



Idiomatic Expressions Analysis in Joker Movie

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Abstract

This research aims to find out the types of idiomatic expressions and to identify the patterns of idiomatic expressions in the *Joker* movie. This research employed a descriptive qualitative method. In collecting the data, this research used a classification form, documentation, and monolingual dictionaries. The result showed that there were 4 types of idiomatic expressions found in the *Joker* movie; proverbs, clichés, fixed statements, and slang. The other types of idiomatic expressions such as simile, binomial, and other language were absent from the *Joker* movie. Moreover, the researcher identified the patterns of the idiomatic expressions in the *Joker* movie were; noun phrases, transitive verb phrases, verbal phrases, prepositional phrases, pair of words, and sentence pattern. The other patterns of idiomatic expressions such as *be* + prepositional phrases and alliterative comparison were not consisted in the *Joker* movie.

Keywords: idiomatic expressions, Joker movie

Introduction

The English language has become one of the important tools to communicate with people around the world. In Indonesia, the English language has been taught in most schools either as the second language or the foreign language. One of the difficulties in learning and teaching the English language is vocabulary. Students often find some vocabularies that are used by native speakers are hard to understand because they cannot be translated literally. This kind of vocabulary often used in phrases or sentences and have meaning that cannot be explained by

grammatical theories. This is a special feature of the English language called an idiom.

The idiom is an expression that always comes up when related to the English language, as idioms are a fascinating and colorful aspect of English. The idiom is frequently used in various types of language, informal and formal, spoken and written. Therefore, the native speaker always uses the idiom in their daily conversations. O'Dell and McCarthy (2017) define that idioms are fixed combinations of words whose meaning is often difficult to guess from the meaning of each word. Similarly, Cyssco as cited in Suryanata (2011) stated that idiom is an expression, consists of words, but the meaning cannot be defined from the words that perform it.

Additionally, Seidl and McMordie as cited in Syafitri (2019) said that idiomatic expressions are used in formal and informal situations. Idiomatic expressions in formal situations can be found in lectures, academic essays, and business reports. Informal idiomatic expressions can be found in literature, music, and movies. According to O'Dell and McCarthy (2017), there are six types of idiom; simile, binomial, proverb, cliché, fixed statement, and other language. Moreover, Joodi (2012) differ idioms forms into eight structures; noun phrase, transitive verb phrase, verbal phrase, alliterative comparison, prepositional phrase, *be* + prepositional phrase, pair of word, and sentence pattern.

Verspoor & Sauter (2009) mention that phrases can be analyzed into constituents, each with a function and realization. The head of a phrase is realized by noun, verb, adjective, adverb, or preposition. A phrase is a group of words that stand together as a single grammatical unit. A phrase does not contain a subject and verb and consequently cannot convey a complete thought. Based on Kim and Sells (2008) phrases are projected from lexical categories and categorized into several types; noun phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase, adverb phrase, and prepositional phrase.

As an English language learner, the idiom is considered one of the hardest yet interesting parts of learning the English language. Learning idioms can help acquire more vocabulary and learn more about their

cultures, social life, and history. Moreover using idioms can make our English sounds more natural and bring it closer to the native speaker level.

Joodi (2012) mentioned some learner's difficulties when learning idioms: First, idioms are not literal; they do not mean what they say. Second, idioms vary in formality from slang to those which can be used in formal situations. Third, Idioms range from the semi-transparent where either the meaning can be interpreted in terms of metaphor or because one part of the idiomatic phrase is used literally to the opaque. Last, idioms that are not in frequent use are difficult to learn.

In the English language, idiomatic expressions are spontaneously used by native speakers daily. It is an essential part of the English language lexicon and vocabulary. Idiomatic expressions are considered inevitable for non-native speakers of English. As a result, Non-native speakers of English should get accustomed to using these expressions. Non-native speakers of English need to learn idiomatic expressions and practice how to use them, parallel to native speakers. As such, it is important to include idiomatic expressions in English classrooms and their teaching materials. As Kasmaini (2009) stated that childhood is a critical period to accessing various sounds because at this age the flexibility of the tongue is high, so it is very easy to imitate utterances as a native speaker pronounces.

Several studies related to this research; First, *An Analysis of Idiomatic Expressions Used by Characters in Hotel Transylvania Movies* conducted by Zaid (2019). This study used a qualitative method and the findings were; all of O'Dell and McCarthy's six types of idiomatic expression are found. Those six types are simile (4%), binomial (8%), proverb (28%), euphemism (8%), cliché (28%), and fixed statement (24%).

