

**AN ANALYSIS ON STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF ENGLISH IDIOMATIC
EXPRESSIONS GRADE XII MIPA (SCIENCE PROGRAM) SMAN 4 PRAYA
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Widisuwita Sumadia

English Graduate Department
Post Graduate Program
Mataram University

Widisuwitasumadia@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This study is a qualitative and quantitative descriptive (mixed method) research used to obtain the information related to the research problems. It aims to analyze whether the grade XII MIPA (Science Program) students understand English idiomatic expressions. Moreover, this study intends to analyze the differences between students' understanding of transparent, semi-transparent and opaque idioms and the students' English learning backgrounds influence on the understanding of English idiomatic expressions. The subject of this study was the third grade students SMAN 4 Praya, especially at XII MIPA (Science Program). The data were collected by giving two instruments; English idiomatic expressions test and English learning background questionnaire. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the third grade MIPA (Science Program) students at SMAN 4 Praya achieved poor scores in understanding English idiomatic expressions after the test given. It can be seen from the M (mean score) of the test. The M (mean score) was 23.83 with the percentage of correct answers 23.6%. Furthermore, there were differences between three categories of English idiomatic expressions. The percentage of transparent, semi-transparent, and opaque was 5.8%, 7%, and 10.8%. There was 3.8% different understanding percentage from opaque to semi-transparent idioms and 5.8% to the transparent idioms, meanwhile between transparent and semi-transparent was 1.2%. The result also illustrated that among the three backgrounds; residence/environment, leisure time, contact with native speaker, students mostly involved in English circumstances 90% through their leisure time, 76.7% contact with native speaker, and 0% residence in English speaking country. As the conclusion English learning background personally influenced their understanding of English idiomatic expressions.

Keywords: Analysis, understanding, idioms, English learning background

**SEBUAH ANALISIS PADA PEMAHAMAN SISWA TERHADAP EKSPRESI
UNGKAPAN BAHASA INGGRIS KELAS XII MIPA (ILMU ALAM) SMAN 4 PRAYA
TAHUN PELAJARAN 2015/2016**

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dan kuantitatif deskriptif yang digunakan untuk memperoleh informasi berkaitan dengan permasalahan-permasalahan dalam penelitian. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis apakah siswa kelas XII MIPA (Ilmu Alam) memahami ekspresi ungkapan bahasa Inggris. Lebih dalam lagi, penelitian ini bermaksud menganalisis perbedaan antara pemahaman siswa terhadap ungkapan yang bersifat transparan, semi-transparan, dan tidak transparan dan pengaruh latar belakang pembelajaran bahasa Inggris siswa terhadap pemahaman mereka akan ekspresi ungkapan bahasa Inggris. Subyek dalam penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas XII SMAN 4 Praya khususnya jurusan MIPA (Ilmu Alam). Data diperoleh dengan memberikan dua instrument; test pemahaman terhadap ekspresi ungkapan bahasa Inggris dan daftar pertanyaan berhubungan dengan latar belakang pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Berdasarkan penemuan-penemuan, maka dapat disimpulkan bahwa siswa kelas XII MIPA (Ilmu Alam) SMAN 4 Praya memperoleh skor yang rendah dalam hal memahami ekspresi ungkapan bahasa Inggris setelah tes diberikan. Hal itu terlihat dari M (skor rata-rata) skor pada test tersebut. M (skor rata-rata) adalah 23.83 dengan persentase jawaban benar siswa 23.6%. Terlebih lagi, terdapat perbedaan tingkat pemahaman diantara tiga kategori ekspresi ungkapan bahasa Inggris. Persentase ungkapan transparan, semi-transparan, dan tidak transparan adalah 5.8%, 7%, dan 10.8%. terdapat perbedaan persentase pemahaman antara ungkapan tidak transparan dengan semi-transparan 3.8% dan transparan 5.8%. Sedangkan antara ungkapan transparan dan semi transparan perbedaannya sebesar 1.2%. Hasil dari penelitian ini juga mengilustrasikan bahwa diantara tiga kategori latar belakang pembelajaran siswa; tempat tinggal, waktu luang, dan kontak dengan penutur asli bahasa Inggris, siswa sebagian besar terlibat dalam situasi yang melibatkan bahasa Inggris 90% melalui waktu luang, 76.7% kontak dengan penutur asli bahasa Inggris, dan 0% bertempat tinggal di negara yg berbahasa Inggris. Sebagai kesimpulan, latar belakang pembelajaran bahasa Inggris siswa secara individu mempengaruhi pemahaman terhadap ekspresi ungkapan bahasa Inggris.

