

**A STUDY OF SYSTEMIC VARIATION AND
FREQUENCY OF MODIFIED IDIOM IN FORBES
ASIA AND THE ECONOMIST**

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**A STUDY OF SYSTEMIC VARIATION AND
FREQUENCY OF MODIFIED IDIOM IN FORBES
ASIA AND THE ECONOMIST**

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	x
LIST OF APPENDICES	xii
ABSTRAK	xiii
ABSTRACT	xv
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background to The Study	3
1.1.1 Definition of idioms and its identification.....	4
1.1.2 Comprehension of Idiom	5
1.1.3 Modified Idiom	8
1.1.4 Language of Journalism.....	10
1.1.5 Business Magazine	12
1.2 Statement of Problem	13
1.3 Research Objectives.....	16
1.4 Research Questions.....	16
1.5 Scope of The Study.....	17
1.6 Significance of The Study.....	18
1.7 Limitations of The Study	19
1.8 Definition of Key Terms.....	20
1.8.1 Idiom.....	20
1.8.2 Modified Idioms	21

1.8.3	Comprehension of Idiom	21
1.8.4	Idiom Variation	21
1.8.5	Systemic Variation	21
1.8.6	Lexical Variation	22
1.8.7	Systematic Variation.....	22
1.8.8	Variation Within Frames	22
1.8.9	Familiarity of Idiom.....	22
1.8.10	Frequency of idiom.....	23
1.8.11	Forbes Asia	23
1.8.12	The Economist.....	23
CHAPTER 2	LITERATURE REVIEW	24
2.0	Introduction	24
2.1	Idiom and Its Use.....	24
2.1.1	Different Views of The Definitions and Classifications.....	24
2.1.2	The Distinction between Idiom and Other Figurative Speeches.....	34
2.1.3	Comprehension of Idiom	37
2.1.4	Comprehension of Modified Idiom	44
2.1.5	Conclusion on Idiom and Its Use	47
2.2	Modified Idiom.....	48
2.2.1	Creative Variation	50
2.2.2	Systemic Variation	51
2.3	Familiarity of Idiom.....	59
2.4	Business Magazines: ‘Forbes Asia’ and ‘The Economist’	62
2.4.1	Language of Journalism.....	63
2.4.2	The Economist.....	67
2.4.3	Forbes Asia	69
2.5	Related Studies of Modified Idiom	71

2.5.1	Creativity of Systemic Variation of Modified Idiom.....	71
2.5.2	Frequency of Modified Idiom and Language Acquisition... ..	73
2.5.3	A Processing of Idiom and Idiom modification.....	74
2.6	Conceptual Framework.....	75
2.7	Summary.....	79
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY		80
3.0	Introduction.....	80
3.1	Research Design.....	81
3.1.1	Textual Analysis of Case Study.....	82
3.1.2	Model for Modified Idiom Identification and Verification	83
3.2	Research Instrument and Case Study	86
3.2.1	Research Instrument of the study.....	86
3.2.2	Case Study.....	87
3.3	Research Sample	88
3.3.1	Sample Size and Saturation.....	88
3.4	Research Procedures.....	90
3.4.1	Data collection procedure	92
3.4.2	Data analysis procedure	95
3.5	Validity And Reliability.....	97
3.6	Summary.....	99
CHAPTER 4 RESULT AND FINDINGS		101
4.0	Introduction.....	101
4.1	Data Analysis	101
4.2	Results of the Study.....	103
4.2.1	RQ1: What Types of Systemic Variation of Modified Idiom Can Be Found In 'Forbes Asia' Magazine?.....	103

4.2.2	RQ2: How Frequent Are Each Type of Modified Idioms According to Its Systemic Variation (Lexical Variation, Systematic Variation, And Variation Within Frames) Used In ‘Forbes Asia’ Magazine?	113
4.2.3	RQ3: What Types of Systemic Variation Of Modified Idiom Can Be Found In The Economist Magazine?	118
4.2.4	RQ4: How frequent are each type of modified idioms according to its systemic variation (Lexical variation, systematic variation, and variation within frames) used in ‘The Economist’ magazine?	130
4.2.5	RQ5: What Are the Differences of Types of Systemic Variation of Modified Idiom Used In Forbes Asia And The Economist Magazines?	134
4.2.6	Discussion Of Mean And Standard Deviation Of The Data	135
4.3	Summary	138
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....		139
5.0	Introduction	139
5.1	Summary and Response to Research Questions	139
5.1.1	RQ1: What types of systemic variation of modified idioms can be found in ‘Forbes Asia’ magazine?	140
5.1.2	RQ2: How frequent are each type of modified idioms according to its systemic variation (Lexical variation, systematic variation, and variation within frames) used in ‘Forbes Asia’ magazine?	141
5.1.3	RQ3: What types of systemic variation of modified idiom can be found in The Economist magazine?	142
5.1.4	RQ4: How frequent are each type of modified idioms according to its systemic variation (Lexical variation, systematic variation, and variation within frames) used in ‘The Economist’ magazine?	143
5.1.5	RQ5: What are the differences of types of systemic variation of modified idiom used in Forbes Asia and The Economist magazines?	144
5.2	Discussion of the Findings	146

