection, picking up and publishing news could be primarily subjective. Therefore, it is considered central to learn and understand about idiomatic expressions, in this term, phrasal verb, while at the same time, render the correct meaning into the target language.

I. RESEARCH METHOD

As long as quality and validity of the research are concerned, it is can be noticed that one method of data collection is not, in nature, better than another. Therefore, which data collection method to apply shall depend upon the research goals and the strengths and weaknesses of each method. These have led the researcher to his consideration of using interview and observing the students` written translation towards the six selected participants who were in their final semester and on the pursuit of getting their degree. It was expected that, by applying this study to the more experienced students at their critical years of education, this research might have highest validiy.

The results of data gained are presented into tables for further visual observation of translation strategies the students used in their work. Each of the data has its own ways to perform insights which strategies of Baker`s the students could come up with, whether it was similar meaning and form, similar meaning and dissimilar form, paraphrase, or omission.

To clarify the strategies pointed in the research’s purpose, retrospective interview was included. Retrospective interview, by definition, is an “attempt to elicit the reason behind the response to the stimulus words after the test has been administered” (Wharton, 2010). This method functioned as well to confirm their personal preferences on how they rendered or translated the meaning of phrasal verbs found in the text for the data analysis.

II. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

There were estimatedly 9 data of phrasal verbs selected as a means to investigate the participants` applied translation strategies. The investigation was focused on the four strategies as written research method namely paraphrase, linguistic compression (omission), similar meaning and form and similar meaning but dissimilar form. The phrasal verbs have been broken into selected ones just so the ease of comprehending the meanings could help analyze the outcomes.

Table 3.1. First Data Example

Data I	Trump Lashes Out at Puerto Rico Mayor Who Criticized Storm Response	
Name	Result	Strategy
Participant 1	Donald Trump menyerang balik Walikota Puerto Rico yang mengkritisi metode penanggulangan badan Amerika	SMAF
Participant 2	Trump menyerang Puerto Rico yang dikritik keras	SMAF
Participant 3	Trump mencaci maki walikota Puerto Rico yang mengkritik respon badai	SMAF
Participant 4	Presiden Trump mencaci Walikota Puerto Rico yang mengkritik respon badai	SMAF

Participant 5	Trump marah kepada walikota Puerto Rico yang mengkritik laporan badai	SMAF
Participant 6	Trump memarahi walikota Puerto Rico karena metode penanggulangan bencana badai mengkritis	SMAF

The focus of the above sentence is **lash out**. As defined by Oxford Phrasal Verbs dictionary, the phrasal verb means to make a sudden violent on sb or to criticize somebody in angry way (2010:179). It can be observed that several students` have made appropriate translation. The words *menyerang* or *menyerang balik* have stronger sense when rendering the phrasal verb **lash out**. Although *memarahi*, *marah*, *mencaci maki* and *mencaci* are actually meant to say the same meaning, those words may not be suitable for the critical tension used in the context, especially in relation to Trump’s characteristics. Talking about strategies, the sentence is better translated using the similar meaning and form strategy as shown by all students since both source text and target text equally use interchangeable lexical unit and contextually equivalent meaning.

Table 3.1. Second Data Example

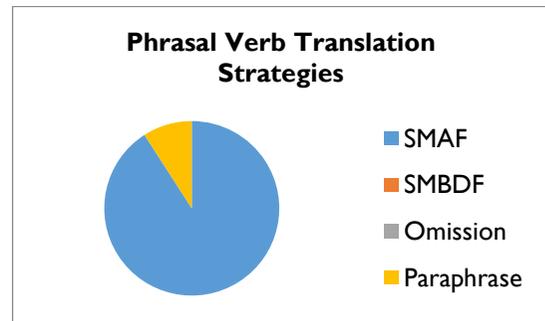
Data 2	..but in recent days he has stepped up his public statements and dispatched a three-star general to take over the response	
Name	Result	Strategy
Participant 1	tetapi dalam beberapa ini telah meningkatkan upaya pernyataan publiknya dan mengirim seorang letnan jenderal untuk mengambil alih upaya penanggulangan bencana tersebut	stepped up: Paraphrase Take over: SMAF

Participant 2	tapi dalam beberapa hari terakhir dia telah mengemukakan pernyataan publiknya dan mengirim jenderal bintang 3 nya untuk mengambil tanggung jawab	stepped up: Paraphrase Take over: SMDF
Participant 3	tapi dalam beberapa hari ini dia telah meningkatkan pernyataan publiknya dan mengirim jenderal bintang 3 untuk mengambil alih tanggapan tersebut	stepped up: SMAF Take over: SMAF
Participant 4	tetapi beberapa hari terakhir ia telah meningkatkan pernyataan public dan mengirim jenderal bintang 3 untuk mengatasi respon	stepped up: SMAF Take over: Paraphrase
Participant 5	tapi belakangan ini dia mengemukakan pernyataan public dan mengirim jenderal bintang 3 nya untuk mengambil alih	stepped up: Paraphrase Take over: SMAF
Participant 6	tapi dalam beberapa hari ia mengambil keputusan tentang pernyataan umum dan mengutus jenderal bintang 3 untuk mengambil alih tanggung jawab	stepped up: Omission Take over: SMAF

