

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, background of the study, statement of research problems, objective of the researcher, significance of the research, and definition of key terms will be presented.

### **A. Background of the Research**

Language is a tool that is used to communicate and get to know each other. There are many languages in the world. Humans as God's creatures are given intelligence to create and learn languages. It is used to convey messages to others in oral or written way. It is obvious that every country has their own different languages, but English is the most used one in the world as the international language. English has become one of the most important aspects to master in order to survive nowadays. In this era of globalization, information development, and technology, language differences can be a problem for some people who do not understand other languages. It means we have to know how to translate well in order to be able to communicate in English properly. In this case, translation can be very helpful and important for people who have problems in understanding the other languages.

A person's ability to translate, very much requires knowledge of good methods and techniques. If a person does not understand the precise translation procedures, then the delivery of messages will often be misinterpreted.

Moreover, for some people who work as translators or who are educated in the translation department, if they do not have capable abilities, it will be very unfortunate if the message cannot be precisely received by the recipient of the other language. Students who are studying with a major in translation, of course, also need to know the basic methods and techniques of good translation procedures. They are not just having the ability to translate everyday conversation properly, but also the ability to translate various learning resources and media.

English as a language is an important means of written and oral communication for human which extends information and aim. Language is always developing and sometimes is difficult to understand. As a result, it should be analyzed and assessed by using various approaches to study. Linguistics is one approaches that can be used to analyze a language, because linguistics is not only studies about language but also things related to language itself.

Furthermore, some sentences in a language sometimes have various meanings depending on linguistic behavior of its users. In linguistic, semantic is often used in language to denote an understanding problem which appeared from connotation. Semantics the subfield of linguistics that studies the nature of the meaning of individual words, and the meaning of words grouped into phrases and sentences. Translating idioms has been a puzzling problem for many people. The most difficult problem people often face is understanding the meaning of connotation, such as an idiom.

Idioms might have a simple sentence but it is hard to be translated. Bortfield (2003, in Kostadinovska, 2018) has stated that idioms are unchanging phrases that imply something other than a literal interpretation of what their particular parts indicate. As an instance is in Indonesia we used to say "*Cinta Monyet*" when two young couple get along together and still immature to be wise in love, but in English it can be translated as "*puppy love*" instead of "*monkey love*" because idiom has its own certain terms in translating and it expresses an idea through an image.

Idiom is a group of words in fixed order that have a particular meaning that is different to the meaning of each word on its own. O'Dell and McCarthy (2010) defines that idioms are words or phrases whose meanings cannot be understood simply by looking at individual words. So, we cannot guess the meaning of a sentence by translating it word by word. We must pay attention to the context when idioms are used. Sometimes, it is difficult to get the true meaning of idiomatic expressions because it does not always mean what the words say. When learning English, understanding idioms is important because native speakers do not really use the basic level of English for communication. In other words, they often use idioms that are not easily understood by EFL students. For example, native speakers often say "*Don't cry over spilt milk*", instead of "*Don't regret what happened*" when having a conversation. That is why learning idioms is important for us as learners.

While Ammer (1997) mentioned that an idiom is a set phrase of two or more words that means something different from the literal meaning of the individual

words. Idioms are the Idiosyncrasies of a language. Often defying rules of logic, they pose a great difficulties for non-native speakers. As for example, the phrase *'on the house'* has nothing to do with a literal house but means *'it's free'*. Translating idiomatic expressions has been very problematic and difficult for many people, especially non-native speakers. Translation and idioms are interconnected, therefore, one needs to comprehend. Take this example, *"to hit the nail on the head"* usually has meaning that has nothing related with carpentry at all. It simply means *"to be perfectly right"*. Thus, this demands us to have a good translation skill in learning idioms. Another example is; *'to have bitten off more than you chew'* is an idiom that means you have tried to do something which is too difficult for you, *'John kicked the bucket'* means John died, and *'get rid of'* which means escape from.

Christine Ammer (1997) says that idiom can be found both in the written and spoken forms. Idioms can also be unrecognizable for non-native speakers, consequently they translate them literally. The meaning would be awkward and does not make any sense, thus making it far away from the intended meaning. Moreover the culture of both languages are different. Someone must comprehend translation and idiomatic expression because they are interconnected. Take an example, *"my hands are full"*, people tend to translate this idiomatic expression literally in Indonesian as *"tanganku penuh"*, but of course that is not the correct meaning.

