

An Idiom Analysis in a Translated Lyrics of Demi Lovato's Songs

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Abstract: Songs and idioms are both unique since they are not easily understood. The songs have deep meaning as idioms that are not literally translated. This study analyzes two songs by Demi Lovato in the title “Fix a Heart” and “Heart Attack.” The aim of this research is to determine the classification of idioms from the lyrics of both songs. The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative because describing each idiom in detail is necessary, so it is easier and more precise to categorize its type of idioms. The theory that is used in this study is a theory of idioms by Chitra Fernando in her book “Idioms and Idiomaticity.” This theory was chosen because the writers consider this theory the most understandable, the most appropriate, and the easiest theory that can be perfectly applied to these songs’ lyrics. The study found 22 idioms from both songs, with seven idioms from “Fix a Heart” and 15 idioms from “Heart Attack.” From total of 22 data, 12 data are literal idioms (54,55%), 7 data are semi-idioms (31,82%), and 3 data are pure idioms (13,64%)..

Keywords: fix a heart; heart attack; idioms; song lyrics; theory of idioms;

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Talking about translation, we all know that it will never be able to be separated from language and culture. But, before talking about the relation between language and culture, we need to understand what is language and culture first. Language is an important method of human communication consisting of structured and conventional words conveyed through language, writing, or gestures (Oxford Dictionary). In the book *Culture Learning: The Fifth Dimension in the Language Classroom*, Louise Damen, the writer, wrote that culture is human patterns or models that they share together so that they can live as patterns in everyday life. These patterns and models cover all aspects of human social interaction. From these two definitions, we can conclude that to have interactions, humans can use communication as a way to interact with other humans. In those interactions, culture exists as the umbrella that covers all aspects of human social interaction, including communication. And to communicate, language is the tool to doing it. It does not necessarily to be the tool of talking.

Language is a wide definition. Signs used between humans that are understood by them could also be called a language, we often hear it named Sign Language. But most importantly, languages consist of culture in them. Language is used to express many things such as feelings, needs, beliefs, etc. Language also inherits tradition from the past and now we call it as culture. Hence, language is what makes us know about the other culture. Thus, showing how language and culture are related to each other. However, there are various languages and cultures and the diversity of it makes translation a very important aspect of the world. With translation, we can exchange and have

knowledge of other's culture. We do not have to learn their language to know their culture because translation is the effective way to answer this problem.

Translation is a process in which the meaning of a particular linguistic conversation is transferred from one language to another language. The act of transferring the substance of a text from the source language to the target language is known as translation (Foster, 1958). Source language (SL) is a language that we want to translate and the target language (TL) is the translated text. That is why as a translator, they must have a high-level understanding in both languages. Not only that, the translator must understand the cultural words, cultural norms and other cultural factors as well to have a proper translation and to make the readers understand the text.

Idiom, according to Cambridge University Press, is a fixed combination of words whose meaning is often difficult to guess from the meaning of each individual word. Meanwhile, a book named *A Reference to American English Idioms* said that an idiom is a group of words that contains different meanings than its individual words. So, to conclude it, idioms are an utterance or a group of words that when they stand together and they have specific meaning that is different from its individual word and sometimes it's hard to guess what it meant just from its individual word.

An entertainment that worldly known are uncountable, but most people would agree that song is one in common. Griffiee (1992) said that "the word song refers to pieces of music that have words, especially popular songs such as that one hears on the radio." According to Zakiyah (2019), song is one of so many resources that can be used for learning in language class that is very rich in culture and very captivating. As we all know, a song contains lyrics and to make its lyric fits with the music, most of the time the writer would use an idiom. The other function of idioms in song are to make the song itself more beautiful, easier to listen and it will be more meaningful.

The translation's products can be found not only in a literature texts like poems, poetry but also in a song lyric and in an idiom. Nowadays, idiom is not only used in communication but also used in various area, including song lyrics. A song lyric is a group of words that contain a short composition of music. According to Moeliono (Peny, 2003:678), lyrics have two meanings they are (1) literature works (Poem) that contain the writer's feelings, and (2) the arrangements of the songs. Meanwhile, O'Dell & McCarthy (2010:6) explained that idiom is an expression of the combination of words and cannot be translated word by word. They divided the idioms into eight types of idioms namely similes, binomials, trinomials, proverbs, euphemisms, cliché, fixed statements, and other languages.

