

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**THE USE OF IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS BY
THE YOUTH OF HO IN THE VOLTA REGION OF
GHANA: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY**



HOPE AMPONI

2015

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

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**A Thesis in the Department of APPLIED LINGUISTICS, Faculty of FOREIGN
LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION, submitted to the School of Graduate
Studies, University of Education, Winneba, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for award of the Master of PHILOSOPHY (APPLIED
LINGUISTICS) degree.**

OCTOBER, 2015

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

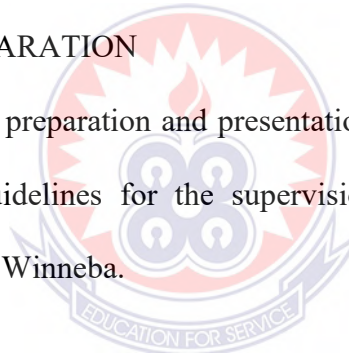
I, Hope Amponi, declare that this Thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for the supervision of Thesis laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.



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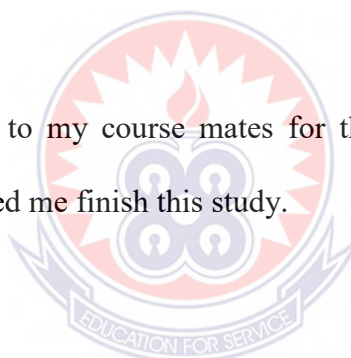
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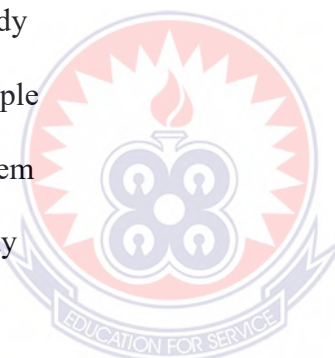
DEDICATION

I dedicate this Thesis to my beloved Mother, Madam Cecilia Abra Doyi, of blessed memory, who passed on during my course of study. May she rest in peace.



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of idiomatic expressions by the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana. Methodologically, the study was a descriptive survey that involved the use of interview and observation to collect primary data from the youth and adults in the various communities of Ho. A sample of thirty-two (32) individuals (youth and adults) and four (4) youth groups were used for this study. Purposive sampling technique was used by this researcher in the selection of the total sample. The data were analysed using themes which were generated from the respondents. The study revealed that the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana do not use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect, mostly because they were not exposed to these expressions by their parents and adults in the community. This makes it difficult for them to understand idioms and use them appropriately. This situation has implications for the future of the dialect: idioms in the Ho dialect may be generally lost on the future generation. The dialect may lose its aesthetic quality. The speakers of the dialect may also sound rude, harsh, unpleasant and profane in their conversation. Something can be done in order to reverse the situation to preserve the quality of the dialect. This study recommended that the adult speakers of the dialect should teach the young ones to use idioms by using them in conversations with them and also organising public education for them. Non-formal education programmes should be organised for the youth who had little or no formal education so that they can also be educated on the use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect. The various stakeholders are also to put in efforts that would entice the youth to read more Ewe books from which they can learn idiomatic expressions and use them in speech.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the background to the study, the history of Ho people, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, the research questions, research design, significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitation of the study, and organization of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

Language is a communication tool. (Chadran, 2011) And for effective communication to take place, the users of a language need to develop the competence and fluency that would enable them communicate effectively. The ability to use and understand idioms in a language is one of the factors that ensure smooth communication in that language. (Jiya, 2012) Meenakshi (2009), therefore, noted that idioms are useful companions of communication.

According to Harper (2001), the word „idiom“ originated from the French word „idiome“ in the late 16th Century (1580“s), meaning “form of speech peculiar to a people or place”, and from late Latin word „idioma“ meaning “a peculiarity in language”, and also from a Greek word „idioma“ meaning “peculiarity, peculiar phraseology.”

Idioms are referred to as “Adaganawo” in the Ewe language. According to Kovey (1998), the name “Adaganawo” is given to idioms to describe their difficult nature. He compares idioms to a very difficult knot that must be untied due to their nature which makes them difficult to understand. Idioms are metaphorical in nature. Just like similes and metaphors, idioms are a type of figurative expression. (Smith, 2013) They

are used to colour language and make it interesting and vivid. (D'Addese, 2011)
According to Plum (2011), language can be boring at times without idioms.

Idioms can be found in every language and are understood by people who speak the same language. Hence, it would be difficult for someone who is not familiar with a language to effectively use and understand idioms in that language. (D'Addese, 2011)
Osei-Tutu (2002, p.159) observes that children do not use idiomatic expressions as much as adults do. He also notes that idioms are like innuendos or insinuations which are used to conceal meaning from others who a particular conversation does not concern. Osei-Tutu (2002) again compares idioms to riddles and says, just as riddles are not straight-forward in their meanings, so are idiomatic expressions.

Idioms are fixed expressions, for example: to say someone is talking or behaving strangely, we may say that the person is “out to lunch.” This is an idiom that indicates that a person’s mind is somewhere else. But saying they have “gone out to lunch” is not idiomatic. It simply means that the person has literally gone out for lunch. (Thiyagarajah, 2009)

Idioms are different from other fixed expressions due to their „illogical“ nature, that is, there is no relationship between the meanings of the individual words and the meaning of the whole expression. In order to understand and use idioms effectively, they must be learnt and memorized (Glucksberg, 2001). Even if one knows all the words that make up an idiom, the meaning must be taught. (Smith, 2013)

Idioms come from different sources such as dictionaries, conversations of native speakers, TV shows and the internet. Some were also well-known proverbs and

adages. (Yunfei, 1999; Terban, 2006) Idioms are better used in informal situations than in formal situations. (Cowie & Mackin, 1975)

Cliché and euphemism are kinds of idioms. Cliché is an idiom that has been overused and has therefore lost its freshness (Terban, 2006). An example is: “to think outside the box” meaning “to think in an original and creative way” (Smith, 2014). Euphemism is a mild, indirect, polite or vague expression used in place of harsh, blunt or offensive phrase, for example, “between jobs” meaning “unemployment.” (Patil, 2016; Patterson, n.d)

According to Osei-Tutu (2002), in Ewe, any literary device such as proverb or riddle whose meaning is completely hidden can be said to be a kind of idiomatic expression.

Corelli (2005) noted that learning idioms presents many difficulties to language learners primarily because they do not know the culture and history behind the idioms. That is why they often use idioms out of context. Again, Corelli (2005) and Edmundson (2007) assert that using idioms is a manner of speaking that is natural to native speakers of a language.

The above assertions, therefore, suggest that one can be identified as a native speaker in a speech community and can fit into the language culture and norm of the speech community to which one belongs if one is able to use idioms effectively in the language of the speech community. This study researched the use of idiomatic expressions by the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana to find out the extent to which they are utilizing this important aspect of their dialect and the implication this would have on the future of the dialect.

1.2 The History of Ho People

The people of Ho form part of the Asogli state and speak the Ho dialect of the Ewe language. They, like most Ewe speaking people, trace their origin from the then Abyssinia, now known as Ethiopia. They migrated with other Ewes from Abyssinia to Oyo in Yoruba land, Western Nigeria. Later, they moved from Oyo to Ketu in Dahomey (now Benin) before settling at Notsie in present day Republic of Togo in about the 12th century. In their settlement at Ketu and Notsie, the Ewes lived in fortified cities called „Agbome“, literally meaning „within the fence wall“. At Notsie, the Ewes were ruled by a wicked king called Agorkorli whose oppressive rule is recorded in the annals of the Ewes (Asogli State Council, 2011).

The Ho (Asogli) people naturally disapproved of the tyrannical rule of King Agorkorli and so, under the leadership of Togbe Kakla and his people they broke through a portion of the fortified wall for all Ewes to escape. Togbe Kakla and his people broke the wall after softening it through a planned and persistent splashing of water. After breaking through the wall, they walked backwards out of the city. This they did in order to deceive the people to think that the footprints they had left were those of people who had entered the city. The action baffled the king's soldiers and by the time they realised what had happened, most of the citizens had absconded.

„Gligbayi“ literally translated „wall-breaking dagger“, was the name given to the dagger that was used by Togbe Kakla to break through the walls of Notsie. This dagger, till today, is a sacred relic of the Ewes kept under the custody of the Agboghomefia, the traditional ruler of Ho in Asogli State (Asogli State Council, 2011).

1.2.1 Early settlements

Togbe Kakla and his followers split from the larger Ewe group to settle at Komedzrale, near Ho, the capital of the Volta Region of Ghana in West Africa. At Komedzrale, Ho and other Asogli people engaged in subsistence farming and hunting. According to oral history, Togbe Kakla had three sons and a daughter namely: Akoe, Letsu, Asor and Esa respectively. As time wore on, the fertility of Komedzrale lands was steadily being exhausted after long use and could no longer support any meaningful activity and the increasing population. This prompted the Asoglis to migrate further. The descendants of Akoe and Letsu settled at Akoefe and Kpenoe, and later Takla. The offspring of Asor founded the present day Ho after a brief stay at Hofedo. The only daughter of Togbe Kakla, Esa, settled at the present day Saviefe which lies north of Ho (Asogli State Council, 2011).

1.2.2 Contemporary Asogli State

The present-day Asogli State is located in the Volta Region of Ghana, West Africa. It comprises four traditional areas namely: Akoefe, Ho, Kpenoe and Takla. These four traditional setups were founded by the direct descendants of Togbe Kakla. Ho is the seat of the paramountcy. Ho is also now the capital of the Volta Region of Ghana. The Asogli people constitute the greater part of the population in the Ho municipality. Asogli State was anonymous prior to the arrival of the colonialists. The Asogli State Council, which is the traditional ruling council, is composed of the Agbogbomefia, Togbe Afede XIV, who is the president, the paramount chiefs of Akoefe, Kpenoe, Takla, and the five divisional chiefs of Ho. (Asogli State Council, 2011)

1.3 Statement of the Problem

An idiom is a figure of speech (also known as literary device). A figure of speech or literary device is a word or group of words which expresses a different meaning from the literal one (Anonymous, 2008). Idioms are also referred to as idiomatic expressions, and so „idiom“ and „idiomatic expression“ are used interchangeably.

Idioms are an integral part of language and everyday speech (Prasad, 2008). Idioms can be understood in relation to the context in which they are used. It is, therefore, good to use them in daily conversations in their right context to ensure effective communication.

Idioms do not follow the normal rule of grammar and semantics (Angel, 2003). They do not mean what they literally say. Thus, they are problematic even to the native speakers of a language. (Osei-Tutu, 2002) People, especially students, often feel embarrassed if they are not able to understand idioms used to them (De Caro, 2009).

Maalej (2005), cited by Leah (n.d), identifies idioms as a culture-specific aspect of language. Megrelidze (2013) considers an idiom as being a culture-based language unit. Pesce (n.d) also notes that if ESL (English as Second Language) students are not taught idioms, they will be missing an important cultural element of the language they strive to speak fluently. Higa (2014) also observes that idiomatic expressions have a hidden cultural context.

From the above assertions, it is obvious that culture, language and idiom are interrelated. Idioms are one of the cultural components of language. Though language is dynamic and therefore undergoes changes and development, certain aspects need to be preserved in order to maintain its quality. One such aspect is idioms. If the

speakers of a language do not use idioms in their speech, they would be neglecting the artistic aspect peculiar to their language. They may also not be able to express themselves as cleverly as possible in a situation where they would need to use idioms (Constantine, 2011).

This study, therefore, sought to investigate the extent of use of idiomatic expressions by the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana and its implication for the future of the Ho dialect, because the youth of Ho are the future custodians of their culture and for that matter their dialect.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to investigate the extent to which the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect and its implication on the future of the Ho dialect. The study would also explore the ways by which Ho youth in the Volta Region of Ghana can improve on their use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect.

1.5 Research Questions

This study tried to find answers to the following questions.

1. How relevant are idiomatic expressions in the use of language in the 21st century?
2. To what extent do the youth of Ho use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect and what are the future implications?
3. How can the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana improve on their use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect?

1.6 Research Design

This study made use of qualitative study which involved the use of semi-structured interview and observation. The semi-structured interviews were conducted for both the youth and adults in Ho. The youth were also observed in addition to the structured interview conducted on them to investigate the extent to which they use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect. The data collected were then transcribed and analysed.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is that it would serve as contribution to the field of sociolinguistics by serving as a point of reference for future research work on the use of idiomatic expressions by the youth.

1.8 Limitation

In order to reduce cost, this researcher limited himself to Ho Township, the capital of the Volta Region of Ghana, where he investigated the extent to which the youth of Ho use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect and its implication on the future of the dialect.

1.9 Delimitation

This study did not touch on other aspects of idioms rather than usage. The study mainly focused on the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana and did not target other Ewe youth in the Volta Region, Togo, Benin or Nigeria. It is an academic exercise and is, therefore, not meant to criticize Ho youth for not using idiomatic expressions if indeed findings revealed so.

1.10 Organisation

In organising the thesis, the following outline was followed:

- ❖ Chapter One: Introduction
- ❖ Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature
- ❖ Chapter Three: Methodology
- ❖ Chapter Four: Results, Findings and Discussions
- ❖ Chapter Five: Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

1.11 Conclusion

In recent times, some Ho youth in the Volta Region of Ghana seem to shy away from speaking their own dialect. It is common nowadays to hear adults who are natives of Ho say that the youth of Ho have taken to other languages, and that they are no more interested in speaking the Ho dialect. The findings of this study would reveal the extent to which the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect, which is a variety of the Ewe language, and the implication this would have on the future of the dialect. The next chapter discusses related literature on the use of idiomatic expressions in some other African languages

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

An idiom is an expression that cannot be understood from the meaning of its separate words but has a separate meaning of its own. There have been a number of valuable studies done on idioms over the years by some language scholars (Cowie & Mackin, 1975; Kwasikuma, 1973; Osei-Tutu, 2002). However, only few of such studies have specifically delved into the use of idiomatic expressions by the youth. This study, therefore, seeks to fill that gap. It is however worthwhile to review existing literature, which is related to the current study under the following sub-headings: semantic variety of idioms, reference sources of idioms, other sources of idioms, the interrelationship between language, culture and idioms, forms of idioms, the importance of idioms, the cultural importance of Ewe idioms, idioms and communication, difficulty in idiom usage, idiom comprehension theories, understanding and using idioms, the use of idioms among the Akans and Yoruba, translation, interpretation and the understanding of idioms.

2.1 Semantic Variety of Idioms

Semantics is the study of meaning in language. Specifically, it is the study of how meaning is structured in words, phrases and sentences. (Goettel, 2014) Idioms vary in meaning in three ways. Some are opaque (completely unclear) such as „to break the ice“ meaning „to say or do something to make people relax or comfortable“. Some are also semi-opaque (clear in some aspects) such as „to pass the buck“ meaning „to pass responsibility.“ Others are relatively transparent (rather obvious), for example: „to see the light“ meaning „to understand“ (Anonymous, 2009).

There are also idioms that have both literal and idiomatic meaning. Such idioms are difficult to recognise, for example: „to go out with someone“, „to take someone for a ride“, „to put one’s feet up“, „to pull someone’s leg“, „to develop cold feet“ and „to put something on ice.“

2.2 Reference Sources of Idioms

Some sources from which the youth, especially Ho youth can learn and use idioms include: dictionaries, story/drama/poetry books, television drama, and in school. “EUEGBE-’DAGANAWO” is a dictionary of Ewe idioms written by G.W.K. Kwasikuma. J.A. Golomeke has also written a book entitled, “Ewe Proverbs, Idioms and their English Equivalentents” which contains Ewe idioms and their meanings. Some Ewe story, drama and poetry books in which idiomatic expressions can be found include: “Ku Di Ɔo Na Wo” by Klu Akotey, “Amegbetɔa Alo Agbezuge Ɔe Ɔutinya” by S.J Obianim, “Hlɔbiabia” by Kodzo Ayeke, “Ɔia Tsatsala” by Bidji Setsoafia, “Tɔkɔ Atɔlia” by F. Kwasi Fiawoo and “Henɔwo Ɔe Gbe” by G.W.K. Kwasikuma.

2.3 Other Sources of Idioms

Idioms are culturally universal. They exist in every culture, therefore, the English also have their reference sources from which they access and use idioms. O’Dell and McCarthy (n.d) mention two major sources namely: dictionaries and the internet. They mention Cambridge dictionary as containing good examples of how idioms are used as well as giving information on their use, that is whether they are used humorously, informally or in a more literal context.

2.4 The Interrelationship between Language, Culture and Idiom

Language is a human system of communication that uses arbitrary signals, such as voice sounds, gestures, or written symbols. (Nordquist, n.d) Culture, on the other hand, is the characteristics of a particular group of people including language, food, social habits, music and arts. (Zimmermann, 2012)

It can be noted from the definition of culture by Zimmermann (2012) that language forms part of the culture of a people. Guineng (2012) mentions the fact that language and culture are closely related to each other. He adds that culture includes and affects language. He again maintains that language is a mirror of culture and can reflect culture. Maalej (2005), cited by Leah (n.d), identifies idioms as culture-specific aspects of a particular language. Megrelidze (2013) also states that an idiom is a culture-based language unit.

The above affirmations point to the fact that language, culture and idiom are interconnected. Thus, idioms are an integral part of language (Pandey, 2011), and language is also a part or an element of the culture of a people.

2.5 Forms of Idioms

Idioms take different forms; they can be a single word, a phrase or clause, or they can even be a complete sentence. (Higa, 2014) The following are the various forms that idioms take.

2.5.1 Phrase idioms

Evans (2012) notes that phrase idioms are a group of idioms which often consists of an entire phrase, for example: “once in a blue moon” (rarely happens), “under the rose” (quietly), “to fall into a rage”, “to fly off the handle”, “to kick the bucket”(to

die), “to be caught between the devil and the deep blue sea”, “to perform bodily function” (to visit the washroom), “to rain cats and dogs” (to rain very heavily).

2.5.2 Lexemic idioms

According to Kellerman (1979), cited by Cedar (2008), lexemic idioms are lexical items (words) that convey metaphorical meaning such as the verb „broke“ in: “She broke his heart” and “He broke his word”. Lexemic idioms can occur in different parts. Some are nominal in nature such as: “top dog”, “white elephant”, “sack wearer” “country cousin”, and “hot dog”. Others are adjectival in nature, for instance: “salt and pepper”, “black and white”.

2.5.3 Simile idioms

Badger (2016) notes that many idiomatic expressions get their meanings by comparing one object or action to another using the word: „like“ or „as“. Over time, certain similes become standard methods for illustrating certain ideas. For instance, when you use the expression: “Like two peas in a pod”, you are describing how two things are similar or close in nature by comparing them to peas which grow together in a pod. Other simile-based idioms include: “Like a cat on hot bricks” (unable to stay still or concentrate because you are very nervous or worried), “as light as a feather” (very light), and “as busy as a bee” (very busy).

2.5.4 Phrasal verbs

Some idiomatic expressions function as verbs. Phrasal verbs normally contain one or more individual verbs and prepositions which, when used together in a sentence, act as a single verb. For example, people use the phrasal verb “to get away with” to mean

“avoid punishment” as in the sentence: “She will get away with stealing that car”. Other examples include: “to come off” (to happen), “to put up” (to let someone stay in your house or to build something like a fence, wall or house), “to break up” (to end a relationship). Phrasal verbs are so widely used and uniformly integrated into standard sentences that many people do not recognise them anymore as idioms. (Badger, 2016)

2.5.5 Euphemisms

Euphemism is a mild, indirect, polite or vague expression used in place of harsh, blunt or offensive phrase (Patil, 2016; Patterson, n.d). Euphemisms are used for dissimulation (concealment) to refer to taboo subjects (such as disability, sex, excretion, and death) in a polite way, and to conceal profanity. Euphemisms are also used to avoid words considered rude, while still conveying their meaning. For example: “pass away” meaning “die”, “comfort woman” meaning “prostitute”, “vertically challenged” meaning “short”, “big-boned” meaning “overweight” and “rest room” meaning “bathroom”.

2.5.6 Clichés

Clichés are expressions (idioms) that have been overused. These expressions were once fresh and original, but with time they have become stale and trite (Terban, 2006). According to Terban (2006), clichés should not be used in formal writing unless one can put an imaginative new twist on them. Smith (2014) also notes that clichés are annoying and confusing and that people lose their credibility when they use them excessively. The following are some clichés that are particularly overused and so should be used sparingly:

- “To bite the bullet” meaning “to start to deal with an unpleasant situation”
- “To think outside the box” meaning “to think in an original and creative

way”

- “At the end of the day” meaning “to give your final opinion after considering all the possibilities”

2.6 The Importance of Idioms

Many language scholars stress the importance of idioms in our daily speech. According to them, idioms form a very integral or central part of language (Pandey, 2011; Smith, 2013) and should, therefore, be appropriately expressed in our daily use of language. Meenakshi (2009) observes that idioms add spice and variety to ordinary speech. She again adds that idioms make language interesting and creative. Plum (2011) also says without idioms, writing and speech would be boring. Pandey (2011) asserts that idioms describe a situation in a vivid and picturesque manner. D' Addese (2011) also explains a function of idioms in our daily expressions and says they make language richer and more colourful. Anonymous (n.d) avers that idioms are part of language and that they give meaning more vividly and often more briefly than a long literal explanation would do.

Kwasikuma (1973, p.5) notes in his introductory note that idioms are like pepper and salt that our forefathers used to garnish their speech, making their conversation pleasant and interesting. He again asserts that idioms are a great linguistic asset of language that must not be toyed with. He then compares speech that is devoid of idiomatic expressions to eating hot pepper or salt only; no one enjoys eating hot pepper or salt only. Kwasikuma (1973) further mentioned that through the use of language, a people showcase the importance and value of their culture to the rest of the world. He again noted that language is a unifier and a very important asset that must be preserved and transmitted to the future generation. He sums up his

observation by saying that, speech or conversation that is without idioms is dull to the ear.

According to Sarmiento (2009), one important benefit a speaker of a language derives from using idioms is that it extends their knowledge of the language, increases their vocabulary range as well as builds their confidence in using the language. Constantine (2011) also expounds an important function of idioms and states that they are used to express something that other words cannot express as cleverly as possible. According to Constantine (2011), we use images or symbols in idioms to describe things as cleverly as possible, thus making our point as effective as possible, for example: „in a nutshell“ suggests the idea of having all the information contained within very few words. He concludes that idioms are colloquial or informal, and are better used in spoken rather than written language.

Moreover, learning to understand and use idioms in speech and writing greatly improves one’s fluency and makes one a better speaker and writer (Jiya, 2012). Again, some people use idioms for humour or to comment on themselves, other people or on situations. Idioms are also used for emphasis, for example: “The singer’s second album sank like a stone” which means, it was a failure.

Summing up the functions of idioms in our daily conversations, it can be deduced from the above exposition that idioms are important in our daily expressions due to the following reasons:

- (i) They enrich language by making it more vivid and interesting.
- (ii) They form an integral part of language and must therefore not be removed from it.

- (iii) Some idioms are used to avoid utterances that are unpleasant, rude, harsh profane and impolite.
- (iv) They also express situations that other words cannot express artistically.
- (v) Idioms also bring about fluency in speech.

2.7 The Cultural Importance of Ewe Idioms

The Ewe language is very rich in idioms and other figurative expressions (Kwasikuma, 1973). Ewes consider idioms as a very important aspect of their language and as a result, they value its use. Those who do not use idiomatic expressions are regarded as uncultured or uncouth. For example, Ewe culture does not allow users of the language to use plain language in some situations. For instance, when talking about certain issues like excretion, death and sex especially in the presence of the elderly, the speaker is supposed to use idioms that refer to such topics. With regards to issues relating to excretion, speakers are supposed to use idioms in order not to sound unpleasant and offensive by using expressions like: “De asi go me” which is literally translated as “To put the hand in the pocket” or “De tsi le ka me” literally translated as “To release water” meaning “To urinate”. These expressions are used in place of “De aɖuɖɔ” which is the plain language for the phrase “To urinate”. With regards to defecation, phrases like “Ye mo” literally meaning “To frown the face” and “Ye tɔgbui gbɔ” literally meaning “To visit the grandfather” refer to the act. These are used in place of; “De afɔdzi”, “Nye mi”, “Ye nugodo” or “Ye kpɔxa” which all means “To defecate” in plain language; these are unpleasant. With regards to issues concerning death, idioms are used in order to reduce or avoid shock

on the part of the listener. As regards issues concerning sex, idioms are used to avoid profanity.

2.8 Idioms and Communication

Communication is the exchange and flow of information and ideas from one person to another; it involves a sender transmitting an idea, information or feeling to a receiver. (Clark, 1997) For effective communication to occur, the receiver must understand the exact information or idea that the sender intended to transmit. (Clark, 1997)

In view of the above, excessive use of idiomatic expressions in speech or writing can hinder effective communication; most especially if the receiver is a non-native speaker of the language being used. Also during lessons in a classroom situation, the excessive use of idiomatic expressions can affect the interaction between teachers and pupils. Pupils may not fully understand what they are taught.

2.9 Difficulty in Idiom Usage

It is not enough to understand idioms, but they must also be used accurately. Linguists have identified some difficulties people have in using and understanding idiomatic expressions. These linguists also adduce reasons for the difficulties.

According to Terban (2006), idioms are often confusing because the meaning of the whole group of words taken together has little, or often nothing, to do with the meaning of the words taken individually. Zakaria, Winnis and Saleh (2013) note that idioms do not mean what they literally mean. Therefore, they are problematic even for native speakers. Smith (2013) also admits that idiomatic expressions can present problems in both understanding and production, and this happens especially if the context is unclear. Context, simply, is the situation, events, or information that is related to something and that helps one to understand it. (Quirk, 2005)

Another problem associated with idiomatic expressions, as noted by Smith (2013), is that they have a fixed nature or form and do not allow for variation. According to him, even if an idiomatic expression is only slightly jumbled, it can sound unnatural and even amusing, for example, in Ewe “Tɔ kɔ nu” is literally translated as “to fight one’s lips” meaning “to eat”. It is unidiomatic to say “Da kɔ nu” which also translates as “to fight one’s lips”. A similar situation can be found in English as in the case of “blow your own horn” versus “blow your own trumpet”.

Osei-Tutu (2002, p.157) also affirms the difficult nature of idioms and for that matter Ewe idioms and mentions that they may sound like a kind of twisted language on hearing it for the first time. He said some Ewe idioms may sound like a foreign language at first, and it is after they have been explained that the listener understands them. Corelli (2005) explains that an idiom is an expression that does not mean what it really says; hence its meaning is often quite different from the word for word translation.

It can, therefore, be deduced from the above assertions that people find idioms confusing because the meaning of a given group of words is different from the meanings of the individual words. They also find it difficult to understand and use idiomatic expressions correctly if the context is unclear.

2.10 Idiom Comprehension Theories

Some academics in the field have propounded theories on comprehension of idioms that can facilitate the understanding of idioms. Cain, Oakhill and Lemmon (2005), cited by Zakaria, Winnis and Saleh (2013), demonstrated that there are three factors in comprehending idioms. These are familiarity, transparency and context. They

maintain that context helps in the interpretation of figurative language by providing the necessary semantic information from which the reader (listener) can extract or infer the appropriate sense of an expression. They therefore state that idioms that are used in context are easier to understand than those used in isolation.

Bobrow and Bell (1973), Gibbs (1980), Swinney and Cutler (1979), cited by Havrila (2009), also propose a non-compositional theory to comprehension of idioms. This approach assumes that idioms are stored in the lexicon and retrieved from it as a whole „long words.“ Tutor (2014) also supports this non-compositional approach and indicates that idioms are stored as a single lexical item that is different from the literal meaning. Cowie and Mackin (1975) indicate that an idiom functions as a unit of meaning. They do not follow the normal rule of grammar and semantics. (Angel, 2003)

Schenk (1995) also supports the assumption that idioms do not conform to the principle of compositionality. According to him, idioms are expressions which function differently in meaning from the meanings of the individual constituent parts.

The principle of compositionality states that the meaning of a whole should be constructed from the meaning of the parts that make up the whole. In other words, one should be in position to understand the whole if one understands the meanings of each of the parts that makes the whole. For example: “John kicked the bucket.” The understood compositionality of the statement is that: John has literally kicked an actual, physical bucket (Tutor, 2014). However, the idiomatic meaning of the statement is: “John died.”

The principle of semantic compositionality is widely accredited to Gottlob Frege for its first modern formulation and so it is called Frege's principle. (Pelletier, 1994) However, idioms are fixed expressions whose overall meaning cannot be deduced from the meanings of its constituent parts (Zakaria *et al*, 2013; citing Marlies, 1995 and Moon, 2006). In other words, there is no relationship between the parts and the whole. They therefore contradict the principle of compositionality. This is perhaps partly responsible for the difficulty people have in understanding idioms.

2.11 Understanding and Using Idioms

Since idioms have been identified as being a very important and central part of language, some steps have also been outlined by scholars in the field to help people who have difficulty in using and understanding them.

Cowie and Mackin (1975) indicate in their general introductory note that familiarity with a wide range of idiomatic expressions and the ability to use them appropriately in context, are among the distinguishing marks of a native-like command of a language. The above statement points to the fact that a speaker of a language needs to acquaint themselves with a great number of idiomatic expressions in the language and use them in their right context, thereby speaking it with native-like command.

According to Laureta (2010), one can learn idioms from real conversations between native speakers. He again adds that one needs to buy a dictionary of idioms and use it to understand idioms one hears in movies and conversations.

Pesce (n.d) asks if we should or should not teach English idioms to English as Second Language (ESL) students. She then warns that ESL students would be missing an

important cultural element of the language they strive to speak fluently if they are not taught idioms. This suggests that students, who constitute the greater part of the youth group of the society, need to be taught idioms so that they can learn the cultural element of their language. Youth refers to persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. (UNESCO, n.d)

Terban (2006) also affirms that if one tries to understand the meaning of an idiom literally word by word, one will get confused. One has to know its 'hidden' meaning. This means that one must deliberately learn and know the meaning of idioms in order to use them correctly in speech. Sarmiento (2009) as well observes that idioms are difficult to use since they must be used at specific settings. This implies that idioms must be used in the right context or situation.

In his article entitled, "Understanding idioms," Boers (n.d) asks a question to which he provides answers that are helpful to people who have difficulty in understanding idioms in their daily communications. The question he poses is, "Are idioms arbitrary?" According to Boers (n.d), linguists used to believe that idioms were completely arbitrary, that is, one could not deduce their meaning from the words that they consist of. He added that in the past teachers told their students that the only way to master idioms was to commit them to memory. According to him, research rather shows that when idioms are presented as non-arbitrary features of language, students find them much easier to understand and remember. Boers (n.d) mentioned that a lot of idioms originate from our general physical experiences for example, "hot under the collar", "breathe fire", "let off steam", all refer to being angry. This makes sense because when people get angry they become red in the face due to rising temperature. Likewise, the figurative expressions, "lend someone a hand", "try your hand at

something”, “have your hands tied”, all use the image of the hand to refer to performing an action. This also makes sense because we know from everyday experience that most activities involve the use of our hands. Boers (n.d) then concludes that a helpful way of remembering idioms is to group them according to the domain that they are derived from, and that if one recognises the origin of an idiom, one would often be able to figure out the meaning on their own

2.12 The Use of Idioms among the Akans and Yoruba

The Akan people occupy the greater part of southern Ghana and west of the Black Volta. They comprise of the Bono (also known as Brong), the Asante (also known as Ashanti), Akyem (also known as Akim), Denkyira, Fante and Akwapem. They speak the various dialects of the Akan language. The Akan group is believed to have migrated from the north to occupy the forest and coastal areas of southern Ghana as early as the thirteenth century. Some of them also ended up in eastern part of Cote d’Ivoire where they created the Baule Community (Sanders, 2004). The Akan language is the most extensively spoken in Ghana. Ghanaians from other ethnic groups altogether form the majority of the population but they also try to speak the Akan language which seems to dominate the other languages (Antwi-Boasiako, 2014). Idioms are called “kasakoa” in the Akan language and, like most other languages, it is rich in idioms. According to Antwi-Boasiako (2014), the non-native Akan speaker may sometimes feel lost in the middle of a conversation with a native speaker as a result of the use of idioms by the native speakers. He also indicates that one may be completely out of order to say certain things directly without using idioms (kasakoa), especially when discussing sex related issues.

Among the Ashantis, idioms are used for various reasons. One of such reasons is that it shows how wise and intelligent a person is. Idioms (and proverbs) are mostly used in the royal courts of kings and queens in the Ashanti Kingdom. Kings and queens are highly esteemed among Akans. They are also very wealthy. Due to their wealth and prestige, they are spoken to in idioms (and proverbs). They are also spoken to in idioms (and proverbs) because they are considered to be wise, intelligent and knowledgeable. In the royal courts, several meetings are held by people with great minds who must communicate in idioms (and proverbs). Addressing kings and queens in plain language during such meetings is considered disrespectful (Amenuvor, 2006).

Ashanti kings and queens speak to their subjects through a person known as “Okyeame”, an Akan word for linguist. The subjects also communicate back to the king and queen through the “Okyeame” who translates and interprets the various conversations that are held in idioms (and proverbs). Very wise and intelligent people who are very conversant with the history and traditions of the Akan culture are selected to play the role of Okyeame. Elders who regularly visit the royal courts are also very wise and conversant with Akan proverbial and idiomatic language. The elders communicate to the king and queen through the Okyeame by using idioms (and proverbs). The elders also settle disputes between the natives using idioms (and proverbs). Since the elders are also considered to be very intelligent and wise, they cannot communicate in plain language. Through the wisdom of the use of idioms and proverbs, kings are able to settle disputes peacefully without hurting the feelings of the parties involved (Amenuvor, 2006).

Akans, and for that matter Ashantis, celebrate festivals throughout the year where they perform rituals and rites. These festivals and ceremonies include the rights of passage, outdooring of a new baby, puberty rites, marriage ceremonies and funerals.

During these ceremonies and festivals Ashanti kings and queens display their wealth, power and prominence. More importantly, they also show off their wisdom by communicating with their subjects in well-selected idiomatic expressions which only the wise would understand. The meanings of some of the idiomatic expressions may be hard to comprehend by the ordinary mind. The king's linguist would therefore have to interpret and translate these expressions for those who are not well-versed in idioms to understand.

Again, among the Ashantis, idiomatic expressions (and proverbs) are used to entertain and teach real life lessons in the royal courts of kings and queens. This was especially done in the olden days when adults would gather around a burning fire telling different popular folktales referred to as „ananse“ stories. The king would then invite and assemble some wise men in the village to share different idiomatic expressions (and proverbs) and their meanings to the audience in the royal palace. A lot of wisdom and knowledge is gained from these idiomatic expressions (and proverbs), because they reflect on life and also caution one about how to live a meaningful and fulfilling life by applying the practical lessons and guidance offered through these idioms (and proverbs). (Amenuvor, 2006)

Another very important use of idioms among the Akans, especially the Ashantis, is to soften the impact of the harshness of plain use of the Akan language. According to the Akan tradition, reality and truth hurts and therefore there must be a better way of telling the truth without causing too much hurt or damage. Idioms and proverbs are also used to soften the psychological effects that the true or plain meaning of an utterance may cause to the receiver of the message. This mostly occurs when one has to break or announce bad news to people especially where death is involved. The following are some idioms that are used to break news on death: “Woaka nkyene agu

” literally meaning “He has kicked a bucket of salt”, “Odae a woansore” literally meaning “He went to bed and never woke up”, and “Oko n’akura” literally meaning “He went to his village and never to return”. “Sebe” is another idiom commonly used in the Akan language which literally means “With all due respect”. The term acts as immunity and covers and protects the speaker from whatever they are about to say (Amenuvor, 2006).

The youth are shying away from the use of the Akan language. The lack of use of the language among the youth is due to the introduction of foreign culture, many Ghanaian students having their education abroad for better opportunities, the better acceptance of the English language and the perception that the English language is a better language, and the difficulty in learning the language due to lack of a well-structured and well-defined alphabet. Due to these reasons the youth rather find it easier communicating in English. The result is that, they are gradually losing the use of the language, its beauty and poetic nature. Therefore, idioms (and proverbs) are used by adults to teach the beauty and the poetic nature of the Akan language to the younger generation for onward transmission to posterity (Amenuvor, 2006).

Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, a new crop of idioms and idiomatic expressions have been and are being formulated to communicate new concepts and ideas. These idioms and idiomatic expressions are new categories of Yoruba traditional idioms used by artistes, poets, politicians, musicians, students, journalists, and broadcasters who have the craving to use them to educate or communicate new developments in science and technology as well as in telecommunication. The new idioms and idiomatic expressions are used when the users are incapacitated by certain linguistic constraints imposed on them by the Yoruba language, especially difficulty in getting appropriate

lexical items and terms for the expressions of their ideas. These expressions are new modes of communication used to articulate socioeconomic, traditional and sensitive issues in the Yoruba routine communication (Akanmu, 2015).

2.13 Translation, Interpretation and the Understanding of Idioms

Just as people find it difficult to use and understand idioms, they also find it difficult translating and interpreting them. This stems from the fact that the meaning of idioms is non-literal. In other words, one cannot deduce the meaning using just the words in the phrase. (Labiak, n.d) This also suggests that the meaning of idioms is rather metaphorical. In fact, idioms are like metaphors whose meanings are hidden (Erdmann, 2011).

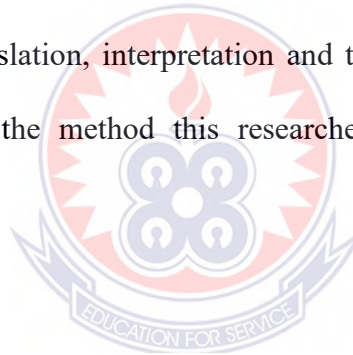
Tutor (2014) says when an idiom is translated word-for-word into another language, in some cases, either its meaning is changed or it is meaningless. An example might be: “Raining cats and dogs” where the reader cannot simply just translate each word (Labiak, n.d). If “Raining cats and dogs” is translated word for word into Ewe, it literally means “Dadiwo kple av ũwo le dzadzam”. The translated idiomatic meaning of the expression is rather “Uedzi le dzadzam” meaning “It is raining very heavily”.

Another reason behind the difficulty in translating idioms is the fact that some idioms are culture-bound, that is, they are specific to particular culture. (Erdmann, 2011) Labiak (n.d) notes that some idioms are culture-specific whilst others can be translated using similar idioms in the target language, for instance the French idiom: “Se vendre comme des petits pains” can generally be translated to English idiom as “Selling like hot cake”.

In order to do meaningful translation of idioms from a language into another, one must first understand the idiom, and understanding the meaning of certain idioms requires some logic and knowledge of origin of the phrase. (Labiak, n.d) Secondly, one must look for the closest equivalent in the target language. (Erdmann, 2011)

2.14 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed literature on idiomatic expressions which included: semantic variety of idioms, reference sources of idioms, other sources of idioms, the interrelationship between language, culture and idiom, forms of idioms, importance of idioms, cultural importance of Ewe idioms, difficulties in idiom usage, idiom comprehension theory, understanding and using idioms, the uses of idioms among the Akans and Yoruba, translation, interpretation and the understanding of idioms. The next chapter discusses the method this researcher followed in carrying out the research.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methods and procedures used in gathering data for the study. These include: the research design, population sampling, instrumentation, data collection strategy, credibility of the study, description of research sites, data collection protocol, and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

Research approach is a scheme, outline or plan that is used to generate answers to research problems. (Kombo & Delno, 2006) It is also a detailed documentation of plan for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. This study adopted the descriptive survey design using the qualitative paradigm. Qualitative analysis is the one in which the researcher groups responses based on the judgment that the responses are similar. (Owu-Ewie, 2012, p.64; citing Patton, 2002) The researcher then describes this similarity conceptually and fits the various items under the domains into which responses can then be grouped. Qualitative research often involves the use of interviews, observation, document and audio visual techniques as data collection strategies. (Owu-Ewie, 2012; citing Creswell, 2009) The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study in order to offer the researcher first-hand information with regards to the extent to which the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect of the Ewe language. This researcher decided to adopt the qualitative method in order to do a more comprehensive work on the topic because there is only little information on the topic and knowledge on it is quite minimal. By choosing to use the qualitative method, this

researcher was able to do an in-depth exploration and description of the data collected. The method is very useful as it eliminated bias from the gathering and presentation of research data.

3.2 Population Sampling

This research used the purposive sampling method to select the participants for the study. The purposive sampling method is the one in which elements are chosen based on the purpose of the study. (Owu-Ewie, 2012, p.29) The participants or population sampled for the research were the youth of Ho (between the ages of 15 and 24) and Adults (40 years and above) from various communities in Ho. These communities include: Ho-Ahoe, Ho-Bankoe, Ho-Dome, Ho-Heve, and Ho-Hliha, all suburbs of Ho where the research was carried out. Four (4) adult participants comprising two (2) males and two (2) females were selected from each of the five communities for the interviews. Twelve (12) youth comprising six (6) males and six (6) females from the various communities were selected for the interview. Four (4) youth groups were also sampled for observation. In all, a total of thirty-two (32) individual participants and four (4) youth groups were selected for the interviews and observation respectively.

3.3 Instrumentation

The techniques/instruments employed in data collection were interview and observation. The semi-structured interview was used to gather data from adults and the youth in the various communities. According to Elly (1991), interviews yield rich words of individuals studied to allow a clear understanding of their situations. The intention of the researcher was to provide as much opportunity for the respondents to express themselves as possible with regards to their perceptions on the extent of use of idiomatic expressions by the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana.

Observation was also used to collect data on some youth groups in the various communities of Ho on the extent of their use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect.

3.4 Data Collection Strategy

The data collection strategies used by the researcher to gather data were interview and observation. Interviews are purposeful conversations with participants to obtain information to answer a research question. Interviews also provide qualitative method of gathering evidence, data or information. The responses are not usually expressed in numerical terms. There are three types of interview namely structured, semi-structured and unstructured. However, the researcher decided to use semi-structured interview. This is because it is a type of interview where the researcher specifies issues and topics to be covered in an outline form. The researcher also chose this type of interview for his research because it allows just a little flexibility and offers each participant approximately the same stimulus/questions so that the responses can be compared. During the interview, supplementary questions were asked as appropriate.

The semi-structured interview was used to gather data from both the adults and the youth in the various communities of Ho who have the experience and information relevant to this research. The purpose was to investigate the extent of use of idiomatic expressions by the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana. This researcher devised his questions in such a way that they helped in eliciting data or information that would answer his research questions. Before the start of the interview proper, this investigator introduced himself and explained the aim of the interview to each interviewee to be fully aware of the purpose of the research. He then decided with the consent of the interviewee on a serene place where the interview could be carried out

to ensure that the recording was clear. Specifically, the face-to-face interview was adopted. After seeking the consent of the interviewees and also informing them on how long it would last; the interviews were conducted and recorded. Each interview lasted about thirty (30) minutes. The raw recorded data were later transcribed and analysed.

Observation was one of the methods also used to collect data on the youth of Ho to investigate the extent of their use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect. Observation is the primary technique of collecting data on the behaviour of participants. In qualitative research, observation consists of detailed documentation of behaviours, events and context surrounding the events and behaviour (Owu-Ewie, 2012). Observation is often referred to as field work because it takes place in the field. Observations are categorized into scheduled and unscheduled. It was difficult for this researcher to adopt only one observational method in carrying out this research and so he employed the use of both the scheduled and the unscheduled types of observation depending on the situation and setting involved.

Scheduled observation which is also referred to as visible, non-participant or overt type of observation is a kind of direct observational approach in which the observer gives explanations to the participants before carrying it out. The explanation may be full, partial or false depending on the purpose of the research (Owu-Ewie, 2012 p.46). It is possible that the participants may try to modify or alter their behaviour when they know that they are being observed and this may affect the validity of the results. In order to avoid or minimize this situation and be able to obtain a normal view of their behaviour, this researcher decided not to give full explanation to the participants but rather partial information since he did not also want them to be completely unaware of

his activity (Owu-Ewie, 2012). This researcher informed them that he was there to examine how they use language generally at the work place without being specific on the extent of use of idiomatic expressions. Even though this direct or overt method raised a question of intruding their privacy, the researcher managed the situation well. By revealing his identity to the groups to be observed, and giving them the assurance of confidentiality, this researcher reduced their anxiety and mistrust. The duration for each observation period was three hours. The frequency of the observation was three times for each group. The groups suited for the scheduled observation method for which reason the researcher used the method to collect data on them were workers/apprentices at a Batik Tie and Dye Production Centre, a Mechanic Shop, and a Fashion Design Centre. The researcher visited these groups because they work or operate in an informal setting that presented the opportunities for the participants to engage in informal conversations in which they could use colloquial language including idiomatic expressions.

This researcher, as indicated early on, used the unscheduled observation method as well. The unscheduled observation method, also referred to as concealed or participant observation approach, is where the researcher joins and becomes part of the group. This method is a covert approach where the researcher keeps their identity and purpose hidden from the group being studied. The observer takes a false identity and role, posing as a genuine member of the group (McLeod, 2015). The groups suited for this method for which reason this investigator used it to collect data on them were spectators watching a football match. This researcher used the following guidelines or strategies in the observation process. He first decided on the goal of the study and the groups to be observed. He then gained entry to the group and established rapport with the participants. He now observed and took record of the

extent to which they use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect. He chose to use the note-taking method for the recording of the observed behaviour because note-taking is relatively quiet and unobtrusive. After the recording, he finally exited from the observation site, analysed the data and wrote a report (Owu-Ewie, 2012).

3.5 Credibility

To establish validity, the data for this study must be credible. Cresswell (2002) observed that the establishment of credibility of findings demands that the research is carried out according to good practice and submitted to the social world to be studied for confirmation that the researcher understood and followed the social order.

In this study, the researcher interacted with the participants over a period of not less than one week in order to develop acquaintance with them. This was done through casual visits to the participants in the various communities and workplaces. This enabled the researcher to develop a relationship with them. In this way, the researcher was able to build trust between him and the participants. This trust made it possible for the participants to readily open up for discussion of issues that were covered by the interview and also for the observation to be carried out.

3.6 Research Sites

The city of Ho, where this researcher did his investigations, is the capital of Ho Municipal District as well as the Volta Region of Ghana. Ho lies between Mount Adaklu, which is to the south, and Mount Galenkui, which is to the north. The city has a museum, cathedrals and a large prison. Currently, Ho has a settlement population of over 96,000. (Wikipedia, 2017) Ho-Ahoe, Ho-Bankoe, Ho-Dome, Ho-Heve and Ho-Hliha are five of the suburbs of Ho where the researcher did his investigations. This researcher did his investigations at these sites because most of the indigenes live in

these areas. Ho-Ahoe is situated near the Ho Sports Stadium. Ho-Bankoe is located at the western part of the city, off Ho-Accra highway. Ho-Heve is situated near Mawuli Senior High School and Evangelical Presbyterian Church Mawuko Girls' Senior High School, off Ho-Adaklu highway. Ho-Hliha is also located opposite K.K. House. Ho-Dome is positioned at the eastern part of the city near the Volta Barracks and Guinness Junction, off Ho-Aflao highway.

3.7 Data Collection Protocol

This researcher first visited the various communities where he had decided to carry out the research and briefly explained the objective of this study to the prospective participants. He then sought their consent and sampled the target population. He scheduled dates for the interviews with the participants and later went back to the various communities in turns and conducted the interviews for them. This researcher also sampled and visited a Batik Tie and Dye Production Centre, a Fashion Design Centre, and a Mechanic Shop where he had decided to do his observation. He briefly explained the objective of this study to the workers/apprentices there. He scheduled visits with them and later went there to carry out his observation on them. He finally visited a Football Park in the research site where he did observation on the youthful spectators to investigate the extent to which they use idiomatic expressions in their conversations and interactions in the Ho dialect.

3.8 Data Analysis

The data for this study was analysed using the qualitative inductive analysis method. Qualitative inductive approach to analyzing data is the one in which the researcher collects data relevant to his or her topic of interest, looks for patterns in the data and works to develop a theory that could explain those patterns. (Goddard & Melville,

2004) With regards to the data collected from the adults and the youth in the interview, the researcher prepared and presented the data by first posing the research questions and then highlighting the interviewee comments. By so doing, this researcher was then able to group into categories the responses of the participants concerning their perspectives on the extent to which the youth of Ho use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect. He then described the similarities conceptually by coding and putting them under their various domains or themes for the responses that were grouped. He then classified all the responses under themes and put all the themes into conceptual categories, describing them. The categories were re-examined to identify how they are linked. The conceptual models were translated into a meaningful storyline for meaningful reading (Owu-Ewie, 2012, p.64). This researcher also presented a detailed report of the observation conducted on the youth groups and analysed it.

3.9 Conclusion

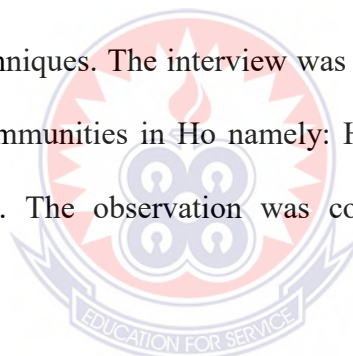
This chapter discussed the methods used in gathering data for analysis. The chapter looked at the research design, population sampling, instrumentation, data collection strategy, credibility, description of research sites, data collection protocol and data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the data and analysis are presented. The chapter looks at the background of the respondents, particularly on sex, age, work. It also presents the findings on respondents' perceptions on the relevance of idioms in language usage in the 21st century as well as the extent to which the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect. The chapter also presents results and findings on the ways that the youth of Ho can improve on their use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect. The data were collected through interview and observation research techniques. The interview was conducted on both the adults and the youth in five (5) communities in Ho namely: Ho-Ahoe, Ho-Bankoe, Ho-Dome, Ho-Heve and Ho-Hliha. The observation was conducted on the youth in these communities.



4.1 Adult Respondents' Demographics

The background data of adult respondents include the following: sex, age, and work.

Respondents' background data are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Demographic Data of Adult Respondents

Variable	Respondents	Percentage	
Sex	Male	10	50%
	Female	10	50%
Age	50-59	5	25%
	60-69	5	25%
	70-79	6	30%
	80-89	3	15%
	90 and above	1	5%
Work	Civil Servants	3	15%
	Farmers	4	20%
	House Wives	2	10%
	Pensioners	4	20%
	Skilled Workers	3	15%
	Traders	4	20%

From Table 4.1 above, 50% of the adult respondents were males, 50% were females. Respondents were selected according to the purpose of the research. It is clear from the table that the number of males is at par with that of the females. This was to ensure that there was no gender bias in carrying out the research. Three (3) of the respondents were Civil Servants, four (4) were Farmers, two (2) were House Wives, four (4) were Pensioners, three (3) were Skilled Workers, and four (4) were Traders.

Moreover, the results on the table revealed that five (5) representing 25% of the respondents were between the ages of 50-59 years, five (5) of them representing 25% were between the ages of 60-69, six (6) of the respondents representing 30% of the total number were between the ages of 70-79 years, three (3) out of the number representing 15% fell within the age range of 80-89 years. One (1) out of the number representing 5% fell within the age range of 90-91 years. It can be deduced from the table that all the respondents are adults who had gained much experience in the use of the Ho dialect. Taking a look at Table 4.1, it is clear that majority of the respondents

were between the age group of 70-79 years. The least number of respondents fell within the age range of 90-91.

4.2 Results of Main Responses from the Interview

Question 1: How relevant are idiomatic expressions in the use of language in the 21st century?

The data presented under this question examines the perception of adult respondents in the five communities of Ho on the relevance of idiomatic expressions in the use of language in the 21st century. These five communities include: Ho-Ahoe, Ho-Bankoe, Ho-Dome, Ho-Heve and Ho-Hliha. From the interview conducted, all the respondents freely expressed their views on the role of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect in the 21st century. The respondents are designated (labeled) with the capital letters of the English alphabet A-T.

4.2.1. Results from respondents of Ho-Ahoe

Respondent “A” stated in the interview that, *“Idiomatic expressions are a figurative language that our forefathers used to communicate in the Ho dialect. The use of idiomatic expressions is still relevant today because it identifies one as a native of Ho. Idiomatic expressions are relevant as they are also used to hide some secrets from non-natives.”*

Respondent “B” also indicated that, *“Idiomatic expressions are phrases that are difficult to understand but should be used to communicate in the Ho dialect so that the young ones can also learn and use them. The use of idiomatic expressions is necessary today and the future. When idiomatic expressions are used for people, it makes them to think deep. Some people even sometimes think it is an insult when they are used for them. Some idiomatic expressions are also really used to soften insults.”*

Respondent “C” revealed that, *“The use of idiomatic expressions is still relevant in language usage in modern times as it helps to switch from the plain use of language in order to hide information from children, non-natives and others who do not understand such expressions.”*

Respondent “D” said in the interview that, *“Idiomatic expressions are a figurative language in form of proverbs. They are still relevant these days in language usage as their daily use help preserve the originality of the dialect.”*

4.2.2 Results from respondents of Ho-Bankoe

Respondent “E” indicated that, *“In the past, idiomatic expressions were like a whisper from parents, and only children who were respectful to their parents understood them. Idiomatic expressions are still relevant today.”*

Respondent “F” also stated that, *“Idiomatic expressions are a kind of expression one uses when one is saying something and does not want some other people to understand it.”*

Respondent “G” also from Ho-Bankoe noted in the interview that, *“Idiomatic expressions are still important in the use of language nowadays because when you want to say something to your relative but other people are around and you do not want them to understand what you want to say, you have to use an idiomatic expression which only the two of you understand.”*

Respondent “H” asserted that, *“An idiomatic expression is a figurative expression which has to be explained before others would understand. They are still relevant today because language is part of our culture. We cannot just throw our dialect away.”*

4.2.3 Results from respondents of Ho-Dome

Respondent “I” noted in the interview that, *“Idiomatic expressions are very old expressions which are explained to a non-native before they understand. Idiomatic expressions are still important today as they are used to conceal vital information from foreigners.”*

Respondent “J” mentioned that, *“An idiomatic expression is an utterance, when used, in most cases; the user must explain it before the listener understands it. The people of Ho use idiomatic expressions to hide vital information, secrets and issues from a stranger.”*

Respondent “K” also averred that, *“An idiomatic expression is a phrase, when used, some of the people who are around do not understand unless the speaker explains it. It is necessary that we use them so that the youth would know that such expressions have been used by our forefathers. Again, we must use them so that the youth can learn from us.”*

Respondent “L” pointed out that, *“An idiom is an expression that has a deep meaning intended to hide information from others so that only a few people around would understand. The use of idiomatic expressions is, therefore, relevant today. They are used to keep secrets.”*

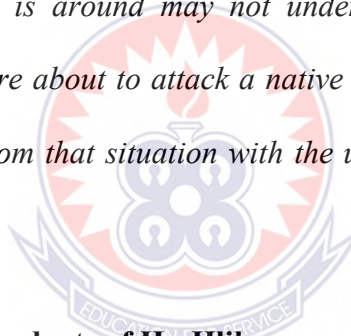
4.2.4 Results from respondents of Ho-Heve

Respondent “M” stated that, *“An idiomatic expression is a peculiar expression; an expression with a hidden meaning used to hide information. The people of Ho use idiomatic expressions to hide information from strangers.”*

Respondent “N” confirmed in the interview that, *“Idiomatic expressions are symbolic phrases that are used in conversation with others. They are still relevant to us the people of Ho today. When they are used for a native of Ho, they understand and act on it, but an outsider does not understand.”*

Respondent “O” explained that, *“An idiom is an expression that is different from plain, everyday language. It is used to communicate a secret to natives when strangers are around, and that is its relevance in language usage to the people of Ho.”*

Respondent “P” affirmed that, *“An idiomatic expression is a kind of expression, when spoken, a stranger who is around may not understand. It is still relevant today because when enemies are about to attack a native without his or her knowledge, he or she could be saved from that situation with the use of an idiomatic expression by another native.”*



4.2.5 Results from respondents of Ho-Hliha

Respondent “Q” said, *“An idiomatic expression is an expression used by natives that strangers do not understand, hence it is used to hide information from non-natives.”*

Respondent “R” noted that, *“An idiomatic expression is a twisted expression which people who have not heard it before find difficult to understand. The expression may even sound foreign to them but it is the same dialect. Idiomatic expressions are very relevant in our use of language today, for instance, when calamity is about to befall a native anywhere, an idiomatic expression can be used for the person to quickly leave the place to escape tragedy. Idiomatic expressions are also used to conceal information from aliens.”*

Respondent “S” said, *“An idiomatic expression is a proverbial language that a stranger does not understand. One of its importance in our use of language today is that it shows one’s true identity. It is also necessary for us to use idiomatic expressions in these modern times in order to preserve the undiluted Ho dialect.”*

Respondent “T” also from Ho-Hliha said, *“An idiomatic expression is a kind of slang or jargon used mostly by ruffians to communicate. It is necessary to use idiomatic expression in the Ho dialect today. This is because when a stranger is among us and we do not want him to understand what we are saying, we can use idiomatic expression.”*

Research Question 2: To what extent do the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect and what is the implication for the future?

The data presented under this question examines the perception of adult respondents in the five communities in Ho on the extent to which Ho youth in the Volta Region of Ghana use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect.

4.2.6 Results from respondents of Ho-Ahoe

Respondent “A” in the interview stated that, *“The use of idiomatic expressions is not common amongst the youth of Ho these days. This is due to frequent travels. They learn other languages and speak them more fluently. Only a few of them stay with the elderly and learn to speak the dialect. Some also have made their minds to not speak the dialect, especially students. Others also do not ask for the meaning of idiomatic expressions when they do not understand. The youth are shy to use the native language. As a result, the true undiluted Ho dialect will vanish in the future.”*

Respondent “B” mentioned that, *“The youth of Ho do not use idiomatic expressions at all in communicating with others in the Ho dialect. The period in which they are born is one of the causes of their inability to use idiomatic expressions. Secondly, they do not have time and patience for their parents to teach them. Most of them also go to school outside their local environment. Even when idiomatic expressions are used for them and they do not understand, they do not ask for explanation. They do not seem to have the desire to learn and use idiomatic expressions. The implication is that, after the elderly are gone; idiomatic expressions will be lost in the dialect and something new may replace them. The youth will use language according to what they will grow to meet.”*

Respondent “C” also from Ho-Ahoo answered and said, *“The youth do not use idiomatic expressions in their speech in the native language as they do not know what they are. They do not also have the experience to use them. Moreover too, they do not relate well with the elderly in the community in order to learn from them. In effect, our cherished idiomatic expressions are gradually dying out of the Ho dialect.”*

Respondent “D” also noted in the interview that, *“The youth of today do not use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect, and this results from the fact that the aged are no more communicating it with them. As a result we are losing the dialect, especially the figurative aspect. The dialect may completely vanish in future.”*

4.2.7 Results from respondents of Ho-Bankoe

Respondent “E” declared that, *“The youth of today do not show respect to their parents. They do not also use idiomatic expressions at all. They do not even want to speak the Ho dialect; they rather prefer to speak other languages like Akan and Ga. We Ewes, whenever we travel out of the region, we learn other languages and throw*

away our own, thinking we are doing something great. We mix our language with the English language and as a result, we do not even know what we are saying anymore.”

Respondent “F” in reply said, *“Nowadays idiomatic expressions are gradually fading away from the Ho dialect because the youth are learning to speak other languages like Akan and Ga. As a result, we are losing our dialect. We are finished because if something is not done about the situation, we will completely lose the dialect in the future.”*

Respondent “G” also said, *“These days I do not hear our youth use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect. When we try to teach them and also use idiomatic expressions to communicate with them, they say our time has passed and that the use of idiomatic expressions belongs to the past. They say they are in the computer age and that idiomatic expressions are archaic. One day our dialect will be completely gone because we have now taken the English language as our language.”*

Respondent “H” affirmed in the interview that, *“Just as students learn from their teachers in the formal classroom, we also learned idiomatic expressions from the elderly and our parents in the past but in informal situations. Now, majority of our elderly people are dead and the youth did not learn much from them before their demise. Our youth, therefore, no more use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect these days. This situation has created a gap.”*

4.2.8 Results from respondents of Ho-Dome

Respondent “I” stated that, *“The youth of Ho do not use idiomatic expressions because they consider them as outdated. They, therefore, do not consider idiomatic*

expressions relevant in the use of language these days. If the trend remains the same, it will lead to retrogression in the growth of the dialect.”

Respondent “J” also averred that, *“The youth do not use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect at all because they do not know it. You would only worry yourself if you try to use it for them. We used to accompany our parents to farm when we were young. During those times it was easy for us to learn from them. These days, however, some of the youth take to smoking cannabis, and as a result, they do not respect their parents. They do not draw close to their parents to learn from them. The consequence of their action is that the dialect will not grow and their oral communication will not make others learn from them and be wise in speech.”*

Respondent “K” from Ho-Dome indicated that, *“The youth of Ho do not use idiomatic expressions because they do not even know there is something like that. It is also because we the adults are not using it for them, or we are not teaching them. Another reason why they do not use it is that they say they are in modern times and when we attempt teaching them they say we are primitive and that our eyes are not „open“. But when we adults alone meet, we use idiomatic expressions amongst ourselves.”*

Respondent “L” in response said, *“The youth of Ho use idiomatic expressions these days but not as much as is expected of them. The reason is that they have now switched to the use of the English language most of the time. Even those youth who cannot speak the Queen’s English often resort to the use of „broken“ or Pidgin English due to the proliferation of Nigerian films in Ghana. It is rather lamentable that we are not paying serious attention to our language these days. We have so much copied the white man that we are losing our own native language. It is regrettable that we do not care much about our own dialect but have stuck to the use of foreign*

languages. The UK, Germany, China, Spain and Japan are some of the countries that have their own native language as their official language. These countries are developed. One of the factors that are responsible for their development is the use of their own native language. I do not know why we are shy of our own dialect. In some homes in Ho today, it is the English language that they speak to the children. Our children see the English and Akan languages as more important than their own native God-given language. They therefore shy away from speaking it. In our junior high schools, students who speak the local language on the school compound are punished and tagged with placards for doing so. This act is scaring away our children from learning and speaking their own indigenous language. Our curriculum developers are, therefore, partly to blame for not paying enough attention to the development of the local language.”

4.2.9 Results from respondent of Ho-Heve

Respondent “M” confirmed that, *“The youth of Ho today do not know idiomatic expressions. This is because they do not listen to their parents in order to learn from them. They also do not respect their parents and so their parents also do not teach them. Moreover, they do not stay at home. They are always roaming about, especially the boys. Our lifestyles these days are also responsible for the loss of some of our customs and traditions. Idiomatic expressions are one of such. The future is bleak with respect to the use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect.”*

Respondent “N” in reply to the question said that, *“Young people do not use idiomatic expressions these days. The youth of today are disrespectful to their parents and the elderly. They also do not come close to their parents to even listen to what they have to say. They speak whatever language that they like. Moreover, they do not attend*

gatherings. Even when they are asked to come to meetings and gatherings, they do not come. It is at those gatherings that they can also learn idiomatic expressions from the adults. As a result, they mix up the dialect with other languages. The implication of their behaviour is that the dialect may fizzle out in future after the elderly are gone.”

Respondent “O” indicated that, *“Our boys and girls these days no more use idiomatic expression in the Ho dialect at all. They are impolite and as a result they do not come close to adults for advice and to learn idiomatic expression from them. They are wayward. They refer to the use of idiomatic expressions as belonging to the past. The implication is that idiomatic expressions will be lost in the dialect after the adults are gone with their wisdom. We may also lose our identity as the people of Ho.”*

Respondent “P” from Ho-Heve admitted that, *“The youth of Ho do not use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect nowadays because they show disrespect to adults and hence cannot draw closer to them in order to learn from them. They also consider adults as old-fashioned and idiomatic expressions as archaic. Christianity also makes them to think that learning these things is fetish. The future of the dialect in terms of the use of idiomatic expressions is bleak as a result. The dialect may die out.”*

4.2.10 Results from respondents of Ho-Hliha

Respondent “Q” averred in the interview that, *“Ho youth do not use idiomatic expressions in their communication in the dialect. The youth are accessing formal education and are now learning different things. They are also learning different languages and, therefore, there is no need for them to learn and use idiomatic expressions in their native language.”*

Respondent “R” from Ho-Hliha also observed that, *“The young ones do not use idiomatic expressions these days. This is because we the adults rarely use idiomatic expressions these days for them to learn from us. Also, the elderly ones who were good at it have passed away. Formal education is also responsible for the youth’s inability to use idiomatic expressions. When idiomatic expressions are used to communicate with the youth these days, they laugh the user to scorn because they regard such expressions as archaic. They cannot speak the dialect without mixing it with other languages. In effect, the dialect is losing its richness and vividness. And this will be a worry to them in the future.”*

Respondent “S” responded and said, *“The youth of Ho do not speak the Ho dialect anymore. In cities, the use of idiomatic expressions is not common. Ho has now assumed a cosmopolitan status; therefore the use of idiomatic expressions in the native language is rare. The indigenes are now mixed up with people from other ethnic groups. This makes the indigenes to use the language that people would quickly understand. This worries me a lot. The consequence is that we are throwing away our own dialect. You would never go to Kumasi and hear them greet and say „Good morning“. They always use their dialect.”*

Respondent “T” from Ho-Hliha also opined that, *“The youth of Ho do not know idiomatic expressions. They do not also understand them. The reason why they do not use them is that they did not learn them. Teachers, who used to teach them in schools, also no more teach them. People, who did not have formal education, learned them through non-formal education programme which was organised sometime in the past. Formerly there was also a book called “Primer” which was used to teach and learn idiomatic expressions and proverbs. Now all these things have fizzled out. The*

implication of Ho youth not speaking their native language is that they are lost; they have lost their identity. If they refuse to use their own dialect, it is up to them.”

