

# *Chengyu* Translation Techniques in Web Novel *Di Yi Qi Shao*

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**Abstract.** The translation is a process of transferring meaning from the source language to the target language. The translation process itself requires appropriate translation techniques in order to produce an acceptable translation in source language. Likewise, idiom or *chengyu* has its own translation techniques. This study aims to analyze the *chengyu* translation technique in the Chinese web novel “*Di Yi Qi Shao*” which has been translated to the Indonesian version called “*Menantu Palsu*” using the idiom translation theory introduced by Nida and Taber which are from idioms to non-idioms; from idioms to idioms; and from non-idioms to idioms. This research is a qualitative descriptive analysis using the content analysis technique as a data analysis technique. The research uses the idiom translation method from Nida and Taber as a reference. The data of this study consists of 196 *chengyu* contained in chapter 1 until chapter 25 of the web novel. The study results showed that 155 *chengyu* (79.08%) were translated from idioms to non-idioms technique and six *chengyu* (3.06%) were translated by from idioms-to-idioms technique. Apart from using those two techniques, 35 *chengyu* (17.86%) were not translated. The results of the study also show that in the process of translation, there is a similar *chengyu*, each being translated by the same translation technique, but there is also a similar *chengyu* on several occurrences: some were not translated. In addition, there are similar *chengyu* which on its several occurrences, were translated by similar techniques but resulted in different translations.

**Keywords:** *Chengyu, Idioms, Translation, Translation Techniques, Web Novel*

Received 14 October 2021 | Revised 24 April 2022 | Accepted 26 April 2022

## 1 Introduction

The translation is one form of communication and the translation is also a solution for issues that involve a difference in language. In the translation process, the original language is called as the source language. The translated language is called the target language; text from the source language is called the source text, and text from the target language is the target text. Newmark (1988, p. 5) defines translation from two separate perspectives. On one side, translation is considered as an activity or process of changing one language to another, while on the other side, translation is considered as a difficult and complex process.

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In an era of informational technology development, nowadays, translation products are commonly shown in various forms of application, for instance a web novel. According to the online Indonesian Dictionary V (KBBI V), a web novel is an online published novel, taking the form of the web page, downloadable file, or other electronic forms.

One of the applications that serves web novels was “NovelMe.” This novel reading application provides works of domestic writers of Indonesian web novels along with works of a foreign writers such as Mandarin translated to Indonesian novels. The translation in this context aims to transfer meaning from a previously Mandarin novel into Indonesian.

According to *Xiandai Hanyu Cidian*, *chengyu* is a phrase or clause with a consistent structure, concise, and full of meaning passed down from generations. Most *chengyu* in Mandarin consists of four characters, and *Chengyu* contains Chinese cultural elements. Therefore, the terms *chengyu* does not have an equivalent meaning in the Indonesian language. In this research, *chengyu* will remain in the source language and not be translated. However, *chengyu* is an idiomatic expression, the discussion regarding the translation of *chengyu* in this research will apply theories relating to translation.

Wang (in Stoch, 2016, p. 52) attempted to define *chengyu* by comparing it to *yanyu*. According to Wang, *chengyu* is a consistent idiomatic expression that attempts to express a general thought and can only be a part of a sentence. At the same time, *yanyu* is an idiomatic expression that is a full sentence, independent, and able to explain something more detailed. Huang (2016, p. 125) posits the similarity and difference between *chengyu* and the Indonesian idiom. According to Huang, many *chengyu* and Indonesian idiom came from the native speaker and passed through generations. The difference between *chengyu* and Indonesian idiom is *chengyu* tends to consist of four characters and come from a written source. In contrast, the Indonesian script consists of two words and is passed down verbally.

Several techniques apply in translating idiom; Baker (2012, p. 77-87) stated that there is six technique of idioms translation, they are: (1) using an idiom of similar meaning (translating into an idiom at the target language that owns a similar meaning); (2) using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form (translating into the idiom at target language with similar meaning but different form); (3) borrowing the source language idiom (translating by borrowing idiom from source language); (4) translation by paraphrase (translating by paraphrasing idiom from source language); (5) translation by the omission of a play on idiom (translating idiom with the same form, but ignoring the meaning it holds); dan (6) translation of entire idiom (to not translate the idiom).

Different from Baker, Nida and Taber (1982, p. 106) posits three techniques of translating idiom, they are:

### 1.1 From idioms to non-idioms

Technique of translating idiom into a non-idiom form to send the content of the idiom to target language. This technique applies when the idiom from the source language has no exact translation in the target language. The writer exemplifies the usage with the following: *chengyu* 幸灾乐祸 *Xingzai-lehuo* if translated to Indonesian through paraphrasing becomes *tertawa di atas penderitaan orang lain* “laughing at the suffering of others.”

### 1.2 From idioms to idioms

Translation technique by translating idiom to an idiom form, if the idiom has an equivalent in the target language. The writer exemplifies the use of the technique as the following: *chengyu* 幸灾乐祸 *Xingzai-lehuo*, if translated into Indonesian becomes *bergendang paha* “drumming on the thigh.”

