



**An Analysis of Idiomatic Expression in Short Story *The Black Cat*
by Edgar Allan Poe And *A Jury Of Her Peers* by Susan Glaspell**

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to find out the meanings of idiomatic expressions, the kinds of idiomatic expressions, and the dominant kinds of idiomatic expressions found in two short stories *The Black Cat* by Edgar Allan Poe and *A Jury of Her Peers* by Susan Glaspell. This study was a descriptive qualitative research. The sources of data in this research were words or phrases that are indicated as idioms found in short stories *The Black Cat* by Edgar Allan Poe and *A Jury of Her Peers* by Susan Glaspell. After analyzing the data, the writer found out three points. Firstly, the idioms found in the two short stories have different meanings from the meanings of its component parts. Secondly, there are five idiomatic expressions that are found in the two short stories. They are Intransitive Verbal Idiom, Transitive Verbal Idiom, Nominal Idiom, Adjectival Idiom, and Adverbial Idiom. Thirdly, after analyzing the five idiomatic expressions in the two short stories, the writer found that the dominant idiomatic expression is transitive verbal idiom that appears eighty one times in the short stories.

Keywords: Idiomatic expression; meanings; kinds.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisa makna dan jenis idiom serta ungkapan idiom yang paling dominan dalam cerita pendek *The Black Cat* oleh Edgar Allan Poe dan *A Jury of Her Peers* oleh Susan Glaspell. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Sumber data penelitian ini adalah idiom yang berupa kata atau frase yang ditemukan dalam cerita pendek *The Black Cat* oleh Edgar Allan Poe dan *A Jury of Her Peers* oleh Susan Glaspell. Setelah menganalisis data, penulis menemukan tiga hal. Pertama, idiom di dalam dua cerita pendek tersebut mempunyai makna yang berbeda dari makna bagian-bagian komponennya. Kedua, ada lima ungkapan idiom yang ditemukan dalam cerita pendek tersebut. Mereka adalah Intransitive Verbal Idiom, Transitive Verbal Idiom, Nominal Idiom, Adjectival Idiom dan Adverbial Idiom. Ketiga, setelah menganalisis lima jenis ungkapan idiom dalam dua cerita pendek tersebut, penulis menemukan bahwa ungkapan idiom yang dominan adalah Transitive Verbal Idiom yang muncul delapan puluh satu kali.

Kata Kunci: Ungkapan Idiom; Makna; Jenis.

Introduction

Idioms are important to understand because nowadays idioms are used everywhere such as in the magazines, in newspapers, in novels, in short stories, and also on TV programs. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, "an idiom is a phrase whose meaning is difficult or sometimes impossible to guess by looking at the meaning of the individual word it contains" (2000: 752). The meaning of an idiom should be phrase not word-by-word meaning. For example, the phrase "*be in the same boat*" in the sentence "*I found the job difficult at first. But we were in the same boat*" have common idiomatic meaning: "*to be in the same difficult or unfortunate situation.*"

According to Asher and Simpson (1994), idiom, habitual collocation, is a phrase or other sequence of words which has a meaning beyond or other than the sum of the meaning of the individual words, e.g., *throw over the traces* (=free oneself of restrictions); *fly off the handle* (= be come angry), and which do not participate in the usual possible range of variation, e.g., *He threw over the traces* but *He threw over the trace*.

Learning idioms is one of the most demanding parts of learning a language. Because their meaning is often completely different from the meaning of the single words that are included in the expression, one has to learn the whole phrase at once. The best way how to learn them is to find an equivalent in one's mother tongue, which can appear very difficult, because the free online dictionaries and also some cheap printed ones offer only word-by-word (literal) translations of the idioms that do not have anything in common with the real meaning of the whole phrase. It is essential to spend time and money in good-quality materials. The use of the idiom should be also consulted with a native speaker to make sure in which contexts the idiom can be used.

