

IDIOMS AND THEIR MEANINGS IN THE BEATLES SONGS' LYRICS

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ABSTRACT

The study entitled "Idioms and their meanings in The Beatles songs' lyrics" focused on 2 aspects: (1) the types of idiom occurred in the song lyrics, and (2) how meanings of idioms convey the theme of the songs.

The primary data was taken from the song's lyrics on Famous song of the Beatles, written by John Lennon and Paul McCartney as data source. The data was collected by using documentation method by applying note taking technique. Thus, the data were also checked with source which provides the information and list of English idioms.

In the analysis, the types of idioms were presented first. The main theories used in the analysis of the data consist of the types of idioms proposed by Palmer (1976). The analysis of meaning comes afterward in order to categorized the types of meaning of idioms occurred in data source. The theory of meaning comes from Leech (1974).

Based on the result of analysis it was found that the three idioms are found in the song. The meaning of idiom had a strong relation with the meaning of the song, as the consequences the meaning of idiom should be analyze of first to find the theme and the message of the song. Discover the types of idioms. They are phrasal verbs, prepositional verb, and partial idiom. Obtain also meaning each idiom of songs. Each song has different meaning.

Key word: Types of idiom, meaning, types of meaning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is known as a means of communication which is used for communicating each other. People can also express their feeling through language. There are plenty of ways to express the feelings through language such as by writing novels or poetries, or, moreover people can compose a song. As a means of expressing feelings, a song seems interesting to be analyzed since it is a unique way to express one's feeling and it provides various combination of vocabulary and a unique set of wordings which has its own function. The language of the song is built in such a specific way; therefore, it becomes different from ordinary language. It is interesting and usually written in beautiful and nice words to attract listeners and hold their attention.

Song is one of the best forms of entertainment to be enjoyed, it is full of melodious music, in which at the same time, present new world while the listeners enjoy the day. At this stage, the listeners will have two advantages such as having a pleasure and obtaining significant information whether about the situation of world or about love feelings that are experienced by the composer or rather by the figure or the personal in the song. Moreover, the listeners can obtain the knowledge through interpreting the words in song lyrics while they have more time to listen and explore the deepest meaning of the song. There are plenty of variations in language which can be found in the song, such as the figurative language, etc, including idioms.

Many people are often confused when they are listening to a song in English expression; there are some expressions whose meanings are uneasy to be interpreted. Even though they understand every single word, but they still grasp what the sentence essentially means. Those expressions could be idioms. Idioms are expressions of at least two words which are not understandable literarily and which function as a unit semantically. (Larson: 1984) it means something different from the meaning of the separate words that has made them up. In general, idioms can be classified into phrasal verbs, prepositional phrases, and partial idioms. Like example in The Beatles song Lyric from Across the Universe song, “they **slip away** across the universe”.

Being interested in studying idioms particularly the idioms that can be found in the song lyrics, this study analyzes the idioms used particularly in the song lyrics taken from The Beatles’s which were composed by John Lennon, Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, and George Harrison. The analyzed songs will be taken from their popular songs. The Beatles is a British Rock Band from Liverpool, England. The members were John Lennon (as the lead vocal, who also handled guitar, rhythm, harmony vocal, acoustic guitar, and organ), Paul McCartney (as the lead vocal, harmony vocal, and backing vocal, who also handled bass guitar, piano,), Ringo Star (who handled drums, tambourine, castanets), George Harrison (as the backing vocal, who also handled tambourine, sitar, lead guitar, acoustic guitar).

2. PROBLEM OF STUDY

In analyzing the song lyrics there are some problem that can be formulated related to the use of idioms in the song lyrics of The Beatles which are follows:

1. What types of idioms applied in the Beatles song lyrics?

3. AIM OF STUDY

The aim of this study, based on the above problem, is:

1. To classify the types of idioms in the song lyrics of the Beatles.

4. RESEARCH METHODE

Research method is an important step and procedure when a scientific research is conducted. Research method is the way or procedure of understanding the objects that will become the target of the subject. Methodology is a system or procedure that is used in order to examine certain objects. It is the way or process and amount of procedures of how a researcher approaches the problems to find the answer by finding, collecting, and analyzing the data. The researches, which consist of obtaining a group of data, will determine the research method. The method is divided into three points, they are:

1. Data source

Data source is the source from which the data are taken. This study applies data taken from the song lyrics, in this case, The Beatles's songs. There are several songs used to meet the requirements of the study.

The Beatles's songs are chosen for this paper due to The Beatles is one of the most popular bands in the world. However, there will only be four songs analyzed that contain idioms. Those songs are *I'm The Walrus*, *Across the Universe*, *While The Guitar Gently Weeps*, *Hard Day's Night*.

Those songs will be taken and used as the primary data collection, and analysis will be as the object of the study. The reasons for choosing those songs are due to they are such nice songs and contain many idioms to be analyzed.

