

Idiom Expressions In ‘The Adventures Of Sherlock Holmes’ Novel By Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

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***Abstrak-** Setiap bahasa memiliki arti harafiah dan kiasan. Makna harafiah adalah acuan langsung kata atau kalimat kepada objek, sedangkan makna kiasan digunakan untuk memberikan gambaran imajinatif atau efek khusus, seperti halnya idiom. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis ekspresi idiom yang terdapat dalam cerita *The Red-headed League* dalam novel *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* karya Sir Arthur Conan Doyle dan termasuk dalam kategori ekspresi idiom tersebut. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif untuk menganalisis ekspresi idiom dan mengkategorikan ekspresi idiom yang ditemukan dalam novel. Analisis ekspresi idiom dilakukan dengan menggunakan teori O’Dell dan McCarthy (2010:22), sedangkan kategorisasi ekspresi idiom dilakukan dengan menggunakan teori Loreto (1987:86) dan Makkai (1972:117). Dari analisis tersebut, dua puluh enam ekspresi idiom ditemukan dalam cerita. Sembilan belas di antaranya dikategorikan menggunakan teori Loreto, sedangkan tujuh ungkapan idiom lainnya dikategorikan menggunakan teori Makkai.*

Kata kunci: ungkapan idiom, novel, Sherlock Holmes

***Abstract-** Every language has literal and figurative meanings. Literal meaning is the direct reference of words or sentences to objects, while figurative meaning is used for giving an imaginative description or a special effect, just like idioms. This research aims at analyzing idiom expressions found in the story of *The Red-headed League* in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* novel by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and in which categories the idiom expressions belong to. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative to analyze the idiom expressions and to categorize idiom expressions found in the novel. The analysis of idiom expressions is carried out using theory of O’Dell and McCarthy (2010:22), while the categorization of the idiom expression is carried out using theory of Loreto (1987:86) and Makkai (1972:117). From the analysis, twenty six idiom expressions are found in the story. Nineteen of them are categorized using theory of Loreto, while the other seven idiom expressions are categorized using theory of Makkai.*

Keywords: idiom expression, novel, Sherlock Holmes

1. INTRODUCTION

Language has an important role in everyone’s life. As a tool of communication, language helps people to communicate and interacts one to another. Language is needed to create a conversation especially to establish a good relationship. It would be a chaos of misunderstanding if one does not understand what the other one(s) talk about.

Words, phrases, and sentences generally have senses, which is part of their meaning. Some meaningful expressions have sense but no reference, while others, such as proper nouns, often have reference but no sense. Language also contains many phrases whose meanings are not predictable on the basis of the meanings of the individual words.

Every language has literal and figurative meanings. While the literal meaning is the direct reference of words or sentences to objects, the figurative meaning is used for giving an imaginative description or a special effect. Therefore, the meaning of individual words in an expression has nothing to do in the comprehension of the whole meaning, like metaphors, similes, proverbs, and idioms. Among them, idioms have a great extent use in everyday language, and the considered as one of the most frequently used means of non-literal language or figurative language.

Many idioms may have originated from metaphorical expressions that established themselves in the language and become frozen in their form and meaning. In English, idiom expression is very essential of the language. Native English speakers grow up hearing and speaking idioms every day. The meaning of an expression is not always obvious, even to a native speaker of the language. Meanings may be obscured in many ways, or at least may require some imaginations

or special knowledge to be apprehended.

Idioms are not only used by the native English speakers in their daily conversation, but also found in written literary work forms such as novel. Reading the story of a novel which contains idiom expressions, especially the detective novel, is quite interesting and challenging. In some other novels that the writer has read, the story *The Red-headed League* in novel *The adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, not only it has interesting story but also rich of idiom expressions in it. Most of the expressions used are coming from the combination of two words. From those reasons, the writer chose idiom expressions as her final assignment.

