



# Benefits of Idiom Construction on Vocabulary Development in Indonesian Dictionary: Study of Lexical Semantic

Krismonika Khoirunnisa<sup>1</sup>(✉), Oktavia Winda Lestari<sup>2</sup>,  
Islam Ragab Abdelhamid Shehata<sup>3</sup>, and Siti Zumrotul Maulida<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Culture, Postgraduate Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta, Indonesia  
krismonicakhpurunisa@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Indonesian Language and Literature Education, Faculty of Education, Postgraduate Islamic University of Malang, Malang, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> Indonesian Language Education, Faculty of Education, Postgraduate Indonesia Education University, Bandung, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup> Indonesian Language Education, Faculty of Education, Graduate Indonesian Education Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Islamic University, Tulungagung, Indonesia

**Abstract.** This article aims to examine the usefulness of idiom construction for vocabulary development in KBBI. The objectives of this study are (1) to describe examples of idiom in the KBBI and (2) to describe the usefulness of idioms contained in the KBBI. The data in this study are examples of idioms found in the KBBI along with the meaning of the concept and the context. The data source used in this study is the online version of KBBI V which can be accessed at <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/>. This research article is a type of qualitative descriptive research. The method used in this research is the mark-up method (read-note) which is used to sort and select according to research needs (idioms). The method of data analysis in this study used a descriptive method by utilizing the theory of Muthmainnah. Which the analysis will be used to find the function and usefulness of the idioms in the dictionary. This article takes about 15–20 idioms from the online KBBI to analyze their meaning and usefulness. The results of this study found that the idioms contained in the KBBI have many forms and various meanings, namely conceptual, textual, and contextual meanings. So that these idioms have their own function from each use.

**Keywords:** Idioms · Indonesian Dictionary · Lexical Semantics · Vocabulary

## 1 Introduction

As a tool used to communicate, language has an important role to identify aspects of meaning. Functionally, the meaning of spoken and written language has the same intensity and role (to be known and understood by the public) although sometimes the objectives are different (disguise, news, courtesy, and others). Communication between humans uses verbal language, although sometimes special language is needed to explain

several purposes in order to achieve the same goal [1]. Over time, language began to develop in the realm of society. Language develops from time to time with relatively varied changes. This development occurred for internal and external reasons [2]. Moreover, with the presence of language, all human activities have been facilitated [3].

An increasingly diverse language will give birth to meanings from various images. One of the language studies that has many possible meanings is the study of lexical semantics. The definition of lexical semantics was put forward by [4], that lexical semantics is a semantic study that examines the meaning of words. The opinion regarding lexical semantics is also expressed by [5] in his book entitled “English Words: Structure, Origin, and Meaning” that *Lexical items whose meanings have something in common form groups with other lexemes. These groups of lexemes are called **lexical fields** or **semantic fields**. There is, however, ambiguity in the use of these terms. The distinction is that ‘semantic or conceptual fields’ include all concepts related to a semantic area, while lexical fields are subsets of semantic fields including only those concepts that have words attached to them* (cf. Coşeriu & Gekeler 1981 at [5]). Moreover, lexical fields are part of the organization of the vocabulary in a given language, while conceptual fields, apply generally across languages.

The statement written by Bejan modified from Gekeler above states that vocabulary items that have the same meaning will form a group with other lexemes. This group of lexemes is called the vocabulary field or the semantic field. However, the use of these terms is ambiguous. The difference lies in the study of semantics itself. The “Semantic or Concept” field includes all concepts related to the semantic field, but the lexical field is part of the semantic field and contains only related words. Moreover, the field of vocabulary meaning is a subset of the vocabulary of a particular language, while the field of conceptual meaning is the general meaning across languages.

