



P-ISSN 2355-2794
E-ISSN 2461-0275

Idiomatic Expressions Used by the Acehnese Novelist Arafat Nur in the Novel *Tanah Surga Merah*

Chairina Nasir*
Azzah Ufairah

Department of English Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,
University of Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh 23111, INDONESIA

Abstract

Writers as language users are fully aware that idioms are powerful tools to get messages across. This research is to examine idiomatic expressions in Arafat Nur's novel Tanah Surga Merah (2017). It is intended to find out the types of idiomatic expressions and the contextual meaning used in the novel. The research design of this study was qualitative research. This study was aimed at finding out the seven types of idioms based on O'Dell and McCarty's (2017) theory and Baker's (2018) translation strategies for contextual meaning. The techniques of data analysis were data reduction, data display, and data verification suggested by Miles et al. (2018). After collecting and analysing the data from the novel, three types of idioms were found, with 30 idioms in total. There are eight idioms in the form of verb+object/complement/adverb or 27% of the share, 19 idioms in the form of compound, which is the most frequent type of idiom used with a percentage of 63%. Lastly, there were only three idioms in the form of simile, or 10% of the share. Idioms in the form of prepositional verbs, binomial (word+word), trinomial (word+word+word), and whole clauses or sentences were not found in this novel. In a nutshell, the contextual meaning of those idioms in the novel varied based on the situations and the contexts which function to describe feelings, emotions, and conditions in conversations. Paraphrasing is the most suitable translating strategy for equal meaning in English as it provides meaning in the context of the idioms found in the novel, and compound idioms are mostly used by the author to describe the characters in the novel.

* Corresponding author, email: chairina.nasir@usk.ac.id

Citation in APA style: Nasir, C., & Ufairah, A. (2023). Idiomatic expressions used by the Acehnese novelist Arafat Nur in the novel *Tanah Surga Merah*. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 10(1), 537-555.

Received June 29, 2022; October 4, 2022; Accepted December 1, 2022; Published Online January 31, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v10i1.26649>

Keywords: Contextual meaning, idiom, novel, *Tanah Surga Merah*.

1. INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most challenging figurative language to comprehend is an idiom. Not only it sounds foreign to the ears even for native speakers, but it also seems irrelevant to the whole context of utterances as well. The complexity of an idiom's nature is agreed by some experts who defined it as a phrase, word, or expression with fixed combinations of words that do not have a specific arrangement of words, no grammatical rules, and has a difficult or unpredictable meaning within the word itself (Hornby, 2015; O'Dell & McCarty, 2017; Walker, 2003). In the same vein, Fromkin et al. (2007) stressed that it could be problematic for people to understand idioms because the meaning of an idiom cannot be inferred from the literal meaning of each word. What is interesting about idioms is that it has significant regional and cultural values providing possible information about their people, traditions, and custom (Baghana et al. 2021, p. 130). Therefore, having idiomatic competencies is necessary for language learners/users for "communicative reality and social relevance in everyday discourse" (Liontas, 2015, p. 621).

The challenge in interpreting idioms is that they cannot be translated from word to word, but they must be done contextually to get the meaning or message across. Spears (2000) mentioned some common English idioms with contextual meanings such as 'break a leg' (good luck), 'how time flies' (how quickly time has passed), 'something makes your day' (something makes you feel very happy), and 'kill two birds with one stone' (produce two useful results by just doing one action). Similarly, Indonesian also has an equivalent idiom to 'kill two birds with one stone', that is *sekali merengkuh dayung, dua tiga pulau terlampaui*, which literally translated as 'once you paddle, two and three islands passed'. Other Indonesian idioms are such as *panjang tangan* 'long hand' which figuratively means thief, *berbadan dua* 'having two bodies' which figuratively means pregnant, *badai pasti berlalu* 'the storm will pass' which figuratively means every problem must have a resolution. In reference to *badai pasti berlalu*, the equivalent idiom in English is 'every cloud has a silver lining'. These idioms applied the idiom translation strategy of paraphrasing (Baker, 2018) by taking into account the sociocultural aspects of the source language.

O'Dell and McCarty (2017) classified idioms based on functions. They listed seven functions of idioms. Those are idioms used for emphasis, used to agree with previous speakers, used to comment on people, used to comment on a situation, used to make an anecdote more interesting, used to catch the reader's eye (i.e., in headlines, advertising slogan and names of small businesses), and used to indicate membership of a particular group. As the natural part of the language, idioms are commonly used in any mode of communication; informal and formal, in direct conversations, and also in written form. Literary texts such as poetry, prose, song lyrics, movie conversations, and novels utilize idioms for more dramatic effects. The following are some studies investigating idiomatic expressions in literary works.

Rozikin, et al. (2021) conducted a study on the analysis of idiomatic expressions in the 'Joker' movie. By applying O'Dell and McCarty's (2017) framework, they found all six types of idioms in the movie. There are eighty idioms in total with the distribution of 18 transitive verb phrases, 55 verbal phrases, one prepositional phrase,

one pair of words, and one whole clause or sentence pattern (fixed statement). In the same framework, Zaid (2019) examined idiomatic expressions used by the characters in ‘Hotel Transylvania 1’, ‘Hotel Transylvania 2’, and ‘Hotel Transylvania 3’. He also found all six types of idioms as suggested by O’Dell and McCarty (2017). The total idioms found from those sequels are one simile, two binomials, seven proverbs, two euphemisms, seven clichés, and six fixed statements.

Besides the aforementioned research examining idiomatic expressions in English movies, other researchers applied O’Dell and McCarty’s (2017) framework in classifying the types of idioms found in English-Indonesian translated novels. Sabrina (2019) conducted a study examining a novel entitled ‘The Life We Bury’. She investigated the types of idioms and the strategies used in translating and providing equivalent meanings from English idioms into Indonesian. The results of her study showed that all of the six types of idioms based on O’Dell and McCarty’s (2017) concept were found. There are three fixed statements, four idioms of prepositions phrases, two compound idioms, three idioms of simile, one binomial, and two fixed statements. To address the strategies used in translating and providing equivalent meanings from English idioms into Indonesian, Sabrina (2019) used Baker’s (1992) translation strategy and Nida and Taber’s (1969) meaning equivalence strategy. It is revealed that the Indonesian-translated novel applied paraphrased strategy of translation as the dominant strategy used and the equal meaning in Indonesian was determined by applying contextual paraphrasing. Similarly, Putri et al. (2021) in their research on finding the type of idioms and strategy used in translating English into Indonesian entitled ‘The Girl on The Train’ also used O’Dell and McCarty’s (2017) idioms classification and Baker’s (2018) framework to examine the kind of strategy used in the translation of the English idioms into Indonesian. The research resulted in one simile, two binomials, one proverb, 14 euphemisms, 19 clichés, and 36 fixed statements. The most common strategy applied to translate the English idioms in the novel into Indonesian was also by paraphrasing.

