The Study of English Animal Idioms: The Nexus between Theory and Applications

Moses Gatambuki Gathigia¹ & Martin C. Njoroge²

Abstract

Available literature on English language teaching reports that animal idioms display semantic opacity and make it difficult for a second language learner to comprehend meaning. This study, therefore, set out to analyse 20 purposively sampled English animal idioms in order to establish the nexus between theory and applications of idioms. To achieve the objective of this study, the fundamental principles of the Hybrid model of idiom processing which combines both non-compositional and compositional approaches were adopted. The study adopted a survey research design because the focus was on analysing sampled English animal idioms that could be used to highlight the nexus between theory and applications. The data for this study were gathered manually from the Macmillan English Dictionary (2007 edition), Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2010 edition) and the internet. Content analysis guided the analysis of the English animal idioms in order to identify the parts of the idioms that were decompositional and those that were non-decompositional. The study found that the Hybrid model of idiom processing not only contributes a significant piece to the jigsaw of comprehension of English animal idioms, but also insights to scholars for further research in English idioms. Thus, this study recommends a shift in paradigm from traditional methods of teaching idioms to the Hybrid model of idiom processing.

Key words: English Animal idioms, Hybrid model of idiom processing, nexus, applications

General Theme: Addressing the Challenges Facing Humanity through Research and Innovation

Symposium 3: Creativity and Innovation in Education

¹ Department of Humanities & Languages, Karatina University, P. O. Box 1957-10101, Karatina, Kenya. Tel: +254721993915, email: mgatambuki@yahoo.com
² Department of English & Linguistics, Kenyatta University, P.O Box 43844-00100, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: +254722319499, email: martin.njoroge@yahoo.com