Second, *Analysis of Idiom Expression in the Comic Doraemon Volume 4 & 6* conducted by Desmanita (2019), this study used a descriptive qualitative design and found out that there are 87 forms of idiom and the dominant form is verb follow idiomatically by a preposition, 13 types of idioms and the dominant type is slang.

Third, *An Analysis of Idiomatic Expressions Found in Adele's Songs* performed by Gunawan and Erippudin (2019), this study used qualitative method and the result showed that there are 56 idiomatic expressions found in 3 types of idiom those are; 35 phrasal verb idioms, 17 tournure idioms, and 4 irreversible binomial idioms.

Additionally, this research was different from the previous studies in terms of the subject and the object, as the previous studies focused on analyzing the meaning of the idiomatic expressions used in comics, songs, and animated movies. This research analyzed the structure of the idiomatic expressions used in a fictional movie that is based on real-life situations, so the students can see directly the use of idioms in everyday life and encourage them to use idioms in their communication.

Moreover, *Joker's* movie contained some idiomatic expressions that delivered complex meanings in which the meaning was hard to predict by EFL students. This movie also related to social life which can be learned as a cultural understanding too. Hence it interesting and encouraging the researcher to conduct research entitled "Idiomatic Expressions Analysis in *Joker* Movie".

Research Methodology

This research utilized a descriptive qualitative method. According to Creswell (2009), descriptive qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Similarly, Maxwell as cited in Puspita (2018) stated that qualitative study focuses on certain events or people emphasizing not numbers, but more in words.

The result of this qualitative research was in form of a description. Ary, Jacobs, & Sornsen (2010) mentioned that qualitative data generally take the form of words (description, observation, impressions, recording, etc.). In this research, the researcher analyzed the structure of the idioms to find the patterns. Afterward, the researcher presented the factual result systematically so it can be understood easily.

The instruments of this research were classification form, documentation, and monolingual dictionaries (McGraw-Hill's Dictionary of

American Idioms and McGraw-Hill's Dictionary of American Slang and Colloquial Expressions)

In collecting the data, the researcher used the following steps; first, the researcher downloaded the Joker movie. Second, the researcher also downloaded the script of the movie to make the identification of the idioms easier. Third, the researcher watched the movie several times to comprehend the movie. Fourth, the researcher listened to the movie and read the script at the same time while found out the idiomatic expressions. Fifth, the researcher underlined the idiomatic expressions in the script. Sixth, the researcher put the data into the classification form based on O'Dell and McCarthy's (2017) theory. Lastly, the researcher analyzed the data.

In analyzing the data, the researcher used the descriptive technique as follows; first, the researcher identified the type of the idioms by cross-checked the idioms types in McGraw-Hill's Dictionary of American Idioms and McGraw-Hill's Dictionary of American Slang and Colloquial Expressions. Second, the researcher grouped the idioms types based on O'Dell and McCarthy's (2017) theory and mentioned the meaning based on the dictionary. Third, the researcher identified and analyzed the patterns of the idioms then put the code on the structure of the idioms. Fourth, the researcher described the patterns of idiomatic phrases based on Joodi's (2012) theory. Fifth, the researcher grouped the idioms based on the patterns. Lastly, the researcher concluded the result.

Result and Discussion

Result

Types of Idiomatic Expressions

The idiomatic expressions found in the *Joker* movie were 123 idiomatic expressions in total, consisted of; 2 proverbs, 24 clichés, 55 fixed statements, and 42 slang.

a. Proverbs

Proverbs are short sentences that refer to something most people have experienced and which give advice or warnings. For example:

Slow and steady; if you work slowly but constantly, you will succeed better than if you work fast for a short while and do not continue.

Cooler heads to prevail; the ideas or influence of less emotional people prevails.

b. Clichés

Clichés are a comment that is often used in certain common, everyday situations. For example:

Feel the pinch; experiencing hardship because of having too little money.

In a heartbeat; means almost immediately.

Couldn't carry a tune; unable to sing a simple melody; lacking musical ability.

c. Fixed statements

Fixed statements are some statements which often used in everyday conversation. For example;

Locked up; to lock someone or something within something or someplace.

Worked up; excited and agitated about something.

Punch out; to record that one has left one's workplace at a certain time.

Wind up; to finish at a certain place.

Bring me out; to make someone come onto the stage from the stage sides or wings.