Aligned with those previous studies, this article aims at examining idiomatic expressions used in the novel ‘*Tanah Surga Merah*’ by an Acehese novelist Arafat Nur (2017). The highlight of this research compares to the previously mentioned works is that this study observes an Indonesian literary work, not an English or translated version of English literary works. The framework of this study is to implement O’Dell and McCarty’s (2017) idiomatic expressions types and Baker’s (2018) translation strategies. ‘*Tanah Surga Merah*’ was published in 2017 and it is Arafat Nur’s 16th novel which won an award in *Sayembara Novel Dewan Kesenian Jakarta* (Jakarta Arts Council Novel Competition). We chose the novel because the setting of the story was on the times of the political conflict in Aceh. More importantly, this novel is rich with idiomatic expressions which implicitly displayed the situation, condition, and life of the Acehese people at the time. Accordingly, the research questions of this study are:

1. What are the types of idiomatic expressions found in Arafat Nur’s novel ‘*Tanah Surga Merah*’?
2. What is the contextual meaning of the idioms used in Arafat Nur’s novel ‘*Tanah Surga Merah*’?

This research is expected to be rewarding benefits both to theory and practice. The results are expected to add knowledge to the existing literature on idioms, and also reference to other researchers who intend to conduct similar studies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Idiom

Even though every language around the world has its own different idioms used, they generally have the same features in which idiomatic expressions are used through lexical items such as words or phrases. An idiom is a fixed combination of words that is difficult to understand and guess the meaning of each word (O'Dell & McCarty, 2017). They further explained that the best way to understand idioms is to examine the context of idiomatic sentences. For example, 'flying on a hot air balloon over Cappadocia was an unforgettable moment for me', though it 'cost me arm and leg'. The meaning of 'cost arm and leg' can be inferred by the keywords 'flying on a hot air balloon' and in a specific place 'Cappadocia'; therefore, it can be inferred that something costing an arm and leg is very expensive. Further explanation on the nature of idiom, Cooper (1999) pointed out that idioms belong to the category of non-literal or figurative language that also includes metaphors, similes, and proverbs. These forms of language are difficult to understand and learn because they do not mean exactly what the literal words express. Cooper (1999) explained that of the four kinds of non-literal expressions, idioms are the most commonly found in discourse. An idiom can have a literal meaning, but its alternate, figurative meaning must be understood metaphorically in discourse. For example, 'over the hill' can mean on the other side of the hill, but the figurative meaning means no longer young, and too old to do a particular thing. An example of this is in a sentence: 'It's true some people regard you as probably over the hill at fifty'.

What is tricky is that the idiom cannot be translated literally because it can be meaningless or changed when forcefully translated into another language (Cooper, 1999). That is why the translator should consider the equivalent of the idiom used in the target language to make it comprehensible (Baker, 2018). For example, *panjang tangan* is the Indonesian idiom, literally translated into *panyang jaroe* in Acehese. Meanwhile, the literal translation is 'long hand' in English, which is meaningless because this idiom has a culture-specific concept that is not comprehensible at the lexical level in English (Baker, 2018, p. 21). Both *panjang tangan* and *panyang jaroe* have the same meaning which is used to call someone a thief, while in English, the idiom is 'light fingers' to call people who like to steal, not 'long hand'.

2.2 Types of Idioms

There are various types of idioms made to simplify the analysis. According to Palmer (1976), idioms are classified into three types. They are phrasal verbs (verb+preposition or verb+adverb), prepositional verbs (verb+adverb/verb+preposition), and partial idioms. Other experts such as Kunin (1996, as cited in Baghana et al., 2021) classified English idioms based on thematic classification. He arranged idioms into eight categories; the first is nominal idioms; a category of a phenomenon, a person, or an object with the formula scheme: adjective+noun, or noun+noun, for example, 'a back number' which means a backward person or something outdated, antediluvian. The second one is verbal idioms to express object-circumstance relations. Oftentimes, the formula structure is verb+noun, -verb+auxiliary pronoun+noun. The examples for this criterion are 'search

one's mind' and 'break your head' which means to solve a difficult problem, and 'to hit the nail on the head' which means guess something and get to the point. Third, attributive idioms denote the properties of an object, a person, or phenomenon, for example, 'blue blood' means a man of noble birth, and 'nutty as a fruitcake' means a very stupid, narrow-minded person. Fourth, adverbial idioms, denoting properties, signs of action, for example, 'not at any price' means under no circumstances, not for anything in the world. Fifth, modal idioms express the speaker's attitude to a particular event or situation, for example, 'It's not my cup of tea' means that something is not for me. Sixth, comparing idioms to describe the appearance of people, their character, and mood details. The pattern is 'as...as.../ like...', for example, 'as proud as a peacock' which describes a proud man, and 'like a bull in a China shop' which means something that is absolutely out of place. Seventh are idioms describing people. For example, 'Jack of the trades, master of none' which means that a person can do many different things well but cannot be an expert in everything. The last category is idioms of feelings and moods; for example, 'full of beans' means to be full of energy and 'eat a horse' means feeling very hungry.

Meanwhile, O'Dell and McCarty (2002) divided idioms into three types: phrasal verbs, idiomatic noun phrases, and common metaphors. Later, O'Dell and McCarty (2017) extended the types into seven idiomatic expressions in the form of verb+noun/complement/adverb, prepositional phrase, compound, simile, binomial, trinomial, and whole clause or sentence as explained below.

