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Arifuddin Arifuddin, Arafiq Arafiq, I Made Sujana & Kurniawan Aggriyanto

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## The Mastery of and Strategies for Understanding the Idiomatic Expressions Applied by the Students of Hospitality and Tourism

Arifuddin Arifuddin, PhD <sup>a</sup>, Arafiq Arafiq, MHum<sup>b</sup>, I Made Sujana, MA<sup>b</sup>, and Kurniawan Apriyanto, MEd<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Postgraduate Program of English Education, University of Mataram Indonesia; <sup>b</sup>English Education, University of Mataram Indonesia

### ABSTRACT

The present study aimed at exploring the level of idiomatic expressions mastery, the strategies for understanding them, the obstacles, English skills and functional English that the students of Hospitality and Tourism Institutes need. The study applied mixed-methods. Data were collected with Needs-analysis, Document, Test, and Interview analyzed with descriptive statistics and qualitative. It indicates that the mastery of idiomatic expressions mastery of the students of Hospitality and Tourism is "Low", no idiomatic expressions teaching, lack familiarity with strategies for understanding idiomatic expressions, the priority English skills include Speaking, Listening, Writing, and Reading; and the primary Functional English needed are General Conversations, Providing Services, Giving information Offering Help and Asking for Co-operation. Therefore, the Hospitality and Tourism educations should improve the quality of the English language teaching.

### KEYWORDS

Tourism; hospitality; idiomatic expressions; ESP; functional English

### Introduction



One of the components of the English language skills which should be mastered by the hotel (hospitality) staff is idiomatic expressions. How about the understanding of idiomatic expressions? It shows that as a whole, students' pragmatic competence, in both receptive and productive skills, is still low (with the average score of 44.6 and 24.81 respectively) (Amin, Arifuddin, & Ahmadi, 2017). It is also reported that the most difficult thing when English is used to carry out the profession of tourism services is the use of phrases or idiom expressions (Bobanovic & Grzinic, 2011). This is a "gap". Ideally, the students of the Tourism Institute are competent in English language skills used in the hospitality business.

On one hand, undoubtedly, idioms occupy a high proportion of everyday communication (Cowie, 1998; van Lancker, 1987; Wray & Perkins, 2000), particularly hotel employees. Even in the current business world, technology and science, the demands of the English language, including the daily language (colloquialism) are very high (Ababneh & Al-Momani, 2011). On the other hand, idiomatic expressions are difficult for the EFL learners (Alhaysony, 2017; Aljabri, 2013; Alkarazoun, 2015; Al-Khawaldeh, Jaradat, Al-Momani, & Bani-Khair, 2016; Chuang, 2013; Itkonen, 2010; Liu, 2008; Lynch, 2010; Nippold, Moran, & Schwarz, 2001; Swinney & Cutler, 1979; Tran, 2013; Vanlancker-Sidtis,

2003). The fact that it is rarely used and not taught in the classroom makes idiomatic expressions difficult for the students to comprehend and use.

Some studies focus on idiomatic expressions, for example, the understanding of idiomatic expressions of the students of the English master's degree of the University of Mataram (Arifuddin, Priyono, & Djuhaeni, 2017). The other studies on learning strategies of idiomatic expressions conducted by Al-Khawaldeh et al. (2016); Smadi and Alrishan (2015); Zyzik (2009), but none studies about the understanding of idiomatic expressions of the students of tourism colleges. Thus, this is an authentic, urgent study and as an attempt to satisfy the students' needs related to necessities, wants and lacks and stakeholders needs as well. Gathigia (2016) recommend that idioms be taught effectively in schools because the acquisition of idioms is an indicator of English language mastery.

The research questions: 1) To what extent is the mastery of idiomatic expressions of the students of the Tourism Institutes in Lombok West Nusa Tenggara province? 2) Are idiomatic expressions taught at the Tourism Institutes? 3) What obstacles do the students of the Tourism Institutes in Lombok West Nusa Tenggara province face in understanding idiomatic expressions? 4) What strategies do the students of the Tourism Institutes in Lombok West Nusa Tenggara province apply to cope with the obstacles to understanding idiomatic expressions? 5)

**CONTACT** Arifuddin Arifuddin, PhD  [arifpgn@yahoo.com](mailto:arifpgn@yahoo.com)  Postgraduate Program of English Education, University of Mataram Indonesia, Jl. Majapahit 62, Gomong, Kec. Selaparang, Kota Mataram, Nusa Tenggara Bar. 83115, Indonesia.

