

ENGLISH TRAINING THROUGH IDIOMATIC EXPRESSION FOR STUDENTS OF SMK MUHAMMADIYAH

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Abstract: This Community Service activity is designed to improve students' ability to understand and use idioms in English more communicatively and contextually. The partners of the activity are students of SMK Muhammadiyah 3 from various departments who have an interest in developing language skills. Training methods include the delivery of interactive materials on common idioms, conversation simulations, language games, quizzes, and group discussions that encourage active participation. Evaluation through pre-test and post-test showed a significant increase in all indicators. The majority of participants were able to comprehensively understand idioms, distinguish idioms from literal expressions, and began to dare to use them in daily communication. This training has proven to be effective not only in improving understanding and practical skills, but also in building students' motivation and confidence. Thus, idiomatic expressions can become an integral part of English communication that is more expressive, natural, and relevant to the interaction needs of adolescents. This program is expected to be able to make a real contribution to the development of students' language competencies, while strengthening their readiness to face global communication challenges.

Keywords: English; Idiomatic Expression; SMK Muhammadiyah; Training

1. Introduction

A. Limited Mastery of Idioms and Colloquial English

To address the challenge of limited mastery of idiomatic expressions in colloquial English, this training is designed using an approach that emphasizes the comprehensive introduction and understanding of idioms. Idioms are an important part of informal communication and often cannot be understood literally. Therefore, students need to be equipped with the ability to interpret the meaning of idioms based on the context in which they are used. In this training, the selected idioms will be adapted to teenagers' communication styles and situations that are relevant to their daily lives, making the learning process more relatable and meaningful (Wijana, 2012).

The training materials will be arranged thematically and contextually, covering various authentic sources such as teen films, popular songs, social media posts, and everyday dialogues commonly used by native speakers. This approach aims to enrich students' learning experiences by exposing them to living and dynamic English. By understanding idioms through media they consume in their daily lives, students will find it easier to internalize the meaning and use of these expressions in real communication. In addition, the materials will be presented visually and interactively to make them more engaging and easier to understand (Iswatiningsih & Pangesti, 2021).

Untuk To strengthen the understanding and application of idioms, students will be involved in various practice-based activities, such as role-play, interactive dialogues, and real-life situation-based quizzes. These activities are designed to encourage students' active engagement, increase their confidence in speaking, and familiarize them with the use of idioms in appropriate contexts. Through conversation simulations and language games, students learn not only cognitively but also affectively and socially. Therefore, this training

is expected to develop more flexible, creative, and practical communication competence for use in daily life and the workplace (Ahmad et al., 2025).

B. Lack of Confidence in Communication

This training is designed to create a supportive learning environment that is free from fear of making mistakes. Through a practice-based approach, such as conversation simulations and group presentations, students will be given space to express themselves actively. Constructive feedback and the use of game-based learning methods, or gamification, will help increase students' confidence in using English flexibly and naturally (Nenden et al., 2024). Therefore, it is important to create a supportive and pressure-free learning environment in English learning, particularly to improve students' confidence in communication. Confidence is a psychological factor that strongly influences speaking ability in a foreign language (Asril et al., 2024).

When students are afraid of making mistakes or being judged, they tend to become passive and reluctant to speak. Therefore, this training applies a practice-based approach, such as conversation simulations and group presentations, which enables students to practice actively in a safe and collaborative atmosphere (Ramadhan et al., 2025). In addition, the use of gamification, namely the application of game elements in learning, has been proven effective in increasing students' motivation and engagement. Gamification creates an enjoyable and healthy competitive learning atmosphere, encouraging students to take more risks in speaking and to become more open to feedback. Constructive feedback also plays a key role in this process because it can strengthen confidence and correct mistakes without making students feel intimidated (Husain & Rohandi, 2025).

C. Unavailability of Relevant Learning Materials

The unavailability of relevant learning materials is a significant challenge in students' mastery of English, particularly in the aspect of informal communication. The materials available at school generally still focus on grammatical structures and the use of formal English, which do not adequately reflect the dynamics of contemporary teenage communication. As a result, students face difficulties in understanding and using expressions commonly found in popular media, such as idioms, slang, and contextual expressions that frequently appear in films, songs, or social media. This gap indicates the need for a more adaptive and contextual learning approach (Soleimani et al., 2024).