Patterns of Idiomatic Expressions

The analyzed idiomatic expressions were limited to the idiomatic expression types included in O'Dell and McCarthy's (2017) theory; in total 81 idiomatic expressions. The patterns of idiomatic expressions in the Joker movie consisted of 6 types; 5 noun phrases, 18 transitive verb phrases, 55 verbal phrases, 1 prepositional phrase, 1 pair of words, and 1 sentence.

a. Noun phrases

Arthur: Is it just me, or is it getting crazier out there?

Social worker: It is certainly tense. People are upset. They're struggling. Looking for work. These are tough times.

The formula: $\frac{\text{tough}}{\text{adj}} + \frac{\text{times}}{\text{noun}}$

This idiom is a combination of an adjective tough plus a noun times; noun phrase.

Sophie: Oh, my God! What are you doing in here? You're in the wrong apartment. Your name's Arthur, right? You live down the hall. I really need you to leave. My little girl is sleeping in the other room. Please.

Arthur: I had a bad day.

The formula: $\frac{\text{bad}}{\text{adj}} + \frac{\text{day}}{\text{noun}}$

This idiom is a combination of an adjective bad and a noun day; noun phrase.

b. Transitive verb phrases

News anchor: In other news, the building industry and landlords today expressed concern over the latest increase in heating oil prices. Renters in the metro area are certain to feel the pinch

The formula: $\frac{\text{feel}}{\text{verb}} + \frac{\text{the}}{\text{art}} + \frac{\text{pinch}}{\text{noun}}$

This idiom is combinations of a verb feel plus a noun phrase the pinch; transitive verb phrase.

Murray: That was great, Arthur. Thank you. I mean, I loved hearing what you had to say. It made my day.

Arthur: Thanks, Murray.

The formula: $\frac{\text{made}}{\text{verb}} + \frac{\text{my}}{\text{pron}} + \frac{\text{day}}{\text{noun}}$

This idiom is combinations of a verb made plus a noun phrase my day; transitive verb phrase.

Social Worker: What's so funny?

Arthur: Just thinking of a joke.

Social worker: Do you want to tell it to me?

Arthur: You wouldn't get it.

The formula: $\frac{\text{get}}{\text{verb}} + \frac{\text{it}}{\text{pron}}$

This idiom is a combination of a verb get plus a pronoun it; transitive verb phrase

c. Verbal phrases

News anchor: The news never ends. This is 1080 GCR. You get all the news you need, all day long. Good morning. I'm Stan L. Brooks, and here's what's happening. It's day 18 of the garbage strike, with 10,000 tons of garbage piling up every day. Even the nicest sections of the city are looking like slums.

The formula: $\frac{\text{piling}}{\text{verb}} + \frac{\text{up}}{\text{adv}}$

This idiom is a combination of a verb piling and an adverb up; verbal phrase.

Haha's clown 2: Did you really bring a gun to the children's hospital, Artie? What the fuck would you do that for?
 Haha's clown 1: Is that part of your new act, Arthur? If your dancing doesn't do the trick, you're just gonna shoot yourself?

The formula: $\frac{\text{do}}{\text{verb}} + \frac{\text{the}}{\text{art}} + \frac{\text{trick}}{\text{noun}}$

This idiom is a combination of a verb do and a noun phrase the trick; transitive verb phrase.

Arthur: Why would I keep his sign?
 Hoyt: How the fuck do I know? Why does anybody do anything? If you don't return the sign, I gotta take it out of your paycheck. Are we clear? Listen, I'm trying to help you. Okay?

The formula: $\frac{\text{take}}{\text{verb}} + \frac{\text{it}}{\text{pron}} + \frac{\text{out}}{\text{adv}} + \frac{\text{of}}{\text{prep}}$

This idiom is combinations of a verb take plus a pronoun it plus an adverb out plus a preposition of; verbal phrase.

Randall: Yeah. What's with the makeup then?
 Arthur: My mom died. I'm celebrating.
 Randall: Right. We heard. That's why we came by. We figured, you know, you could use some cheering up.

The formula: $\frac{\text{cheering}}{\text{verb}} + \frac{\text{up}}{\text{adv}}$

This idiom is a combination of a verb cheering and an adverb up; verbal phrase.

Murray: So, I know you're a comedian. You been working on any

new material? You wanna tell us a joke?
 Arthur: Yeah? Okay.
 Murray: He's got a book. A book of jokes. Take your time. We got all night.
 Arthur: Okay, okay. Here's one. Knock, knock.
 Murray: And you had to look that up?

