



# Idiom Analysis in the Indonesian Subtitles of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002) and *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004)

Akhdanil Ghifari<sup>1</sup>, Agus Salim Mansyur<sup>2</sup>, Andang Saehu<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung

Article Info	Abstract
<p><b>Received:</b> 2026-05-26 <b>Revised:</b> 2026-06-08 <b>Accepted:</b> 2026-06-16</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> audiovisual translation; English–Indonesian; Harry Potter; idiom analysis; subtitle translation</p> <p><b>DOI:</b> 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.10835</p> <p><b>Corresponding Author:</b> Akhdanil Ghifari <a href="mailto:akhdanilmasoem@gmail.com">akhdanilmasoem@gmail.com</a> Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung</p>	<p><i>Idiomatic expressions represent one of the most complex challenges in audiovisual translation due to their culture-specific nature and resistance to literal rendering. Fantasy films such as the Harry Potter series are particularly rich sources of idiomatic language, as they draw extensively on British cultural conventions and figurative expressions deeply embedded in the source culture. Despite growing scholarly interest in subtitle translation, studies focusing on idiomatic expressions in fantasy film subtitles within the English–Indonesian language pair remain limited. This study analyzes the types of idiomatic expressions and the translation strategies employed in the Indonesian subtitles of <i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i> (2002) and <i>Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban</i> (2004) using Baker's (2011) framework through a descriptive qualitative method applied to twelve purposively selected idiomatic expressions. The findings reveal that pure idioms constitute the largest category (50%), followed by figurative idioms (33.3%) and semi-idioms (16.7%), with translation by paraphrase emerging as the dominant strategy (66.7%), followed by using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form (25%), and translation by cultural substitution (8.3%). This study concludes that non-literal and adaptive translation strategies are essential in conveying idiomatic meaning effectively for Indonesian audiences, contributing practical insights for subtitle translators and researchers working with English-language fantasy films.</i></p>

## 1. Introduction

Audiovisual translation (AVT) has emerged as one of the most dynamic fields in contemporary translation studies, driven by the global expansion of film, television, and digital media across linguistic and cultural boundaries (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2007; Chaume, 2020). The increasing accessibility of foreign-language content through streaming platforms has significantly intensified the demand for high-quality subtitle translation across diverse language pairs (Baños & Díaz-Cintas, 2024; Pedersen, 2020). Among the various modes of AVT, subtitle translation occupies a particularly significant role, involving complex interactions between language, culture, visual context, and temporal constraints that collectively make it one of the most challenging forms of translation practice (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2021; Gottlieb, 1992).

Among the many challenges in subtitle translation, idiomatic expressions represent one of the most complex elements for translators to handle. Idioms are conventionalized expressions whose meanings cannot be derived from the literal interpretation of their individual components, deeply embedded in the cultural and historical context of the source language (Baker, 2011; Fernando, 1996).

Gibbs (2020) asserts that figurative thought and language are fundamental to human cognition, while McCarthy and O'Dell (2010) note that English idioms are among the most culturally specific features of the language. Yet idiomatic expressions also present translators with opportunities for creative problem-solving and dynamic target-language adaptation, as translators must navigate the tension between source-cultural fidelity and target-language naturalness in ways that reflect genuine linguistic and cultural expertise (Venuti, 1995; Shuttleworth & Cowie, 2014).

Previous research has consistently demonstrated that idiomatic expressions pose significant challenges in subtitle translation across a range of linguistic and cultural contexts. Pratama and Nababan (2020) found that translation quality of idioms in film subtitles is frequently compromised by temporal and spatial constraints, while Sari and Putri (2021) identified paraphrase as the dominant strategy in English–Indonesian idiomatic subtitle translation. Hidayat and Nugroho (2022) demonstrated significant variation in strategy selection across different idiomatic contexts, and Kusumawardhani and Santosa (2022) highlight meaning preservation as the central concern in idiomatic translation.

Sutopo and Hartono (2021) found that meaning shift frequently results from idiomatic translation in subtitle contexts, while Rahman and Yuliasri (2024) further demonstrate that subtitle translation significantly affects viewer comprehension of figurative language. Yuliasri and Hartono (2023) additionally emphasize that readability and acceptability are essential evaluative criteria for idiomatic translation in audiovisual texts.

The translation of idiomatic expressions from English into Indonesian is particularly challenging due to substantial differences in grammatical structure, lexical system, and cultural background between the two languages (Larson, 1998;

Newmark, 1988; Nida & Taber, 1982). Baker (2011) proposes the most widely cited framework for analyzing idioms in translation, classifying them into pure idioms, semi-idioms, and figurative idioms, and identifying five primary translation strategies. Despite this growing body of research, studies focusing specifically on idiomatic translation in fantasy film subtitles within the English–Indonesian language pair remain limited, indicating a significant gap in the existing literature (Hidayat & Nugroho, 2022; Pratama & Nababan, 2020).

Fantasy films such as the Harry Potter series are especially underexplored in this regard, despite being particularly rich sources of British cultural idioms that present distinctive translational challenges not commonly encountered in other film genres (Fernando, 1996; Langlotz, 2006).