2.2.1 *Verb+object/complement/adverb*

Idioms in the form of verb+object/complement, or adverb, are words that represent an action, for example, to write, read, eat, drink, etc. (O'Dell & McCarty, 2017, p. 6). Cruse (2006) stated that verbs are elements that can display morphological contrasts of form, sound, aspect, mood, and numbers. It means that verbs can represent tenses of sentences like the present, past, or future. It can describe a mood or feeling such as the verb 'hate', 'like', 'love', 'sad', etc. It is not just a word indicating action but also non-action. An example of an idiom using an action verb is 'drive someone up the wall', meaning make someone very angry (O'Dell & McCarty, 2017).

2.2.2 *Prepositional phrase*

This is a set of phrases that begin with prepositions and function as adjectives or adverbs. The phrase is a term used in grammatical analysis, referring to one element of the structure that usually contains more than one word and has no subject or verb (Cruse, 2006). A prepositional phrase can be something such as 'at the moment', 'from time to time', 'in a hurry', etc. (O'Dell & McCarty, 2017). It can be seen that almost all begin with prepositions and do not have a subject or verb. An example of an idiom with a prepositional phrase is 'in the blink of an eye', meaning in an extremely short time (O'Dell & McCarty, 2017).

2.2.3 *Compound*

A compound refers to a linguistic unit that functions independently (Cruse, 2006). It consists of free morphemes, meaning that the compound has two regular

words joined together. Sometimes the words are written separately, they have conjunctions and are written as one word, for example, 'narrow-minded' that means uninterested in hearing other people's opinions or refusing to accept them. An example of idiom in the form of compound is 'a bone of contention', meaning something that people argue and disagree over (O'Dell & McCarty, 2017)

2.2.4 *Simile*

A simile is an expression that compares two things which include the words 'as' or 'like'. The function is to make the sentence more interactive and the comparison more powerful (O'Dell & McCarty, 2017). For example, 'as dry as a bone' means very dry indeed, and 'as fit as a fiddle' means perfectly well (O'Dell & McCarty, 2017).

2.2.5 *Binomial (word+word)*

A binomial is a composition of two words joined together to form another meaning. For example, 'single-handed' means alone or no one help (O'Dell & McCarty, 2017). Some common idioms in the form of binomial 'black and blue', 'sick and tired', 'life and death', 'body and soul', 'odds and ends', 'flesh and bones', 'bright and early', 'again and again', 'alive and well', and so on (Spears, 2000). These binomial expressions are frozen. For example, the binomial 'black and blue' cannot be inverted into 'blue and black' and so do other binomials.

2.2.6 *Trinomial (word+word+word)*

A trinomial is a type of idiom that consists of three words joined together to form a new meaning, such as 'cool, calm and collected', meaning relax, in control, and not nervous (O'Dell & McCarty, 2017). Some other trinomial expressions are 'mind, body, and soul', 'here, there, and everywhere', and 'healthy, wealthy, and wise' (Spears, 2000). Resembling binomial, trinomial expressions are also frozen, where 'cool, calm, and collected' cannot be reserved into 'collected, cool, and calm'.

Some idioms come in the form of clauses. Clauses are terms used to refer to a grammatical organization smaller than a sentence but larger than a phrase, word, or morpheme (Cruse, 2006). A clause can be dependent or independent. A dependent clause, or subordinate clause, is not a complete sentence because it needs a main clause or independent clause. An independent clause is a simple sentence. An example of an idiom from a whole clause is 'to cut the long story short' means to tell the main points, but not all the fine details. In addition, an idiom in the form of whole clauses and sentences can be in conversational responses or proverbs such as 'you name it', 'that's life', 'it's a small world', 'how time flies', etc. (O'Dell & McCarty, 2017).

2.3 **Idioms Translation Strategy**

Expanding literary horizons by reading foreign languages' literary works is possible with the help of translation. The challenge of translating a novel, for example, is to provide equal meaning by taking into account differences such as figurative and idiomatic expressions. The translated version of the work should be made equal so that readers can have the same aesthetic experience as if they read the original version.

Nida and Taber (1969) set a definition of translation as the reproduction of the closest natural equivalent in terms of meaning and style of the source language (SL) message into the target language (TL) word or phrase. Their concept of equivalence translation later developed into some strategies for translation by Baker (1992, 2018) that are based on the complexity level. The first strategy is using similar meanings and forms of words and expressions. The following is the example of the first strategy applied in translating English idiomatic expressions in ‘The Diary of a Young Girl (The Definitive Edition)’ into the Indonesian version of ‘*Catatan Harian Anne Frank (Edisi Paling Lengkap)*’:

- (a) ST : ..., I quickly **racked my brains** for a neutral topic
 TT : ..., *cepat-cepat aku memeras otakku, untuk memikirkan topik*
 (Prihatiwi, 2010, p. 54)

The second strategy for idiom translation is similar meaning but dissimilar form. The TL may have a different lexical item from the SL but equally bears the same meaning. Here is an example:

- (b) ST : Then Mrs. Van D really **flies off the handle**.
 TT : *Lalu Nyonya Van D mulai berkicau.*
 (Prihatiwi, 2010, p. 56)

The idiomatic expression of ‘flies off the handle’ means to get angry. In the Indonesian-translated version, this is translated into *mulai berkicau* which is also an idiom in the Indonesian language. Only the word *berkicau* refers to a bird singing that is to describe an action of being ‘talkative’. The idiom flies off the handle and has different lexical items from *mulai berkicau*. Flies off the handle if translated with equivalent lexical items is *melempar gagang* which certainly means something else. The third strategy for idiom translation is paraphrasing which is translating a source idiom by giving its meaning in the target language; it can be a single word or a group of words. The example is as follows:

- (c) ST : But the other side of the coin is that the British Air Force is operating **around the clock**.
 TT : *Tetapi sisi Angkatan Udara Inggris beroperasi setiap saat.*
 (Prihatiwi, 2010, p. 56)

The meaning of the idiomatic expression ‘around the clock’ is all day and all night. The translator of ‘The Diary of a Young Girl (The Definitive Edition)’ uses equal meaning in translating into the Indonesian language *setiap saat*. Although the word is not an idiom in the Indonesian language, the paraphrasing strategy applied suits the meaning as it is not comprehensive to literally translate the idiom ‘around the clock’ into *seputaran jam dinding*. The last strategy in translating idiom is an omission which is when there is no equal meaning of the SL in the TL or contextually the meaning is not comprehensive. The following is an example of omission:

- (d) ST : Yesterday Mother and I had another run-in and she really **kicked up a fuss**.
 TT : *Kemarin aku dan Mama kembali terlibat pertengkaran.*
 (Prihatiwi, 2010, p. 64)

The idiom ‘kicked up a fuss’ means to complain loudly in order to describe a state of being annoyed about something. ‘The Diary of a Young Girl (The Definitive Edition)’ novel, it is used to describe Anne Frank’s mom feeling towards Anne (a Jewish teenager who chronicled her family’s two years (1942–44) in hiding during the German occupation of the Netherlands during World War II). The translators deliberately did not provide a translation of the idiom ‘kicked up a fuss’ into the Indonesian language. Prihatiwi (2010) assumed that the omission strategy was used since the idiom run-in is sufficient to describe the unpleasant atmosphere that Anne experienced.

2.4 *Tanah Surga Merah*

‘*Tanah Surga Merah*’ was written by Arafat Nur and published in 2017. It narrates the story of a former GAM (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* or Free Aceh Movement)—combatant; named Murad who returned to his hometown, Aceh, in 2014. He witnessed a political, and socio-economic condition that was increasingly unpredictable and concerning after a major conflict with the Indonesian government. The novel also depicts his struggle to return to his community while escaping from his ex-fellow comrades who accused him as a traitor.

Murad, the main character in ‘*Tanah Surga Merah*’, is described to return to his homeland after more than five years of escaping the government’s prosecution of being a separatist. He was once an Aceh freedom fighter who was praised, respected, and feared by his people. Nonetheless, when he came back, he was no longer a hero but a fugitive who has been staked out by the government police and hunted down by vengeful *Partai Merah* (literally translated as Red Party) people. Afraid of being traced, he disguised himself with a trendy haircut, freshly shaved and cleaned face. He intended to visit everyone that matters to him; family, relatives, companions, and those whom he considered as friends but later turned out to be his foes. Eventually, Murad’s life started to be in hardship. He moved from one place to another in order not to get caught and visited his relatives and friends for shelter. Despite all his efforts to be undercover, he was soon identified; it is not easy to hide for someone as popular as he was. However, Murad managed to escape one more time with the help of his best friend. This time Murad had to live far away and no one knows him and where he was a *Teungku* (religious teacher) in disguise. The story ended when Murad found the woman of his life but sadly he had to leave her behind. She was the last person who helped him escape into the forest after the enemy found his whereabouts.

Interestingly, the title of the novel ‘*Tanah Surga Merah*’ suggests respective meanings. *Tanah* (land) is the land of Aceh, and *Surga* (paradise) describes the fascinating beauty of its nature. *Merah* (red) is interpreted as a bloodbath. Figuratively, *Tanah Surga Merah* means a beautiful land of wonder but there have been many conflicts of bloodshed happened.

3. METHOD

This research applied a descriptive qualitative approach as the data are in the form of words, phrases, and/or sentences (Creswell, 2014). In order to find types of idiomatic expression in *Tanah Surga Merah*, O’Dell, and McCarty’s (2017)

framework and Baker's (2018) idioms translation strategies for contextual meaning were applied. The instruments used for the study were the novel, the classification form, and the Indonesian Idiom dictionary (Chaer, 1993). The process of collecting the data followed the steps suggested by Miles et al. (2018). The first step was data reduction, which was done by reading the novel thoroughly to locate idioms. The next step is data display which idioms were sorted based on the types of idioms proposed by O'Dell and McCarty (2017) and calculated the occurrences of each type of idiom found in the data. The last step was data verification which the data were classified on a checklist based on the types of idiomatic expressions, and from there on the Indonesian idiomatic expressions found were analysed using the strategies proposed by Baker (2011).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through the process, there are 19 idioms found in '*Tanah Surga Merah*' novel. The idioms are classified into seven types of idioms as proposed by O'Dell and McCarty (2017). However, there are only three types of idioms found which are: verb+object/complement/adverb, compound, and simile. Meanwhile, the idiom in the form of prepositional phrase, binomial, trinomial, and whole clause was not found in the novel. In addition, this study also applied Baker's (2011) idiomatic expressions translation strategy to reach equal meaning in the target language (English). Considering the metaphorical language of the idioms in the source language (Indonesian language) is highly culturally and socially related, the most appropriate translation strategy to use is paraphrasing. To get valid and reliable results, Miles et al. (2018) matrix was used to calculate the rate of occurrences of those idiom types in '*Tanah Surga Merah*' novel.

Table 1. The frequency of idioms found in the novel '*Tanah Surga Merah*'.

No.	Types of Idiom	Frequency	Percentage
1	Compound	19	63%
2	Verb+object/complement/adverb	8	27%
3	Simile	3	10%
Total		30	100%

Table 1 reveals that the types of idioms in the form of compounds are placed in the first position as the most used idioms with 19 frequencies (63% out of 100%) of the total. Next, the type of idiom in the form compound is placed in a second position with eight frequencies (27% out of 100%) of the total frequency. The least used idiom found in the novel is in the form of a simile with three frequencies (10% out of 100%) from the total frequencies. To further discuss the findings, the following subsection are used to elaborate on the three types of idioms found in *Tanah Surga Merah* novel.

4.1 Idioms in the Form of Compound

According to Cruse (2006), a compound refers to a linguistics unit that functions independently. A compound word consisting of a free morpheme means that a compound has two regular words joined together. Similarly, O'Dell and McCarty (2017) stated that a compound is a unit of meaning formed by two or more words.

Sometimes the words are written separately, had conjunctions, and are written as one word, for example, ‘narrow-minded’. The results from the data are as follows.

4.1.1 *Kaki tangan*

The idiom *kaki tangan* was spoken by Murad on page 16, line 2. Minion is the appropriate word that has an equivalent meaning to *kaki tangan*, describing a character of a person who is a loyal servant of another more powerful being, as shown in (1).

