

**THE APATHY HEADED FOR JAPANESE PROPAGANDA  
IN IDRUS' *HEIHO*<sup>1</sup>: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

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**Abstract**

Idrus was a noteworthy writer in Indonesian in the course of Japanese authority. His fight in being rebellious counter to the regime at that period was noticeable through his writings, which made him familiar as a frank writer. His works were then translated into English. The translated works, nevertheless, do not communicate precisely the analogous implication as they were in the source language. Putting on Zepetnek's Expressive Mechanisms in analyzing Idrus' *Heiho* is advantageous in this study in accepting whether the messages in the text to be translated (TT1) are well informed in the translated text (TT2). The results show that the TT2 of Idrus' *Heiho* is not able to send detailed apathy headed for Japanese propaganda as it was in the TT1. Cultural and period gaps are worth mentioning to be reflected in the interpretation process.

**Keywords:** comparative studies, Idrus' *Heiho*, expressive mechanisms, apathy, Japanese propaganda

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## INTRODUCTION

Reading literary works is able to take along the readers to a time journey in which the readers are capable to gain information on the language, olden times, sociology, anthropology, natural features, and political affairs at that period. As Mahayana stated in Idrus (2010), literary works may contain factual records written not only to support the plot, but also to be the sociological and chronological manuscript. For instance, by understanding the story of Siti Nurbaya, the person who reads will be able to gain the awareness on exactly how unhappy the Indonesian womenfolk at that time of being discriminated and unable to be what they actually wanted to be. Such comprehension can likewise be perceived in Idrus' *Dari Ave Maria ke Jalan Lain ke Roma*, in which the readers might be able to be encouraged by the patriotism at that time (Idrus, 2010, p. vi).

During the course of the Japanese power, Idrus composed "*Corat – Corat di Bawah Tanah*", a compilation of short stories in which he depicted Indonesians' day-to-day lifetime by means of his lifelike and satirist style (Jassin in Idrus, 2010). One of the short stories in the compilation is entitled *Heiho*. *Heiho* was a troop created by Japanese colonial government as a means of propaganda for voicing their position as "the older brother" of all the countries in the Far East that would help them get rid of the western colonizers from Asia. Many people at time were trapped into the idea that *Heiho* could be a way for them to show their Japanese propaganda. Idrus, on the other way around was aware of the fact that it was only the Japanese way of getting more people to back up their soldiers at the front lines. In a way, *Heiho* was the tool for Idrus to rise his reader's awareness of how Japanese manipulated people by attacking the feeling

of Japanese propaganda. That is why, in the story Idrus sounds cynical about the position. Along the way the storyline, Idrus portrayed *Heiho* as a lowly respected position. The main character, Kartono joined *Heiho* based on his idea that it is a way to fight for his nation. However, his wife considered being a height was nothing to be proud and his boss also showed no enthusiasm when Kartono asked him for a testimonial letter. Irony is a suitable term to describe Kartono's situation. At the end of the story, it was told that Kartono was deceased in a battle not in the name of Indonesia, but only as one victim of Japanese's lie. Miserably, nearly at the same time, his wife was married to a new man.

*Idrus' Heiho* was published in *Pantja Raja*. This writing was considered as a controversial script for illustrating *Heiho* as an unfortunate profession, consequently, in November 1946, an ex-*Heiho* directed a letter to the publisher affirming that Idrus' short story humiliated the profession of *Heiho* (Prabowo in Idrus, 2010). Later, *Idrus' Heiho* was translated by D.W. Roskies and published in 2015 by Lontar Foundation. Will this translated version be able to transfer the precise apathy towards Japanese propaganda as it was seen in the source text? This study is going to respond this question by applying translation as comparative studies.

There are two previous studies used in this paper as references. The first is entitled *Muatan Politik Propaganda Jepang dalam Cerpen dan Drama Karya Idrus (A Political Content of Propaganda of Japanese Colonial in Idrus' Short Stories and Drama)*. In this study, the practices of Japanese propaganda are exposed in Idrus's *Ave Maria* and *Kejahatan Membalas Dendam (The Revenge)* by means of Gramsci's hegemony theory. The result of the analysis shows that Idrus's works written in the Japanese colonization had many

of political contents. Indonesian had to work hard to assist Japan in the war with Ally, in order to achieve Indonesian independence, as Japanese government at that time had promised it. The second previous study has been done by Ferdinal (2013). In his study, Ferdinal concludes that Idrus criticized both the government and the people. *Heiho*, according to Ferdinal, satirizes Indonesians who joined Heiho, an institution consisting of Indonesians who supported Japanese soldiers for the period of World War 2. The preceding studies are significant in assisting the writers in scrutinizing Idrus' *Heiho* although the approach and the theories executed are not the same. Therefore, this study is noteworthy to richen the studies in literature, especially those related to translation as comparative studies.