One of the studies of lexical semantics is idioms. In general, idioms have a relationship between linguistic features and rules. Idioms have their own uniqueness in terms of construction of meaning and sentences as their constituents. This is known from the opinion of [2] which explains that idioms are a collection of words that have their own meaning from each word. This opinion is also known from the statement of [10] that idioms are combinations of words that already have their own different meanings. This different meaning occurs when the word is coupled with a sentence that is indicated to be able to change the meaning of the original description. For example, the length of the hand which means thief, accomplice which means helper, red rooster which means fire, and so on.

In addition to the construction of its meaning for its uniqueness, idioms are also known as the category of phrases that are difficult to understand. This is known from the opinion of [11] in their article entitled “Criteria for Identifying Representing Idioms in a Phraseological Dictionary” that *The idiom is an elusive phraseological category. It has traditionally been regarded as a product of semantic processes. The idiom has mostly been described in terms of semantic transparency and the degree of proximity to the concrete world*. In this explanation, [11] conclude that idioms also include the study of phrases that are difficult to understand. This is because language in the culture of society has many meanings that are not only seen from one aspect. Idioms will be understood

more often if the expression of words or their meanings is explained in relation to the concrete world.

Another opinion was also expressed by [6] in his article entitled “Translating Idiomatic Expressions from English into Arabic” Difficults and Strategies “which states that *An idiom is a form of speech or an expression that is peculiar to itself. Idioms are linguistic expressions or lexical items that have got a vast territory in a way that they can include many cultural aspects such as religious beliefs, culture-specific items, superstitions, and different ideologies of the people from diverse societies and nations*”. In this explanation, Oualif concluded that apart from having its own meaning, idioms also have a range of linguistic expressions related to beliefs (religion), culture, ideology, and society. The definition of idioms was also put forward by [7] entitled “Teaching and Learning Idioms in L2: From Theory to Practice”. In that article, Vasiljevic argues that *Idiomatic expressions are an intrinsic feature of all natural languages*.

In line with [6] opinion regarding the scope of linguistic expression, the researcher found statements from [8] about the relationship between word meaning and structure. This explanation is in his book entitled “The Language of Word Meaning” which suggests that *Lexical semantics has not yet been given a satisfactory answer to a crucial question that has been implicitly or explicitly asked by philosophers of language, because word meaning can be studied as a transparent structures*. In his explanation, Busa & Bouillon argue that lexical semantics has not provided satisfactory answers to important questions that are implicitly or explicitly asked by philosophers of language. This is because ‘word’ has an uncertain study when viewed from one side. Semantic studies have many sides, one of which is in terms of structure. The word structure can be a transparent structure. This is what makes ‘word’ a study that cannot be discussed only from its meaning. [12] also explains that *Idiomcity is not a categorical property and expressions*. This is explained by Grady as a form of emphasizing that idioms are not properties or expressions, but compilations or word orders that are able to provide descriptions and logical contexts.

The opinions of [8] and [12] have also been modified by linguists in Indonesia, one of which is [13] in his article entitled “Traditional Javanese Linguistic Theory and Its Problems”. In his article, Marsono explains that a theoretical framework with a set of terms will provide direction. So that the meaning will focus more on clear concepts and contexts.

## 2 Literature Review

Many researches on idioms have been carried out using various methods and theories to support their findings. Research on idioms was carried out by [4] which discussed English idioms taught to students as their second language. The research resulted in finding idioms from teaching English idioms through songs in English as well. Baryadi’s research (2013) which discusses idioms with verb elements in Indonesian. The study found clear differences between constructions in the form of idioms and constructions that were not idioms. Research from [7] found explicit instructions and idiom expressions. Research from [9] which discusses idioms in the education category on CNN news. The study found the types of idioms (full and partial) with presentation in the form of a percentage. The results of the study found that the use of partial idioms had a higher percentage than full idioms.

Other studies that discuss idioms are also conducted by western researchers, including research from [1] which discusses the analysis of learning English idioms about audio-visual behavior. The results of the research found that idioms stimulated more language assistance from mobile phones. Research from [1] which discusses the types and identification of tokens without supervision of idiom expressions. The results of his research found that token identification will be able to help us distinguish the use of idiomatic expressions in context.