Based on the idiom notions above, the researcher considers the issue of the idiom translation to be very important. Idioms exist in almost a variety of

products that people often encounter in life such as films, songs, books, novels, magazines, and newspapers. Based on various research results, even a lot of translators are wrong in interpreting the idiom. Therefore, researcher is interested in examining the translation ability of English students taking translation course at IAIN Tulungagung in interpreting idioms. While studying at IAIN Tulungagung, researcher have observed a little about the ability of English students who are still deemed less qualified, especially in terms of translation. Considering that the campus is a miniature of life in society, and because IAIN Tulungagung is the scope of learning in which researcher study, researcher will find it easier to conduct the research at IAIN Tulungagung.

The researcher then conducted a Preliminary Study for this research, requiring the dissemination of questionnaires about everyday simple idioms among translation students from class A to class C by taking a sample of 30 students. From the Preliminary Study, it is proven that only 17% from samples taken from translation students from class A to class C who understand Idiom translation.

Translation is a process of transferring a meaning from source language to target language (Newmark, 1984). In his book of *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and application* (2008) Munday stated: "The process of translation between two different written languages involves the translator changing an original written text (the source text or ST) in the original verbal language (the source language or SL) into a written text (the target text or TT) in a different verbal language (the target language or TL)". Susan Bassnet

(2002, p.12) proposed a definition of translation as the rendering of a source language (SL) text into the target language (TL) so as to ensure that (1) the surface meaning of the two will be approximately similar and (2) the structures of the SL will be preserved as closely as possible but not so closely that the TL structures will be seriously distorted. The main objective of translation is to deliver the message from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL).

Larson (1984) says there are two different types of translation, which are literal translation and idiomatic translation. Literal translation is form-based translation which attempt to follow the form of the source language. Idiomatic translation is meaning-based translation which make every effort to transfer the meaning of the source language text in the natural forms of the target language.

Roman Jakobson (1959), in his article "*On Linguistic Aspects of Translation*", distinguishes 3 types of translation: Intralingual translation, or rewording (an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs in the same language), Interlingual translation or translation proper (an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language), and Intersemiotic translation or transmutation (an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems).

In translating literary works, translator must be able to convey the context and the message of the work accurately and naturally. Translators must retell the story with diction and elaboration that is acceptable and understandable by the target readers. In sum, translators have to produce a good translation. Massoud (1988: 19-24) in Abdellah (2002) sets a set of criteria to determine

whether a translation is good or not. The criteria are as follows: (1) a good translation is easily understood; (2) a good translation is fluent and smooth; (3) a good translation is idiomatic; (4) a good translation conveys, to some extent, the literary subtleties of the original; (5) a good translation distinguishes between the metaphorical and the literal; (6) a good translation reconstructs the cultural/historical context of the original; (7) a good translation makes explicit what is implicit in abbreviations, and in allusions to sayings, songs, and nursery rhymes; (8) a good translation will convey, as much as possible, the meaning of the original text. Translators must strive to fulfill these criteria.

This clearly is not an easy task for translators. During translation process, translators may encounter many problems. Some theorists have created lists of translation problems. According to Ghazala (1995), these problems are involving: (1) phonological problems, which are concerned with sound and strictly found in literature and advertising translation; (2) grammatical problems, which are caused by different etymological origins; (3) stylistic problems, which are related to style and degree of formality and informality; (4) lexical problems, which are caused by misunderstanding or total ignorance of the word's meaning. These problems may be encountered when translating literal meaning, synonyms, polysemy and monosemy, collocations, proverbs, metaphors, technical terms, proper names and idioms.

Translators have the freedom to replace the words in source text with whatever words in target language they deem suitable. However, there is a possibility that the translators fail in conveying the real meaning of the words.

If this happens, the translation product will deliver incomparable meaning rendering. This situation is known as inaccuracy. Inaccuracy refers to the low correspondence between the translated and original text. If a translation is not accurate, readers will find difficulties in understanding the context of the text. The explanation above is the motive why the researcher conducts a research about translation, especially idiomatic expression and accuracy.

