

Color Similes and the Choice of Translation Strategy from English into Indonesian

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Color similes are widely used in English to describe the actual meaning of color or to depict it figuratively. This study investigates how native Indonesian speakers perceive color similes when they are translated from English into Indonesian. It also aims to identify the most effective or the most acceptable translation strategies for translating color similes. The study was conducted by administering a questionnaire to 50 native Indonesian speakers regarding the translation of color similes. For each simile, the questionnaire presented three translation versions: retention of the same image, replacement of the image with a different image, and reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense. The participants were asked to choose the translated version based on three levels of acceptability: acceptable, fairly acceptable, and unacceptable. The questionnaire consisted of 25 similes containing the basic colors of black, white, brown, green, and red. The results of the study show that most of the basic colors in English and Indonesian share the same metaphorical meaning. However, the images used in the English similes are not all acceptable in Indonesian. The translation strategy that is considered most effective is the reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense. The factors that affect the acceptability of color simile translations are exposure to English in daily activities, media exposure about popular culture, religious beliefs, general knowledge of ecology, culture-specific phenomena, educational backgrounds, and the uniqueness of languages.

Keywords: color simile; figurative language; simile translation; translation acceptability; translation strategy

1. Introduction

A simile is a figure of speech that compares two unlike things, often introduced by ‘like’ or ‘as.’¹ For example, phrases like ‘cheeks like roses,’ ‘as white as snow,’ and ‘as white as a sheet’ are similes. A simile is an expression that describes a person or a thing as being similar to someone or something else.² Simile can be used to depict colors. There are many similes

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¹ *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “simile,” accessed June 1, 2025. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/simile>.

² *Collins Dictionary*, s.v. “simile,” accessed June 1, 2025. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/simile>.

related to color. Similes of color are used in various languages and cultures to describe colors and to convey figurative meanings.

As an essential part of languages and cultures, colors have attracted many researchers' attention, such as Tinghua Li (2020) conducting a comparison of color metaphors about the similarities and differences between English and Chinese, Domicelè Jonauskaitė (2024) investigating Lithuanian conceptual color–emotion associations in the global context of 37 nations, Qian Zhao and Amalia Qistina Castaneda Abdullah (2024) analyzing metaphorical meanings of color symbols in literature, and Huilan Yang, Beibei Huang, Lingling Li, and Sumin Zhang (2025) investigating the red-gray color metaphor for love concepts in Chinese. These previous studies demonstrate the similarities and dissimilarities of cross-cultural color meaning and association. The similarities in color metaphor across languages can be attributed to common perceptual and cultural experiences, while the dissimilarities can be attributed to different living environments, religions, customs, and philosophies. The dissimilarities provide important evidence for the influence of cultural variation on metaphors and similes, contributing to overcoming barriers in language teaching and learning, cross-cultural communication, and translation practice.

From a translation point of view, the colors in similes can be interpreted similarly both in a source language and in a target language. However, the simile image used in the source language may not be familiar in the target language. For example, in English, as in 'I washed my clothes white as snow,' the image of 'snow' is used to depict white. However, not all languages and cultures use the same image to depict white. Other languages and cultures, for example, use 'white as seashells or white as bones.' In this case, retention of the same image cannot always be used to translate similes. The translators have to use other strategies so that the simile in the source language can be conveyed accurately and naturally in the target language.

Based on the above reasons, this study examined how native Indonesian speakers respond to the results of color simile translations from English into Indonesian. The study also investigated the most effective or acceptable translation strategies in translating color similes from English into Indonesian. Thus, it seeks to answer two main questions:

1. How do Indonesian speakers respond to the translation of color similes from English into Indonesian?

2. What is the most effective translation strategy to produce an acceptable color simile translation from English into Indonesian?

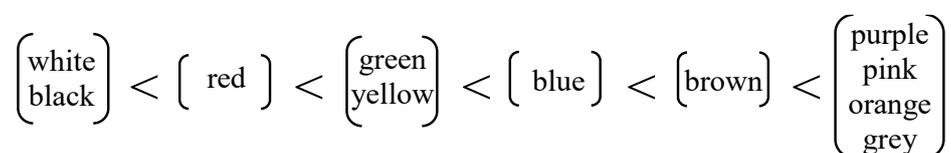
There has not been much research on simile translation that focuses on the translation of color similes, especially in the context of English into Indonesian translation. Previous studies on simile translation have addressed simile in literary works, such as Alla Martynyuk and Elvira Akhmedova (2022), and animal simile translation, such as Mohd Nour Al Salem, Imran Alrashdan, and Essa Salem (2022) and Ali Mohammed Saleh Al-Hamzi, Mangatur Nababan, Riyadi Santosa, and Muhammed Yunus Anis (2023). This research will provide an interesting insight into the challenges and the solutions in translating color similes from English into Indonesian. By understanding the meaning of color and simile image both in the source language and culture and in the target language and culture, the translator can determine the most effective translation strategy to translate color similes.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Research on Color Terms

Colors are used to describe various things in this world. Each thing has its color. Brent Berlin and Paul Kay (1969) proposed basic color terms that can be found in almost all world languages, which consist of 11 basic colors (figure 1), namely white, black, red, green, yellow, blue, brown, purple, pink, orange, and gray.

Figure 1. The basic color term (Berlin and Kay 1969)



As an essential part of language and culture, colors have attracted many researchers' attention. First, Li (2020) made a comparison of the metaphorical usage of shared basic color terms about the similarities and differences between English and Chinese. The research found that English and Chinese share the same metaphorical meaning of colors. Black represents anger, evilness, illegality, disapproval, unconsciousness; white represents purity, pale, brain work, peace; red represents embarrassment/shame, happiness, warning of danger, love; yellow

represents warning; green represents environmental protection, youth, permission; and blue represents manual work, a plan, without warning. Second, Khaerul Umam and Deli Nirmala (2020) contrasted the concept of color metaphor in English and Indonesian song lyrics. The research found that the concepts of color metaphor in English and Indonesian song lyrics have some similarities and differences. The striking similarities are found in that black symbolizes darkness, white symbolizes purity, yellow symbolizes enlightenment, and gray symbolizes sadness. However, the different concepts of color metaphor are found in blue, red, and green.

Third, Jonauskaitė (2024) analyzed Lithuanian conceptual color–emotion associations in the global context of 37 nations. Colors can be interpreted differently, but they also have similarities, such as red for love, yellow for amusement and joy, black for sadness, pink for admiration, orange for joy and amusement, white for relief, and gray for sadness and disappointment. Fourth, Zhao and Castaneda Abdullah (2024) analyzed metaphorical meanings of color symbols in literature. In literary works, color plays an important role for writers to convey emotions, ideas, themes, and characters in stories. Colors that are widely used as symbols in literary works are red, blue, white, black, and yellow. And colors that are not widely used are purple, gray, green, and brown. These colors have a variety of meanings. Red is associated with strong emotions such as passion, desire, love, a woman’s shyness (blushing), blood, fire, trauma, and violence. Blue is associated with the sea, sky, and eyes, which symbolize freshness, beauty, tranquility, and a feeling of melancholy. White symbolizes purity, beauty, holiness, and innocence. Black symbolizes darkness, evil, death, a depressing environment, and mystery. Yellow symbolizes sunshine, joy, danger, money, wealth, status, imperial power, and dignity. Purple symbolizes nobility, dignity, and happiness. Green is mainly associated with spring, symbolizing vitality, youth, and hope.

Fifth, Yang, Huang, Li, and Zhang (2025) investigated the red-gray color metaphor for love concepts in Chinese. Conceptual metaphors crucially shape how people understand and represent abstract concepts like love. Numerous Chinese linguistic metaphors associate love (beginning/continuing a romantic relationship) with red and lovelorn (breakup/end of a romantic relationship) with gray.

These previous studies demonstrate the similarities and dissimilarities of cross-cultural color meaning and association. Marta Bieszk (2021) stated that the connection between symbols and their referents is arbitrary, and the result of differences is determined by various factors:

personal perception, collective perception, language itself, the discrepancy between names of colors, cultural differences between the sender and the recipient, and kinds of communication (different names will be used in different text types). The similarities of color metaphors in different languages can be attributed to the common perceptual and cultural experience. The dissimilarities originate from the different living environments, religion, customs, and philosophy. The dissimilarities provide important evidence for the influence of cultural variation on similes, contributing to overcoming barriers in language teaching and learning, cross-cultural communication, as well as translation practice.