As a solution, the implementation team will develop a learning module designed thematically and based on real-life situations, focusing on popular idioms used in colloquial English. This module will be presented in an attractive visual format, such as infographics, illustrations, and interactive dialogues, so that students can more easily understand and remember the meaning of idioms in their contexts of use. Each idiom will be accompanied by examples of its application in everyday conversation, enabling students to directly relate the material to their own experiences. This approach aims to make learning more meaningful and applicable (Putri et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the learning materials will be integrated with digital media that are closely related to teenagers' daily lives, such as short videos from YouTube or TikTok, educational memes, and interactive content from social media. By utilizing media that are already familiar to students, the learning process will become more enjoyable and relevant. In addition to increasing students' interest in learning, this strategy also encourages them to explore English more actively and independently outside the classroom. Thus, the

developed module not only addresses the need for contextual learning but also strengthens students' communication skills in facing global challenges.

D. The Need for an Enjoyable and Interactive Learning Approach

This training is designed using an experiential learning approach that emphasizes students' active involvement in the learning process. Instead of merely receiving material passively, students will be involved in various activities that allow them to directly experience the use of colloquial English, particularly idiomatic expressions, in real and relevant contexts. Activities such as language games will encourage students to interact spontaneously and enjoyably, while the watch-and-discuss method, which involves watching videos and then discussing the idioms that appear, will help them understand the meaning of idioms contextually and culturally. In addition, through creative expression, students are given space to create their own content, such as memes, vlogs, or short dialogues containing idioms, allowing them to express their understanding creatively and personally.

This approach not only develops students' cognitive aspects, such as language comprehension and idiom structure, but also their affective and social aspects, which are highly important in foreign language learning. By actively participating in enjoyable and meaningful activities, students will feel more confident, motivated, and emotionally connected to the material being learned. The social interactions created during the activities also strengthen their communication skills in informal situations, which often become a challenge in the use of English in everyday life.

Ultimately, this training aims to bridge the gap between formal English taught in the classroom and colloquial English used in real life. Through direct experience and an interactive approach, students will not only acquire linguistic knowledge but also practical skills that they can apply in various global communication contexts. This approach is in line with the principles of 21st-century learning, which emphasize collaboration, creativity, and digital literacy as integral parts of the educational process (Duc et al., 2024).

2. Metode

A. Setting of the Community Service Activity

a. Time of Activity

This activity was conducted on January 14, 2026, through several stages of visits. The first visit was carried out as an initial meeting with the principal of the partner school and as an opportunity to become acquainted with the teachers at the partner school. During this visit, the team also conveyed the purpose and objectives of the community service activity. The second visit involved the signing of a letter of willingness to cooperate with the school as an official confirmation that the school would serve as the partner institution in the community service activity. The third visit was the implementation of the community service activity. The fourth visit involved feedback in the form of assessment or evaluation of the community service activity by analyzing the pre-test and post-test completed by the students.

b. Location of Activity

This activity was conducted at SMK Muhammadiyah 3 Pekanbaru, Riau Province, located at Jl. Cipta Karya No. 15, Sialang Munggu Subdistrict, Tuah Madani District, Pekanbaru City, Riau 28291.

c. Population and Research Sample

The students involved in this activity consisted of 30 participants from various departments.

B. Activity Method

The steps in this stage included opening remarks from the principal or a representative, introduction of the community service team members, delivery of material on idiomatic expressions, practice in using idiomatic expressions through games, question-and-answer sessions and discussion, and completion of the community service activity questionnaire. At the end of the activity, documentation was also carried out as evidence of the implementation of the community service program.



Figure 1. The Ongoing Community Service Activity

3. Results and Discussion**A. Training on Colloquial English Learning Using Idiomatic Expressions for Students of SMK Muhammadiyah 3 through Quizzes**

The evaluation of this Community Partnership Program (*Program Kemitraan Masyarakat/PKM*) was conducted using quizzes as a feedback instrument to measure students' level of understanding of idiomatic expressions. The quiz was designed not only to assess students' ability to recognize idioms but also to measure the extent to which they were able to explain the meanings of idioms accurately within communication contexts.

The assessment instrument used a four-level scale. A score of 4 was given to students who were able to provide a complete answer by mentioning both the idiom and its meaning. A score of 3 was given to students who were only able to mention the idiom without explaining its meaning. A score of 2 was given to students who were only able to explain the meaning without mentioning the idiom, while a score of 1 was given to students who were unable to answer both aspects.

Through this scoring system, the PKM implementation team was able to obtain a more objective overview of the effectiveness of the training while also identifying aspects that still required further reinforcement. This evaluative approach confirms that the idiomatic expression training at SMK Muhammadiyah 3 was not only oriented toward knowledge transfer but also toward the development of students' practical skills and reflective attitudes in using colloquial English more expressively and contextually.

