A Comparative Study on Idioms of the Human Body Parts in Korean and Malay Languages

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ABSTRACT

The idiom or idiomatic expression is a phrasal combination of two or more words where its figurative meaning is different from its literal meaning. Most idiomatic expressions reflect the speaker’s culture, customs, and social and historical backgrounds. Hence, without knowing a target language’s cultural aspects, and also because idioms are expressions whose meanings cannot be inferred from the dictionary definitions, a foreign language learner frequently faces problems in understanding the actual meaning of these idiomatic expressions. In the case of Koreans and Malaysians who use idiomatic expressions in their daily conversations, understanding them in their respective languages is not a problem. However, this might not be the case when these two groups try to learn each other’s idioms. Therefore, this study analyses the idiomatic expressions related to five human body parts (head, eyes, nose, mouth and ears) in Korean and Malay. In addition, the study also examines the cultural aspects, purpose and situations in which the idiomatic expressions are used by the speakers of the respective languages. Data was sourced from dictionaries and books on idioms in both languages and a comparative study was conducted using the Language Relativism framework of Sapir-Whorf’s. The findings revealed three categories of idiomatic expressions; those that have the same literal and real meanings in both languages, those that differ in real meanings but are similar in literal meanings in the two languages, and those that differ in literal meanings but are similar in real meanings in Korean and Malay.

Keywords: idioms, idiomatic expressions, Korean language, Malay language, culture, communication

INTRODUCTION

In the global society, language could be a helpful and valuable tool for global citizens to communicate with people from different cultures. However, language also could be a source of misunderstandings and conflicts or at the same time barriers for cordial relationship and effective cooperation for mutual benefits if people from different cultures are ignorant of cultural diversity or lack a shared cultural code. Claire Kramsch states that different people speak differently because they think differently, and they think differently because their language offers them different ways of expressing the world around them (1998: 11). Therefore it is highly recommended that one should learn a second language or other languages not only to communicate with different people but also to share views and understand each other better. The role of language in communication and in the sharing of culture, then, cannot be underestimated because the study of language as a source of cultural and historical elements can enable us to understand people’s values, world views and morality.
Korean language has become one of the most popular languages among Malaysians. It was offered as a foreign language in the middle of 1980 at two national universities and one college as an elective course. At present, more than 20 public and private universities including private language institutes and centres are offering it to students. Meanwhile, the Korean government Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK) which was first held at the National University of Malaysia (UKM) in 2004 had only 28 candidates for the basic level without any for the intermediate and advanced levels. However, when the 36th TOPIK was held in April 2014, the number of candidates increased to 219. Surprisingly, 67 out of 73 Malaysians sat for the intermediate level and 10 out of 24 took the advanced level test. This clearly shows that the number of Korean language learners has increased and that their Korean proficiency level has also improved. Besides being more proficient in the language, Korean entertainment programmes such as Korean Wave and K-Pop have contributed significantly to Malaysians’ awareness and knowledge of Korea and its language. As a result, a large number of Malaysian nowadays can give simple greetings in Korean and talk about Korean culture, history and its economy frequently.

With the acceleration of improved language proficiency and knowledge about Korea, the demands to learn Korean idioms or cultural idiomatic expressions have been heightened among Malaysians. Because idioms are specific expressions of a country’s historical, social and cultural backgrounds, it is difficult to understand her idiomatic expressions without knowing these backgrounds. Therefore, Malaysians studying Korean idioms will find it very difficult in understanding them. However, if Malaysians learn the right meaning of Korean idiomatic expressions and use them appropriately, it will lead to better understanding between Malaysians and Koreans. Since idiomatic expressions related human body parts could be considered universal because all human beings have the same body parts, this study focuses on comparing Korean and Malay idioms or idiomatic expressions related specifically to the head, eyes, nose, mouth and ears. When we can understand the social and cultural heritage of people by investigating their idioms which have been passed down verbally and non-verbally for generations, the world becomes a better place for everyone.

STUDIES ON IDIOMS/IDIOMATIC PHRASES

Idiom is an expression whose meaning is not predictable from the usual meanings of its constituent elements (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 1987) and in its structural characteristics, idioms or idiomatic phrases are similar in structure to ordinary phrases except that they tend to be frozen in form and do not readily undergo rules that change word order or substitution of their parts (V. Fromkin and R. Rodman, 1998: 151). Since the above-defined range of idioms is extremely large, the first meaning is to be used as specific or narrow sense of idiom in this paper.

