

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter discusses some issues related to the difference between formal and informal English language and some previous studies. The issues cover English idioms, speaking and daily English idioms.

#### **A. Theoretical Foundation**

##### **1. Speaking**

Speaking is a way to communicate, or show opinions, feelings, ideas, etc, by or as talking and it involves the activities in the part of the speaker as psychological, physiological (articulator) and physical (acoustic) stages<sup>4</sup>. It is also the most important skill in order to interact with each other. Speaking skill is about how to say something or produce a language orally that has meaning and makes the hearer can understand about the speaker's say. By speaking with other, people are able to know what kinds of situation are in the world. People know that language is habit. Language is not only taught and learnt but it is used as habit. So, people must be able to speak English well because other people identify the English mastery with their English well. The writer draws conclusion that people who have ability in speaking will be better in receiving information.

---

<sup>4</sup> Oxford Advanced Dictionary, p.1140

Speaking is one of the language skills that learners should master. Speaking is the most important one because the goal of using a language is to communicate. Language is used in the society and speaking is crucial<sup>5</sup>. Speaking is produced, oral skill. Speaking consists of producing systematic verbal, utterances to convey meaning. It is able to be the alternative process of construction meaning that involves the producing and receiving processing information.

Everybody has learned their language since they were children, especially their mother tongue. The process occurs naturally and properly with a view to communicate in society. Speaking English is difficult to do. Talent and much motivation and desire are required to have a good ability in speaking English<sup>6</sup>. So, the people who want to have a good skill in speaking English, they have to practice to speak English on and on, in order they can speak English fluently.

Speaking is an activity to produce utterances in oral communication<sup>7</sup>. So here, speaking ability is important in language learning because we communicate with other people through our oral expression to gain much more information. It means that the activity is involving two or more people in which the participants are both hearers and speakers, both of them must

---

<sup>5</sup> Kathleen M Bailey, *Practice English Language Teaching: Speaking*, p.2

<sup>6</sup> Donald C. Bryant and Karl R. Wallace, *Fundamentals of public speaking*, p.12

<sup>7</sup> Keith Johnson and Morrow, *Communicative in Classroom Application and Method for Communicative Approach*, p.70

react and respond to each other so each participants has an intention or a set of intension that he wants.

Actually there are some advantages for the people who have a good ability in English especially fluency in speaking English. The first, they can communicate with the people from different country around the world, because English has become a common language in the universe, any people in the world use English as a tool of communication, for example: when we go to Japan and we do not have a good ability in speaking Japanese so we can use English to communicate with them although they have their own language. The second advantage is for getting information from the internet, because some information of the internet is in English. The importance of the internet grows rapidly in all fields of human life, including not only education but also marketing and trade as well as entertainment and hobbies. This imply that it becomes really important to know how to use internet service, as part of that is to read and to write in English, so that is why, we need English both written and spoken English. The third is about getting higher position in our job. English has significant position in getting job, because many common jobs depend on some level of English ability. When the workers have a good skill in English they may have a good position than the workers who have not ability in English.

## 2. English Idioms

Informal language (or colloquial language) is the language of private conversation, of personal letter, etc. It is the first form of language that a native speaking child becomes familiar with. Because it is generally easier to understand than formal English, it is often used nowadays in public communication of popular kinds; for example, advertisements or popular newspapers mainly employ colloquial or informal style<sup>8</sup>. The terms slang, idiom, register, jargon arise when we talk about informal language but idiom is the most words, phrase or sentence which mostly occur in conversation because it has general meaning for all places.

Idiom is a phrase whose meaning is different from the meanings of the individual words. Most experts have drawn a fundamental distinction between literal and figurative language and have assumed that idioms and their figurative meanings must be stored separately in the mental lexicon, and that this meaning must be learnt as a whole unit<sup>9</sup>. Compounds whose meanings are not determined compositionally by the meanings of their components and their grammatical structure are called idioms.