2.2 Translation of Color Similes

A simile consists of four parts, which are the topic, the simile marker, the image, and the point of similarity. For example, in ‘I wash my clothes white as snow,’ ‘I wash my clothes white’ is the topic or the first proposition, or the thing being talked about. ‘As’ is the simile marker. ‘Snow’ is the image or the second proposition, or what it is being compared with. ‘White in color’ is the point of similarity in the comment of both propositions involved or the comment of the event proposition, which has the image as its topic. The correct understanding of a simile depends on the correct identification of the topic, the image, and the point of similarity.

Similes of color are widely used in English to describe the actual meaning of color or to depict it figuratively. The similes of color use basic colors, namely white, black, red, green, yellow, blue, brown, purple, pink, orange, and gray; for example, ‘as black as the ace of spades,’ ‘as black as the devil,’ ‘as brown as a berry,’ ‘as green as grass,’ ‘as red as blood,’ ‘as white as a ghost,’ and ‘as white as snow.’

Not all similes are easily understood. If they are translated literally, word-for-word, into the target language, they will often be completely misunderstood. Mildred L. Larson (1984, 275–277) stated that there are several reasons why similes are hard to understand and cannot be translated literally. First, the image used in the simile may be unknown in the target language. Second, the topic of the simile is not always clearly stated. Third, the point of similarity may be implicit and hard to identify. Fourth, the point of similarity may be understood differently in one culture from another. Fifth, the target language does not make a comparison of the type that

occurs in the source language simile. Sixth, languages differ in how frequently similes are used and in how easily new similes are created in the language.

To overcome the above simile translation problems, translators can apply translation strategies as proposed by Larson (1984, 277–279) and Patrizia Pierini (2007), which can be formulated as follows:

1. The simile may be kept if the receptor language permits—retention of the same image (that is, if it sounds natural and is understood correctly by the readers).
2. A simile of the receptor language, which has the same meaning, may be substituted—replacement of the image with a different image.
3. The simile may be kept, and the meaning explained (that is, the topic and/or point of similarity may be added)—retention of the same image plus explicitation of similarity feature(s).
4. The meaning of the simile may be translated without keeping the simile image—reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense.
5. The image may be replaced with a gloss.
6. The simile may be omitted.

This study experimented on color similes that have a complete form, namely having a topic, a simile marker, an image, and points of similarity. The color similes were translated into three versions based on the top three translation strategies to translate similes: retention of the same image, replacement of the image with a different image, and reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense. These translation strategies were assessed based on three levels of acceptability: acceptable, fairly acceptable, and unacceptable. Acceptability is also related to naturalness in translation. A translation may be accurate and understandable, but the forms may not be natural in the target language. The translation can sound right or foreign to the speaker of the language.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Participants

This study involved 50 native Indonesian speakers who filled out a questionnaire that included 25 color similes in English and three possible versions of translation in Indonesian. The participants ranged in age from 23 to 54 years and included both males and females. All

participants hold either Bachelor’s or Master’s degrees. The participants are fluent in the Indonesian language, with a score of Indonesian language proficiency starting from Grade III (Good) or B1 (Intermediate). The grade demonstrates sufficient communication skills in Indonesian, both oral and written, not having any problems communicating for survival and social purposes and not having any problems communicating for professional purposes, in both simple and complex settings. The participants also understand English starting from B1 (Intermediate), which shows they can communicate about familiar topics, write simple texts, and engage in conversations. They also have experience in translation from English into Indonesian or vice versa.

Table 1. Summary information of all participants

Number of participants	n	50
Educational level	Bachelor’s Degree	45 (90%)
	Master’s Degree	5 (10%)
Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting • Accounting information system • Animal science • Biology • Education administration • Elementary teacher education • English education • English language and literature • German language and literature • History • Indonesian language education • Information management • Law • Management • Mathematics • Pancasila and citizenship education • Pharmacy • Physical education, health, and recreation • Physics • Social sciences • State administration 	
Age	Mean	33.44 years 23 to 54 years
Gender	Men	16 (32%)
	Women	34 (68%)
Indonesian language proficiency levels	Grade III, Good	28 (56%)
	Grade II, Very Good	15 (30%)
	Grade I, Distinction	7 (14%)
English language proficiency levels	B1 (Intermediate)	31 (62%)
	B2 (Upper Intermediate)	13 (26%)
	C1 (Advanced)	5 (10%)
	C2 (Proficient)	1 (2%)
Experience in translation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic task or course assignment • Using online translation platforms • As a tourist guide • Watching movies and listening to English songs • Summarizing articles • Translating children’s books • Translating work-related documents • Translating in teaching activity 	

3.2 Data and Research Instruments

This study utilized a questionnaire to collect data on the acceptability of color simile translations into Indonesian based on translation strategies. The similes were selected based on the eleven basic colors proposed by Berlin and Kay (1969), specifically white, black, red, green, yellow, blue, brown, purple, pink, orange, and gray, which can be found in almost all languages of the world. Data was obtained from six major dictionaries: *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, *Oxford English Dictionary*, *Cambridge English Dictionary and Thesaurus*, *Collins Dictionary*, *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, and *The Free Dictionary*. From these sources, 25 idiom-based similes were selected for the questionnaire, comprising 11 similes based on black, six based on red, four based on white, three based on green, and one based on brown.

The questionnaire was designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data regarding the acceptability of these similes for Indonesian readers based on the translation strategies applied. For the quantitative section, three Indonesian translation versions were provided for each English simile, designed to reflect specific strategies: (1) retention of the same image, (2) replacement of the image with a different image, and (3) reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense. The participants were required to rate these translations on a scale of acceptable, fairly acceptable, or unacceptable. The qualitative section consisted of open-ended questions allowing the participants to provide opinions on their choices or suggest more acceptable translations.

3.3 Procedure

The survey was conducted online. The participants were instructed to assess the 25 color similes by rating the acceptability of the three provided translation versions and offering qualitative comments or alternative suggestions where necessary. The collected data was then analyzed to determine how Indonesian speakers responded to English color simile translations and to identify the most effective strategies. Ultimately, the analysis aimed to establish the most acceptable simile translations and the most appropriate translation strategies, serving as a reference for translators to produce color simile translations that are acceptable to Indonesian readers.

4. Research Findings

This section presents the responses of Indonesian speakers to the translations of color similes from English into Indonesian in terms of acceptability and identifies the most effective strategies for producing acceptable color simile translations.

4.1 Black (color)

In English, black (color) means having the darkest color there is, like the color of coal or of a very dark night. Black can also be interpreted as bad or evil.³ There are similes in English that use the word ‘black’ to refer to the color black. For example, in this study, black is used in the following nine similes: (1) ‘as black as the ace of spades,’ (2) ‘as black as coal,’ (3) ‘as black as the devil,’ (4) ‘as black as one’s hat,’ (5) ‘as black as pitch,’ (6) ‘as black as a raven,’ (7) ‘as black as a skillet,’ (8) ‘as black as a stack of black cats,’ and (9) ‘as black as a sweep.’ In Indonesian, *hitam* ‘black’ refers to a base color that is similar to the color of charcoal or contains or shows a color similar to charcoal.⁴

Table 2. Acceptability of the black (color) simile translations

No.	Color Similes	Translation Strategies	Indonesian Translation	Back Translation into English	Acceptable		Fairly Acceptable		Unacceptable		Total
					F	%	F	%	F	%	
1.	as black as the ace of spades	retention of the same image	<i>hitam seperti kartu as sekop</i>	black as the ace of spades	15	30	18	36	17	34	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>hitam seperti arang</i>	black as charcoal	19	38	25	50	6	12	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>hitam</i>	black	24	48	19	38	7	14	50
2.	as black as coal	retention of the same image	<i>hitam seperti batu bara</i>	black as coal	15	30	17	34	18	36	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>hitam seperti arang</i>	black as charcoal	18	36	22	44	10	20	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>hitam</i>	black	35	70	12	24	3	6	50
3.	as black as the devil	retention of the same image	<i>sehitam iblis</i>	as black as the devil	4	8	14	28	32	64	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>sehitam arang</i>	as black as charcoal	17	34	20	40	13	26	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>sehitam ini</i>	as black as this	32	64	14	28	4	8	50

³ *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. “black,” accessed June 1, 2025. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/black>.

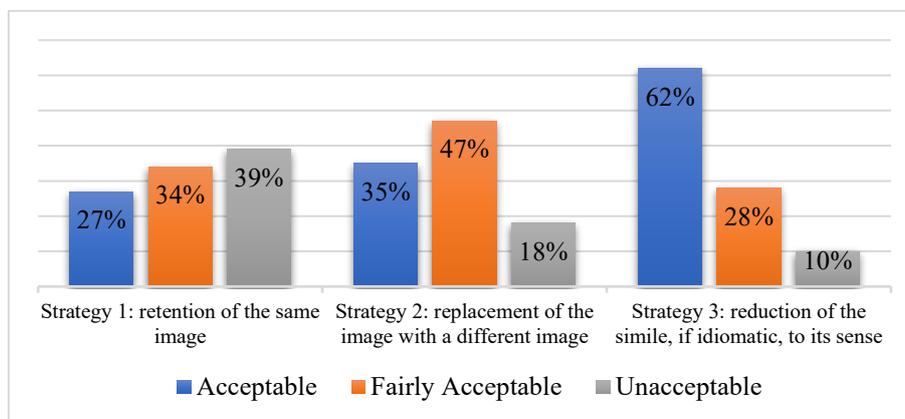
⁴ *The Official Monolingual Indonesian Dictionary*, s.v. “hitam,” accessed June 1, 2025. <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/entri/hitam>.