Of the many scholars (Kim Kyu Sun: 1979, Kim Mun Chang: 1974, Kim In Han: 1983, Park Kyung Hyun: 1983, 1984, and Hwang Hee Yeong: 1978) who worked on Korean idioms, Kim Jong Taek (1971) divides them into substantive type idiom and predicative type idiom. He explains that the former refers to an idiom ending with a word or proverb ending noun whereas the latter refers to two or more

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1 Idiom is defined as follows: 1) an expression whose meaning cannot be derived from its constituent element. 2) a language dialect or style of speaking peculiar to a language. 3) a construction or expression peculiar to a language. 4) a distinct style or character, as in music or art. The Random House Dictionary of the English Language (1968). Fernando suggests three criteria of idioms as follows; (1) Semantic criteria a) the meaning of an idiom is not the result of the compositional function of its constituent part. b) an idiom has a homonymous counterpart which would render it ambiguous unless suitably contextualised. c) an idiom has a compulsory literal semantic counterpart which may substitute with it synonymously in a given context. (2) Syntactic criteria: a) an idiom is syntactic unit consisting of two or more free morphemes. b) an idiom is a syntactic unit manifesting lexical integrity. c) an idiom is not generatable i.e. an idiom is not produced qua idiom by the operation of syntactic rules. (3) Sociolinguistic criteria: an idiom is institutionalized. (1978: 313, 343)

Studies on Korean idioms related to human body parts can be divided into three groups. The first study idioms on only one part of the human body such as the ‘head’, ‘nose’, ‘eyes’ and ‘ears’ separately (Kim Mun Chang: 1976, Park Kyung Hyun: 1984, Sohn Yong Joo: 1988, 1990, Lee Kyung Ja: 1980, 1982, 1983, Hong Sa Man: 1985, 1986). The second conduct comparative studies between Korean and other languages. For example, Lee Sang Do (1999) and Kim Yang Ok (2004) compared Korean and Chinese idioms about the hand and whole body parts respectively. The third group, which is the most current, study methods of teaching Korean idioms related to human body parts. While Kim Myung Choon (2007) researched on how to teach Korean idioms to Japanese learners, Lee Yeong Sook (1992) looks at how idioms are used in teaching Korean as a second language. Unfortunately, her study lacks the strategies in teaching idioms in Korean language education. Another innovative method of teaching idioms was through the mass media. Choi Gwon Jin and Jeong Hye Ryeong (2010) used a list of idioms taken from seven Korean textbooks and from TOPIK test papers to conduct the study.

In the Malay dictionary, idiom is a phrase consisting of two words or more and has a different meaning from the meaning of the composing words (Kamus Dewan 1986: 1113). Malaysians always say that “Bahasa adalah jiwa bangsa” (Language is the soul of the race) as elements of literature can portray the culture of the society including perceptions and values of its people. Zainal Abidin Bakar discusses the role and functions of idioms and says that in Malay society particularly, ‘Pantuns’ (poems) reflect the soul and values of Malay culture. “Pantun and ‘peribahasa’ (proverbs) are integral and valuable cultural heritage for the Malay society” (1984: 3). Muhammad Haji Salleh (1986: 3) also added that “pantuns are clearly portraying perfection and genius of Malay’s literature. Pantuns pertain spirit, arts, wisdom and good manners of Malays”. Furthermore Muhammad Haji Salleh (2006: 1) emphasizes on idioms as a tool of socialization and mentions idioms and proverbs were the most significant methods in channelling the values, thoughts of the Malay of the archipelago. Through wisdom and poetic associations, the lines sketch the people’s soul, giving voice to issues faced perpetually for hundreds of years, in fact

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thousands, in matters of practicality and hearts, physically and spiritually, which would later be translated into a mixture of opinions, values, laws, love and affection and a multiplicity of emotions. The function of pantun and peribahasa should be seen from two major perspectives, namely the literati/sage as poet and thinker. "Pantuns contain guideline and teaching which guide people to goodness and peace of life in order to be polite and intelligent" (Mastura Ashari, 2011, 2012: 11). In the Malay world, idiom is a very popular communication method and is used by all groups and classes of society (Zainal Abidin Bakar, 1983: 32). According to Hasan Muhammad Ali (1996: 8) the function of idioms i) lend colour and life to an otherwise monotonous essay, ii) refine or introduce a more subtle adjective to soften the verbs or image which one wishes to convey or use, iii) enhance and entice the recipient of the objective or purpose of such a word or idea which the speaker uses, iv) lay emphasis on the idea or story being told.