## METHODOLOGY

As Bassnett (2005) identified, once perceived as a marginal activity, translation has been perceived as a mechanical rather than a creative process. Currently, translation began to be perceived as an essential action of human interchange. Formerly understood as a sub branch of linguistics, translation at present is observed as an interdisciplinary study and the unbreakable linking between language and way of life has become a vital theme of academic consideration. Bassnett (2002) also identified that translation studies is undeniably a discipline in its own right, not simply a trivial division of comparative literary study. What is generally understood as translation involves the interpretation of a source language text into the target language to ensure that (1) the surface meaning of the two will be approximately similar and (2) the structures of the 'the text to be translated' (TT1) will be preserved as thoroughly as possible. Belloc (in Bassnet, 2005), moreover,

stated that the researcher should analyze idiom by idiom as well as intention by intention, considering that the meaning of a phrase in one language may be less or more emphatic than it is in another language.

## Expressive Mechanisms in Translation

To understand translation as comparative studies, the definition of expressive mechanisms proposed by Totosy de Zepetnek is significant. Totosy de Zepetnek stated that the subsequent techniques done by the translator are important to be considered in analyzing a translated literary work. (1) Expressive Individualization in which translational transformation strengthening the unique expressive features of 'the text to be translated' (TT1), as well as 'translator' (TP2)'s individual tendencies; (2) Expressive Leveling in which the elimination of unique expressive features of TT1 into 'translated text' (TT2). Some unique expressive features of TT1 may not be found in TT2. It might be uninvolved by TP2 for a number of considerations, which might be summed up as the incapability to find the equivalent sense in TT2; (3) Expressive Substitution in which the replacement of untranslatable expressive elements of TT1 with elements, which approximate these in expressive value in TT2; (4) Expressive Loss which is impoverishment of the expressive structure of TT1, consequently, it causes a whole loss of particular expressive elements or lines in TT2. In this type of expressive mechanism, the unique expression is not removed, but it is simplified, so that the expression in TT1 can have the identical sense in TT2.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Heiho* told about Kartono, an employee of an Indonesian workplace who got a little fee, which then initiated him to register as a Heiho

(this sequence was not overtly indicated in TT1, but it was exposed clearly in TT2). Later, he was accepted. As soon as his boss offered him a testimonial letter for his diligence, Kartono requested that memo to be written in Japanese. His boss was furious at him for the reason that he did not ponder that was essential. After having a clash with his boss, Kartono, then, went to the barracks and was given new clothes and shoes. At the street, people seeing he walked with his too-tight new shoes, gossiped him. Kartono went back home, and found that Miarti, his wife did not give the impression to be contented with Kartono's decision to be a *Heiho*. As a closing point, Kartono went back to the barrack, joining *Heiho*. Eight months later, he was dead in Burma, and Miarti was four-month pregnant by her new husband.

Although there was no irony portrayed in the title, for it simply stated the core of the theme: *Heiho*, this story actually contained the irony of being a *Heiho*. It told about an underpaid worker who was eager to improve his monetary condition as well as to show his Japanese propaganda by being a *Heiho*. In the story, it was only Kartono who had a desire to be a *Heiho*, and he believed that it was somewhat to be honored of. None of other

characters represented in the story appeared to be contented with that occupation. The clash between Kartono and his boss, the way people gossiped on Kartono, and his wife's unfaithfulness became an irony in which Idrus indirectly depicted two societal gaps in Indonesia: (1) those who were fanatical pro-independence and (2) those who were cynical to Japanese authority. A different miserable point was shown in the ending of the story in which Idrus covertly stated that being a *Heiho* was to some degree a mistaken decision. At the end of the story, it was told that Kartono was dead because of being a *Heiho*, while his ex-wife had a joyful life with a new man.

In the translation, TT2's plot did not have various modifications, except on Kartono's motive in registering as a *Heiho*. The other sequences were identical. The TT2 of Idrus' *HHeiho*, though, did not deliver the precise degree of irony and cynicism as they were in the TT1 as made known by the subsequent analysis.

### Expressive Individualization

The first expressive mechanism implemented in the translated version of Idrus' *Heiho* is expressive individualization as seen in Table 1.

