

FORMING ENGLISH IDIOMS

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Tulisan ini membahas tentang idioms. *Idioms* adalah *ungkapan*, merupakan gabungan beberapa kata untuk membentuk suatu ekspresi maupun ungkapan dengan makna yang tidak sesungguhnya. Maksudnya, makna yang dibentuknya memiliki makna tersendiri tidak sesuai lagi dengan kamus. Ada banyak cara yang bisa dilakukan untuk membentuk idioms; bisa dengan membentuk "noun + noun", "verb + verb", "prep + prep" dan lain sebagainya. Penguasaan *idioms ini* akan membantu atau memperkaya kosa kata bahasa Inggris kita. Jadi, untuk apat menguasai kosa kata bahasa Inggris dengan baik, ada banyak hal yang bisa dilakukan, termasuk menguasai *English Idioms*.

Kata Kunci: ungkapan, bahasa Inggris, kosa kata.

A. INTRODUCTION

There are many linguistics elements into meaningful patterns which have learnt by students in teaching and learning, one of the most linguistic elements which have studied by students is called the idiom. Idiom is learnt by the ninth grade of the junior high school firstly. It can be seen from the topic lesson of the idiom which is intended of their textbook.

Idiom is one way to build English vocabulary. Building vocabularies will make the vocabularies inlarger. It is need to increase the ability students or people in enriching their vocabularies. By having good vocabularies, with many various of mastering idioms, your English learning will become various. Idiom means a combination of words that have a figurative meaning. So, in idioms there are the combination of words that build a meaning figuratively.

Further, idiom is a group of words which has special connotation not usually equal to the sum of the meaning of the individual words, and which usually cannot be translated literally into another language without special meaning being lost, e.g. *that's not my cup of tea* or *hold the line please*, alternative term is idiomatic expression.

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In this writing will be discussed about the concepts of idioms, sources and forms of idioms.

B. DISCUSSION

1. English Idioms

An idiom comes from Latin: *idioma*, "special property", f. Greek: *ἰδίωμα* – *idiōma*, "special feature, special phrasing", f. Greek: *ἴδιος* – *idios*, "one's own", which is meant as a combination of words that have a figurative meaning. An idiom's figurative meaning is separate from the literal meaning. An **idiom** is a phrase where the words together have a meaning that is different from the dictionary definitions of the individual words, which can make idioms hard for ESL students and learners to understand². Here, the meaning focussed on the meaning of real meaning and literal meaning.

Idioms are also words, phrases or expressions which are commonly used in everyday conversation by native speakers of English. They are often metaphorical and make the language more colourful. People use them to express something more vividly and often more briefly. They serve as an image or mental picture.³ It is as words, phrases or exspression used by the speakers to make language more colourful, an dto express something briefly. Sofyanda et, al⁴ stated that an idiom is a phrase or a word which is used in a special meaning that you cannot understand just by knowing the dictionary definition and grammar of the parts; many two-words verbs are idiomatic.

So, it can be concluded that idioms is expressions that used to express feelings with literal or not real language, it cannot be understood through dictionary purely.

Examples;

- *to bear up* means *to have courage*
- *to look like* means *to look angry*

² retrieved from <http://www.usingenglish.com/reference/idioms/> at Oct 2013.

³ http://www.learn-english-today.com/idioms/idioms_proverbs.html

⁴ Sofyanda, Anwar. et, al, *Contextual English*. Bandung : Grafindo Media Pratama (Bandung: Grafindo Media), 2008, p. 4.

Supporting the above quotations, Bolinger⁵ also stated that idioms maybe defines as groups of words with set meanings that cannot be calculated by adding up separated meaning of the parts. Furthermore, an idiom also is a group of words, peculiar to one language which by usage is given meaning which cannot be deduced immediately from the separate words of which it is composed. Further, Jannedy⁶ also defined that idioms are cases where sequence of words has a fixed meaning that is not composed of the literal meanings of its words by regular principles.

To me it clearly, read the following sentence to make more understanding of the idioms.

These are idioms using the *word day*

1) *Any day now*

- The baby's due *any day now*.

You can say something could happen any day now if you are expecting it to happen very soon.

2) *Big day*

- It's going to be a *big day* for me; my first international match.

Someone's big day is a day on which he/she does or is planning to do something very important, such as getting married.

3) *Seize day*

- My mother told me *to seize the day*.

If someone tells you to seize the day they mean that you should take every opportunity to learn and experience new things now, rather than wait until later.

So, here some idioms in English⁷:

Idioms	Meaning
All of a sudden	Quickly
Every now and then	Occasionally

⁵ Bolinger. *Aspect of Language*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovovich inc., 1981, p. 53.

⁶Jannedy. *English Idioms and How to Use Them*. . 1994, p. 56.

