

IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS IN TAYLOR SWIFT'S SONGS ON THE ALBUM *EVERMORE*

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Abstract : This study aims at identifying and describing the idiomatic expressions found in Taylor Swift's songs on the *Evermore* album. This study was a descriptive qualitative study that used note-taking and literature review as the means of collecting the data. The primary data of this study were taken from the lyrics of 4 songs in Taylor Swift's *Evermore* album. The researcher also used secondary data such as academic articles, books, and various websites in conducting this study. The data were then analyzed using the content analysis technique proposed by Miles and Huberman. The result showed that there are 21 idioms found in Swift's song lyrics in the *Evermore* album. Based on its types, there are 2 proverb idioms, 8 phrasal compound idioms, 9 tournures idioms, and 2 simile idioms. Those idiomatic expressions are used to express the problem in life and the problems in love faced by the character in the songs.

Keywords : *Idiom, Idiomatic Expression, Types of Idiom, Taylor Swift, Evermore*

INTRODUCTION

Language is a very important aspect of human life. Language enables humans to communicate with each other and to express their thought and feelings. According to Sudarsono *et al.* (2016), "Language is very important in people's lives: people use language to express inner thoughts and emotions, to understand complex and abstract thoughts, to learn to communicate with others to meet our wants or needs, and to set rules and maintain our culture." It means that language plays an important role at the individual level and society level. Furthermore, the use of language is always dynamic in society.

In society, humans use language in various forms: spoken, written, and even symbol (Nerubassaka, Palshkov & Maksymchuk, 2020). They also tend to use language that reflects their culture and norms (Tourey, 2021). It can be seen from the type of language they use in daily communication. One type of language

used in society is idiom. An idiom is a regularly used term or phrase with a symbolic or metaphorical meaning that differs from the literal meaning of the words themselves. Idioms are words that have a long history in a language and frequently reflect the social, historical, or cultural circumstances in which they first appeared. According to Ediwarman & Pahamzah (2022), "idiom is a phrase, the meaning of which cannot be predicted from the individual meanings of the morphemes it comprises." So, an idiom is an expression that cannot be understood by referring to the actual meaning.

The use of idioms is a common phenomenon in every language including English. Even, idioms are one of the biggest problems in learning English, because idioms are hard to be understood without knowing their functions, history, and contextual use (Maru *et al.*, 2021). English learners are sometimes unable to understand English successfully because of the use of idioms. However, idioms are

necessary, because they play an important role in language. Therefore, there is a great need to master idioms to promote communication and promote an innovative social interaction environment. It means that if English learners do not learn English idioms, they will never know when others use English. Otherwise, they cannot understand what the speaker is saying. Moreover, using idioms in conversations will be easier to listen to and attract.

Idioms can be found in daily English conversation, English books, and even English songs. In the songs, idioms can be found in the form of idiomatic expressions. Idiomatic expression is a complex vocabulary item whose meaning cannot be inferred from its various parts (Šarić, 2022). In other words, an idiomatic expression is a special expression, it is composed of a series of English words or phrases (Zeng & Bhat, 2021). These words or phrases have different meanings in literature or word by word. There are even some differences in using English idioms between Britain and the United States. The difference lies in the meaning, and use of phrases, or forms. Native English speakers often use idiomatic expressions in their daily speech.

In spoken language, idiom expression can be used in songs, and in writing, idiom expression can be expressed in literature. Its common use makes idiomatic expressions an interesting object to be studied. This study is designed to identify and describe the meaning of idiomatic expressions in the songs. The songs used in this study are 4 songs' lyrics from Taylor Swift's *Evermore* album. This album is chosen because the album is relatively new, released on December 2020. Furthermore, Taylor Swift is one of the most popular English singer and songwriter that has received many awards and recognition from around the globe.

Various studies have been conducted to analyze Swift's works from the linguistics perspective, especially from the idiomatic expressions area. Listiani (2015) analyzed the idiomatic expressions in the form of figurative language in Swift's *Speak Now*, an album released in 2015. Lazuardi (2022) investigated the idiomatic expressions in Swift's *Folklore*, an album released in April 2020. This study offers an analysis of another Swift's work released later on December 2020, *Evermore*. Since the object of this study is newer compared to previous studies, this study offers new findings on the idiomatic expressions used by Swift in her work. It opens the possibility to investigate the similarities and differences between the idiomatic expressions used by Swift in her works.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is descriptive qualitative research. According to Denzin and Lincoln as cited in Aspers and Corte (2019), "qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives." It means that qualitative research is used to understand and interpret the phenomenon in society, including the language phenomenon. This method is suitable for the purpose of this research in which the researchers attempt to identify and describe the meaning of the idiomatic expressions in Swift's songs in the *Evermore* album.