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What language skills do the students of the Tourism Institute in Lombok West Nusa Tenggara province need? 6) What types of functional English do the students of the Tourism Institutes in Lombok West Nusa Tenggara province need?

Based on the research questions, the present study aimed at 1) measuring the level of the idiomatic expressions mastery of the students of the Tourism Institutes in Lombok West Nusa Tenggara province; 2) ensuring if those idioms are included in the curriculum of the Tourism Institutes in Lombok West Nusa Tenggara province; 3) exploring the obstacles to the understanding of the figurative language that they faced; 4) investigating the strategies that they applied to cope with the obstacles to understanding idiomatic expressions; 5) determining the language skills that they need; 6) identifying the types of functional English that they demand.

The findings of the present study will: 1) be one way to help students improve their daily communication skills; 2) Help them recognize idiomatic expressions; 3) provide information about strategies used by students in understanding and studying such expressions and other types of figurative language, the obstacles to understanding English idiomatic expressions for them, and the scope and orientation of those idioms in the English curriculum or syllabus at the Tourism Colleges or other Hospitality Education Institutions; and 6) be the reference for the design of teaching materials or sources of learning English in tourism, especially idiomatic expressions.

## Literature Review

### Meanings of the Idiomatic Expressions

An idiom and its meaning cannot be identified based on the meanings of the individual words (Ifill, 2002; Manzoor & Kiran, 2015; Simpson & Mendis, 2003, p. 423; Grant & Bauer, 2004, p. 38; Langlotz, 2006; Zimmerman-Edison, 2015), and a language is rich in idiomatic expressions in the forms of similes, metaphors, verbal phrases, figurative language, and proverbs (Cooper, 1998).

"Idioms", "reduced forms", and 'shared cultural knowledge are truly difficult for EFL learners (Alhaysony, 2017; Al-Khawaldeh et al., 2016; Arifuddin, 2013; Arifuddin, Sujana, & Kamaludin, 2016; Chuang, 2013; Itkonen, 2010) closely related to socio-cultural, historical, and political backgrounds (Al-Kadi, 2015, p. 513; Saleh & Zakaria, 2013). The inappropriateness between the lexical meaning and its real meaning, the accuracy of using, lack of knowledge of culture and history of idioms, and the difficulty in identifying their synonyms in the first languages make idioms difficult (Rizq, 2015; Bolinger, 1986, p. 280) and idioms are the most frequently used, and a language is rich

of such forms (Cooper, 1998). EFL learners need to become more aware of the common presence of these idioms (Kim, 2015) which improves the understanding of the L2 culture and society (Samani & Hashemian, 2012).

### Language Proficiency and Idiomatic Expressions

Since the mastery of the idioms is important for the EFL learners (Wray & Perkins, 2000), they need to interact with the native speakers (Liu, 2008) and be familiar with the context which ensures proficiency (Aljabri, 2013). The mastery of idioms is considered as a sign of proficiency, fluency, and comprehension (Saleh & Zakaria, 2013). It shows that language proficiency and the scores on the test of idioms correlate significantly (Akbarian, 2012; Al-Mohizea, 2017; Belousova, 2015; Hamza, Eng, & Hassan, 2017; Nippold et al., 2001).

Related to the content, texts containing familiar vocabulary is easier to understand because the speakers have prior knowledge (Lynch, 2010) and the absence of context and rarely used in the academic setting (Lundblom & Woods, 2012) makes idioms difficult to understand (Hamza et al., 2017; Swinn & Cutler, 1979). Tran (2012) emphasize that the idiom teaching might not have received adequate attention in EFL teaching contexts. Tran (2012) notes that many teachers tend to avoid idioms in their language and teaching. Above all, Kim (2016) suggests that in order to interpret the meaning of idioms based on contexts, teachers should provide books containing the information about the definitions and more detailed examples of the idioms.

In teaching idioms, teachers should use appropriate and effective media. Robo, (2014) insists that the organization of teaching idioms in an English class should take into consideration the usage of some materials, use games, flashcards, role-plays, and pictures. Teachers should use a variety of methods and strategies depending on the topic and module. Mother tongue should be left apart and teach idioms through paraphrasing.