This study therefore aims to address two primary research questions: (1) What types of idiomatic expressions are found in the Indonesian subtitles of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002) and *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004), classified according to Baker's (2011) framework? and (2) What translation strategies are employed in rendering these expressions into Indonesian? The novelty of this study lies in its focus on fantasy film subtitles as an underexplored genre in English–Indonesian translation studies, providing comparative analysis across two films with distinct directorial styles within the same fictional universe, and contributing empirical evidence on how translators exercise creative agency in navigating the cultural and linguistic distance between British English and Indonesian.

## 2. Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design, which is appropriate because the primary objective is to describe, classify, and interpret translation phenomena rather than to measure them statistically (Creswell, 2014). This methodological orientation is consistent with the broader tradition of qualitative research in translation studies, grounded in the theoretical frameworks of Baker (2011), Newmark (1988), and Venuti (1995).

The data consist of idiomatic expressions in English and their corresponding Indonesian subtitle translations selected from two films: *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002), directed by Chris Columbus, and *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004), directed by Alfonso Cuarón. Both films were selected because the Harry Potter series is renowned for its extensive use of British English idioms deeply embedded in British cultural conventions (Baker, 2011; Fernando, 1996), and the selection of two consecutive films from the same series provides a valuable comparative dimension for examining whether translation strategies differ across films with distinct directorial styles (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2021).

Furthermore, the English–Indonesian language pair presents significant translational challenges due to substantial differences in grammatical structure, lexical system, and cultural background (Larson, 1998; Newmark, 1988), while

fantasy films remain an underexplored genre in English–Indonesian subtitle translation studies despite their rich idiomatic content (Hidayat & Nugroho, 2022; Pratama & Nababan, 2020). The subtitles analyzed in this study are the official Indonesian subtitles released alongside the films, ensuring that the data reflect professionally produced translation decisions rather than fan-made or crowd-sourced renderings.

Data collection was conducted by watching both films systematically in their entirety, with idiomatic expressions identified based on Baker's (2011) definition of idioms as conventionalized expressions whose meanings cannot be derived from literal interpretation, complemented by the criteria of Fernando (1996) and Langlotz (2006). Operationally, an expression was classified as a pure idiom when its meaning is entirely non-compositional and bears no transparent relationship to its constituent words; as a semi-idiom when at least one component retains its literal meaning while the overall expression carries an extended figurative sense; and as a figurative idiom when the metaphorical dimension retains sufficient surface transparency to allow partial interpretation, yet the expression remains conventionalized enough to preclude accurate literal translation (Baker, 2011; Fernando, 1996).

Each expression was recorded with its timestamp, source text, and target text. A purposive selection process then determined the final twelve data items, a sample size consistent with the depth-oriented nature of qualitative idiom analysis in translation studies (Creswell, 2014; Sari & Putri, 2021), based on three criteria: (1) the expression must qualify as idiomatic according to Baker's (2011) framework; (2) it must present a clear case of a specific translation strategy; and (3) the data must collectively represent a variety of idiom types and strategies across both films.

Data analysis followed three sequential steps. First, each expression was classified according to Baker's (2011) idiom typology — pure idioms, semi-idioms, and figurative idioms — informed by Fernando (1996), Gibbs (2020), and Langlotz (2006). Second, the translation strategy applied to each expression was identified by comparing source and target texts against Baker's (2011) five strategies, with additional theoretical grounding from Newmark (1988), Larson (1998), and Venuti (1995). Third, the classified data were interpreted in relation to multimodal factors — including visual context, character expression, and temporal constraints — that may have influenced translation decisions (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2021; Pedersen, 2020).

To ensure coding reliability, the classification of idiom types and translation strategies was verified through peer discussion with two fellow researchers trained in translation studies, with any disagreements resolved through deliberation and cross-reference to the theoretical frameworks until consensus was reached (Creswell, 2014).

### 3. Result

This section presents the findings of the analysis of idiomatic expressions and their translation strategies identified in the Indonesian subtitles of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (2002)* and *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (2004)*. A total of twelve idiomatic expressions were selected and analyzed across both films, classified according to Baker's (2011) typological framework into pure idioms, semi-idioms, and figurative idioms, and examined in relation to five translation strategies proposed by Baker (2011).

#### *Idiom Analysis in Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (2002)*

The first six data items are drawn from *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (2002)*. The analysis reveals a predominance of pure idioms and figurative idioms, with translation by paraphrase emerging as the dominant strategy.