Back again to the beginning, translation, language, and culture can't be separated. In other words, they are connected. Language and culture are like the two side of coins which is different, but they can't be separated. Why? Because language is a reflection of the culture and people's identity. This is proven by many phenomena or reality which shows the relation between language and culture. The relation can be transformation, interaction, etc. According to Koentjaraningrat (2015) as quoted by Abdul Chaer and Leonie on their book "Sociolinguistics", language is the part of culture too. So, the relation between language and culture is subordinative, where the language is located under the culture area. But there is other opinion which is said that language and culture have coordinative relation. What does it mean? It means that their relation is the same, or they have the same degree.

This research has some similarities and differences with the previous research titled *The Types of Idiom and Their Meaning in Maroon 5's Hands All Over Album* by Widiantara. The similarity of this research with Widiantara research is both of the researches analyzed the theory of meaning proposed by Leech (1974). Meanwhile, the differences between the two researches

first, this research also analyzed types of idiom proposed by Fernando and the characteristic of idiom proposed by Moon (1996 : 21). Second, both of the researches used different data in analyzing the research. The researchers chose this song to be analyzed because these two songs contain a lot of

idioms that never be researched before. Besides, many people are addicted to this song because of the lyrics and the melody that “fit” their feeling as well.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Definition of Idiom

As stated by Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, an idiom is a group of words whose meanings differ from the individual words' meanings. For example, if someone tells a secret by mistake, there is an idiom like “let the cat out of the bag”. According to the Cambridge Dictionary idiom is a set of words in a specific order that have different meanings from the meaning of the particular words. For example, the expression “bitten off more than one’s can chew” have a meaning that someone has attempted something too difficult for him.

Meanwhile, the definition of idiom according to Spears (2007 : 12), is a set of words or phrases that, when translated, have a different meaning from the original word. In addition, Moon (1998) defines idiom as a confusing phrase used in conflicting ways. “Idiom has mainly two meanings in general use. First, an idiom is a unique way of expressing anything in language, music, or art that distinguishes a person or a group; second, an idiom is a lexical collocation or phrasal lexeme that is unique to a language” (Moon, 1998).

2.2 Types of Idioms

According to the book *Idioms and Idiomaticity* by Fernando, idioms are divided into three sub-clauses.

1. Pure idioms

A pure idiom is a non-literal, conventionalized multiword expression whose meaning cannot be deduced by adding the meanings of the words that compose the phrase. For example, in “spill the tea,” the literal meaning in the idiom doesn’t contribute to the figurative meaning, which spills the tea actually means “reveal the secret.”

2. Semi-idioms

A semi-idiom is an idiom that at least has one literal meaning and one with a non-literal meaning. The example is catching one’s breath, which means rest before continuing an activity.

3. Literal idiom

A literal idiom is less complex than a pure idiom and semi-idiom because the literal idiom is easier to be understood. For example, catching someone’s eye has a meaning to something that is attractive.

2.3 Characteristics of Idiom

Refers to Moon (1996: 21), there are four classifications of idiom based on ‘the spectrum of idiomaticity.’ They are transparent idioms, semi-transparent idioms, semi-opaque idioms, and opaque idioms.

1. Transparent Idiom

Transparent idiom is an idiom that is easy to understand and easy to translate. The meaning of transparent idiom can be obtained from each part of the idiom. An example is “once in a blue moon.” This idiom is used to describe something that doesn’t happen often.

2. Semi-transparent Idiom

Semi-transparent idiom usually has metaphorical meaning and each part of the idiom have a little role in understanding the whole meaning of the idiom. An example of a semi-opaque idiom is the idiom “go down in flames,” that has a meaning to fail spectacularly or end suddenly.

3. Semi-opaque Idiom

A semi opaque-idiom is an idiom that has one literal meaning and one figurative meaning. For example, the idiom “take it with a pinch of salt” means take it easy.