The formula: $\frac{\text{look}}{\text{verb}} + \frac{\text{that}}{\text{pron}} + \frac{\text{up}}{\text{adv}}$

This idiom is combinations of a verb look plus a pronoun that plus an adverb up; verbal phrase

d. Prepositional phrases

Murray: You see all this, the lights, the show, the audience, all that stuff? I'd give it all up in a heartbeat to have a kid like you.

The formula: $\frac{\text{in}}{\text{prep}} + \frac{\text{a}}{\text{art}} + \frac{\text{heartbeat}}{\text{noun}}$

This idiom is a combination of a preposition in and a noun phrase a heartbeat; prepositional phrase.

e. Pair of words

Paramedic 1: Keep the respirations above 15. Slow and steady. We got some stairs coming up.
 Arthur: Mom? What happened?
 Paramedic 1: Who are you?
 Arthur: I'm her son. What happened?

The formula: $\frac{\text{slow}}{\text{adj}} + \frac{\text{and}}{\text{con}} + \frac{\text{steady}}{\text{adj}}$

This idiom is combinations of two adjectives joined by a conjunction and; pair of words phrase.

f. Sentence

News anchor: As tensions mount around the metro area, Mayor Stokes has pleaded for cooler heads to prevail. City services have been affected, and some businesses have decided to remain closed amid the unrest. Chuck Stevens filed this report.

The formula: $\frac{\text{cooler}}{\text{adj}} + \frac{\text{heads}}{\text{noun}} + \frac{\text{to}}{\text{adv}} + \frac{\text{prevail}}{\text{verb}}$

This idiom is a complete sentence; sentence pattern

Discussion

This research aimed to find out about the types of idioms and the patterns of idioms in the *Joker* movie. The researcher used the theory of O'Dell and McCarthy (2017) to reveal what types of idioms consisted in the *Joker* movie. Meanwhile to know what patterns of idioms in the *Joker* movie; the researcher used Joodi's (2012) theory. The result of this research found that the idiomatic expressions that existed in the *Joker* movie were only 4 types of idioms; proverb, cliché, fixed statement, and slang.

In this *Joker* movie, the proverb type was the type that was least found. The researcher suspected that this happened because a proverb is a phrase or short sentence that provides advice or warning; meanwhile, in this *Joker* movie, there were not many scenes and dialogues that require the characters to deliver warning or advice that amplified in idiomatic forms.

The next type of idiom found in the *Joker* movie was cliché, the number of clichés found in this movie was quite a lot. The researcher assumed that this happened because cliché is a comment that is often used in certain common, everyday situations. It is a comment that most people are familiar with and is therefore lost its effectiveness. In this film, cliché was used to emphasize the meaning of the utterances, but the phrases that the characters choose had been used so often in everyday life that the effect of the emphasis was no longer effective.

The third type of idiom in this *Joker* movie was fixed statements; it was the types of idiom most often found in this movie; almost half of the data findings were fixed statements. As the definition of fixed statements are some statements that are often used in everyday conversation The researcher certain that this phenomenon happened because the dialogues used by the characters were very common conversations and it did not require various idioms to amplify the messages. Fixed statements were only used to vary the words in the dialogues; hence the conversation between the characters in the movie was not too monotonous. It also represents the actual situation of real-life interaction between native speakers as they communicate with each other.

The last type of idioms that the researcher found in this *Joker* movie was slang; although this type was not presented and analyzed in this research, the researcher found quite a lot of use of slang by the characters in the *Joker* movie. The researcher assumed that this happened because the background story of this movie was the life of people in the slums around a big city, thus the communication made by the characters was very representative of real-life situations. This also supported the statement from Richard that slang is a term that often used by people when interacting with others in their daily life.

The other types of idioms based on O'Dell and McCarthy's theory which are simile, binomial, and other languages are absent from the *Joker* movie. The researcher supposed this happened because this *Joker* movie was focused on the characters' development and the action of the characters rather than the way the dialogues deliver the amplified meaning between the characters. Additionally, the director of this movie; Todd Phillips is a person that often directed comedic movies; a genre of movie that focused on the jokes rather than the beauty of the words. Thus, it influenced the dialogues in this *Joker* movie.