⁷ Sofyanda, Op.Cot. p. 4-5.

In advance	Ahead of time
Make oneself at home	Be relaxed and comfortable
Not to mention	In additions
As long as	During the time that
Take turns	Do something alternately with others
Look forward to	Anticipate with pleasure
Take after someone	Resemble someone in character
Learn by heart	Memorize
On time	At the scheduled time
Little by little	Gradually
Make friends	From friendships with people
Never mind	Do not bother
Catch cold	Become sick with a cold
Take it easy	Relax
On purpose	Intentionally
Take part in	Participate in
Give someone a hand	Help someone with something
See eye to eye	Agree

Form the above idioms, so they may use in sentences as below;

- I cannot wait for the next holiday. I *look forward* to it.
- Today is Lisa's turn to cook breakfast. Tomorrow is Anny's turn. They *take turns* cooking the breakfast.
- Yuni is like her mother when she was young. Yuni *takes after someone* her mother.
- We cannot be late. We have to get there *on time*.
- Do not panic. Just *take it easy*.
- I did not mean to hurt him. I did not do it *all of a sudden*.

Based on some definitions of idioms above, it can be stated that;

- a) Idioms maybe defines as groups of words with set meanings that can not be calculated by adding up separated meaning of the parts.
- b) Idioms is a group of words, peculiar to one language which by usage is given meaning which cannot be deduced immediately from the separate words of which it is composed.
- c) Idioms are cases where sequence of words has a fixed meaning that is not composed of the literal meanings of its words by regular principles.

So, it can be concluded that idioms defines as groups of words with set meanings that cannot be calculated by adding up separated meaning of the parts.

2. The Sources of Idioms

Idiom may come from many sources, according to Marie⁸ that sources of idioms are divided into six parts, namely:

1) Clothing

- A white collar means *dress of worker in the hospital*.
- To wear out, means *to become shabby and unless from wear*.

2) Part of body

- *Head on*. means opposite each other.
- *To sick one's chin*, means critics.

3) Food and cooking

- *Chicken out* means coward.
- *Cook up* means to look for to prepare.

4) Agriculture

- *Crop up* means throw appear.
- *Weed out* means throw something which useless.

5) Home life

- *Clean the table* means to take place and glass from the table.
- *Eat someone of house and home*, means to fill food.

6) Military and Nautical Life

- *Soldier on* means strong and solid.
- *On parole* means liberated after making such a promise.

⁸Marie. *Twentieth Century Literary Criticism*. America: Gale Research, 1980, p. 5.

Based on the explanation above, Marie⁹ explained that there are some of the uses and characteristics of idioms as follows:

- a. Idioms are very day in formal speech amongst members of the some group.
 - b. It can often out as 'code' which out side.
 - c. Linguistic pulls, it can be since sub-dialect.
 - d. It is hardly use at all in writing expect for stylistics.
 - e. Today is idioms can be tomorrow Standard English.
- Further, there are some of the characteristics of idioms:

- a. The meaning of an idiom is metaphorical function rather than literal. It is a result of the compositional function of their parts
- b. The grammatical form of an idiom is in variable and fixed
- c. The process of substitution is not allowed and passive construction cannot be formed
- d. The expression have other fish to try means that to have something to do that is more important or profitable however, we could not say have other.

In additions, there are many criteria's and aspect in identifying or idioms, they are:

- 1) The presence of at least to free morphemes is given expression
- 2) The ability of this morphemes to function with different meaning in more than one environment
- 3) The potential ambiguity of all idioms of recording a rising from the possibility of literal interpretation
- 4) The semantic unpredictably of idioms a rising from the act that an idiom has a meaning which can't be reduced.
- 5) Institutional.¹⁰

There are some aspect of idioms consisted of:

- 1) Phrase or sentence whose meaning is not through knowledge of the individual meanings of the constituent words but must be learnt as a whole
- 2) a group of words with a special meaning, which cannot be understand by talking the meaning of one at a time.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid. p. 8.*

So, it can be stated that the source of idiom consisted to clothing, part of body, food and cooking, agriculture, home life, military and nautical life.

3. Forms of Idioms

Marie¹¹ said that idioms have many different forms or structure. They can be very long and rather short. A long idiom is one that consists of some combinations of verb, prepositions, adjective, and noun. This form includes of idioms with phrasal verbs with object, idioms with phrasal verbs without object idioms with verb noun combinations, idioms with preposition noun combinations, idioms with verb noun preposition combination and idioms with preposition noun preposition combination¹².

1) Idioms with Phrasal Verbs with Object

Phrasal verb is a complete verb unit with a specific meaning and has more than one meaning? Phrasal verb is made up of a verb and preposition or an adverb particle. It normally consists of two words like call up, look into, etc. Idioms with a phrasal verbs can be defined into two kind, they are:

a. Separable Phrasal Verbs

The phrasal verbs in this sub chapter are called separable phrasal verbs because the always have objects. They are separated by noun objects and pronoun objects.