4. Opaque Idiom

The literal meaning of opaque idiom is basically different with the actual meaning of the idiom. It is difficult to find the meaning of the idiom if translating the idiom literally. For example, “piece of cake.” This expression is used to say something that is incredibly easy to done.

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Data Source

The data for this study were taken from the bilingual lyrics of Demi Lovato’s songs. There were two songs that will be used for this study, Heart Attack and Fix a Heart. These two songs that contain some idioms were used as the data source.

3.2 Technique of Collecting Data

In this study, the data were collected using the documentation method. Documentation is a wide range of written material that can produce qualitative information. On the other hand, the documentation method is research conducted by documenting the data that related to the topic. According to SuharismiArikunto (2013) this technique is also able to collect data, such as notes, transcripts, newspapers, magazines, ancient inscription meeting notes, etc.

1. Transcribing

The first step in collecting the data for this study is transcribing. The writer should transcripts the song into lyrics to analyze. But in order to make the lyrics as precise as what the songwriter intended, the writer browsed the translated lyrics from internet, which can be accessed on <https://m.kapanlagi.com/lirik/artis/demi-lovato/heart-attack-dan-terjemahan/> and <https://www.liriklagu.id/terjemahan/demi-lovato-fix-a-heart/90942>

2. Reading

The next step is reading. After transcribing, the researcher read the lyrics to understand the whole contents of idioms.

3. Identifying

The researcher also identified the idioms while reading the lyrics. The steps were:

a. Underlining

This was the first step in identifying the data. The suspected idioms found in the lyrics were underlined. For example *The feelings got lost in my lungs*

b. Bracketing

It will be difficult to determine whether it consists of one or two suspected idioms if a group of underlined words go beyond in one line. So, the bracketing technique will be useful to separate one another. The suspected data will be clearly identified if it bracketing technique is used to separate them. For example *The feelings got (lost in my lungs)*.

3.2 Technique of Analyzing Data

The collected data were analyzed using the qualitative descriptive method based on the theories. The collected data were classified according to their types. Since the researcher worked in a group and the lyrics contain many kinds of idioms, the researcher had many theories for references. This paper used the theory from Fernando (1996) to categorize the collected data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

There are seven data found in the song “Fix a Heart” by Demi Lovato.

ST: And if I'm not the best, then you're stuck

TT: Dan jika aku bukan yang terbaik, maka **kau tak bisa kemana**

The literal meaning of the term is being trapped in something. “You’re stuck” in here means that the second person stuck in the condition that she/he couldn’t handle, not the real “stuck”. That term includes literal idioms. In addition, Fernando (1996) classifies idioms according to the book “Idioms and Idiomaticity.” One of them is literal idioms. Literal idioms are those idioms that are easy to comprehend and translate and their meaning can be derived from the meanings of their constituent parts. So, based on that theory, the terms are included into literal idioms.

ST: I try to sever ties and I,

TT: Kucoba **memutus ikatan** dan aku

Based on the context of this song, try to sever ties in here means that the person wants to end a relationship. That term includes into literal idioms. According to Fernando (1996: 35-36), literal idioms are groups of words with a meaning different from their literal definition. The literal meaning of the term “try to sever ties” is they try to separate the ties by cutting. Because the meaning of the term is different from their literal meaning, so the term is included into literal idioms.

ST: Ended up with wounds to bind

TT: Malah **terluka karena ikatan**

In the context of the song, wounds to bind in here isn’t physically can be seen but feel. It’s almost same with the literal meaning of it. Literal meaning of the term is there is a wound when we wrap or tie something to make it tight. According to Fernando (1996), idioms that usually have metaphorical meaning and their constituent parts have a little role in comprehending the whole meaning of the expression is semi-idioms. So, based on the theory, the terms are included into semi idioms

ST: Like you're pouring salt on my cuts.

TT: Seolah kau **menyiramkan garam pada lukaku**

Pouring salt on my cuts means that person makes something even harder for the speaker. This idiom is categorized as a literal idiom according to Fernando (2006 : R49) because it is understandable even if we don't familiar with the idiom. However, in the TT, it is not equivalent to using the word 'menyiramkan'. There is same idiom in TT to translate the idiom from the ST. So, the best equivalence for the idiom in ST is 'menabur garam di atas like.

