

VARIATIONS AND DERIVATION OF IDIOMS IN THE KISS NOVEL

by

LINA SEPTIANASARI
 STKIP Muhammadiyah Bogor
Linasury62@yahoo.co.id

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Abstract:

Human creativity in using language is incredible. It is reflected through several variations and changes they made in using fixed expressions to express their ideas. One of those is in the way people used idioms. This research discusses about English idioms in *The Kiss* novel. It aims (1) to describe the forms of idioms used in *The Kiss* novel and (2) to describe the variations and derivation of idioms used in *The Kiss* novel. This is a qualitative linguistic research which used novel as the source of the data. English idioms in *The Kiss* novel become the object of this research. The data here are collected by using reading method. Besides, the collected data then are analyzed by using translational method. The results show that there are 6 types of idioms' form found in this research, they are: verbal idiom, prepositional phrases, compound, binomial, whole clause or sentence, and ill-formed idiom in which some idioms got lexical variation and derivation on their form. The lexical variation and derivation in idioms' form can happen as long as the idiomatic meaning of idiom is defensible and can be understood by the language users;

Keywords: idioms; derivation; variation.

INTRODUCTION

Idiom is one of language units used frequently in communication by American native speakers. It is very common for the native speakers of English to use idiom in their daily conversation, especially in informal situation. English second language learners or English foreign language learners sometimes get into some difficulties in

communicating with native speakers. Generally they have difficulty in understanding the meaning of the idioms which are used in the conversation due to the fact that the idioms cannot be translated literally and based on the words used in the phrase or sentence construction. This unique character of idiom becomes an interesting reason for an extensive research in this field.

As explained above, the lack of understanding on idioms can cause communication breakdown. Sometimes, it is difficult for the English learners to make an intelligible conversation with another person or group of people due to lack knowledge and understanding of idioms and its meaning. Communication breakdown arises in conversation when idiom, such as: “what’s cooking?”, “what the hell!”, or “how do you do”, is translated literally by the listener who might possibly react inappropriately in response towards what the speaker said resulting to an ineffective communication.

It is crucial for language learners to understand about idioms because it is frequently used in daily conversation by native speaker of America. Moreover, when a foreigner decided to stay in America, it would be better if they learn about idiom to anticipate communication breakdown (Ito, 1993). Frequently EFL learners get difficult to understand the idiomatic expression (see (Alkarazoun, 2015); and (Salamah, 2015)). In line with this, there is a firm relation among language, culture, and idioms that should be understood by English foreign language learners (Yağiz & Izadpanah, 2013). The idiomatic meaning and cultural value of idiom’s construction becomes the obstacle for the second speakers in understanding idiom’s meaning. Lack of knowledge in understanding second language gives significant influence in socializing with the society. Therefore, language research in idiom is needed to ease the English learners in improving their language ability. Along similar lines, other linguist argued that English language learners have an urge to learn about idioms in order to enhance their social and cultural understanding in English (Edison, 2015).

It is undeniable that foreign or second language learners need to learn idioms in order to comprehend the language they learn. Idioms are used in daily conversation, novel, movie’s script, song’s lyrics, poem and many others. The cultural value of spoken language is also frequently reflected in idioms. Hence, foreign language learners need to learn idiom so that they can speak like a native speaker.

A number of research problems have been analyzed by linguists through traditional and non-traditional approaches (Almohizea, 2016), (Grant & Bauer, 2015), and (Herbst, 2010)). Several researches who were focused on transformation and variation on Idioms have been developed to see the change of this fixed expression (further reading (Hovhannisyan & Mkrtchyan, 2014), (Liu, 2012), and (Edison, 2015)). Transformation and variation of idioms are found in spoken and written English. Adeyanju (2009) conducted a research about variation of Nigerian English idioms based on factors of stability. Another research about idiomatic variation has been conducted by Geeraert, Baayen, and Newman (2017). Both of those researches used eye-tracking experiment. On the contrary, this research used novel as the source of data. Novel as one of many products of written English provides many data about transformation and variation of English idioms. One of those novels is The Kiss Novel.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher was interested to conduct a research about idiom by using The Kiss novel as the object of this research. The type of this novel is romance. The researcher chose this novel because many idioms are found in this novel. This novel shows the use of idioms represented with the context of utterances. The novelist described the circumstance of American society by using idioms which can be seen in the plot of the novel. These aspects help the learners or non-native speakers in understanding the idioms. Furthermore, the story of this novel is close enough to the real life in America so the use of idioms in their social interaction can be analyzed through this novel. The last consideration is because this novel was written by a best-seller novelist.