Katakunci: *Analisis, pemahaman, ungkapan, latar belakang pembelajaran bahasa Inggris*

INTRODUCTION

Learning English as a foreign language (EFL) by some means is learning vocabularies and learners intensively use bilingual dictionary in doing translation. It means that translating and interpreting ability is much needed in order to make clear and accurate communication. Moreover, it requires brief understanding on lexical meaning of source language (SL) to be translated into target language (TL).

When learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) cannot find certain word or idiomatic expression in the dictionary, they tend to make errors in and interpreting, in line with this Aveling (2002:2) stated, "they made mistakes as a failure to achieve equivalency in meaning, adequacy, accuracy, etc. Similarly, Ghazala (1995) claims that these problems occur because of either sound and lexis (word) or grammar and style. He provided that:

Some lexical problems perhaps encountered by translator during the translation process are literal meaning, synonyms, polysemy and monosemy, collocations, **idioms**, proverbs, metaphors, technical terms, proper names, titles, political establishment, geographical term and UN acronyms (Ghazala, 1995:20-21).

Idiomatic expressions have an important role in English language. The use of idiom is so widespread that an understanding of these expressions is essential to successful communication, whether in listening, speaking, reading, or writing. As McDevitt (1993 cited in Saberian and Fotovatnia's study 2011:1), idioms are an important part of any language and may be said to be an indicator of one's fluency in that language.

Related to Senior High School, especially by the implementation of new curriculum in Indonesia (Curriculum 2013), students are expected to comprehend texts and expressions in every basic competence. It means that in mastering text comprehension an obligation to master vocabularies is important. However, it is more than just knowing, even they have acquired sufficient vocabularies, it is possibly hard to gain and deliver the meaning of idiomatic expressions without experiencing. The students will face obstacles because they have to know more about lexical words or compound sentences which are commonly used in idiomatic expression.

In Senior High School, idioms are often used in texts and expressions. Their appearance in text cannot be ignored because of its important role. There are some particular features of idioms which make them different from non-idiomatic expressions. Because meaning and expression is different, that makes it difficult to be understood. The idioms appeared in text and expressions such *kick the bucket* or *passed away* in dialogue that need response of sympathy or condolence, *piece of cake* for expressing an easy term, *rain cats and dogs* for stating a condition of heavy rain, *to take part in*, *to take account*, *a bird in hand is worth to in the bush*, etc. In my view, idioms are essential to students of Senior High School for helping them as learners of English as second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) in comprehending texts and expressions and conducting obvious communication. In addition, mastering English idiomatic expression is one way to be native like because of the increasing use of the expressions itself. It perhaps could be called as one of the art creature in language because it is beneficial in terms of language learning and use. It has important role in communication such as making polite sentence or stating something indirectly.

Therefore, English idiomatic expressions such *kick the bucket* or *passed away*, *piece of cake*, *rain cats and dogs*, *to take part in*, *to take account*, *a bird in hand is worth to in the bush*, etc. perhaps cause trouble to students. The English teacher should select appropriate expressions which have value in everyday life and within the students' ability to reach the comprehension. However, learning such expression seems to be difficult for students and they need to give more attention to it. Learning about English idiomatic expressions helps the students in terms of achieving fluency in English. Furthermore, learning English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) is not easy because learners of the language often attempt to translate literally by word to word and their mother tongue will dominate interpreting the meaning of the idiomatic expressions. As a result more confusion will occur.

This occurred at SMAN 4 Praya grade XII MIPA (Science Program) as I experienced in teaching activity. The major problem in translating English to Indonesia among Senior High School students at SMAN 4 Praya is that they attempt to translate text word by word. It will cause more errors in recognizing and such idiomatic expressions and will be very difficult to

possess the appropriate meanings. Therefore, based on the background stated above, a study was conducted in order to prove the students' problems scientifically since there is still lack of information about the students' understanding of English idiomatic expressions. As well, it is still lack of information whether the students' English learning backgrounds influence on their understanding of English idiomatic expressions and the differences between students' understanding of transparent, semi-transparent, and opaque idioms.