2. METHOD

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. Qualitative research is descriptive which the data is collected in the form of words or pictures, rather than numbers (Bogdan and Bilken, 1982). And the result of the analysis is presented descriptively.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Idiom Expressions

Based on the theory of idiom from O'Dell and McCarthy (2010:6), there are several words in the story whose meanings are not their literal meanings, which are then classified as idioms. Those words are:

1. I had **called upon** my friend, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, one day in the autumn of last year and found him in deep conversation with a very stout, florid-faced, elderly gentleman with fiery red hair. (page 26)

Called upon, if we take word by word literal meaning, they will not make sense with the context of the story, since 'call' usually used when we make a conversation over the phone, but since the situation is when he (Watson) visiting his friend, Sherlock. Thus, **called upon** is an idiom means visit (someone).

2. "I was afraid that you were engaged."

"So I am. Very much so."

"Then I can wait in the next room."

Not at all. This gentleman, Mr. Wilson, has been my partner and helper in many of my most successful cases, and I have no doubt that he will be of the utmost use to me in yours also." (page 26)

Not at all usually used to politely accept thanks or to agree to something, but in this context, **not at all** means "you don't have to" or disagreement, which Holmes means that he does not mind if Watson to stay in the room. Then, **not at all** is an idiom expression used by Holmes to decline Watson's permission for not wanting to interrupt the conversation between Holmes and his guest.

3. "A proposition which I took the liberty of doubting."

"You did, Doctor, but none the less you must **come round** to my view, for otherwise I shall **keep on** piling fact upon fact on you until your reason **breaks down** under them and acknowledges me to be right.... As a rule, when I have heard some slight indication of the course of events, I am

able to guide myself by the thousands of other similar cases which occur to my memory. In the present instance I am forced to admit that the facts are, **to the best of my belief**, unique." (page 27)

From this single conversation, the writer found that there are four idioms used by Sherlock Holmes. The first one is **come around**. **Come around** from the context does not have literal meaning as to arrive or to appear, but it is an idiom used by Holmes to change Watson's mind to agree or appreciate what he was reluctant to accept at first.

The second and the third ones are **keep on** and **breaks down**. Literally meaning, keep means to hold or to take care (something) and break means to crack or to separate something into pieces. But those will not fit with the meaning purpose of the context. Holmes uses **keep on** as an idiom to show his persistency to pile facts that will make disappear or destroy (**break down**) Watson's reason for doubting Holmes. The fourth one is **to the best of my belief**. It is an idiom expression that we used when we think our statement is true because it is based on what we know or believe, but not completely sure.

4. "How did you know, for example, that I did manual labour? It's **as true as gospel**, for I began as a ship's carpenter." (page 28)

The writer recognize **as true as gospel** as an idiom expression. It is an expression used by Mr. Wilson, who was amazed by Holmes' deduction ability, to show confirmation that is undeniably true. He uses 'gospel' as the comparison to emphasize the degree of the truth since gospel refers to one of the first four books of the new testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in Christianity.

5. "Well, the snuff, then, and the Freemasonry?"

"I won't insult your intelligence by telling you how I read that, especially as, rather against the strict rules of your order, you use an arc-and-compass breastpin."

"Ah, **of course**, I forgot that. But the writing?" (page 28)

Of course means yes or certainly or for sure. Mr. Wilson uses **of course** instead a simple answer "yes" to indicates enthusiastic agreement or acknowledgement. Thus, **of course** is an idiom expression.

6. "The fish that you have tattooed immediately above your right wrist could only have been done in China. I have made a small study of tattoo marks and have even contributed to the literature of the subject. That trick of staining the fishes' scales of a delicate pink is quite peculiar to China. When, in addition, I see a Chinese coin hanging from your watch-chain, the matter becomes even more simple."

Mr. Jabez Wilson laughed heavily. "Well, I never!" said he. "I thought **at first** that you had done something clever, but I see that there was nothing in it, **after all**." (page 29)

There are two idioms from the dialogue above. **At first** means initially or before and **After all** means despite what has been said or expected (It is usually used when we are explaining something, or giving a reason). In the story, Mr. Wilson does not expect that Holmes could tell about tattoo marks he had from china. Because before (**at first**), Mr. Wilson thought that Holmes doing something more amazing than just observing his appearance, that is why he demeaning Holmes ability as a detective by saying 'after all' in the end.