**Data 1: "Now you've done it."**

**Timestamp:** 00:01:25

**English:** "Now you've done it."

**Indonesian:** "Tuh kan.."

**Idiom Type:** Pure idiom

**Translation Strategy:** Translation by paraphrase



Figure 1. "Now You've Done It" / "Tuh kan.." (00:01:25)

**Data 2: "Doesn't miss a trick, that man."**

**Timestamp:** 00:13:52

**English:** "Doesn't miss a trick, that man."

**Indonesian:** "Orang itu selalu tahu."

**Idiom Type:** Pure idiom

**Translation Strategy:** Translation by paraphrase



Figure 2. "Doesn't Miss a Trick, That Man" / "Orang itu selalu tahu." (00:13:52)

**Data 3: "You're a mess" and "Dodgy place."**

**Timestamp:** 00:17:01

**English:** "You're a mess, Harry. Skulking around Knockturn Alley? Dodgy place."

**Indonesian:** "Kacau kamu, Harry. Ngapain masuk-masuk ke Knockturn Alley? Itu tempat kotor."

**Idiom Type:** Semi-idiom

**Translation Strategy:** Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form



Figure 3. "You're a Mess" and "Dodgy Place" / "Kacau Kamu" dan "Itu Tempat Kotor"  
(00:13:52)

**Data 4: "And I thought your family could sink no lower."**

**Timestamp:** 00:21:56

**English:** "And I thought your family could sink no lower."

**Indonesian:** "Aku pikir keluargamu tidak bisa lebih rendah lagi derajatnya."

**Idiom Type:** Figurative idiom

**Translation Strategy:** Translation by paraphrase



Figure 4. "Sink No Lower" / "lebih rendah lagi derajatnya" (00:21:56)

**Data 5: "Fame is a fickle friend, Harry. Celebrity is as celebrity does."**

**Timestamp:** 00:41:47

**English:** "Fame is a fickle friend, Harry. Celebrity is as celebrity does."

**Indonesian:** "Ketenaran tidak abadi, Harry. Orang jadi selebriti karena yang dilakukan."

**Idiom Type:** Figurative idiom

**Translation Strategy:** Translation by paraphrase

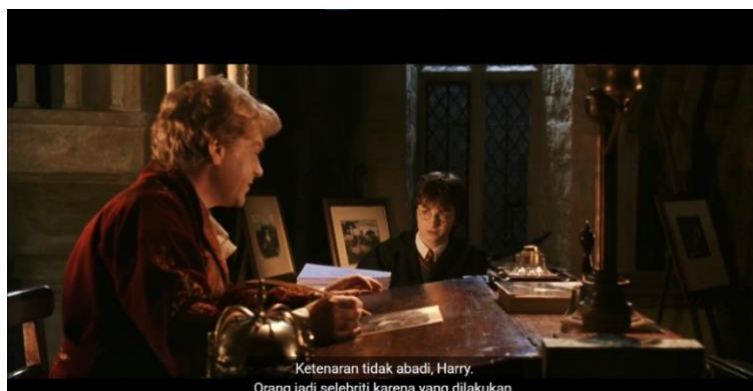


Figure 5. "Fame is a Fickle Friend" / "Ketenaran tidak abadi" (00:41:47)

**Data 6: "Bee in your bonnet, Potter?"**

**Timestamp:** 01:14:26

**English:** "Bee in your bonnet, Potter?"

**Indonesian:** "Ada yang kamu pikirkan, Potter?"

**Idiom Type:** Pure idiom

**Translation Strategy:** Translation by paraphrase



Figure 6. "Bee in Your Bonnet, Potter?" / "Ada yang kamu pikirkan, Potter?" (01:14:26)

*Idiom Analysis in Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (2004)*

The following six data items are drawn from Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (2004). The analysis reveals a comparable distribution of idiom types to the first film, while introducing greater strategic variety, most notably through the appearance of translation by cultural substitution.

**Data 7: "Bad blood will out."**

**Timestamp:** 00:03:31

**English:** "It's all to do with blood. Bad blood will out."

**Indonesian:** "Ini semua tentang darah. Darah yang buruk akan ketahuan."

**Idiom Type:** Figurative idiom

**Translation Strategy:** Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form



Figure 7. "Bad Blood Will Out" / "Darah yang buruk akan ketahuan." (00:03:31)

**Data 8: "Let's not wait for the grass to grow."**

**Timestamp:** 00:08:52

**English:** "Let's not wait for the grass to grow."

**Indonesian:** "Mari jangan membuang-buang waktu."

**Idiom Type:** Pure idiom

**Translation Strategy:** Translation by paraphrase



*Figure 8. "Let's Not Wait for the Grass to Grow" / "Mari jangan membuang-buang waktu."  
(00:08:52)*

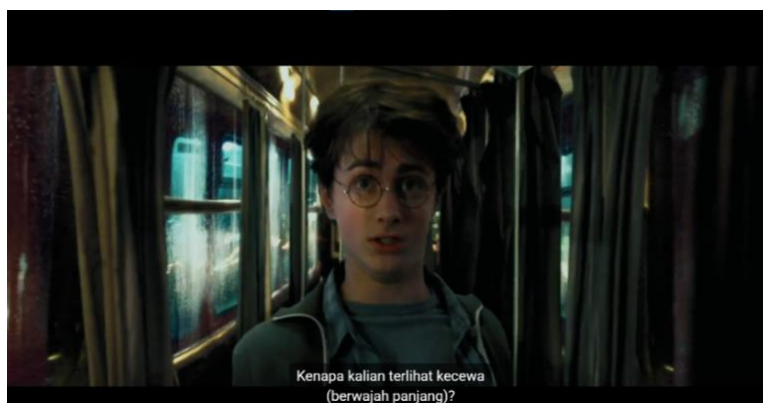
**Data 9: "Why the long faces?"**

**Timestamp:** 00:12:04 English: "Why the long faces?"

**Indonesian:** "Kenapa kalian terlihat kecewa (berwajah panjang)?"

**Idiom Type:** Semi-idiom

**Translation Strategy:** Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form



*Figure 9. "Why the Long Faces?" / "Kenapa kalian terlihat kecewa (berwajah panjang)?"  
(00:12:04)*