According to the statements above, this research is focused on the syntactical change of the idioms uses. The objectives of this research are (1) to describe the form of idioms in The Kiss Novel and (2) to describe the derivation and inflection of idioms in this novel. The data was taken from dialog and narration of the novelist. This research analyzed the way native English speakers use and modify fixed expression, particularly in the use of idioms.

METHOD

Design

Research method in linguistics refers to a working method in order to investigate language which not only explain “what is language” or “how is language”, but also give a brief explanation about “why is language?” and also “when is language?” (Sudaryanto, 1993). Besides, research method is also used to analyze and measure the validity of the data.

Subject and types of data

The subject of this study is the Kiss Novel, while Idioms which are found in the Kiss novel become the research object of this research. The type of this research is referential research which used written text as the source of the data

Instrument

The instrument of this study is the researcher with the aid of table of analyzed idioms. The co-instrument is used to make the study focus based on the research question.

Data Collecting

In this research, the researcher uses *Simak* (scrutinizing) method to collect the data. Mahsun (2012) stated that this method is conducted by scrutinizing the use of language in a particular language community. In implementing this method, the researcher used 2 supporting techniques, *Sadap* technique and *Catat* technique. *Sadap* technique is used as the base technique to collect the data which be combined with *catat* technique. In measuring the validity of the data, the researcher conducted a peer debriefing technique with American English native speaker and also used American English Idioms Dictionary to investigate the accuracy of the data.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the researcher used a taxonomical analysis. All of the data were verified before being analyzed to avoid bias. All of the data were then classified by its character of variation and its form. Every single datum was then categorized where it belonged to and put it in the taxonomical analysis table.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This part discusses the result of analysis which may give general information about the syntactical form of idioms in *The Kiss* novel. It is already known that idioms have a fixed formula in which the words construction cannot be substituted randomly, so the head of an idiom cannot be replaced by another word due to its correspondence idiomatic meaning. Based on its form, O'Dell & McCarthy (2003) classified idiom into 7 types. They are verb + object/complement, prepositional phrase, compound, binomial, trinomial, simile, and whole clause or sentence. This theory becomes the primary theory used to analyze the forms of idioms in this novel. Out of these forms, the researcher found out another form of idiom which is out of the idioms forms as explained by O'Dell & McCarthy (2003). Syntactically this form of an idiom can be called as an ill-formed idiom. This term is commonly used by the Grammarian to classify ungrammatical fixed expressions. The brief explanation of this case will be explained clearly in the next part.

Syntactical Forms of Idioms

The result of the analysis shows that there is no trinomial idiom used in *The Kiss* novel. In line with this case, simile idiom also cannot be identified in this research. As already mentioned before, there are only 6 types of idioms found in this research; they are verb + object (verbal idiom), prepositional phrase, binomial, compound, whole clause or sentence, and ill-formed idiom. Look at the data below!

- (1) But that's what these little bachelorettes get together are for, to defuse these fears. Otherwise, Western civilization would **grind to a halt**. (Minger, 2006)
- (2) Tell us what you're doing **in our neck of the woods**. (Minger, 2006)
- (3) And more importantly, he had **a big heart**. (Minger, 2006)
- (4) I've been running through the whole thing in my head, **over and over**. (Minger, 2006)
- (5) The Midwest could still be an extremely sexist place, with the whole "**Boys will be boys**" mentality easily making excuses for what Paul had done. (Minger, 2006)

(6) “I haven’t even been able to find this convent, it’s so isolated, **let alone** make any calls.”(Minger, 2006)

Based on its syntactical structure, the idiom in data (1), *grind to a halt*, is formed by a verb followed by a prepositional object. There are 4 words on its construction. They are a *grind* as a verb, *to* as preposition, *a* as an article, and *halt* as a noun. This idiom can be used in past tense, present tense, or future tense. The type of this idiom is classified as a verbal idiom.

