



THE PERCEPTION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTRE (FLC) STUDENTS TOWARDS IDIOMATIC SPEAKING CLASS

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Abstract

The research investigates the impact of an idiomatic speaking class on students' English speaking skills and their perceptions of the learning experience. The research, conducted at the Foreign Language Center in Selong, East Lombok Regency, used qualitative methods like observations, questionnaires, and interviews. The findings showed that 68.75% of students enjoyed learning idioms and found the class beneficial. Despite considering idioms challenging, students appreciated the interactive teaching methods, which included games and discussions, for making the learning process engaging and effective. Although students faced difficulties with pronunciation and memorization of idioms, the supportive teaching methods and tutor feedback were instrumental in overcoming these challenges. The class also contributed to increased confidence and proficiency in speaking, with students noting significant improvements in their ability to use idiomatic expressions in conversation. In conclusion, the idiomatic speaking class was found to be a valuable component of English language education, significantly enhancing students' speaking skills and boosting their motivation and confidence in using idiomatic expressions. The study highlights the importance of interactive teaching methods and supportive learning environments in overcoming challenges and improving language proficiency.

Keywords : Students' Perception; Idiomatic Speaking Class; Interactive Learning;

PENDAHULUAN

Perception is the impression of an individual to a specific protest which is affected by inside components, such as behavior beneath the control of individual and outside variables, such as behavior impacted by circumstances outside (Ashar et al., 2022; Firmansyah, 2015). According to (Aryanti et al., 2024; Santoso, 2019) perception is the process by which individuals organize and interpret sensory input to give meaning to the surrounding environment. So, student perception is the way individuals or students interpret and understand information received from the environment, including experience, prior knowledge, and other factors. Student perception refers to the way students interpret and understand various aspects of their educational experiences, including their interactions with teachers, learning environments, instructional methods, and assessment practices (Knickenberg et al., 2022; Saraswati et al., 2020).

Dalal (2023) explained that students with positive perception will be more motivated to learn, but negative perceptions can lead to negative motivation. Perception according to (Dalal, 2023; Firmansyah, 2015; Knickenberg et al., 2022) is divided into two forms, namely positive perception and negative perception. Learning requires interesting and relevant experiences that make students



feel actively involved in the learning process that can create positive perceptions (Mehlhorn et al., 2022). Constructivist as explained by (Cobb, 2024; Topçiu & Myftiu, 2015) is a learning theory that emphasizes the active role of students in building understanding and making sense of information. It is based on the idea that individuals construct their own knowledge and understanding through experiences and interactions with their environment (Cobb, 2024; Mishra, 2023). Therefore, the way of learning in class influences the perception of a learner.

Not all subjects have the same learning methods, because each subject has its own characteristics, different learning objectives, and different student needs. Not all lessons have the same learning methods, each student learns differently, and what works for one student may not necessarily work for another (Benati, 2021; Patel & Jain, 2008; Ta'amneh, 2021). Likewise, idiom lessons require specialized teaching. Idiomatic speaking class is a class program designed to learn idioms specifically. This program is made to facilitate students who want to learn idioms with interesting teaching methods. This class aims to improve students' speaking skills by using idioms. Mastering speaking abilities allows you to improve your general communication skills, learn how to transmit ideas more effectively, listen better, and ask the proper questions while speaking. To master speaking skills, it is necessary to consider the aspects of speaking.

There are five aspects considered when assessing speaking skills: grammar, vocabulary, language skills, pronunciation, and comprehension (Bygate, 1987; Cole, 2007; Maysuroh et al., 2023; Tulu & Gutema, 2023). In addition to these five aspects, idioms are also included in these aspects. Idiom is one of the components in speaking because it can improve English speaking ability and increase comprehension (Al-Khawaldeh, 2016; Hinkel, 2017; Martinez Del Castillo, 2016; Turick, 2018). According to (Martinez Del Castillo, 2016) idioms are phrases or expressions in a language whose meaning cannot be deduced from the literal definition of their individual words. However, idioms are not easy to learn and teach for many reasons, idioms are not literal, they do not imply their content. The most difficult are those that have no equivalents and their meaning cannot be deduced from the combined meaning of their component parts (Rakhmyta & Rusmiati, 2020; Ta'amneh, 2021). Another reason is the limited exposure to the cultural background behind the idiom, which causes difficulties in understand its meaning (Hinkel, 2017; Rana, 2016).

Learning idioms requires appropriate teaching methods to facilitate their understanding. According to (Ashar et al., 2022; Martinez Del Castillo, 2016; Rakhmyta & Rusmiati, 2020) when teaching idiomatic expressions, it is important to understand and comprehend the context and culture in which the idiom is used, as idiomatic words often have different meanings in different contexts. When teaching idiomatic expressions, technologies such as online learning platforms (LMS) and learning apps can be used to organize and manage learning materials (Cole, 2007; Maysuroh et al., 2023; Mehlhorn et al., 2022).