**Data 10: "What a load of rubbish."**

**Timestamp:** 00:29:55

**English:** "What a load of rubbish."

**Indonesian:** "Benar-benar omong kosong."

**Idiom Type:** Pure idiom

**Translation Strategy:** Translation by cultural substitution

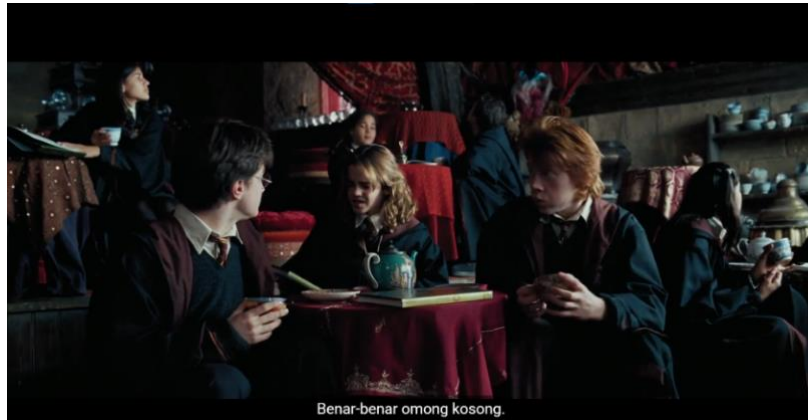


Figure 10. "What a Load of Rubbish" / "benar-benar omong kosong." (00:29:55)

**Data 11: "God, this place has gone to the dogs."**

**Timestamp:** 00:32:46

**English:** "Witty. God, this place has gone to the dogs."

**Indonesian:** "Bagus sekali. Ya, Tuhan, tempat ini benar-benar kacau."

**Idiom Type:** Pure idiom

**Translation Strategy:** Translation by paraphrase

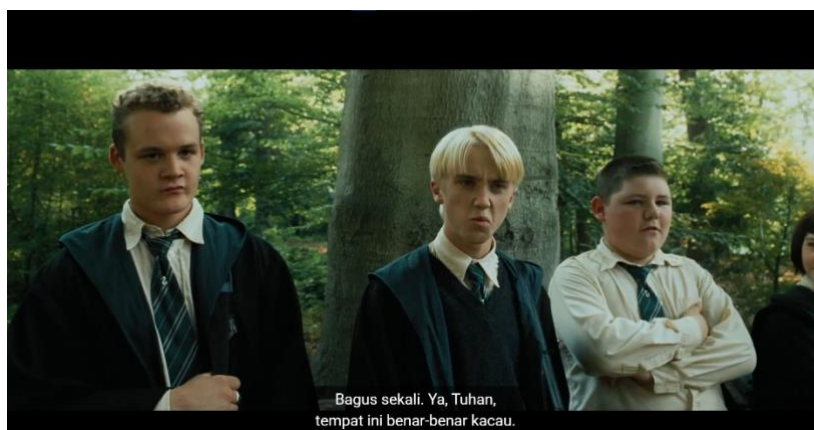


Figure 11. "Gone to the Dogs" / "Benar-benar kacau." (00:32:46)

**Data 12: "He's really laying it on thick, isn't he?"**

**Timestamp:** 00:39:14

**English:** "He's really laying it on thick, isn't he?"

**Indonesian:** "Dia sungguh membesar-besarkan masalah itu, bukan?"

**Idiom Type:** Figurative idiom

**Translation Strategy:** Translation by paraphrase



Figure 12. "Laying it on Thick" / "Membesar-besarkan" (00:39:14)

*Summary of Findings*

The analysis of twelve idiomatic expressions across both films reveals several significant patterns. Pure idioms constitute the largest category with six instances (50%), followed by figurative idioms with four instances (33.3%) and semi-idioms with two instances (16.7%). In terms of translation strategies, translation by paraphrase is overwhelmingly dominant, applied in eight out of twelve data items (66.7%), followed by using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form in three instances (25%), and translation by cultural substitution in one instance (8.3%).

These patterns collectively suggest that the cultural and linguistic distance between British English and Indonesian plays a decisive role in shaping translator decision-making, with communicative clarity consistently prioritized over figurative fidelity. Table 1 provides a complete overview of the classified data.