- (1) “*Baru saat itu aku menyadari, bahwa diantara mereka ada Saifud, yang merupakan kaki tangan Suardin sang wali kota.*” [‘Then I realized that among them was Saifud, who was Suardin’s minion’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 16)

4.1.2 *Simpang-siur*

The idiom *simpang siur* on page 24, line 28, in the novel means ‘uncertain, unclear or confusing’. In (2), Murad told that the unclear and confusing news of his gun shooting, and that everyone regretted what had happened. He explained the reason why he shot fired; it was nothing political, it was merely because of unfair money sharing of a certain infrastructure project.

- (2) “*Berita itu begitu simpang-siur dan semuanya menyesalkan penembakan yang kulakukan, yang tidak ada kaitannya dengan masalah politik, melainkan mengenai perkara fee proyek.*” [‘The news was so obscure and everyone regretted the shooting that I did, which had nothing to do with political matters, it is about the project fee’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 24)

4.1.3 *Hidung belang*

Hidung belang means ‘a womanizer or a playboy’. The example of *hidung belang* in a sentence was found on page 25, line 7, as displayed in (3).

- (3) “*Namun, yang lebih memicuku untuk membunuh lelaki hidung belang itu adalah kejadian tak terencana ketika pada suatu malam dia hendak memerkosa Fitri, gadis Buloh yang masih kerabat dekatku.*” [‘However, what triggered me to kill that playboy; it was unplanned. It happened when one night he was about to rape Fitri, a girl from Buloh who was still my relative’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 25)

The idiom of *hidung belang* is usually used to call a molester who likes to take advantage of women. The sentence above refers to a male subject that Murad had killed because the man was about to rape a woman, who was one of Murad’s relatives.

4.1.4 *Gerak-gerak*

This idiom means ‘action or movement.’ it is usually used to describe someone’s gestures or movements. The statement of the *gerak-gerak* idiom was found on page 46, line 28, as shown in (4).

- (4) “*Dengan sabar aku menunggunya, mengamati setiap gerak-gerak dan bahasa tubuhnya yang sudah cukup aku kenal.*” [‘I patiently waited for him, observing his every gestures and body language that I am very familiar with’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 46).

Contextually, the sentence above refers to what Murad did when he secretly surveilled his old friend, Mukhtar, who was preparing a net to catch a fish. Murad was surprised to see how his fellow ex-GAM (Free Aceh Movement) member has drastically changed from a warrior look into a poor fisherman image (Mukhtar is now skinny, and his hair is messy and stiff).

4.1.5 *Pahlawan kesiangan*

Contextually, this idiom *pahlawan kesiangan* found on page 51, line 26, is to criticize people in power who were nobody during the conflict, but behave as if they are ‘the heroes’ once the conflict is resolved. This is depicted in (5).

- (5) “*Orang-orang yang muncul belakangan, yang mengelap darah di pedang, tidak lain adalah pahlawan kesiangan*”. [‘The people who appeared later, who wiped the blood on the sword, were none other than late heroes’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 51)

4.1.6 *Lapang dada*

Contextually, the idiom *lapang dada* found on page 51, line 1, means ‘sincere’ or ‘a state of accepting hardship without complaining’. The data can be seen in (6).

- (6) “*Dia begitu menderita, tetapi tampak tenang dan menerima keadaan dengan lapang dada*”. [‘He suffered greatly, but seemed calm, and accepted the situation sincerely’] (Nur, 2017, p. 51).

4.1.7 *Anak jadah*

The idiom is found on page 74, line 27. This statement was spoken by Abduh, Murad’s high school friend, who now is a high school teacher.

- (7) “*...Anak jadah inilah generasi mendatang yang akan memimpin Aceh...*” [‘This illegitimate child is the next generation who will lead Aceh’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 74)

The idiom in (7) means ‘a child born out of marriage’, it is commonly called an illegitimate child. In the situation above, Abduh and Murad were discussing the condition of their community where plenty of young people dating like married couples. Abduh was concerned about the consequences of young people committing adultery. There will be many illegitimate children who are not ‘good seeds’ to become role models as the leaders of the future.

4.1.8 *Babak-belur*

The idiom is found on page 103, line 30. This was spoken by Nanda, one of Murad’s neighbours, as presented in (8).

- (8) “*Aku sangat benci pada mereka. Abangku juga pernah dapat masalah. Hanya kena senggol sedikit, mereka sudah main pukul. Ya, babak-belur!*” [‘I really hate them. My brother was also in trouble because of them. He just nudged them by accident, but they hit him without warning. Yes, black-and-blue!’] (Nur, 2017, p. 103)

The idiom in (8) means ‘the swollen and bruises of the body as the effect of getting hit, punched, tortured, etc’. Contextually, the sentences above described Nanda’s brother who was also beaten hard by some people from *Partai Merah*. *Babak-belur* is similar to the English idiom black-and-blue; although in English, the idiom of ‘black-and-blue’ belongs to the binomial type.

4.1.9 *Keras kepala*

The idiom *keras kepala* is found on page 115, line 23. It was spoken by Hadi Kriet. It means ‘someone does not want to accept or listen to other people’s advice’. Contextually, the sentence in (9) describes Murad’s character. The English idiom ‘bull-headed’ also bears the same meaning as *keras kepala*.

- (9) “Dari dulu kau keras kepala begitu”. [‘You have always been stubborn’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 115)

4.1.10 *Omong kosong*

The idiom is found on page 145, line 3, as shown in (10). The idiom *omong kosong* means ‘something that one said was meaningless or deceitful’. The sentence above contextually means the performance of Abduh’s drama is more useful than the lies that some people tell to fool the people of Aceh.

- (10) “Pastinya pertunjukan drama Abduh itu lebih berguna daripada omong kosong yang semakin membuat rakyat Aceh yang bodoh ini bertambah bodoh”. [‘Indeed Abduh’s drama performance was more useful than the nonsenses that made the Acehese people fools even more stupid’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 145).

4.1.11 *Kepalang basah*

The idiom *kepalang basah* is found on page 148, line 3. This statement was spoken by Murad, and means ‘the damage is done’. Sentence (11) describes Murad’s condition that he has already gotten into an increasingly serious problem. After a few days of returning to Aceh, people of *Partai Merah* found out about him and tried to arrest him. Here Mukhtar talked to Imran about the weapon he used in the conflict time to protect himself after his presence was traced by *Partai Merah*.