Therefore, there are some difficulties in using Idioms according to Redman (2004:40). First, it can be difficult to understand the meaning of an idiom, especially if it does not have the full context. Second, with many idioms, if make just small mistake, it can

sound strange, funny, or badly wrong, for example get a move, a small talk, put an eye on, off hands. Third, idioms often have special features: they may be informal or funny or ironic, they may only be used by certain people (e.g. young children, teenagers, or elder people); they may only appear in limited context, and they may have special grammar. For those reasons, people can often learn the meaning of idiom but then use incorrectly. For example, after her husband dies she was down in the dumps (this idiom means sad and depressed, but is completely wrong. here the situation is too serious and the idiom is too informal). Fourth, when people translate idioms, they also have to know about its cultures because idioms are influenced by cultures or habits. Different countries have different culture and idioms. Finally, idioms are difficult to translate.

Based on the difficulties in using idioms above, it is necessary to make an analysis of idiomatic expressions to help people to understand more accurately and deeply about idioms used in communication especially in a short story.

Review of the Related Literature Idiomatic Expression

Idiomatic expressions are expressions which are in forms of words or phrases that contain idioms. Idioms may have several meanings from different experts and dictionaries.

First, Burger (2003) said that the meaning of an idiom does not appear on the surface, it is not clear at the first sight. One can find out what exactly an idiom means on grounds of further knowledge of the expression itself or of the context in which the idiom is used. The idiomatic phrase could be based on an external likeness, such as in *play cat and mouse with somebody*. It is not difficult to imagine a cat playing with a mouse, so it is not difficult to guess the real meaning of such a phrase. On the other hand, there are idioms which is different from its real meaning, such as idiom *to rain cats and dogs*.

Second, *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (1995, 701) defines *idiom* as “a group of words in a fixed order having a particular meaning, different from the meanings of each word understood on his own”. From the first and second definitions of the idiom, the writer can conclude that the reader must be smart and be careful in understanding the idioms because the meanings of idioms cannot be guessed by its form or its structure.

Third, Palmer (1990) stated idioms as consequences of words whose meaning cannot be predicted from the meaning of the words themselves. Semantically, idioms are single units, but they are not single grammatical units like words. He also printed out some restriction in syntactic features and noted that the problem of idioms was involved with the much wider issue of word formation, by which what would appear to be new and more complex lexemes can be formed from single ones.

Fourth, Walker (2003) stated that an idiom is an expression peculiar to a language, not readily analyzable from its grammatical construction or from the meaning of its component parts as to put up with (tolerate, endure). This definition points out that an idiom is peculiar to the language in which it is used. An idiom is such a kind of habit to its native speakers. Therefore, it is understandable that for many foreign learners, they find it difficult and strange when they listen or read some kinds of idioms.

Fifth, Bolinger (1981) states, “Idioms are defined as groups of words with set of meanings that cannot be calculated by adding up the separate meanings of the parts”. Based on two quotations above, the writer concludes that an idiom cannot be translated literally from one language to another without some change in its meaning or connotation.

From all definitions stated above, it is now clear that idiom is words or phrases whose meaning is not predictable, cannot be deduced from their constituent words, so they must be learnt as a whole or unity. However, from all the theories above, the writer applies **Burger’s theory** because the theory can explain clearly how to understand the meaning of idioms.

Kinds of Idiomatic Expression

There are several kinds of idioms based their forms. First, Feare (1980:3) divides five types of idioms as follows:

A. Intransitive Verbal Idioms

The governing parts of verbal idioms are verbs, mostly in a definite verb form. Verbs in the idioms can usually occur in different modifications. First, intransitive verbal idioms, verb which is not followed by direct object are divided into three types:

a) Intransitive verb with particle

Example: A large carnation *stood out* on his suit (stood out means was clearly seen)

b) Intransitive verb with preposition

Example: The lecturer *touched on* many interesting ideas (touched on means talked briefly)

c) Intransitives verb with particle and preposition

Example: John *came up with* a fine solution (come up with means suggested)