### 3 Research Methods

This research is a qualitative research. According to [3] qualitative research is research that produces analytical procedures that do not use statistical analysis procedures or other qualification methods. The method used is descriptive method, which is a method that describes the data to get general conclusions. Descriptive method serves to see, review, find out and explain something as it is at the time of the research. The data in this study is the benefit of the existence of idioms as vocabulary development in KBBI. The data in this study were obtained from examples of idioms in the KBBI and using the theory of [10]. This theory is used by researchers to analyze the benefits of the presence of idioms found and associated with vocabulary development in KBBI. The data source of this research is written source (KBBI Online Version V) as the primary source which will be analyzed later.

### 4 Discussion

#### 4.1 Idiom Form (Indonesian Dictionary Online Version)

Table 1 fills the function as an idiom that contains many word classes in each of its constituent words. Why doesn't KBBI only include general vocabulary? Logically, general vocabulary will be easier to understand than idioms or other terms that are often unknown to beginners (ordinary people or non-educated people). For ordinary people, will understand the word "court" better than "green table", because the two words have very different meanings. The court is a council that hears cases, while the green table is another term for the word "court". In addition, the green table can also be understood as "a table that is indeed green".

**Table 1.** Idiom classification table based on the researcher's reasoning and match KBBI online version. **Source:** <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/>

Number	Idiom	Describing (Concept) and Meaning (Context)
1.	Meja hijau	1. Mmeja yang berwarna Hijau 2. Pengadilan*
2.	Kabar burung	1. Kabar yang dibawa oleh burung (metode pengiriman surat) 2. Berita yang belum tentu kebenarannya*

*(continued)*

**Table 1.** (continued)

Number	Idiom	Describing (Concept) and Meaning (Context)
3.	Jago merah	1. Ayam jago 2. Terjadi kebakaran*
4.	Buah tangan	1. Membawa buah 2. Oleh-oleh*
5.	Kepala keluarga	1. Pemimpin keluarga* 2. Orang yang berkedudukan di keluarga
6.	Kepala dingin	1. Suhu normal (kondisi setelah sakit) 2. Sabara dan tenang*
7.	Darah biru	1. Darah yang membeku (darah yang keluar karena luka) 2. Keturunan bangsawan/ningrat*
8.	Kambing hitam	1. Kambing yang berwarna hitam 2. Orang yang tidak salah, tapi disalahkan*
9.	Kuda hitam	1. Kuda yang berwarna hitam 2. Seseorang yang dprediksi tidak menang, tetapi akhirnya menang*
10.	Banting tulang	1. Orang yang sedang marah (menghentakkn anggota badan) 2. Kerja keras/berjuang*
11.	Panjang tangan	1. Orang yang memilik tagan yang panjang (faktor tinggi badan, kelainan, dll) 2. Pencuri*
12.	Adu mulut	1. Cekcok* 2. Orang yang suka cari gara-gara
13.	Besar mulut	1. Kelainan 2. Suka membual*
14.	Naik daun	1. Supranatural 2. Populer*
15.	Naik darah	1. Tekanan darah yang tidak normal (darah tinggi) 2. Emosi (marah)*
16.	Gulung tikar	1. Melakukan suatu pekerjaan (menggulung tikar) 2. Bangkrut*
17.	Akal bulus	1. Otak kura-kura 2. Licik*
18.	Tulang Punggung	1. Rusuk/bagian tulang yang ada pada tubuh 2. Orang yang bertanggungjawab*
19.	Bau kencur	1. Pemula* 2. Pendatang baru* 3. Kurang berpengalaman*
20.	Buku putih	1. Buku yang berwarna putih 2. Buku penting/rahasia*

This is the reason why in the development of the KBBI not only tables, heads, bones, horses, roosters, and others were included, but the KBBI also made the compilation of these word classes as differentiators of existing meanings. In general, the word table is household furniture, the head is one of the limbs, bones are part of the body framework, and other basic meanings. However, when the word is juxtaposed with a sentence or other word context that is indicated to change the meaning, the word will also change according to the context.