This study provided the theoretical framework that this study related on. One of the interesting topics in language is idioms. In terms of interpreting idioms, it is considered difficult for English learners especially for the students in the country where English determined as a foreign language such as Indonesia. That is due to the no existence of equivalence in other languages since a meaning of an idiom is not the meaning of its literal. This study examined whether the third grades of Senior High School Students understand of English idiomatic expressions.

Dealing with idioms, translators as well as learners should pay attention to the context and equivalence of a certain idiom. An idiom will never be literally translated by the translator if they do not use a good strategy. Idioms are often assumed as odd because they are determined as culture bound. It was due to the cultural association included in the majority of them.

Richards and Schmidt (2002: 246) defines an idiom as: " an expression which functions as a single unit and whose meaning cannot be worked out from its separate parts." For example, the meaning of the idiom to "run oneself out" is "to be completely exhausted". This meaning has nothing to do with the meanings of the separate words of which the idiom is composed. However, it is to be noted that an idiom has usually started as a phrase having a literal meaning and then starts to be used in a figurative way. Al-Haddad (1994) argues that there must be some relationship between the meaning of most idioms and the meanings of their constituents at some time in the past, and, if not, they would not have been expressed by them. Translating idioms is not an easy task. Pedersen (in Trosborg, 1997: 109) argues that: " The translation of idioms is as difficult as it is central". Whereas Larson (1984), argues that idioms should be translated with great care: "The translator must first be sure of the meaning of the idiom and then look for the natural equivalent way to express the meaning of the idiom as a whole". Despite recent developments in the field of translation theory and application, idiomatic expressions are still considered as a serious challenge for translators as well as foreign teachers/learners. Larson (1984) confirmed that idioms can never be translated literally; word for word translation should be avoided.

Idioms have been classified from different points of view, syntactically or semantically. Makkai (1972) divides idioms into two categories:

1. Idioms of Encoding (identifiable)

It is those idiosyncratic lexical combinations that have transparent meaning involving collocational preferences and restrictions, exemplified by *at* in *he drove at 70 m.p.h.*

2. Idioms of decoding (non-identifiable)

It refers to those non identifiable and misleading lexical expressions whose interpretations could not be comprehended on the basis of only learned linguistic conventions. In other words, the meaning of decoding idioms is not predictable. Expressions such as *beat about the bush* and *fly off the handle* are examples of this type of idioms. Idioms of decoding are classified into lexemic and sememic idioms (Makkai, 1972:135-179).

1. Lexemic idioms

- a) Phrasal verbs: e.g., *to come up with*, *to take part in*

- b) Tournures (turns of phrase): e.g., *fly off the handle, kick the bucket*
- c) Irreversible binomials: e.g., *paper and salt, coffee and cream*
- d) Phrasal compounds: e.g., *black ice, black board*
- e) Incorporating verbs: e.g., *man-handle*
- f) Pseudo-idioms: e.g., *spick and span, kit and kin*

2. Sememic idioms

Usually convey pragmatic meanings related to a particular culture. They include:

- a) Proverbs: e.g., *A bird in hand is worth two in the bush.*
- b) Familiar quotations: e.g., *Not a mouse stirring.*
- c) 'First base' idioms: associated with a national game like baseball, e.g., *have two strikes against one, never to get to first base.*
- d) Idioms of 'institutionalized politeness': such as *may I ...?*
- e) Idioms of 'institutionalized greeting': e.g., *How do you do? , So long.*
- f) Idioms of 'institutionalized understatement': e.g., *I wasn't too crazy about him.*
- g) Idioms of 'institutionalized hyperbole': e.g., *He won't even lift a finger.*

The degree of 'idiomaticity' that an idiom carries is the most important feature based on which different scholars and linguists have classified idioms. Moon (1996) classifies idioms based on 'the spectrum of idiomaticity':

Transparent-opaque idioms

1. Transparent idioms:

Transparent idioms are those idioms which are easy to comprehend and translate and their meaning can be derived from the meanings of their constituent parts.