B. Transitive Verbal Idioms

A transitive verbal idiom is the second kind of verbal idioms, verb which is followed by direct object. Transitive verbal idioms are divided into four types:

a) Transitive verb with movable particle

Example: The president *cleared up* the problem (cleared up means made clear)

b) Transitive verb with immovable particle

Example: Five singers *make up* that rock-and roll group (make up means form)

c) Transitive verb with preposition

Example: The executive *devoted* much time *to* her work (devoted to means made much effort in)

d) Transitive verb with particle and preposition

Example: the participants *got* many ideas *out of* the conference (got out of means obtained from)

C. Nominal Idioms

Nominal idioms are idioms which main part is a noun with or without an article (does not matter if a definite or an indefinite one). Nominal idioms are divided into two:

a) Pairs of noun

Example: *Ups and downs* are a part of life (ups and downs means good and bad times)

b) Adjective + noun combination

Example: *White lies* are never good (white lie means small lie)

D. Adjectival Idioms

Adjectival idioms are idioms that consist of one or more adjectives. Some linguists do not recognize them. The adjectives appear mostly with another element, a noun or a verb, which makes then a nominal or verbal phrase. Adjectival idioms are divided into two:

a) Pairs of adjectives

Example: The judge's decision was quite *fair* and *square* (fair and square means honest)

b) Various compounds

Example: Jim is quite *level-headed* (level-headed means sensible)

E. Adverbial Idioms

Adverbial idioms are idioms that contain one or more adverbials.

Example: *Little by little* Tom's grades improved (little by little means gradually)

Second, Cowie (1983) divides idioms into phrase idioms and clause idioms. Further, he mentions that the most frequent clause idioms are:

a) Verb + Complement (ex. *go berserk – be very mad, angry*)

b) Verb + Direct Object (ex. *ease sb's conscience/mind – to make sb. feel less worried about stg.*)

c) Verb + Direct Object + Complement (ex. *paint the town red - to go out and enjoy yourself in the evening, often drinking a lot of alcohol and dancing*)

d) Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object (ex. *do sb. credit - to bring praise and respect to someone for something they have done*)

e) Verb + Direct Object + Adjunct (ex. *take stg. amiss - to be offended by something*)

Moreover, he divides phrase idioms into:

a) Noun Phrase (ex. *a fat cat – somebody who earns a lot of money*)

b) Adjective Phrase (ex. *dog-tired – very tired*)

c) Prepositional Phrase (ex. *as often as not – frequently*)

d) Adverbial Phrase (ex. *as fast as his legs could carry him – very fast*)

Third, Cullen and Sargeant (1998) clearly stated that a phrasal verb is a short two-word verb (or sometimes three-word verb) phrase made up of a verb and an adverb (an adverbial particle) or a preposition. They further explain that a phrasal verb is a form of idiom – that is, it has a meaning that is different from the sum of its parts.

However, from all the theories above, the writer applies Feare's theory because the theory can explain clearly about kinds about idioms.

Methods of the Research

This study was a descriptive qualitative research. It means that this research collected the narrative data or other types of data to answer the question and make the conclusion.

The sources of data in this research were idioms found in the short stories: *The Black Cat* by Edgar Allan Poe and *A Jury of Her Peers* by Susan Glaspell. The data were classified by the writer directly into five types of idioms. The data of this research were collected through several steps as follows:

1. The writer read intensively both short stories *The Black Cat* by Edgar Allan Poe and *A Jury of Her Peers* by Susan Glaspell.
2. While reading intensively, the writer directly identified the words or phrases that were included as idioms and then underlined the words or phrases in these short stories.

3. After that, the writer grouped the idioms into six types of idioms in note book, whether they belong to intransitive verbal idioms, transitive verbal idioms, nominal idioms, adjectival idioms, and adverbial idioms.

There were several steps used to analyze the data of the research as follows:

1. Making a list
The writer made a list words or phrases identified as idioms.
2. Labeling the group of the data
The writer labeled the data based on the types they belong to.
3. Describing and analyzing the data
The writer described the idioms and analyzed the meanings of idiomatic expressions found based on the type classification.