Previous researches have shown some difficulties faced by students, especially English majors, when learning idioms and their strategies. The studies conducted by (Al-Khawaldeh, 2016; Asri, 2017; Hinkel, 2017; Idami et al., 2022; Ta'amneh, 2021), they found difficulties faced by students when learning idioms, namely the lack of foreign cultural background, understanding English figurative expressions, using idioms in oral communication, and practicing idioms in different communicative contexts, difficulty in presenting idioms in a way that reflects language use in real life. In terms of strategies used by students in learning idioms, they found that the most frequently used strategies were predicting the meaning of idioms, translating them into the first



language, guessing the meaning from the context, relying on verbal and visual information, and looking up unknown idioms in the dictionary.

Previous researches provide an in-depth look at the difficulties English Language Education students face in learning idiomatic expressions, as well as highlighting the strategies used to overcome these challenges. In view of this, the researcher was interested in further exploring learners' views on idiom learning. Therefore, this study aims to investigate learners' views on idiom learning in one of the idiomatic speaking classes at the Foreign Language Center (FLC).

METHODOLOGY

The research will be conducted by using qualitative methods, focusing on detailed descriptions, analysis, and surveys to investigate social or humanitarian issues (Benati, 2021; Hall & Liebenberg, 2024; Patel & Jain, 2008). This research focuses on FLC students who attended the speaking idiomatic class at the Foreign Language Center (FLC) in Selong, East Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara. The class is designed to help students learn idiomatic by starting with an idiomatic sentence, explaining correct pronunciation, and practicing together. The material is taught on a topic, repeated at previous meetings, and interspersed with games to make learning more interesting. The study will involve 27 FLC batch 27 students, with 6 being the research sample. The average FLC student is just graduating from high school. The teachers, most of whom have a bachelor's degree in English Education, and some have worked abroad for a long time. The class is designed to help students remember and retain information.

This study uses observation sheets, questionnaires, and interview guides to collect data on students who have attended an idiomatic speaking class. The data collection process involves face-to-face interviews, with two stages. The first stage involves introducing the author and asking for consent. The interviews last five to ten minutes and are recorded with video or sound. The second stage involves selecting two interviewees with the best results, which are conducted directly and recorded. The results are processed into words for further analysis.

The researcher used a holistic analysis approach (Beal, 2013; Hall & Liebenberg, 2024; Ofir et al., 2016; Walsh, 2015) to analyze data, including data collection, integration, presentation, interpretation, and maintenance. Trustworthiness is demonstrated through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This involves ensuring the research process is well-documented, transparent, and subjective (Maher et al., 2018; Shenton, 2004; Stahl & King, 2020). Triangulation is a common strategy to prove credibility, dependability, and confirmability (Morse et al., 2002). The researcher used observation, questionnaire, and participant interview techniques to verify data accuracy.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The researcher observed the activities in an idiomatic speaking class to assess the teaching and learning process on June 9 2024. Using observation sheets, the researcher documented classroom activities, including tutor-student interactions. The observation revealed that the class proceeded smoothly. The tutor began with a greeting and a brief review of the previous material. The teaching methods employed were engaging and enjoyable, resulting in enthusiastic participation from the students. Most students actively asked questions and practiced idiomatic expressions. The tutor effectively addressed students' questions and difficulties. However, students faced challenges, particularly in pronouncing words in idiomatic sentences and remembering the



meanings of idioms, which often lack literal interpretations. In conclusion, the idiomatic speaking class was conducted effectively, though students encountered difficulties with pronunciation and memorization of idioms.

To collect field data, the researcher distributed a research questionnaire on June 15, 2024. To clarify the results, the researcher compiled a table of student opinions related to idiomatic speaking classes and idioms, presenting them as percentages. The results are shown in Table 1, which records students' opinions about the idiomatic speaking class. The questionnaire consisted of 8 questions, and the results are presented in the table below.

Table 1. Students Responses to Idiomatic Speaking Class

| No | Questionnaire | SA | A | DS | SD |
|----|---|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| 1. | I like learning idiom | 3 18,75% | 11 68,75% | 2 12,5% | 0 0% |
| 2. | Idiomatic class is an interesting subject | 4 25% | 10 62,5% | 1 6,25% | 1 6,25% |
| 3. | Idioms is difficult to learn | 8 50% | 5 31,25% | 3 18,75% | 0 0% |
| 4. | Idioms is a very important lesson and needs to be learned in English | 5 31,25% | 10 62,5% | 1 6,25% | 0 0% |
| 5. | The tutor uses interesting teaching methods | 6 37,5% | 10 62,5% | 0 0% | 0 0% |
| 6. | The teaching method used makes it easy to learn idioms | 6 35,5% | 9 56,25% | 1 6,25% | 0 0% |
| 7. | I am satisfied with the feedback given by the tutor on my use of idioms | 7 34,75 | 8 50% | 1 6,25% | 0 0% |
| 8. | “Idiomatic speaking class” helped me to improve my speaking ability. | 5 31,25% | 11 68,75% | 0 0% | 0 0% |

The results showed that most students (68.75%) enjoyed learning idioms. Although idioms are considered a difficult subject (50%), students find them interesting (62.5%) and important to learn in English (62.5%). With the use of interesting (62.5%) and easy-to-understand teaching methods, it has become easier for students to learn idioms (56.75%). Most students were also satisfied with the tutor's feedback on their use of idioms (50%). Additionally, students believe that the idiomatic speaking class helps improve their speaking ability (68.75%).