Table 1. Summary of Idiom Types and Translation Strategies in the Indonesian Subtitles of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (2002)* and *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (2004)*

No	Film	Timestamp	English Idiom	Indonesian Translation	Idiom Type	Translation Strategy
1	CoS	00:01:25	Now you've done it	Tuh kan..	Pure idiom	Translation by paraphrase
2	CoS	00:13:52	Doesn't miss a trick	Orang itu selalu tahu	Pure idiom	Translation by paraphrase

3	CoS	00:17:01	You're a mess / Dodgy place	Kacau kamu / Tempat kotor	Semi-idiom	Similar meaning, dissimilar form
4	CoS	00:21:56	Sink no lower	Tidak bisa lebih rendah lagi	Figurative idiom	Translation by paraphrase
5	CoS	00:41:47	Fame is a fickle friend	Ketenaran tidak abadi	Figurative idiom	Translation by paraphrase
6	CoS	01:14:26	Bee in your bonnet	Ada yang kamu pikirkan	Pure idiom	Translation by paraphrase
7	PoA	00:03:31	Bad blood will out	Darah yang buruk akan ketahuan	Figurative idiom	Similar meaning, dissimilar form
8	PoA	00:08:52	Wait for the grass to grow	Jangan membuang-buang waktu	Pure idiom	Translation by paraphrase
9	PoA	00:12:04	Why the long faces	Kenapa terlihat kecewa	Semi-idiom	Similar meaning, dissimilar form
10	PoA	00:29:55	What a load of rubbish	Benar-benar omong kosong	Pure idiom	Translation by cultural substitution
11	PoA	00:32:46	Gone to the dogs	Tempat ini benar-benar kacau	Pure idiom	Translation by paraphrase
12	PoA	00:39:14	Laying it on thick	Membesar-besarkan masalah	Figurative idiom	Translation by paraphrase

#### 4. Discussion

This section discusses the findings of the analysis in relation to the theoretical frameworks of Baker (2011), Fernando (1996), Gibbs (2020), Newmark (1988), Larson (1998), Nida and Taber (1982), and Venuti (1995), addressing the two research questions concerning idiom types and translation strategies identified in the Indonesian subtitles of both films.

*Idiom Types in the Indonesian Subtitles of Both Films*  
*Pure Idioms*

Pure idioms constitute the largest category in the dataset, with six instances across both films. Baker (2011) defines pure idioms as expressions whose communicative meaning is entirely opaque and cannot be derived from the literal interpretation of their components, making them the most translationally challenging category. This is consistently reflected in the data, as all six pure idiom instances required either translation by paraphrase or translation by cultural substitution, with no instance of direct or structural equivalence being achievable.

Data 1 ("Now you've done it") and Data 6 ("Bee in your bonnet, Potter?") exemplify the complete cultural opacity characteristic of pure idioms, as their literal translations would produce entirely meaningless or misleading results for Indonesian audiences (Newmark, 1988; Lestari & Hartono, 2023). Similarly, Data 8 ("Let's not wait for the grass to grow") and Data 11 ("Gone to the dogs") draw on culturally specific British imagery — the slow growth of grass and the deterioration associated with canine abandonment — that carries no equivalent resonance in Indonesian linguistic culture (Langlotz, 2006; McCarthy & O'Dell, 2010).

The stylistic loss in these cases is considerable: the translator's necessary reliance on paraphrase strips away not only the cultural imagery but also the expressive register and connotative richness of the original expressions, producing target texts that are communicatively adequate but stylistically impoverished relative to the source (Venuti, 1995; Newmark, 1988). Data 10 ("What a load of rubbish") represents the sole instance of translation by cultural substitution in the entire dataset, wherein the translator successfully identifies a genuine Indonesian idiomatic equivalent — "omong kosong" — that achieves a comparable communicative effect while preserving a degree of expressive naturalness absent in paraphrased renderings, representing the highest degree of dynamic equivalence possible in idiomatic translation (Nida & Taber, 1982; Baker, 2011).

*Semi-Idioms*

Semi-idioms constitute the smallest category in the dataset, with two instances. Baker (2011) defines semi-idioms as expressions in which at least one component retains its literal meaning while the overall expression carries an extended figurative sense, making them moderately challenging to translate. Both instances in the dataset — Data 3 ("You're a mess" and "Dodgy place") and Data 9 ("Why the long faces?") — were rendered using the strategy of using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, reflecting the partial transparency that characterizes this idiom type.

Data 9 is particularly noteworthy for the translator's unique dual rendering strategy — simultaneously providing the idiomatic Indonesian equivalent "terlihat kecewa" and the literal translation "berwajah panjang" in parentheses — an approach that preserves both the idiomatic meaning and the literal imagery of the source expression within a single subtitle (Baker, 2011; Shuttleworth & Cowie, 2014). Venuti (1995) would characterize this as a simultaneously foreignizing and domesticating strategy, while Kusumawardhani and Santosa (2022) note that such strategies represent an optimal approach to meaning preservation in semi-idiomatic translation, minimizing cultural loss while maintaining communicative clarity.

From a pedagogical standpoint, this dual rendering approach represents a valuable model for subtitle translators working across culturally distant language pairs, demonstrating that creative translator agency can produce solutions that serve both comprehension and cultural transparency simultaneously (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 2014; Venuti, 1995).