An idiom *in our neck of the woods* in data (2) is a kind of prepositional idiom. This idiom uses *in* as the proposition of the phrase. Further discussion, it is constructed by preposition followed by *our* as possessive pronoun, *neck* as a noun, *of* a proposition, *the* as an article, and *woods* as a noun. All of these words then are combined as a fixed expression called a prepositional idiom.

Idiom *a big heart* in data (3) is a compound noun formed by 3 words. These 3 words come from different word class; they are an article, adjective, and noun. Briefly, this compound idiom is formed by *a* as an article, *big* as an adjective, and *heart* as a noun.

Idiom *over and over* in data (4) is a kind of binomial idiom. This idiom is constructed by two adverbs combined by using *and* as a conjunction. The word *over* as an adverb has been followed by the word *and* as a conjunction and the word *over* as an adverb. Those 3 words are combined as a group of words or idiom called as binomial because there are two elements which are tied by the conjunction.

Idiom *boys will be boys* in data (5) above is a sentence idiom which consists of 3 constituents; they are subject, verb, an object. This idiom is constructed by boys (noun), will (modal), be (auxiliary verb), and boys (noun).

Idiom *let alone* in data (6) is an ill-formed idiom which has an ambiguous grammatical form. It is because syntactically verb *let* is used to be followed by pronoun or noun in a sentence, but in this case, this verb is followed by an adverb. This group of words does not have a literal meaning because it is only used as an idiom, not a set of literal phrase.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher concludes that there are 6 classifications of idioms in The Kiss novel considered by its syntactical forms. They

are a verbal idiom, prepositional phrase idiom, compound idiom, binomial idiom, whole clause or sentence idiom, and ill-formed idiom.

Lexical Variation in Idioms

After comparing the idioms taken from *The Kiss* novel and its fixed form which are taken from *American English Idioms Dictionary*, the researcher found that there are some types of lexical variations which have been used by this novelist. Lexical variations in idioms already discussed before by Moon (1998) in his book entitled “*Fixed Expressions and Idioms in English: A Corpus-Based Approach*”. Based on the theory explained by Moon (1998), the researcher analyzed the lexical variations found from the data which can be seen at the table below!

Table 1 Lexical Variation in Idioms

No. Data	Data from the Novel	Fixed Form of Idiom	Lexical Variation in Idiom's Form	
			Form in Novel	Form in Dictionary
(7)	“My father basically pulled every string he could to make sure she never saw any of us again.” (Minger, 2006)	Pull the strings. (Spears, 2005)	V + det. + N	V + Art. + N
(8)	When Ron, the Matthews son who had become his best friend in the States, had told Will he thought Tess had a major crush on him , he'd laughed. (Minger, 2006)	Have a crush on someone/ something. (Spears, 2005)	V + Article + Adjective + Noun + Prep. + Pronoun	V + Article + Noun + Prep. + Pronoun/ N

(9)	“She’s been through hell. ” (Minger, 2006)	Through hell and high water. (Spears, 2005)	Prep. + N	Prep. + N + Conj. + Adj. + N
(10)	But she found that she liked being with him a whole lot more than going out with Paul, who threw around his money in an attempt to impress anyone. (Minger, 2006)	Throw someone’s money around. (Spears, 2005)	V + Adv. + Poss. Pronoun + N	V + Poss. Pronoun + N + Adv.

The idiom in The Kiss novel *pulled every string* in data (7), is formed by verb *pulled*, determiner *every*, and noun *string*. Meanwhile, this idiom has a fixed form in the dictionary as *pull the string* constructed by verb *pull*, article *the*, and noun *strings*. It can be seen from the explanation above that noun in the idiom of data (7) already changed from its fixed form in the dictionary. The change of the singular form of a noun in idiom to the plural form of the noun in idiom is called as noun variation. The idiom in the data above shows that the idiom *pulled every string*, found in the novel, already get a lexical variation on its noun, *string*.