Given the rich data idioms provide, unfortunately, not many studies about idioms and idioms related to human body parts by Korean researchers have been carried out in Malaysia. One noteworthy study was the “Pengkajian simpulan bahasa mengenai anggota badan dalam beberapa bahasa: Research on body-related idioms in several languages” in 1993 by academics from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia where Malay idioms on human body parts were compared to five Asian languages; Korean, Thai, Chinese, Japanese and Arabic, as well as three European languages; English, French and German.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study is underpinned by Sapir-Whorf’s ‘Language Relativism’. From the perspective of language relativism or weak language determinism, thought is influenced by language, whatever that language may be. This language relativity assumes that; firstly, peoples of the world have developed different ways of viewing the world and language differences affect our daily, automatic thinking, rather than what we are capable of thinking about. Secondly, language differences reflect differences in conceptual structure and the conceptual system underlying the language that a person speaks will affect the way in which that person thinks about the world and, accordingly, the way in which that person will reason when solving problems. Thirdly, language can create some aspects of reality and the more frequent and automatic the word or grammatical form, the more it potentially affects what we observe in the world and how we reason. Languages make different distinctions in their lexicons. A distinctively sculpted lexicon is the evolutionary product of a people’s struggle to survive in a specific environment. But of course, the environment itself can be human-made. Whorf says that the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which have to be organized largely by the linguistic systems in our minds. Meanings are not so much discovered in experience as imposed upon it, because of the tyrannical hold that linguistic form has upon our orientation to the world. Therefore, there is a need to study the treasure of Malay and Korean languages and to examine whether language affects the perception and reasoning of people.

Language is a guide to ‘social reality’. Though language is not ordinary thought of as of essential interest to the students of social science, it powerfully conditions all our thinking about social problems and processes. Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. (Edward Sapir, 1949: 162 in Claire Kramsch, 1998: 85) Based on this theory,
it is assumed that analyzing Malay and Korean languages could enhance our understanding of cultures, particularly their values and attitudes.

**ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

This qualitative study adopted text analysis to examine the differences of perception, world-view and values, particularly about the human body in Korean and Malaysian society. This research on expressions aims at discerning general perceptions embodied in ideas or thoughts of Koreans and Malaysians. In line with this aim, the authors had focused idioms of the two societies and each of these categories was then divided into sub-categories of the head, eyes, nose, mouth and ears. 62 Korean idiomatic phrases and 78 Malaysian idiomatic phrases were selected. In both languages, the idioms are formed as follows:

- **Noun**
- **Body-related words (head, eyes, nose, mouth, ears)**
- **Adjective**
- **Verb (active form)**
- **Verb (passive form)**

**Idioms on Head**

In Korean as well as Malay idioms on human body parts, the word ‘head’ carries an important function in relation to recognition and conceptualization. It is used as idiomatic expression in various communicative, cultural and literature context. The word ‘head’ represents the head of a community. As the leader, ‘head’ therefore, is the person to be respected by members of the community. ‘Head’ does not mean the physical form but the ‘brain’. It refers to ‘intellectual ability’, ‘thought’, ‘enlightenment’ and ‘understanding’. In most cases, when the word ‘head’ regardless whether it is used either as ‘head’ or ‘brain’ when combined with various nouns and adjectives, they become idioms in both languages. From 25 Korean idioms and 18 Malaysian idioms, 7 idioms matched with the following three categories as shown in Tables 1, 2, 3 below;

