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THE MEANING OF IDIOM “EYE(S)” IN THE CORPUS OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN ENGLISH: SEMANTIC STUDY

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Keywords: idiom, transparent idiom, semi-transparent idiom, opaque idiom.

ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study are (1) to identify the types of idiom (2) to explain the meaning of idiom eye (s). The methods used are descriptive analysis method. The steps to obtain the data needed are as follows: identifying, classifying, analyzing the data contained in the corpus and concluding the results of the research. The theory used in this study is the theory Langlotz (2006:4) regarding the types of idioms. The results show that (1) there are three types of idiom: Transparent Idiom (36.66%), Opaque Idiom (60.34%). (2) The meaning of the eye (s) literal (0%), non-literal meaning (100%). Idioms as expressions have an indirect meaning, the meaning of which cannot be predicted. There are 30 idioms in the data. Idiom with the word eye is found in nominal group structure. It can be either as subject, object and complement. The word eye used in idiom has several meanings. The most meaning in the idiom with the word eye belongs to opaque idiom.

Keywords: idiom, transparent idiom, semi-transparent idiom, opaque idiom.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication tool in the form of a voice from a spoken tool, a language that has many forms, meanings and purposes. Language can help

someone to convey feelings, meanings, opinions as according to Walija (1996: 4) *“disclose the definition language of communication is the most complete and effective way to convey ideas, messages, intentions, feelings and opinions to others.”* Therefore, language is very important as a medium of distribution, language itself is included in linguistics. Linguistics is the study of language as communication as according to Richard and Schmidt (2002: 283) *“define linguistics as the study of language as a system of human communication.”* In linguistics, it is divided into several studies, one of which is semantics.

Idioms are commonly used in conversation, or other printed media as substitute words. According to Langlotz (2006: 4), idioms are usually used to communicate, by playing with words, to be different, or to entertain or be funny. Idioms are usually in the form of words that have different meanings. Seidl and McMordie (1978: 13) stated that *“Idiom as a number of words which, when taken together, have a different meaning from the individual meaning of each words.”* It means that when idioms are taken together, they have different meanings from individual words. Idiom can be occurred in the Corpus of Contemporary American English. Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) is according to Mark Davies (2010: 447) *“The Corpus of Contemporary American English is the first large, genre-balanced corpus of any language, which has been designed and constructed from the ground up as a ‘monitor corpus’, and which can be used to accurately track and study recent changes in the language.”*

Corpus of Contemporary American English is the first large genre balanced corpus of any language, which has been designed as a ‘monitor corpus’, and which can be used to accurately track and learn the latest changes in language. COCA is a large institution of American English, the most widely spoken English Corpus, an unmatched collection of insights on variations in English, this corpus contains over billion words of text (20 million words every 1990-2019) and is composed of eight genres: oral, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, academic texts, and always experiencing the addition of other data articles. Corpus often uses the word idiom especially in the word “eye(s)” which can be discussed from the type of idiom to its meaning. Not only in Corpus, the idiom “eye(s)” is also often used in everyday words.

METHOD

The research method used in this research is descriptive method as according to Fraenkel and Wallen (1990: 23) *“descriptive method is a method use to explain analyze and classify something through various techniques, survey, interview, questionnaires, observation, and text.”* It can be interpreted as a descriptive method used to explain the analysis of classifying something through various techniques, surveys, interviews, questionnaires, observations, and texts. Also, this research uses text techniques and explain the research steps by doing:

1. Determine the topic to be selected
2. Conduct a preliminary study

3. Identify the problem to be studied
4. Determine the benefits of research that will be achieved
5. Tracing and determining sentences that contain idioms on the web that will be studied
6. Collecting the types of idioms found
7. Clarify and analyze the data obtained based on semantic studies

Research Questions

1. What kind of idiom “eye(s)” used in the COCA?
2. What does the idiom “eye(s)” mean in the COCA?

Objectives and Benefits

Based on the problem identifications above, the objectives of this research are:

1. To identify the type contained in the idioms in the COCA.
2. To identify the meaning of the word “eye(s)” contained in the COCA.

The benefit of this research is that there are many idioms “eye(s)” that are used and can be discussed, to find out the types of idioms that are often used in the Corpus and to make it easier for the reader or someone to know these meanings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Meaning is part of linguistics, a theory about the meaning or purpose of a word or sentence. The meaning studies a speech in order to be understood by both the listener and the speaker. Meaning is divided into two parts such as *literal meaning* and *non-literal meaning*. Literal meaning is the true meaning or meaning that is easy to understand and very clear. According to Saeed (1997: 15), literal meaning is “*where the speaker speaks in a neutral, factually accurate way*”. It means that when the speaker speaks to another person, the actual meaning can be understood by the listener. Meaning is not much different from Griffiths’ (2006: 9) theory which says that “*Sentence/literal meaning is the meaning that people are similar to the language can agree on for sentences considered in isolation*” which means that literal meaning is the meaning that an ordinary person with language can accept for sentences that are considered separately.