### *Figurative Idioms*

Figurative idioms constitute the second largest category with four instances. Baker (2011) classifies figurative idioms as expressions whose metaphorical dimension retains sufficient transparency to allow partial interpretation, though their idiomatic meaning remains sufficiently conventionalized to preclude accurate literal translation. The four instances in the dataset — Data 4 ("Sink no lower"), Data 5 ("Fame is a fickle friend"), Data 7 ("Bad blood will out"), and Data 12 ("Laying it on thick") — demonstrate a varied range of metaphorical structures, from vertical spatial metaphors to personification and proverbial adaptations.

Data 5 presents one of the most semantically complex figurative idioms in the dataset, employing both personification and a proverbial structure derived from "handsome is as handsome does." Both figurative dimensions are dissolved in the target text through paraphrase, resulting in significant expressive, stylistic, and cultural loss: the personification of fame as a fickle companion and the proverbial rhythm of the original are entirely absent from the Indonesian rendering, reducing a rhetorically rich expression to a straightforward declarative statement (Lestari & Hartono, 2023; Venuti, 1995). Data 7 ("Bad blood will out"), by contrast, represents a relatively foreignizing approach, as the translator chooses to preserve the blood metaphor in the target text rather than dissolving it through paraphrase.

While this preserves a degree of figurative texture, Sutopo and Hartono (2021) note that meaning shift remains an inevitable consequence of such partial preservation strategies, as the culturally specific connotations of "bad blood" in British English — connoting hereditary animosity and familial disgrace — are not fully recoverable through a structurally similar but culturally distinct Indonesian rendering.

*Translation Strategies Employed Across Both Films*  
*Translation by Paraphrase*

Translation by paraphrase is overwhelmingly dominant across both films, applied in eight out of twelve data items (66.7%). Baker (2011) identifies paraphrase as the most practical strategy when no equivalent idiomatic expression exists in the target language, and the dominance of this strategy reflects the significant cultural and linguistic distance between British English and Indonesian that frequently renders equivalent idiomatic translation impossible (Larson, 1998; Newmark, 1988). Pratama and Nababan (2020) similarly observe that paraphrase in subtitle contexts prioritizes communicative efficiency over figurative fidelity, a pattern consistently reflected across the data items analyzed in this study.

While paraphrase effectively preserves the core communicative meaning of idiomatic expressions, it produces a layered form of loss that extends beyond the merely semantic. At the stylistic level, the expressive register of the source text is frequently reduced: vivid, culturally charged expressions are rendered as neutral, prosaic Indonesian statements that convey the propositional content but sacrifice the connotative and affective dimensions of the original (Venuti, 1995; Newmark, 1988).

At the cultural level, the dissolution of source-cultural imagery severs the connection between the target-language audience and the British cultural world of the source text, potentially diminishing the immersive quality of the subtitled experience (Gibbs, 2020; Langlotz, 2006). These observations carry direct implications for subtitle translator training: educators and practitioners should emphasize that paraphrase, while often unavoidable, represents a translational compromise rather than an optimal solution, and that translators should actively seek idiomatic or culturally substitutive alternatives before defaulting to paraphrase (Baker, 2011; Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2021).

*Using an Idiom of Similar Meaning but Dissimilar Form*

Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form is applied in three data items (25%), representing the second most frequently employed strategy. Baker (2011) describes this strategy as replacing a source language idiom with a target language expression that carries a comparable communicative meaning, even when the two expressions differ substantially in their cultural and linguistic form. This strategy is applied across semi-idioms (Data 3 and Data 9) and a figurative idiom (Data 7), demonstrating its versatility across different degrees of idiomatic opacity.

Venuti (1995) frames this strategy as a domesticating approach, prioritizing target-language naturalness over source-cultural fidelity, while Kusumawardhani and Santosa (2022) note that connotative equivalence is the primary criterion for

evaluating such translations. Theoretically, this strategy represents a more sophisticated exercise of translator agency than paraphrase, as it requires the translator to identify a genuinely equivalent target-language expression rather than simply dissolving the idiom into its propositional content (Baker, 2011; Shuttleworth & Cowie, 2014).

The application of this strategy in Data 7 ("Bad blood will out") is particularly significant, as the translator's decision to preserve the blood metaphor represents a relatively foreignizing choice compared to the paraphrase strategy applied to the other figurative idioms in the dataset, suggesting an awareness of the expressive value of the source text's figurative texture (Venuti, 1995; Fernando, 1996). From a pedagogical perspective, this strategy offers the most transferable model for translator training in idiomatic subtitle translation, as it balances communicative adequacy with expressive naturalness in ways that neither paraphrase nor literal translation can achieve (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2021; Baker, 2011).

### *Translation by Cultural Substitution*

Translation by cultural substitution appears in only one data item (8.3%) — Data 10 ("What a load of rubbish") — yet represents one of the most theoretically significant findings of this study. Baker (2011) describes this as the most communicatively effective strategy for idiomatic translation when a genuine target-language equivalent exists, as it replaces the cultural specificity of the source idiom entirely with a target-language equivalent that achieves an equivalent communicative effect. The translator's identification of "omong kosong" as a genuine Indonesian idiomatic equivalent to "a load of rubbish" achieves the highest degree of dynamic equivalence possible in idiomatic translation (Nida & Taber, 1982), preserving not only the propositional meaning but also the expressive register and pragmatic force of the source expression.