ST: And I just out of ran band-aids

TT: Dan aku kehabisan **perban**

Band-aids here mean a quick solution to solve a problem for temporary, so running out of ban-aids means there is no a quick way to solve the problem. This idiom categorized as pure-idioms according to Fernando (2006 : R49) because the meaning of the idiom can't be understood if there is no words or context before the idiom. In the TT, band-aids have the same meaning as 'tambal sulam'.

ST: Cause you can bandage the damage

TT: Karena kau bisa **membalut luka**

As we know, bandage is used to cover some wounds. In this song, the singer wants to tell everyone about her relationship with her lover that had already been ruined. But she knows that the only way to help her feel better is with her lover. Therefore, she used a bandage to the damage. This idiom can be classified as a literal idiom according to Fernando (1996) because it is easy to comprehend and translate. Its meaning can be derived only from the meaning of its part.

ST: Swearing up and down

TT: **Bersumpah**

Swearing up and down, to understand it we need to know that up and down are two opposite directions, portray ways that the writer has been through. So, the literal meaning of "swearing up and down" is that the writer has been swearing or telling in every way possible to her lover. According to Fernando's theory of idioms, "swearing up and down" is considered a semi-idiom. Because it has metaphorical meaning, and part of "swearing" gives a clue about the meaning of the idioms so the listener of the song can understand it.

4.1 Heart Attack

In the song lyrics "Heart Attack" by Demi Lovato, there are 15 data found that contains idiom.

ST: You make me glow

TT: Kau **membuatku berbinar**

According to Fernando (1996), the sentence *you make me glow* is considered as semi-idiom since the term *you make me* in this idiom has its usual meaning, while the following word *glow* have the peculiar meaning to a particular sequence. *Glow* in here didn't mean that "me" is really can glow like glow in the dark, but it means that **the person is happy, especially with eyes that are shining because of someone** like what it said in the target language.

ST: But I cover up

TT: Tapi **kusembunyikan**

The term *cover-up* can be classified into literal idiom based on the theory of Fernando (1996) since it is understandable even if we don't familiar with the idiom. Based on Cambridge Dictionary, the idioms *cover-up* means **to keep something unpleasant or illegal secret or hidden**.

ST: The feelings got lost in my lungs

TT: Perasaan itu **hilang di paru-paruku**

According to fernando (1996) the phrase *lost in my lungs* is considered as literal idioms because the sentence has its usual meaning. As the researcher can take a look at the target text, the word *lost* means **unable to find one's way or not knowing one's whereabouts** (Oxford Languages).

ST: I take off and I run

TT: Aku **kan pergi** dan berlari

The phrase *take-off* was categorized in a literal idiom based on a theory of Fernando (1996) because it is understandable even if we don't familiar with the idiom. Based on the Cambridge Dictionary, *take-off* means **to suddenly leave somewhere, usually without telling anyone that you are going**.

ST: When you come around, I get paralyzed

TT: Saat kau **hadir**, aku linglung

According to Fernando (1996) the phrase *comes around* was categorized as a literal idiom because it has a literal meaning and it's understandable even if we don't familiar with the idiom. Based on the Cambridge Dictionary, *come around* means to become conscious again after an accident or medical operation, or in Indonesia, it means *hadir/mampir*.

ST: And I burst into flames

TT: **Dan aku kan terbakar**

Burst into flames' means to ignite all at once. This idiom is related with the previous lyric cause the speaker already flying too close to the sun which means she is too ambitious until she is greedy and it leads her burst into flames with her downfall. This idiom 'burst into flames' categorized as literal idiom according to Fernando (1996 : 35 – 36).

ST: If I ever did that, I think I'd have a heart attack

TT: Jika aku jatuh cinta, kurasa pastiku 'kan **jantungan**

Heart attack' here means the speaker will be very shocked. This idiom is categorized as a literal idiom according to Fernando (1996: 35 – 36). This idiom is easy to understand in the TT even if they don't familiar with the expression. The translator translated 'heart attack' into 'jantungan' in TT, which is equal with the term 'very shocked'.