Example:

The sky is blue.

From the example above, the sentence is clear and easy to understand, namely that the speaker says that the sky is blue. From this example, it is not necessary to

look for the meaning because it is very clear. Spontaneous literal meanings are used when someone explains a clear and understandable meaning.

1). Non-literal meaning

Non Literal Meaning can be said as a figurative meaning or a different meaning from the word spoken as according to Saeed (1997: 15) “*where the speaker deliberately describes something in untrue or impossible terms in order to achieve a special effect.*” It means that when the speaker describes something with impossible terms, usually non-literal words are often found in the use of idioms as expressions.

Example:

Someone is playing with fire.

From the example above, when it is interpreted literally, it means that someone is playing with fire. Since the sentence is non-literal, the expression means someone who is doing something dangerous that can cause great harm to them and causing many problems because fire means something dangerous, anger or a bad image.

2). Idioms

Idiom comes from the Latin *idioma* that has the meaning of peculiarity of language which means language peculiarity. According to Procter (1995: 701), “*Idioms is a group of words in a fixed order having a particular meaning, different from the meanings of each word understood on its own. It can have literal meaning in one situation and a different idiomatic meaning in another situation.*”

Based on the statement above, idiom is a group of words that have certain different meanings, in other situations they can be literal meanings, and in other situations, the meaning of idioms is different.

Example:

A piece of cake.

If it is interpreted as literal, it means just a piece of cake. When it is interpreted as idioms, it means something that is very easy or does not require a lot of effort. From that sentence, it can be seen that the word spoken is much different from its true meaning. Also, from the example above, idioms cannot be drawn directly from their literal meaning because they are different from the actual meaning. Idioms can be classified into four types such as transparent idioms, semi-transparent idioms, semi-opaque idioms, and opaque idioms.

3) Transparent Idioms

Transparent idioms are predictable and easy to understand idioms, have almost the same meaning as the spoken word. Transparent idioms are easier to predict understanding. According to Nippold and Taylor (1995: 427), “*Idioms that were higher in transparency were easier to explain than the more opaque expressions,*

findings that were consistent with the view that some idioms may be learned through semantic analysis.”

It means that the more idioms have a higher level of transparency, the easier it is to understand compared to opaque expressions that are not clear. The findings are consistent with the view that some idioms can be learned through semantic analysis.

Example:

Watching with empty eyes.

From the example above, ‘*empty*’ means empty or void and ‘*eyes*’ means eyes or gaze of the eyes which if it is interpreted, it means the flat eyes, empty without emotion or without compassion. The meaning is easy to interpret and not much different from the actual word, and the sentence is easy to understand.

4) Semi-Transparent Idioms

Semi-transparent idioms are idioms that carry a metaphorical meaning that cannot be known only through general usage, its constituent parts have a role to help in understanding the full meaning of the expression. Idioms that have a minor role in understanding the overall meaning of expression. As Moon (1996: 21) says that semi-transparent idioms are “*Idioms that usually have metaphorical meaning and their constituent parts have a little role in comprehending the whole meaning of the expression.*”

It means that semi-transparent idioms usually have metaphorical meanings and their constituent parts have a small role in understanding the meaning of the expression as a whole.

Example:

Cut to the chase.

If it is interpreted literally, it means to cut to teach. The word cannot be interpreted literally. The word ‘*cut*’ means cut to help to find out the meaning of the word which is not far from cutting or stopping whose true meaning goes straight to the subject by cutting the details of the conversation so that it goes straight to the core of the conversation.

5) Semi-Opaque Idioms

Semi-opaque idioms are the idioms that the essence of meaning is not very clear, a group of idioms whose figurative meaning is not related to the meaning of their constituent words. According to Peacock (2009: 2) that semi-opaque idioms are “*phrases that lean more to the opaque, and are not so clear as to their literalness*” which means that semi-opaque idioms are phrases that are not so clear with its literacy.

Example:

To know the rope.

From the example above, the meaning is not very clear with its literacy. The word ‘*know*’ means knowing or recognizing, and ‘*rope*’ literally means rope. However, the real meaning of that sentence is having experience in the appropriate procedure. It is like using a rope to tie something, and the person must know how to tie it properly.