5.2.1	Discussion of Familiarity of Modified Idiom from The Study of Forbes Asia Context.....	146
5.2.2	Discussion of Familiarity of Modified Idiom from the Study of the Economist Context.....	149
5.2.3	Discussion of The Difference of The Types of Modified Idiom Found in The Context of Forbes Asia and the Economist.....	151
5.3	Implication of the study	152
5.4	Suggestion for Further Research	153
5.5	Conclusion	154
REFERENCES		157
APPENDICES		

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
Table 2.1.1	Summary the different idea of defining idiom presented by scholars.....	33
Table 2.2.2	Different types of lexical variation.....	52
Table 3.3.1	Population and sample size of the study.....	90
Table 4.2.1(a)	Modified idiom with noun variation appeared in the corpus of Forbes Asia.....	104
Table 4.2.1(b)	Modified idiom with verb variation appeared in the corpus of Forbes Asia.....	105
Table 4.2.1(c)	Modified idiom with adjective variation appeared in the corpus of Forbes Asia.....	107
Table 4.2.1(d)	Modified idiom with shortening appeared in the corpus of Forbes Asia.....	108
Table 4.2.1(e)	Modified idiom with expansion appeared in the corpus of Forbes Asia.....	110
Table 4.2.1(f)	Modified idiom with grammatical modification appeared in the corpus of Forbes Asia.....	111
Table 4.2.1(g)	Modified idiom with coordination appeared in the corpus of Forbes Asia.....	112
Table 4.2.1(h)	Modified idiom with variation within frame appeared in the corpus of Forbes Asia.....	112
Table 4.2.2	The frequency of types of modified idiom in Forbes Asia.....	114

Table 4.2.3(a)	Modified idiom with noun variation appeared in the corpus of The Economist.....	119
Table 4.2.3(b)	Modified idiom with verb variation appeared in the corpus of The Economist.....	121
Table 4.2.3(c)	Modified idiom with adjective variation appeared in the corpus of The Economist.....	123
Table 4.2.3(d)	Modified idiom with shortening appeared in the corpus of The Economist.....	124
Table 4.2.3(e)	Modified idiom with expansion appeared in the corpus of The Economist.....	126
Table 4.2.3(f)	Modified idiom with grammatical modification appeared in the corpus of The Economist.....	127
Table 4.2.3(g)	Modified idiom with coordination appeared in the corpus of The Economist.....	128
Table 4.2.3(h)	Modified idiom with variation within frame appeared in the corpus of The Economist.....	129
Table 4.2.4	The frequency of each types of modified idiom in The Economist.....	130
Table 4.2.5	The difference of modified idiom in Forbes Asia and The Economist.....	134
Table 4.2.6	Data, Mean and Standard deviation of the study.....	136

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 2.1.4(a) Comprehension strategy of modified idiom.....	46
Figure 2.2.2(d) Summary of types of systemic variation.....	59
Figure 2.6 Conceptual framework of the study.....	78
Figure 3.1.2 Model of modified idiom identification and verification.....	85
Figure 3.4 Research procedure of the study.....	92
Figure 3.4.2 Data analysis procedure of modified idiom.....	95
Figure 3.4.2(a) Steps of implementing data analysis.....	97
Figure 3.5 Triangulation of data collection process.....	98
Figure 3.6 Summary of research procedures.....	100
Figure 4.2.2(a) Types of modified idiom in Forbes Asia.....	115
Figure 4.2.2(b) Frequency of Types of modified idiom in Forbes Asia in number.....	117
Figure 4.2.2(c) Frequency of Types of modified idiom in Forbes Asia in percentage.....	117
Figure 4.2.4(a) Types of modified idiom in The Economist.....	132
Figure 4.2.4(b) Frequency of Types of modified idiom in The Economist in number.....	133

Figure 4.2.4(c)	Frequency of Types of modified idiom in The Economist in percentage.....	133
Figure 5.5	Summary of findings through concept map.....	156

LIST OF APPENDICES

- APPENDIX A Modified Idiom in Forbes Asia Issue January 2018
- APPENDIX B Modified Idiom in Forbes Asia Issue March2018
- APPENDIX C Modified Idiom in Forbes Asia Issue April 2018
- APPENDIX D Modified Idiom in Forbes Asia Issue May2018
- APPENDIX E Modified Idiom in Forbes Asia Issue June 2018
- APPENDIX F Modified Idiom in The Economist Issue January 20th-26th 2018
- APPENDIX G Modified Idiom in The Economist Issue February 10th- 16th 2018
- APPENDIX H Modified Idiom in The Economist Issue Febuary 17th-23rd 2018
- APPENDIX I Modified Idiom in The Economist Issue May 12th- 18th 2018
- APPENDIX J Modified Idiom in The Economist Issue May 19th- 25th 2018