In some cases, some translators do not pay attention to the element of accuracy, while they tend to get stuck on the meaning in the dictionary and ignore the context. Annisa Kusumastuti (2019) in her research entitled “Subtitle Analysis of the Idiomatic Used Expressions in the Subtitles of *That Thing You Do!* Movie”, showed that the translator interpreting the idiom “*Eat my shorts, captain*” as “*Makan celanaku, Kapten*”. The translation was entirely wrong because the respond had nothing to do with shorts at all. “Eat my shorts” is a dismissal expression of one’s frustration with someone. Although it was more an “I-don’t-care” expression instead of anger or frustration, the translation was still wrong. The more accurate translation should be “*Terserah deh, pak*”. Therefore, the results of the translation become unnatural and difficult to understand. That affects the translation to be inaccurate. Newmark states that a translator must know the knowledge of textual criticism literally or non-literally, because they must assess the quality of the text before deciding how to interpret and then translate it. From this statement, it can be concluded that the translator needs to understand the literal and non-literal knowledge of the text.



In Indonesia, many popular fictions and literatures come from other countries. Books written in foreign languages, usually English, are deemed appealing. Literature is a group of works of art made up of words. Most are written, but some are passed on by word of mouth. Literature usually means works of poetry and prose that are especially well written. Wellek and Warren (1963: 22) state that literature is produced by imagination of the author. Literature is not just a document of facts, it is not just the collection of real events though it may happen in the real life. Literature can create its own world as a product of the unlimited imagination. Literary works are generated from an idea or a person's imagination into the most beautiful words and has some effects toward people's lives. Those effects are the form of things to please the people and be able to provide a new knowledge. A literary work also provide several depictions of life as desired by the author.

As a reader, the writer finds that there many forms or literature. They are prose, drama, and poetry. Prose is a flowing descriptive work that is not bound to certain elements, while poetry is a type of literature based on the interplay of words and rhythm. It often employs rhyme and meter (a set of rules governing the number and arrangement of syllables in each line). In poetry, words are strung together to form sounds, images, and ideas that might be too complex or abstract to describe directly. Poetry is the oldest form of literature. The world's great works that are monumental are written in poetic form, such *Oedipus*, *Antigone*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Lagaligo*, *Mahabharata*, and *Ramayana*. Beside

the extraordinary form of poetry, mostly it is also written as reflective work of daily life.

In this research, poetry becomes an object of the study. Poetry is one of literary works which sometimes apply an idiom in it; of course, each idiom that appears has a certain meaning. Paul Valery stated that poetry is an art based on language, but poetry has more general meaning that is difficult to define because it is less determine; poetry also expresses a certain state of mind. Meanings in poem are significant as Alexander (1975: 15) says: “it is one thing to gain pleasure from a poem and quite easy to be able to say why you liked it. Before you can say why you like a poem, it is first necessary to understand its meaning well”. Whatever the genre of the theme, poem always leaves a moral message to people that can absorbed easily.

The meaning can be distinguished based on several criteria and point of view. Based on the semantic, it can be distinguished into lexical and grammatical meaning. On the other hand, there are associative meaning, reflective meaning, and idiomatic meaning. Moreover, the meaning of idiom can be defined lexically and contextually. In short, the meaning of idiom can be understood contextually because some idioms have various meanings depend on the context.

There have been a few previous studies conducted on idiomatic expression analysis, which is closely related with this research paper as references. The first is the thesis conducted by Siti Maimunah with the title “AN ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL AND CONTEXTUAL MEANING ON THE IDIOMATIC

EXPRESSIONS FOUND IN *JALALLUDDIN RUMI'S* POEM". The result showed that there are forty six kinds of idiomatic expressions with their lexical and contextual meaning used in *Jalalluddin Rumi's* poems from ten data which are presented in this study. The writer found that most of contextual meaning of idiomatic expressions has the same meaning with lexically. The misinterpretation in translating idiomatic expression is the use of literal translation procedure to translate idiomatic expression because the translator probably does not understand about the idiomatic expressions and its meaning in the context. The second one is conducted by Muhammad Jaidie, entitled "THE ABILITY OF TRANSLATION STUDENTS IN TRANSLATING A DESCRIPTIVE ENGLISH TEXT INTO INDONESIAN". His research was about the ability of translation students at Malang Muhammadiyah University in translating text. It showed that the ability of eighth semester students of academic year 2008/2009 who joined Translation III at English Department of University of Muhammadiyah Malang was poor in translating the descriptive English text into Indonesian with the average score 43.7. According to Machali (2002) in her assessment criteria, the score 43.7 was included in the poor ability in the translation.