E.g.1. *Back and forth*

2. Semi-transparent idioms:

Idioms that usually have metaphorical meaning and their constituent parts have a little role in comprehending the whole meaning of the expression. e.g. *Break the ice* (to reveal the tension)

3. Semi-opaque idioms:

It is the group of idioms whose figurative meaning is not related to the meanings of their constituent words. In other words, the idiomatic expression is separated in two parts; a part with literal meaning, and the other part with a figurative meaning. e.g. *To know the rope* (to know how a particular job should be done).

4. Opaque idioms:

Opaque idioms are the most difficult type of idioms, because the literal meanings of their parts have little to do with the actual sense of idioms; that is, the meaning of an opaque idiom cannot be derived from the meanings of its individual parts because there are items which have cultural references.

E.g., 1. *To burn one's boat* (to make retreat impossible)

2. *Spill the beans* (to reveal a secret)

McCarty and O'Dell (2003:6) made a syntactic classification of English idioms according to their possible combination:

- a) **verb+ object / complement:** (and or adverbial) e.g., *kill two birds with one stone* (achieve two aims with a single action or at the same time)
- b) **Prepositional phrase:** e.g., *in the blink of an eye* (in an extremely short time)
- c) **Compound:** e.g., *a bone of contention* (a subject about which there is disagreement)
- d) **Simile** (as + adjective + as or like + a noun): e.g., *as dry as a bone* (very dry indeed)
- e) **Binominal** (word + and + word): e.g., *rough and ready*, (crude and lacking sophistication)
- f) **Trinomial** (word + word + and + word): e.g., *cool, calm and collected* (relaxed, in control, not nervous)
- g) **Whole clause or sentence:** e.g., *to cut a long story short* (to get to the point of what one is saying quickly)

2.3 The Understanding of Idioms

As cited in Kainulainen (2006:25), the understanding of idioms is not a simple matter. The views presented in the study indicate the different ways idioms can be seen. They reflect different conceptions of idioms and most of all they mirror the time of their publication. Gibbs' work on idiom comprehension is a good example of the phenomenon. His notions on the process of idiom interpretation have slowly changed along with the times.

In this term, the role of context is very important since the students as the participant are the students as a foreign language. Using contextual clues to infer the meaning of unknown words is an effective strategy which helps learners acquire skills and aids vocabulary learning (Dunmore, 1989). Additionally, using contextual pragmatic clues seems to have a considerable effect on L2 idiom comprehension particularly in opaque idioms whose meaning cannot be inferred from the individual word meanings. As Swinney and Cutler (1979) stated, most idioms have the feature of ambiguity. This means that idioms which are grammatically well formed have an acceptable literal meaning as well as figurative meaning. As a result, the comprehension of such idioms will be problematic.

METHODS

This study is a qualitative and quantitative descriptive form (mixed method) research which provided descriptions and numbers. The detailed descriptions of data collection displayed some quantitative data in terms of evaluating and assessing the students' test in order to support and show the accurate data. It is based on the research variable and the type of data source. The present study focuses on describing the students' understanding of English idiomatic expressions measured by providing English idiomatic expressions test and the English Learning background questionnaires. "*Qualitative research* refers to inductive, holistic, emic, subjective and process-oriented methods used to understand, interpret, describe and develop a theory on a phenomena or setting. Qualitative research is mostly associated with words, language and experiences rather than measurements, statistics and numerical figures. The quantitative data were the percentage of students' understanding and the background questionnaire.

The population of this study was the grade XII MIPA (Science Program) students SMAN 4 Praya consisted of 5 classes. This study took 30 students from 5 classes based on the teaching

and learning that I have experienced due to the limited time and difficulties to measure the whole students in that level.

The sampling method used in the present study is *Purposeful Sampling*. It is meant that the researcher is looking for participants who possess certain traits or qualities. In this sampling method, the researcher considered the aim of the research and selects samples accordingly (Coyne, 1997: 624). I referred to this method since I attempt to obtain sample that appears to be representative of the population.

The purposeful sampling was used in determining MIPA (Science Program) at the third grade of Senior High School. It was chosen since the students possess similar treatments. I have conducted teaching and learning activity in those classes and assumed that the students gave satisfaction to my needs. As well, Yusra (2006:32) stated “the researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality. In this way they build up a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs.