The first findings of this research were in line with the result of Desmanita's (2019) study; which found 3 types of idioms that were based on the theory of Hockett, namely figures of speech, substitutes, and slang. In her study, she found that slang is the most used idioms in Doraemon comic volumes 4 and 6. The researcher presumed this happened because of the types of literary work that she analyzed, which is a comic. Although the literary work she analyzed was in written form which contrasts from this research, the genre of the comic itself is a slice of life; it is a genre that tells about the daily life of the characters in the story. Thus it clarified that the result of her research was quite similar to the finding of this research.

The findings of this research also supported Zaid's (2019) result; in her study, the result showed that the most used idiom type in her object of study is cliché. The other types of idioms such as simile, binomial, euphemism, and fixed statement all existed in her study. The researcher assumed that this occurred because the theory used by Zaid was O'Dell

and McCarthy's (2010) theory and the type of literary work she analyzed was also a movie. Moreover, the researcher supposed the reason that she found all types of idioms in her research was because she analyzed 3 movies at once which in contrast with this research that only analyzed one movie.

The second findings showed that patterns of idiomatic expressions in the *Joker* movie quite vary. The patterns used Joodi's theory to analyzed the idioms that were classified into O'Dell and McCarthy's classification; which consisted of the noun phrase, transitive verb phrase, verbal phrase, prepositional phrase, pair of words, and sentence pattern. Meanwhile, other patterns such as alliterative comparison and be + prepositional phrases were absent from this movie.

From the findings, the researcher found that the most pattern that appeared in the *Joker* movie was the verbal phrase patterns. The researcher assumed that this phenomenon happened because most of the idiom type found in the *Joker* movie was the fixed statements and most of the fixed statements were categorized as a verbal phrase; a combination of a verb and one or more adverbs or prepositions. There were not too many noun phrase patterns found in this *Joker* movie; almost all the entire noun phrase patterns that were found described the unfavorable conditions of the characters. The next pattern was transitive verb phrases; this pattern was quite common in this *Joker* movie; as the definition of the transitive verb phrase is a verb phrase plus a noun phrase as the direct object.

The other patterns such as prepositional phrases, pair of words, and sentence were only found 1 each. The researcher assumed that this happened because of the first finding of this research; the types of idioms in this *Joker* movie were not too varied; hence the patterns found were limited to certain patterns.

The second findings of this research were similar to the finding of Gunawan and Erippudin (2019) who found that most idioms forms found in Adele's songs are phrasal verbs; a combination of a verb and one or more adverbs or prepositions. Despite the object of their study is a song;

one of the types of literary work that focused in strengthen the messages and the beauty of the way the messages are conveyed. The songs they analyzed were the modern type song which did not focus on the word variations, hence their idioms form are not varied, and mostly the idioms they found were classified as fixed statements.

In brief, the idioms found in the *Joker* movie were only 4 types; most of the idiomatic expressions were classified as a proverb, cliché, fixed statement, and slang. The idiomatic expression patterns were 6 patterns; noun phrase, transitive verb phrase, verbal phrase, prepositional phrase, pair of words, and sentence. It also showed a connection between fixed statements and verbal phrase patterns as the pattern of most fixed statements was the verbal phrase. Additionally, the idiomatic expressions in the *Joker* movie were not very highlighted as the story was focused on the actions and the characters' developments.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Conclusion

According to the data analysis and the discussion in the previous chapter, the researcher conveyed some conclusions; first, based on the obtained data, the types of idiomatic contained in the *Joker* movie were only 4 types, the types of idiomatic expressions that appeared in this research were; proverbs, clichés, fixed statements, and slang. The factor that influenced the existence of idiomatic expressions in the *Joker* movie including the genre of the movie, the purpose of the movie, and the background of the director of the movie.

Second, the result found that nearly all patterns of idiomatic expressions existed in the *Joker* movie. Those included; noun phrases, transitive verb phrases, verbal phrases, prepositional phrases, pair of words, and sentence patterns. The other patterns were absent because the variety of idiomatic expression types found in the movie only consisted of 3 types of idioms.

Suggestion

Based on the results of this research, the researcher would like to offer some suggestions; For teachers, the use of movies as an aid in

teaching and learning idioms is conceivable, the teacher can provide a short movie, and asked the students to watch it together during the classroom activity, and then asked them to found out the idiomatic expressions and discussed the meaning and the patterns together.

For students, it is expected to be useful to enrich the knowledge and comprehension of idiomatic expression types and patterns. Understanding idioms can help increasing vocabulary and language variations that can be used in daily conversation.

For future researchers, it is expected that this research can be useful as a reference to conduct further research that is interrelated with idiomatic materials. It is more recommended to analyze literary works that truly focus on the beauty of the words.

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