The explanation from the table above marked (\*) is a standardized vocabulary in the KBBI, while those marked with (\*) are reasoning vocabulary. Reasoning vocabulary is a vocabulary that is expected to appear in someone's understanding suddenly. This can happen to people who are not too familiar with the standardized vocabulary.

## 4.2 The Function of Idioms on Vocabulary Development in KBBI

According to [10] in her research entitled "Kemampuan Menggunakan Idiom dalam Kalimat Peserta Didik SMP Negeri 1 Tutallu Kabupaten Polewali Mandar" it is explained that idioms have various functions, namely:

### a. Stylistic Function

[10] agrees with opinion of [1], that language has characteristics related to meaning, which makes the meaning difficult to logic. At this function, stylistic is an idiom function that is difficult to understand. As a language that is relatively developed in the realm of society, this stylistic function has the contribution of scientific disciplines in the field of language and literature which will involve language style. Examples: village flowers, dream flowers, rose leaves, and others.

### b. Rhetoric Function

A part from the opinion of [1, 10] also agrees with the opinion of [4], which explains that lexical meaning is formed from several words that are arranged and combined with other words, they will find new meanings. The function of rhetoric is an idiom function that is used for the ability to argue. Not infrequently this rhetorical function is used by idioms in the realm of law and politics. Example: white book (secret book), black on white (signature, agreement) coachman debate (debate that nothing produces or irony terms), and others.

## Textual Function

Textual functions are idiom functions that are used to build the initial text (functions related to text). This textual function is often used to clarify idioms according to the sentence or context that accompanies it. Example: **page, yard**, and others.

## Contextual Functions

Contextual function is an idiom function that is used to understand idioms in context. Textual and contextual functions in idioms are more often known as ambiguous functions. This is because textual and contextual have an inseparable relationship. The textual function will map the idiom on a basic basis, while the contextual function will explain the map of the idiom. Example:

- 1) Cover page (book page)
- 2) I'm waiting in the yard (yard, garden, etc.)
- 3) Face is bright red (face, appearance)
- 4) Printed only the front (cover)

### **Politeness and Confidentiality Function**

The function of politeness and confidentiality is better known as the function of necessity. Requirements function is not much different from textual and contextual functions. In intensity, this function is to maintain mutual comfort both in the realm of public use or in the private sphere. Example: "tuna" which means defects and types of marine fish. Another example is the idiom night butterfly and *tunasusila* which means prostitute.

## **5 Conclusions and Suggestions**

Based on the results and discussions that have been presented by the researcher, idioms have many different forms of description and functions. The first form of depiction is found to have a logical meaning or meaning commonly known as the meaning of the concept. The second form of depiction is found in the presence of meaning in text and context. The first form of idiom depiction found ambiguous understanding meanings, while the second idiom depiction found meanings that were difficult to define or more difficult to understand.

Another essence that the researcher found was from a comprehensive perspective in standardizing vocabulary. The existence of standardization that can be widely accessed by the public makes the vocabulary more recognizable and more varied. This becomes an option, that a variety of languages will be more challenging to learn and understand regarding the concepts and contexts.

Research articles regarding the usefulness of idioms are still lacking, both in terms of theory, results, and analysis. Therefore, this research still needs development and renewal from further researchers (especially on the topic of idioms on vocabulary development in KBBI). Considering that the readers come from various circles (academics and other parties), it will be very useful if the references on the topic of idioms are more varied in terms of sources, objects, and data updates.