### 1.3 From non-idioms to idioms

A technique focusing on searching the equivalent of the idiom from source language to target language in non-idiom format. This technique is applied so that the translated form is sound. The writer exemplify by the following: the Mandarin sentence 那家公司倒闭了! *Na jia gongsi daobi le!* translated to Indonesian into *Perusahaan itu sudah gulung tikar!* “That company closed down” and the Indonesian sentence is *Wajahnya memerah tersipu.* translated to Mandarin into 她羞得面红耳赤。 *Ta xiu de mianhong erchi* “She blushed with shame.”

The focus of this technique is to translate *chengyu* consisted of the Mandarin novel “*Di Yi Qi Shao*” into an Indonesian novel titled “*Menantu Palsu*.” The main aim of the research is to analyze the translation technique used to translate *chengyu* in the web novel “*Di Yi Qi Shao*” into Indonesian novel titled “*Menantu Palsu*.” The result of the research is to broaden the knowledge of *chengyu* and its translation techniques and contribute to the development of books or teaching materials, especially for courses related to Mandarin translation.

## 2 Method

This research is a qualitative descriptive analysis using the content analysis technique as a data analysis technique. The research uses the idiom translation method from Nida and Taber as reference. The translation technique used to analyze the data is the from idioms to non-idioms and from idioms-to-idioms technique.

This research data is *chengyu* with four characters consisting in the web novel “Di Yi Qi Shao” chapter 1 until 25. *Chengyu* in the novel is reviewed based on the entry of the *chengyu* in *Chengyu Quanjie Cidian*. The data acquisition technique in this research is the reading and note-taking technique. The writer investigates *chengyu* directly in the web novel “Di Yi Qi Shao” and the Indonesian translation version.

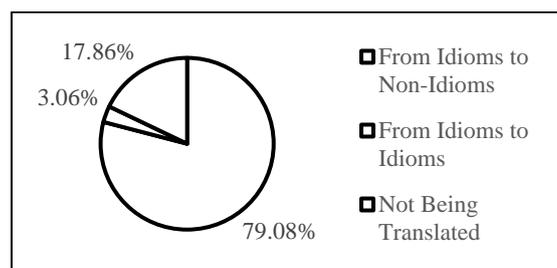
The research data of the *chengyu* have different data numbers. The data numbers consist of two numbers, the first digit of the data number is the location or the chapter where it is found, while the second digit is the data number of when the *chengyu* appears in the chapter.

### 3 Results and Discussion

The amount of *chengyu* in the web novel “Di Yi Qi Shao” chapter 1 until 25 without counting its appearance frequency is 142 in total. The overall *chengyu* and the chapters while counting the appearance frequency is 196.

From 142 *chengyu* founded in the web novel *Di Yi Qi Shao* chapter 1 until 25, 109 *chengyu* only appears once, while 33 appears more than once. The frequency of the *chengyu* with more than one appearance varies, the minimum is twice while the most are nine times.

Out of the 196 *chengyu* in the web novel *Di Yi Qi Shao*, 155 *chengyu* (79.08%) is translated using *from idioms to non-idioms* technique, only six *chengyu* (3.06%) are translated with *from idioms-to-idioms* technique. The writer also found that 35 *chengyu* (17.86%) were not being translated.



**Figure 1** *Chengyu* Translation Techniques Used in *Di Yi Qi Shao*

As mentioned above, 33 *chengyu* appears more than once; it is found that there is a similar *chengyu*, each of them is translated using the same technique, but differs in the result of the translation.

**Table 1.** Similar *Chengyu* with Different Translation Results

<i>Chengyu</i>	Data Numbers	Translation Result
不可思议	2.5	<i>“ragu”</i>
	8.4	<i>“tidak percaya”</i>
	9.5	<i>“kaget”</i>
	11.1	<i>“tercengang”</i>
	11.9	<i>“tidak bisa mengucapkan sepatah kata pun”</i>
	14.1	<i>“tercengang dan kaget”</i>
	16.7	<i>“tatapan kagum yang luar biasa”</i>
	21.1	<i>“terkejut tak menyangka”</i>
	21.2	<i>“tak percaya”</i>
	不知不觉	11.7
13.2		<i>“tanpa sadar”</i>
16.11		<i>“langsung”</i>
18.1		<i>“tanpa sadar”</i>
18.5		<i>“tanpa sadar”</i>
耿耿于怀	6.2	<i>“masih bisa mengingatnya”</i>
	9.4	<i>“mengingat dengan jelas”</i>
见死不救	1.8	<i>“sama sekali tidak mau membantu”</i>
	16.4	<i>“menolak menyelamatkan”</i>
理所应当	1.3	<i>“termasuk suatu hal yang pantas dilakukan”</i>
	1.5	<i>“pantas”</i>
	1.6	<i>“termasuk satu hal yang tepat”</i>
面红耳赤	24.2	<i>“merah karena malu”</i>
	25.2	<i>“memerah karena malu”</i>