Examples:

She	Put	Her grown	On
	Verb	Noun object	Particle

They must be separated by pronoun object

She	Put	Her grown	On
	Verb	Pronoun object	Particle

¹¹ Marie, *Op.Cit.*, p. 5.

¹² *Ibid.*

b. Inseparable Phrasal Verbs

An inseparable phrasal verb has objects, but they can never separate by adverbs, and also used in the same way as normal verbs.

Examples:

- He *got on* the bus at Waterloo and got off at Piccadilly.

Got on means enter of board.

- The police are *looking into* last week's robbery.

Looking into means investigate

- When I was in East Java, I *lived on* Cassava.

Lived on means eat only certain things.

2) Idioms with Phrasal Verbs without Object

In this form, the idioms without use any objects.

Examples:

- If he hadn't *slipped up* on the last question, his score would have been perfect *Slipped up*, means 'made a careless mistake'

- *Look out!* Here's fierce dog.

Look out, means beware

3) Idioms with verb Noun Combinations

Another idiomatic form, besides verb phrase with and without object, is verb plus noun combination. For the illustrations, *the verbs make and take* used idiomatically with many different objects. The meaning of both verbs is usually clear from the context, and an important thing is to remember the correct verb.

Examples:

- Dave can't *keep his temper* when he drives in heavy traffic

- The movie star used to have lots of fans, but in recent years in has *losing* his touch.

- *Loosing* (one's) touch mean's 'be able to do something as well as before'.

4) Idioms with Preposition Noun Combinations

In this form, idioms formed by preposition plus noun combinations. The preposition *by* is used with reflexive pronouns. It means 'alone' and 'without help'.

Examples:

- John didn't forget his coat. He left *on purpose*.
On purpose means not accidentally
- You'd better take your umbrella *in case* it rains.
In case means as a proposition.
- You don't like football, do you? *on the contrary*, I like it very much
On the contrary means exactly the opposite.

5) Idioms with Verb Noun Preposition Combination

This idiom can be formed by verb plus noun plus preposition. It takes an object and noun keeps its literal meaning and only verb proposition are used idiomatically.

Examples:

- My teacher always *find fault* with me and with my work.
Finds fault with means critics.
- Don't *make fun of* his English. He is doing the best he can.
Make fun of means to laugh at.
- The Swiss didn't *take part* in two world wars.
Take part in means participate or join.

6) Idioms with Preposition Noun Preposition Combination

Idioms in these forms be formed by preposition plus noun plus preposition. All idioms in these forms are followed by noun or gerund, except *in order* to is followed by a verb. Most of these idioms presented, in this form are in variable.

Examples:

- The game was cancelled *on account of* rain.
On account of means because of.
- Who is *in charge of* the entire company?
In charge of means responsible for.

- I am *in favour of* changing the system.

In favour of means support.

Furthermore, Marie¹³ said also that a short idiom intended of with adjective noun combination, idioms with metaphors, idioms with metaphorical use of body part and idioms with metaphorical use of colours.

1) Idioms with Adjective Noun Combination

In this form idioms formed by adjective plus noun, adjective and nouns are used idiomatically. The combinations behave as noun. In most cases only the noun takes a plural form.

Examples:

- The *cold war* between Indonesia and Malaysia happened in 1965
Cold war means unfriendly relations between nations but with no military engagement.
- Mathematics is my *weak point*.
Weak point means a weak or defective area.
- She tells so many *tall storied* that one believes anything she says
Tall stories means an exaggerated and unbelievable tale.
- His knowledge of karate of then got him out a *tight corner*.
Tight corner means a difficult or dangerous situation.

a. Idioms with Noun Phrase

Each idiom in this form is made up two nouns, where one or both of them may be used idiomatically.

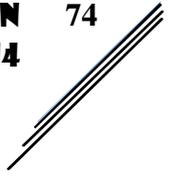
Examples:

- He dropped out *the rate race* and retired to the country.
The rate race means competitive struggle in work.

Idioms with Adjective

In this form, adjective followed by various preposition is not exactly used idiomatically, but it is unpredictable each individual combination has to be learnt by heart.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 6.



Examples:

- I am rather *short of money*; would you lend me your money?

Short of money means not having enough of something.

2) Idioms with Metaphors

A metaphor is an expression which says something literally untrue about some topic, but which expressed the idea that some part of the meaning of the literally untrue statement is attributed to the topic. In this form idiom is made up of metaphors.

Examples:

- She seemed quite charming, but she turned out to be a wolf in *sheep's clothing*.

Wolf in *sheep's clothing* means an enemy pretending to be a friend.