The primary data of this research are 4 songs lyric in Swift's *Evermore*. They are *Champagne Problems*, *Cowboy Like Me*, *Gold Rush*, and *Long Short Story*. Secondary sources such as academic articles, books, and websites are used to support the primary data. The data

collection process in this research is carried out using the note-taking technique and literature review. In collecting the data, the writers listened to the songs while reading the lyrics. The writers listened to songs again and again to identify the idiomatic expressions in the songs' lyrics. The obtained data are analyzed using the content analysis technique proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). The analysis is conducted in the following steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

After analyzing the data, it is found that there are 21 idiomatic expressions in Swift's *Evermore* album. The idiomatic expressions are found in the 4 songs' lyrics. The figure below summarizes the idiomatic expressions found in those songs.

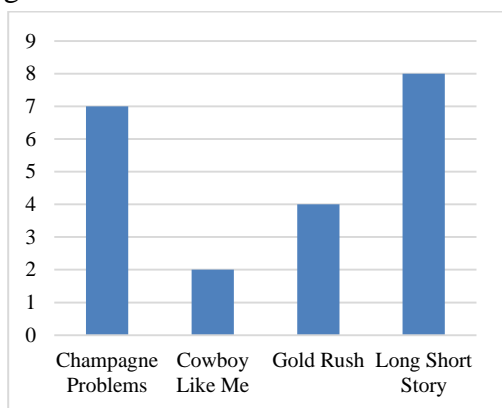


Figure 1. Numbers of Idiomatic Expressions in the Songs of Swift's *Evermore* Album

Based on Figure 1, it is found that the song *Long Short Story* has the most idiomatic expressions compared to the other songs. The song *Cowboy Like Me*, on the other hand, has the least idiomatic expressions.

Based on the types of idioms, the idiomatic expressions found in the songs in Swift's *Evermore* album can be divided into 4 types. They are the proverb idiom, phrasal compound idiom, Tournures

idiom, and Simile idiom. Figure 2 below shows the types of idioms in the songs of Swift's *Evermore* album.

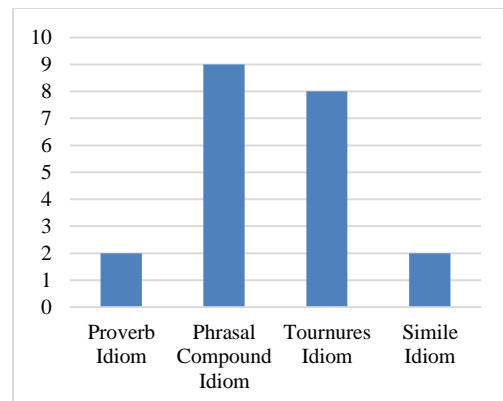


Figure 2. The Number of Idiomatic Expressions in the Songs of Swift's *Evermore* Album based on their types.

The phrasal compound idiom is the most common type of idiom found in *Evermore* by Taylor Swift. On the other hand, proverbs and simile idioms are the least common types of idioms found in Swift's *Evermore*.

After analyzing the data, the researchers found 21 idioms in Taylor Swift's songs on the album *Evermore*. Below is a collection of idioms in Taylor Swift's songs on the album *Evermore*:

1. Golden gates,
2. Midas touch,
3. Champagne problems,
4. Skeleton's in (someone's) closet,
5. Gold Rush,
6. Contrarian shit,
7. Have the nerve to deck the halls,
8. Someone's on their knees,
9. November flush,
10. This dorm was once a madhouse,
11. If the shoe fits,
12. Down the rabbit hole,
13. Keepin' score,
14. Tug of war,
15. Gray of my day-old tea,
16. Silent Sleepers,
17. Petty things,
18. Rare as the glimmer of comet in the sky,

19. The knife cuts both ways,
20. Cowboy like me,
21. Falling feels like flying till the bone crush.

The following is a table that contains a collection of idioms along with their types in some of Taylor Swift’s songs on the *Evermore* album.