I selected a sample of 30 students out of 190 to know if they could understand English idiomatic expressions. At least 10 students or 5 % of the total was being used, nevertheless by taking 30 out of 190 is meant that I made the poll to 16% of the population, this was n/N $30/190 = 0,16$ and every student represented 6 students, this was N/n $190/30 = 6,33$ where N =Total number of students and n =numbers of sample (Barrero & Albandoz, 2001:4-5). The bigger the percentage of samples used in this study, the more representative it will be. The number of students as the sample represented the average number of students in a class at that program. Therefore, I used *Stratified Sampling* in selecting students from 5 classes of IPA (Science Program) that was defined as homogenous group with similar characteristics. As the reason of each member of the population under study has an equal chance of being selected. Thus, 30 students were selected as the participant by taking 6 students from every class by using *Systematic Random Sampling* and taking the odd numbers from the attendant list.

Instrument is very important in any study because it is used to collect the data. In the present study I used two kinds of instruments; idiomatic expression test to measure the students’ understanding and English learning background questionnaire as supporting measurement. The multiple choice test was chosen since the aim is to study included variables rather than strategies. As well, Brown (2003:3) defined “test is a method of measuring person’s ability and knowledge.” understanding is related to ability and knowledge, so that the measurement given to the students at the time of teaching and learning. Similarly to Levorato (1993: 112), multiple choice tasks are suitable when measuring independent variables, such as age or the informativeness of the context, whereas completion tasks tell more about the strategies employed in the comprehension process.

The examples of idioms in a brief context in the form of multiple choices test were taken from the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms* (1995) that was adapted from Mäntylä (2004). This dictionary was chosen since the examples presented were based on authentic written and spoken texts and the present study aims to gain the objectives. Additionally, the dictionary was the only one based on frequency and the latest one on the market at that time. The idioms presented are defined as 20 popular idioms of 62 idioms in Mäntylä (2004) that were from the most frequent and the second most frequent. 6 of the idioms were transparent, 8 semi-transparent and 6 opaque. The present study analyzed the understanding of English idiomatic expressions, so that I gave brief context for helping to predict the idioms’ meaning because the participants were the third grade of Senior High School students. They were not expected too much to understand idioms out of context since they are considered as foreign language learner.

Table 1. The number of idioms, source, transparency and frequency

Source of Idioms	Frequency	Transparency	Questions No.
<i>Collins Cobuild Dictionary (1995)</i>			
20 most popular Idioms	10 the most frequent 10 the second frequent	6 Transparent	1,9,11,12,13,17
		8 Semi-transparent	2,5,6,7,15,16,19,20
		6 Opaque	3,4,8,10,14,18

Table 1 projected that 20 most popular idioms used were taken from *Collins Cobuild Dictionary*. There are 10 idioms categorized as 10 of the most frequent and 10 idioms of the second frequent. The idioms were determined as the most popular idioms referred to Mäntylä (2004) based on the reason that *Collins Cobuild Dictionary* was one of the authentic dictionary in written and spoken at the time (1995) even nowadays, it is still used in the form of application (program) even books. Among the idioms, there were separations in the numbers. Transparent and opaque idioms consisted of 6 questions for each and the rest are semi-transparent idioms. The semi-transparent questions were much more in order to make balance 20 items of 3 idioms categories. Moreover, it was determined as the reason to make the test in intermediate level, not too easy and not too difficult. Almost items of the test also had been tried out by Kainulainen (2006). The Table of the most frequent idioms referred to *Collins Cobuild Dictionary (1995)* was shown in appendices.

English Learning Background Questionnaire

This study presented questionnaires related to the students' background in order to gather more information to the students of English idiomatic expressions. The background questionnaire was designed to find out the frequency of students to be involved in using English outside school. Moreover, it probably affects their understanding of idioms. In sequence, to obtain authentic data of language use, three categories is defined in background questionnaires as what had been mentioned in Kainulainen's study (2004); residence in English speaking countries/environments, leisure time and contacts with native speakers. The questionnaires had options where there was no correct and incorrect answer since it is an open questionnaire and there is no score for them.