<b>Chengyu</b>	<b>Data Numbers</b>	<b>Translation Result</b>
	25.5	<i>“semakin malu”</i>
面面相觑	7.1	<i>“saling memandang”</i>
	10.6	<i>“saling memandang satu sama lain”</i>
目瞪口呆	6.6	<i>“tercengang”</i>
	7.2	<i>“tertegun seketika”</i>
判若两人	9.2	<i>“jauh berbeda”</i>
	13.1	<i>“berubah dalam sekejap mata”</i>
倾家荡产	4.6	<i>“hancur dan bangkrut”</i>
	7.9	<i>“akhir dari hidup”</i>
	7.10	<i>“bangkrut”</i>
生龙活虎	5.1	<i>“sangatlah sehat”</i>
	24.5	<i>“kembali muda”</i>
手足无措	10.4	<i>“buru-buru”</i>
	25.3	<i>“tidak tahu harus bersikap seperti apa”</i>
数一数二	3.3	<i>“terbesar”</i>
	9.7	<i>“besar dan terkenal”</i>
提心吊胆	12.4	<i>“bekerja dengan sangat keras”</i>
	17.4	<i>“khawatir”</i>
信誓旦旦	17.1	<i>“yakin”</i>
	21.7	<i>“bersumpah”</i>
一清二楚	8.6	<i>“jelas”</i>
	11.10	<i>“tahu”</i>
	18.2	<i>“tahu”</i>
战战兢兢	18.6	<i>“gemetar”</i>

<i>Chengyu</i>	Data Numbers	Translation Result
	20.5	“ <i>gemetar</i> ”
	1.9	“ <i>menyindir satu sama lain</i> ”
	15.1	“ <i>membantah ataupun berkata kasar</i> ”

#### 4 Conclusion

The idiom translation technique by Nida and Taber used to translate *chengyu* in the web novel *Di Yi Qi Shao* consists of idioms to non-idioms translation technique at 155 *chengyu*, (79.08%) and from idioms-to-idioms translation technique at six *chengyu* (3.06%). Aside from those two techniques, 35 *chengyu* (17.86%) in the novel is not translated.

The commonly used technique is *from idioms to non-idioms technique*, which more than 75% use. In translating *chengyu*, the translator tends to translate *chengyu* with a simple and concise method, paraphrasing or translating the *chengyu* into words so the message implied can be easily transferred.

Out of the 33 *chengyu* that appears more than once, the writer finds 24 similar *chengyu*, each translated with a similar technique. However, the writer finds nine *chengyu* translated in several appearances, and some remain untranslated. The nine *chengyu*, in its several appearances went through different translation processes are the following: 不慌不忙 *bu huang bu mang*, 不知不觉 *buzhi-bujue*, 灰头土脸 *huitou tulian*, 恼羞成怒 *nao-xiu cheng nu*, 手足无措 *shou-zu wucuo*, 添油加醋 *tianyou-jiacu*, 一清二楚 *yi qing er chu*, 议论纷纷 *yilun fenfen*, and 众目睽睽 *zhongmu kuikui*.

Aside from the findings above, 18 similar *chengyu* at several appearance is translated with the same translation technique but produce a different result. Those *chengyu* are the following: 不可思议 *buke siyi*, 不知不觉 *buzhi bujue*, 耿耿于怀 *genggeng yu huai*, 见死不救 *jian si bu jiu*, 理所应当 *li suo yingdang*, 面红耳赤 *mianhong erchi*, 面面相觑 *mianmian xiang qu*, 目瞪口呆 *mudeng koudai*, 判若两人 *pan ruo liangren*, 倾家荡产 *qingjia dangchan*, 生龙活虎 *shenglong huohu*, 手足无措 *shou-zu wucuo*, 数一数二 *shu yi shu er*, 提心吊胆 *tixin-diaodan*, 信誓旦旦 *xinshi dandan*, 一清二楚 *yi qing er chu*, 战战兢兢 *zhanzhan jingjing*, and 针锋相对 *zhenfeng xiangdui*.

The writer finds that there is *chengyu* with equivalents in Indonesian. However, the translator does not use the equivalents. For example: (1) 肆无忌惮 *si wu jidan*, which is equivalent to *berlantas angan*; (2) 低三下四 *disan xiasi*, which is equivalent to the idiom *berhina diri*; (3) 挑拨离间 *tiaobo li jian* that is equivalent with the idiom *mempertajam sanding*; (4) 议论纷纷 *yilun fenfen* that is equivalent with the idiom *buah bibir*; (5) 手足无措 *shou-zu wucuo* that is equivalent with the idiom *kebakaran janggut*; (6) 平易近人 *pingyi jin ren* that is equivalent with the idiom *berleher lembut*; (7) 无所事事 *wu suo shishi* that is equivalent with the idiom *bertopang dagu*; and several other *chengyu*.

The analysis of the background on choosing the following translation technique, along with an equivalent analysis of *chengyu* with idiomatic expression, can be analyzed further within the next research.

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