The rarity of this strategy in the dataset reflects the genuine scarcity of equivalent idiomatic expressions between British English and Indonesian, underscoring the magnitude of the translational challenge posed by the cultural and linguistic distance between the two languages (Rahman & Yuliasri, 2024; Yuliasri & Hartono, 2023).

Theoretically, this finding supports Venuti's (1995) argument that true cultural equivalence in translation is rarely achievable across culturally distant language pairs, and that the apparent naturalness of domesticated translations frequently conceals the translator's creative labor in identifying viable substitutes.

The singular instance of cultural substitution in this dataset also raises productive questions for future research: to what extent do different fantasy film translators vary in their willingness and ability to identify culturally substitutive solutions, and what role do institutional constraints — including subtitle software, editorial guidelines, and time pressure — play in limiting the deployment of this theoretically optimal strategy (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2021; Chaume, 2020)?

## 5. Conclusion

This study examined twelve idiomatic expressions found in the Indonesian subtitles of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002) and *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004), analyzing their types and translation strategies based on Baker's (2011) framework. The findings indicate that idiomatic expressions in both films can be categorized into pure idioms, semi-idioms, and figurative idioms, with pure idioms appearing most frequently, demonstrating that the films contain numerous non-literal expressions whose meanings cannot be directly interpreted from their lexical forms (Fernando, 1996; McCarthy & O'Dell, 2010).

This finding supports the view that idioms are culturally embedded linguistic units that require contextual and figurative interpretation rather than literal decoding (Gibbs, 2020; Glucksberg & McGlone, 2001; Langlotz, 2006), and confirms that fantasy films such as the Harry Potter series constitute particularly rich sites of idiomatic language use that present distinctive translational challenges for subtitle translators working across culturally distant language pairs.

Regarding translation strategies, translation by paraphrase emerged as the dominant strategy, consistent with Baker's (2011) argument that paraphrase is commonly employed when direct idiomatic equivalence is unavailable in the target language. The findings further confirm that subtitle translation tends to prioritize communicative clarity, brevity, and audience accessibility over literal preservation of figurative imagery (Chaume, 2020; Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2021; Gottlieb, 1992).

However, as the discussion demonstrates, the dominance of paraphrase also produces a layered form of stylistic and cultural loss, as the expressive register, figurative texture, and connotative richness of the source expressions are frequently dissolved in favor of prosaic Indonesian renderings (Venuti, 1995; Newmark, 1988). The singular instance of translation by cultural substitution — wherein "omong kosong" successfully replaces "a load of rubbish" — represents the most communicatively and stylistically optimal outcome in the dataset, achieving dynamic equivalence in both propositional content and expressive register (Nida & Taber, 1982).

These findings are consistent with previous studies on idiom translation in English–Indonesian audiovisual contexts (Hidayat & Nugroho, 2022; Pratama & Nababan, 2020; Sari & Putri, 2021; Sutopo & Hartono, 2021; Yuliasri & Hartono, 2023), while extending them by foregrounding the stylistic and cultural dimensions of translational loss that quantitative strategy analyses frequently overlook.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the dataset consists of only twelve idiomatic expressions drawn from two films within the same franchise, which limits the generalizability of the findings to broader patterns of idiomatic subtitle translation in fantasy or other film genres. Second, the study focuses exclusively on subtitle translation and does not examine dubbing,

audience reception, subtitle readability measurement, or machine-assisted subtitle production, all of which are increasingly relevant dimensions of contemporary audiovisual translation practice (Baños & Díaz-Cintas, 2024; Granell & Chaume, 2023). Third, while inter-rater verification was conducted, the absence of a formal quantitative reliability measure represents a methodological limitation that future studies should address through more rigorous coding procedures.

### *Suggestions*

Based on the limitations above, future researchers are encouraged to conduct broader studies involving larger datasets, additional fantasy films, or different audiovisual genres in order to obtain more comprehensive and generalizable findings regarding idiom translation in subtitles. Future studies may also explore audience reception, subtitle readability, and viewer comprehension of figurative language in audiovisual media, as these dimensions significantly influence the communicative effectiveness of subtitle translation (Rahman & Yuliasri, 2024; Yuliasri & Hartono, 2023).

Researchers are additionally encouraged to investigate the role of institutional and technological constraints — including subtitle software, editorial guidelines, and production timelines — in shaping translator decision-making, particularly regarding the selection of culturally substitutive versus paraphrase-based strategies (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2021; Chaume, 2020). Finally, comparative studies examining subtitle translation across multiple language pairs, or contrasting subtitle and dubbing approaches to idiomatic expressions in the same films, would contribute valuable empirical evidence to the growing body of research on audiovisual translation in non-Western linguistic contexts (Granell & Chaume, 2023; Pedersen, 2020).

## **6. Acknowledgement**

First and foremost, the author expresses the deepest gratitude to Allah SWT for the health, strength, and ease bestowed throughout the entire process of conducting and completing this research. Without His grace and guidance, this work would not have been possible.