Findings and Discussions

The Meaning of Idiomatic Expression

According to Burger's theory about the meaning of idiomatic expression, the reader or the listener must be smart to understand the meaning behind the stated idiom. Because the meaning of an idiom does not appear on the surface of the sentence, it is not clear if the readers or the listeners just see or read in the first sight. The meaning of the idiom depends on the context where it is found. For example, in the short story *The Black Cat* there are many idiomatic expressions found, but the writer took fifteen idiomatic expressions to analyze.

The first idiomatic expression is "*to pen*" as in the following sentence:

- FOR the most, yet most homely narrative which I am about *to pen*, I neither expect nor solicit belief. (paragraph 1, line 1)

The meaning of "*to pen*" in the sentence "*I am about to pen*" above is *write*, because the context of the sentence is about someone who wants to write the homely narrative. Therefore, the word "*pen*" means "*write*".

The second idiomatic expression is "*fond of*" as in the following sentence:

- I was especially *fond of* animals, and was indulged by my parents with a great variety of pets.(paragraph 2, line 3)

The meaning of "*fond of*" above is *loving so much*. It is proven by the following sentence:

With these I spent most of my time, and never was so happy as when feeding and caressing them. It shows that the meaning of "*fond of*" is *loving so much*.

The third idiomatic expression is "*returned with*" as in the following sentence:

- When reason *returned with* the morning -- when I had slept off the fumes of the night's debauch -- I experienced a sentiment half of horror, half of remorse, for the crime of which I had been guilty; but it was, at best, a feeble and equivocal feeling, and the soul remained untouched.(paragraph 8, line 1)

The meaning of "*returned with*" in the sentence "*when reason returned with the morning*" is *having an idea after she/he wakes up in the morning*. It can be proven by the following sentence:

when I had slept off the fumes of the night's debauch
It shows that after he/she slept last night and he/she wakes up in the morning, the idea comes into his/her mind. In conclusion, "*returned with*" means *having an idea*.

The fourth idiomatic expression is "*a cut of the north wind*" as in the following sentence:

- When Martha Hale opened the storm-door and got a *cut of* the north wind, she ran back for her big woolen scarf. (paragraph 1, line 1)

The meaning of "*a cut of the north wind*" is *a slowly north wind*. It is because the meaning of "*a cut*" is a little. Little can be replaced by slowly, because it has a similar meaning.

The fifth idiomatic expression is “*She hated to see things half done*” as in the following sentence: be

- She hated to see things *half done*; but she had been at that when the team from town stopped to get Mr. Hale, and then the sheriff came running in to say his wife wished Mrs. Hale would come too--adding, with a grin, that he guessed she was getting scary and wanted another woman along.(paragraph 2, line 1)

The meaning of “*She hated to see things half done*” is *she hated to see incomplete things*. It can be proven by the following sentence:

But what her eye took in was that her kitchen was in no shape for leaving: her bread all ready for mixing, half the flour sifted and half was not sifted.

The sentence above shows that the incomplete flour that she hated to see.

The sixth idiomatic expression is “*backing up*” as in the following sentence:

- Mrs. Gorman, sheriff's wife before Gorman went out and Peters came in, had a voice that somehow seemed to be *backing up* the law with every word.(paragraph 5, line 6)

The meaning of “*backing up*” is supporting. It can be proven by the following sentence:

But if Mrs. Peters didn't look like a sheriff's wife, Peters made it up in looking like a sheriff.

This sentence shows that Peter supports Mrs. Peter become a sheriff's wife.

The last idiomatic expression is “*made it up*” as in the following sentence:

- But if Mrs. Peters didn't look like a sheriff's wife, Peters *made it up* in looking like a sheriff.(paragraph 5, line 7)

The meaning of “*made it up*” is *to prettify*. It can be proven by the sentence “looking like a sheriff”, because that sentence shows that Mrs. Peter should be the same as a sheriff.

Finally, it can be concluded that the meaning of an idiomatic expression can analyzed from the contex of where the idiom is used.