### Table 1: Idioms with same literal and actual meaning (Head)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Korean idioms (Meori)</th>
<th>Malay idioms (Kepala)</th>
<th>Meaning of words</th>
<th>Actual Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meorireul sikhida</td>
<td>Kepala dingin</td>
<td>Sikhida (cool down)</td>
<td>Calm down, patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meoriga dolda</td>
<td>Kepala pusing</td>
<td>Dolda (spin)</td>
<td>To have a lot problem, to be crazy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2: Idioms with different literal meaning but same actual meaning (Head)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Korean idioms (Meori)</th>
<th>Malay idioms (Kepala)</th>
<th>Meaning of words</th>
<th>Actual Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Kim Hyung Sook(1996) studied on body-related idioms in Korean dictionary for Idioms and levelled the idioms by its frequency of usages as follows; hand(155) > eyes(124) > mouth(121) > nose(72) > ears(58) > foot(54) > head(47) > face(36). However only selected Korean idioms were undertaken for the purpose of comparing Malaysian idioms and those idioms that could be categorized are mentioned in this study. According to Mun Jong Sun (1994) Korean idioms on human body parts accounted for 54% in total Korean idioms. It is characterized by most of Korean idioms on human body parts are monosyllabic. For example, human body-related idioms in one syllable are eyes(nun), nose(kho), mouth(db), ears(pwi), tooth(ri), tongue(neyo), jaw(teok), neck(mok), hand(sin), arm(pal), foot(bal), bone(ppyeo), body(mom), stomach(bae), cheek(bol) etc. human body-related idioms in two syllables are head(meo-ri), face(eol-gul), shoulder(eo-ggae), chest(ga-seum) and etc. In addition to this, some Chinese words in one syllable are also found as lung(pye), liver(gan), stomach(wi) and intestine(jang) etc. Lee Yeong Sook (1992: 99)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Korean idiom (Meori)</th>
<th>Malay idiom (Kepala)</th>
<th>Meaning of words</th>
<th>Actual Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dol Meori</td>
<td>Kepala udang</td>
<td>Dol (stone/rock)</td>
<td>Stupid, foolish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Idioms with same literal meaning but different actual meaning (Head)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Korean idioms (Meori)</th>
<th>Malay idioms (Kepala)</th>
<th>Actual Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dol Meori</td>
<td>Kepala batu</td>
<td>Dol (stone/rock): stupid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meoriga mugeobda</td>
<td>Berat kepala</td>
<td>Mugeobda (heavy): headache, feels not well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meoriga gabyeobda</td>
<td>Ringan kepala</td>
<td>Gabyeobda (light): lighthearted, carefree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meoriga keuda</td>
<td>Besar kapala</td>
<td>Keuda (big): to be an adult, get to know well</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to note that some idioms are totally different and cannot be matched with each language probably because these idioms reflected their own unique cultural background. For example, the Malay idiom ‘Kepala arwah (late head)’ which means special dish or food served before feast ends is not easy to understand without knowledge of the Malaysian culture. Similarly, Korean idioms such as ‘Meorireul kkakda’, ‘Meorireul eonda’ and ‘Meorireul pulda’ which mean ‘Cut the hair (to be a monk or to be in jail), ‘Hair to be putted on the head (a woman to get married, to become a professional gisaeng/Korean geisha)’ and ‘Untied hair (to be bereaved)’ respectively are idioms that reflect the life and culture of the Josun Dynasty (1392-1910). In general, the ‘head’ in Korean and Malay idioms provides us with the values of the respective societies on how to evaluate the status and the intellectual ability of individual. It represents some positive perceptions and values such as ‘high self esteem’, ‘intelligence’, ‘individual’s social status’, ‘enlightenment’ and ‘obedience’. For some idioms, it is also used to symbolize negative perception and values like ‘being obstinate or stubborn’, ‘caprice or being temperamental’, and ‘learning disability or stupidity’.

**Idioms on Eyes**

Idioms on eyes refer to human judgement, satisfaction, anger and attention in both Korean and Malay. The Korean word ‘nun’ is usually combined with colour, height or weight adjectives and various verbs but the Malay word ‘mata’ is combined with nouns. After analyzing eight Korean idioms and twenty three Malay idioms, only the following idioms on eyes could be categorized as shown in Tables 4, 5 and 6 below;

Table 4: Idioms with same literal and actual meaning (Eyes)
The Malay idiom 'Mata jalan (street eyes, marks)' which means 'signboard' is also found in Korean idioms. However, there is no meaning by itself. It must be combined with verbs like 'Nun gireul jugo badda (to share the same thought)' and 'Nun gireul kkeulda (to be attracted, draw attention)'. The eyes in both languages display values of 'the judgment' and 'tool of emotions'. It is used to describe 'disappointment' and 'anger' while it is considered as 'source of knowledge' and 'tool of expression of emotions'. And 'eyes' in Korean idioms are used for describing 'preference', 'individual's interest' while Malay idioms about eyes represent 'origin', 'integral element of something' or 'tool of expression'.

