

An Analysis of Idiom Types in English Film Dialogue and Their Translation Strategies in Indonesian Subtitles of the Kingsman Trilogy

Analisis Jenis Idiom dalam Dialog Film Berbahasa Inggris dan Strategi Penerjemahannya dalam Subtitle Bahasa Indonesia Film Kingsman Trilogy

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Article Information	ABSTRACT
<p>History Revised: 28 June 2025 Accepted: 25 August 2025 Approved: 30 September 2025</p> <p>Kata Kunci <i>ekspresi idiomatik; jenis idiom; strategi penerjemahan; subtitling; penerjemahan audiovisual</i></p> <p>Keywords idiomatic expressions; idiom types; translation strategies; subtitling; audiovisual translation</p>	<p>Idiomatic expressions are an important element in film dialogue because they convey figurative meaning, cultural values, and pragmatic functions. However, translating idioms into Indonesian subtitles often presents problems due to cultural differences and audiovisual technical constraints such as limited space and time. This study aims to analyze the types of idiomatic expressions found in the English film dialogue of the Kingsman trilogy and the translation strategies used in the Indonesian subtitles. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method with content analysis. The data consist of idioms identified from the English dialogue and their translations in Indonesian subtitles. Idiom types are classified based on McCarthy and O'Dell's typology, while translation strategies are analyzed using Baker's framework. The findings show that semi-idioms are the most dominant type and that paraphrasing is the most frequently used translation strategy.</p> <p>Abstrak <i>Ekspresi idiomatik merupakan unsur penting dalam dialog film karena menyampaikan makna figuratif, nilai budaya, dan fungsi pragmatik. Namun, penerjemahan idiom dalam subtitle bahasa Indonesia sering menghadapi permasalahan akibat perbedaan budaya serta keterbatasan teknis audiovisual seperti ruang dan waktu. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis jenis-jenis idiom yang terdapat dalam dialog film berbahasa Inggris pada Kingsman trilogy dan strategi penerjemahan yang digunakan dalam subtitle bahasa Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan analisis isi. Data berupa idiom yang diidentifikasi dari dialog film berbahasa Inggris dan terjemahannya dalam subtitle bahasa Indonesia. Klasifikasi idiom didasarkan pada tipologi McCarthy dan O'Dell, sedangkan strategi penerjemahan dianalisis menggunakan kerangka Baker. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa semi-idiom paling dominan dan parafrasa menjadi strategi yang paling sering digunakan.</i></p>



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1. Introduction

Idiomatic expressions are an essential component of natural language use because they convey figurative meaning, cultural values, and pragmatic functions that extend beyond literal interpretation (Alfiyan, M. 2021). In film dialogue, idioms contribute to characterization, humor, interpersonal relationships, and narrative development (Kurniawan, R., & Yuliana, S., 2022). However, the figurative and culture-bound nature of idiomatic expressions often creates difficulties in translation, particularly in audiovisual media where subtitles must operate under strict temporal and spatial constraints (Cacciari, C., & Glucksberg, S., 1991). These limitations frequently require translators to condense meaning, adjust figurative expressions, or replace idioms with non-idiomatic forms, which may result in shifts of meaning or loss of stylistic nuance.

The problem of translating idioms has been widely discussed in translation studies, especially within the field of audiovisual translation (Amelia, R., 2022). Previous studies have consistently shown that idioms are among the most challenging linguistic elements to translate because they rarely have direct equivalents across languages and are deeply embedded in cultural contexts (McCarthy, M., & O'Dell, F., 2017). Research on English–Indonesian subtitling has reported that meaning-oriented strategies such as paraphrasing and omission are frequently employed to deal with idiomatic expressions under audiovisual constraints (Díaz-Cintas, J., & Remael, A., 2021). While these studies provide valuable insights into translation strategies, many of them focus primarily on strategy frequency without examining how different types of idioms influence the choice of translation strategy.

Alongside developments in translation studies, the growing consumption of foreign films through streaming platforms has increased the importance of subtitles as a primary mode of language mediation for Indonesian audiences (Pratama, F., 2023). In this context, subtitle quality plays a crucial role in shaping viewers' understanding of dialogue, characterization, and narrative meaning (Karamitroglou, F., 1998). Inadequate handling of idiomatic expressions may lead to misinterpretation or reduce the intended pragmatic effect, particularly when subtitles serve as the main source of linguistic input for viewers who do not understand the source language (Wulandari, D., 2020).