This study particularly focuses on analyzing the translation ability of students taking Translation Course in interpreting and translating idiomatic expressions are used in poetry. In this case, the poetry that would be analyzed is the task of translating poetry given by the lecturer in the Literary Text

Translation course. Based on that explanation above, poetry becomes an object of the study.

From the result of preliminary study that has been mentioned, there are only 17% of random samples taken from various translation students at IAIN Tulungagung. The purpose of this research is to analyze students' ability about idiom translation and what causes their misinterpretations in translating. Thus demanding them to have a good skill in translation which they can interpret and convey the message of the language that is translated properly and correctly. The researcher will conduct the research that involving a few of Translation Students in IAIN Tulungagung. Due to the reason above, this study is very important and interesting to be conducted. Therefore, the study entitled "*An Analysis of Students' Ability in Translating Idiomatic Expressions Found in Poetry*" will be conducted.

## **B. Statement of Research Problems**

Based on the background of the study above, the research problems of the study can be formulated as follows:

1. How is students' ability in translating some idioms in Poetry?
2. What are their translation strategies in translating idioms?
3. Are there any misinterpretations among Translation Students in translating some idioms found in poetry? And if there is any, what makes it and why?

### **C. Objectives of the Research**

Based on the research problems above, it can be known that the objectives of the study are:

1. To know the students' ability in translating some idioms in Poetry.
2. To know the translation strategies that are used by the students in translating Idioms.
3. To know what causes misinterpretations that happen among the Translation Students in translating some idioms found in poetry.

### **D. Significance of the Research**

The results of this study are expected to be useful for readers, institutions and students who are interested in English education. This result is expected to be useful for English language students, especially those who take specialization in the field of "Translation" as a reference in their learning process, so that they will have additional expertise in translating some kinds of literary works.

1. For the writers

It is hoped that the results of this study can contribute to increase knowledge in translating idioms.

2. For the readers

The results of this study is expected to be the starting point for those who would like to do literary text translation so that they can provide correct translation of idiomatic expressions.

### 3. For the future researchers

The results of this study can be used as a reference and information for further research related to translation of idiomatic expressions.

## **E. Scope and Limitation of the Research**

To avoid misunderstanding upon what the researcher explained, the researcher limits the scope of the study in order to make it more detail and focus. The scope of this research is to find out the quality of students' translation in translating Idioms and what makes them difficult in translating Idioms.

The study that is conducted in this research is limited only in the area of translation of idiomatic expression found in poetry which are the weekly task in the Literary Text Translation course that were given by the lecturer.

## **F. Definition of Key Terms**

In order to avoid different perception about key terms which will be the focus of this research, so giving definition for each key terms is needed.

### 1. Translation Ability

Translation ability is the ability in rendering the message from the source language into the good, right and acceptable target language.

### 2. Idiomatic Expression

The idiomatic expression is a combination of words that cannot be interpreted word by word because the idiom has a special meaning.

Idiomatic expressions are a type of informal language that have a meaning.

### 3. Source Language

Source language is the language that is to be translated. An example of a source language is English when it needs to be translated into Indonesian.

### 4. Target Language

Target language is the destination language in which the source language will be translated into.

### 5. Poetry

Poetry is any kind of verbal or written language that is structured rhythmically and is meant to tell a story, or express any kind of emotion, idea, or state of being. Poetry is used to achieve this artistic expression in several ways. There are certain forms and patterns that poets follow in the composition process of their work. These different forms were birthed out of separate artistic and cultural movements. Most of these forms coincide with the previously mentioned definition of poetry; and, the most popular of these forms are elegy, narrative, ode, ballad, sonnet, villanelle, sestina, free verse, and epic.