KAJIAN VARIASI SISTEMIK DAN FREKUENSI IDIOM

DALAM FORBES ASIA DAN THE ECONOMIST

ABSTRAK

Idiom yang diubah suai atau idiom yang bervariasi menimbulkan banyak masalah semantik terutama kepada penutur bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua dan bahasa asing. Ramai penutur bahasa Inggeris bukan asli sering mendapati diri mereka gagal untuk memahami makna penuh mesej semasa membaca konteksnya dengan idiom yang diubah suai, dan salah satu sebab berlakunya salah faham terhadap mesej kerana tidak biasa dengan idiom yang diubah suai. Penutur bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua dan bahasa asing tidak biasa dengan perubahan bentuk idiom dan kemudian melakukan kesilapan semasa cuba memahami mesej. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan mengkaji penggunaan dan kekerapan variasi sistemik idiom yang diubah suai dalam bentuk kajian kes, termasuk “Forbes Asia” dan “The Economist”. Kajian ini menganalisis penggunaan dan kekerapan idiom yang diubah suai yang merupakan faktor yang mempengaruhi kebiasaan dan pemahaman idiom untuk menentukan kebiasaan pengguna bahasa terhadap idiom yang diubah suai. Kajian kes deskriptif dijalankan untuk mengkaji jenis dan kekerapan idiom yang diubah suai yang muncul dalam konteks kajian kes. Analisis kualitatif melalui rangka kerja analisis teks oleh Glucksberg (2001) tentang idiom yang diubah suai telah digunakan. Sebanyak 100 idiom yang diubah suai daripada konteks “Forbes Asia” dan “The

Economist” dikumpulkan melalui pensampelan bertujuan, memandangkan kajian ini bertujuan memberikan tumpuan kepada set ciri-ciri tertentu. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa semua jenis variasi sistemik idiom yang diubah suai muncul dalam korpus. Pembaca “Forbes Asia” lebih biasa dan memahami idiom yang digugurkan daripada jenis pengubahsuaian idiom yang lain, manakala pembaca “The Economist” mempunyai lebih kebiasaan dan pemahaman terhadap idiom dengan variasi kata benda dan kata kerja daripada jenis pengubahsuaian idiom yang lain. Oleh itu, galakkan penggunaan variasi idiom yang diubah suai harus memfokus pada jenis variasi tanpa atau kurang melibatkan kebiasaan. Secara ringkasnya, analisis kajian ini memberikan pemahaman tentang kebiasaan terhadap idiom yang diubah suai melalui kekerapan pelbagai jenis idiom yang diubah suai. Hasil kajian ini diharapkan dapat meningkatkan kesedaran pengguna bahasa terutama penutur Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua dan bahasa asing terhadap keadaan idiom yang diubah suai dalam konteks, pemahaman idiom yang diubah suai dan penggunaan jenis idiom yang diubah suai.

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IDIOM IN FORBES ASIA AND THE ECONOMIST**

ABSTRACT

Modified idiom or idiom with variation pose many semantic problems especially to non-native speakers of English language. It appeared that many non-native speakers of English language often find themselves loss in understanding the full meaning of the message while reading the context with modified idiom, and one of the reason of misunderstanding the message is the lack of familiarity of modified idiom. Non-native speakers of English language are not familiar with the change of idiom's form and then, face the error in understanding the messages. Therefore, this study is designed to investigate types and the frequency of systemic variation of modified idiom in the context of case study, includes Forbes Asia and The Economist. The study analysed the frequency of modified idiom which are factors that affect familiarity and idiom comprehension in order to determine language users' familiarity with modified idioms. A descriptive case study was conducted to investigate types and the frequency of modified idioms that appeared in the context of case study. Qualitative analysis through Glucksberg's (2001) textual analysis framework on modified idioms was applied. One hundred modified idioms from the context of Forbes Asia and The Economist were collected via purposive sampling as the research aimed to focus on particular set of characteristics. The result of the study

has indicated that all types of systemic variation of modified idiom appeared in the corpus. Readers of Forbes will be more familiar and understand omitted idiom than other types of modification of idiom, while readers of The Economist will be more familiar and understand idiom with noun and verb variation than other types of modification of modified idiom. Thus, the promotion of variation of modified idioms should focus more on types of variations with no or less emergence of familiarity. In summary, the analysis of this study has provided an understanding of modified idioms familiarity through the frequency of different types modified idiom. The outcomes of this study hopefully will raise an awareness of the state of modified idioms in the context, understanding of modified idioms and usage of types of modified idioms to language users especially to non-native English speakers.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Language is essential in every aspects of everyday life. It is used as a communication tool to express thoughts, ideas, and feelings between people (Yule, 2010). Nowadays, language channels such as print media and written-texts are frequently used to connect the information (Labov, 2010). The main reason for using written-text or print media is due to technology that has become an important feature of people's interactions. However, messages that are delivered in written form seem to be complex as some contents can be difficult to interpret and may lead to misunderstanding (Guffey & Almonte, 2010).

Accordingly, comprehension of a message is an important part of interpreting the information. Failure to comprehend messages may occur when a receiver cannot connect the information with the stored information of one lexical's knowledge. Literature has indicated that phonology and meaning mismatch are the first and second reason of the comprehension failure, respectively (Labov, 2010). Therefore, in order to avoid any misunderstanding, it is significant to study the process of interpreting the meaning of a message through the comprehension of language's components. As a result, language users are to gain the ability to interpret the messages that are transmitted via language in order to avoid any failure in communication and improve their language proficiency.

According to Yule (2010), the mechanisms of sound (phonetic), grammar (syntax), word (lexis), meaning (semantic), uses (pragmatic) and connected text (discourse) have to be learned in order to use the language. It is also essential to comprehend the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences in order to communicate effectively with others. Accordingly, figurative speeches such as idioms in many speeches and papers are needed to be understood in order to improve proficiency of language users (Yule, 2010).