The author also wishes to express heartfelt and boundless gratitude to the author's beloved parents, Ibu Fadri Yeni (Alm.) and Bapak Abdullah Mubaroq, whose love, sacrifice, and prayers have been the greatest source of strength and motivation throughout this academic journey. May Allah SWT grant Ibu Fadri Yeni the highest place in His mercy, and may Bapak Abdullah Mubaroq always be blessed with health and happiness.

Sincere and profound gratitude is extended to the academic supervisor and first thesis supervisor, Prof. Dr. H. Agus Salim Mansyur, M.Pd., whose invaluable guidance, scholarly insight, and unwavering support have been instrumental in shaping this research from its earliest stages to its completion. The author is

equally grateful to the second thesis supervisor, Dr. Andang Saehu, M.Pd., CHS., CIIQA, whose expertise, constructive feedback, and generous encouragement have contributed enormously to the quality and depth of this work.

The author also wishes to express special and loving gratitude to Ayu Sulistiawati, whose constant support, patience, and companionship through every moment of joy and difficulty have been an immeasurable source of comfort and inspiration throughout this journey, as well as to Nala and Mpruy, the author's two beloved cats, whose cheerful and endearing presence provided comfort and joy during the long hours of writing and research. Your presence has made all the difference.

Furthermore, the author extends warm and heartfelt appreciation to Dhiya Fadel Athallah and Aditya Hamdianto, whose friendship, encouragement, and generous assistance have been deeply valued and will always be remembered with gratitude

Finally, the author wishes to thank all friends and colleagues whose names cannot be mentioned one by one, your support and assistance have meant more than words can express, and this work would not have been the same without you.

## 7. References

- Baker, M. (2001). *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (M. Baker & G. Saldanha, Eds.; 2nd ed.). Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203359792>
- Baker, M. (2011). *In Other Words: A coursebook on translation, Second edition*.
- Baños, R., & Díaz-Cintas, J. (2024). Exploring new forms of audiovisual translation in the age of digital media: cybersubtitling and cyberdubbing. *The Translator*, 30(1), 129–144. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2023.2274119>
- Díaz Cintas, J., & Remael, A. (2007). *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315759678>
- Díaz-Cintas, J., & Remael, A. (2021). *Subtitling, Concepts and Practices*. Routledge.
- Fernando, Chitra. (1996). *Idioms and idiomaticity*. Oxford University Press.
- Gibbs, R. W. (2020). *The Poetics of Mind: Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding*. Cambridge University Press.
- Glucksberg, Sam., & McGlone, M. S. . (2001). *Understanding figurative language: from metaphors to idioms*. Oxford University Press.
- Gottlieb, H. (1992). Subtitling - a new university discipline. In *Teaching Translation and Interpreting* (pp. 161–170). John Benjamins Publishing Company.  
<https://doi.org/10.1075/z.56.26got>
- Granell, X., & Chaume, F. (2023). *Audiovisual translation, translators, and technology: From automation pipe dream to human-machine convergence*. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4843-5228>
- Hidayat, A., & Nugroho, R. A. (2022). Idiom translation in English–Indonesian

- movie subtitles. *Lingua Cultura*, 16(1), 89–97.
- Langlotz, A. (2006). *Idiomatic Creativity* (Vol. 17). John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/hcp.17>
- Larson, M. L. (1998). *MEANING-BASED TRANSLATION A Guide to Cross-Language Equivalence Second Edition*.
- McCarthy, M., & O'Dell, F. (2010). *English Idioms in Use: Advanced*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139152204>
- Newmark, P. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. 1–292.
- Nida, E. A. (1964). *Toward a Science of Translating*. Brill.
- Nida, E. A., & Taber, C. R. (1982). *The Theory and Practice of Translation*. BRILL. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004669147>
- Pedersen, J. (2020). *Subtitling Norms for Television. An exploration focussing on extralinguistic cultural references*. John Benjamins. <http://benjamins.com/catalog/btlESTSubseries>
- Pratama, R., & Nababan, M. (2020). Translation quality of idioms in film subtitles. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 12(4), 101–114. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v12i4.17435>
- Rahman, F., & Yuliasri, I. (2024). Subtitle translation and viewer comprehension of figurative language. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 11(1), 67–82. <https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v11i1.31284>
- Sari, D. P., & Putri, A. R. (2021). Strategies in translating English idioms into Indonesian subtitles. *Journal of Language and Translation*, 9(2), 45–58. <https://doi.org/10.30812/jlt.v9i2.1382>
- Shuttleworth, Mark., & Cowie, Moira. (2014). *Dictionary of translation studies*. New York, NY : Routledge.
- Sutopo, D., & Hartono, R. (2021). Idiomatic expressions and meaning shift in subtitle translation. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literature*, 6(1), 55–66. <https://doi.org/10.33369/joall.v6i1.14251>
- Venuti, L. (1995). *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.43249780203342633>
- Yuliasri, I., & Hartono, R. (2023). Readability and acceptability of idiom translation in audiovisual texts. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 13(2), 342–354. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v13i2.59832>