Kinds of Idiomatic Expression **Intransitive Verbal Idioms**

According to Feare's theory, intransitive verbal idioms means that verbs which are not followed by direct objects. For example:

- come in
The word *come* is a verb and the word *in* is a proposition. *Come* is a verb that cannot be followed by direct object as seen in the following sentence:
So I knocked again, louder, and I thought I heard somebody say, 'Come in.' (“A Jury of Her Peers” Paragraph 29 line 2)

- linger in
The word *linger* is a verb and the word *in* is a proposition. *Linger* is a verb that cannot be followed by direct object as seen in the following sentence:
They were soon back--the stark coldness of that shut-up room was not a thing to *linger in*.(“A Jury of Her Peers” Paragraph 120 line 1)

- go out
The word *go* is a verb and the word *out* is a proposition. *Go* is a verb that cannot be followed by direct object as seen in the following sentence:
She said the fire would *go out* and her jars might burst. (“A Jury of Her Peers” Paragraph 72 line 2)

- growing horror
The word *growing* is a verb and the word *horror* is an adjective. *Growing* is a verb that cannot be followed by direct object as seen in the following sentence:

And then again the eyes of the two women met--this time clung together in a look of dawning comprehension, of *growing horror*.("A Jury of Her Peers" Paragraph 225 line 1)

- hurried over

The word *hurried* is a verb and the word *over* is a preposition. *Hurried* is a verb that cannot be followed by direct object as seen in the following sentence: "My!" she began, in a high, false voice, "it's a good thing the men couldn't hear us! Getting all stirred up over a little thing like a--dead canary." She *hurried over* that.("A Jury of Her Peers" Paragraph 265 line 2)

Transitive Verbal Idioms

According to Feare's theory, transitive verbal idioms means a verb which is followed by direct object. For example:

- broke in

The word *broke* is a verb and the word *in* is a preposition. *Broke* is a verb that can be followed by direct object as seen in the following sentence:

The thin voice of the sheriff's wife *broke in* upon her: "I must be getting those things from the front-room closet."("A Jury of Her Peers" Paragraph 119 line 1)

- burned to

The word *burned* is a verb and the word *to* is a preposition. *Burned* is a verb that can be followed by direct object as seen in the following sentence:

I *burned to* say if but one word, by way of triumph, and to render doubly sure their assurance of my guiltlessness.("The Black Cat" Paragraph 29 line 10)

- catch eye

The word *catch* is a verb and the word *eye* is a noun. *Catch* is a verb that can be followed by direct object as seen in the following sentence:

Mrs. Hale tried to *catch* her husband's *eye*, but fortunately the county attorney

interrupted with...("A Jury of Her Peers" Paragraph 26 line 1)

- cleared up

The word *cleared* is a verb and the word *up* is a preposition. *Cleared* is a verb that can be followed by direct object as seen in the following sentence:

"Well, let's go right out to the barn and get that *cleared up*."("A Jury of Her Peers" Paragraph 160 line 1)

- closed on

The word *closed* is a verb and the word *on* is a preposition. *Close* is a verb that can be followed by direct object as seen in the following sentence:

"I don't see as there's anything so strange," Mrs. Hale said resentfully, after the outside door had *closed on* the three men--"our taking up our time with little things while we're waiting for them to get the evidence. ("A Jury of Her Peers" Paragraph 161 line 2)

Nominal Idioms

According to Feare's theory, nominal idioms means idioms whose main part is a noun or without an article (does not matter if a definite or an indefinite one). The phrase can be pair of noun or adjective + noun combination. For example:

- a quick step

The word *quick* is an adjective and the word *step* is a noun. *Quick step* is a nominal idiom that consists of adjective + noun as seen in the following sentence:

Suddenly Mrs. Hale took a *quick step* toward the other woman, "Mrs. Peters!"("A Jury of Her Peers" Paragraph 130 line 1)

