

SEMANTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF FORMULAIC EXPRESSIONS

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Abstract: In linguistics, we can explore our knowledge about meaning by studying semantics. Semantics is in linguistics that studying about meaning of words, phrases, sentences, or larger units of discourse. Several disciplines and approaches have contributed to the often contentious field of semantics. One of the crucial questions which unites different approaches to linguistic semantics is that of the relationship between form and meaning. Semantics as a linguistic theory that investigates word meaning. This theory understands that the meaning of a word is fully reflected by its context. For example, proverbs and idioms can be proper samples of analyzing semantically. Proverbs and idioms, as metaphoric expressions or as cultural discourse, are condified on semantic structures. Clearly, proverbs have discursive autonomy and are quoted as “texts”, idioms instead are reproduced as lexical units and they are full of wisdom provide to people, while an idiom is a phrase that has its own meaning. Another difference is that proverbs verbalize general truth and fall back on shared knowledge of the people whereas idioms are fixed phrases with a figurative meaning.

Keywords: Semantics, formulaic expressions, linguistic analysis, word phrases, phraseological units, proverbs, idioms, different meanings

INTRODUCTION

Semantics is the scientific study of meaning of words, word phrases and sentences. The term is one of a group English word formed from various derivatives of the Greek verb *semainein* (to mean or to signify). The word semantic has ultimately prevailed as a name for the doctrine of meaning, in particular of Linguistics meaning. Semantics is one of the branches of linguistics studying about meaning and it is considered as a major branch of linguistics devoted to the study of meaning in a language. It is stated also by the researchers that semantics is technical term used to refer to the study of meaning, and since meaning is a part of language, semantics is a part of linguistics. In addition, he states that meaning here covers a variety aspect of language and there is no general agreement about the nature of meaning, what aspect of it may properly by included in semantics, or the way in which it should be describes. In order the meaning to be successfully studied, of course, it must be made clear just what the meaning is. According to what has long been the most widely accepted theory of semantics, meanings are ideas or concept

that can be transferred from the mind of the speaker to the mind of the hearer by embodying them, as it were, in the form of one language or another. Because semantics deal with the meaning of language used by the people in order to convey their intended meaning of speaking, or message of a language used. Consideration of formulaic expressions in terms of semantics is of interest to further continuation of our research. Though there are various types of formulaic language, they can be included in the same groups. We find that it is more preferable to classify them in terms of different semantic fields. To be more exact, they are proverbs and idioms that are often used by people in certain situations. We often tend to give advice to someone through by utilizing them in our daily lives. We come across a lot of these set expressions in English but most of them cannot be known their expressed meaning by looking at the structure, so one should analyze the meaning of these formulaic expressions before using them. For this reason, we should begin by understanding the meaning of these two terms.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Proverbs, are considered one of the types of formulaic expressions, reflect the most powerful resources in language. They are defined as a short sentence that is mostly used to give advice to someone. Shaping the language figuratively and non-literally may touch a level beyond language itself. In fact, proverbs would be described as one of the most important utilizations in English getting an increased consideration at the basic levels of language understanding. In fact, they are the precious products of human thoughts, realities, attitudes, feelings and beliefs. The reason behind quoting various kinds of proverbs is to elaborate and enhance the validity that proverbs have indeed communicative significance and value when used in communication being an impressive and widely used tool of expression in language. According to Whiting, a proverb is “An expression which owing its birth to the people, testifies its origin in form and phrase. It expresses what a fundamental truth is apparently in a homely language, often ornamented, however, with alliteration and rhyme”.

Idioms are known as the main line of units of language. They exist at the different levels, beginning from words, finishing with steady combinations, being the proof that this characteristic is inherent in the majority of units of a lexicon of English. Idioms are defined as a phrase that comprises of its own meaning but this meaning cannot be understood if we translate word by word in language. The lexical idiom can have an appearance of a word or represent his lexico-semantic option having full or partial semantic integrity. It is specified in one of definitions of the term “idiom” that it is one of types of phraseological units. Idiomatic phrases are the peculiar expressions of the existing languages which are on the use integral and

uniform on sense, usually not giving in to exact transfer on other languages and demanding when translating replacements of similar stylistic coloring.

A wide range of proverbs, idioms are used in everyday life and they express different meaning such as life, family, friendship, wisdom, wealth, health, education and others. We will analyze these types of formulaic expressions in the following:

ANALYSIS

Proverbs about “Friendship”: There a lot of proverbs about friends and friendship. As we know, having faithful friends is quite important in our lives and increases our chances of being happy. Additionally, friendship, a state of enduring affection, esteem, and trust between two people. In all cultures, friendships are important relationships throughout a person’s life span. We will give some examples of these set expressions related to the friendship in the below. For example: 1. “Prosperity makes friends and adversity tries them”. – Meaning: Prosperity attracts friends but you come to know who your real friends are only in times of adversity. 2. “A friend in need is a friend indeed”. – Meaning: Someone who helps you in difficult time is a true friend. 3. “Books and friends should be few but good”. – Meaning: If you have too many books, you cannot read them at all. If you have too many friends, you cannot find them to build deeper bonds with most of them. Therefore, have few but good friends. 4. “Lend your money and lose your friend. – Meaning: Lending money to a friend can lead to souring of friendship. If you ask you to repay, he may feel offended and if he fails to repay, you will be offended. 5. “Friendship is like money, easier made than kept”. – Meaning: It is relatively easier to reach a milestone than to hold on to it. It is easier to make money and friendship but difficult to keep them. You have to invest time and effort to nurture them.

Proverbs about “Healthy lifestyle”: There are more groups of proverbs which can be used in the situations connected with the healthy lifestyle and we mostly use them to describe healthy body and eating to keep fit. For example: 1. “You are what you eat”. – Meaning: If you eat healthy, you stay healthy. If you eat junk, you may develop health problems in the medium to long term. 2. “The best doctors are Dr. Diet, Dr. Quiet and Dr. Merryman”. – Meaning: To lead a healthy life, we need good diet (to beat poor eating habit), rest (to beat hectic work) and some enjoyment (to beat stress). 3. “After lunch, rest: after dinner, walk a mile”. – Meaning: After lunch take a rest to aid digestion since lunch is usually a heavy meal. After dinner, take a walk since it is usually a lighter meal. 4. “A good laugh and a long sleep are the best cures in the doctor’s book”. – Meaning: Laughter and adequate sleep are the best cures as well as preventions as they boost immunity and wellbeing; 5. “Health is not valued till sickness comes”. – Meaning: We go through robotically, not eating healthy and not exercising regularly, which inevitably leads to one or the other health problem. That is when we realize the importance of good health.

Proverbs about “Happiness”: These set expressions can be also used to say about happiness or to describe the condition of being happy. It is clear that happiness is emotional state characterized by feelings of joy, satisfaction, contentment and fulfillment. In fact, this emotional situation is expressed in the following proverbs. For instance: 1. “Being happy is better than being a king”. – Meaning: You may have all the riches and power of the world, but it is not of much use if are still unhappy. Some do not realize but it is true that money, fame and power do not necessarily bring happiness. 2. “Happiness is the best cosmetic”. – Meaning: If you happy, it will show on your face. You will glow. 3. “Self-love and body positivity”. – Meaning: Love yourself despite what others think about you is a must for your happiness. What is important is who you are as a person and not what you look like or what your background us. 4. “Live in the present”. – Meaning: Unless we are deeply engaged in something, we spend our time reminiscing past or planning for future. But life is in the present. Happiness is in savouring what is around. 5. “If you want happiness for an hour – take a nap. If you want happiness a day – go fishing. If you want happiness for a month – get married. If you want happiness for a year – inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime – help someone else”. – Meaning: If you want happiness, help others. Research has clearly established the role helping others in enhancing own happiness.

Proverbs about “Money”: In our living different types of proverbs expressed money are used to express, save, earn it. Obviously, money is any object that is generally accepted as payment for goods and services and repayment of debts. There are illustrated examples of money in the below. For example: 1. “A penny saved is a penny earned”. – Meaning: Saving money is as good as earning money the net result is money is hand. 2. “Look after the pennies the pounds will look after themselves”. – Meaning: If you save small amounts regularly, you will have large sum in due course. 3. “Money talks”. – Meaning: Money can influence, make things happen. 4. “Money is a good servant but a bad master”. – Meaning: If you money and if you can put it to good use, then it is a good servant. But if you owe others money, it will control you and affect you adversely. 5. “Money cannot buy happiness”. – Meaning: More money does not translate into more happiness. We can buy every items such beautiful clothes, delicious meals, expensive houses or cars that we want but we cannot purchase happiness.

Idioms about “Family”: Here are some essential idioms for talking about family and other more complicated family matters. It is true that family, a group of people united by the ties of marriage, blood or adoption, constituting a single household and interacting with each other in their respective social positions. There are given common examples in the following idioms. For example: 1. “Like father, like son”. – Meaning: This idiom means that sons tend to be similar to their fathers.

We normally use this idiom to talk about personality, interests and character. For example: Jimmy is tall just like his father, and they have the same simile. Like father, like son”. 2. “The apple of one’s eye”. – Meaning: People use this idiom to talk about the most cherished or favourite family member such as a parent and child in a family. For example: Our grandson is the apple of our eye. We absolutely adore him”. 3. “Family man”. – Meaning: It describes a man who is devoted to his wife and children and enjoys spending time with them. For example: Carl never goes out with his coworkers after work. He is a true family man, and always rushes home to be with his wife and kids. 4. “Blood is thicker than water”. – Meaning: It means that relationships with family members are stronger and more important than relationships with people outside of the family. For example: Actually, Karen is going to side with her sister in this argument. Blood is thicker than water. 5. “A chip off the old block”. – Meaning: It means the person is very similar in character and personality to one of their parents. For example: Tiffany is an accomplished pianist just like her mother. She is a chip off the old block.

Idioms related to “Education”: Studying is very important in human life, especially in modern life of the people. They have many expressions which belong to education. Some of these set expressions in which each of them points to pronounced value are given below. For example: 1. “To pass with flying colours”. – Meaning: It means to accomplish something easily. We often use this expression to talk about tests or exams. For example: Sally managed to pass the exams with flying colours. 2. “To breeze/sail through”. – Meaning: This idiom describes to succeed at something. For example: “I do not think you will be able to breeze through college if you are majoring in chemical engineering”. 3. “A bookworm”. – Meaning: This is a type of person who loves to read. For example: My son is into sports and video games, but my daughter is more of a bookworm”. 4. “A class clown”. – Meaning: This is a type of idiom to describe a student who is a disruptive student who often makes jokes instead of paying attention and doing their work. For example: Brett is a college professor now. Ironically, he was the class clown of our elementary school. 5. “To hit the books”. – Meaning: It means to study very hard. For example: Finals are next week and I have not even started studying yet. I would better hit the books tonight.

Idioms about “Job”: There are various idioms expressing various types of job in the workplace. Here are some of the most common phraseological units depicted different occupation. For instance: 1. “Soft job”. – Meaning: This idiom describes a type of job that is relatively very easy to get around or complete. For example: Blowing up all the balloons at the party was a soft job for him. 2. “Snow job”. – Meaning: This idiom describes a type of job that involves concealing an individual’s real identity to try and frame or persuade someone into doing something on their behalf. For example: We are surely need to do a snow job on him, if he does

not keep his mouth shut. 3. “On the job”. – Meaning: This idiom describes a situation where an individual is currently working on a job. For example: I was on the job when you called; and I am sorry I did not pick up. 4. “Odd the job”. – Meaning: This idiom describes a type of job that is located in a deserted place and usually operates at odd hours. For example: He got his hands on an odd job and he does not want to leave because he needs money. 5. “Nine-to-five job”. – Meaning: This idiom describes a type of job in which an individual works from 9 to 5 pm in the evening. For example: I really want a nine-to five job so that I can work on another job later at night.

Idioms about “Mood”: It is apparent that there are a lot of idioms described mood in English. They express different kinds of feelings as well as emotions related to mood. For instance: 1. “On a cloud nine”. – Meaning: It means that he or she is feeling extremely happy. For example: When he finally proposed to her, she was on a cloud nine. 2. “Under the weather”. – Meaning: In English, people only tend to use this expression to describe being slightly sick rather than being seriously ill. For example: John’s feeling a bit under the weather tonight, so he will not be joining us for dinner. 3. “On pin and needles”. – Meaning: When people say they are on pin and needles, they are not talking about sewing or injections. It really means that they are feeling anxious or nervous. For example: The movie was so suspenseful, I was on pins and needles the whole time. 4. “Full of the joys of spring”. – Meaning: This idiom is used to express the mood of being energetic, cheerful and delight. For example: James must have had some good news, he is full of the joys of spring today. 5. “Happy camper”. – Meaning: This is said about a person who is completely satisfied with his life or with a certain situation in life. Everything is fine with him, he never complains, and he simply enjoys life. If the word “not” is added, it has the opposite meaning. For example: My friend just got a new job and also bought a new car. He is such a happy camper at the moment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It can be seen in the above, every language has its own unique collection of formulaic expressions. These expressions contain meanings that may not be obvious by simply looking at the individual words. They express commonly shared or universal ideas related to people’s daily life. There are many concepts of various topics in linguistics and they also describe different conditions of our living. To be more clearly, proverbs are a bit of wisdom provided to people, while idioms are the phrases that have their own meanings to express any situations in life. The meanings of them cannot be understood by a common man. Both proverbs and idioms have deep and vivid meanings. Idioms and proverbs are unique cultural components of a language. They are fixed expressions that they are used in day to day communication and proverbs are characterized to give advice. They mostly come up all the time in

both written and spoken English. These English idioms and proverbs are familiar and easily understood by native English speakers, but they are not usually used in everyday conversation. The combinatory possibilities of words or multi-word chunks and expressions like proverbs and idioms help attaining automaticity and fluency in language, making the users sound natural. Idioms and proverbs in English are sets of words that have specific meanings, draw out the essence of the English culture. These types of formulaic expressions have some basic different meanings which provide a sense of deep thought and emotion. Therefore, it can be summarized that various types of formulaic expressions are characterized by the special features of semantics in linguistics.

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