Action–spy films present additional challenges for subtitling due to rapid dialogue delivery, frequent scene changes, and stylistically marked language. These characteristics intensify the need for efficient translation strategies that ensure immediate comprehension while maintaining narrative flow (Sari, N., 2020). The *Kingsman* trilogy exemplifies this genre, as its dialogue combines formal British expressions, informal speech, humour, and culturally loaded idioms (Baker, M., 2018). Such features make idiom translation especially complex and provide a relevant context for examining how translators negotiate meaning under audiovisual constraints (Nassaji, H., 2015).

In addition to translation strategy research, idiom classification has been explored through typological frameworks such as McCarthy and O'Dell's categorisation of pure idioms, semi-idioms, and literal idioms, which

distinguishes idioms based on their level of semantic transparency (Gottlieb, H., 1992). Although this typology has been applied in linguistic and pedagogical studies, its integration with translation strategy analysis in audiovisual contexts remains limited. Few studies have combined idiom typology with subtitling strategies to explain why certain strategies are preferred for specific types of idioms (Hidayat, D., 2020).

Based on this gap, the present study focuses on a single research problem: how idiomatic expressions in English film dialogue are translated into Indonesian subtitles. The study aims to identify the types of idiomatic expressions found in the English dialogue of the *Kingsman* trilogy and to analyse the translation strategies used in the Indonesian subtitles. By applying McCarthy and O'Dell's typology of idioms and Baker's framework of translation strategies, this research seeks to explain how idiom transparency influences strategy selection under audiovisual constraints. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to audiovisual translation studies and practically to subtitling practice by offering insights into effective strategies for translating idiomatic expressions in fast-paced film dialogue.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design because it aims to describe linguistic phenomena without statistical measurement. This approach is appropriate for analyzing idiomatic expressions and their translation strategies as they occur naturally in audiovisual media. Content analysis is used as the main method to examine film dialogue and subtitles systematically based on predetermined theoretical categories.

The data source of this study is the *Kingsman* trilogy, which consists of *Kingsman: The Secret Service* (2014), *Kingsman: The Golden Circle* (2017), and *The King's Man* (2021). The data are idiomatic expressions found in the English film dialogue and their corresponding translations in the Indonesian subtitles. The data were obtained from the English film scripts and the Indonesian subtitles that were aligned with the film scenes to ensure contextual accuracy.

The data were collected using a documentation technique. The instrument of data collection was a data sheet used to record idiomatic expressions, their contextual information, and their Indonesian subtitle translations. The data collection procedure began with repeatedly watching the films to understand the dialogue context. Idiomatic expressions in the English dialogue were then identified and verified using idiom dictionaries to confirm their idiomatic status. Each identified idiom was matched with its Indonesian subtitle translation and recorded systematically.

Data analysis was conducted in several stages. First, the identified idioms were classified into pure idioms, semi-idioms, and literal idioms based on McCarthy and O'Dell's typology. Second, the Indonesian subtitle translations were analyzed using Baker's framework of idiom translation strategies, which includes using an idiom of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but different form, paraphrasing, and omission. Finally, the results

were interpreted by considering audiovisual subtitling constraints to explain the patterns of strategy use (McCarthy, M., & O'Dell, F., 2017).

3. Findings and Discussion

A total of 42 idiomatic expressions were identified from the English dialogue. Based on McCarthy and O'Dell's typology, the idioms were classified into pure idioms, semi-idioms, and literal idioms.

Tabel 1
Distribution of Idiom Types in the *Kingsman* Trilogy

No	Idiom Type	Frequency
1	Pure Idioms	13
2	Semi Idioms	15
3	Literal Idioms	14
	Total	42

As shown in Table 1, semi-idioms constitute the most frequent idiom type with 15 occurrences, followed by literal idioms with 14 occurrences, while pure idioms appear least frequently with 13 occurrences. This distribution indicates that the dialogue in the *Kingsman* trilogy predominantly employs idiomatic expressions that retain a degree of semantic transparency. Such expressions are particularly suitable for fast-paced audiovisual narratives, as they allow viewers to grasp meaning quickly without extensive cognitive effort.

The predominance of semi-idioms suggests that many idiomatic expressions in the films are metaphorically motivated but still partially interpretable from their lexical components. This characteristic enables semi-idioms to convey figurative meaning while remaining accessible to a broad audience. Literal idioms also occur frequently because their meanings closely correspond to their literal interpretations, allowing relatively direct comprehension. In contrast, pure idioms, which are fully opaque and strongly culture-bound, are used more selectively. Their limited occurrence suggests that highly opaque idioms are employed mainly for specific pragmatic purposes, such as emphasising humour, character identity, or emotional intensity, rather than as a dominant stylistic feature.

As an example of idiom type classification, the expression "*up shit creek*" is categorised as a pure idiom because its meaning cannot be inferred from the literal meanings of its individual components. The expression does not relate directly to the lexical meanings of *up*, *shit*, or *creek*, but instead conveys the figurative meaning of being in serious trouble. This characteristic reflects the nature of pure idioms identified in the data, which are semantically opaque and highly dependent on contextual and cultural knowledge for interpretation.