Table 2. The related category of questionnaire

No.	Category	Total	Question no.
1.	<i>Residence</i>	4 questions	1-4
	English speaking country, non English speaking country.		
2.	<i>Leisure Time</i>	6 questions	5-10
	Watching TV, listening to music, reading books.		
3.	<i>Contact with native speaker</i>	2 questions	11-12
	Family, relative, e-mail friend, frequency.		

Table 2 demonstrated the first term, residence; the students were asked whether they had stayed in English speaking country or non-English speaking country. Moreover, in second term they

were expected to give answers related to activities in the situation of their leisure time for example watching TV, listening to music, and reading books. Thirdly, the contacts of students in their environment were asked in relation to the family, relative, e-mail friend, and their frequency.

Briefly, the questionnaire was in the type of open-ended questions. There were 4 questions for residence category; number 1-4, 6 questions for leisure time; number 5 to 10, and 2 questions for contact; number 11 to 12. The questionnaire is formed by providing two to five alternative options. However, if the options mentioned in the questionnaire could not represent the students' answer, it was prepared a blank space for them to write other answers. In order to obtain valid and reliable answers, at the beginning of the questionnaire the students were instructed to be honest in answering questions due to the questionnaire was in the form of open-ended questions within 30 minutes of time allocation.

Generally the data in this study was collected in the form of test and questionnaire. I decided to conduct the test during the teaching and learning schedule at school. Furthermore, below were the steps in collecting the data:

The questionnaire was adopted from the instrument used by Kainulainen (2006) and idioms test was adapted from Mäntylä (2004). The first was the questionnaire related to the students' background aims in finding the frequency of English used by the students in daily life. The second was English idiomatic expressions as mentioned in *Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms* (1995). Preparing the students

The students as the participant were guided in every instrument given. They were 30 students joining MIPA (Science Program). The situation of the class must be clear and no annoyance in order to make them more focus in answering the instruments.

Students were provided lists of English idiomatic expressions and asked to answer as their own. The English idiomatic expressions were supplied in context. Students were expected to match the English idiomatic expressions provided in a sentence with the correct meaning. The test was conducted in classroom.

The students were provided the background questionnaire related to their frequency of using English language in daily communication adopted from Kainulainen's study (2006). The questionnaire consisted of three items; residence/environment, leisure time, and contact with native speaker. It was determined since the involvement of students in practicing English may influence their understanding of idioms. Therefore, the questionnaire given aims in finding their frequency to be involved in English circumstance through those three categories. .

Qualitative content analysis is the analysis strategy of choice in qualitative descriptive study. Qualitative content analysis is a dynamic form of analysis of verbal and visual data that is oriented toward summarizing the informational contents of that data (Altheide, 1987; Morgan, 1993). The data was analyzed in descriptive technique through the instrument provided and followed the steps below:

- a. The students' answers based on the test were scored and percentage as the data. It displayed in Table as well to clarify the result. It was based on the students' correct answers on the instrument given. The data was measured by using:
 1. Data analysis of students' test

The data in this study was consisted of students' achievement in answering the test. Data were analyzed by using:

- a. Mean Score

The formula to obtain students' mean score was:

$$M = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Where: M = Mean score
 $\sum X$ = Sum of students' score
 N = Number of students

(Nurkencana, 1983)

b. Classical completeness

The percentage of classical completeness was counted by using formula below:

$$KK = \frac{P}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where: KK = Percentage of classical completeness
 P = Number of students who get score
 N = Number of students

(Nurkencana, 1983)

- b. The result of the students' test were analyzed based on the idioms category; transparent, semi-transparent, and opaque idioms. The students' answers related to the idioms test were ordered from the easiest to the most difficult. Then, the percentage of correct answers for every category were compared each others in order to find out whether any differences in their understanding.
- c. The students' answers of English learning background questionnaires were analyzed and correlated to the idioms test score. There were three categories of student's background analyzed; residence, leisure time, and contact with native speaker are generally compared with the average of students' score in order to find out whether some selected aspects of their background influence the understanding.