7. Holmes chuckled and wriggled in his chair, as was his habit when in high spirits."It is a little **off the beaten track**, isn't it?" (page 30)

Off the beaten track has idiom meaning as in a place or places not commonly visited or not many people go there. But that will not fit the context meaning since there is no one going into someplace or someplace, therefore, in this story **off the beaten track** means uncommon, unusual and could not be understood refers to the strangeness of the story that Mr. Wilson tells Holmes and Watson.

8. "He is still with you, I presume?"

"Yes, sir. He and a girl of fourteen, who does a bit of simple cooking and keeps the place clean -- that's all I have in the house, for I am a widower and never had any family. We live very quietly, sir, the three of us; and we keep **a roof over our heads** and pay our debts, if we do nothing more." (page 30)

A roof over our head is an idiom means somewhere to live (a home). Eventhough it could literally meaning a roof above someone's head (unnecessarily has a door, a window, even a room) but this idiom expression used to emphasize how much it means a home for Mr. Wilson.

9. " I wish to the Lord, Mr. Wilson, that I was a red-headed man.'

" 'Why that?' I asks.

" 'Why,' says he, 'here's another vacancy on the League of the Red-headed Men. It's worth quite a little fortune to any man who gets it, and I understand that there are more vacancies than there are men, so that the trustees are **at their wits' end** what to do with the money....' " (page 31)

At their wits' end is an idiom expression. It means to be very worried or upset because when we have tried every possible way to solve a problem but still cannot do it. In this story, the idiom used to express that the trustees running out of ideas or ways to spend the money. So, it does not have anything to do with someone's wit or intellectual ability.

10. " 'And what are they worth?' I asked.

" 'Oh, merely a couple of hundred a year, but the work is slight, and it need not interfere very much with one's other occupations.'

"Well, you can easily think that that made me **prick up my ears**, for the business has not been over-good for some years, and an extra couple of hundred would have been very handy." (page 31)

Literally meaning, **prick up my ears** could be mean to make a very small hole with something sharp, which is not suitable with the context of the story. Thus, **Prick up my ears** or **prick up one's ears** is an idiom expression means start listening carefully. It is expression when people become attentive or to listen carefully, especially after hearing something interesting. This idiom originated from animals' habitual when they are in alert of danger or serious situation.

11. " 'But,' said I, 'there would be millions of red-headed men who would apply.'

" 'Not so many as you might think,' he answered. 'You see it is really confined to Londoners, and to grown men. This American had started from London when he was young, and he wanted to do the old town **a good turn**. Then, again, I have heard it is no use your applying if your hair is light red, or dark red, or anything but real bright, blazing, fiery red. Now, if you cared to apply, Mr. Wilson, you would just **walk in**; but perhaps it would hardly be worth your while to **put yourself out** of the way for the sake of a few hundred pounds.' " (page 32)

There are three idioms found from the dialogue above. The first idiom is **a good turn**. Literally meaning, turn means to change one's direction or to change the course of something, but, it will not fit with the context meaning. Therefore, **a good turn** is an idiom means a good deed or an act of good will. This idiom expression used when someone is in a favor and he or she want to do something good in return.

The second one is **walk in**. Walk has literal meaning as to move or go somewhere by putting one foot in front of the other on the ground but without running, but from the context of the story **walk in** has idiom meaning as to enter someplace on foot. It expresses of Mr. Wilson's shop assistant suggestion for him to come to London and try to apply for the job.

The third one is **put yourself out**. It is also an idiom expression means to inconvenience oneself. This idiom expression used when someone does something inconvenient with much effort, in this case, for Mr. Wilson take another job with small payment.

12. " 'In the case of another,' said he, 'the objection might be fatal, but we must **stretch a point** in favour of a man with such a head of hair as yours. When shall you be able to **enter upon** your new duties?'

" 'Well, it is a little awkward, for I have a business already,' said I. (page 34)

Literally meaning, **stretch a point** means to make a point longer, wider, and looser. It will not suit with the context meaning of the story. Thus, **stretch a point** is an idiom expression means to give a leeway or an exception for Mr. Wilson. And **Enter upon** also an idiom. From the story, it is not literally meaning to enter someplace but has idiom meaning as to start or to begin which refers to Mr. Wilson to start his new job.