- (11) “Sekarang aku sudah kepalang basah. Sedangkan situasi semakin gawat...” [‘I’m absurdly wet. While the situation is getting worse’] (Nur, 2017, p. 148)

4.1.12 *Luntang-lantung*

The idiom is found on page 156, line 11, as shown in (12). The idiom above describes someone who has no purpose in life or those who have no earnings. This sentence described a man, who looks like a beggar and earns his livelihood by delivering *ceramah liar*, literally translated as ‘wild speech’, meaning a mass-gathering speech. It is called so because to deliver a speech, one needs to have an authorized permit, in which he did not have.

- (12) “*Hidupnya luntang-lantung dan hanya mendapatkan nafkah dengan cara berceramah liar di sejumlah pasar*”. [His life has no purpose and only earns a living by giving mass-gathering speeches at some markets’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 156)

4.1.13 *Sumpah-serapah*

The idiom is found on page 174, line 27. The idiom *sumpah serapah* means various bad words accompanied by a curse or oath. The sentences above described *Partai Merah* members/well-wishers who cursed other road users with bad words, as shown in (13).

- (13) “*Perilaku hewan-hewan itu tidak jauh beda dengan orang-orang Partai Merah, yang begitu lepas, meloncat-loncat gasang menguasai jalan, bahkan pengguna jalan lain pun disumpah-serapah saat gerombolan kendaraan mereka melaju kencang*”. [‘Those animals behaviour are not much different from the *Partai Merah* people, who were so loose, jump around in control of the road, even other road users were cursed as the hordes of their vehicles speeding’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 174).

4.1.14 *Mata-mata*

The idiom is found on page 197, line 72. This statement was spoken by a petrol seller, as in (14).

- (14) “*Apakah kau membawa mata-mata?*” [‘Did you bring a spy with you?’] (Nur, 2017, p. 197)

The idiom above means ‘a person assigned to investigate secretly’. The sentence above was uttered when a petrol seller saw Dahli with Murad and thought he brought a spy with him when they stopped by to fill the gas of their vehicle.

4.1.15 *Rendah hati*

The idiom is found on page 204, line 1, as shown in (15). The idiom *rendah hati* means ‘someone who is not arrogant or humble’. Contextually, the idiom described people’s opinion about Murad who disguised himself as a *Tengku* (religious teacher).

- (15) “*Tengku sangat rendah hati sekali*”. [‘Tengku is very humble’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 204)

4.1.16 *Lidah api*

The idiom is found on page 48, line 26. This statement was spoken by Mukhtar, as in (16).

- (16) “*Lihat saja situasi saat ini, memang tidak kelihatan, tapi diam-diam keadaan semakin memanas, dan tak lama lagi bakal muncul lidah api yang menyala*”. [‘Just look at today’s situation, though it may look invisible, but the situation is getting heat up silently, and soon there will be a burning flare’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 48)

The idiom *lidah api* means ‘a triggered issue or something that fan the flames’. The sentence above means something bad is going to happen since there is a silent trigger that goes unnoticed and some people take it for granted.

4.1.17 *Lepas tangan*

The idiom is found on page 126, line 12. This statement was spoken by Aminah, as shown in (17). The idiom *lepas tangan* means to stop taking responsibility. Contextually, the statement is Aminah's request to Mukhtar to not give up his responsibility, and abandon her and their children.

- (17) “*Kau tak bisa lepas tangan begitu dan meninggalkan kami*”. [‘You can’t wash your hands clean and leave us’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 126).

4.1.18 *Jalan setapak*

This idiom is found on page 45, line 13. In English, *jalan setapak* is called ‘pathway’. The idiom of *jalan setapak* means ‘narrow road/a small road that cannot be passed by vehicles like motorcycles, cars, etc’. It is usually in villages or rural areas. In (18), the author explained the situation that was passed by the main character to illustrate the road that can only be passed by pedestrians.

- (18) “*Tak jauh dari situ, aku melalui jalan setapak berbelok ke barat dengan rumput liar tebal di kedua sisinya sehingga ujung celana jins-ku basah oleh tempelan embun*”. [‘Not far away, I went through a pathway turning west with thick weeds on both sides. It is so that the tips of my jeans were wet with dew’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 45)

4.1.19 *Membabi-buta*

The idiom is found on page 100, line 25. It does not mean a blind pig (*babi buta*), but the idiom *membabi-buta* intends to do something recklessly without thinking of the circumstances. This idiom is used to show the adverse effects that are done out of the control (lost control), such as presented in (19). Contextually, the meaning of the sentence describes Murad's daredevil acts and loss of control without estimating the risk because he was extremely angry.

- (19) “*Aku bergerak membabi-buta, melawan mereka seperti tingkah orang gila mengamuk*”. [‘I moved blindly, fighting them like a crazy man’s temper’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 100)

4.2 Idioms in the Form of Verb + Object/Complement/Adverb

O’Dell and McCarty (2017) mentioned that idioms can be in the form of verb+object/compliment/adverb. A verb is a word that represents an action, i.e., ‘to write’, ‘read’, ‘eat’, ‘drink’, etc. Adding to that, Cruse (2006) stated that verbs are elements that can display morphological contrasts of form, sound, aspect, mood, and numbers. It means that a verb can represent tenses of sentences like the present, past, or future. It can describe mood or feeling such as the verb ‘hate’, ‘like’, ‘love’, etc. Seven idioms in the form of verb+object/complement/adverb are found in the novel.

4.2.1 *Lupa diri*

This idiom is found on page 52, line 29. It was a conversation between Mukhtar and Murad who described a friend of theirs who has totally changed, as shown in (20).

- (20) “...*Si miskin itu sekarang sudah kaya, punya mobil, rumah besar, dan hidup layaknya orang terpandang yang lupa diri*”. [‘The poor man is now rich, has a car, a big house, and live like a respected person who forgets himself’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 52).