4.	as black as one's hat	retention of the same image	<i>hitam seperti topiku</i>	black as my hat	11	22	14	28	25	50	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>hitam seperti arang</i>	black as charcoal	12	24	25	50	13	26	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>gelap</i>	dark	37	74	9	18	4	8	50
5.	as black as pitch	retention of the same image	<i>hitam seperti aspal</i>	black as pitch	19	38	23	46	8	16	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>hitam seperti arang</i>	black as charcoal	22	44	23	46	5	10	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>hitam</i>	black	31	62	16	32	3	6	50
6.	as black as a raven	retention of the same image	<i>hitam seperti burung gagak</i>	black as a raven	14	28	19	38	17	34	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>hitam seperti arang</i>	black as charcoal	18	36	22	44	10	20	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>hitam</i>	black	34	68	9	18	7	14	50
7.	as black as a skillet	retention of the same image	<i>sehitam wajan</i>	as black as a skillet	13	26	19	38	18	36	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>sehitam arang</i>	as black as charcoal	16	32	26	52	8	16	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>sehitam ini</i>	as black as this	35	70	11	22	4	8	50
8.	as black as a stack of black cats	retention of the same image	<i>hitam seperti tumpukan kucing hitam</i>	black as a stack of black cats	11	22	15	30	24	48	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>hitam seperti arang</i>	black as charcoal	17	34	25	50	8	16	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>hitam</i>	black	35	70	10	20	5	10	50
9.	as black as a sweep	retention of the same image	<i>hitam seperti abu cerobong</i>	black as a chimney sweep	18	36	16	32	16	32	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>hitam seperti arang</i>	black as charcoal	17	34	24	48	9	18	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>hitam</i>	black	28	56	15	30	7	14	50

Table 3. Acceptability of translation strategies for the black (color) similes

Translation Strategies	Acceptable		Fairly Acceptable		Unacceptable		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Strategy 1: retention of the same image	120	27%	155	34%	175	39%	450
Strategy 2: replacement of the image with a different image	156	35%	212	47%	82	18%	450
Strategy 3: reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense	280	62%	124	28%	46	10%	450

Figure 2. Acceptability of translation strategies for the black (color) similes



The translations of the black (color) similes using strategy 1: retention of the same image show the following results. Most of the participants accepted the black simile translation for ‘as black as a sweep’ (n=18 or 36%) using the same image, *abu cerobong* ‘a chimney sweep.’ A sweep or chimney sweep is black in color. Most of the participants also fairly accepted the following simile translations: ‘as black as the ace of spades’ (n=18 or 36%), ‘as black as pitch’ (n=23 or 46%), ‘as black as a raven’ (n=19 or 38%), and ‘as black as a skillet’ (n=19 or 38%). The image ‘pitch’ is fairly acceptable because, in the target language, the same image is also used to depict black. The image of ‘a skillet’ is also fairly acceptable since the target language uses a similar imagery, such as ‘the bottom of a frying pan’ or ‘burnt,’ to depict black in the context of objects or food. Most of the participants rejected the following translations: ‘as black as coal’ (n=18 or 36%), ‘as black as the devil’ (n=32 or 64%), ‘as black as one’s hat’ (n=25 or 50%), and ‘as black as a stack of black cats’ (n=24 or 48%). Most participants did not accept the depiction of ‘the devil’ as black. They considered the devils to have bad connotations. Instead, they argued that devils are typically associated with the color red, stemming from the belief that devils are created from fire. To support this opinion, some participants referenced the American superhero movie *Hellboy*, which depicts a devil-like figure in red. In *Hellboy*, the main character, Hellboy, is depicted as a large, muscular, red-skinned ape/monkey-like man with a tail, horns (which he files off, leaving behind circular stumps on his forehead that resemble goggles), cloven hooves, and an oversized right hand made of stone.

The translations of the black (color) similes using strategy 2: replacing the image with a different image show the following results. Most of the participants fairly accepted all nine black simile translations that replace the image in the source language with a different image in

the target language. The source language black simile images to depict black ‘the ace of spades,’ ‘coal,’ ‘the devil,’ ‘one’s hat,’ ‘pitch,’ ‘a raven,’ ‘a skillet,’ ‘a stack of black cats,’ and ‘a sweep’ were replaced with *arang* ‘charcoal.’ In the target language or Indonesian, *hitam* ‘black’ is a base color that is similar to the charcoal color or contains or shows a color similar to charcoal. The similes in which the image was replaced with *arang* ‘charcoal,’ as in *sehitam arang*, *hitam seperti arang* or ‘(as) black as charcoal,’ were considered fairly acceptable by most of the participants. The participants realized that the sentences given were translations. The *arang* ‘charcoal’ is widely used in Indonesian to depict black as in a dark state, hair color, overcooked food, dirt, and objects. The participants suggested other images to depict black, such as ‘black like shoe polish,’ ‘pitch black,’ and ‘dark.’ In Indonesian, the word *hitam* ‘black’ is closely related to these words: charcoal, glossy, carbon, dark, black sky, mangosteen, sweet, deep black, and others.

The translations of the black (color) similes using strategy 3: reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense, show the following results. Most of the participants accepted nine black simile translations that replace the source language simile images with their meanings in the target language. The simile images in the source language ‘the ace of spades,’ ‘coal,’ ‘the devil,’ ‘one’s hat,’ ‘pitch,’ ‘a raven,’ ‘a skillet,’ ‘a stack of black cats,’ and ‘as black as a sweep’ were replaced by the simile’s meaning, which is the color black. The Indonesian translation *hitam* ‘black’ was considered acceptable by most participants. Black in Indonesian can also be translated into *gelap* ‘dark,’ such as in ‘a dark room.’ Its usage depends on the context, but usually *hitam* ‘black’ is for an object or thing and *gelap* ‘dark’ for a room or situation.

The results of the study show that black is interpreted similarly in the source and the target language, referring to a color or a shade of dark. However, the images used are different. In English, the images used to depict black are ‘the ace of spades,’ ‘coal,’ ‘the devil,’ ‘one’s hat,’ ‘pitch,’ ‘a raven,’ ‘a skillet,’ ‘a stack of black cats,’ and ‘a sweep.’ The Indonesian participants accepted the image of ‘a sweep,’ fairly accepted the images of ‘the ace of spades,’ ‘a pitch,’ ‘a raven,’ and ‘a skillet,’ and rejected the images of ‘coal,’ ‘the devil,’ ‘one’s hat,’ and ‘a stack of black’ to depict black. The Indonesian participants generally depicted the color black with *arang* ‘charcoal.’ Translations using *arang* ‘charcoal’ as an image are fairly acceptable in all translation contexts, namely, black to describe a dark state, hair color, overcooked food, dirty, and objects. The Indonesian participants accepted the translations using

the meaning of black, which is translated into *hitam* ‘black’ and *gelap* ‘dark’ depending on the context. The participants also suggested other images to depict black or dark, namely black/dark as night, black as when the eyes are closed, black as the lights are off, black like shoe polish, black as asphalt, black as the bottom of a frying pan, dark, burnt black, jet black, pitch black, shiny black, and dirty black.

The similarities and differences in the participants’ choices regarding the black simile imagery are influenced by, first, exposure to English in their daily activities, such as watching movies, listening to songs, and reading English texts. As they realized that the similes were translations from English into Indonesian, they understood that perhaps these simile expressions were acceptable in English. Second, media exposure shaped their association with a certain color. For example, instead of black depicted by the devil, they prefer the devil to represent red, as they watch the devil depicted in red in a popular movie. Third, religious beliefs also shaped their color associations. With the same example, the devil is the image to depict black in English. The Indonesian participants rejected this image since they believe, according to Islamic faith, which happened to be the religion of most respondents, that devils are made of fire. Fire is close to the color red, so the depiction of the devil as red is more acceptable.

4.2 Black (bad)

Black in English can also be used to represent bad or evil. For example, in this study, black in the following similes represents evil or a thoroughly evil, mean-spirited, or ungenerous mindset or disposition, namely ‘as black as the devil’ and ‘as black as a raven.’