DISCUSSION

Table 3. The order of easy to difficult idioms

Idioms	Transparency	Number of Students With Correct Answer	Percentage
1. Make a pitch	Opaque	16	53.3%
2. Make noises	Semi-transparent	12	40%
3. On edge	Opaque	11	36.7%
4. Have a chip on your shoulder	Opaque	11	36.7%

5. Vote with your feet	Semi-transparent	9	30%
6. Be home and dry	Opaque	9	30%
7. Bring home	Opaque	8	26.7%
8. Give the green light	Transparent	8	26.7%
9. Keep your head down	Transparent	8	26.7%
10. Smell a rat	Semi-transparent	7	23.3%
11. The nooks and crannies	Opaque	6	20%
12. End it all	Transparent	6	20%
13. Throw of balance	Transparent	5	16.7%
14. Full faces	Semi-transparent	5	16.7%
15. Get the chops	Transparent	4	13.3%
16. The tip of the iceberg	Transparent	4	13.3%
17. Across the board	Semi-transparent	3	10.0%
18. Be in gear	Semi-transparent	2	6.7%
19. Come to ahead	Semi-transparent	2	6.7%
20. Ahead of the game	Semi-transparent	2	6.7%
Total Percentage		142	23.6%

Table 3 illustrated the order of easy to difficult idioms, in which the opaque idioms *make a pitch* basically categorized as the most difficult idioms determined by 53.3% of students as the easiest idiom to comprehend the meaning. The semi-transparent idiom *make noises* was determined as the second easiest idioms by 40% of students followed by 36.7% defined opaque idioms *on edge* and *have a chip on your shoulder* as the third and the fourth easiest idioms. The most difficult idiom were semi-transparent idioms *be in gear*, *come to a head*, *ahead of the game* with 6.7% of students' understanding. It means that the categories of idioms and the difficulties of idioms did not determine the students' understanding. Table 10 also projected that the students achieved 23.6% of correct answers.

The first objective was answered by the findings. It can be concluded that the grade XII MIPA (Science Program) students *poorly* understand English idiomatic expressions because the achievement was 23.6%. The result also demonstrated that the grade XII MIPA (Science Program) students understand opaque English idiomatic expressions better than others through the context strategy. In line with this, Cooper (1999) provided that a number of strategies were used by L2 learners to comprehend idioms 28% from the context, 24% by discussing and analyzing idioms, and 19% by using the literal meaning. The existence of idioms in a sentence helped the students to acquire one correct meaning among four options. In this term, the role of context was very important since the students as the participant were the students as foreign language. Similarly, using contextual clues to infer the meaning of unknown words is an effective strategy which helps learners acquire skills and aids vocabulary learning (Dunmore, 1989). Additionally, using contextual pragmatic clues seems to have a considerable effect on L2 idioms comprehension particularly in comprehending opaque idioms whose meaning cannot be inferred from the individual word meanings. In other words, contextual clues can influence the interpretation of an ambiguous sentence with literal and non-literal meanings (Bobrow & Bell, 1973).

Table 4. The different understanding percentage of transparent, semi-transparent, and opaque idioms

No.	Transparency	Total Number of Students' Correct Answers	Percentage
1.	Transparent (1,9,11,12,13,17)	35	5.8%
2.	Semi-transparent (2,5,6,7,15,16,19,20)	42	7.0%
3.	Opaque (3,4,8,10,14,18)	65	10.8%
Total		142	23.6%

Table 4 demonstrated that there was differentiation in the result of English idiomatic expressions test. The percentage of English idiomatic expressions among transparent, semi-transparent, and opaque were 5.8%, 7%, 10.8% and the percentage of 30 students in acquiring English idiomatic expressions was 23.6%. The opaque idioms had the highest percentage and followed by semi-transparent and transparent idioms. There was 3.8% of differentiation in understanding between opaque and semi-transparent idioms and 5.8% to the transparent idioms, meanwhile between transparent and semi-transparent was 1.2%. The second objective on differentiation among students understanding of the three categories of idioms was answered by the data.