13. I tried to puzzle it out, but **gave it up** in despair and set the matter aside until night should bring an explanation. (page 43)

Gave (past form of give) has literal meaning as to hand something to somebody. But that monologue is done by Watson alone. According to the story, Watson express his confusion of the problem left by Holmes. No matter what he thinks, he could not understand it and wants to stop solving the problem. Therefore, Watson use an idiom expression of **gave it up** which means to stop or quit trying on something.

14. "I hope **a wild goose** may not prove to be the end of our **chase**," observed Mr. Merryweather gloomily.

"You may place considerable confidence in Mr. Holmes, sir," said the police agent loftily. (page 43)

A wild goose chase contains four words: a, wild, goose, and chase which if we take word to word literal meaning (chasing a wild goose), they will not make sense to the context of the story. Therefore, **a wild goose chase** is an idiom expression. It has figuratively meaning of a worthless hunt or chase. This idiom expression is used when people doing a futile attempt on doing something which will probably prove to be fruitless.

15. "...His brain is **as cunning as his fingers**, and though we meet signs of him at every turn, we never know where to find the man himself. He'll **crack a crib** in Scotland one week, and be raising money to build an orphanage in Cornwall the next..." (page 44)

There are two idioms found in the part of long dialogue above, **as cunning as his finger** and **crack a crib**. Literally meaning, finger is not cunning (clever or skillful) since fingers are part of body which can not think on its own, the brain does the thinking. Thus, **as cunning as his fingers** is an idiom expression to express how clever his (John Clay the criminal) brain just like how skillful he uses his fingers.

Crib has literal meaning of a bed for a child older than a baby. But **crack a crib** from the context does not have the meaning to break a child's bed. It refers to a crime act as in to break or to unload a safe or a bank vault. Therefore, **crack a crib** is an idiom expression.

16. "This fellow Merryweather is a bank director, and personally interested in the matter. .. He is **as brave as a bulldog** and **as tenacious as a lobster** if he gets his claws upon anyone. Here we are, and they are waiting for us." (page 44)

As brave as a bulldog and **as tenacious as a lobster** are idiom expressions used by Holmes to describe Mr. Merryweather the bank director. **As brave as a bulldog** used to express the bravery of Mr. Merryweather has, compared with the bulldog, the canine animals. And **as tenacious as a lobster** used to express the determination on something that Mr. Merryweather has, with the comparison of a lobster, a sea animal, which known for its habit of once it holds on something in it's claws, it will never let go.

17. "But how could you guess what the motive was?"

"Had there been women in the house, I should have suspected a mere vulgar intrigue. That, however, was **out of the question...** "

Out of the question from the dialogue above does not have the literal meaning of away from the question. But it is an idiomatic expression of impossibility. From the story Holmes explains to Watson that the motive could not be romantic problem since there is no women in the house, so it is impossible if it is about that kind of problem.

3.2. Idiom Categorization

Todd Loreto categorized idioms in grammatical ways. There are six categories of idioms:

a. Alliterative Comparisons

Alliteration is the repetition of usually initial consonant sounds in two or more neighboring words or syllables . This idiom comes in comparison. From the twenty seven datas above, there is only one idiom categorized in alliterative comparisons idioms. It is **as brave as a bulldog**. It is called alliterative because brave and bulldog both start with letter 'b'.

b. Noun Phrases

A noun phrase includes a noun like a person, place, or thing, and the modifiers which distinguish it. There are three idiom expressions of noun phrases found from the novel:

1. **A roof over our heads** is a noun phrase since 'roof' is a noun modified with an article 'a', 'head' also a noun modified with the preposition 'over' and a possessive pronouns 'our'.
2. **A wild goose chase** is a noun phrase since 'wild', 'goose', and 'chase' are nouns modified with an article.
3. **A good turn** is a noun phrase with article 'a' in front of the noun 'turn'.