Idioms or idiomatic expressions are figurative speech contains a small group of words with certain definitions. There are many idiom definitions in literature (see i.e. Fraser, 1970; Fernando, 1978; Grant & Breur, 2004; Hockett, 1958; Katz & Postal, 1963; Makkai, 1972; Wood, 1981; Moon, 1998, Weinreich, 1969). For example, Wood (1981) defines idiom as *“a complex expression which is wholly non-compositional in meaning and wholly non-productive in form”* (p.95). Generally, idiom is an expression with a figurative meaning and idiom's meaning is unrelated to its literal meaning. An idiom has an actual meaning that is completely different from its literal meaning and the meaning does not come from its individual components. For instance, idiom ‘spill the beans’ means to reveal the secret or surprise, which has no relation with the meaning of each word; spill or beans. Therefore, the comprehension of idiom is crucial since the figurative language of an idiom cannot be easily understood by many non-native speakers (Moon, 1998).

For these reasons, idioms have caused difficulties for language users, especially to non-native speakers of English language, as it is a complex form of language and needs high proficiency to interpret the expressions. Moreover, idioms used in everyday contexts

often have a variety of forms. The change of the language has caused users to replace the original lexis of idioms with different words, and this has changed the lexis of the idioms. According to Moon (1998), idioms can vary in lexical and grammatical terms. For instance, idiom 'the *calm* before the storm' can be modified with synonymous word to 'the *lull* before the storm' (Moon, 1998, p. 120).

Likewise, a change in the idiom's context has influenced its comprehension, especially to the non-native speakers. Non-native English speakers often face difficulties in identifying the meaning of a modified idiom due to a lack of familiarity. Since being familiar with idioms is an important factor influencing idiom comprehension, the lack of understanding may occur once language users lack such familiarity (Moon, 1998). As a consequence, understanding idioms' variations and the change within their contexts has become an important issue as the progressive change in idioms' contexts has an impact to the understanding of the expression (Labov, 2010)

1.1 Background to The Study

Idioms are expressions with a verbal image which shows the creative use of the language in delivering the messages. Idioms are used by speakers or writers in order to make language more exciting and meaningful in both writing and speech (Moon, 1998). Likewise, learning idioms is one of the challenges in learning a language as idioms can result in different understanding if they are only translated word to word. Language users are required to comprehend idioms in order to avoid the any misunderstanding. Hence, it

is significant for language users to have a good comprehension of idioms in order to receive the accurate meaning of the messages and to avoid the errors in understanding the language (Liu, 2008).

1.1.1 Definition of idioms and its identification

There has been some disagreement and confusion among scholars (Fraser, 1970; Fernando, 1978; Grant & Breur, 2004; Hockett, 1958; Katz & Postal, 1963; Makkai, 1972; Wood, 1981; Moon, 1998; Weinreich, 1969) concerning the definition of idioms. Idioms have been defined from different perspectives by scholars. Some scholars have defined idioms based on idiom's form or structure (Hockett, 1958; Katz & Postal, 1963; Makkai, 1972; Weinreich, 1969) and some have defined idioms based on the meaning of the context (Fraser, 1970; Fernando, 1978; Grant & Breur, 2004; Wood, 1981; Moon, 1998). However, the common basic definition describes idioms as the expression or group of words that, as a unit, have a special meaning that is different from the literal meaning of each words (Brenner, 2003).

Apparently, there are also arguments that idioms may not always be a group of words which contain two words as defined by many scholars; (Fraser, 1970; Fernando, 1978; Makkai, 1972; Wood, 1981; Moon, 1998). Idioms can also have only one lexis, for example, word 'scratch'. Scratch can be identified as an idiom since it is not only defined as an action of cut or damage a surface with something sharp, but it can have an idiomatic meaning as money (Brenner, 2003). Moreover, idioms do not always have a figurative

meaning that differs from literal meanings. Idioms may have a meaning close to the literal meaning of the phrases. For example, idiom 'close down', where the expression can be identified almost literally as 'close' but it generally implies the idiomatic meaning of 'close or quit permanently'. Thus, understanding an idiom is important in order to identify the accurate meaning of the expressions (Brenner, 2003).

1.1.2 Comprehension of Idiom

Idioms' comprehension is a very complex process and a very challenging research issue for many linguists (Liu, 2008). Native and non-native speakers of English language are different in the process of comprehending and interpreting idioms. Liu (2008) proposes that the strategies used to comprehend idioms by native speakers of a language can be divided into five groups:

(1) Literal first hypothesis: idioms can be understood by interpreting the literal meaning of lexicons.

(2) Lexical representation hypothesis: native English speakers can access to the idiomatic meaning of an idiom before the literal one as the idiom resides in users' mental lexicon.

(3) Direct access model: this is an extension of the lexical representation model; however, in this model native speakers recognise the expression as an idiom and access directly to the meaning of the idiom.

(4) The compositional analysis hypothesis: idioms are treated by accessing to individual word meaning and are connected with the pragmatic interpretation through the string of the idiomatic meaning.

(5) The dual idiom representation model: it is a process of combining the compositional analysis and the memory retrieval hypothesis (the first three hypotheses).