This idiom means ‘someone who is not aware of himself’. Here, Murad used the idiom to describe their old friends who used to be a comrade in ‘the army’, had become rich men now and had good positions in the *Partai Merah*. Mukhtar used *lupa diri* to emphasize his disappointment because the once ‘comrades’ had forgotten their struggling time and pretended not to know them.

4.2.2 *Mempertaruhkan nyawa*

This idiom is found on page 54, line 26. This statement was spoken by Mukhtar. It means ‘to risk a life’. From the contextual meaning, Mukhtar explained his present life from the remnants of his past struggles. In sentence (21), risking life referred to how Mukhtar and Murad used to fight as combatants and hold status as *Partai Merah* members. They should have become ‘respected officials’ and lived prosperously since *Partai Merah* has become the ruling government post the conflict era. Sadly, Mukhtar was only a father who fed his family as a fisherman afterward.

- (21) “*Beginilah kehidupanku sekarang, buah perjuangan kita dulu mempertaruhkan nyawa di hutan.*” [‘This is my life now, the outcome of struggle in risking my life in the forest’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 54)

4.2.3 *Naik daun*

This idiom is found on page 57, line 24. This statement was spoken by Mukhtar. Sentence (22) does not literally mean someone who is climbing up a leaf (*naik daun*), although it is quite amusing to see. In the Indonesian language, the idiom of *naik daun* means something or someone currently in fashion or going famous. Contextually, the sentence depicts how Mukhtar explained the situation that Murad had gone viral with the problem he was facing.

- (22) “...*Fotomu begitu besar tertempel di halaman muka dan ada di mana-mana, mirip artis yang sedang naik daun!*” [‘Your picture is huge, it is published on the front page of the newspaper and everywhere else, like a rising star’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 54)

4.2.4 *Berutang budi*

This idiom is found on page 123, line 25. This statement was spoken by Murad, as shown in (23).

- (23) “*Demikianpun, aku tidak merasa berutang budi padanya*”. [‘Even so, I don’t feel I owe him a favor’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 123)

The idiom *berutang budi* means ‘a kindness should be returned’. In English, it is similar to ‘owe a favor or indebted’. In this context, the sentence above explained that Murad thought he did not need to repay Hadi Kriet’s kindness because Hadi Kriet once owed him a favor and it is also because Murad knew Hadi Kriet too well; he was a notorious cheapskate as his nickname *kriet* means ‘stingy’ in Acehese to describe his personality.

4.2.5 Naik darah

This idiom is found on page 178, line 20. This statement was spoken by Imran, as presented in (24). The idiom *naik darah* in the Indonesian language means ‘get angry’. Imran refused Murad’s request for a gun and stated that he could easily lose his temper when he holds a weapon.

- (24) “*Aku tidak yakin. Kau cepat naik darah kalau pegang senjata...*” [‘I am not sure. You get angry easily if you hold a weapon’.] (Nur, 2017, p. 178)

4.2.6 Lalu-lalang

The idiom was found on page 117, line 24, as depicted in (25). The meaning of the *lalu-lalang* idiom is ‘passing by’ (walking, passing, and so on), or coming in and out. Contextually, the sentence above explained a crowded traffic condition.

- (25) “*Kendaraan itu terus melaju di jalan yang kini telah ramai oleh lalu-lalang kereta, mobil sedan, bus penumpang, dan truk angkutan barang*”. [‘The vehicle keeps moving on the road which is now crowded with motorcycles, sedan cars, buses and trucks passing by’] (Nur, 2017, p. 117)

4.2.7 Berpecah-belah

The idiom is found on page 156, line 27. This statement was spoken by a man giving a speech on the market street. The idiom *berpecah-belah* means ‘disunited’. The meaning of the sentence in (26) is to remind people that Allah would not grant a prayer if the people are disunited.

- (26) “*...Bagaimana mungkin Allah bisa mengabulkan doa semacam itu bila umat Islam sendiri senang bertengkar dan hidup berpecah-belah?*” [‘How can Allah grant such prayers if Muslims fight against each other and live disunited?’] (Nur, 2017, p. 156)

4.2.8 Berbunga-bunga

The idiom is found on page 243, line 15, as shown in (27). The idiom *berbunga-bunga* means ‘extremely happy’. Murad was describing his feeling to a girl. It happened when Murad was walking around the village, he saw a girl who caught his attention, and the girl looked back at Murad and smiled.

- (27) “*Setiap kali pandangan kami bertemu, dia melayangkan senyuman yang membuat hatiku berbunga-bunga*”. [‘Every time our eyes met, she gave me a smile that made my heart happy.’] (Nur, 2017, p. 243)

4.3 Idioms in the Form of Simile

A simile is an expression that compares two things that include the words ‘as’ or ‘like’. O’Dell and McCarty (2017) state that the use of similes in spoken and written English makes the comparisons more colourful and more powerful. For example, ‘as dry as a bone’ means very dry indeed, and ‘as fit as a fiddle’ means perfectly well (O’Dell & McCarty, 2017). The following are similes found in *Tanah Surga Merah* novel.

4.3.1 *Kepalanya sama keras dengan kepalamu*

The meaning of *kepalanya sama keras dengan kepalamu* is to describe two people who have the same character; stubborn. A stubborn person is someone difficult to handle as he/she is persistent and will not listen to other people's opinions. Hadi Kriet made this statement on page 117, line 1, as shown in (28).

(28) "*Kepalanya sama keras dengan kepalamu*". ['His head is as hard as yours'.] (Nur, 2017, p. 117)

4.3.2 *Tubuhku kaku seperti patung*

The statement is found on page 134, line 23. Sentence (29) means 'not moving at all'. It describes Murad's condition as a reaction of surprise or shock. The sentence illustrated how Murad did not move at all because of a hug from his old friend, Imran, when they met again after being separated for so long.

(29) "*Tubuhku kaku seperti patung*". ['My body is stiff like a statue'.] (Nur, 2017, p. 134)

4.3.3 *Kau muncul disini seperti hantu saja!*

The statement uttered by Mukhtar on page 48, line 9, as presented in (3), literally means someone who suddenly appears and disappears. Contextually, the sentence describes Murad when he came unexpectedly to meet his friend, Mukhtar.