Table 1. Results of Idiomatic Expression Training

No.	Quiz	Answer	Score			
			4	3	2	1
1	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning? 	Break a leg: semoga sukses	25	3	2	0
2	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning? 	Hit the sack: tidur	26	2	2	0
3	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning? 	Under the weather: sedang tidak enak badan	21	4	2	3
4	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning? 	Cost an arm and a leg: sangat mahal	18	7	3	2
5	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning? 	Piece of cake: sangat mudah	27	3	0	0
6	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning? 	Kill two birds with one stone: menyelesaikan dua hal sekaligus	15	5	5	5
7	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning? 	It's not my cup of tea: bukan kesukaanku	21	8	1	0
8	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning? 	Hit the nail on the head: tepat sasaran	18	7	3	2
9	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning? 	Bite the bullet: menerima kenyataan pahit	17	5	6	2
10	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning? 	The ball is in your court: giliranmu bertindak	19	4	3	4

11	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning?		Speak of the devil: baru saja dibicarakan	21	5	4	0
12	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning?		Add fuel to the fire: memperparah keadaan	18	7	3	2
13	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning?		Burning the candle at both ends: terlalu Lelah karena kerja terus	10	6	4	10
14	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning?		Kick the bucket: meninggal	18	5	6	1
15	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning?		Cry over spilled milk: menyesali hal yang sudah terjadi	22	5	2	1
16	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning?		In hot water: dalam masalah	19	4	6	1
17	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning?		The early bird catches the worms: yang cepat akan dapat hasil	14	6	4	6
18	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning?		Get out of hand: diluar kendali	15	5	5	5
19	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning?		Throw the towel: menyerah	17	5	4	4
20	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning?		Zip your lips: diam	25	3	2	0
21	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning?		Hit the books: belajar keras	26	4	0	0

22	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning?	Break the ice: mencairkan suasana	28	2	0	0
						
23	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning?	Kick off: mulai	17	6	3	4
						
24	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning?	On the same page: sependapat	18	4	4	4
						
25	What is the suitable idiom based on this picture, and what is the meaning?	Cold feet: ragu sebelum melakukan sesuatu	15	5	5	5
						
Rata – rata			20	5	3	2

Based on the evaluation data, the interpretation indicates variations in students' levels of understanding of idiomatic expressions. Of the total 30 participants, the majority, namely 65.3%, were able to understand idioms comprehensively, both in mentioning the expressions and explaining their meanings. This indicates that most students had achieved comprehensive competence.

However, 16% of the students were only able to mention the idioms without explaining their meanings, while 10.3% were only able to explain the meanings without mentioning the intended idioms. Meanwhile, 8% of the students were unable to answer both aspects, indicating that a small group still required more intensive assistance.

This data distribution shows that the training was effective in improving students' understanding of idioms, while also emphasizing the need for follow-up strategies to strengthen the abilities of students who remained in the low category. Academically, these results demonstrate that the interactive approach used in the training successfully developed students' competence in idiomatic expressions and can serve as a basis for designing subsequent learning programs that are more specifically directed toward the needs of students whose competence has not yet reached an optimal level.

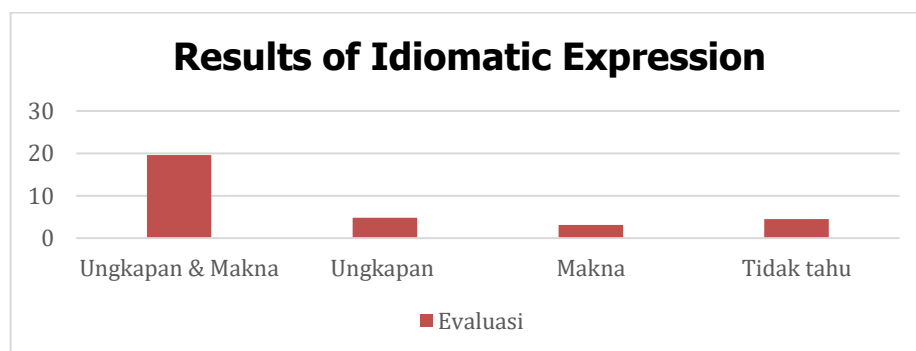


Figure 2. Results of Idiomatic Expression Training

Based on the evaluation data, it can be concluded that students' level of understanding of idiomatic expressions showed clear variation. Of the 30 students who participated in the training, 20 students, or 65.3%, were able to understand idioms comprehensively by mentioning the expressions and explaining their meanings. Meanwhile, 5 students, or 16%, were only able to mention the idioms without providing explanations of their meanings, and 3 students, or 10.3%, were only able to explain the meanings without mentioning the intended idioms. In addition, 2 students, or 8%, were unable to answer both aspects.

This data distribution indicates that the majority of participants had achieved comprehensive understanding, although a small number of students still required further reinforcement. Academically, these results confirm the effectiveness of the training in developing students' competence in idiomatic expressions while also providing an overview of the areas that need to be strengthened in subsequent learning activities.

B. Training on Colloquial English Learning Using Idiomatic Expressions for Students of SMK Muhammadiyah 3 through Questionnaires

The pre-test in the colloquial English training using idiomatic expressions at SMK Muhammadiyah 3 served as an initial stage to map students' basic abilities. This test helped the organizers identify students' understanding and skills in using idiomatic expressions in daily conversations. The results became an important reference for adjusting the training materials, identifying knowledge gaps, and strengthening the abilities that students already possessed. Therefore, the training could be focused on aspects that remained weak, implemented in a more directed and effective manner, and provide a tangible impact in the form of improved competence and confidence among students in communicating using idiomatic expressions.

Table 2. Partner Assessment Questionnaire on the Community Service Activity

<i>(Pre-test)</i>							
No	Assessment Indicator	Sub-indicator	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Basic Understanding of Idioms	Knowing the definition of idiomatic expressions	I know what idiomatic expressions are.	0	0	1	29
		Able to distinguish idioms from literal expressions	I am able to distinguish idioms from ordinary expressions or words.	0	0	5	25
		Recognizing examples of common idioms in English	I recognize examples of common idioms in English.	0	0	4	26
2	Identification of Idioms in Context	Able to find idioms in reading texts	I am able to find idioms in	0	0	7	23

			texts, videos, or songs.				
		Able to identify the meaning of idioms based on sentence context	I am able to identify the meaning of idioms based on sentence context.	0	0	2	28
		Demonstrating an understanding that idioms cannot always be translated literally	I understand that idioms cannot always be translated literally	0	0	6	24
3	Use of Idioms in Communication	Attempting to use idioms in simple sentences	I try to use idioms in simple sentences.	0	0	10	20
		Using idioms in daily conversations (in role-play or dialogues)	I use idioms in daily conversations (in role-play or dialogues.)	0	0	11	19
		Demonstrating creativity in constructing sentences using relevant idioms	I am able to demonstrate creativity in constructing sentences using relevant idioms.	0	0	5	25
4	Reflection and Attitudes toward Idiom Learning	Expressing interest in learning more idioms	I am interested in learning more idioms.	0	0	6	24
		Demonstrating confidence in trying to use idioms	I am confident in trying to use idioms.	0	0	7	23
		Recognizing the challenges in understanding idioms and the strategies to overcome them	I recognize the challenges in understanding idioms and the strategies to overcome them	0	0	11	19

The pre-test results prior to the colloquial English training using idiomatic expressions at SMK Muhammadiyah 3 showed that the majority of students still had a very limited understanding of idioms. They experienced difficulties in recognizing definitions, distinguishing idioms from literal expressions, and identifying examples of idioms in texts or conversations. In addition, the use of idioms in daily communication was rarely practiced; therefore, idioms had not yet become a productive skill among students. Nevertheless, there was interest in learning more idioms, although students' confidence remained low.



Figure 3. PKM Participants Attending the Training

Table 3. Partner Assessment Questionnaire on the Community Service Activity

<i>(Post-test)</i>							
No	Assessm ent Indicator	Sub indicator	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagre e	Strongly Disagree
1	Basic Understa nding of Idioms	Knowing the definition of idiomatic expression s	After participating in this PKM activity, I am able to understand idiomatic expressions well.	9	21	0	0
		Able to distinguish idioms from literal expression s	After participating in this PKM activity, I am able to distinguish idioms from ordinary expressions or words.	8	22	0	0
		Recognizin g examples of	After participating in this PKM activity, I am able to	5	24	1	0

		common idioms in English	recognize examples of common idioms in English.				
2	Identifica tion of Idioms in Context	Able to find idioms in reading texts	After participating in this PKM activity, I am able to find idioms in texts, videos, or songs.	7	17	5	1
		Able to identify the meaning of idioms based on sentence context	After participating in this PKM activity, I am able to identify the meaning of idioms based on sentence context.	5	19	4	2
		Demonstra ting an under stand ing that idioms cannot always be translated literally	After participating in this PKM activity, I understand that idioms cannot always be translated literally.	9	18	2	1
3	Use of Idioms in Communi cation	Attemptin g to use idioms in simple sentences	After participating in this PKM activity, I will try to use idioms in simple sentences.	27	3	0	0
		Using idioms in daily conversa tions, for example in role-play or dialogues	After participating in this PKM activity, I will use idioms in daily conversations, for example in role-play or dialogues.	20	10	0	0