The researcher also conducted interviews with students to gather their perceptions. The interviews revealed that the idiomatic speaking class is highly beneficial for improving speaking skills. The tutor's interactive method and use of engaging, easy-to-understand media, such as audiovisual aids, contribute significantly to this positive outcome. Tutors also frequently incorporate games related to idiom learning, making the process enjoyable and preventing boredom. From the interviews, the researcher concluded that the idiomatic speaking class effectively enhances students' speaking abilities. This improvement is due to the class's emphasis on active practice of idiomatic expressions and building students' confidence in speaking. Many students reported noticeable improvements in their speaking skills as a result of participating in this class.

Based on the researcher's findings above, the students believe that the idiomatic speaking class greatly influences their speaking skills. The data shows that most students enjoy learning idiomatic expressions (68.75%) and consider them important and interesting lessons in English. They find idioms challenging (50%) due to difficulties in memorizing sentences and meanings, and



in proper pronunciation. However, the teaching and learning methods used in the class, such as direct interaction, memorization, and practicing in front of the class, make it easier for students to learn idioms. The tutor's effective responses to students' obstacles also play a significant role.

The research findings above also revealed that idiomatic speaking classes help improve students' speaking skills. Questionnaire data indicates that many students feel these classes enhance their speaking ability (68.75%). In these classes, the tutor encourages students to be more active in practicing and speaking. The class is designed to be as engaging as possible to prevent boredom, and students focus on memorizing sentences, frequently repeating them, and practicing in front of their peers to build confidence. Students have reported improvements in their speaking skills, noting that before taking this class, they used ordinary sentences, but now they can use idiomatic expressions. Many students were initially less confident in speaking English, but after taking this class, their confidence has increased.

The observed improvement in students' speaking abilities in idiomatic speaking classes can be attributed to a range of factors. One key element is the students' genuine interest in learning idioms. When students are engaged and motivated by the subject matter, they are more likely to participate actively and put in the effort required to master it. Another significant factor is the effectiveness of the teaching methods and media employed by the tutors. The use of interactive and engaging methods, such as direct classroom interactions and multimedia resources like audiovisual aids, enhances the learning experience. These methods help make the material more accessible and enjoyable, which can lead to better retention and understanding of idiomatic expressions.

The tutors' responsiveness to students' challenges also plays a crucial role. Effective tutors are attentive to the difficulties students face and provide timely and constructive feedback. This support helps students overcome obstacles such as difficulties in pronunciation, memorization of idiomatic sentences, and understanding their meanings. Tutors address these issues to help pupils learn more effectively and gain confidence. Finally, the supportive learning environment contributes to the improvement in speaking skills. A positive and encouraging atmosphere in the classroom makes students feel comfortable and motivated to practice their speaking skills. This environment, coupled with the engaging nature of the class and the supportive responses from the tutor, creates a conducive setting for students to enhance their speaking abilities. In summary, the combined effect of students' interest in idioms, effective teaching methods, responsive tutoring, and a supportive learning environment collectively leads to significant improvements in students' speaking skills.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the objectives of this research, it can be concluded that students perceive the Idiomatic Speaking Class as significantly beneficial for improving their English speaking skills. The questionnaire results revealed that 68.75% of students enjoyed learning idioms and viewed the class positively. The use of interactive teaching methods, including games and discussions, created an engaging learning environment that encouraged active student participation. Although students found idioms challenging, they recognized their importance in learning English. About 50% of students experienced difficulties with memorizing idioms and correct pronunciation but felt that the support from tutors and effective teaching methods helped them overcome these challenges. This demonstrates that a well-suited approach from teachers can help students grasp difficult material more effectively. Additionally, the study found that students' confidence in speaking improved after taking the idiomatic speaking class. Students who previously lacked confidence in using English



were now more proficient in incorporating idioms into their conversations, which also increased their motivation and interest in learning English.

For future improvements, the researcher offers several suggestions. The tutors need to maintain interactive and engaging teaching methods, provide additional support for pronunciation challenges, and create a supportive classroom environment. Incorporate technology and digital media to enhance learning. The students should actively participate in class, practice speaking regularly, review idioms at home, and seek help from tutors. Utilize learning resources and collaborate with peers to make learning more enjoyable. For future researcher needs to expand the study to include a diverse range of students, use consistent data collection methods, and explore factors like the learning environment and social support to gain a deeper understanding of improving speaking skills.

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