The analysis for the above case is an exception in this research as there are two phrasal verbs to be rendered in a sentence namely step up which means to boost, intensify or to increase something (p. 312), and take over whose meaning understood as taking responsibility from somebody else (p. 330). Nearly most of students have introduced the same translation strategy i.e. SMAF to perfect tense into *telah meningkatkan (pernyataan)*. Only some students carried out different interpretation by paraphrasing it into

mengemukakan pernyataan and using omission which resulted *mengambil keputusan*. Even so, their thought was clearly similar when translating **take over** into *mengambil alih* or *mengambil tanggung jawab* so as to add any variation

Table 3.3. Translation Strategies Percentage



According to the result gained in the analysis of the students' strategies, it can be seen that SMAF (similar meaning and form) was the most used strategy to render the SL' text into Indonesian. Some factors that carry out this result may come from the similarity of lexical items, the students' limited vocabulary and their motivation in doing it themselves.

As for the similarity of lexical items, the translation of a phrasal verb may be best translated the way it is in order to easily suit the context. The focus in transferring the meanings is all but very idiomatic. What it means by idiomatic is the translation has the fixed form in the source language that should also be equivalent to that in the target language. Occupying nearly 100% of the strategy used by the students, SMAF (similar meaning and form) was used effectively enough as to avoid misconception in the target text. It is very significant to note that the students have also arguably used the most suitable strategy to work on their best translation. Other strategies were not clearly apparent as the students did not consider them appropriate if applied in the target text.

The fact that only suiting the form into the target text has placed itself the most used way to render the idiomatic phrasal verb indicates that the majority of students lacked of compositions in their experiential learning. Even though the news article might have given a complicated form of text, their creativity was required to make the target language text less difficult for the audience to comprehend it. It might become boring for some reasons if the translation were supposed to follow what was written in the source text. Creating a fruitful writing as well as translating the context still becomes an issue for some students that it is still taking a lot consideration to let them do it with less guidance.

Table 3.4. Restrospective Interview Transcript Example

No.	Result
1.	<i>strategi saya dalam menerjemahkan phrasal verb nomor 1 dengan cara mencari persamaan dalam bahasa aslinya dan diterjemahkan sesuai dengan artinya</i>
2.	<i>strategi saya dalam menerjemahkan phrasal verb nomor 2 dengan cara tidak mengubah arti source dan result</i>
3.	<i>Pada phrasal verb data ketiga saya mengartikan step dub sebagai mengambil keputusan saya menggunakan internet untuk mencari makna yang lebih dekat dari kata step up, strategi saya dalam menerjemahkan phrasal verb ini, dengan cara mencari persamaan dalam bahasa aslinya</i>
4	<i>strategi saya dalam menerjemahkan phrasal verb nomor 4 dengan cara mencari persamaan dalam bahasa aslinya</i>

Following the in-depth result of the above retrospective interview strategies, the participant could mostly be notably described to have made use of equivalence of the source text into the target text. As long as the text was concerned, the student made up his/her mind to keep the structured form of the phrasal verbs in

order to suit the context where possible. Keeping the presence of their basic form could help the participants translate phrasal verbs easier, thus, made it easier for them to mind the original source sense into a readable translation result.

III. CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the data analysis and discussion, the followings are summarized as conclusions:

The first, the researcher concludes that in terms of translation strategy, similar meaning and form is mostly employed since this is the best way the participants could achieve when dealing with a news article. The pragmatism way of seeing the text may become the factor that limits variations to the students' translation. By means of looking up a phrasal verb in dictionary just the way it is, the mere source language is directly taken into the target language where the source language structure or the lexical item is also transferred literally. Based on the interview, it was also revealed that the less practices of certain strategies that could be the cause of these critics. They actually remarked the presence of learning strategies. However, the emphasis was mostly on theory only that did not even help in the steps.

The second, it can be concluded that diction and distinctive features of phrasal verbs are the culprits why they ended up losing some variations in transferring the source text meanings. The changes that are attached to the meanings might incur if they paid a little more attention in their grammar and source of readings. While distinctive features could be learned extensively, diction may need more work and time to be put as the effort of improving the students' translation competency. The limitation of variations can draw back their motivation and, thus, place them in very significant lack of encouragement to translate texts themselves.

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