Table 5. The comparison between the students' scores with their English learning backgrounds

No.	Initial	Score	Leisure Time			Contact With Native Speaker
			Watching TV	Reading	Listening to Music	
1.	MN	10	0 hour	1-4 hours	0 hours	No
2.	AR	25	0 hour	1-4 hours	10-14 hours	No
3.	RA	45	1-4 hours	1-4 hours	10-14 hours	Yes

Table 5 demonstrated the total score of students in answering English idiomatic expressions test was correlated to the English learning background answers. By comparing three students with the lowest, medium, and the highest score, displayed that the highest understanding of English idiomatic expressions was achieved by student actively involved in English through watching TV 1-4 hours, reading 1-4 hours, and listening to music 10-14 hours a week and also a contact with native speaker without staying in English speaking country; otherwise the students with the lowest score was involved in English through only reading 1-4 hours a week without any contact with native speaker, residence in English speaking country, and leisure time especially watching TV and listening to music. Thus, the third objective was answered by the data.

On the basis of the findings, the present study was similar to the previous study that illustrated the grade XII MIPA (Science Program) students at SMAN 4 Praya were difficult to comprehend English idiomatic expressions by showing 23.6% of understanding but they comprehended opaque better than semi-transparent and transparent idioms. It remained 76.4% of students were failed in understanding idioms because they tended to pick one part of the words and interpreted idioms as equivalent as the word. Hence, they failed in finding the meaning of idioms as the whole because they interpreted it partly.

The present study was contrastive that revealed the grade XII MIPA (Science Program) students at SMAN 4 Praya did not understand English idiomatic expressions as they were able to answer correctly 2 to 9 items with 23.6% of understanding percentage because the participant in this study were the students as foreign language learner, meanwhile in the previous study the participants were the students as the second language learner.

The grade XII MIPA (Science Program) students at SMAN 4 Praya could understand opaque idioms easier than transparent. The highest score was opaque idioms with 10.8% followed by semi-transparent 7%, and transparent 5.8%. It was due to the students' strategy in comprehending the idioms that they better in using context to obtain the equivalent of meaning. Therefore, the present study provided contrastive result since the previous study demonstrated that students comprehended transparent and semi-transparent better than opaque idioms. Additionally, they could not understand opaque idioms which was uncommon and not learned by them.

In summary, this study was similar to a particular study because this study used the third grade students of Senior High School as the participant. The result of the study illustrated that they acquired poorly English idiomatic expressions since they were as foreign language learner (non-native speaker). The result of this study revealed contrastive that opaque idioms were acquired better than semi-transparent and transparent because of the existence of context; meanwhile the other studies provided idioms without context.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals the grade XII MIPA (Science Program) students at SMAN 4 Praya achieved *poor* understanding of English idiomatic expression with **M** (mean score) 23.83 and 23.6% of correct answers. They could answer correctly the English idiomatic expressions test 2 to 9 out of 20 items. Moreover, they tended to possess the correct meaning of opaque idioms with better score. It was proven by the students' contrastive results in terms of three categories of idiom; transparent, semi-transparent and opaque idioms. They understand opaque idioms as the easiest idioms to understand the meaning and semi-transparent idioms as the most difficult. The percentage displayed the number of students answering opaque idioms was 53.3% as the highest and semi-transparent idioms 6.7% as the lowest. Furthermore, they comprehended opaque idioms better than semi-transparent and transparent with average percentage 10.8% of opaque, 7% of semi-transparent, and 5.8% of transparent. This result has answered the research question no.1 on whether they understand English idiomatic expressions.

From the result of the research analysis, it was proven that the students' score of English idiomatic expressions test was different. The percentage of transparent, semi-transparent, and opaque was 5.8%, 7%, and 10.8%. There was 3.8% different understanding percentage from opaque to semi-transparent idioms and 5.8% to the transparent idioms, meanwhile between transparent and semi-transparent was 1.2%. This result has answered the research question no.2 on differences between three categories of English idiomatic expressions.

In analysis of English learning background questionnaire, the result illustrated that among the three backgrounds; residence/environment, leisure time, contact with native speaker, students mostly acquired English through their leisure time. They actively involved in at least 1-4 hours of watching English program on TV, 1-4 hours reading English text, and listening to English music 1-4 hours a week as the most influence aspects. The percentage displayed that 90% of leisure time, 76.7% of contact with native speaker, and 0% of residence in English speaking country. In leisure time, there were two dominant aspects, 73% students spent their time in watching and 70% in reading. This result has answered research questioned no.3 that

students' English learning background personally influenced their understanding of English idiomatic expressions.

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