On the other hand, the process of comprehending idioms by non-native speakers does not seem to conform to any of the strategies used by native English speakers. However, non-native speakers of English language use 'heuristic approach' to understand an idiom (Liu, 2008, p.73). Heuristic approach refers to how idioms are treated as a problem and solved by using a variety of strategies such as pragmatic knowledge or contextual information to interpret the meaning of idioms. Thus, the process of comprehending idioms' meaning among non-native English speakers is more complex than native English speakers (Liu, 2008). Furthermore, in order to comprehend idioms in English, there are two main factors that affect the comprehension: the use of idiom and the users' language proficiency (Liu, 2008).

Using an idiom is concerned with familiarity of the idiom, transparency in meaning, and the context of use. These three factors affect its comprehension in terms of the use of the idiom in the language. As for the use of idioms, familiarity is one of the important features that influence idioms' comprehension. Idiom familiarity refers to the frequency of the expression which has been encountered by language users, and it has an

impact on the recognition of the expression in one's memories (Herrmann, 2008). Accordingly, the more frequent the words appear in the language, the more familiarity a person has to the expressions. Therefore, familiarity is considered as an important factor that influences idioms' comprehension. Familiar idioms can be interpreted faster than unfamiliar ones. (Mantyla, 2004).

Besides familiarity, transparency in meaning or semantic analysability also has an impact on the way idioms are understood. Semantic analysability of idioms is the possibility of analysing idioms' context through the meaning of each lexis. It refers to the way the meaning of individual word contributes to the overall figurative meaning of idioms (Liu, 2008). For example, non-native English speakers interpret the meaning of idiom 'be in the dark' as 'not knowing anything' by comprehending words' meanings; 'dark' suggests that a person cannot see anything, which refers to the meaning of the idiom's phrase (Liu, 2008).

Context of use is another feature that influences idioms' comprehension. Context of use refers to the usefulness of overall context in revealing the meaning of the idiom. The context where an idiom occurs may assist language users to comprehend the meaning of the idiom phrases by providing a picture of the overall meaning. It may also provide a clue of the idiom's meaning (Liu, 2008).

In summary, idiom's familiarity (how familiar users are with idioms and are able to store those idioms as a lexicon to their knowledge), semantic analysability (how users

connect the meaning of each word to the meaning of idiom), and context of use (how overall context helps language users guess the meaning of idioms) are factors that affect the comprehension of idioms.

1.1.3 Modified Idiom

One important feature of idioms is their variation. Idioms or idiomatic expressions are not always fixed expressions as many researches have proposed (Liu, 1998). Apparently, idioms can have a change within the context as language users wish to deliberately create the effect to the language. The variation of an idiom means the possibility to substitute words with its form while still keeping the idiomatic meaning of the expression. Likewise, some idioms show variations within their form, except invariant idioms or idioms which do not allow a single word to change such 'give up' or 'up to date' (Liu, 2008).

Modified idioms, which produced from idiom's variation, were created due to a variety of reasons including language use creativity. Note the following examples: 'a skeleton in the closet' to 'a skeleton in the cupboard', or 'a bad apple' to 'a rotten apple' (Liu, 2008, p.36). Meanwhile, the change of idioms' form has produced modified idioms (Omazi, 2008)

Variation is a part of semantic analysability which can influence idiom comprehension. Variation of idiom can be in terms of lexical or grammatical change. Idiom Variation can be broadly divided into two types: systemic variation and creative variation

(Szczepaniak, 2006). According to Liu, systemic variation can be sub-divided into three types; lexical variation, systematic variation, and variations within frames (Liu, 2008). Lexical variation comprises noun variation, verb variation, adjective variation, particle variation, conjunction variation, and variation between English varieties. Systematic variation comprises modification with expansion, modification with shortening, grammatical modification, and coordination (Moon, 1998; Vrbinc & Vrbinc, 2011).

A 'modified idiom' is a term that refers to an idiomatic expression which presents a variation within its form (Omazi, 2008). Idiom variation is the process of changing different lexis of the original form while still keeping the idiomatic meaning of the expression. The substitution can be synonymous or antonymous (Moon, 1998). For example, idiom 'hide your head in the sand' has changed to 'lift your head in the sand', where the word 'hide' has been replaced with word 'lift'. These two words are opposite in meaning but still keep the expression's meaning idiomatically (Vrbinc & Vrbinc, 2011, p.80). Moreover, the change of an idiom can also happen in terms of shortening or extending the expression from the original form. For example, idiom 'a bird in hand is worth two in the bush' can be shortened to only 'a bird in hand' (Liu, 2008, p.37)

Consequently, Changing the forms of idioms, which produces modified idiom, may cause misunderstanding to non-native English speakers. A change in idioms' form has an influence on the recognition skill of language users as the expressions are not familiar to them and lead to misunderstanding. Likewise, modified idiom is the creative use of a

language that is still not very well recognised among non-native English speakers (Omazi, 2008).

Moreover, regarding the use of modified idioms, modified idioms are a creative use of language that are frequently found in language of journalism, including the headlines of news or the content of magazine articles. It is a figurative speech with the intention to produce a stylistic language to the context (Glaser, 1986). Accordingly, modified idioms are a figurative speech in many modern speeches or written contexts in order to enhance the memorability of a message. Modified idioms influence the context by drawing the attention to the listeners or readers and that is why it is mostly found in the language of journalism (Omazi, 2008). For example, Private Eye magazine used a modified idiom: *“The Treasury will soon have to lift its head from the sand and face up to the multi-billion pound costs of companies challenging British tax law in the European courts. (PE: 14/04-27/04/06; p. 6)”*. Based on this example, instead of ‘hide (one) head in the sand’ which is the original idiom found in idiom dictionaries, the journalist changed the idiom’s form to ‘lift its head from the sand’ (Vrbinc & Vrbinc, 2011, p.80).

1.1.4 Language of Journalism

Language of journalism is a communication between people and organization. It is a tool for the interaction between language and the society. Language of journalism has been applied in many communication channels such as broadcast television, publications, or

print media. Meanwhile, business magazine is one section of a print media which contains language of journalism (Fer, 2016).

Generally, language of print media has to be concise, objective, and simple. The simplicity of language is significant for journalistic language as the information will be presented in a way that allows everyone to read and understand. Apparently, an important feature of journalistic language, especially in print media, is the simplicity of the language. Language of journalism has to provide news or facts in a clear and concise way by using simple language. The language should contain enough information from which readers can understand what happen even in a fixed space of print media (Fer, 2016). Therefore, lead paragraph as well as word choice have to be stimulated. Language and word choice in journalistic language have to be carefully selected in order to create the language that grabs readers' attention (Fedler, 2005).

According to Jeffrey (2016), there are three types of writing style in journalistic language: expository, descriptive, and persuasive. Each writing style is used for different purposes. For example, descriptive language focuses more on creating image in readers' mind, while expository language is more about giving facts to support the statement (Jeffrey, 2016),

After all, journalistic context is important as it is express the informative messages to the readers. The information should be delivered with an effective language and word choice. Language style has to show the interest of the messages. Therefore, language in media or news often includes journalistic language features that involve verbal expressions

or figurative sense within the context, and the creative use of language such as modified idioms is used very often in the context of journalism (Glaser, 1986).

1.1.5 Business Magazine

Magazine is one of the media platforms with journalistic language. It is a type of media print that tends to be more specialised than other media platforms (broadcast journalism or newspaper journalism). Magazine is a media platform driven by mutual interest, shared beliefs, or common identity of certain topics (Smith & Higgins, 2013). Business magazine is a type of publication for sharing the information related to business (Loiko, 2011).

Business magazines provide the information related to investment, business trend, cooperation, and merging partnership deals of companies around the world. Many business magazines provide informative articles related to the analysis of the products and companies. Accordingly, magazine's readers are getting the benefit from the information of the articles (Loiko, 2011).

Forbes Asia and The Economist are a few examples of the famous and well-known business magazines. Forbes Asia and The Economist are always ranked in top ten most read business magazines among the readers of English business magazine with most subscriptions (Columbres, 2016).

Likewise, it is essential for readers to accurately comprehend the meaning of the messages in business magazines. Understanding the message is essential since information

gained from the content of magazine can influence any potential change in the business (Whitehead, 1993). However, language of journalism in business magazines often contain figurative speeches including modified idioms. Thus, understanding modified idioms is significant to comprehend the meaning of the messages.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Modified idioms or idioms with variation pose many semantic problems especially to non-native English speakers (Moon, 1998). It appeared that many non-native English speakers often find themselves lost in understanding the full meaning of the message while reading the context with modified idioms. Modified idioms that presented in the language have caused misunderstanding to many non-native English speakers. The variation from word changing of idioms has produced a certain degree of confusion and this has led to errors in understanding the message (McCarthy, 2010).

Apparently, one of the reasons of losing the understanding of message is the misunderstanding of modified idiom's meaning (Moon, 1998). According to Moon (1998), many non-native English speakers face a difficulty in identifying the accurate meaning of modified idioms due to the lack of familiarity. Non-native English speakers are not familiar with the changes of idiom's form and therefore face a difficulty in understanding the messages (Moon, 1998).

The outcome of familiarity to modified idioms is that the interpretation of modified idioms' meaning can be processed faster compared to unfamiliar idiom (Moon,1998).

However, familiarity, which is one of the factors that impact the comprehension of idioms, is influenced by the frequency of their occurrence in the language. The more frequent language users found modified idioms in the language, the more familiarity they have with the expressions (Sameer, 2013). Since the frequency of modified idioms in the language indicates the familiarity and the comprehension of modified idioms, exploring the frequency of modified idioms is significant in order to understand the familiarity of modified idioms. Therefore, the investigation of the frequency of modified idioms that appear in the context can determine language users' familiarity with modified idioms.

However, modified idioms are idiom variants that can be modified in terms of lexical variation and grammatical structure and such a variation is called systemic variation which includes lexical variation, systematic variation, and variation within frames (Moon, 1998). Understanding the use of modified idioms according to their systemic variation will provide the insight into language users' level of familiarity. Moreover, systemic variation of modified idioms is an area of analysis which has not been deeply explored by previous studies (Longlotz, 2006). Hence, identifying the frequency of systemic variation of modified idioms will provide the insight into the understanding of familiarity with modified idioms.

Moreover, concerning the investigation of modified idioms, language of journalism, which includes business magazines, often contains modified idioms in the context. It is a language that requires attention from the readers, and modified idioms often appear in this type of language (McCarthy, 2010). Moreover, investigating the type of

systemic variation of modified idioms in the context of journalism has not been much reported in the literature. In fact, no collection of modified idioms has been recorded as previous research has focused more on the purpose of pedagogy (Anwar, Tahir & Qureshi, 2018). Likewise, the use of types of modified idiom has not been indicated in the previous research. Such investigation indeed will provide insight into the understanding of the types of modified idioms, and the study of frequency of modified idioms will indicate degree of familiarity of modified idiom. Thus, this study aims to explore the use of each type of systemic variation of modified idioms in the context of business magazines which comprise language of journalism, and Forbes Asia and The Economist were selected as the contexts of the analysis.

In summary, understanding modified idioms appears to be difficult for many non-native English speakers who often face misunderstanding and misinterpretation of idiom's meaning as they lack a familiarity with modified idioms. Thus, this study aims to examine the frequency of each type of modified idioms that appear in the context of journalism. The purpose of the study is to provide a better understanding of the familiarity to modified idioms. Therefore, the contexts of Forbes Asia and The Economist were chosen for the present study since language of journalism contains many modified idioms. Accordingly, the types of modified idioms that mostly cause misunderstanding will be reported as the results of the study.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

1. To categorise modified idioms which appear in 'Forbes Asia' magazine with its systemic variation (lexical variation, systematic variation, variation within frames).
2. To identify the frequency of modified idioms used in 'Forbes Asia' magazine according to their types of systemic variation.
3. To categorise modified idioms which appear in 'The Economist' magazine with its systemic variation (lexical variation, systematic variation, variation within frames).
4. To identify the frequency of modified idioms used in 'The Economist' magazine according to their types of systemic variation.
5. To compare the differences of types of systemic variation of modified idioms found in 'Forbes Asia' and 'The Economist' magazines.

1.4 Research Questions

In the light of statement of problem above, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What types of systemic variation of modified idioms can be found in 'Forbes Asia' magazine?
2. How frequent is each type of modified idioms according to their systemic variation (lexical variation, systematic variation, and variation within frames) used in 'Forbes Asia' magazine?

3. What types of systemic variation of modified idioms can be found in The Economist magazine?
4. How frequent is each type of modified idioms according to their systemic variation (lexical variation, systematic variation, and variation within frames) used in 'The Economist' magazine?
5. What are the differences of types of systemic variation of modified idioms used in Forbes Asia and The Economist magazines?

1.5 Scope of The Study

This study emphasises modified idioms in one particular field that has been only explored by few previous studies (Anwar, Tahir & Qureshi, 2018). The present study explores modified idioms that have appeared in the journalistic language of English business magazines, namely Forbes Asia and The Economist. The rational of choosing the journalistic context is that many current studies of the journalistic context are more focusing on reviewing and identifying media content; however, there is still a gap in research on the linguistic study of the journalistic context (Perrin, 2013). Therefore, the analysis of modified idioms of the journalistic context is chosen as the area of the present study.

Moreover, language of journalism is an interesting area to conduct the analysis of idiom. Modified idiom are believed to be mostly found in the context of journalism since the language of journalism requires the attention from the readers (McCarthy, 2010). The creative use of language, which includes modified idioms, is being used by the writers of

magazines with the intention to make sentences more vibrant and stylistic which in turn increase the occurrence of modified idioms in the language (Glaser, 1986).

Moreover, the motive of choosing business magazines is that business magazines are appealing to their readers nowadays. In today's economic trend, business magazines are not only interesting to business people but they are also appealing to regular readers who would like to follow the trend of business world. Apparently, a business magazine is a type of magazine that is ranked in the top five magazines which are read by magazine readers along with other types of magazines ("top magazines by category", 2005). Thus, the popularity of business magazine is the reason to select this field of publication. Likewise, in this study, two business magazines with different types of writing style will be used as a fundamental source for data analysis: Forbes Asia and The Economist magazines.

1.6 Significance of The Study

The findings of the present study are supposed to present a guideline of types modified idioms found in context of journalism. This guideline will show the present of different types of systemic variation of modified idioms in the journalistic context, and the frequency of their occurrence. Accordingly, those findings will reveal the familiarity of modified idioms among language users in the light of the frequency of their occurrence in the context. The study provides a better picture of the comprehension of modified idioms that affected by the familiarity of the expressions.

Accordingly, the present analyses will contribute to the understanding of the familiarity of modified idioms, which influences the comprehension of modified idioms

which were proposed by Liu (2008). The results of this analysis will further indicate the difficulty of the understanding of modified idioms. The outcomes of this study hopefully raise an awareness of the state of modified idioms in the context and the possible promotions of types of modified idioms to language users especially to non-native English speakers. It might help minimise the difficulty of comprehending modified idioms in the light of the familiarity of the expressions.

1.7 Limitations of The Study

Apparently, there are some unavoidable limitations during the analysis. The first limitation of the study is the area of the research. This study has been designed to only focus on one particular field, which is the journalistic context of business magazines, and has not included other types of magazines. However, the study is advantageous by examining this particular field as it is a type of context which contains abundant modified idioms. Likewise, the study will provide a group of modified idioms that can contribute to the modified idioms of the literature in general.

Second limitation is related to the focus of the study, which is limited to the systemic variation of modified idioms. As modified idioms can be broadly divided into two types of variations (systemic variation and creative variation). However, it was not possible to conduct an analysis of creative variation due to the whole expressions of creative variation are rephrased or reorganised with complex changes that threaten the expressions. Therefore, the study will only focus on systemic variation and their subunits

(lexical variation, systemic variation, and variation within frames) that allow the study to focus on the surface change of the expressions.

The last limitation is the coverage of all types of journalistic writing style. This study has chosen Forbes Asia and The Economist as a case study; however, the articles of the two magazines are only written in expository and descriptive language. Persuasive language that appears on advertisement pages of two magazines (Forbes Asia and The Economist) will not be covered in the analysis since their advertisement pages are not written by magazines' writers. As this analysis proposes to examine the contents of Forbes Asia and The Economist, all the contents in the analysis should be written on the basis of the same writing policy. Therefore, advertisement pages will be not covered as they are created by the outsources (products' owners).

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

1.8.1 Idiom

Idiom or idiomatic expression refers to an expression that comprises at least two lexical items whose components cannot be modified or vary only within definable limits (Fernando, 1978). For this operational definition, 'original idiom' refers to the original form of an idiom which is established in a phraseological dictionary or an idiom dictionary.

1.8.2 Modified Idioms

Modified idiom refers to an idiomatic expression which presents the variation within its form. It is a compressed version of the original form of an idiom and new contexts (Omazi, 2008).

1.8.3 Comprehension of Idiom

Comprehension of idiom is the process of understanding an idiom and its use. It is the process of interpreting the use and the meaning of the idiom (Cacciari & Tobossi, 2014).

1.8.4 Idiom Variation

The variation of an idiom means the possibility to substitute one word or several words in the original form. It is a different form of the idiom besides what is recorded and prescribed in dictionaries (Moon, 1998).

1.8.5 Systemic Variation

Systemic variation is the modifications or changes within the constraints of the lexicological or phraseological system of an idiom (Glaser, 1986). There are three types of systemic variation, namely lexical variation, systematic variation, and variation within frames (Moon, 1998; Vrbinc & Vrbinc, 2011).

1.8.6 Lexical Variation

Lexical variation is a sub-unit of systemic variation. It is the substitution of one or more words in the idiom's original form by another word, which usually has something in common with the replaced words (Moon, 1998; Urbinc & Urbinc, 2011)

1.8.7 Systematic Variation

Systemic variation is a type of idiom variation which is produced via a change in the grammatical structure of the expression (Liu, 2008). Systematic variation includes a process that weakens the idiom's frozenness. It is a grammatical and regular alteration of the original idiom's form (Moon, 1998; Urbinc & Urbinc, 2011).

1.8.8 Variation Within Frames

Variation within frames is a sub-unit of systemic variation with a change within the fixed frame. The modification will maintain the same fixed form of the original idiom with no semantic connection (Moon, 1998).

1.8.9 Familiarity of Idiom

Familiarity of idiom is the ability to recognise an idiomatic expression from one's memory. It is influenced by the frequency of the expressions that occurs in a language (Herrmann, 2008).

1.8.10 Frequency of idiom

Frequency of idiom is the number of occurrences of an idiom in the context. It refers to how many times an idiom appears in the context (Ellis, 2002).

1.8.11 Forbes Asia

Forbes Asia is the local edition from Forbes supplement. Forbes is a bi-weekly business magazine featuring original articles on finance, industry, investing, and marketing topics (Forbes, n.d.). In this study, the context of the analysis covers Forbes Asia issues January 2018, March 2018, April 2018, May 2018, and June, 2018.

1.8.12 The Economist

The Economist is a weekly English language magazine owned by the Economist group. The collection of the articles in The Economist covers various business segments. The articles contain subjects related to the elementary principles of political economy, laws, prices, wages, renting, exchanging, and local and international taxes (The Economist, n.d.). In this study, the context of the analysis covers The Economist issues February 17th-23rd 2018, January 20th-26th 2018, February 10th-16th 2018, May 12th-8th 2018, and May 19th-25th 2018.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The present chapter provides the overview of the related literature. It begins with defining the concept of idiom, its use and definitions, idiom's comprehension, and its variation. After that, the key concepts of modified idioms, which include the comprehension and the types of modified idioms will be provided. The literature related to language of journalism and familiarity of idiom, which is the main concern of the present research, are also given in this chapter.

2.1 Idiom and Its Use

Idioms or idiomatic expressions have gained the attention of scholars, teachers, and also language learners in the past two decades. Idioms are one of the figurative languages that have received considerable attention due to its use and its occurrence (Mantyla, 2004).

2.1.1 Different Views of The Definitions and Classifications

Idioms or idiomatic expressions have aroused interest among language learners. The different views on idiom's definition have been proposed by many scholars (Fraser, 1970; Fernando, 1978; Grant & Breur, 2004; Hockett, 1958; Katz & Postal, 1963; Makkai, 1972; Wood, 1981; Moon, 1998, Weinreich, 1969). However, there is no clear consensus on the definitions of idiom among scholars. The unspecific definition of idiom has made the term