### The Need for the English Language in Hospitality and Tourism

Not surprisingly, idioms place the biggest proportion in the daily communication (Cowie, 1998; van Lancker, 1987; Wray & Perkins, 2000), even in the current business, technology and science worlds (Ababneh & Al-Momani, 2011). In general, communication skills such as social and cultural skills other communication competencies are important in any aspect of hospitality business (Bobanovic & Grzinic, 2011). Specifically, for example, all students of the Tourism (or Hospitality) Colleges need the English language, particularly the

English language components relevant to their future occupations. This types of English are generally known as functional English.

In addition, they should have had professional communication (Meson, 2013) in global world. This is an anticipation of the internationalization of hospitality and tourism education (Hobson, 2008) and the emerging trends in the hospitality and tourism industry as well as hospitality and tourism academia (Kim & Jeong, 2018).

In addition, over the past forty years tourism has position itself as one of the largest world-wide economic sectors (Scott & Gössling, 2015). And fundamental requirements and specific skills for hospitality industry are needed (Beesley and Davidson (2013). One of the essential skills is communication skill. Communication is no longer considered an objective but also a device for participating in socially meaningful activities (Kaya, 2015). The existence of English as a world lingua franca facilitates international communication (King, Byrne, Djouadi, Bianco, & Stoicheva, 2011, p. 20). Consequently, it leads to the necessity for qualified hospitality and tourism industry employees. In addition, it is advantageous of having sufficient English fluency in the Tourism and Hotel Management sector (Zou, Ramirez, Erazo, & Encalada, 2019).

### Strategies for Understanding the Idiomatic Expressions

Strategies also contribute to the pragmatic understanding. Wray (1999) suggests that learning foreign language idiomatic expressions is difficult so that it needs a special treatment. Al-Khawaldeh et al. (2016) found that students found it difficult to learn and understand the idiomatic expressions, and the most effective strategy is contextual inference. That is why, Vulchanova, Vulchanov, and Stankova (2011) suggest to the learners to apply the metalinguistic skill, such as exposure in the contexts of use of idiomatic expressions, contextual inferences, and text comprehension.

Besides such strategies, Smadi and Alrishan (2015) report that literal translation strategy is effective. And according to Zyzik (2009), the other most effective strategy used in understanding the meanings of the idiomatic expressions is guessing through the context. So far, according to Lontas (2002), the strategy commonly used in learning second language idioms is the integration of interpretation and determination of meaning, that is, by firstly interpreting their literal meanings and followed by determining their figurative meanings.

The native speakers use a variety of idioms in their daily interactions, while the non-native speakers rarely use them (Macis & Schmitt, 2017). The minimum understanding of the idiomatic expressions results in significant misunderstanding (Liu, 2008). It shows that the EFL students

showed a low achievement in figuring out the meanings of idioms (Alkarazoun, 2015; Tran, 2013). English idioms are difficult even for the English native speakers (Buchwald, 2000; Vanlancker-Sidtis, 2003). Due to the critical educational issue, Altuwaresh (2016) suggests to language teachers to teach collocations and ensure that their students are well-exposed to them.

Other scholars suggest some strategies. Wu (2008) suggests that EFL teachers design various activities for students to use with English idioms and subsequently acquire them efficiently, and students learn better when they are provided with collaborative activities and integrated skills. Cieslicka (2010) proposed the Literal Salience Resonant (LSR) model of L2 idiom comprehension. In relation to laterality, Nordmann, Cleland, and Bull (2014) found that high-literality idioms were rated as more familiar than low-literality idioms.

## Instruments and Methods

### Instruments

#### Test of Idiomatic Expressions Understanding

A written test was used to measure the idiomatic expressions mastery of the students the Tourism Institutes. The test contains 35 items testing the students' mastery of the idiomatic expressions commonly used in the hospitality and tourism areas. The Test of Idiomatic Expressions Understanding was used to measure the idiomatic expressions mastery of the students the Tourism Institutes. The test was constructed by the author and coauthors. The selection and the coverage of the idiomatic expressions assessed in the test were based on syllabus of the English course. The test items also refer to hospitality and tourism-related English idioms selected from "Idioms and Idiomatic expressions used in traveling and tourism" (Marin, 2017) and The Tourism Society's Dictionary for the Tourist Industry (Collins, 2008). The test was administered at all locations of the institutes or colleges.