ST: Never put my love out on the line

TT: Tak pernah **bahayakan** cintaku

'Out on the line' means behaving in a way that breaks the rules. In the lyric, 'never put my love out on the line' means the speaker never breaks the rules for her love so that she can have a harmonious love. This is categorized as semi-idioms according to Fernando (1996) because this idiom has metaphorical meaning:

ST: Never break a sweat for the other guys

TT: Tak pernah **keringatan** untuk pria lain

'Break a sweat' means sweating because using a lot of energy. So, 'never break a sweat for the other guys' in the lyrics means the speaker not even use her energy to deal with the other guys. This expression categorized as semi-idiom according to Fernando (1996 : 35 – 36) because the expression has one literal meaning and one with non-literal meaning.

ST: I'm flying too close to the sun

TT: **Aku** terbang terlalu dekat dengan mentari

The idiom 'flying too close to the sun' means to do something ambitiously and overly confident that can lead to downfall. This expression categorized as pure idioms according to Fernando (1996) because the literal meaning of part of the expression has little to do with the actual sense of idiom.

ST: They're burning, I'd rather be numb

TT: **Perasaan itu membakar**, lebih baik aku mati rasa

'They're burning' here means that the feeling of jealousy and hurt that the writer felt is burning them. According to Fernando (1996: 35-36), this idiom is categorized as literal idiom because it is easy to understand, easily translated, and the meaning can be pulled just from its words.

ST: It comes out wrong, like a cry for help

TT: **Yang tampak** malah seperti jeritan minta tolong

'Comes out' here is categorized as a literal idiom, according to Fernando (1996: 35- 36). The word comes out literally means exactly the same as from the dictionary. We can look at Cambridge Dictionary, for example. In Cambridge Dictionary, *come out* means appear or If something comes out, it becomes known publicly after it has been kept secret. In this song, the word *comes out*, picturing the appearance of what the writer is trying to do.

ST: 'Cause I don't wanna fall in love

TT: Karena ku tak ingin **jatuh cinta**

'Fall in love' is an idiom that widely and famously used by everyone. This idiom represents our feeling of romance towards someone that is very deep and real. According to Fernando (1996: 35-36), this idiom is categorized as a literal idiom, because it's easily understood, everyone knows it, and the dictions are the same as its whole meaning.

ST: I gasp for air

TT: **Aku megap-megap**

In this song, 'I gasp for air' describes how desperate and overwhelmed the writer is facing the problem she has with her lover. This idiom is categorized as **semi-idiom** according to Fernando (1996: 35-36), because it has one literal element which is the *gasp*, and one non literal element which is *air*. Air in here pictures the normal things and sane feelings that humans usually have when we are not suffering from problems such as love.

ST: Pain's more trouble than love is worth

TT: Lebih banyak memberi masalah daripada indahnya

This idiom is categorized as literal idioms according to Fernando (1996: 35-36). Because the meaning is easily understood and the dictions have a literal meaning. The writer wants to tell that in

her love life, she feels more hurt than joy

CONCLUSION

From this study, it can be concluded that from “Fix a Heart” song by Demi Lovato, seven data were found. Based on idioms theory by Fernando (1996: 35-36), 4 were categorized as literal idioms, 2 as semi-idioms, and 1 as pure idiom. 57,14% literal idioms, 28,57% semi-idiom, and 14,28% pure idiom. From song named “Heart Attack” by Demi Lovato, 15 data were found. 8 were literal idioms, 5 were semi-idioms, and 2 were pure idioms, with 53,34% literal idioms, 33,34% semi-idioms, and 13,34% pure idioms.

So, from 22 data that, in total, found in this study, literal idioms is the most commonly found, followed by semi-idioms, then pure idioms. Or 12 data are literal idioms (54,55%), 7 data were semi-idioms (31,82%), and 3 data were pure idioms (13,64%).

The translator of these lyrics has done a great job translating them. Every idiom was translated to the target language (Indonesian) without erasing its real meaning.

However, the translator failed to find the equivalent of some idioms in TT, such as *menabur garam pada luka* but the translator translated it to *menyiram garam pada luka*.

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