6) *Opaque Idioms*

Opaque idioms are the type of idioms that are difficult to interpret because there are no parts of the word related to its actual meaning. According to Peacock (2009: 2) says that “*such saying are opaque or not clear in their meaning unless one is enlightened and know the background or meaning of the idiom.*”

It means that the opaque type of idioms has an unclear meaning unless the person who interprets it has an understanding of the background of the meaning of the idiom. This type of idiom is difficult to explain because it is so different from its meaning, so a dictionary is usually needed to find out the meaning of the idiom.

Example:

To burn one’s boat.

From the example above, the phrase “*to burn one’s boat*” is an opaque idiom because it has a different meaning from the spoken word. If it is interpreted literally, the phrase is unclear. It will mean to burn someone’s boat, but the real meaning of the phrase is to commit to oneself in an unchangeable direction. Understanding the meaning of an opaque idiom through the meaning of the word literally tends to be unclear.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data 1

That's my boy there, he's my angel, the apple of my eye.
(Source: COCA, NEWS Washington Post)

The word eye above is in the nominal structure of the group, the meaning is not word by word, it is unity and the function is to explain he is my Angel; The apple of my eye in the data is opaque idiom. When someone saw the reflection came out inside the pupils which are the center of the eye. When somebody is the apple of my eyes, he/she is someone you noticed, someone who loved, most liked by someone who is very important. This Idiom has meaning non-literal because where the speaker deliberately describes something in untrue or impossible terms in order to achieve special effect because it is a term that is not possible if interpreted the apple of my eye is the apple of my eye that is different from its true meaning.

The idiom cannot be interpreted literally we cannot find the meaning in dictionary. It cannot be translated word by word if someone translated word by word it

doesn't make sense. To understand the meaning of the idiom we need to see the context and the whole sentence and to comprehend the entire sentence. According to Oxford dictionary, the meaning of the idiom the apple of my eye is the person of whom one is extremely fond, favorite, loving. The meaning of the sentence, that's my boy there, he's my angel, the apple of my eye is that the boy is very precious.

Data 2

Keanu Reeves is still in the public eye because of his highly-rated FOX NEWS TV show.

(Source: COCA, Dreaming of Barack Obama's Forced Retirement)

The word eye the data 2 is in the nominal structure of the group, the meaning is not word by word, it is unity and the function is to explain Keanu Reeves; Public eye are included transparent idiom because it has a meaning that is easy to understand and can be predicted, Public eye which consists of public in other word from general and eye which means seeing or spotlight, public eye is famous become public attention that is usually used when someone or something that has become the public attention.

The meaning of this idiom is non literal meaning because it has a meaning that is close to the true meaning, this meaning used spontaneously because it has a clear meaning. According to Longman dictionary of Contemporary English, the meaning of the idiom public eye means someone who is in the public eye is seen a lot on television, written about in newspapers.

Data 3

If your man has roving eyes, then that can be problematic too.

(Source: The Cost of Ignoring Premarital Doubt | Boundless Line)

Roving eyes in the data is opaque idiom since it carries a metaphorical sense which cannot be known only through general usage, roving eyes is an idiom to draw the meaning of the phrase seen from initial word 'roving' which means the surroundings which have a figurative meaning that describes something that is not limited to an area or location and eyes means seeing which include literal, roving eyes in general describe action from a man who always sexually attracted to someone even though they already have a partner.

This Idiom has meaning non-literal because it includes the impossible word terms and a word that describes something, which if interpreted literally around the eyes that have different from it true meaning. According to Oxford dictionary roving eye means a tendency to be constantly looking to have new sexual relationships.

Data 4

Keep a close eye on your representatives.
(Source COCA: Rested and Back in the Saddle!)

Keep a close eye on in the data is transparent Idiom because it has a meaning that is easy to understand and not far from its true meaning, idioms are still related to their meaning, keep close eye which if interpreted is the eyes stay closer, keep a close eye on idiom which intends to pay attention to someone or observe carefully who are usually used to ensure seeing someone's performance or developing someone's work.

This idiom has meaning non literal meaning because it has a meaning close to the true meaning, this meaning is spontaneously used because it has a clear meaning. According to Longman dictionary of Contemporary English, the meaning of the idiom keeps a close eye on is to monitor someone or something closely.

CONCLUSION

There are 30 idioms in the data. Idiom with the word eye is found in nominal group structure. It can be either as subject, object and complement. The word eye used in idiom has several meanings. The most meaning in the idiom with the word eye belongs to opaque. They are 20 data and transparent Idiom is 10 data. From all the data can be found that the meaning has non literal meaning since the meaning cannot be predicted. To understand entire the idiom we need to know the context: who is the speaker, what does speaker talk about, when does the speaker and where speaker does.

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