#### Need Analysis Questionnaire

The construction the questionnaire is based on the target competencies and the students' needs. The students' Needs Analysis is based on Chamber (1980), Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Robinson (1991) and Brown (2016). The questionnaire was used to collect the data about the students' need of English. It contains semi-structured and structured questionnaires. It is the researchers-constructed questionnaire.

#### Interview Guide

An open-ended interview guide was used to collect further clarification information from the students.

### Document (Syllabus or Curriculum and Lesson Plans)

The documents were analyzed in order to uncover the coverage of idiomatic expressions in the English courses offered by the Tourism Institutes.

### Methods

The present study employed Mixed-methods, the integration of both quantitative and qualitative methods. In data collection, the test was used to collect quantitative data about the students' mastery of the idiomatic expressions. Meanwhile, questionnaire, interview and syllabi were applied to gather qualitative data dealing with the students' needs, learning obstacles and the coverage of the idiomatic expressions in the syllabi respectively.

### Population and Sample

The present study was conducted at the Tourism Institutes in Lombok West Nusa Tenggara province. Population involves all students of 4 Tourism Institutes widely spread in Lombok West Nusa Tenggara province, namely, Mataram Tourism College, Lombok Tourism Poly-technique, Tourism Diploma of the University of Mataram, and Lombok Tourism Community. The sample 100 students were selected randomly, while the document and the interviewees were chosen with a purposive sampling technique.

### Data Collection Procedures

#### Test of Idiomatic Expressions Understanding

The procedures: 1) The researchers distributed the Test of Idiomatic expressions to the students; 2) The students answered the test items individually in 45 minutes using answer sheets; and 3) The researchers scored the students' answers based on the correct answers.

#### The Need Analysis Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used to collect the data about the students' need of English. The procedures: 1) The participants responded to exploring questions dealing with their needs in learning English supporting their future workplaces; 2) The researchers identified the participants' responses; 3) The researcher classified the responses; and 4) The researchers summarized the students' responses.

#### Interview Guide

The Interview Guide was applied to investigate the: 1) obstacles to the understanding of the idiomatic expressions; 2) strategies that the students applied to overcome the problems or obstacles to understanding the idiomatic expressions.

### Document (Syllabus or Curriculum and Lesson Plans)

The procedures: 1) The researchers examined the syllabi or curriculum and lesson plans to uncover the coverage of idiomatic expressions in the English courses offered by the Tourism Institutes; 2) The researchers identified the concord between the institutional goals and descriptions and coverage of the curriculum of the institutes.

### Data Analysis

#### Level of Mastery of the Idiomatic Expressions

The data about idiomatic expressions understanding based on the students' scores were analyzed with descriptive statistics. The procedures: 1) Scoring the students' mastery of the idiomatic expressions; 2) Determining the levels of the idiomatic expressions mastery based on the scoring criteria and 3) Displaying the scores of all participants.

#### Students' English Language Needs

The data about the students' needs of English and their strategies for understanding idiomatic expressions were analyzed qualitatively. The procedures: 1) Identification; 2) Reduction; 3) Classification; 4) Percentage calculation; 5) Display (using a pie chart); 6) Description; 5) Interpretation and 6) Conclusion.

#### Obstacle to Understanding and Strategies

The data about the students' obstacles to understanding the meaning of the idiomatic expressions and their strategies to cope with the obstacles were analyzed as follows: 1) Transcription; 2) Reduction; 3) Classification; 4) Description; 5) Synthesis; 6) Interpretation and 7) Conclusion.

#### Syllabi or Curriculum Coverage

The data dealing with the coverage of the idiomatic expression in the syllabi or curriculum were analyzed through the following procedures: 1) Searching; 2) Identification; 3) Classification; 4) Description and 5) Conclusion.

### Results

#### Idiomatic Expressions Mastery

The scores of the test attended by 50 students are displayed in Table 1. The score for each test item is 2.86 and the total score is 100. By referring to the criteria (95–100 = very high; 75–94 = high; 65–74 = medium; 45–64 = low; and 0–44 = very low) for understanding the idiomatic expressions, the mean value of 57.94 is at the "low" level.

**Table 1.** Scores of idiomatic expressions mastery.

Students	Score	Students	Score	Initials	Scores	Initials	Score
Student 1	25.74	Student 26	71.5	Student 51	77.22	Student 76	62.92
Student 2	60.06	Student 27	42.9	Student 52	37.18	Student 77	74.36
Student 3	77.22	Student 28	40.04	Student 53	40.04	Student 78	77.22
Student 4	77.22	Student 29	37.18	Student 54	42.9	Student 79	57.2
Student 5	62.92	Student 30	42.9	Student 55	42.9	Student 80	25.74
Student 6	74.36	Student 31	77.22	Student 56	71.5	Student 81	60.06
Student 7	80.08	Student 32	82.94	Student 57	45.76	Student 82	80.08
Student 8	40.04	Student 33	40.04	Student 58	40.04	Student 83	40.04
Student 9	57.2	Student 34	57.2	Student 59	57.2	Student 84	25.74
Student 10	25.74	Student 35	54.34	Student 60	54.34	Student 85	51.48
Student 11	51.48	Student 36	45.76	Student 61	82.94	Student 86	71.5
Student 12	37.18	Student 37	82.94	Student 62	82.94	Student 87	37.18
Student 13	71.5	Student 38	60.06	Student 63	57.2	Student 88	80.08
Student 14	25.74	Student 39	40.04	Student 64	45.76	Student 89	25.74
Student 15	80.08	Student 40	40.04	Student 65	40.04	Student 90	37.18
Student 16	80.08	Student 41	45.76	Student 66	40.04	Student 91	62.92
Student 17	74.36	Student 42	57.2	Student 67	57.2	Student 92	74.36
Student 18	37.18	Student 43	57.2	Student 68	60.06	Student 93	80.08
Student 19	62.92	Student 44	51.48	Student 69	51.48	Student 94	45.76
Student 20	80.08	Student 45	60.06	Student 70	57.2	Student 95	80.08
Student 21	45.76	Student 46	51.48	Student 71	51.48	Student 96	45.76
Student 22	45.76	Student 47	57.2	Student 72	65.78	Student 97	80.08
Student 23	71.5	Student 48	57.2	Student 73	57.2	Student 98	71.5
Student 24	71.5	Student 49	82.94	Student 74	60.06	Student 99	77.22
Student 25	80.08	Student 50	65.78	Student 75	82.94	Student 100	71.5

Notes: (95–100 = very high; 75–94 = high; 65–74 = medium; 45–64 = low; and 0–44 = very low).

### Teaching Idiomatic Expressions

More than 95% of students said that there had never been idiomatic expressions teaching during their studies at the Tourism Colleges. Even if, there is a tiny discussion of idiomatic expressions in the classroom English communication. These data indicate that the Hospitality and Tourism institutes should prioritize using language for communication and Functional English, including, idiomatic expressions. In fact, the institution has not given attention to students' needs. This means that the institutions have not identified student needs and the demands of their future careers.

### Obstacles to Understanding Idiomatic Expressions

Because they were never taught in the course, the majority of students said that they could not express what obstacles they faced to learn and understand idiomatic expressions. They rarely hear and use idiomatic expressions because of the limitations of exposure. There is a small percentage, less than 5%, based on their personal experience which reveals that the difficulty of understanding idioms is caused by limited vocabulary mastery.

### Strategies Applied to Deal with Obstacles to Understanding Idiomatic Expressions

Based on the results of identification, classification, synthesis, and inference, the following is a summary of the

strategies applied by the students: 1) self-study; 2) understanding sentences; 3) understanding keywords; 4) practice and read references; 5) understanding speech expressions and gestures of the body; 6) expand learning languages that are rarely used; 7) memorize, practice and read repeatedly; 8) search for and read the references on the internet; 9) hang out and watch a lot of western movies; 10) listen to words and collect as many videos as possible; 11) understanding idioms first, then trying to slip into the conversation; and 12) the majority of the students don't know the strategy because the idiomatic expressions were never taught.

### Needed English Skills

Of the four English language skills, students may choose more than one skill. Based on their choices (frequency of choice), here is the data summary of the English language skills that they need, namely Speaking (38.5%), Listening (22.93%), Writing (19.27%), and Reading (17.43%) as shown in Figure 1.

### Needed Functional English

Functional English that the students need involve General Conversations (28.45%), Providing Services (25%), Giving information (22.41%), Offering Help (14.65%), Asking for Co-operation (9.48%).

## English Skills that the Students Need (%)

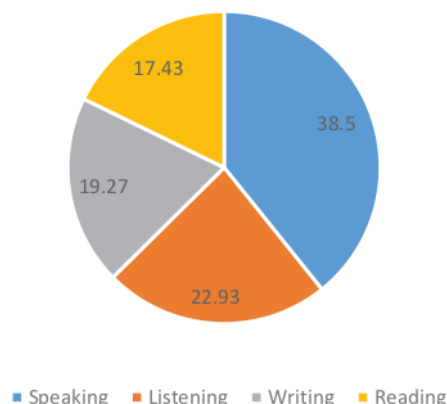


Figure 1. English skills that the students needs.

## Language Functions the Students Need (%)

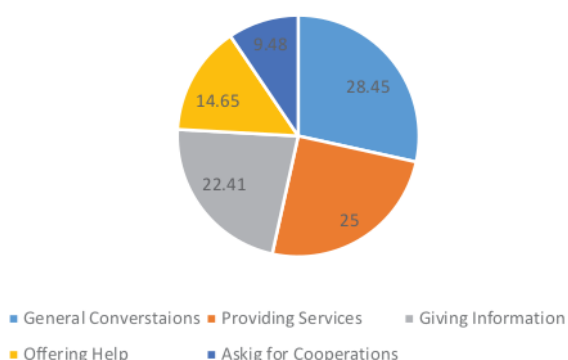


Figure 2. Needed functional English.

## Discussion

### Idiomatic Expressions Mastery

Understanding of idiomatic expressions of the Tourism Institutes is still low. This finding is in line with the results of a study conducted by Tran (2013) which indicates that the EFL understanding of idiomatic expressions is low. The same finding was reported by Alkarazoun (2015) that EFL students exhibit low ability or learning achievement in determining the meaning of the idiomatic expressions. Surprisingly, Vanlancker-Sidtis (2003) found that even very fluent non-native speakers of English showed lower mastery of colloquial (idioms) than the normal native speakers when listening. Although in different subjects, including those in English majors, such findings is also

relevant to those reported by Alhaysony (2017), Al-Khawaldeh et al. (2016), Arifuddin, et al. (2017), Amin et al. (2017), Al-Mohizea (2017), Chuang (2013), and they tend to understand the literal meaning (Cieslicka, 2010). The results of the study conducted by Itkonen (2010) which are more focused on colloquial languages, such as idioms, reduced forms and shared cultural knowledge are also relevant to the findings of this study. It cannot be denied that the understanding of the culture of language users influences the understanding of idiomatic expressions, which indirectly serves as a vehicle for character development which is crucial in the job opportunities (Rochayati & Wardani, 2018). It is also reported that the most difficult thing when English is used to carry out the profession of tourism services is the use of phrases or idiom expressions (Bobanovic & Grzinic, 2011). This shows that idiomatic expressions are indeed difficult.

As stated earlier, besides the students of high schools, the students of the English majors also have difficulty in understanding the meaning of idiomatic expressions. So, for non-native speakers as well as native speakers, an idiomatic expression is difficult to understand and use. So, both native and non-native speakers of English sometimes find it difficult to understand idiomatic expressions.

It cannot be denied, competence or understanding of idiomatic expressions and figurative language is crucial in interaction and communication in the world of tourism. How could they communicate (understand and produce) with foreign tourists (in English) and carry out their role as a tourist or hospitality service servant if their English-language competence is low? This is a really worrying condition. As an institution that prepares professional employees in the tourism or hospitality services sector, which demands high-level foreign language competence, especially English, there should be an adequate portion of idiomatic expressions teaching in the curriculum of the formal education institutions. However, this is not an excuse. A solution must be sought immediately, for example, by intensifying the debriefing through lectures and direct exposure (exposure) (Figure 2).

What about the teaching of idiomatic expressions in the Tourism Institutes? More than 95% of students said that idiomatic expressions had never been taught during their studies at the institution. There is a tiny opportunity for the students to communicate in English in the classroom. It indicates that the College of Tourism should prioritize the use of language for communication and Functional English, including, idiomatic expressions. Unfortunately, the institution has not given attention to the students' needs. This means that the institution has not identified the student needs and the demands of their careers in the future. It should provide the opportunity for students to

increase their competitiveness. It is relevant to Suarez, March, Kim, and Shanklin (2001) study suggesting that graduate students invest a significant amount of resources to improve their competitiveness in the job market.

If the students who have never been taught idiomatic expressions show a low understanding of the idiomatic expressions, it is natural. Even the students who have been formally taught also face difficulties in understanding idiomatic expressions. This finding is in line with the results of a study conducted by Tran (2012) which examined the figurative idiomatic competence of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) student in Vietnam and Alkarazoun (2015) which showed that EFL students showed a low understanding of idiomatic expressions. In other words, Mataram Tourism Institute really needs to formally provide the opportunities for the students to improve their understanding of figurative language, including idiomatic expressions.

One of the factors influencing the understanding of idiomatic expressions is "familiarity". This view is in line with the results of Aljabri's (2013) and Nippold et al.'s (2001) research, which show that the causes of the low understanding of idioms include the level of familiarity. So, it is necessary to increase the level of their familiarity with idiomatic expressions through formal lectures. If possible, official lectures will be enriched with direct exposure. This kind of activity is important because according to Altuwaresh (2016), language learning through context or exposure gives a greater opportunity to increase foreign language competence, especially skills using functional language.

Based on the level of understanding of idiomatic expressions as described earlier, the question arises, 'What are the obstacles? Since they were never taught in the courses, the majority of students said that they could not express the obstacles in learning and understanding idiomatic expressions. They rarely hear and use because of the limitations of exposure. There is a small percentage, less than 5%, based on their personal experience which reveals that the difficulty of understanding the idiom is due to the limited mastery of vocabulary. It's natural, because their learning opportunities to recognize idiomatic expressions, including reading them, is limited. It is known that one of the causes of difficulties in understanding idiomatic expressions is lack of reading.

Reading is important to practice understanding the meaning of the idiomatic expressions which are difficult to trace through the meaning of the individual words that form them. This is in line with the definition of idioms, namely, as a standard expression which means that it cannot be understood through the meaning of each forming word (Ifill, 2002), an idiom is a group of words or

phrases which means that they cannot be traced through the meaning of each constituent (Simpson & Mendis, 2003); Al-Kadi (2015). This is one of the causes of the difficulty of understanding idiom meanings. Due to the importance of reading, institutions are obliged to enter idiomatic expressions in their curriculum, so that students have a minimum obligation to read. Generally, reading is one of the strategies to improve the understanding of figurative language and idiom mastery.

So far, what strategies have been applied by the target students of this study to understand the meaning of idiomatic expressions? Of the several strategies presented by the students, they did not seem varied, too general, and did not provide sufficient opportunities to master idiomatic expressions. For example, Self-learning/self-taught, Understanding the sentence, Understanding keywords, Practicing and reading references, Understanding speech expressions and gestures, Expand learning languages that are rarely used, and Frequently practice. The limitations of the strategies they know and apply may be because they do not give lectures about idiomatic expressions, so they do not know much about how to (strategies) learn and understand idiomatic expressions.

The following are some of the strategies often applied by the students who learned idiomatic expressions. First, "Memorizing, practicing and reading repeatedly, including using dictionaries." This strategy is feasible because the results of the study show that transfer strategies, comparing and contrasting L1-L2 idioms, include bilingual vocabulary (bilingual glossaries in EFL textbooks) and designing an idiom dictionary are the effective strategies to teach idioms (Afshunpoura & Memari, 2014). Many bilingual dictionaries contain idiomatic expressions that help students recognize and understand idiomatic expressions. By reading idiomatic expressions independently, learners can practice interpreting the meaning and use of the idiomatic expressions that contribute to increasing familiarity with meaning (Belousova, 2015).

Second, listening to words and collecting videos, reading sources on the internet, and socializing and watching a lot of western movies or videos. "There is no need to describe research that proves the importance of using foreign language videos or films, including idiomatic expressions in English. Third, "Using the internet". This internet user can also be related to Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). This strategy is in relevant to Lontas's (2018) suggestion to use CALL in learning and understanding idiomatic expressions. Unfortunately, students do not recognize several important strategies such as paraphrasing, using images or flash cards, exposure in a real context, and trial-and-error.

### Needed English Skills

Of the four English language skills, students may choose more than one skill. From their choice (frequency of choices), the summary of the data is obtained. In detail, Speaking 42 (38.5%), Listening 25 (22.93%), Writing 21 (19.27%), and Reading 19 (17.43%).

Such an order (ranking) of the English language skills is exactly the same as Trang's (2015) study on English language skills used in the world of tourism, namely Speaking, Listening, Writing and Reading; and very similar to the order reported by Perchanant (2012), Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing.

Of the three results of the studies, Speaking and Listening are the main language skills needed in the tourism and hospitality services profession. Both of these skills really require the mastery of everyday language and functional English, which is rich in idiomatic expressions and figurative language. These findings need to be considered by the institution in an effort to meet the student learning and career needs. Along with the importance of the suitability of competence and the world of work, Yahya (2016) emphasizes that the material provided in learning at the educational institutions must be adjusted to the real conditions that will be addressed by students as entrepreneurs or actors in tourism and hospitality services. In addition to hard skills, soft skills are also crucial for tourism operators and other business people. The results of Harvard University research shows that 80% of the career success is obtained from soft skills, while hard skills only contribute 20% (Rao in Amin, 2016).

### Needed Functional English

Communication competencies, such as social and cultural skills, called functional language are key to success in international business, particularly hospitality business (Klimova & Semradova, 2013). Based on the frequency of student choice for Functional English needs, it can be summarized as follows. General Conversations (28, 45%), Providing Services (25%), Giving information (22.41%), Offering Help (14.65%), and Asking for Co-operation (9.48%). Some of the functional English they need are relevant to what Dann (2001) pointed out that students of tourism education institutions need English that is related to hotel reservation and checks in, giving and requesting information about hotel facilities, and giving directions. The relatively similar findings were reported by Sari (2016) indicating that the most functional English is needed by the students in tourism and hospitality education institutions, namely, Tour Guiding (60.8%), Taking and Confirming Reservations (57%), and Handling Checking in and out (54%), Using telephones (48.6%),

Handling Complaints (43%), and Asking and Giving Information (41%) (Sari, 2016). These kinds of functional English and communicative activities are required by the hospitality students. These communicative activities and skills should be considered while designing English language courses for the hotel industry or hospitality (Yasmin, Sarkar, & Sohail, 2016). The debate about developing a hospitality education perspective has also been initiated (Wisch, 1991).

Based on some results of these studies, it is still important to add some functional English in the English curriculum and lectures at the College of Tourism in Lombok West Nusa Tenggara.

### Implications

Low mastery of the idiomatic expressions, or English communication skills in general, leads to communication difficulties because the hospitality and tourism employees commonly interact with foreign language users, including the native speakers of English. Therefore, the hospitality and tourism education must reconstruct the curriculum appropriate with the students' real needs in hospitality and tourism world. Take for example, it should provide more opportunities for the students to expose to the real use of English idiomatic expressions in particular. Besides, more competent English language teachers should be hired.

### Limitations and Future Research

Some factors may affect the effectiveness of a foreign language teaching, for instance, teachers' professionalism and students' exposure. Due to the broad coverage of the present study, the two factors have not been examined, so it is urgent to conduct further studies on these aspects.

### Conclusion

In conclusion: 1) The mastery of the idiomatic expressions of the students of the Tourism Institutes in Lombok West Nusa Tenggara province is "Low"; 2) In practice, idiomatic expressions were not taught in the English classes at the Hospitality and Tourism Institutes in Lombok; 3) The obstacles of the students of the Tourism Institutes in Lombok West Nusa Tenggara province to the understanding of the idiomatic expressions involve the absence of formal learning of idiomatic expressions in the classrooms. Nonetheless, there is a small number, less than 5%, based on their personal experience which reveals that the difficulty of understanding idioms is caused by limited vocabulary; 4) To encounter the obstacles to understanding the idiomatic expressions in their daily English communication, the

students apply the strategies, such as, Self-learning/self-taught, Understanding sentences, Understanding key-words, Practicing and references, Understanding speech expressions and gestures, Expanding learning languages that are rarely used, Frequent practice, Memorizing, practicing and reading repeatedly, Looking for references on the internet and reading on the internet, Hanging out and watching western movies, Listening to words and collecting as many videos as possible, and Understanding idioms and then trying to slip into conversations. 5) Based on their experience<sup>1</sup> and learning goals, the students need the following English skills, namely, Speaking, Listening, Writing, and Reading. 6) The types of functional English that the students of the Tourism Institutions in Lombok West Nusa Tenggara province need are General Conversations, Providing Services, Giving information, Offering Help, and Asking for Co-operation.

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### ORCID

Arifuddin Arifuddin  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3816-6842>

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