		Demonstrating creativity in constructing sentences using relevant idioms	After participating in this PKM activity, I am able to demonstrate creativity in constructing sentences using relevant idioms.	10	15	3	2
4	Reflection and Attitudes toward Idiom Learning	Expressing interest in learning more idioms	After participating in this PKM activity, I am interested in learning more idioms.	5	19	4	2
		Demonstrating confidence in trying to use idioms	After participating in this PKM activity, I am confident in trying to use idioms.	9	18	2	1
		Recognizing the challenges in understanding idioms and the strategies to overcome them	After participating in this PKM activity, I recognize the challenges in understanding idioms and the strategies to overcome them.	27	3	0	0

The post-test results of the colloquial English training using idiomatic expressions at SMK Muhammadiyah 3 showed a significant improvement compared to the initial condition. Whereas most students previously experienced difficulties in understanding idioms, after the training they were able to recognize definitions, distinguish idioms from literal expressions, and identify examples of idioms in various contexts.

Progress was also evident in their ability to identify the meanings of idioms in texts, videos, and conversations, as well as in their awareness that idioms cannot always be translated literally. In addition, students began to show confidence in using idioms in simple sentences and dialogues, indicating a shift in attitude from merely knowing idioms to attempting to apply them.

Their creativity in constructing sentences using relevant idioms also began to develop. In terms of reflection, students' interest in learning more idioms became stronger, their confidence increased, and they began to develop strategies to overcome learning difficulties. Overall, the post-test confirms that the training not only improved students' understanding and practical skills but also fostered motivation, positive attitudes, and readiness to make idiomatic expressions part of more natural and expressive colloquial English communication.

Table 4. Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

No	Assessment Indicator	Pre-test					Post – test				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Improvement in Understanding	
1	Basic Understanding of Idioms	0	0	1	29	9	21	0	0	✓	
		0	0	5	25	8	22	0	0	✓	
		0	0	4	26	5	24	1	0	✓	
2	Identification of Idioms in Context	0	0	7	23	7	17	5	1	✓	
		0	0	2	28	5	19	4	2	✓	
		0	0	6	24	9	18	2	1	✓	
3	Use of Idioms in Communication	0	0	10	20	27	3	0	0	✓	
		0	0	11	19	20	10	0	0	✓	
		0	0	5	25	10	15	3	2	✓	
4	Reflection and Attitudes toward Idiom Learning	0	0	6	24	5	19	4	2	✓	
		0	0	7	23	9	18	2	1	✓	
		0	0	11	19	27	3	0	0	✓	

This training activity aimed to improve students' ability to understand and use idiomatic expressions as part of more expressive and natural colloquial English communication. The partners of this activity were students of SMK Muhammadiyah 3 from various departments who had an interest in developing their English language skills. The training was conducted using interactive methods, including the delivery of material on common idioms, daily conversation simulations, language games, quizzes, and direct practice through role-play and group discussions. Evaluation was carried out through pre-test and post-test activities to measure students' progress.

The pre-test results showed that most students did not yet understand idioms, had difficulty distinguishing idioms from literal expressions, and rarely used them in communication. However, the post-test results showed a significant improvement across all indicators. Students were able to recognize the definition of idioms, identify idioms in various contexts, and begin to use them confidently in daily conversations. In addition, the training also fostered students' motivation, positive attitudes, and confidence in using idiomatic expressions.

Overall, this training proved effective in improving students' basic understanding, identification skills, and ability to use idioms in real communication. This activity not only strengthened linguistic competence but also developed a more reflective learning attitude oriented toward self-development. Thus, idiomatic expressions can be positioned as an integral part of students' communication that is more relevant to the interaction needs of teenagers in the global era.

4. Conclusion

The conclusion drawn from the pre-test and post-test evaluation shows that the idiomatic expression training at SMK Muhammadiyah 3 had a significant impact on improving students' competence. The majority of participants, namely 65.3%, were able to understand idioms comprehensively by mentioning the expressions and explaining their meanings, while a small number of students still required further reinforcement.

Improvement was clearly observed across all indicators, particularly in basic understanding of idioms, the ability to identify idioms in context, and the confidence to use them in daily communication. This training not only established a strong foundation of knowledge but also fostered positive attitudes, motivation, and students' confidence. Therefore, idiomatic expressions can be positioned as an integral part of more expressive, natural, and relevant colloquial English communication in line with teenagers' interaction needs, while also providing opportunities for further reinforcement for students who still require deeper learning.

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