(30) "*Kau muncul disini seperti hantu saja!*" ['You appear here like a ghost'.] (Nur, 2017, p. 48)

This research finding is similar to Sabrina's (2019) finding which analysed the types of idiom based on O'Dell and McCarty's (2017) framework and the translation strategy proposed by Baker (2018) in the Indonesian version of 'The Life We Bury' novel. She found the same number of similes as found in '*Tanah Surga Merah*' novel which was three similes. Translation by paraphrasing is a similar strategy applied in translating idioms in both studies.

5. CONCLUSION

'*Tanah Surga Merah*' is an award-winning novel describing the political, social, and cultural situation in Aceh after the post-peace agreement of the free Aceh movement with the Indonesian government in 2005. This novel is rich with figurative expressions particularly idioms to express Arafat Nur's critics, opinions, and concerns through his main character, Murad, and other supporting characters. Nearly all of the characters in the novel use idioms in their conversations; Mukhtar, Murad, Imran, Nanda, Hadi Kriet, the man giving a speech at the market, and the petrol seller. The intended use of the idioms in the novel was to indicate a situation such as *naik daun*, *kepalang basah*, *luntang-lantung*, etc. The other purpose was to show the characters or emotions of a person such as *hidung belang*, *pahlawan kesiangan*, *lupa diri*, *rendah hati*, *lapang dada*, etc. It can be concluded that the function of idioms found in the novel is to emphasize statements, conditions/situations, emotions, and/or characters.

The research results showed that idioms in the form of compounds are more widely used in the '*Tanah Surga Merah*' novel as there are 19 idioms found. From our perspectives, compound idioms are widely used because they can describe characters, events, and situations in a more attractive way and are contextually comprehensible. On the other hand, idioms in the form of similes are the least found. There are only three similes. A simile is an expression that compares two things by using the word 'as' or 'like'. The use of similes in spoken and written English is to make the sentences more attractive and the comparison is more powerful.

After conducting a thorough and measurable study on the types of idioms in the '*Tanah Surga Merah*' novel, it can be concluded that there are three types of idiom found with 30 idioms in total. There are eight idioms in the form of verb+object/complement/adverb or 27% of the share, 19 idioms in the form of compound, which is the most frequent type of idiom used with a percentage of 63%. Lastly, there were only three idioms in the form of simile, or 10% of the share. Idioms in the form of prepositional verbs, binomial (word+word), trinomial (word+word+word), and whole clauses or sentence were not found in the novel. In a nutshell, the contextual meaning of those idioms in the novel varied based on the situations and the contexts which function to describe feelings, emotions, and conditions in conversations.

As every study needs further analysis for advancement, this study comes not without limitations. This study does not provide a detailed elaboration on the word root of each Indonesian idiom used in the novel and how they have transformed into idioms. Moreover, as the idioms' meaning is translated by using a paraphrasing strategy, it is not possible to come up with one single-fixed meaning in the target language. Although there are some idiomatic expressions in the novel resemble those of the target language (English), there are still idioms remaining unexplored.

REFERENCES

- Baghana, J., Voloshina, T. G., Novakova, K. S., & Chernova, O. O. (2021). English idioms peculiarities in political discourse (Based on British and American media). *XLinguae*, 14(2), 129-141.
- Baker, M. (1992). *In other words: A course book on translation* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Baker, M. (2011). *In other words: A course book on translation* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Baker, M. (2018). *In other words: A course book on translation* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Chaer, A. (1993). *Kamus Idiom Bahasa Indonesia*. [Indonesian idiom dictionary]. Nusa Indah.
- Cooper, T. C. (1999). Teaching idioms. *Foreign Language Annals*, 31(2), 255-266.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Cruse, A. (2006). *A glossary of semantics and pragmatics*. Edinburgh University Press Ltd.
- Fromkin, V., Rodman, R., & Hyams, N. M. (2007). *An introduction to language* (6th ed.). Harcourt Brace College Publisher.
- Hornby, A. S. (2015). *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary* (9th ed.). Oxford University Press.

- Liontas, J. I. (2015). Developing idiomatic competence in the ESOL classroom: A pragmatic account. *Tesol Journal*, 6(4), 621-658. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.230>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2018). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. SAGE Publications. Inc.
- Nida, E. A., & Taber, C. R. (1969). *The theory and practice of [Biblical] translation*. Brill.
- Nur, A. (2017). *Tanah Surga Merah*. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- O'Dell, F. & McCarty, M. J. (2002). *English collocation in use*. Cambridge University Press.
- O'Dell, F., & McCarty, M. J. (2017). *English idioms in use advanced with answers: Vocabulary reference and practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Palmer, F. R. (1976). *Semantics: A new outline*. Cambridge University Press.
- Prihatiwi, J. (2010). *A translation analysis of English idiomatic expression in "The Diary of a Young Girl (The Definitive Edition)" translated into "Catatan Harian Anne Frank (Edisi Paling Lengkap)"* [Associate degree's final report, Universitas Sebelas Maret]. Sebelas Maret University Institutional Repository. <https://digilib.uns.ac.id/dokumen/detail/22646>
- Putri, D. I., Widisanti, N. M., & Rejeki, S. (2021). Types of idioms and strategies in translating idioms in the novel *The Girl on The Train* by Paula Hawkins. *Journal Albion: Journal of English Literature, Language, and Culture*, 3(2), 39-45. <https://doi.org/10.33751/albion.v3i2.4530>
- Rozikin, A., Kasmains, K., & Lubis, A. A. (2021). Idiomatic expressions analysis in Joker movie. *Journal of English Education and Teaching*, 5(4), 594-608. <https://doi.org/10.33369/jeet.5.4.594-608>
- Sabrina, G. R. (2019). *The translation strategy of English-Indonesian idiomatic expression in The Life We Bury novel By Hilmi Akmal* [Bachelor's thesis, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta]. Institutional Repository UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/49078>
- Spears, R. A. (2000). *American idiom dictionary* (3rd ed.). NTC Publishing Group.
- Walker, R. (2003). *The new international webster's comprehensive dictionary of the English language*. Trident Press International.
- Zaid, M. A. (2019). *An analysis of idiomatic expressions used by characters in Hotel Transylvania movie* [Unpublished master's thesis]. UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten.