

Modern Arabic Language Idioms in the *Silsilat Al-Lisan Arabic Language Learning* Textbook

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Abstract—Idioms are the result of the extensive development of modern Arabic, though they have received little attention in textbooks. Still, out of the few textbooks that are specifically devoted to idioms, *Silsilat Al-Lisan Arabic Language Learning* (SLAL) has emerged as one of the most well-known. Therefore, this study examines the forms of idioms found in SLAL regarding the relationship of meaning between its elements, the situation of use, and pedagogical grammar. This study uses a qualitative approach based on library data. These data were collected using documentation. After that, the data were analyzed using the distributive method, selecting and determining the elements, describing the smallest element, and expanding it. Based on their meaning and structure, idioms in SLAL are divided into pure and partial elements of nouns, verb phrases, noun phrases, adjective phrases, and prepositional phrases. Meanwhile, based on their use, idioms are divided into those found in science and events. The first model idiom can be analyzed through the phrase theory and meaning fields to determine the intended meaning. The second model must be analyzed using a pragmatic or contextual theory because what is intended is a function or intent. Nevertheless, the analysis of the first model will be more accessible if it is associated with context. In addition, the idioms in the book are categorized as pedagogical idioms that are different from theoretical ones.

Index Terms—idiom, modern Arabic, learning material

I. INTRODUCTION

Idioms are one of the significant results of the development of modern Arabic vocabulary, primarily through the neology method (*muwallad*) (Al-Jarf, 2024). Even though idioms are often used in everyday conversation and modern science, many non-native-speaking Arabic learners frequently have difficulty understanding them (Wardhana et al., 2023). This is because the literal meanings of two or more words that make up an idiom are often difficult to identify (Van Ginkel & Dijkstra, 2020). Students usually open a dictionary to solve the problem of understanding idioms (Melati, 2017). However, not all dictionaries contain the meanings to idioms, and if there are any, the meaning presented must be carefully identified and selected to fit the proper context (Nikitina & Rogaleva, 2021). Meanwhile, if one uses idiom dictionaries, they will find that there are not many dictionaries that specialize in idiomatic lemmas (Jarad & Abu-Saydeh, 2017). According to Abdou (2019), current dictionaries of Arabic idioms are inadequate because the idiom is constantly evolving, and dictionaries are not always updated (pp. 7-9).

In the Arab world, one of the most well-known idiom dictionaries specifically presenting modern idiomatic phrases is Dāwud's work *Mu'jam at-Ta'bīr al-Iṣṭilāhī fī al-'Arabiyyah al-Mu'āṣirah* (Righi & Ismail, 2022). Although this dictionary includes many modern idioms, its presentation is not designed for learning, as the lemmas are sorted by order of the hijrah letters, making it difficult for Arabic learners to memorize or learn them (Nikitina & Rogaleva, 2021). Idioms need to be memorized textually from the dictionary and understood in the context of the situation in which they are used (Beck & Weber, 2020; Learners et al., 2017). Furthermore, dictionaries that collect Arabic idioms with scientific methods are still rare in Indonesia. One is the *Arabic-Indonesian Idiom Dictionary Active Pattern* by Imamuddin and Ishaq. However, it does not cover all idioms, especially modern ones, and uses the same presentation methods as the Dāwud dictionary (Mahridawati, 2015). This means that this dictionary is more intended for studying pure lexicography than learning Arabic directly.

In Arabic language textbooks, idioms do not receive a great deal of attention (Sahrir & Nawi, 2014). Existing books usually only present vocabulary relevant to a particular subject matter, such as is found in *al-'Arabiyyah Baina Yadaik* (Ibrahim et al., 2007). Indeed, some idioms are included in each lesson, with others at the end of the book; however, there is usually no distinction between general vocabulary and idioms. Furthermore, Arabic idioms are not specifically taught in the classroom, and there are no subjects that focus on teaching Arabic idioms, so little attention is paid by students to these idioms. In contrast to these books, the textbook *Silsilat Al-Lisan Arabic Language Learning* (SLAL) provides a vocabulary of idiom-specific words used in modern contexts, both in everyday and situational situations, which are placed at the beginning of each lesson so that learners can better focus on them (Mohamed et al., 2021). As a result, several universities, schools, and language institutions that teach Arabic use books from the United Arab Emirates (Syihabuddin et al., 2023). Consequently, based on the issues mentioned above, this study will focus on the following two research questions.

1. How are the idiom forms in SLAL textbooks reviewed regarding the relationship in meaning between their elements and the situation of their use?
2. How are the idioms in the textbook reviewed from a pedagogical grammar standpoint?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the classical Arabic linguistic tradition, idioms are not explicitly discussed as part of the syntactic concepts of the Arabic language. Nonetheless, idioms can be used in various classical literary works and even in commentaries on the Qur'an (Fayeed, 2020). On the other hand, Western linguists consider idioms to be part of the study of syntax and semantics simultaneously (Gehrke & McNally, 2019). Therefore, in modern Arabic linguistics, idiom terms are translated in a variety of ways, such as *at-ta'bir al-iṣṭilāḥī* (idiomatic expression), *al-'ibārah al-iṣṭilāḥiyyah* (idiomatic phrase), *al-'ibārāt al-mi'yāriyyah al-'urfiyyah* (conventional standard expressions), *at-ta'birāt al-masykūkah* (dubious expressions), *at-ta'birāt asy-syā'i'ah* (common expressions), *at-ta'birāt as-siyāqīyyah* (contextual expressions), *at-ta'birāt al-khāṣṣah* (special expressions), *at-ta'ābir al-bāliyyah al-khawālīf* (obsolete expression), *al-kalām al-ma'sūr* (proverbs) and *at-tarākīb al-iṣṭilāḥiyyah* (idiomatic structures) (Nurcholisho, 2017). Among these terms, the most widely used are *at-ta'birāt al-iṣṭilāḥiyyah* (idiomatic expression).

An idiom is a combination of several words with different meanings from the literal meaning of the words that make them up when put together (Jamshed et al., 2024; Lahiani, 2024; Mahdi & Sahari, 2024). Syntactically, the minimal elements of an idiom are two words that form a phrase with a grammatical relationship and a specific meaning (Zang et al., 2024). According to Fayeed's (2020) research, in journalistic texts and the media, idiomatic phrases in Arabic are divided into four types: verb phrases, nouns, adjectives, and prepositions. However, according to Husamuddin (1985) and El-Batal (2005), an idiom can consist of a single word called a simplex idiom, like, for example, the word *qārūrah*, which means "woman with a sexy body" (p. 11). This shows that idioms are more accurately translated as *ta'bir* (expressions) that can include all elements of language, such as *kalimah* (word), *tarākīb* (phrase), *jumlah* (clause), or *kalām* (sentence). Research by Khak and Sari (2011) supports this opinion, indicating that idioms can be complex words (p. 146). In addition, idioms can also be in the form of clauses or sentences, as Thoyyibah (2015) and Hasanuddin (2015) postulate, which indicates that Arabic idiom clauses can be declarative, interrogative, hexameric, and imperative.

Idioms are semantically categorized into pure idioms (with unpredictable unified meanings) and partial idioms (where some elements retain lexical meaning) (Katsarou, 2011). Fatimah (2014, p. 38) identified five meaning changes in partial idioms: total, expanding, narrowing, refining, and roughing, while Isya (2021) notes that retained literal meanings can aid idiomatic understanding. From a pragmatic perspective (Katsarou, 2011), idioms function across various domains like banking, business, and healthcare (Seidl & McMordie, in Nurcholisho, 2017), with Makkai (1972) identifying sememic idioms, or idioms that produce culture-related meanings, including proverbs, polite expressions, and indirect expressions (Katsarou, 2011).

The above construction places the idiom within the framework of theoretical linguistics. However, in applied or educational linguistics, especially pedagogical grammar, idioms are considered part of grammar that can help learners communicate using the language they are learning. Idioms in this context result from a selection of theoretical idioms applied in learning. Much research on Arabic idioms in the context of learning has been carried out, but they are mostly found in translations and dictionaries (Aljabri, 2024; Assaf, 2019; Lahiani, 2024). Experimental research that teaches idioms from Dāwud dictionaries through reading has also been carried out (Mursalin et al., 2021). At the same time, Chen and Wu (2017) conducted experiments by teaching English idioms to Chinese learners through syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and cultural analysis, which has proved effective in improving English idiom mastery (pp. 22-23). Thus, based on Chen and Wu's research, this study will examine modern Arabic idioms in terms of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics and analyze them with a pedagogical grammatical approach.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with primary data of 366 idioms from editions one to four of the *Silsilat Al-Lisan Arabic Language Learning* (SLAL) textbook. This book is published by The Mother Tongue Arabic Language Center, Abu Dhabi, in collaboration with the Kingdom of the United Arab Emirates. The book can be accessed online

through <https://mothertongue.ae>. The authors of SLAL are Amer Alsibai, M. Saeed Alabrash, Mohamed Abs, and Mumin Alannan, with commentary from Bakri Sheigh Ameen, Mahmoud Almasri, Mazen Almubarak, Fakhrudeen Qabawah, Ali Hamadallah, and Mahmoud Bay. This research is synchronous, which means that the research is based on the modern period (1879–present), which is a time period that is mainly used to assess the literal meaning of idioms in the context of modern times and not the time of Classical Arabic before that. Data was collected through the literature study method with search, collection, and checklist techniques (Luthfi, 2020, p. 38). The data was then analyzed using a distributive method with segmenting immediate constituents techniques, where the construction of idioms is divided into constituent elements to determine their literal meaning. After that, the data was further analyzed by an expansion technique, such as placing idioms in complete sentences and considering the meaning field, context, or specific situation. Finally, data was presented using formal and informal techniques, where formal techniques involved presenting data descriptively in plain language, and informal techniques involved presenting data with specific formulas (Sudaryanto, 2015).

IV. RESULTS

A. Idioms Reviewed From the Relationship of Meaning Between Elements

The meanings of idioms in the *Silsilat Al-Lisan Arabic Language Learning* (SLAL) textbook are classified into pure idioms, semi-idioms, or partial idioms based on the relationship among their elements. The components that make up these idioms are divided into five categories: nouns (N), verb phrases (FV), nominal phrases (FN), adjective phrases (FA), and prepositional phrases (FP). For more details, take a look at the following table.

TABLE 1
ARABIC IDIOMS IN THE *SILSILAT AL-LISAN ARABIC LANGUAGE LEARNING* (SLAL) TEXTBOOK

Idiom	N	FV	FN	FA	FP	Total
Pure	11	11	16	21	11	70
Partial	0	0	87	72	6	165
Total	11	11	103	93	17	235

First, a whole idiom is a word or combination of words that produces a new meaning that cannot be recognized from the lexical meaning of its elements because its meaning has undergone a complete change. Based on their constituent elements, in SLAL, these pure idioms are divided into five categories: nouns (*ism*), verb phrases (*tarkīb fi'lī*), noun phrases (*tarkīb ismī*), adjective phrases (*tarkīb na'fī*), and prepositional phrases (*jār wa majrūr*).

TABLE 2
THE MEANING OF THE PURE IDIOM AND ITS ELEMENTS

No.	Pure Idiom	Elements	Literal Meaning	Idiom Meaning
1	كما أن القواعد الخوارزمية في الحساب "الخوارزميات" ما زالت تستخدم حتى الآن	N	In addition, the formulas that are <i>khuwarizmi</i> * in Khuwarizmi mathematics are still used today.	In addition, algorithmic formulas in arithmetic (algorithms) are still used today.
2	ما رأيك في الدراجة	FV	How do you see on* a bike?	What do you think about bicycles?
3	إذا ذهبت إلى طوكيو فإن أول مشهد تراه هو ناطحات السحاب التي تملأ في المدينة	FN	If you go to Tokyo, the first sight you will see are the horns of clouds* that fill the city.	If you go to Tokyo, the first sight you will see are the (tall) skyscrapers that fill the city.
4	هو أول من نجح في عملية شق القصبة الهوائية	FA	He was the first person to successfully perform a surgical operation on a plant with nodules and air segments.*	He was the first person to perform a throat shaft surgery (<i>tracheostomy</i>) successfully.
5	أين بيتك بالضبط؟	FP	Where is your home carefully?*	Where exactly is your house?

All of the examples in Table 2 above are pure idioms in which the literal meaning of the constituent elements undergoes a complete change. In the first example, this whole idiom consists of a complex noun with the lexical *Khuwārizmi*, which means a person named *Khuwārizmi*!, plus *yā' niṣbah*, which converts the word into a trait or "*khuwārizmī*", while *alif* and *tā'* denote the plural form *muannas sālim*, which means "the *khuwārizmī* nature of more than two." When all these elements are combined, their meaning changes to "algorithmic formulas," a series of steps used to solve problems in mathematics. This change in meaning is total because the meaning initially referred to a person's name changed to a mathematical term. This understanding requires a unique knowledge of Islamic history or mathematics, of which Al-Khuwārizmī was the inventor of algorithmic formulas.

The second example is a whole idiom consisting of the verb phrase *ra'ā fī*. This phrase comprises two words: *ra'ā*, which means "to see," and *fī*, which means "inside." When combined, the meaning changes to "opinion about." Literally, this phrase relates to eye activity, but when combined, its meaning relates to the activity of the mind or brain. This change in meaning is complete.

The third example is also a whole idiom because if the noun phrase *nāṭihāt as-sahāb* is separated, the meaning changes. *Nāṭihāt*, which means "horns," relates to the highest part of the animal's body, while *as-sahāb*, which means "cloud," relates to the objects in the sky. This idiom means "skyscrapers," which refers to tall buildings that seem to

reach the sky. This total change in meaning occurs from the field of meaning of animals and celestial bodies to building architecture.

The fourth example is an idiom consisting of the adjectives *al-qaṣbah* and *al-hawā'iyyah*. Separately, *al-qaṣbah* means “plant with books and with us,” and *al-hawā'iyyah* means “air.” *Al-qaṣbah* is usually associated with plants and *al-hawā'iyyah* with gases in the atmosphere. However, when combined, this phrase means “throat shaft.” This change in meaning involves a shift from the field of meaning of plants and physical elements to the body's anatomy, with *qaṣbah* associated with a long, rounded shape and *hawā'iyyah* with the concept of gas as breath.

Finally, the fifth example is a prepositional phrase consisting of *bi* and *al-ḍabṭi*. If separated, *bi* means “with,” and *al-ḍabṭi* means “rule.” In this case, *bi* has no specific meaning, but it does affect the change in the meaning of *ḍabṭ*, from “rule” to “precise” or “exactly.” This change is total, from the field of meaning of the process to the result.

Second, a partial idiom, or what is also called a semi-idiom, is a word or phrase in which one of its lexical elements forms a new meaning. In contrast, the other element retains its literal meaning. The change in meaning in one of its elements is not too far because it is usually still in the same field of meaning with elements that have not changed meaning. In SLAL, idioms are partially divided into five based on their constituent elements: nouns (*ism*), verb phrases (*tarkīb fi'lī*), noun phrases (*tarkīb ismī*), adjective phrases (*tarkīb na'ī*), and prepositional phrases (*jār wa majrūr*).

TABLE 3
MEANINGS OF PARTIAL IDIOMS AND THEIR ELEMENTS

No.	Pure Idiom	Elements	Literal Meaning	Idiom Meaning
6	أنا قادم حالا	N	I came with <i>a situation</i> .*	I am coming soon.
7	تمسكت بتقاليدها وعاداتها	FV	He <i>endures with</i> * his traditions and customs.	He adheres to his traditions and customs.
8	أريد شقة واسعة فيها ثلاث غرف: غرفة جلوس وغرفة نوم وغرفة ضيوف	FN	I want a spacious apartment with three rooms: <i>a sitting room</i> ,* a bedroom, and a living room.	I want a spacious apartment with three rooms: <i>a family room</i> , a bedroom, and a living room.
9	فقد ذكره الله في القرآن الكريم والكتب السماوية الأخرى	FA	Allah mentions it in the Al-Qur'an and other <i>heavenly books</i> .*	Allah mentions it in the Al-Qur'an and <i>the Gospels, the Torah, and the Zabur</i> .
10	يا سيدي، الأمر في غاية الأهمية	FP	O sir, this matter is at the <i>peak of interest</i> .*	O sir, this is <i>very important</i> .

Examples 6 through 10 in Table 3 above are partial idioms in which only one of the elements changes meaning. This change in meaning in a partial idiom remains in a single field of meaning, and the change can be narrowing, expanding, empowering, or refining. For example, in the sixth example, the idiom element in the form of the noun *hāl-an*, which initially meant the literal meaning of “circumstances,” changed to the idiomatic meaning of “immediate”. The combination of the two has an idiomatic meaning as a limiting relationship, which indicates a situation in which time seems to pass quickly. Thus, this change in meaning remains in one field of meaning. Grammatically, the word *hāl*, which appears after the predicate *qādimun*, serves as a description of the state of a person who comes, and therefore, *hāl* is an accusative case (*naṣb*) with the addition of *the alif* consonant as a signifier. Idioms that function as predicates like this are often found in SLALL, such as *fill-an*, which idiomatically means “real,” and *taqrīban*, which means “approximately”.

Example 7 is a partial idiom with verb phrase elements in the form of *tamassakat bi*. This phrase consists of *tamassakat*, which means “to hold or endure”, and *bi*, which means “with.” When these two words are combined, the meaning changes to “hold on”. The meaning of “enduring here” indicates the efforts of Arabs to hold fast to their customs despite the influence of Western culture. Meanwhile, “sticking” shows the efforts of today's Arab society to remain guided by their old traditions. Despite the differences, the two are still in the same field of meaning, namely the effort to maintain something. Therefore, the change in the meaning of this idiomatic phrase is narrow, from an effort to maintain it in general to maintaining tradition amid outside influences.

Example 8 is a semi-idiom with the element of a noun phrase consisting of two nouns, namely *gurfah*, which means “space,” and *julūs*, which means “to sit.” When these two nouns are combined, the meaning of *gurfah* remains the original, while *julūs* changes its meaning to “family.” Despite the changes, the meaning of this family is still in one field of meaning, namely the house plan. One of the functions of the space in the house is to sit, especially for family members. This idiomatic meaning indicates that family members, such as parents, children, and grandfathers, specifically use the space. This change in meaning is narrow, from a space to sit to a unique space for the family.

Example 9 is a semi-idiom with elements of adjective phrases. This phrase consists of a noun as the center, i.e., *al-kutub*, and an adjective as an attribute, *as-samāwiyyah*. Both mean “books of the sky.” When combined in idiom, the phrase means “sacred books revealed to prophets who are believed to have received revelation from God, such as the Zabur to the Prophet David, the Torah to Moses, and the Gospel to the Prophet Jesus.” In this phase, only the word *samāwiyyah* changes meaning, while the word *kutub* retains its original meaning. This change in the meaning of *samāwiyyah* is still in one field of meaning and is narrowing, from objects that descend from the sky to holy books that were revealed to the Prophets.

Example 10 is a semi-idiom consisting of a prepositional phrase. The phrase consists of the preposition *fī*, which means “inside,” followed by two nouns: *gāyah*, which means “peak,” and *al-ahammīyyah*, which means “importance.” When combined in the form of idioms, the meaning of this prepositional phrase changes to “very important.” Of these

three elements, when it becomes an idiom, the meaning of the element *fī* is lost or not used, and *al-ahammīyah* still has a literal meaning. The only thing that has changed meaning is the element of *gāyah*, from “peak” to “very.” These two meanings are synonymous and indicate the meaning of “the end point or final stage of something.” Therefore, this change in meaning is still in a field that indicates the superlative meaning or the end of something.

B. Idioms Reviewed From Usage Situations

Based on the context of their use, the idioms of modern language in the SLALL book are divided into two categories: scientific fields and events. First, idioms in the scientific field refer to idioms whose meaning and use can primarily only be understood in the context of a particular scientific field or in the scientific discourse in which the idiom is used. In the context of the scientific field, modern Arabic idioms are divided into four categories: science and technology, social, humanities, and religion.

TABLE 4
IDIOMS IN THE FIELD OF SCIENCE

No.	Idioms	Science	Literal Meaning	Idiom Meaning
11	اشترت ساعة ذكية	Science and Technology (Computers)	I bought a smartwatch.*	I bought a watch that I wore on my hand in the form of a portable computer device connected to the internet.
12	وهي أحد النُمور الآسيوية التي شهدت تطوراً سريعاً	Social (Political)	Malaysia is one of Asia's fastest-growing tigers.*	Malaysia is one of the strongest and leading countries in all fields in the fast-growing Asian region.
13	وهو أول من ابتكر طريق العلاج عن طريق الدخول إلى العقل الباطن	Humanities (Psychology)	He was the first person to discover a method of treatment by entering a hidden mind.*	He was the first person to discover a method of treatment by entering the subconscious mind (a collection of thoughts, feelings, impulses, or memories that are beyond human consciousness).
14	في حين أن الأديان السماوية كلها تحرم هذا العمل	Religion	While all the religions of the heavens* forbid this work.	While Islam, Christianity, and Judaism prohibit this act.

Examples 11 through 14 in Table 4 above are idioms in specific scientific fields. To determine the exact meaning, these idioms must be understood in the context of the relevant discipline. Example 11 is an idiomatic phrase in science and technology, specifically computer science. The phrase *sā'ah zakīyyah* is translated from English *smartwatch*. The word *sā'ah* still means “watch,” while *zakīyyah*, which means “smart,” is a term for “portable computer connected to the internet.” Beyond computer science, SLALL's books include other idioms in the science and technology category, such as health (*sayyārah is'āf-un*, “rescue car” for “ambulance”), physics (*majmū'ah syamsiyyah*, “collection of suns” for “solar system”), zoology (*ḥadīqah al-ḥayawān*, “zoo”, for where animals are kept), astronomy (*al-aqmār aṣ-ṣinā'iyyah*, “artificial moons” for “satellites”), sports (*kurrah as-salah*, “basketball” for “basketball”), biology (*al-baḥr al-abyaḍ al-mutawassīṭ*, “Central White Sea” for “Mediterranean Sea”), transportation (*sayyārah ujjrah*, “salary car” for “taxi”), and mathematics (*'ilm al-muṣalaṣāt*, “trigonometry” for “trigonometry”).

Example 12 is an idiom in the social field, especially politics and culture. The phrase *an-numūr al-asawiyyah*, which means “Asian tiger,” idiomatically refers to “the country in the Asian region that is the strongest and foremost in various fields.” The word “Asia” still refers to a geographical region, while *an-numūr* has changed from a “tiger” to a symbol of a superior country. As the king of the beast, the tiger symbolizes victory or dominance. In addition, SLALL's book also includes idioms in other social sciences such as economics (*al-mizān at-tijārī*, “trade balance” for “the difference between the value of exports and imports”), communication (*jawāz as-safar*, “travel permit” for “passport”), fashion (*albisah ad-dākhiliyyah*, “underwear” for “clothing covering sensitive parts”), and education (*ad-dirāsāt al-'ulyā*, “the highest studies” for “postgraduate studies”).

Example 13 is an idiom in the humanities, especially psychology. The phrase *al-'aql al-bāṭin* translates from the English “unconscious mind” and has an idiomatic meaning as a collection of thoughts, feelings, impulses, or memories that are not in the human consciousness. In this phrase, *al-'aql* experiences the expansion of meaning from mere thinking to all mental activities. In contrast, *al-bāṭin* experiences a narrowing of meaning, referring to actions beyond human control. In addition to psychology, SLALL's book also includes idioms in other humanities, such as culture (*asy-syarq al-awsaṭ*, “Middle East” for “Arab League countries”).

Example 14 is an idiom from religion, especially religious comparison. The phrase *al-adyān as-samāwiyyah* means “the religions of the heavens” and idiomatically refers to “religions believed to be derived from God's revelations,” namely Islam, Christianity, and Judaism.

In addition, event idioms are idioms whose meanings can primarily only be understood in the context of certain Arab cultural events. In the book SLALL, these idioms are divided into five categories: courtesy, congratulations or general greetings, admiration, meetings and farewells, and agreement.

TABLE 5
EVENT IDIOMS

No.	Idioms	Event	Literal Meaning	Idioms Meaning
15	من فضلك	Decency	From your priorities.	Excuse me.
16	كل عام وأنتم بخير	Congratulations / general welcome	Every year, and you are well.	Happy Eid al-Adha or Fitr greetings.
17	ما شاء الله	Out of the ordinary	Something God wants.	Phrases that serve as expressions when seeing something unusual.
18	أتمنى لك التوفيق	Meeting/farewell	I wish you success.	Phrases for farewell.
19	إن شاء الله	Covenant	If God wills.	Phrases to express the certainty of a promise.
20	تشرفنا	Introduction	We glorify.	Nice to get to know you.

All idioms in Table 5 fall into the category of event idioms. The meaning of these idioms can only be understood in the context of the event in which they are used. The literal meaning of these idiom elements is also unreliable for predicting their idiomatic meaning. To understand the idiomatic meaning, it is essential first to explain the event of the speech, then associate the idiom with Arab culture in general or how it is used in Arab society. For example, the idiom *min faḍlik* (15) is used to give the impression of being polite when going to do something or to convey something in person; the idiom *kullu āmm wa antum bi khair* (16) is used to wish a happy holiday; the idiom *mā syā Allāh* (17) is used when looking at something extraordinary; the idiom *atamannī laka at-taufīq* (18) is used to express good wishes when parting after meeting; the idiom *in shā' Allāh* (19) is used when making vows; and the idiom *tasyārafnā* (20) is used to express happiness in being able to get acquainted with someone.

C. Modern Arabic Education Idioms

The idioms analyzed in this paper can be categorized as educational idioms. The SLAL books refer explicitly to these idioms as *ta'bīrāt ad-dars* (Mohamed et al., 2021). Educational idioms refer to idiom materials designed for learning Arabic so that students can use Arabic well in productive and receptive aspects (Chen & Wu, 2017). The concept of this educational idiom is also reflected in the book's purpose, which is aimed at helping Arabic learners in various parts of the world. Because of this, the idioms in SLAL may differ from those found in theoretical linguistic studies. Idioms in SLAL are included in the study of applied linguistics, especially educational linguistics (Saputra et al., 2023). More specifically, using the term “Kasher” (Kasher, 2018), this educational idiom is included in the study of pedagogical grammar. In other words, idioms in SLAL have been selected from theories, dictionaries, or corpus collected by linguists and then classified for language teaching by Arabic language educators (Nurhadi, 1995).

Based on the data in SLAL, five characteristics of educational idioms distinguish them from theoretical idioms: communicative purpose, principle of simplicity, partial idiom material and absorption, situational organization, and practical presentation.

First, there are the communicative purposes: SLAL idioms serve dual communicative purposes: scientific-technological and daily communication, implemented through an integrative approach (*naẓāriyah al-wahdah*) for both productive and receptive skills (Muflihah et al., 2024). The scientific focus aligns with efforts to establish Arabic as a language of science (Chakrani, 2020), while the daily usage emphasis reflects Arabic's status as a widely spoken global language (Saeed et al., 2023). Traditional literary idioms like proverbs and metonymy (Hossam et al., 2015) are minimized due to their limited relevance in practical global communication.

Second is the principle of simplicity: idioms in SLAL are generally complex words or phrases. Idioms in clauses or sentences are rarely used except in familiar expressions in everyday communication. The idioms presented are easy to understand with the help of context or meaning fields. The SLAL books avoid unpatterned or *opaque idioms* (Elgobshawi, 2018) and do not include structural changes such as transformations or substitutions (Alqahtani, 2016).

Third is the learning material, which consists of partial idioms and absorption. The SLAL books predominantly feature partial idioms and absorption idioms, diverging from previous research trends (Abdou, 2019; Mahdi & Sahari, 2024; Mursalin et al., 2021) that focused primarily on pure idioms and often categorized partial idioms as compound words (Khak & Sari, 2011). The emphasis on partial idioms reflects their learning accessibility, as they require only basic meaning analysis of key elements. Additionally, the books incorporate scientific and technological idioms absorbed from English (Othman, 2024), addressing modern Arabic's limited self-derived vocabulary (Rahmap, 2016). These absorption idioms, also known as neoclassical or synthetic compounds, combine bound and independent forms from foreign languages to enhance Arabic's functionality in international scientific discourse (Bauer, 1998).

Fourth, it is organized situationally. Idioms in SLAL are organized or sorted based on the context of the situation in which they are used. This ranking is based on the themes developed that are tiered into 31 topics spread over 86 lessons. These topics start from the order closest to prospective Arabic language learners, such as at home, in the market, and daily activities. After that, common themes for a person include working in the office, travel, tourism, and others. The most resounding theme concerns case studies reviewed from various disciplines such as literature, astronomy, biology, religion, economics, politics, and botany. Literature is considered the highest theme, so it is placed in the final lessons of the book. In addition, literature is a science that has become a distinctive feature of Arab civilization from pre-Islamic times to today (Umroh & Ni'mah, 2024).

Fifth, it is presented practically. The meaning of practical here is that SLAL idioms are presented in the form of practical examples, and there is no theoretical explanation of the idioms, except to use only the term *ta'bīr ad-dars*. This

is understandable since the purpose of studying this idiom is its use in practice, not theoretically. Among the ways it is used to present it is at the beginning of each lesson chapter; in addition to providing a dictionary of everyday vocabulary, the SLAL book offers a dictionary of idioms separate from the others. After that, the idioms are placed based on situations adapted to their use in the text or theme discussed. To quickly understand the context of using these idioms, the SLAL book includes several images. Finally, to solidify and, at the same time, measure the idiom ability of students, this SLAL book also puts the idiom in exercises. So, in its presentation, idioms are placed in a complete discourse and spread to the components of learning materials such as subject matter, supporting materials, and evaluations (Musyriifa et al., 2022).

V. DISCUSSION

Modern Arabic idioms challenge traditional theoretical concepts of idiomaticity. While the boundaries between compound words and idioms become increasingly blurred (Elgobshawi, 2018), some linguists argue that partial idioms shouldn't be classified as true idioms (Khak & Sari, 2011) since they retain some literal meaning. True idioms, according to Katsarou (2011), should create entirely new, non-compositional meanings. However, this text adopts an inclusive approach that recognizes both partial and pure idioms, with partial forms being more prevalent. In the context of the SLAL book, both partial and pure idioms are recognized in parallel, with partial forms being more prevalent, supporting the linguistic view of this dual classification.

Although idioms are traditionally viewed as having unpredictable meanings, even for pure idioms (Beck & Weber, 2020), this study demonstrates that their meanings can be effectively interpreted through meaning field analysis. This approach examines words within their contextual, discourse-related, and cultural frameworks, aligning with linguistic compositionality principles. Rather than analyzing individual elements in isolation, this method identifies specific semantic features that interact within broader contextual and cultural domains to construct meaning.

However, the non-compositional principle is more relevant for event idioms because what is sought is the function or intention of the idiom, not the literal meaning. An event idiom's context or culture in which it is expressed is critical. Therefore, the non-compositional principle is applied in analyzing event idioms, which focuses on the intent rather than the literal meaning of the idiom elements.

This study defines modern Arabic idioms as fixed expression patterns specific to the language in a specific field of meaning, context, discourse, or culture. This idiom consists of at least one complex word and has a new meaning different from the literal meaning of some or all of the elements that make it up. The characteristics of modern Arabic idioms include (1) changes in meaning due to the combination of elements, (2) the use of new combinations of words, (3) meanings that are not real, (4) new meanings that did not exist before, and (5) binding by fields of meaning, context, discourse, or culture. These characteristics distinguish modern idioms from classical idioms that are still used today.

However, in partial idioms, it is difficult to determine the literal meaning of their elements because the word's meaning can change over time (Ech-Charfi, 2023, pp. 33–34). For example, the word *Al-Is'āf* in idioms *sayyārah al-is'āf*, which means 'ambulance' in the modern era, even though the primary meaning is 'help'. For native Arabic speakers, this may not be a problem. However, for non-Arab learners, such as Indonesians learning classical Arabic (Bilgiler & Gunawan, 2020). This can be challenging because dictionaries often do not accurately update the meaning of words (Abdou, 2019).

In particular, in the context of learning, this SLAL book solves the problem by providing a specific dictionary, images, and context for using idioms so that learners can easily find their meaning without analysis. However, if learning is to be done with theoretical analysis, the analysis model as in this study, namely (1) idioms are reviewed from syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and culture, which Chen and Wu (2017) have practiced, and (2) idioms are divided into pure (non-compositional) and partial (semi-compositional) idioms, as Abdi and Farangizade (2017) posited. It has also been proven effective in improving students' ability to understand idioms. These two analysis models can be an alternative to idiom learning. Meanwhile, in the context of theoretical linguistics, the problem of literal meaning can be overcome by conducting direct research on the native Arabs or using library data such as corpus data circulating in the public both in books, mass media, and public places. Especially for library data in dictionaries, the literal meaning of one idiom element can be seen in the meaning of the earliest word entry in the dictionary. Of course, the dictionary is the latest one and can potentially improve the understanding of idioms (Campoy-Cubillo & Esbrí-Blasco, 2022; El-Batal, 2005; Nikitina & Rogaleva, 2021). Apart from that, searching for the literal meaning of idioms in learning Arabic does not have to be done because the most important thing is understanding the function of the idiom in honest communication. In addition, according to Katsarou (2011), who quotes Chafe (1968), an idiom does not have to have a literal meaning and equivalent.

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded that, judging from the meaning and structure, the modern Arabic idioms found in SLAL are divided into pure and partial. Each of the two has elements of nouns, verb phrases, noun phrases, adjective phrases, and prepositional phrases. Judging from the usage situation, idioms are divided into idioms of science and events. In the scientific field, idioms are divided into science and technology, social science, humanities,

and religion. Meanwhile, in events, idioms are divided into manners, congratulations, public remarks, admiration, meetings, farewells, agreements, and introductions. Modern Arabic idioms in SLAL have been reviewed using pedagogical grammar. They are included in the category of educational idioms. These idioms are prepared for learning Arabic so that students can speak Arabic productively and receptively. The characteristics of educational idioms are communicative goals, simple principles, material in the form of partial idioms and absorption, organized situationally, and presented practically.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the Institute for Research and Community Service (LPPM) Sebelas Maret University Surakarta, through contract number 194.2/UNS27.22/PT.01.03/2024 for providing scholarships and supporting this research.

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