Speakers use idiom, on this account, as though they were words or phrases that have become frozen into a single form with a special meaning. Somewhere in the mind these expressions are stored as exceptions, much as

---

<sup>8</sup> Leech, Geoffrey and Svartvik, Jan.A, *Communicative Grammar of English*, p.67

<sup>9</sup> Wood, M.M, *A definition of idiom*.

they might be listed at the end of a dictionary<sup>10</sup>. Listeners firstly try to make a literal interpretation of an utterance. The literal meaning can be constructed compositionally, that is, it can be composed from the meanings of its parts according to the syntactic relations amongst them. Words have meanings; each syntactic rule in the grammar has a corresponding semantic principle.

It is important to notice the fact that the concepts encoded by the idiom provide access to a set of assumptions which, when added to the context, may contribute to the derivation of the intended interpretation does not imply that hearers always access this information when processing an idiom. Aiming to arrive at the intended effects by expending as little processing effort as possible, the hearer often arrives at the appropriate interpretation of the idiom before processing the encoded concepts to any depth<sup>11</sup>. At some point during processing, the concept encoded by the idiom is also retrieved from memory and some of the information gives access to add to the context in order to the accessibility to derive the intended set of implications. The process of meaning construction continues often broadening the encoded concepts and narrowing the concept encoded by the idiom to the point where the resulting conceptual representation satisfies the hearer's expectations of relevance.

The term 'idiom' is usually applied to multi-word phrases, although theoretically words consisting of more than one morpheme can exhibit similar

---

<sup>10</sup>Cristina Cacciari and Patrizia Tabossi, *Idioms: processing, structure, and interpretation*. P.9-11

<sup>11</sup>Gibbs, Raymond W, *Semantic analyzability in children's understanding of idioms*.

properties. Prototypical idioms have two principal characteristics<sup>12</sup>: they are non-compositional, and they are syntactically frozen. Idioms are non-compositional in the sense that their global meanings cannot be predicted on the basis of any stable readings that their constituents may have in other contexts. A standard (extreme) example is *to pull someone's leg*. It is not possible to construct the meaning of this expression on the basis of standard readings of pull and leg. The expression *to pull someone's leg* is also syntactically frozen. For instance, the element leg is ostensibly a noun, but it cannot be modified in the usual way by adjectives, nor can it be pluralized, while retaining the idiomatic meaning: *Pete pulled Bill's left leg/injured leg, Pete pulled Bill's legs*.

Gibbs gives further explanation that idioms usually have the following characteristics<sup>13</sup>:

- a. Most idioms have only a non literal or metaphorical meaning; i.e., one cannot often discover their meanings by looking up the individual words in an ordinary dictionary. E.g., *the thieves took everything, so I was left really up a gum tree* (= in a difficult situation). However, some idioms have both a literal and a non literal meaning; e.g., *he spilled the beans can mean* (a) literally: 'he

---

<sup>12</sup> Cruse, Alan, *A Glossary of Semantics and Pragmatics*. Page 82-84

<sup>13</sup> Gibbs, Raymond W, *The Poetics of Mind*, p.267

*allowed the beans to get out of a container and fall on the floor or other surface*; (b) non literally: ‘he revealed a secret’.

- b. Most idioms are more or less invariable or fixed both in wording and in certain grammatical ways. That is to say, they function like lexical units or wholes. According to Gibbs the reasons are<sup>14</sup>:
- 1) We cannot often make substitutions of synonymous words into idioms without loss of their idiomaticity or metaphorical meaning. E.g., in the idiom *John gave up the ghost* (John died), we cannot replace ghost by apparition and say *John gave up the apparition*; it no longer means ‘to die’.
  - 2) We cannot often introduce modifiers (e.g., adjectives and adverbs) into idioms. E.g., in the idiom *he let the cat out of the sack* (he revealed a secret), we cannot say *he let the black cat out of the sack*; it is no longer considered an idiom.
  - 3) They cannot often be used in the passive. E.g., *Mrs. Jones gave up the ghost* cannot be transformed into the *ghost was given up by Mrs. Jones*; it is no longer an idiom.
  - 4) Some idioms have slightly variant forms. E.g., *we can say until kingdom com or till kingdom come* (for a very long time in vain) as in *you can protest till kingdom come*; however, no one will pay attention to you. Similarly, *you can say up to the/one’s*

---

<sup>14</sup> Gibbs, Raymond W, *The Poetics of Mind*, P.272

*ears/eyes/neck/eyeballs* (wholly concerned with something, esp. something troubling, work, business, or debt) as in the secretary is up to her ears (in) addressing and stamping letters. Another example is *to be in someone's good/bad books* (to be in favor/disfavor with someone).