Research Question 3: How can the youth of Ho improve on their use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect?

The data presented under this question examines the perception of adult respondents in the five communities of Ho on the ways that the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana can improve on their use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect.

4.2.11 Results from respondents of Ho-Ahoe

Respondent “A” in the interview said, *“For the Ho dialect, and for that matter idiomatic expression, not to die out in future, we need to begin doing something about it from the formal classroom. Ewe teachers themselves are no more speaking the language well. They do not also teach idiomatic expressions; therefore, the students are not learning it from them. I suggest that the teachers themselves learn the native language well in order to be able to teach the students too. Parents should also speak the dialect to their children at home. They should let the children know that the Ho dialect and for that matter the Ewe language is a very important language. They should always encourage them to speak it most of the time.”*

Respondent “B” in reply mentioned that, *“We need to teach the youth so that they can also transmit it to their children in the future.”*

Respondent “C” also affirmed in the interview that, *“We need to bring the youth closer to ourselves and give them education on the importance of speaking one’s dialect. We must also explain to them the importance of idiomatic expressions in the*

use of language as well as teach them how to use idiomatic expressions in their right context.”

Respondent “D” proposed in the interview that, *“It is necessary that our teachers teach our children idiomatic expressions that are in the dialect and how to use them so that they can also learn to use them in communication. In addition, our elders should also use it in their speech so that our children who do not have formal education can learn from them. Parents also have a part to play.”*

4.2.12 Result from respondent of Ho-Bankoe

Respondent “E” advised that, *“We need to do something urgent about the situation. We need to do something that would turn the heart of the youth towards the speaking of the native language so that it shall well with them in the future. We must teach them the native language, especially those of them who are ready to listen, so that they can learn it. And if they learn it, it will help them in their future.”*

Respondent “F” also recommended that, *“More time should be allocated to the teaching of the Ewe language in our schools. Those youth who are not in school should also stop roaming about unnecessarily and stay at home so that their parents can teach them. They should also respect their parents and elders so that they would also be willing to teach them.”*

Respondent “G” advocated that, *“We need to be speaking the dialect to the youth so that those who listen can learn and benefit from it. Teachers should also teach idiomatic expressions in the formal classroom. They should attach as much importance to the teaching of the Ewe language as they do the English language and Mathematics because the Ewe language is an important asset to us as a people. Those*

youth who are not in school can also learn from their parents at home. Our elders and traditional leaders should try and educate them as well on the importance of idiomatic expressions in the use of language. They should also let the youth know that their own native language is an asset that must not be thrown away. They can also learn idiomatic expressions from churches through sermons.”

Respondent “H” said, *“Our teachers and scholars of the language should do more research on idiomatic expressions and come out with findings that will help our youth.”*

4.2.13 Results from respondents of Ho-Dome

Respondent “I” said, *“The refusal or the inability of Ho youth to use idiomatic expressions in their communication is tantamount to backwardness. It is bad that they do not know it. They should be made to learn it. We the adults must do something about the situation. We need to talk to them to see to it that the use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect does not end or stop with them.”*

Respondent “J” suggested that, *“Elderly people can call the youth in their area together and educate them on the importance of idiomatic expressions in the use of language. Teachers should also teach it in our various schools.”*

Respondent “K” answered and said, *“We need to put a plan in place to organise meetings for the youth where we the adults can educate them on the use of idiomatic expressions so that we can preserve them in the dialect.”*

Respondent “L” indicated that, *“In the past our youth were trained with our oral literature forms such as folktale, riddles, parables, poetry, legends and idioms from which they learned the rich artistic aspects of the dialect. All these things are fizzling out from the system. We need to go back and pick all these valuable assets of the dialect and learn them all over again. We must not give our greatest focus to a foreign language to the neglect of our own. Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, if you are caught using English in the office or workplace, you would be reprimanded and told to express yourself in the Yoruba language. If we can also do that as Ewes, it would help us greatly. Also, the language should be taught again from the primary school level. The youth who do not have access to formal education can learn it from radio programmes tailored towards them. They can also run programmes on story-telling (folktales) and other oral literature forms on the radio which the youth can tune to and listen. Another problem that needs to be addressed concerning the youth is the unrestrained use or addiction to the mobile phone. If something can be done to restrict its use, it would be of great help to the youth.”*

4.2.14 Results from respondents of Ho-Heve

Respondent “M” stated that, *“Opinion leaders should put a plan in place to be meeting the youth from time to time and sensitizing them on the importance and use of the dialect. They must let them know that idiomatic expressions are one of the things that they must not allow to die out of the Ho dialect.”*

Respondent “N” said, *“We plead with our chiefs and elders in the community to call and advise the youth to be drawing closer to adults so that they can learn from them. If the chiefs and elders call them but they refuse, respectable youth leaders should be called upon to convince them. Some of the youth also think that some of the meetings*

with elders and practices are fetish and so churches should organise meetings where traditional leaders can come and educate the youth in the church”.

Respondent “O” also said, *“The youth should be called together by the chief and educated on idiomatic expressions and their importance in the use of language. Books should also be written on idiomatic expressions from which the youth can learn”.*

Respondent “P” opined that, *“The youth should humble themselves under elderly people and not refer to them as old-fashioned so that they can also teach them. We need to invite our youths to gatherings and ceremonies where they can learn about idiomatic expressions.”*

4.2.15 Results from respondents of Ho-Hliha

Respondent “Q” contended that, *“There is no need for the use of idiomatic expressions in oral communication these days.”*

Respondent “R” mentioned that, *“It is necessary for the youth to learn idiomatic expressions and be able to use them in the Ho dialect so that the dialect would not be extinct. They can learn it from their parents. They can also learn it from school.”*

Respondent “S” in response said, *“Learning to speak the dialect, and for that matter idiomatic expression, should begin from childhood. This is because right from childhood parents and teachers start teaching the children the English language to the neglect of the native language. This has made them to think that perhaps the Ewe language is inferior to the English language. Another problem is that the people who trained as Ewe language teachers are very few. It is surprising that the universities that are in the region also do not run courses in Ewe but do so in English and French.*

It is a fact that majority of our youth cannot read the Ewe language. Something must be done about the situation. Teachers of the language should have patience in teaching the young ones. They should not teach the language with cane in hand; this would scare them away from learning and acquiring the language.”

Respondent “T” suggested that, *“The youth should be trained so that they can acquire and use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect. If they refuse to come closer to elderly people and ask them questions, they would not be able to learn from them. Teachers should be made to teach the Ewe language the more in our schools. Non-formal education programmes should be reintroduced so that those youth without formal education can attend.”*

4.3 Discussion of Interview

Research Question 1: How relevant are idiomatic expressions in the use of language in the 21st century?

Majority of the respondents generally shared the view that idiomatic expressions are still relevant in the use of language in the 21st century. According to them, when the indigenes of a speech community use idiomatic expressions in their native language to communicate, it shows their true identity. They also indicate that the use of such figurative expressions enrich the language and make it interesting to listen to, thereby eliminating the boredom and stress of plain, everyday use of language. They added that a people begin to lose their identity when they shy away from the use of their own dialect.

The respondents also indicated that idiomatic expressions are still significant in the use of language today in order to hide secrets from others. According to the

participants, there are some secrets that non-natives need not know concerning the history of the indigenous people. Only the indigenes must be privy to such secrets or information. Therefore, anytime there is a conversation concerning such issues in the presence of strangers, the indigenous people resort to the use of idiomatic expressions to conceal vital information from them. The respondents again averred that it is very necessary to switch from the plain grammatical use of language to the use of idiomatic expressions in order to hide some information from children and other people who such information does not concern. According to the interviewees, the culture of Ho people does not allow children to be privy to some information especially with regards to issues concerning sex. Therefore, when children and for that matter the youth are around when such issues are being discussed among adults, they switch to the use of idiomatic expressions. They do this in order to prevent the young ones from becoming morally corrupt. Another reason the respondents adduced for the relevance or importance of the use of idiomatic expressions in language in modern times is that, it helps to preserve the originality of the language or dialect. They mentioned the fact that the daily use of the native language full of idiomatic expressions helps to prevent the dialect from being diluted, making it a kind of hybrid. They claimed that the youth of today find it difficult these days to speak the Ho dialect without mixing it with any other language, thereby missing out on some vital aspects of the dialect, especially idiomatic expressions.

Moreover, the participants noted that idiomatic expressions are relevant in the use of language because language is part of culture and that their culture must not be thrown away; they must maintain and preserve it for the future generation. Another school of thought expressed by the participants is that idiomatic expressions are necessary in our daily communication nowadays, because when idiomatic expressions are used

especially by adults, children as well as the youth would know that there are such expressions used by their forefathers in the dialect in the past so that they can also learn to use them and by so doing the dialect would not die out one day even as it faces a stiff competition from other languages like English, French, Twi and Ga.

Again, the respondents maintained that idiomatic expressions are very key in the use of language as they were and can still be used to warn a native of an impending danger. According to the interviewees, in the past when there were inter-tribal wars, idiomatic expressions were used to communicate to indigenes that were in danger of being captured and killed by enemies to escape. Likewise, in case of imminent armed robbery attack and any other form of attack, idiomatic expressions were and could be used for indigenes that are likely to fall victim to such attacks to escape.

In addition, respondents asserted that the use of idiomatic expressions, especially in oral communication, is necessary in this 21st century as well as in the future. They observed that when idiomatic expressions are used in communicating with people in the native language, it makes them think deep thereby making them learn to speak with wisdom. They also affirmed that idiomatic expressions are also used to soften the hurtful effect of insults on those they are used for.

However, some respondents differ in their observation and perception on the use of idiomatic expressions in language in this 21st century. They pointed out that such expressions were used in the past due to situations such as war and wanton ritual killings, but now such situations or occurrences are very rare and so the use of idiomatic expressions nowadays is not necessary.