- cool blood

The word *cool* is an adjective and the word *blood* is a noun. *Cool blood* is a nominal idiom that consists of adjective + noun as seen in the following sentence:

One morning, in *cool blood*, I slipped a noose about its neck and hung it to the limb of a tree; -- hung it with the tears streaming from my eyes, and with the bitterest

remorse at my heart; -- hung it *because* I knew that it had loved me, and because I felt it had given me no reason of offence... ("The Black Cat" Paragraph 9 line 18)

- old heart

The word *old* is an adjective and the word *heart* is a noun. *Old heart* is a nominal idiom that consists of adjective + noun as seen in the following sentence: I had so much of my *old heart* left, as to be at first grieved by this evident dislike on the part of a creature which had once so loved me. ("The Black Cat" Paragraph 9 line 4)

- Unburthen soul

The word *unburthen* is a noun and the word *soul* is a noun. *Unburthen soul* is a nominal idiom that consists of pair of noun as seen in the following sentence: But to-morrow I die, and to-day I would *unburthen my soul*. ("The Black Cat" Paragraph 1 line 4)

Adjectival Idioms

According to Feare's theory, adjectival idioms mean idioms that consist of one or more adjectives. For example:

- little sharp

The word *little* is an adjective and the word *sharp* is an adjective. *Little sharp* is an adjectival idiom that consists of pair of adjective as in the following sentence: "I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said, a *little sharp*, 'Can I see John?' 'No,' says she--kind of dull like. ("A Jury of Her Peers" Paragraph 41 line 1)

Adverbial Idioms

According to Feare's theory, adverbial idioms mean idioms that contain one or more adverbials. For example:

- by slow degrees

The words *by* and *slow* are adverb and the word *degrees* is a noun. The words *by* and *slow* are adverbs that modify *degrees* as a noun. It is suitable with the definition of adverbial idiom as in the following sentence:

By slow degrees, these feelings of disgust and annoyance rose into the bitterness of hatred. ("The Black Cat" Paragraph 17 line 3)

- by this time

The words *by* and *this* are adverb and the word *time* is a noun. The words *by* and *this* are adverb that modifies *time* as a noun. It is suitable with the definition of adverbial idiom as in the following sentence: *By this time* I--didn't know what to do. I walked from there to here; then I says: "Why, what did he die of?" ("A Jury of Her Peers" Paragraph 45 line 1)

- deadly sin

The word *deadly* is an adverb and the word *sin* is a noun. The word *deadly* is an adverb that modifies *sin* as a noun. It is suitable with the definition of adverbial idiom as in the following sentence: a *deadly sin* that would so jeopardize my immortal soul as to place it -- if such a thing were possible -- even beyond the reach of the infinite mercy of the Most Merciful and Most Terrible God. ("The Black Cat" Paragraph 9 line 22)

- high degree

The word *high* is an adverb and the word *degree* is a noun. The word *high* is an adverb that modifies *degree* as a noun. It is suitable with the definition of adverbial idiom as in the following sentence: This circumstance, however, only endeared it to my wife, who, as I have already said, possessed, in a high degree, that humanity of feeling which had once been my distinguishing trait, and the source of many of my simplest and purest pleasures. ("The Black Cat" Paragraph 18 line 4)

- by the way

The word *by* is an adverb and the word *the way* is a noun. The word *by* is an adverb that modify *the way* as a noun. It is suitable with the definition of adverbial idiom as in the following sentence: "By the way," he said, "has anything been moved?" He turned to the sheriff. "Are

things just as you left them yesterday?"("A Jury of Her Peers" Paragraph 15 line 1)

Conclusions

After the analysis, there are three conclusions that can be drawn. First, the meaning of idioms found in the two short stories can be analyzed based on the context of the idioms. Second, there are five idiomatic expressions found in the two short stories. They are intransitive verbal idiom, Transitive Verbal Idiom, Nominal Idiom, Adjectival Idiom, and Adverbial Idiom. Third, the dominant idiomatic expression is transitive verbal idiom that appears eighty one times in the short stories.

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