Table 1  
*Expressive Individualization in Heiho*

TT1	TT2
(1) Akan tetapi penghargaan orang di atas belum juga kelihatan. Beberapa bulan yang telah lalu ia telah mencatatkan namanya untuk menjadi heiho... (p. 105)	(2) But was he appreciated by his superiors? Apparently not. <b>That was why</b> a few months back he'd put his name down as a heiho, ... (p.14)
(3) <b>Kepala kantor itu bukanlah seorang nasionalis.</b> Ia orang biasa saja yang mengutamakan <b>kemakmuran rumah tangga.</b> (p.106)	(4) Now this boss of his was no patriot. He was an ordinary man, who cared first food on the table for his family and <b>money in the bank.</b> (p.15)
(5) , mengapa bekerja di kantorku? Haruskah aku belajar bahasa Nippon pula,	(6) ..., <b>why the hell</b> are you working here? Bust a gut to learn Japanese on top of

membengkok – bengkokkan tanganku, hanya untuk menulis surat penghargaan? <b>Kalian semuanya sakit demam, malaria tropikal.</b> (p. 106)	everything else, just to write a testimonial letter for you? <b>You nationalists must have brain fever.</b> (p. 15)
(7) Engkau tidak cinta kepadaku. Miarti (p. 109)	(8) “I see now that you don’t love me.” He said heavily, “ <b>otherwise you wouldn’t let me go</b> (p. 18)

Source: Idrus. *Dari Ave Maria ke Jalan Lain ke Roma*.2010. Jakarta: PT. Balai Pustaka; Lontar Foundation. *Oh, Oh, Oh!*2015. Jakarta: The Modern Library of Indonesia.

In Table 1 (1) and (2), it is comprehended that expressive individualization was applied in TT2. The expression “**that was why**” was used to underpin the motive why Kartono registered as a *Heiho*. This information, conversely, could not be found in TT1 in which Idrus in a straight line identified that Kartono registered as *Heiho* without clearing up the purpose. This one likewise created dissimilar sequence of event between TT1 and TT2. In TT1, Idrus implemented irony in which he let the person who read construct their individual presumption of Kartono’s being a *Heiho*. TT2, on the other hand, did not convey an irony for it itemized openly that Idrus registered as a *Heiho* for the reason that he desired the appreciation. The additional phrase “**that was why**” is used to toughen the information in TT2. Unfortunately, because of that, the apathy headed for *Heiho* as a symbol of Japanese propaganda was found stronger in TT2. By highlighting Kartono’s reason on the registering as a *Heiho* because of his financial problem, the TT2 cynically stated the Kartono’s motive is not purely as being a nationalist.

Another expressive individualization is implemented as seen in Table 1 (3) and (4) that describe Kartono’s boss. *Ia*, here refers to Kartono’s boss. Idrus depicted him explicitly as someone who was not a nationalist, and Idrus categorized him as that belonged to the

ordinary man (that mostly was concerned only on *kemakmuran rumah tangga* (family welfare). From this line, the researcher argues that this is the way Idrus wanted to differ Kartono from his boss to convey his cynicism against Japanese propaganda. The phrase *ordinary man*, was used as the depiction of the boss as the representative of most people in the society, who struggled to survive from the hardship in the time of Japanese occupation. Kartono, was depicted as having a different idea; someone who got the touch of patriotism and eventually was mocked as a walking alien at the end of the story. Idrus, in this case sarcastically humiliated the occupation of *Heiho* as somewhat illogical as a means of attacking the colonizer’s propaganda for putting the idea on head of the Indonesian that it was a proof for their love for their country. In TT2, the phrase ‘cared first for food on the table for his family and **money in the bank**’ was used, which according to the researcher it is a bit annoying for it does not fit with historical fact that people in Indonesia in 1945 almost certainly did not care on the quantity of money in the bank, for banks were customarily used by merchants or rich societies ([https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bank di Indonesia#Sejarah Bank Pemerintah](https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bank_di_Indonesia#Sejarah_Bank_Pemerintah)). Another thing that makes it bring different degree of cynicism from TT1 is that the phrase modifies Kartono’s boss as an ordinary man in today’s

context, not in the context of Indonesia's situation under the Japanese colonialization. It could also be assumed that in this case, TP2 had his personal tendencies to make this sequence clearer for 'the reader of the translated text' (RR2). Unfortunately, TP2 did not seem to convey the actual condition as the background of the story in TT1. Therefore, the degree of irony and cynicism was not the equal between TT1 and TT2. TT2 did not carry as pitiable condition as it was in TT1.

Once more, an expressive individualization is found in *Heiho*. An expression was added by TP2, as seen in Table 4.6.1 (5) and (6). The expression '*mengapa bekerja di kantorku?*' was translated into '**why the hell** are you working here?' It is, accordingly, assumed that the level of annoyance carried in TT2 was greater than it was in TT1, exposed by the phrase '**why the hell...**' of which the original version did not send such saying. Therefore, the degree of cynicism shown by Kartono's boss' anger could not be found in TT1. This expression was added perhaps to preserve societal bound, it was to assist the 'readers of TT2' (RR2) to visualize how furious Kartono's boss at that time was. Then, in the progression of translation, expressive individualization was applied to reinforce this expressive feature.

Yet again, expressive individualization is executed in Table 1 (5) and (6). It can be grasped from the last sentence, "Kalian semuanya sakit demam malaria tropical" that was translated into "You nationalists must

have brain fever". The use of demam malaria tropical is very interesting for Idrus wanted to express his sarcastic idea on categorizing those who joined Heiho as sick persons, not physically but mentally. However, the type of illness chosen by Idrus was typically one that was only found in tropical countries, like Indonesia. This kind of disease was considered a fatal illness at that time. Thus, the depiction of the mental illness (for choosing Heiho as the occupation) was very strong in TT1. The historical context, however, is not found since the translator (once again) used more of his common sense instead of being faithful with the context of the original text.

Another expressive individualization is found in *Heiho*, as seen in Table 1 (7) and (8). There was a translational transformation strengthening unique expressive features of TT1. In TT2, there was an extra clarification on the situation if Miarti really loved Kartono seen in the expression "**otherwise you wouldn't let me go...**" which could not be found in TT1. The apathy towards being Heiho was stronger in TT2 in which *Heiho*, as a "nationalist" was depicted as someone who was always unfortunate, even more, he did not have a true love.

### Expressive Leveling

Besides expressive individualization, which is found in Sub-Chapter 4.6.1, the translation version of Idrus' *Heiho* conveyed also expressive leveling as seen in the next explanation.

Table 2  
*Expressive Leveling in Heiho*

TT1	TT2
(1) Kelihatannya kepala kantor tidak dapat menahan nafsu marahnya. <b>Perkataannya yang diucapkannya putus – putus</b>	(2) The boss was finding it hard to control himself. (p. 15)

<b>seperti tulisan Nippon</b> (p. 106)	
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Source: Idrus. *Dari Ave Maria ke Jalan Lain ke Roma*.2010. Jakarta: PT. Balai Pustaka; Lontar Foundation. *Oh, Oh, Oh!*2015. Jakarta: The Modern Library of Indonesia.

Expressive leveling was implemented in the TT2 of Idrus' *Heiho* as stated in Table 2 (1) and (2). It was perceived that there was an elimination of TT1's unique expressive features. The translation of "*Perkataannya yang diucapkannya putus – putus seperti tulisan Nippon,*" which we could point out to be one of irreplaceable expressive feature in TT1, could not be found in TT2. There was no further clarification on how "the boss was finding it hard to control himself", thus the explanation of the boss' annoyance was simplified in TT2. On the other hand, it was

defined clearly in TT1 on how he was so angry that he could not express smoothly. As a result, the point of apathy towards being a *Heiho* could be found in TT1, in which Idrus analogized the boss' madness with Japanese handwriting, could not be found in TT2.

### Expressive Loss

The translated version of Idrus' *Heiho* conveyed also expressive loss as one of its expressive mechanism which can be found in the next table.

Table 3  
*Expressive Loss in Heiho*

TT1	TT2
(1) Kartono sedang asyik bekerja. <b>Dadanya bengkok seperti akal orang Nippon.</b> (p. 105)	(2) Kartono was hard at work, bent over in a <b>plausible imitation of a Japanese.</b> (p.14)
(3) <b>Tolol dan pandir.</b> (p. 108)	(4) <b>You've got it all wrong,</b> you've got to realize the times we're living in!" (p.18)
(5) Kartono <b>mengeluh panjang seperti perempuan hamil.</b> Jangat di keningnya berkerinyut pula (109)	(6) Kartono <b>complained long and loud,</b> and his forehead grew furrowed. (p.18)

Source: Idrus. *Dari Ave Maria ke Jalan Lain ke Roma*.2010. Jakarta: PT. Balai Pustaka; Lontar Foundation. *Oh, Oh, Oh!*2015. Jakarta: The Modern Library of Indonesia.

In Table 3 (1) and (2), it is perceived that "*dadanya bengkok seperti akal orang Nippon*" was interpreted into "**bent over in a plausible imitation of a Japanese.**" Expressive loss as one of the expressive mechanisms was implemented at this point. "*Bengkok seperti akal*" is a simile; it was then simplified into "bent over in a plausible imitation of a Japanese." Literally, in TT1,

Idrus sarcastically identified that Kartono's chest bent over identical to Japanese people's thoughts. At this point, Idrus indirectly condemned that Japanese did not have typical mind. It could be perceived as Idrus' ironical way in criticizing Japanese authority. Idrus' sarcasm headed for Japanese, was not found in TT2. As a result, TT2's apathy towards Japanese propaganda, represented by *Heiho*, was not as strong as it was in the TT1.

There is an impoverishment of the expressive structure of TT1 in Table 3 (3) and (4). The words “*tolol dan pandir*”, which could actually be understood as “stupid and ignorant”, cannot be found in TT2. It was converted into “**You’ve got it all wrong**, you’ve got to realize the times we’re living in!” it is supposed, then, that TP2 was more well-mannered in labeling Kartono by means of a more normative expression. Unluckily, it caused an entire loss of detailed expressive elements in TT1. At this point, expressive language function, in which language purposes to express speakers’ sense, cannot be found in TT2. The utterer in TT1 openly stated that Kartono was a stupid and ignorant individual, but the speaker in TT2 did not do the identical thing. It can be determined that the degree of cynicism was stronger in TT1. Thus, the apathy towards being a Heiho as a form of Japanese propaganda headed for Kartono is stronger in TT1.

Expressive loss was implemented also the TT2 as seen in Table 3 (5) and (6) in which there was an impoverishment of the expressive structure of TT1. TT1 described that Kartono’s complaint was analogous with

a pregnant woman’s. The readers, however, could not notice this saying in TT2. As a result, it caused a loss of expressive elements in TT2. Expressive language functions, in which language functions to express speaker’s attitude, cannot be found in TT2. Therefore, the degree of irony and cynicism was stronger in TT1. By analogizing Kartono’s complaints with an expecting woman’s, Idrus ironically stated that Kartono’s life was so hard that he grumbles all the time similar to an expecting woman, as commonly recognized that a pregnant woman normally complained for the reason that physically and psychologically it was occasionally hard for her to be active because of her situation. Being a heiho is depicted as having a severe life, so that the person grumbles all the time. It can be said that the apathy towards being a heiho as a form of Japanese propaganda is stronger in TT1.

#### Expressive Substitution

There is only one expressive substitution found in the translated version of Idrus’ *Heiho* as perceived in the subsequent result.

Table 4  
*Expressive Substitution in Heiho*

TT1	TT2
(1) Haruskah aku belajar bahasa Nippon pula, <b>membengkok – bengkokkan</b> tanganku, hanya untuk menulis surat penghargaan? (p. 106)	(2) <b>Bust a gut</b> to learn Japanese on top of everything else, just to write a testimonial letter for you? (p. 15)

Source: Idrus. *Dari Ave Maria ke Jalan Lain ke Roma*. 2010. Jakarta: PT. Balai Pustaka; Lontar Foundation. *Oh, Oh, Oh!* 2015. Jakarta: The Modern Library of Indonesia.

In Table 4 (1) and (2), in TT1 Idrus illustrated that in writing Kanji, one had to bend (*membengkok-bengkokkan*) his hand, which is converted to be “bust a gut.” The phrase *membengkok-bengkokkan* sounds

mocking instead of what is interpreted by TP2 as *a big effort to do something*. Idrus also used the word *bengkok* in the same text to describe Japanese thought, by which RR1 can assume that the word was meant to be in

negative meaning. Thus, the apathy towards Japanese propaganda in TT1 cannot be found in TT2.

## CONCLUSION

The apathy towards being a Heiho as form of Japanese propaganda that was brought by Idrus in *Heiho* was not felt exactly the same when it was translated into English. More than a few expressions were not found in the translated version. As a result, the readers might not feel similar sense and tone between TT1 and TT2. This dissimilarity might occur

because of the contradictory background between Idrus, the original author and Roskies, as the translator. There is a cultural and time gap sandwiched between them. Idrus as an Indonesian who lived in precisely the same era as the setting of *Heiho* must have the experience of being oppressed by Japanese government at that time. *Heiho*, as his reflection, of course brought his bitter life into transcription. On the other hand, Roskies did not have such experience as felt by Idrus since he was not an Indonesian. Additionally, he was alive in a different era from Idrus.

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