5) Most idioms are entered in dictionaries or the lexicon as single items of vocabulary.

c. Most idioms belong to informal spoken or written language; therefore, they are generally avoided in formal speech or writing.

### **3. The relation between the linguistic form of an idiom and its meaning**

The meanings of words are arbitrarily stipulated in memory. The meanings of phrases and sentences, however, are derived compositionally from the meanings of their individual words and their syntactic structure. Since the meanings of idioms cannot be derived compositionally by the morpho-syntactic rules of a language the standard belief is that they too must be arbitrarily stipulated in memory<sup>15</sup>. That is, although originally metaphorical, the linguistic forms of idioms are said to bear now no relation with their meanings.

For most idioms, we can establish some relations between their meaning and their form. In fact, the meanings of an idiom's elements often play a role

---

<sup>15</sup> Chomsky, Noam, *Rules and Representations*, p.61

in the way we use and understand idiom strings in conversation<sup>16</sup>. Idioms vary regarding the extent to which the meanings of their individual constituents contribute to the overall figurative interpretation.

#### 4. Daily English Idiom

In general, the idioms which are mostly is used by teenagers are pair of words idioms, number idioms, animal idioms, color and name idioms, etc<sup>17</sup>. These categories refer to the words that construct the idioms. The term daily English idiom means the idiom words that are mostly is used in daily conversation in this case which are is used by teenagers or students in the classroom. Idioms are usually presumed to be figures of speech contradicting the principle of compositionality which states that the meaning of a complex expression is determined by the meanings of its constituent expressions.

#### B. Previous Studies

In this part, the researcher explains the previous studies that have been completed by the previous researchers which have familiar subject.

Bybee mentioned in his research that Idioms such as *back to square one*, *play with fire*, *pull someone's leg*, *steal the show* or *with flying colors* are expressions that abound in English and are easily produced and understood by students<sup>18</sup>. Traditionally, idioms are described as fixed expressions, i.e., as

---

<sup>16</sup> Gibbs, Raymond W, *Spilling the beans on understanding and memory for idioms in conversation*.

<sup>17</sup> Anand Kumar M, Dhanalakshmi, Soman K P and Rajendran S, *Morphology based Factored Statistical Machine Translation System for English to Tamil*, p.37

<sup>18</sup> Bybee, J.L, *Morphology: a study of the relation between meaning and form*, p.329

phrases or sentences whose figurative meaning is not clear from the literal meaning of their individual constituents.

A study by Septia Mardiana entitled ‘Memorized Idioms to Improve Students’ Speaking Ability in SBI Class of Second Year at SMP Negeri I Gresik’ mentioned that idioms are easy to understand by the students in order to improve their speaking ability<sup>19</sup>. Teacher often uses idioms while speaking in order to make the students can use idiom in a conversation.

Another finding is obtained by Andreou. He addressed issues such as the content of the term idiom that is possible in teaching methods, the notions of compositionality, register and frequency, the special character of idioms or not, the suitable learners’ level for teaching and finally the way idiom instruction is dealt with in Greek literature<sup>20</sup>. The above mentioned aspects are of crucial importance because having lack of idiom knowledge will have an impact on the learners’ overall performance. Hence, it is essential for both teachers and students to deal with idioms in a well defined environment, where topics such as idiom definition or teaching methodology are solved. This is the only way the educational process as a whole will be beneficial to its participants.