c. Preposition Phrases

A prepositional phrase is made up of a preposition and a noun or a noun phrase . There are seven preposition phrase idiom expressions found from the novel. They are: **to the best of my belief, of course, at first, after all, off the beaten track, at their wits' end, and out of the question**. All of them start with prepositions followed by a noun or a noun phrase.

d. Verb + Noun Phrases

The verb + noun phrases idioms is idiom consists with verb combine with noun phrases. There are four verb + noun phrase idioms in this category. **Prick up my ears, put yourself out, stretch a point, and crack a crib** are all verbs modified by a noun phrase.

e. Verb + Preposition Phrase

This idiom consists of verb combine with preposition phrases. But the writer did not find any verb + preposition phrase idiom in the novel.

f. Verb + Adverb

This kind of idiomatic expression is a combination of verb + adverb. **Called upon, come around, breaks down, and enter upon** are the verb + adverb found from the novel.

The rest of the idiom expressions which cannot be included in the category by Todd Loreto are: not at all, as true as gospel, gave it up, as cunning as his finger, keep

on, walk in, as tenacious as a lobster. These idiom expressions will be categorized based on theories of Adam Makkai.

a. Class L/1: Phrasal verb idioms in lexemic idiom by Adam Makkai

Phrasal verbs are compound verbs, more than one word, that result from combining a verb with an adverb or a preposition. **Keep on** and **walk in**, fits in this class since 'keep' and 'walk' are verbs followed by prepositions 'on' and 'in'.

b. Class L/2: Tournure idioms in lexemic idiom by Adam Makkai

A tournure is a lexemic idiom consisting of at least three lexons and optionally containing the definite article *the* or the indefinite article *a*. Certain tournure idioms contain a compulsory required *it*. **gave it up** fits in this class since it consists of 3 lexons and contains a compulsory required 'it'.

c. Similes by Felicity O'Dell and McCarthy

Similes are expressions which compare two things. They always include the word *as* or *like*. Then the idiom expressions like: **As true as gospel, as cunning as his finger, and as tenacious as a lobster** are fits in this category since all of them are idiom comparisons.

d. Euphemisms by Felicity O'Dell and McCarthy

Euphemisms are kind of idioms used to avoid saying words which may offend or be considered unpleasant. **Not at all** fits in this category since it is usually used to politely accept thanks or to agree to something, and in this story, it shows a disagreement.

4. CONCLUSION

Language has literal and figurative meanings. Literal meaning is the direct reference of words or sentences to objects, while figurative sense is used for giving an imaginative description or a special effect. Such a meaning characterizes notions like metaphors, similes, proverbs and idioms. Among these, idioms have a great extent use in everyday language, and they are considered as one of the most frequently used means of non-literal language. Idioms have figuratively meaning which is difficult to guess from the meaning of each individual word in the idioms.

In the analysis, twenty six data of idiom expressions are found in 'The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes' novel, they are: called upon, not at all, come around, keep on, breaks down, to the best of my belief, as true as gospel, of course, at first, after all, off the beaten track, a roof over our heads, at their wits' end, prick up my ears, a good turn, walk in, put yourself out, stretch a point, enter upon, gave it up, a wild goose chase, as cunning as his fingers, crack a crib, as brave as a bulldog, as tenacious as a lobster, and out of the question.

Further analysis figures out that out of the twenty six idiom expressions found in the novel, nineteen of them can be categorized using Loreto's theory. There are seven idioms expressions belong to preposition phrase category, four idioms expressions belong to verb + noun phrase category and verb + adverb phrase category, three idiom expressions belong to noun phrase category and one idiom expression belong to alliterative comparison category. But there is no idiom expression that belongs to verb + preposition category.

The analysis also figures out that the other seven idiom expressions can be categorized using Makkai's theory. There are three idiom expressions belong to simile category, two idioms belong to phrasal verb idiom category, one idiom expression belongs to tournure idiom category and one idiom expression belongs to euphemisms category.

Further research on idioms with the same theory but with different research objects, or with different theories and different research objects, is highly recommended. That's because the results of these studies can add to the repertoire of knowledge and provide more examples of idioms in literary works.

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