American English idiom in data (8) has a fixed form in the dictionary as *have a crush on someone or something* but on its use, this idiom can get a lexical variation on its form, such as what has been found in the novel *has a major crush on him*. This idiom is constructed by verb *have*, article "a", adjective *major*, noun *crush*, preposition *on*, and object pronoun *him*. It can be seen clearly that this idiom get a lexical variation on its form. The word *major* is used in data (8) as the amplification to strengthen the meaning of the idiom. On the other hand, pronoun "*him*" is used as the specificity of the idiom’s object.

In data (9), preposition *through* and noun *hell* are combined as an idiom *through hell*. The fixed form of this idiom in the dictionary is *through hell and high water*. Wholly this idiom is constructed by the words *through* as preposition, *hell* as a noun,

and as the conjunction, *high* as an adjective, and *water* as a noun. The data of idiom from the novel shows that there are three words which are omitted on the usage of this idiom. They are *and*, *high*, and *water*. Even though this idiom has lost a half of its part, this phrase (through hell) still has a correspondence idiomatic meaning. When an idiom is downgraded from their canonical form to lower-level grammatical unit, it can be called as truncation. Lexical variation in data (9) is also called as truncation.

Idiom *threw around his money* in data (10) found in the novel also has a lexical variation in its form. The construction of the idiom in the novel is formed by verb *threw*, adverb *around*, possessive pronoun *his*, and noun *money*. Fixed form of this idiom in the dictionary is formed by verb *throw*, a possessive pronoun, noun *money*, and adverb *around*. The difference between these idioms is on its word construction. Even though the position of the words of these two idioms are different, but they still have the same idiomatic meaning. This lexical variation is called as reversals.

The researcher concluded that there are 4 types of lexical variation found in this research. They are (1) noun variation; (2) specificity and amplification; (3) truncation; and (4) reversals. Though some idioms have lexical variation in its forms, they still have a correspondence idiomatic meaning with its fixed form. Those two types of idioms still have the same idiomatic meaning.

Derivation in Idioms

Idioms can be derived from one-word class to another word class. This process can affect the grammatical function of the word which already derived. Here is the data of the idioms which has been derived from one form to another form.

Table 2 Derivation in Idiom

No. Data	Data from the Novel	Fixed Form of Idioms	The Change of Idioms' Form	
			Fixed Form	Derivation
(11)	"I drove a brokenhearted Tess to Our Lady of Perpetual Sorrow and supported her decision to give the rest of her	Break one's heart (Spears, 2005)	V + O	Adj.

	shattered life over to God!"(Minger, 2006)			
(12)	He had no idea if he even had the right to bring up something like this, what with her broken heart. (Minger, 2006)	Break one's heart (Spears, 2005)	V + O	Adj. + N

Idiom *broken-hearted* in data (11) and idiom "*broken-heart*" in data (12) are idioms derived from the same verbal idiom, that *breaks someone's heart*. It is found from The Kiss novel that those idioms are derived from verbal idiom to adjective idiom in data (11) and noun idiom in data (12). The analysis above shows that derivation not only occurs in literal words, but it also occurs in idioms. Moon (1998) called this phenomenon as the transformation in the idiom.

CONCLUSION

The result shows the variation of idioms is found in The Kiss Novel. Furthermore, there are 6 types of forms as syntactically have been explained above. The variations are found in the term of lexical and derivational variations. These change of idioms are used by the writer in conveying the message of the story of this Novel.

From the discussion above, the researcher concludes that lexical variation and derivation can occur in the daily use of idioms. Idioms do not have to be used as its fixed form in conversation. Language users can modify its form as long as the interlocutors can understand its meaning. Speakers' creativity in using idioms gives significant influence toward its forms and its usage in the utterance. Lexical variation and derivation in idioms show that idioms have a conditional flexibility. Lexical variation and derivation can occur in an idiom as long as the idiomatic meaning of an idiom is still maintained and can be understood by the language users or native speakers.

BIO-PROFILE

Lina Septianasari is a lecturer at the English Education Study Program of STKIP Muhammadiyah Bogor. She obtained her Master's degree from Gadjah Mada

University (UGM) in 2015. Her research interests are Sociolinguistics, Semantics, Pragmatics, and Corpus Linguistics. Her corresponding email:

Linasary62@yahoo.co.id

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