3) Idioms with Metaphorical Use of Body Part

Below are the examples of idioms with metaphorical use of body parts with their meaning and illustrative sentences.

- Billie can't come to the party. He is *boning up* for his last examination.

Boning up means to study intensively.

- The two women sat down under the tree and began to *chin about* their problem.

Chin about means to talk informally.

- He will back up the dean.

Back up means support.

- Mike asked to see the dean so he can talk to him *face to face*.

Face to face means in direct communication.

- Joe is such a talker. You always get *an earful* when he comes to visit.

An earful means information or gossip.

4) Idioms with Metaphorical Use of Colours

In this form, the writer would give the examples of idioms with metaphorical use of colours. It is interesting to note that the colours

must used in the idiomatic expressions are four. They are black, blue, red, and white. The most common is blue. Its fact that blue is the most preferred colour.

Examples:

Black

- My family treat me as the *black sheep* because I'm an artist.
Black sheep means someone who doesn't obey his/her family.
- The big store was running *in black*.
In black means successful or profitable.
- She had a bad day and suddenly she *black out*.
Black out means unconscious or fainted.

Blue

- Housewives sometimes wish they could sleep through *blue Monday*.
Blue Monday means a Monday when you have to work after a happy weekend.
- Jim argued with Sam until, he was *blue in face*.
Blue in face means very angry and upset.
- She considerers herself *blue blood* because her family is descended from famous aristocratic decent family.
Blue blood means noble or aristocratic descent.

Red

- *Red eye* was he common alcoholic drink found in most salons in west
Red eye means strong or cheap whisky.
- The rich man often, *in the red* with his business.
In the red means losing money.
- They *rolled our red carpet* for the queen when she comes in Indonesia.
Rolled our red carpet means to welcome an important guest.

White

- When they told her that her boyfriend was got married, she turns *white as sheet* and began to cry.

White as sheet means pale, bold less.

- Mother always buys many things with *white sale*.

White sale means the selling, especially at lower prices.

From the above explanation, the researcher concluded that the forms of idiom consisted to the mix idioms with phrasal verbs with object, idioms with phrasal verbs without object idioms with verb noun combinations, idioms with preposition noun combinations, idioms with verb noun preposition combination and idioms with preposition noun preposition combination, idiom with adjective noun combination, idioms with metaphors, idioms with metaphorical use of body part and idioms with metaphorical use of colours.

Below will be the exampels of idioms in expressing some feelings:

IDIOMS

MEANINGS

Concepts: Beauty – apperarance

cut a dash	If a person <i>cuts a dash</i> , they make a striking impression by their appearance and attractive clothes. Wearing his uniform, my grandfather cut a dash on his wedding day.
deck out	If you <i>deck out</i> someone or something, you dress or decorate them in a special way. Paul decked out his car for the occasion.
dressed to kill	When someone, especially a woman, is <i>dressed to kill</i> , they are wearing very fashionable or glamorous clothes intended to attract attention. She arrived at the reception dressed to kill.
dressed up to the nines	Someone <i>dressed up to the nines</i> is wearing very smart or glamorous clothes. Caroline must be going to a party - she's dressed up to the nines.

Concepts: Intelligence - Understanding

collect one's thoughts	If you collect your thoughts, you try to think calmly and clearly in order to prepare yourself mentally for something. Anne stopped to collect her thoughts before calling back the customer.
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- come to grips with If you come to grips with a problem or situation, you start to understand or deal with it properly.
After the initial shock, the patient began to come to grips with his disability.
- come to your senses If you come to your senses you start to think clearly and behave sensibly.
She finally came to her senses and realized that public transport was faster than driving in the city.
- blind you with science If someone tries to blind you with science, they confuse you with their knowledge by using difficult or technical words.
When you ask Tim for a simple explanation, he blinds you with science.

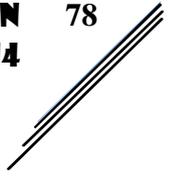
Concepts: Communication – Contact – Information

- out of touch If you are *out of touch*, you no longer communicate with someone, or you are unaware of recent developments.
I've been out of touch with Jenny since we left college.
- drop someone a line If you drop someone a line, you write a letter to them.
I always drop her a line to wish her a Merry Christmas.
- get hold of If you obtain something, or manage to contact someone, you get hold of them.
I'd like to contact the owner. Do you know where I can get hold of him?

There are many idioms more that cannot be given in this writing; in order to be one who master them you must learn more and more, so your English, especially vocabulary about idioms will be improved.

C. CONCLUSION

Idioms are the combination of words become phrases or expression to express feelings; its meaning build the meaning that donot come form the dictionary. There are some formation to build idioms; it must be built based on the forms. The use of language cannot build it up just as they can. It also must have meanings, the meanings are literal; used idioms will make your vocabularies increase and various.



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