2. Method and Technique of collecting Data

In composing this study, the methods applied in collecting the data have observation method and documentation method. The steps to collect data are as follows:

1. Downloading the lyrics from the internet, in order to obtain accurate lyrics of the songs. There are several sites in internet which provide song lyrics such as <http://www.sing365.com> , <http://www.A-Zlyrics.com>, etc. However, sometimes the lyrics might not be the correct ones, therefore, The Beatles's official site, <http://www.thebeatles.com> will be chosen as the source of the lyrics.
2. Then, the lyric will be read carefully, repeatedly and intensively in order to understand and find the major theme of each song and to understand the meaning or message behind each song.
3. The next step is to take notes of the words or phrases which are considered as idioms, then cite them on different papers to be analyzed later.

3. Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

The data have analyzed qualitatively based on the theory and also based on checking the existence on several sources such as other reference books and websites. The steps are as follows:

The collected data will be checked including the sources which provide the information and list of the English idioms. The sources are a dictionary entitled *Kamus Idiom Edisi Lengkap* by Tim Primapena (2004) and *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 7th Edition* (Oxford University Press 2005).

The idioms are categorized by their types. The type of idioms is determined based on the theory of idioms proposed (1976).

The analyses of English idioms found also include the analysis of the meaning. The meaning was found in a books mentioned above. The types of meaning also categorized based on the theory proposed by Leech (1974) as the main theory proposed by Nida and Taber (1982) as the supporting theory. The message of the song was discovered based on the meaning of idiom.

5. ANALYSIS OF IDIOMS IN THE BEATLES SONGS LYRICS

Phrasal Verb

Phrasal verb is a very common type of idiom in English. What is usually called the phrasal verb is the combination of the combination of the verbs and adverbs (Plamer, 1976:9). The meaning of these combinations cannot be predicted from the individual verbs and adverbs.

From the selected The Beatles songs analyzed, founds phrasal verbs:

1. "I break down....." (Lennon, McCartney, 1969) "

Since of the special features of some idioms, we have to learn the idioms as the whole and we often cannot change any part of it, except, perhaps, only the tenses of the verb (Seidl and McMordie 1980)

The idiom I *break down* consist of two words formed by a verb (*break*) followed by an adverb (*down*).

- 2." Don't **let me down**, please, don't let me down...." (Lennon, McCartney, 1969)

Phrasal verb can either be transitive verbs, i.e. with a direct object or intransitive verb, i.e. without a direct object (Seidl and McMordie, 1980:115). In some transitive phrases, the verbs are separable which means the verb can be separated from the adverb by a direct object. The direct object which either a noun or pronoun can be inserted between them, e.g. *Please send them in*-the phrasal verb *send in* separated by a pronoun *them*. Unlike transitive phrases, the intransitive phrases cannot take a direct object or the verb can never be separated from the adverb, e.g. *the*

project has **fallen behind** *the schedule*-the word *fallen behind* cannot be separated or inserted by an object. To know exactly where the direct object and adverb or prepositional stand, it is indicated by the use of *someone* or *something* to stand for the object in its proper place, e.g.

See something through, see trough something (Seild and McMordie, 1980:115).

The expression don't *let me down* is considered as a transitive phrase the verb (*let*) and the adverb (*down*) separated by direct object *me*(someone).

Prepositional Verb

Based on Palmer (1976:99), prepositional verb is the sequence of verb and preposition or verb, adverb and preposition. It can be seen in the examples given such as *look after*, *go for*, *put up with* and *do away with*.

19. "Your mama's **waiting for** you..." (Lennon, McCartney, 1970)

The Expressions *waiting for* belongs to prepositional verb since it is a sequence of verbs plus preposition.

Partial Idiom

Another type of idioms exists in what is called partial idiom. It is where one of the words has its usual meaning and the other has a meaning that is peculiar to particular sequence (Palmer, 1976:99). A number of idioms of this type were found in the song lyrics used as the data source:

21."He **blew his mind out in a car**..." (Lennon, McCartney, 1967)

The expression *He blew his mind out in a car* is concerned with occurrence of *blew his mind out* which has the meaning peculiar to particular sequence *in car* in its usual meaning.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, the conclusion can be formulated as follows:

In views of the types of idioms, the three types of idioms consisting phrasal verb, prepositional verb, and partial idiom were found in the song lyrics and collected as the data source in the study.

Phrasal verb can be classified onto transitive phrasal and intransitive phrasal. The analysis explains that intransitive phrasal which was most collected in the song lyrics written by The Beatles. It seems that the song writers preferred to elaborate phrases without taking a direct object or applying the verbs that are not separated from the adverb, such as “It took me so..... Long to *find out* and I found out.....” and “Dear Prudence, won't you *come out* to play.....” Secondly, phrases using partial idiom is mostly applied in the collected The Beatle’s song lyrics, where one of the words has its usual meanings while the other has a meaning that is intended to a particular sequence. For instance in the sentence “Now I find *I've changed my mind...*”, “Now I find” has a partial meaning that is still as incomplete idiom after it is followed by the phrase of “I’ve changed my mind” that provides a meaning to a specific condition.

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