The analysis of translation strategies applied in the Indonesian subtitles is presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Translation Strategies Used in Indonesian Subtitles

No	Translation Strategy	Frequency
1	Similar Meaning and Form (SMF)	5
2	Similar Meaning but Different Form (SMD)	0
3	Paraphrase	33
4	Omission	4
Total		42

Table 2 shows that paraphrasing is overwhelmingly the most dominant translation strategy, accounting for 33 out of 42 cases. This finding indicates that the subtitler prioritises semantic clarity and readability over the preservation of idiomatic form. In audiovisual translation, subtitles are constrained by limited space and time, requiring viewers to process information rapidly. Paraphrasing allows the subtitler to convey the intended meaning efficiently without burdening viewers with unfamiliar or culturally specific expressions.

The strategy of using an idiom with similar meaning and form is applied in only five cases. This limited use suggests that Indonesian provides relatively few idiomatic equivalents that closely match both the meaning and structure of English idioms found in the films. Omission occurs in four cases and is typically employed when the idiomatic expression is not essential to the core message or when visual and contextual cues sufficiently support comprehension. Notably, the strategy of using an idiom with similar meaning but different form does not occur in the data. The absence of this strategy highlights the difficulty of identifying culturally and pragmatically equivalent idioms across languages within the constraints of subtitling.

A clear relationship emerges between idiom types and translation strategies. Pure idioms, which are semantically opaque, tend to be translated through paraphrasing or omission because their figurative meanings are difficult to transfer directly into Indonesian subtitles. Semi-idioms and literal idioms, which possess higher levels of transparency, allow greater flexibility in translation. However, even these idioms are frequently paraphrased, indicating that transparency alone does not guarantee the use of idiomatic equivalents in the target language. Instead, subtitling constraints and audience processing considerations play a decisive role in strategy selection.

The dominance of paraphrasing also reflects the functional priorities of subtitling as a mode of audiovisual translation. Unlike written translation, subtitles must synchronise with spoken dialogue and visual elements while remaining readable within a short exposure time. As a result, meaning-oriented strategies are favoured over form-oriented strategies. In the context of fast-paced action–spy films such as the *Kingsman* trilogy, subtitles must support immediate comprehension to maintain narrative flow, which further encourages the use of paraphrasing.

In terms of translation strategy, the idiom "up shit creek" is translated into Indonesian as "aku dalam masalah" using a paraphrasing strategy. Instead of preserving the idiomatic form, the subtitle renders the core meaning in a non-idiomatic expression that is easily understood by the target audience. This example illustrates how semantically opaque idioms are frequently paraphrased in Indonesian subtitles to ensure clarity and immediate comprehension under audiovisual subtitling constraints.

When compared with previous studies on idiom translation in audiovisual media, these findings are largely consistent with earlier research that reports paraphrasing as the most frequently used strategy in English–Indonesian subtitles. However, this study extends previous research by demonstrating that the dominance of paraphrasing is closely related to idiom transparency. Rather than merely reporting strategy frequency, the present findings show that idiom type plays a crucial role in shaping translation decisions, particularly under audiovisual constraints.

Overall, the results demonstrate that subtitling constraints significantly influence how idiomatic expressions are translated in film dialogue. The need for brevity, synchronization with visual elements, and immediate viewer comprehension encourages translators to prioritize communicative function over formal equivalence. By integrating idiom typology with translation strategy analysis, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of idiom translation in Indonesian film subtitles and contributes to ongoing discussions in audiovisual translation studies.

4. Conclusion

This study investigated idiomatic expressions in the English film dialogue of the *Kingsman* trilogy and the translation strategies used in the Indonesian subtitles. The findings show that semi-idioms are the most frequently occurring idiom type, followed by literal idioms and pure idioms, indicating a preference for expressions that retain a degree of semantic transparency in fast-paced film dialogue. In terms of translation strategies, paraphrasing is overwhelmingly dominant, while strategies involving idioms with similar meaning and form are limited, and idioms with similar meaning but different form are not employed. These results demonstrate that idiom transparency plays a crucial role in determining translation strategy selection under audiovisual subtitling constraints. The dominance of meaning-oriented strategies reflects the subtitler's need to prioritise clarity, readability, and immediate comprehension. This study contributes to audiovisual translation research by integrating idiom typology with translation strategy analysis and offers practical insights for translators dealing with idiomatic expressions in film subtitles. Future research may explore different genres, language pairs, or audience reception to further examine the effectiveness of idiom translation strategies.

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