



JEELS
(Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies)
P-ISSN: 2407-2575 E-ISSN: 2503-2194
<https://jurnalfaktarbiyah.iainkediri.ac.id/index.php/jeels>

ANALYSIS OF IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS FOUND IN JUSTIN BIEBER'S SONG LYRICS IN THE ALBUM *JUSTICE*

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Abstract: This study aims to identify the types and meanings of idiomatic expressions in the lyrics of Justin Bieber's *Justice* album, using a qualitative descriptive method with content analysis across 17 songs. Idioms were classified based on Lim's categories—phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs, verb as keyword, noun as keyword, adjective as keyword, and idiomatic pairs—resulting in 195 identified idioms. The most dominant type is verb as keyword (108 idioms/55.4%), followed by noun as keyword (26/13.3%), phrasal verbs (21/10.8%), idiomatic pairs (15/7.7%), adjective as keyword (14/7.2%), and prepositional verbs as the least frequent (11/5.6%). This distribution reflects the songwriter's preference for dynamic, emotionally driven language, showing that idioms function not only as stylistic elements but also as tools to convey deeper emotional and thematic messages. The findings offer valuable insights for English language learning, particularly in understanding figurative language, enriching vocabulary, and enhancing translation skills..

Keywords: Translation, idiomatic expression, song, Justin Bieber, Translation Strategies

INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental tool of human communication, functioning as a system of sounds, symbols, and rules that enables people to express ideas, opinions, and emotions. As a socially constructed system, language develops in response to human needs for interaction and meaning-making, using sight, sound, or touch as its medium. Through vocabulary and grammar, language shapes how individuals interpret the world and engage with others in everyday life.

Beyond its communicative function, language plays an essential role in forming social identity and cultural belonging. To learn a language effectively, learners must understand not only its structural features but also the cultural context in which it operates. Without language, conveying thoughts or emotions becomes difficult and time-consuming, making meaningful communication and feedback nearly impossible.

Among the many features of language, idioms represent a particularly rich and challenging element. Idioms are fixed expressions whose meanings cannot be understood from their individual components. As highlighted by scholars, idioms carry deeper cultural, emotional, and ideological meanings, making them concise, memorable, and frequently used in daily communication. Their figurative nature often leaves no direct equivalent in other languages, which can confuse learners.

Globally, several languages are widely spoken, but English remains the most influential due to globalization and its role as an international lingua franca. English is now a central tool for global communication, connecting people across countries, cultures, and professions. Its importance has grown significantly, with millions speaking it as a first, second, or foreign language.

The dominance of English is also reflected in digital communication. For decades, English has been the primary language of the internet, shaping the way information is shared and accessed worldwide. Although content in other languages has increased over time, English continues to have the highest number of users online, reinforcing its status as a global communication key.

As a result, many people around the world are motivated to study English, recognizing its social, academic, and professional value. However, learning English as a foreign language presents challenges, especially in countries like Indonesia where it is not spoken in daily life. Students often struggle with vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and the complexity of authentic expressions found in real-life communication.

Vocabulary, in particular, forms the foundation of language proficiency. Without sufficient vocabulary, learners cannot effectively express ideas in listening, speaking, reading, or writing. Idioms, as part of advanced

vocabulary, are difficult because they do not follow literal meanings or regular grammatical rules. Their figurative nature requires learners to develop not only linguistic knowledge but also cultural awareness.

To overcome these difficulties, engaging learning media such as songs can be highly effective. Songs are widely enjoyed, emotionally appealing, and memorable, making them a powerful tool for developing vocabulary and understanding idiomatic expressions. Popular music, which often contains idioms and expressive language, can enhance students' learning motivation and reduce anxiety, enabling them to internalize new expressions more naturally.

Given the popularity of English songs among learners, studying idioms through music offers both linguistic and cultural benefits. Justin Bieber's *Justice* album, widely known and rich in figurative expressions, provides meaningful data for examining types and meanings of idioms within authentic contexts. Analyzing idioms in this album is therefore valuable for supporting English learners, especially in improving their understanding of figurative language and communicative competence.

METHOD

This research applies a qualitative research design, which is used to explore and understand the meanings that individuals or groups assign to social and linguistic phenomena. Unlike quantitative methods that rely on numerical data, qualitative research focuses on interpreting human experiences, cultural expressions, and the relationships that shape them. This approach is particularly suitable for investigating idiomatic expressions, as it allows the researcher to uncover deeper meanings behind language features that cannot be analyzed statistically.

To support this qualitative approach, the study employs library research as its primary data-collection method. Library research involves obtaining and examining written materials such as books, journals, and other published sources relevant to the topic. Through this method, the researcher collects, identifies, and interprets idioms found in Justin Bieber's song lyrics, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the types and meanings of idiomatic expressions used in the *Justice* album.

Source of the Data

The data of this study consist of the seventeen songs from Justin Bieber's 2021 album *Justice*, obtained from his official Spotify page. The album has been distributed globally and contains numerous idiomatic expressions within its

lyrics. This research aims to identify the total number of idioms found, classify the types of idiomatic expressions used, and analyze their meanings throughout the album. The songs analyzed in this study include: "2 Much," "As I Am," "Holy," "MLK Interlude," "Hold On," "Ghost," "Love You Different," "Anyone," "Red Eye," "Deserve You," "Off My Face," "Unstable," "Die for You," "Somebody," "Peaches," "Loved by U," and "Lonely."

Data Collection

In collecting the data, this study employed a documentation method, which involves examining written materials to obtain qualitative information. The process consisted of several steps. First, the researcher conducted transcription by obtaining the official lyrics of the songs to ensure accuracy and alignment with the songwriter's intended wording. Second, the researcher carefully read the lyrics to understand their overall meaning and identify potential idiomatic expressions. During this reading process, idioms were identified through two techniques. The first technique was underlining, in which any suspected idiomatic expression within the lyric lines was marked for further analysis. The second technique was bracketing, used when underlined expressions extended across more than one line, making it difficult to determine whether the segment contained one or multiple idioms. By placing brackets around each suspected expression, the researcher ensured clear separation and accurate identification of the idioms present in Justin Bieber's *Justice* album.

Data Analysis

Here is a **single, concise, yet complete paragraph** for your **data analysis** section:

The researcher employs content analysis to examine figurative language in Justin Bieber's *Justice* album lyrics by systematically collecting, coding, and classifying the data. Following qualitative research principles, the analysis begins with listening to the songs, reading the lyrics, and underlining expressions containing figurative language. These findings are then identified and categorized according to types of figurative language and parts of speech—such as phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs, idiomatic pairs, and other keyword-based idioms—while ensuring accuracy through theory-based verification. Both manifest meaning (what is directly stated) and latent meaning (what is implied) are considered, allowing the researcher to interpret the deeper messages within the lyrics. Finally, each item is coded to support clear organization, easy rechecking, and valid interpretation of the data.

FINDINGS

Based on the idiomatic expression data found in the *Justice* album by Justin Bieber, the most dominant type is verb as keyword idioms, with a total of 98 occurrences across 17 songs. This indicates that the lyrics heavily rely on action-oriented or emotionally expressive language to convey deep feelings such as love, pain, vulnerability, and hope. Following that, noun as keyword idioms appear 26 times, while phrasal verbs and prepositional verbs occur 21 and 11 times respectively. Adjective as keyword idioms and idiomatic pairs/phrases are less frequent, appearing 14 and 15 times. The dominance of verb-based idioms reflects the dynamic and emotional tone of the album, emphasizing personal transformation, emotional struggle, and relationship narratives through figurative language

Data Description

NO	Song	Type of Ideomatic					
		Pharsal verb	Prepositional verb	Verb as keyword	Noun as keyword	Adjective as keyword	Idiomati c Pirs
1	2 Much	2	2	2	-	1	-
2	As I Am	2	3	6	1	-	1
3	Holy	2	-	9	-	1	1
4	MLK Interlude	2	-	3	1	1	-
5	Hold On	2	-	3	1	1	-
6	Ghost	1	-	4	1	1	-
7	Love You Different	1	1	7	2	1	-
8	Anyone	1	1	7	2	1	-
9	Red Eye	1	-	3	3	1	1
10	Deserve You	-	2	8	-	1	1

DISCUSSION

This research provides meaningful contributions to the field of English language learning, particularly in vocabulary development and translation skills. By analyzing idiomatic expressions in Justin Bieber's *Justice* album, the study shows how song lyrics can serve as engaging and authentic learning materials. The presence of idiomatic language in music helps learners experience English in a natural and expressive form, encouraging them to move beyond literal comprehension and gain deeper familiarity with figurative expressions commonly used in everyday communication.

The study highlights that idioms, while essential in natural English usage, can be challenging for learners due to their non-literal meanings and cultural associations. To address this, idioms in the album are categorized based on grammatical structure, such as phrasal verbs, verbs as keywords, and idiomatic pairs. This categorization helps learners notice patterns in idiom formation and usage, ultimately expanding their vocabulary through multi-word expressions rather than isolated terms. Understanding these patterns improves learners' ability to interpret meaning holistically and apply idioms contextually in real communication.

Context plays a central role in interpreting idiomatic meaning, and the study demonstrates that music provides rich emotional and narrative contexts that make idioms easier to understand and remember. Through song lyrics, learners encounter expressions tied to feelings, relationships, and life events, which enhances their contextual learning. This also becomes crucial in translation, as many idioms – such as “die for you” or “pick up the pieces” – cannot be translated literally without losing meaning. The research therefore emphasizes the importance of figurative and cultural interpretation, allowing learners to develop more accurate and sensitive translation skills.

Overall, this research offers practical implications for English teachers and curriculum developers who wish to integrate music into vocabulary and translation lessons. Popular songs can increase student motivation while providing authentic linguistic input that supports the learning of complex features like idioms. Classroom activities such as identifying idioms, analyzing context, interpreting figurative meaning, and translating expressions into the native language can significantly enhance learners' receptive and productive skills. Thus, the study not only deepens understanding of idiomatic language but also demonstrates how music can be an effective and memorable tool for strengthening vocabulary and translation competence.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of idiomatic expressions in Justin Bieber's *Justice* album, this research concludes that various types of idioms appear throughout the lyrics, identified through steps such as listening to the songs, reading and identifying the idioms, classifying them by part of speech, rechecking the classifications using expert theories, and coding the findings. Translating these idioms poses significant challenges, as literal translation often fails to convey the intended meaning. Therefore, the most frequently used and effective translation strategy is paraphrasing, which allows translators to maintain

accuracy and preserve meaning when transferring idiomatic expressions from English into Indonesian.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES

Generative AI tools (such as CHATGPT) or other AI-assisted technologies that are used for preparing the manuscript must be declared by the authors. For example: During the preparation of this work the authors used DeepL (V.24.4.3) for optimizing language and readability. The authors have reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication after the use of this tool/service.

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