### Idioms on Nose

Two common meanings are found in Korean and Malay idioms on nose; ‘pride’ and ‘self’. When the Korean word ‘kho (nose)’ and the Malay word ‘hidung (nose)’ are combined with the word ‘high’, the resulting idiom means ‘arrogance’ in both languages. On the other hand, when ‘kho’ and ‘hidung’ are combined with ‘cannot be seen’, the idiom means ‘absence’. Since there are not many idioms on nose in both languages, only two categories out of the eight Korean and five Malay idioms could be identified as shown in Tables 7 and 8 below;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Korean</th>
<th>Malay</th>
<th>Meaning of words</th>
<th>Actual Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Khokkutdo an boida</td>
<td>Tidak nampak hidung</td>
<td>Kkeutdo an boida (is not shown)</td>
<td>Absent in the place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khoga nopda</td>
<td>Hidung tinggi</td>
<td>Nopda (high)</td>
<td>Arragon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Keun kho dachida | Kena batang hidung | Keun (big), dachida (to be hurt) | Kena batang (to be hit the bridge of nose) | Pay dearly

Table 8: Idioms with same literal meaning but different actual meaning (Nose)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Korean idioms</th>
<th>Malay idioms</th>
<th>Actual Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Kho)</td>
<td>(Hidung)</td>
<td>Korean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nae khoga seokja</td>
<td>Hidung panjang</td>
<td>Busy in own business, can not do other things</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, Korean idioms on nose are not combined with nouns but with adjectives and verbs unlike Malay idioms which are combined with nouns such as ‘Hidung belang (striped nose)’ which means ‘a man who likes to interfere with woman’. The nose in both languages reflects similar perceptions and values on ‘authority’ and ‘self’ respectively. It is used to represent ‘participation’, ‘power’, ‘arrogance of people’, ‘embarrassment’, ‘humiliation’, and ‘ignorance’. In addition to this, it is found that Malay idioms emphasize ‘high self esteem’ and ‘desire of people’ and Korean idioms describe the ‘difficult situation’ or ‘belittling other people’.

Idioms on Mouth

Communication and food intake are the main functions of the mouth. Most Malay idioms on mouth are associated with the communicative function whilst Korean idioms are associated with life and communication. Interestingly too, in both Korean and Malay societies, a person’s character is judged as either trustworthy or depending on the weight of the mouth. Another peculiar finding is that a large percentage of idioms on mouth are used as negative expressions in both societies. From the data, 23 Malay and 12 Korean idioms on mouth were analyzed and categorized in Tables 9. 10 and 11 as follows;

Table 9: Idioms with same literal and actual meaning (Mouth)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Korean idioms</th>
<th>Malay idioms</th>
<th>Meaning of words</th>
<th>Actual Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Ib)</td>
<td>(Mulut)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibi mugeobda</td>
<td>Berat mulut</td>
<td>Mugeobda (heavy)</td>
<td>Berat (heavy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibi deoreobda</td>
<td>Mulut kotor</td>
<td>Deoreobda (dirty)</td>
<td>Kotor (dirty)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Idioms with different literal meaning but same actual meaning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Korean idioms</th>
<th>Malay idioms</th>
<th>Meaning of words</th>
<th>Actual Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Ib)</td>
<td>(Mulut)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibi gabyeobda</td>
<td>Mulut bocor</td>
<td>Gabyeobda (light)</td>
<td>Bocor (leak)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulut berus</td>
<td>Berus (brush)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Like to speak out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ibman salda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Korean idioms</th>
<th>Malay idioms</th>
<th>Actual Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ibe balin mal</td>
<td>Mulut manis</td>
<td>Balin mal (sweet word): flattery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibi garyeобda</td>
<td>Mulut gatal</td>
<td>Garyeобda (itchy): want to speak out to someone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Idioms with same literal meaning but different actual meaning (Mouth)

Additionally, natural environment elements and lifestyle of both Korean and Malaysian societies affect their respective idioms. In this case, each society’s idioms cannot relation to their literal and actual meanings. The words ‘buaya (crocodile)’ and ‘getah (glue)’ as in ‘Mulut buaya (untrustful words)’, which means words spoken by a liar or bad person, and as in ‘Mulut bergetah (something or matters to be proven often)’ can be easily found in Malay idioms but not in Korean. In contrast, the Korean idioms ‘Ibe pul-chil hada (to earn for living)’ cannot be understood without knowing the Korean lifestyle. The mouth in Korean and Malaysian idioms is utilized to display ‘credibility’ and ‘social skills’ in the respective societies. It reflects the positive values of ‘trustfulness’, ‘keeping promises’, ‘social skills’ or ‘communication skills’, ‘sociable attitude’ and ‘sustenance of life or livelihood’ while it is also described as the cause of many problems in relation to ‘curses’, ‘poisonous words’, ‘loquaciousness’ and ‘sweet lips’ when it is used unwisely. One of the most interesting differences between Korean and Malay idioms is antipathy of value on the idiomatic expressions ‘heavy mouth’. Korean idioms implies positive perception on a ‘heavy mouthed’ person as a reliable individual who can keep secrets. Meanwhile, Malay idioms insinuates negative value on ‘heavy mouthed’ person as a unsociable or anti-social individual who is reluctant to communicate or mingle with others.

Idioms on Ears

Idioms on ears in Korean and Malay, refer to the channel of information since they concern people’s words and ideas. Eight Malaysian and nine Korean idioms were selected for comparison, however, only two idioms could be categorised under the theoretical framework as follows;

Table 12: Idioms with same literal meaning but different actual meaning (Ears)
Korean idioms (Gwi) | Malay idioms (Telinga) | Actual Meaning |
---|---|---|
Gwiga yeorida | Bertelinga lembut | Yeorida(soft): believe other’s words eventhough it is a lie | Lembut(soft): like to help other who is in trouble |
Gwiga yalbda | Telinga nipsis | Yalbda(thin): someone who is easy to believe | Nipsis(thin): someone who is easily to be offended or angry |

The ears in both languages is used to reflect ‘values on conviction’ and it is considered as ‘the channel of knowledge and information’ and ‘criteria to evaluate the level of being obstinate’. Korean idioms use ears to display ‘the level of hearing ability’, ‘interest’, ‘conviction’ and ‘familiarity’ while Malaysian idioms represent ‘the level of sensitivity, dullness’ and ‘keenness of individual to others’ advices or opinion’. Compared to other idioms on human body parts, the idioms on ears are not found many, consequently as shown as above, there is few idoms to categorize in Korean and Malay languages.

**CONCLUSION**

It is impossible for a language learner to master a foreign language without understanding cultural aspects that are implied in language itself. Whilst language is used for communication, expression, ideas, values, world view and culture of its people are also expressed by it. As a result, learning idioms can enhance the process of mastering language as they are used to express emotions, behaviours, attitudes and situations of society. Incidentally, language learners can learn not only language expressions but also its intergral cultural aspects which is a pre-requisit for cross-cultural communication in the global era.

The idiom is not simply a phrasal combination of two or more words but an expression that reflects a speaker’s culture, history, customs and social background. Therefore, Korean idioms and Malay idioms play an important role of representing each country’s culture, history and customs respectively. In understanding a target country’s language, one should study not only the alphabet, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar but also acquire the cultural knowledge of that country. This is because good communication in the true sense of the word works on the basis of a sound knowledge of the target country lifestyle and customs as well as its people’s way of thinking. Furthermore, the role of language is to convey ideas and culture and the culture is expressed by the language. Therefore, one cannot master a language without understanding the culture that is contained in the language itself.

The findings have revealed that idioms are the best part of the language in representing a culture and the learning of body-related idioms is even more difficult. If a person understands the procedure and the creation of the idioms, that person will be able to communicate well with the native speaker. Therefore, the education of idioms is not only limited to teaching a language for communication purposes but also teaching a learner about how to master a culture.

In conclusion, Koreans and Malaysians have developed ways of viewing the world differently and also different language structures and grammar affect their daily and spontaneous thinking. Eventhough the same components are used in the formation of idioms, sometimes their meanings may be the same but in many cases they are different. As language differences reflect differences in conceptual structure, Korean idioms are formed by verbs and adjectives whilst Malay idioms are formed by nouns. In terms of cultural context, some
idioms that have the same literal meaning are used by Koreans and Malaysians for the same purpose. Besides similar idioms, there are idioms that have different literal meaning but the same actual meaning whereas some idioms have similar literal meaning but different actual meaning. These significant findings have shown that world view and language affect the formation of idioms related to body parts in different ways in both the languages of Korea and Malay.

REFERENCES