Table 4. Acceptability of the black (bad) simile translations

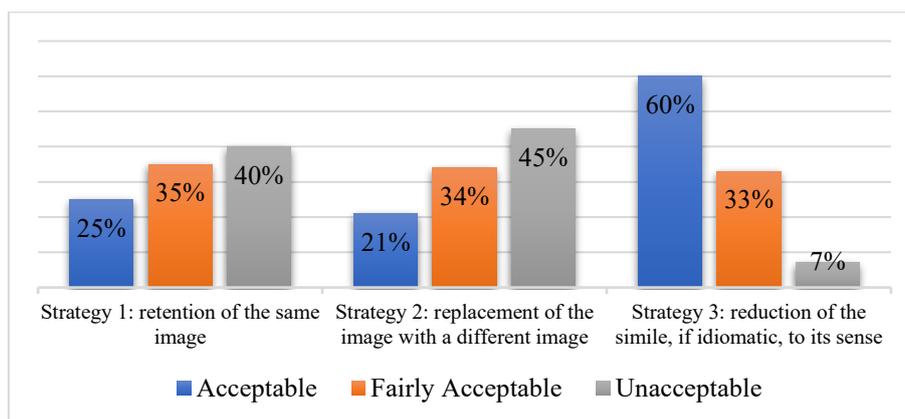
No.	Color Similes	Translation Strategies	Indonesian Translation	Back Translation into English	Acceptable		Fairly Acceptable		Unacceptable		Total
					F	%	F	%	F	%	
10.	as black as the devil	retention of the same image	<i>hitam seperti iblis</i>	black as the devil	13	26	18	36	19	38	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>hitam seperti arang</i>	black as charcoal	10	20	16	32	24	48	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>orang jahat</i>	bad people	29	58	17	34	4	8	50
11.	as black as a raven	retention of the same image	<i>sehitam burung gagak</i>	as black as a raven	12	24	17	34	21	42	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>sehitam arang</i>	black as charcoal	11	22	18	36	21	42	50

reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>jahat</i>	wicked	31	62	16	32	3	6	50
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Table 5. Acceptability of translation strategies for the black (bad) similes

Translation Strategies	Acceptable		Fairly Acceptable		Unacceptable		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Strategy 1: retention of the same image	25	25%	35	35%	40	40%	100
Strategy 2: replacement of the image with a different image	21	21%	34	34%	45	45%	100
Strategy 3: reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense	60	60%	33	33%	7	7%	100

Figure 3. Acceptability of translation strategies for the black (bad) similes



The translations of the black (bad) similes using strategy 1: retention of the same image show the following results. Most of the participants rejected the translation of black similes with the same images as the source language in the following similes: ‘as black as the devil’ (n=19 or 38%) and ‘as black as a raven’ (n=21 or 42%). The participants responded that in Indonesian, black does not depict the devil. It is also unacceptable to compare humans with the devil. However, they agree that evil people are often symbolized by black. According to them, black is a bad sign and is often associated with hate and crimes.

The translations of the black (bad) similes using strategy 2: replacement of the image with a different image show the following results. Most of the participants rejected the simile translation in which the image was replaced with *arang* ‘charcoal,’ as in ‘(as) black as charcoal.’ The image of *arang* ‘charcoal’ is commonly used in Indonesian to depict black. According to

the participants, charcoal is uncommon to depict bad or evil. Charcoal is commonly used to depict black in color or dark.

The translations of the black (bad) similes using strategy 3: reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense show the following results. Most of the participants accepted the translation of the black similes with their meaning, which is bad or evil. The similes ‘as black as the devil’ and ‘as black as a raven’ were translated into *orang jahat* ‘bad people’ and *jahat* ‘wicked.’

4.3 Brown

In English, brown is the color of earth or wood. It can also describe a white-skinned person who has been in the sun until their skin has become darker than usual.⁵ In this study, one simile of brown color was tested, namely ‘as brown as a berry,’ which refers to a brown color or having very dark skin due to being in the sun or having tanned skin because of prolonged sun exposure. In Indonesian, *cokelat* ‘brown’ is blackish red, like the color of a ripe sapodilla, or a color containing brown.⁶

Table 6. Acceptability of brown simile translations

No.	Color Similes	Translation Strategies	Indonesian Translation	Back Translation into English	Acceptable		Fairly Acceptable		Unacceptable		Total
					F	%	F	%	F	%	
12.	as brown as a berry	retention of the same image	<i>cokelat seperti buah beri</i>	as brown as a berry	12	24	16	32	22	44	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>cokelat seperti sawo matang</i>	brown like ripe sapodilla	19	38	26	52	5	10	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>kecoklatan</i>	brownish	35	70	13	26	2	4	50

Table 7. Acceptability of translation strategies for the brown simile

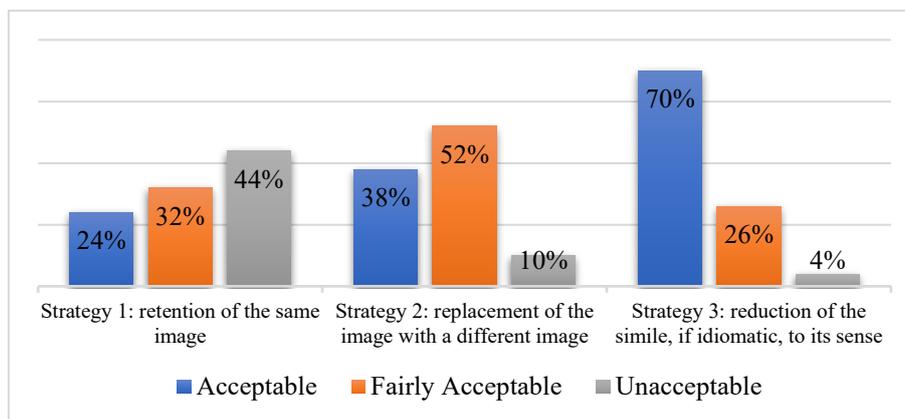
Translation Strategies	Acceptable		Fairly Acceptable		Unacceptable		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Strategy 1: retention of the same image	12	24%	16	32%	22	44%	50
Strategy 2: replacement of the image with a different image	19	38%	26	52%	5	10%	50

⁵ *Collins Dictionary*, s.v. “brown,” accessed June 1, 2025. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/brown>.

⁶ *The Official Monolingual Indonesian Dictionary*, s.v. “cokelat,” accessed June 1, 2025. <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/entri/cokelat>.

Strategy 3: reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense	35	70%	13	26%	2	4%	50
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Figure 4. Acceptability of translation strategies for the brown simile



The translation of the brown simile using strategy 1: retention of the same image shows the following results. Most of the participants (n=22 or 44%) rejected the translation of ‘as brown as a berry’ by retaining the image of ‘a berry’ or *buah beri* in the target language. The participants argued that the color brown, as they know, did not represent berries. Berries have bright colors like red and blue, for example, as found in strawberries, raspberries, and blueberries.

The translation of the brown simile using strategy 2: replacement of the image with a different image shows the following results. Most of the participants (n=26 or 52%) accepted the translation for ‘as brown as a berry,’ referring to tanned skin color, when it was translated using a different image in the target language: ‘(as) brown as/like ripe sapodilla.’ Brown as skin color in the target language is often likened to *sawo matang* ‘ripe sapodilla.’ However, this brown color refers to the skin color of most Indonesians and is not specific to sunburned or tanned skin. According to the Indonesian participants, the skin exposed to the sun is not brown, but darker or even black.

The translation of the brown simile using strategy 3: reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense, shows the following results. Most of the participants (n=35 or 70%) considered the translation of simile ‘as brown as a berry’ to its meaning *kecoklatan* ‘brown or brownish’ acceptable in the target language.

The results of this study show that the color brown can be interpreted differently in the source language and the target language. In the target language, the skin color is generally

brown, and after long exposure to the sun, the color becomes darker and blacker. The simile image used in the source language is not acceptable in the target language. The source language uses ‘berry’ to depict brown, while the target language uses *sawo matang* ‘ripe sapodilla’ to depict brown as the skin color. Understanding cultural background in terms of ecology is very important to produce an acceptable translation in the target language.

4.4 Green (color)

In English, green is a color between blue and yellow, like the color of grass. Green also has the meaning of being inexperienced or untrained.⁷ In this study, green refers to a color, specifically in the simile ‘as green as grass,’ which means very green. In Indonesian, green is a color similar to that of leaves in general or a combination of blue and yellow in the spectrum.⁸

Table 8. Acceptability of green (color) simile translations

No.	Color Similes	Translation Strategies	Indonesian Translation	Back Translation into English	Acceptable		Fairly Acceptable		Unacceptable		Total
					F	%	F	%	F	%	
13.	as green as grass	retention of the same image	<i>Hijau seperti rumput</i>	as green as grass	30	60	14	28	6	12	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>Hijau seperti daun</i>	green like leaves	32	64	17	34	1	2	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>hijau sekali</i>	very green	35	70	13	26	2	4	50

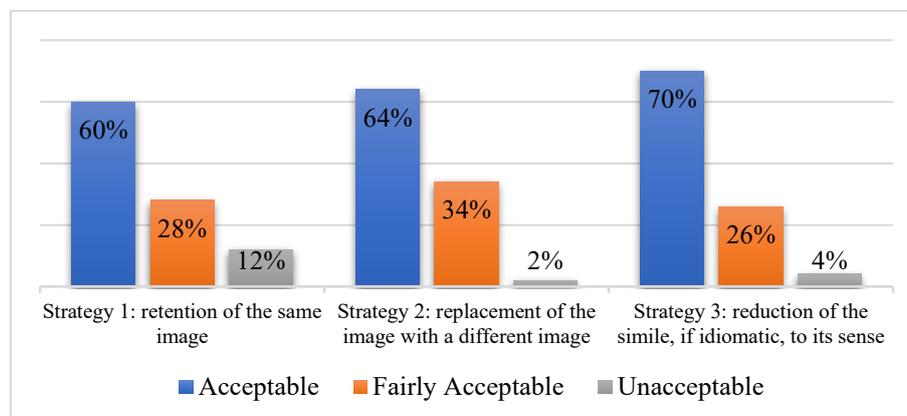
Table 9. Acceptability of translation strategies for the green (color) simile

Translation Strategies	Acceptable		Fairly Acceptable		Unacceptable		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Strategy 1: retention of the same image	30	60%	14	28%	6	12%	50
Strategy 2: replacement of the image with a different image	32	64%	17	34%	1	2%	50
Strategy 3: reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense	35	70%	13	26%	2	4%	50

⁷ *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. “green,” accessed June 1, 2025. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/green>.

⁸ *The Official Monolingual Indonesian Dictionary*, s.v. “hijau,” accessed June 1, 2025. <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/entri/hijau>.

Figure 5. Acceptability of translation strategies for the green (color) simile



The translation of the green (color) simile using strategy 1: retention of the same image shows the following results. Most of the participants (n=30 or 60%) accepted the simile translation using the same image as the source language, where ‘as green as grass’ was translated into *hijau seperti rumput*, which means very green.

The translation of the green (color) simile using strategy 2: replacement of the image with a different image shows the following results. Most of the participants (n=32 or 64%) accepted the simile translation using a different image. In this context, the simile image ‘grass’ in ‘as green as grass’ is changed in the target language into *daun* ‘leaves’ or ‘(as) green as leaves.’ In Indonesian, green is commonly depicted by the color of leaves.

The translation of the green (color) simile using strategy 3: reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense, shows the following results. Most of the participants (n=35 or 70%) accepted the translation of ‘as green as grass,’ which means very green, as *sangat hijau*, also meaning ‘very green.’ This shows that green is interpreted similarly in both English and Indonesian. The translations of the green simile using the three possible translation strategies were well accepted by most of the participants.

4.5 Green (inexperienced)

Green in English also means not experienced or trained, as in the similes ‘as green as a gooseberry’ and ‘as green as grass.’ These similes can be interpreted as referring to someone who is inexperienced, very young, immature, or perhaps naïve. In Indonesian, green also has the metaphorical meaning of inexperienced.

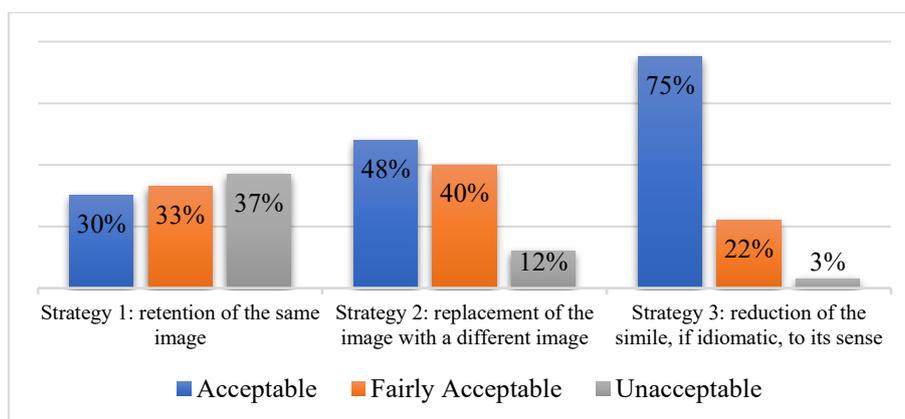
Table 10. Acceptability of the green (inexperienced) simile translations

No.	Color Similes	Translation Strategies	Indonesian Translation	Back Translation into English	Acceptable		Fairly Acceptable		Unacceptable		Total
					F	%	F	%	F	%	
14.	as green as a gooseberry	retention of the same image	<i>sehijau gooseberry</i>	as green as a gooseberry	14	28	19	38	17	34	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>sehijau daun</i>	as green as leaves	16	32	23	46	11	22	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>tidak berpengalaman</i>	inexperienced	35	70	14	28	1	2	50
15.	as green as grass	retention of the same image	<i>hijau seperti rumput</i>	as green as grass	16	32	14	28	20	40	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>hijau seperti daun</i>	green as/like leaves	15	30	25	50	10	20	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>belum berpengalaman</i>	inexperienced	40	80	8	16	2	4	50

Table 11. Acceptability of translation strategies for the green (inexperienced) similes

Translation Strategies	Acceptable		Fairly Acceptable		Unacceptable		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Strategy 1: retention of the same image	30	30%	33	33%	37	37%	100
Strategy 2: replacement of the image with a different image	48	48%	40	40%	12	12%	100
Strategy 3: reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense	75	75%	22	22%	3	3%	100

Figure 6. Acceptability of translation strategies for the green (inexperienced) similes



The translations of the green (inexperienced) similes using strategy 1: retention of the same image show the following results. Most of the participants (n=19 or 38%) fairly accepted the translation of the green simile ‘as green as a gooseberry’ by maintaining its source language

image of ‘a gooseberry.’ One of the reasons for this translation’s acceptability is that the participants realized that this simile was a translation from English into Indonesian. They learned that in English, the word green, which means inexperienced, can be depicted by ‘a gooseberry.’ However, for the simile ‘as green as grass,’ most of the participants (n=20 or 40%) rejected the translation by retention of the same image in the target language. Green, which means inexperienced as depicted by *rumput* ‘grass,’ is not commonly used in the target language.

The translations of the green (inexperienced) similes using strategy 2: replacement of the image with a different image show the following results. Most of the participants fairly accepted the simile translations with different images, ‘green as a gooseberry’ (n=23 or 46%) and ‘as green as grass’ (n=25 or 50%). The images of the two green similes, ‘a gooseberry’ and ‘grass,’ were changed into *daun* ‘leaves’ as in *hijau seperti daun* or ‘(as) green as/like leaves.’ In the target language, green is a color similar to the color of leaves in general or a combination of blue and yellow in the spectrum. The word green in Indonesian is closely related to these words: leaves, moss, neon, army, and emerald.

The translations of the green (inexperienced) similes using strategy 3: reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense, show the following results. Most of the participants accepted the simile translations of ‘as green as a gooseberry’ (n=35 or 70%) and ‘as green as grass’ (n=40 or 80%) based on their core meaning: inexperienced. Most of the participants agree that this is the most acceptable translation version. The participants also suggested an alternative translation: using the word ‘green’ on its own. From the context of the sentence in the questionnaire, they understood that green has the idiomatic meaning of inexperienced. In Indonesian, the word *hijau* ‘green’ can also be used to describe someone young and inexperienced. There is also an idiomatic expression in Indonesian to describe someone young and inexperienced, which is *anak kemarin sore*, or literally ‘yesterday afternoon child’ in English.

4.6 Red

In English, red is the color of blood or fire.⁹ Also, if you say that someone’s face is red, you mean that it is redder than its normal color, because they are embarrassed, angry, or out of

⁹ *Collins Dictionary*, s.v. “red,” accessed June 1, 2025. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/red>.

breath. In this study, six similes containing the color red were used, namely: (1) ‘as red as a beet,’ (2) ‘as red as blood,’ (3) ‘as red as a cherry,’ (4) ‘as red as a poppy,’ (5) ‘as red as a rose,’ and (6) ‘as red as a ruby,’ which all have meaning as a representation of extremely flushed and red, especially in the face, as from embarrassment, anger, or physical strain. In Indonesian, *merah* ‘red’ means a basic color similar to the color of blood or containing or showing a color similar to red.¹⁰ Based on the definitions, both English and Indonesian use the same image of blood to depict the color red.

Table 12. Acceptability of the red simile translations

No.	Color Similes	Translation Strategies	Indonesian Translation	Back Translation into English	Acceptable		Fairly Acceptable		Unacceptable		Total
					F	%	F	%	F	%	
16.	as red as a beet	retention of the same image	<i>merah seperti buah bit</i>	as red as a beet	16	32	26	52	8	16	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>merah seperti delima</i>	red like a pomegranate	24	48	23	46	3	6	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>tersipu-sipu</i>	blushing	36	72	11	22	3	6	50
17.	as red as blood	retention of the same image	<i>semerah darah</i>	as red as blood	12	24	21	42	17	34	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>semerah udang rebus</i>	as red as boiled shrimp	13	26	26	52	11	22	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>merah wajahnya</i>	her face is red	31	62	17	34	2	4	50
18.	as red as a cherry	retention of the same image	<i>merah seperti buah ceri</i>	as red as a cherry	18	36	21	42	11	22	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>memerah seperti delima</i>	blushing like a pomegranate	21	42	16	32	13	26	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>memerah</i>	blushing	39	78	10	20	1	2	50
19.	as red as a poppy	retention of the same image	<i>merah seperti bunga poppy</i>	as red as a poppy	11	22	23	46	16	32	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>merah seperti darah</i>	red as blood	14	28	28	56	8	16	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>merah</i>	red	39	78	9	18	2	4	50
20.	as red as a rose	retention of the same image	<i>merah seperti bunga mawar</i>	as red as a rose	14	28	25	50	11	22	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>merah seperti darah</i>	red as blood	14	28	28	56	8	16	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>merah</i>	red	35	70	13	26	2	4	50
21.	as red as a ruby	retention of the same image	<i>merah seperti batu rubi</i>	as red as a ruby	14	28	26	52	10	20	50

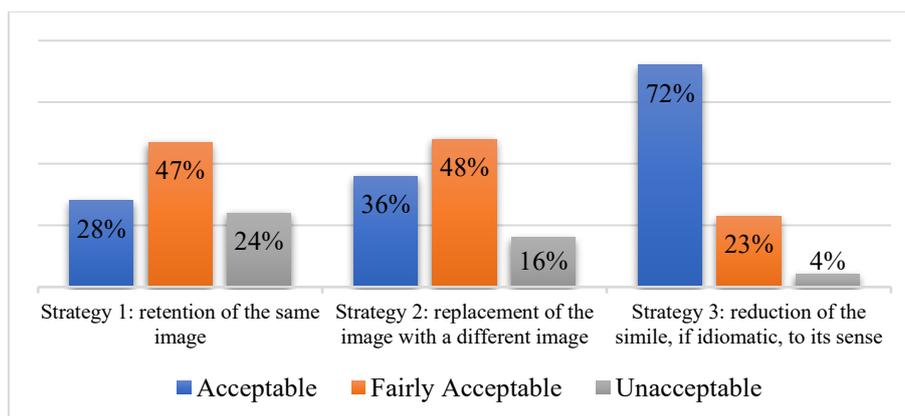
¹⁰ *The Official Monolingual Indonesian Dictionary*, s.v. “merah,” accessed June 1, 2025. <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/entri/merah>.

replacement with a different image	<i>merah seperti delima</i>	red like a pomegranate	22	44	24	48	4	8	50
reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>tersipu-sipu</i>	blushing	37	74	10	20	3	6	50

Table 13. Acceptability of translation strategies for the red similes

Translation Strategies	Acceptable		Fairly Acceptable		Unacceptable		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Strategy 1: retention of the same image	85	28%	142	47%	73	24%	300
Strategy 2: replacement of the image with a different image	108	36%	145	48%	47	16%	300
Strategy 3: reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense	217	72%	70	23%	13	4%	300

Figure 7. Acceptability of translation strategies for the red similes



The translations of the red similes using strategy 1: retention of the same image show the following results. Most of the participants fairly accepted all simile translations using the same image, as in ‘as red as a beet’ (n=26 or 52%), ‘as red as blood’ (n=21 or 42%), ‘as red as a cherry’ (n=21 or 42%), ‘as red as a poppy’ (n=23 or 46%), ‘as red as a rose’ (n=25 or 50%), and ‘as red as a ruby’ (n=26 or 52%). One of the reasons the translations with the same image were fairly acceptable by the participants is that they realized the similes were translations from English into Indonesian. The exposure to English in their daily activities, such as watching movies, listening to songs, and reading English texts. As they knew that the simile was a translation from English into Indonesian, they thought it was perhaps acceptable in English. In addition, the participants also made the following comments: ‘red as a beet’ seems more suitable for angry condition; even commonly used in target language, ‘red as blood’ sounds

scary; the depiction of red using fruits seems appropriate to depict sweet moments; ‘red as a poppy’ sounds unfamiliar; ‘red as a rose’ sounds lovely; even if ‘red as a ruby’ sounds unfamiliar, one can still relate it with the color red since there was a phenomenon of momentary trend of gemstones in Indonesia in the 2010s, and ruby is one of them.

The translations of the red similes using strategy 2: replacement of the image with a different image show the following results. Most of the participants accepted the translations of ‘as red as a beet’ (n=24 or 48%) and ‘as red as a cherry’ (n=21 or 42%), where image was replaced with *delima* ‘pomegranate,’ as in *merah seperti delima* ‘(as) red as/like a pomegranate.’ Most of the participants fairly accepted the translations of ‘as red as blood’ (n=26 or 52%), ‘as red as a poppy’ (n=28 or 56%), ‘as red as a rose’ (n=28 or 56%), and ‘as red as a ruby’ (n=24 or 48%), where image was replaced with ‘red as boiled shrimp,’ ‘red as blood,’ and ‘red as a pomegranate.’ The participants suggested other images to depict the color red in the target language, such as ‘red like a tomato’ and ‘red like a fire engine siren.’ The color red in Indonesian is often depicted with various objects, such as fire, brick, chili, blood, ruby, heart, mangosteen, and shrimp.

The translations of the red similes using strategy 3: reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense, show the following results. Most of the participants accepted all the red similes when translated into their core meanings, namely *tesipu-sipu* ‘blushing,’ *merah* ‘red,’ or *wajahnya merah* ‘red face.’

The results of the study showed that most of the participants fairly accepted the translation with the same simile image, since they realized that the similes were translations from other languages. The simile images to depict red, as in ‘a beet,’ ‘blood,’ ‘a cherry,’ ‘a poppy,’ ‘a rose,’ and ‘a ruby,’ were fairly accepted by the target language participants. Meanwhile, the participants accepted and fairly accepted the translations with a different simile image. In the target language, red is defined as the color of blood. Red is also closely related to the words fire, brick, chili, blood, ruby, heart, mangosteen, and shrimp. The participants suggested tomatoes and roses to depict red. In general, the translations of the similes into their core meanings were the most accepted translation versions by the participants. The participants who came from various majors and educational backgrounds stated that the images to depict the color red in the target language may vary. The choice depends on the context and text; for example, roses for red in a romantic situation.

4.7 White

In English, white refers to the color of new snow or milk, or being light or pale in color.¹¹ In this study, four similes with the color white were tested: (1) ‘as white as driven snow,’ (2) ‘as white as a ghost,’ (3) ‘as white as a sheet,’ and (4) ‘as white as snow,’ representing an extremely white or pale color or complexion. In Indonesian, *putih* ‘white’ refers to a basic color similar to that of cotton, or a color that is pure or suggests a pale face.¹²

Table 14. Acceptability of the white simile translations

No.	Color Similes	Translation Strategies	Indonesian Translation	Back Translation into English	Acceptable		Fairly Acceptable		Unacceptable		Total
					F	%	F	%	F	%	
22.	as white as driven snow	retention of the same image	<i>seputih salju</i>	as white as driven snow	24	48	20	40	6	12	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>seputih kapas</i>	as white as cotton	19	38	28	56	3	6	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>sangat putih</i>	very white	33	66	16	32	1	2	50
23.	as white as a ghost	retention of the same image	<i>pucat seperti hantu</i>	as white as a ghost	25	50	15	30	10	20	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>pucat seperti kapas</i>	pale as cotton	13	26	20	40	17	34	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>pucat</i>	pale	37	74	10	20	3	6	50
24.	as white as a sheet	retention of the same image	<i>pucat seperti kain</i>	as white as a sheet	10	20	14	28	26	52	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>pucat seperti kapas</i>	pale as cotton	14	28	21	42	15	30	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>pucat</i>	pale	36	72	12	24	2	4	50
25.	as white as snow	retention of the same image	<i>seputih salju</i>	as white as snow	22	44	20	40	8	16	50
		replacement with a different image	<i>seputih kapas</i>	as white as cotton	22	44	22	44	6	12	50
		reduction of the simile to its sense	<i>putih</i>	white	39	78	10	20	1	2	50

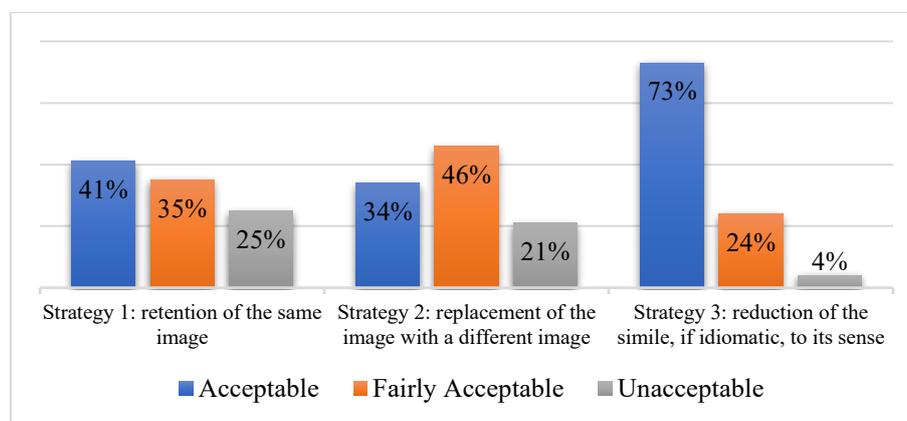
¹¹ *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “white,” accessed June 1, 2025. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/white>.

¹² *The Official Monolingual Indonesian Dictionary*, s.v. “putih,” accessed June 1, 2025. <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/entri/putih>.

Table 15. Acceptability of translation strategies for the white similes

Translation Strategies	Acceptable		Fairly Acceptable		Unacceptable		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Strategy 1: retention of the same image	81	41%	69	35%	50	25%	200
Strategy 2: replacement of the image with a different image	68	34%	91	46%	41	21%	200
Strategy 3: reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense	145	73%	48	24%	7	4%	200

Figure 8. Acceptability of translation strategies for the white similes



The translations of the white similes using strategy 1: retention of the same image show the following results. Most of the participants accepted three white simile translations that maintained the source language image into the target language: ‘as white as driven snow’ (n=24 or 48%), ‘as white as a ghost’ (n=25 or 50%), and ‘as white as snow’ (n=22 or 44%). However, most of the participants rejected the translation of the white simile in ‘as white as a sheet’ (n=26 or 52%) maintaining the source language image. According to the participants, the images of ‘snow’ and ‘cotton’ are commonly used in the target language to depict white or pale. However, ‘a sheet’ is not commonly used in Indonesian to depict white or pale.

The translations of the white similes using strategy 2: replacement of the image with a different image show the following results. Most of the participants accepted the translation of ‘as white as snow’ (n=22 or 44%) replacing the image ‘snow’ with *kapas* ‘cotton,’ which is commonly used to depict white in the target language, as in ‘as white as cotton.’ In Indonesian, *putih* ‘white’ is described as a color like cotton. Most of the participants fairly accepted the translations of the white similes ‘as white as driven snow’ (n=28 or 56%), ‘as white as a ghost’

(n=20 or 40%), and ‘as white as a sheet’ (n=21 or 42%) replacing the image with *kapas* ‘cotton,’ which is commonly used to depict white in the target language, as in ‘as white as cotton.’ The participants suggested another image to depict the color white in the target language: *pucat seperti mayat* ‘white/pale as a corpse.’ In Indonesian, the word white is closely related to the words pure, ivory, chalk, pearl, pale, snow, milk, and gray hair.

The translations of the white similes using strategy 3: reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense, show the following results. Most of the participants accepted all the translations for ‘as white as driven snow’ (n=33 or 66%), ‘as white as a ghost’ (n=37 or 74%), ‘as white as a sheet’ (n=36 or 72%), and ‘as white as snow’ (n=39 or 78%), which were translated into their core meanings: *putih* ‘white’ and *pucat* ‘pale.’ The participants suggested that in certain contexts, for example, to describe white hair, it is more acceptable to use the word *uban* ‘gray hair’ instead of *rambut putih* ‘white hair.’

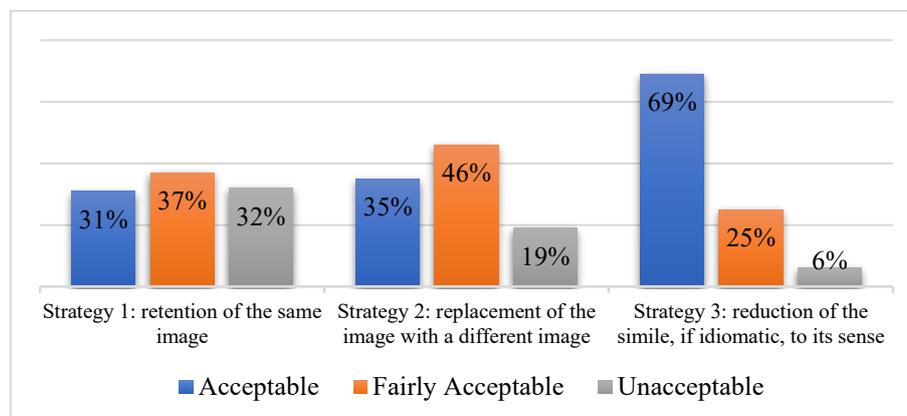
5. Discussion

This section features a discussion of the research findings. The following table 16 and figure 9 show the translation strategies and the acceptability of the color simile translations from English into Indonesian. Strategy 3: the reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense turned out to be the translation strategy producing the most acceptable translations, based on the participants’ responses. The other two strategies, strategy 1: retention of the same image and strategy 2: replacement of the image with a different image, produced fairly acceptable translations, according to the participants’ responses.

Table 16. Translation strategies and translation acceptability

Translation Strategies	Acceptable		Fairly Acceptable		Unacceptable		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Strategy 1: retention of the same image	383	31%	464	37%	403	32%	1250
Strategy 2: replacement of the image with a different image	435	35%	573	46%	242	19%	1250
Strategy 3: reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense	858	69%	314	25%	78	6%	1250

Figure 9. Translation strategies and translation acceptability



Strategy 1: retention of the same image received various responses from the participants. The application of this translation strategy to translate color similes produced 31% acceptable, 37% fairly acceptable, and 32% unacceptable translations. Most of the participants accepted certain simile images because, first, they recognized the similes as translations from English into Indonesian. Second, exposure to English in their daily activities through media was influential; even if a simile image was uncommon in their native language, they assumed it was acceptable in English. However, the participants rejected some other images due to cultural differences, one of which is related to ecology. Ecology in this context consists of flora, fauna, winds, plains, and hills (Newmark 1988). For example, in English, a gooseberry and berries represent brown or tan. In Indonesian, the types of berries that are familiar to the participants are strawberry, raspberry, and blueberry, which are red and blue. Another reason the participants rejected source language images is that the target language already possesses familiar expressions for those colors, such as *hitam seperti arang* ‘black as charcoal,’ *cokelat seperti sawo matang* ‘brown like ripe sapodilla,’ *hijau seperti daun* ‘green like leaves,’ *merah seperti delima* ‘red like a pomegranate,’ and *seputih kapas* ‘as white as cotton.’

Strategy 2: replacement of the image with a different image produced 35% acceptable, 46% fairly acceptable, and 19% unacceptable translations. Most of the participants accepted the simile translations that replaced the source language image with an appropriate target language image, especially for similes depicting literal colors. However, the participants rejected the translation of color similes with idiomatic meanings, such as ‘as black as the devil’ meaning bad or evil, when they were replaced by images like *hitam seperti arang* (‘black as charcoal’). The participants argued that the image of *arang* (‘charcoal’), while commonly used

to depict black, is unsuitable or unable to convey the idiomatic sense of bad or evil in the target language. They suggested it is better to translate such expressions using their literal meanings.

Strategy 3: reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense produced 69% acceptable, 25% fairly acceptable, and 6% unacceptable translations. Most participants accepted the translation of similes by using their direct meanings. The participants from various educational backgrounds argued that while using the same simile form is more suitable for making a sentence more appealing or hyperbolic or creating a lovely atmosphere, translating by meaning is highly acceptable if the primary goal of the text is to provide information.

The results of this study showed that colors in English can be understood similarly by Indonesian readers. In both languages, black refers to a color or a shade of dark and represents bad or evil; green represents being inexperienced or very young; red refers to the color of blood or being extremely flushed; and white refers to being pale in color. However, the specific images used to depict these colors are not always identical. In English, the images used to depict black are ‘the ace of spades,’ ‘coal,’ ‘the devil,’ ‘one’s hat,’ ‘pitch,’ ‘a raven,’ ‘a skillet,’ ‘a stack of black cats,’ and ‘a sweep,’ while in Indonesian, the images used to depict black are ‘charcoal,’ ‘night,’ ‘shoe polish,’ ‘asphalt,’ and ‘the bottom of a frying pan.’ In English, brown is the color of ‘earth’ or ‘wood,’ while in Indonesian, it is the color of ‘ripe sapodilla.’ In English, green is the color of ‘grass,’ while in Indonesian, it is the color of ‘leaves.’ In English, the images used to depict red are ‘a beet,’ ‘as blood,’ ‘a cherry,’ ‘a poppy,’ ‘a rose,’ and ‘a ruby,’ while in Indonesian, the images used to depict red are ‘pomegranate,’ ‘fire,’ ‘brick,’ ‘chili,’ ‘blood,’ ‘ruby,’ ‘heart,’ and ‘shrimp.’ In English, the images used to depict white are ‘driven snow,’ ‘a ghost,’ ‘a sheet,’ and ‘snow,’ while in Indonesian, the images used to depict white are ‘cotton,’ ‘corpse,’ ‘ivory,’ ‘chalk,’ ‘pearl,’ ‘snow,’ and ‘milk.’

The results of the questionnaire show that several factors affect the acceptability of color simile translations from English into Indonesian. First, the participants have been exposed to English in their daily activities. Based on their personal assessment, their language skills are at least intermediate, meaning they can communicate about familiar topics, write simple texts, and engage in conversations in English. They are also exposed to English through translating, listening to music, watching movies, studying, and working. This exposure is one of the reasons the participants accepted the English images used in the translated similes. Even though the

translations may not feel natural in their native language, they recognized that the similes were the result of a translation from English.

Second, media exposure enriches the participants' knowledge of popular culture; for example, movies significantly affect their understanding of the world. The participants associated certain colors with images they saw in movies representing other cultures. For instance, the image of 'the devil' in the simile 'as black as the devil' was considered unacceptable for depicting the color black. Instead, the participants related the image to *Hellboy*, an American superhero movie. In the film, the main character is depicted as a large, muscular, red-skinned ape/monkey-like man with a tail, horns (which he files off, leaving behind circular stumps on his forehead that resemble goggles), cloven hooves, and an oversized right hand made of stone. Consequently, the participants felt the image of 'the devil' was more suitable for representing the color red.

Third, religious beliefs affect the participants' views on color similes. For example, the image of 'the devil' in 'as black as the devil' is not accepted for depicting the color black or the concepts of bad and evil. These participants believe black does not depict the devil, and they consider it unacceptable to compare humans with the devil. Instead of associating the devil with black, the participants prefer the devil to represent red. They believe, according to their religious views, that devils are made of fire; since fire is close to the color red, the devil is considered a more acceptable image for red.

Fourth, the participants' general knowledge of ecology affects their choice of translation acceptability. Ecology in this context refers to flora, fauna, winds, plains, and hills (Newmark 1988). For example, most participants rejected the translation of 'as brown as a berry' when it retained the image of 'a berry' or *buah beri* in the target language, referring to tanned skin color. The participants argued that the color brown does not represent berries, which they associate with bright colors like red and blue, such as strawberries, raspberries, and blueberries. In the target language, brown skin is often likened to *sawo matang* 'ripe sapodilla,' as in *cokelat seperti sawo matang* '(as) brown as/like ripe sapodilla.' However, this specific brown refers to the natural skin tone of most Indonesians rather than being specific to sunburned or tanned skin. Furthermore, the participants argued that skin exposed to the sun does not turn brown, but rather becomes darker or even black.

Fifth, a phenomenon or trend in a certain culture at a specific time affects understanding and acceptance of a translation. For example, regarding the image of ‘a ruby’ to depict red as in ‘as red as a ruby,’ although this simile sounds unfamiliar, the participants can still relate it to the color red. This is due to the momentary gemstone trend that occurred in Indonesia in the 2010s, where ruby was an example.

Sixth, the participants’ various educational backgrounds affect their choice of simile translation and contribute to potential new versions. For example, the images used to depict the color red in the target language vary; the choice depends on context and text type, such as using roses to represent red in a romantic situation. To describe white hair, it is more acceptable to use the word *uban* ‘gray hair’ instead of *rambut putih* ‘white hair.’

Seventh, the uniqueness of languages affects the participants’ choice regarding translation acceptability. The participants often rejected source language images because the target language already possesses familiar expressions for those colors. Examples include *hitam seperti arang* ‘black as charcoal,’ *cokelat seperti sawo matang* ‘brown like ripe sapodilla,’ *hijau seperti daun* ‘green like leaves,’ *merah seperti delima* ‘red like a pomegranate,’ and *seputih kapas* ‘as white as cotton.’ There are many other images that can be used to illustrate color similes in the target language.

By considering the similarities and differences between color similes in English and Indonesian in terms of meaning and images, as well as the factors affecting the acceptability of color simile translations from English into Indonesian, translators can apply effective strategies to produce color simile translations that are both accurate and acceptable in the target language. Strategy 1, retention of the same image, can be used if it sounds natural and is understood correctly in the target language. This strategy is suitable for making a sentence more appealing or hyperbolic or to create a certain atmosphere. Strategy 2, replacement of the image with a different image with the same meaning, can be used when the target language already possesses color similes with familiar expressions. While effective for translating similes depicting colors, it may not be suitable for those with idiomatic meanings, as it is unable to deliver the idiomatic meaning of color similes. This strategy also helps make a sentence more appealing or hyperbolic or to create a certain atmosphere. Finally, strategy 3, reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense, is suitable for translating both similes depicting colors and those having

idiomatic meaning. This strategy is best for informative texts, though it may be less effective if the goal is to make the sentence more appealing or hyperbolic or to create a certain atmosphere

6. Conclusion

This study found that strategy 1: retention of the same image produced 31% acceptable, 37% fairly acceptable, and 32% unacceptable translations. Strategy 2: replacement of the image with a different image produced 35% acceptable, 46% fairly acceptable, and 19% unacceptable translations. Strategy 3: reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense produced 69% acceptable, 25% fairly acceptable, and 6% unacceptable translations. Strategy 3, the reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense became the translation strategy producing the most acceptable translations, while strategy 1: retention of the same image and strategy 2: replacement of the image with a different image produced fairly acceptable translations, based on the participants' responses.

The results of this study showed that colors in English can be understood similarly by Indonesian readers. In both languages, black refers to a color or a shade of dark and represents bad or evil; green represents being inexperienced or very young; red refers to the color of blood or being extremely flushed; and white refers to being pale in color. However, the specific images used to depict these colors are not always identical. In English, black is the color of 'coal,' while in Indonesian, black is the color of 'charcoal.' In English, brown is the color of 'earth' or 'wood,' while in Indonesian, it is the color of 'ripe sapodilla.' In English, green is the color of 'grass,' while in Indonesian, it is the color of 'leaves.' In English, red is the color of 'blood,' while in Indonesian, it is the color of 'pomegranate.' In English, white is the color of 'snow,' while in Indonesian, it is the color of 'cotton.' The factors that affect the acceptability of color simile translations from English into Indonesian include exposure to English in daily activities, media exposure about popular culture, religious beliefs, general knowledge of ecology, culture-specific phenomena or trends, educational backgrounds, and the uniqueness of languages.

By considering the similarities and differences between color similes in English and Indonesian in terms of meaning and images, as well as the factors affecting the acceptability of color simile translations from English into Indonesian, translators can apply effective strategies to produce color simile translations that are both accurate and acceptable in the target language.

Strategy 1, retention of the same image, can be used if it sounds natural and is understood correctly in the target language. Strategy 2, replacement of the image with a different image with the same meaning, can be used when the target language already possesses color similes with familiar expressions. While effective for translating similes depicting colors, it may not be suitable for those with idiomatic meanings, as it is unable to deliver the idiomatic meaning of color similes. Strategy 3, reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense, is suitable for translating both similes depicting colors and those having idiomatic meaning.

This study obtained data from a corpus of various dictionaries, selecting only the color similes available within that corpus. There are many other color similes used in English and Indonesian which, of course, pose different challenges for translators. Future researchers could examine color similes found outside this corpus, including colors such as yellow, blue, purple, orange, and pink. The researchers hope this study provides a clear overview of color simile translation and the application of effective strategies to produce translations that are both accurate and acceptable in the target language.

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