## **References**

1. K. Khoirunnisa, (2022). "Modus Pengungkapan Kegembiraan dan Kesedihan Pada Karangan Siswa Kelas 3 dan 5 SD: Kemahiran Menulis Perspektif Psikolinguistik". *Prosiding Seminar dan Lokakarya Kemahiran Berbahasa Bahasa Indonesia Menuju Bahasa Internasional*, 181–191. <https://badanbahasa.kemdikbud.go.id/resource/doc/files/Prosiding%20Semiloka%20Kemahiran%20Berbahasa%202021.pdf>.
2. S. Shehata, R.A Islam Y. Mulyati., et al. (2021). "Bagaimana Memanfaatkan Idiom Serapan Bahasa Arab dalam Bahasa Indonesia untuk Buku Pengayaan BIPA". *RIKSA BAHASA 15*, 36–41. <http://proceedings.upi.edu/index.php/riksabahasa/article/view/1651/1505>.

3. H. Harlina, J Novia, & Emidar. (2012). “Idiom dalam Masyarakat di Desa Pondok Tengah Kecamatan V Koto Kabupaten Muko-Muko Bengkulu Utara”. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*, 1(1), 665–672. <http://ejournal.unp.ac.id/index.php/pbs/article/viewFile/1381/1207>.
4. P. Pateda. (2010). *Semantik Leksikal*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
5. C. Bejan, (2017). *English Words: Structure, Origin, and Meaning: A Linguistic Introduction*. New York: Addleton Academic Publisher. [http://library.lol/main/BEA0223843A95D4AB06183B01282FDB4\\_](http://library.lol/main/BEA0223843A95D4AB06183B01282FDB4_)
6. M. Oualif, (2017). “Translating Idiomatic Expressions from English into Arabic Difficults and Strategies”. *AWEJ: Arab English Journal for translation & Literacy Studies*, 1(3), 22–31.
7. Z. Vasiljevic (2015). “Teaching and Learning Idiom in L2: From Theory to Practice”. *MEX-TESOL Journal*, 39(4), 1–24. <http://www.mextesol.net/journal/public/files/b97a7cef9cf17f841d8f8a0008a62c18.pdf>.
8. F. Busa, B. Pierrette. (2001). *The Language of Word Meaning: Studies in Natural Language Processing*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [http://library.lol/main/2F925F893712B68C55A495838DD05004\\_](http://library.lol/main/2F925F893712B68C55A495838DD05004_)
9. Tim Pengelola Website Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia Versi V (daring). Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia Versi V. Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa Kemdikbud. diakses melalui. <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/>.
10. M. Muthamainnah. (2012). “Kemampuan Menggunakan Idiom Dalam Kalimat Peserta Didik Smp Negeri 1 Tutallu Kabupaten Polewali Mandar”. *Jurnal Papatuzdu*, 4(1), 60–71.
11. U. Claussen., E. Lyly. (1994). “Criteria for Identifying Representing Idioms in a Phraseological Dictionary”. *Auralex*, 258–262. <https://osf.io/pfxtd/download/?format=pdf>. [https://www.euralex.org/elx\\_proceedings/Euralex1994/28\\_Euralex\\_Ulla%20Clausen%20&%20Erika%20Lyly%20-%20Criteria%20for%20Identifying%20and%20Representing%20Idioms%20in%20a%20Phra.pdf](https://www.euralex.org/elx_proceedings/Euralex1994/28_Euralex_Ulla%20Clausen%20&%20Erika%20Lyly%20-%20Criteria%20for%20Identifying%20and%20Representing%20Idioms%20in%20a%20Phra.pdf).
12. W.O. Grady, (1998). “The Syntax of Idioms”. Netherland: *Kluwer Academic Publisher*, 279–312. [http://ling.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/OGrady\\_SyntaxofIdioms.pdf](http://ling.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/OGrady_SyntaxofIdioms.pdf).
13. M. Marsono. (1998). “Teori Linguistik Tradisional Jawa dan Permasalahannya”. *Humaniora* (8), 7–13. <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/12226-ID-teori-linguistik-tradisional-jawa-dan-masalahnya.pdf>. <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/283601-kemampuan-menggunakan-idiom-dalam-kalima-ee1926d6.pdf>.

**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