A research conducted by Amarapa concluded that idioms are not only used in informal situation but also in some formal situation like in learning process at school. In his research, people prefer to speak using slangs and idiom

---

<sup>19</sup> Septia Mardiana, *Memorized Idioms to Improve Students’ Speaking Ability in SBI Class of Second Year at SMP Negeri I Gresik*, p.57

<sup>20</sup> Georgia Andreou, *Teaching idioms in a foreign language context*. Page 10

because those words are easy to understand and give strong emotional power to the audience. Either adult or youth prefer to talk with the others ungrammatically<sup>21</sup>. And those habits made informal English become a widespread quickly among people when they communicate in daily life.

Abel mentioned in his research that nonnative students who are frequently exposed to idiom because they read English literary texts every day start to judge idioms as non-decomposable more often, just as native speakers do. This is taken as evidence in favor of the underlying representations, i.e., the existence of idiom entries<sup>22</sup>. The fact that frequency has an effect on mental representations is one of the most replicated results of many psycholinguistic experiments.

A study by Teresa Stated the aspectual properties that are not grammatically transparent are dependant on the concept with which they are cognitively associated by the intervention of cognitive patterns such as image-schemas<sup>23</sup>. In case of conflict, the aspectual information that is associated with the target conceptual domains with which idioms are connected in the conceptual system motivate the atelic or telic interpretation of idiomatic expressions that speakers in this case students can reach at the time of idiom comprehension.

Based on a research conducted by Felix, in our modern and cultivated societies, students constitute one large subgroup within the young which deserves

---

<sup>21</sup> Amarapa, *A Study of Informal English Used in Movie*. p.40

<sup>22</sup> Beate Abel, *Daily English Idioms in the first language and second language lexicon: a dual representation approach*. p.330-331

<sup>23</sup> Teresa Espinal, 2009, *Classes of idioms and their interpretation*, p.3

special study, for many a time they develop a special kind of vocabulary<sup>24</sup>. As a modest contribution to this area of research, in the present article writer has compiled and commented on the bibliography related to the special vocabulary of these two groups in British and American English. Such a restriction on the field of study has led him to try to compile as exhaustive a list as possible, which explains why works of very different approaches and length have been included.

Huong Quynh Tran also mentioned an explanation in his research. He stated that learning idioms in light of an integrated skill approach at a university in Vietnam. It demonstrates that teachers and students at the university achieved moderate effectiveness in idiom learning. Both teachers and students believe that students are motivated, feel relaxed and confident and actively participated in idioms learning activities in this foreign language context<sup>25</sup>. The findings also reveal that students have demonstrated the process in idiom comprehension as well as in idiom production though the evidence in the comprehension of idiomatic phrases is more evitable.

Boers also mentioned that the literature remarks a persistent confirmation that figurative competence plays an important part in assessing spoken language competence<sup>26</sup>. Figurative competence, getting along with other language competence, refers to the ability to appropriately use and comprehend idioms in

---

<sup>24</sup> Félix Rodríguez, 1994, *Youth and Student Slang in British and American English*.

<sup>25</sup> Huong Quynh Tran, *An Explorative Study of Idiom Teaching for Pre-service Teachers of English*, p.77

<sup>26</sup> Boers, F., Eyckmans, J., Kappel, J., Stengers, H., & Demecheleer, M, *Formulaic expressions and perceived oral proficiency: Putting a lexical approach to the test*, p.245-261

communication. It enables non-native speakers to achieve full comprehension in daily life conversation.

Mc Devitt stated that idioms are an important part of any language and may be said to be an indicator of one's fluency in that language<sup>27</sup>. Many L2 learners, especially intermediate and advanced students, are eager to learn more idioms due to the fact that these learners have had a good exposure to the target language and hence have learnt to appreciate the value and the importance of idioms, including their vividness and effectiveness in communicative tasks.

Based on the previous studies the writers conclude that idioms are mostly is used by people in daily conversation whether adult or children. Meanwhile what makes this study different from the researches above is that this research about Idioms will also give people in this case teacher to make the students to be more creative in speaking with a lot of daily English Idioms that they will use when communicate in classroom. This study will also reveal the daily English idioms is used by the students in their conversation in learning process and the reason why they is used daily English idiom while speaking.

---

<sup>27</sup> McDevitt, E, *What does that mean? An introduction to American idioms*.