Table 1. The Explanation of Idiomatic Expressions used in Swift’s *Evermore*

Idioms	Types of Idiom	Examples of idiom sentences in song lyrics	Meaning	The title of song
If the shoe fits	Proverb idioms	The knife cuts both ways if the shoe fits , walk in ‘til your high heels break	Merasa sedih dan bahagia bersamaan (dia senang lelaki ini muncul tapi sedih karena saat ini dia punya pasangan) jika cocok, jalani aja sampai hatiku hancur lagi	Long short story
Down the rabbit hole	Proverb idioms	And I fell from the pedestal right down the rabbit hole long short story, it was a bad a time	Dan aku terjebak dalam perseteruan itu singkat cerita itu adalah waktu yang buruk	Long short story
Golden gates	Phrasal Compound Idioms	Missing me at the golden gates they once held the keys to	Merindukan masalah cintaku aku sudah menentukan pilihan	Long short story
Keepin’ score	Phrasal compound idioms	No more keepin’ score now I just	Tak lagi mementingkan diri sendiri aku hanya	Long short story

		keep you warm (keep you warm)	ingin membuat mu nyaman (membuat mu nyaman)	
Tug of war	Tournures Idioms	No more tug of war now I just know there’s more (know there’s more)	Tak perlu lagi bertarung hanya ingin merasakan kebahagiaan	Long short story
Petty things	Phrasal Compound idioms	Past me I wanna tell you not to get lost in these petty things	Sudah cukup mencari perkara denganku aku ingin memberitahu jangan terlalu memikirkan masalah orang lain	long short story
Rare as the glimmer of comet in the sky	Simile idioms	and he’s passing by rare as the glimmer of a comet in the sky	Dan dia muncul membuatku merasakan apa itu cinta sejati	Long short story
The knife cuts both ways	Tournures idioms	The knife cuts both ways if the shoe fits, walk in it ‘til your high heels break	Merasa sedih dan bahagia bersamaan (dia senang lelaki ini muncul tapi sedih karena saat ini dia punya pasangan) jika cocok, jalani aja sampai hatiku hancur lagi	Long short story
Cowboy like me	Simile idioms	I’ve got some tricks up my sleeve takes one to know one	Aku selalu punya trik untuk menipu mangsa ternyata kau juga seorang	Cowboy like me

		you're a cowboy like me	penipu	
Falling feels like flying till the bone crush	Tournures idioms	I don't like that falling feels like flying 'til the bone crush	Aku tidak suka perasaan yang berlebihan ini sungguh sangat menyakitkan	Gold rush
Gray of my day old tea	Tournures idioms	and then it fades into the gray of my day old tea	Lalu obsesi itu mulai hilang dan aku merasa lelah	Gold rush
Contrarian shit	Phrasal compound idioms	At dinner parties I call you out on your contrarian shit	Aku ingin mengajakmu kencan tak peduli ada perbedaan antara kita	Gold rush
Silent sleepers	Phrasal Compound idioms	Bustling crowds or silent sleepers you're not sure which is worse	Ditolak dikeramai an atau menangis sendirian kau tak tahu mana yang lebih buruk	Champagne problems
November flush	Phrasal compound idioms	November flush and your flannel cured	Hubungan yang intim karena ku mengira kau adalah obatnya	champagne problems
Gold rush	Phrasal Compound idioms	so inviting I almost jump in but I don't like a gold rush , gold rush	Sangat menarik aku hampir terperdaya tapi aku tak suka bersaing dalam cinta	Gold rush
This dorm was once a madhouse	Tournures idioms	" This dorm was once a madhouse " I made a joke, "well, it's made for me"	Mereka bilang hubungan ini tidak waras aku bilang ya hubungan ini dikhususkan untukku	Champagne problems
Have the	Tournures	And soon	Dan segera	Champagne

nerve to deck the halls	idioms	they'll have the nerve to deck the halls	mereka akan melupakan rasa sakit yang mereka alami hari itu	problems
Someone's on their knees	Tournures idioms	Sometimes you just don't know the answer 'till someone's on their knees and asks you	Terkadang kau tak tahu jawabannya hingga seseorang benar-benar melamar mu	Champagne problems
Midas touch	Phrasal Compound idioms	Your midas touch on the chevy door	Hubungan kita terlihat indah namun tak berguna	Champagne problems
Skeleton in (someone's) closet	Tournures Idioms	And the skeletons in both our closets plotted hard to fuck this up	Masa lalu kita dipenuhi hal buruk membuat hubungan ini sulit	Cowboy like me
Champagne problems	Phrasal Compound idioms	crestfallen on the landing champagne problems	Begitu sakit dan kecewa keputusan yang sulit	Champagne problems

CONCLUSION

After the writers analyze Taylor Swift's song lyrics on the *Evermore* album which contains 4 songs. The authors conclude that the idiom found in whole songs in Taylor Swift's songs on the *Evermore* album are 21 idioms. It contains 2 proverb idiom, 9 phrasal compound idioms, 9 tournures idioms, and 2 simile idioms. The idiomatic expression found in Taylor Swift's songs on the *Evermore* album tells and expresses life problems that can be handled alone, and represents love. The idiomatic expressions found in Taylor Swift's songs

on the *Evermore* album can be used to communicate in everyday life. This can help promote a better understanding of English, especially in linguistics.

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