Research Question 2: To what extent do the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect and what are the future implications?

Majority of the respondents, who postulated that the youth of Ho do not utilize the rich asset of idiomatic expressions in their oral communication, put forward a number of reasons for their assertion. One of such reasons is that, some of the youth travel out of their local communities to other parts of the country for several reasons. Unlike the olden days when the main occupation was farming whereby the youth stayed with their parents and engaged in peasant farming, the youth now leave their communities to look for job opportunities in cities like Accra and Kumasi. Even though there is still are opportunities for some of them to stay home and engage in agriculture and other occupations, they do not seem to be interested in such activities. They prefer migrating to the cities to look for white-collar jobs. And as they move to stay in those cities for a long time, they learn the culture of the people including their language. As a result, some of them forget their own language and speak the newly acquired ones that they have learnt in order to fit into that society. The respondents also observed that whenever the youth of Ho and for that matter Ewe youth find themselves among other ethnic groups, they tend to learn the language of that ethnic group at the expense of their own native language. Even when they happen to meet other Ewes in those places, they pretend not to understand the Ewe language anymore. When they eventually visit home, they find it difficult communicating in their own native language.

Another reason cited by the respondents as to why the youth of Ho do not incorporate idiomatic expressions in their speech is the increase in formal education. They indicated that most of the youth access formal education outside their local

communities. Some attend school in Kumasi, Accra, Cape Coast, Winneba, Tamale and other big cities where only English, Ga, Twi, Fante, Dagbanli and other languages are spoken. These youth (students) are left with no other option than to choose to learn those languages in order not to feel odd among their peers. By so doing, the Ho dialect and for that matter the Ewe language is discarded by the youth. According to the respondents, when some of such youth visit home during vacation, the best they can do in speaking the native language is to frequently mix it with words from the new languages they have learnt.

Another idea expressed by some of the respondents is that some of the youth have made up their minds not to speak the Ho dialect at all. They just decided to learn other languages and speak them fluently with their peers. This is because they feel shy speaking the dialect. According to the interviewees, only a few of the youth stay with elders to learn from them. Others also do not bother to ask for explanation when they do not understand idiomatic expressions used for them.

Some of the participants also disclosed that the period in which the youth are born now is responsible for their inability to be conversant with the use of idiomatic expressions in the dialect. They added that the youth are born in the era of technology and so they are very much concerned with the issues of technology. As a result, they do not seem to have the desire to learn and use idiomatic expressions in their speech. The implication, according to the interviewee, is that after the elderly are gone, idiomatic expressions and other figurative expressions will eventually fizzle out from the language. In effect, the Ho dialect may lose its originality and eventually die out if the situation is not reversed. But they quickly added that, maybe in the future

something new may come up to replace the use of idiomatic expressions and the youth in the future may use language according to what they will grow to meet.

Another school of thought expressed by some of the respondents is that the youth of Ho are not familiar with idiomatic expressions and as a result they do not know how useful they are in the use of language. According to the respondents, Ho youth find it difficult to understand idiomatic expressions used for them and therefore they also find it difficult using them in speech. If an adult tries to teach them or use it for them, they would only worry themselves because the youth are not ready for it. Consequently, they do not have the experience to use idiomatic expressions. This is also because they do not relate well with the elderly in the community in order to learn from them. They do not also respect their parents whereby they can learn from them. This is also because some of them have taken to the smoking of cannabis. According to the respondents, the adults in the various communities are also not playing their role of communicating with the youth in idioms. As a result, they are gradually losing the Ho dialect to other languages.

It was also noted by the respondents that the youth do not know how to use idiomatic expressions but whenever the adults try to train them to be able use them and other figurative expressions well in speech, they refer to such adults as being old-fashioned. They say they are in the computer age and that idiomatic expressions are now archaic. They do not consider idiomatic expressions as relevant in the use of language these days. They have taken to speaking the English language and soon the Ho dialect would be gone. Respondents also revealed that, just as students learn in the formal classroom today, they also learnt idiomatic expressions in their youthful days in the past through conversations with their parents and the elderly in the community in

informal situations. However, majority of such elderly people are now dead. The youth did not learn from them before their demise. This has created a gap. The youth therefore do not use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect these days. According to the respondents, if the trend continues, whilst other languages are developing by the day, the Ho dialect and for that matter the Ewe language would keep retrogressing.

It was also emphasised by the respondents that the youth of Ho lag in the use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect simply due to the fact that they do not attend community gatherings where such expressions are used during ceremonies. The respondents said that it is during such gatherings that the rich customs of the community are displayed and the youth can learn so much from such meetings. According to the respondents, the increase in Christianity also makes them to think that attending such meetings and practising what is taught over there is fetish.

Another reason adduced for the youth not using idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect is that Ho has now assumed a cosmopolitan status. People from different ethnic backgrounds have come to settle in the city alongside the indigenes. This is responsible for the use of the English language most of the time to communicate with the strangers. Some of the respondents said they find it rather disheartening to hear natives of Ho speak other languages like Twi, Ga and French with non-natives but who do not want to speak their own dialect. They lamented that the natives do not value their own dialect as much as they do other languages such as English, Twi, Ga and French. The implication, according to them, is that they are throwing away their own dialect which marks their identity and embracing others. They added that one would never go to Kumasi and hear the indigenes there greet each other in English, “Good morning”. They always use their own dialect.

One of the respondents, however, averred that the youth of Ho use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect these days but not as much as they used to do in the past. He indicated that the Ho youth of today have switched to the use of the English language most of the time perhaps due to the advancement of formal education. The respondent also noted that those who cannot speak the Queen's English due to lack of or little formal education even tend to use pidgin or broken English. According to this respondent, this results from the proliferation of Nigerian films in Ghana. He pointed out that these youth learn the broken or Pidgin English from the Nigerian films that they watch. He lamented that nothing is being done about the situation, which shows that serious attention is not being paid to the Ho dialect and for that matter the Ewe language these days. He said the people of Ho and for that matter Ewes have so much copied the culture of the Whiteman and those of their neighbours such as the Akans and Nigerians that they are throwing theirs away. As a result they are losing their own dialect or language. He said it is regrettable that the people of Ho do not care much about the use of idiomatic expressions in communicating in the Ho dialect. He said perhaps the people are shy of speaking their own God-given dialect. He confirmed that it is the English language that is being used at home by most parents in communicating with their children in Ho these days. In some schools in Ho, instructions are put up at vantage points that indicate that, no student should speak the vernacular (Ho dialect). The participant again pointed out that students who are caught speaking the Ho dialect or the Ewe language in some of their Junior High Schools are punished for doing that. He added that such students are also tagged with placards. According to this interviewee, all these situations make their children and the youth to think that perhaps the English language and other languages like Akan, Ga and French are better than the Ho dialect and the Ewe language. He also blamed the curriculum

developers for not paying much attention to the development of the native language especially at the basic and senior high school levels.

A participant who also admitted that the Ho youth of today do not use idiomatic expressions at all in communicating in the Ho dialect said she thinks it is not necessary or mandatory for the youth to use idiomatic expressions in the dialect in modern times. This respondent cited the increase in formal education and much learning as the reason for her assertion. It was moreover noted by this interviewee that the youth are learning different languages due to their frequent travels and schooling away from home therefore they do not necessarily have to use idiomatic expressions in the native language.

Research Question 3: How can the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana improve on their use of idiomatic expression in the Ho dialect?

The respondents suggested that more serious attention should be given to the teaching of the Ewe language whose variety is the Ho dialect. They also indicated that the Ewe language teachers should be well trained in the teaching of the language so that they can teach it well. According to the respondents, learning the Ho dialect should begin from childhood. Right from the kindergarten through the primary school, junior high school and senior high school, more seriousness should be attached to the teaching of the Ewe language. The interviewees also proposed that the teachers should not just teach the language as a subject in the classroom but should also speak it with the students. They said apart from teaching the language generally, the teachers should also pay particular attention to the teaching of idiomatic expressions and how to use them in the right context so that the students who constitute the youth group in the society can also learn to use them in communication. The respondents again stated

that students should not be scared with the cane in the process of teaching the language but rather encouraged as well as educated on the importance of the Ewe language and for that matter the Ho dialect. According to them, punishment would further push away the students from learning the language. They therefore advised that the teachers should have patience for the young ones as they teach them the language. They should not assume that the students already know how to speak the language.

Some of the participants also noted that parents play a very important part in language development of children and should therefore train their children to speak the Ho dialect. They should speak the dialect at home with the children most of the time so that they can easily acquire it and also be able to speak it with a native-like accent. By so doing they would unconsciously learn to use idiomatic expressions in the dialect as well. They then advised that parents should reduce the use of English and other languages in the home. Moreover, the respondents said parents should encourage their children to speak the Ho dialect as well as educate them on the importance of the dialect. The interviewees also advocated that parents should sensitize their wards to realise that language is a very important asset that needs to be transmitted to future generations so that the youth can be aware of their responsibility of preserving the language by speaking and transmitting it to posterity.

Another group of respondents disclosed from the interview that the adults in the various communities also have a role to play. They need to draw the youth closer to themselves and educate them on the importance of speaking one's dialect. They should also sensitize the youth on the importance of the use of idiomatic expressions in their native language.

A number of the respondents said, most of the youth of Ho have attitude problem. They explained that the youth have a wrong attitude towards the Ho dialect and recommended that their attitude should be worked on. They added that something urgent would have to be done in order to turn the heart of the youth towards the dialect so that the dialect can stand the test of time. This, they say, can be done by deliberately calling them occasionally and consistently and sensitizing them on the dialect.

Other respondents also suggested that more time should be allotted to the teaching of the local language in the schools. They justified their assertion by saying that when more time is allocated to the teaching of the local language, it would indicate the importance they would be attaching to the language plus the students would have more time to practise in order to become more conversant with the language. In addition, the respondent indicated that there is a general misconception among the populace that the indigenes already know how to speak their own dialect and therefore need no tuition again in it. This, they say, is also responsible for the lax in the teaching of the local language. They propose a massive overhaul in the attitude of the people to reverse the situation and to save the future of the Ho dialect and for that matter the Ewe language.

The respondents also advocated that the youth who are not in school and who show disrespect to their parents should be called by the chiefs and elders of the various communities and talked to so that they can change their attitude. The participants admitted that this would be a daunting task that should not be carried out only once or twice but done regularly and deliberately in order to make the right impact. They

again opined that, considering the challenges of the modern times, the community leaders need to adopt some innovative ways of winning the youth to their side.

The participants again argued that in the past the youth were trained in oral literature forms from which they learnt and acquired so much knowledge and wisdom especially in the use of the Ho dialect and for that matter the Ewe language. They mentioned some of these oral literature forms as idioms, folktales, riddles, parables, poetry, legends and proverbs. They insisted that through the training of the people in these oral traditions in the past, they learnt and acquired the rich artistic aspects of the language. They added that through the engagement in activities like the telling of stories by the fire side in the evenings after the day's work, they relaxed and entertained themselves. These stories were also replete with proverbs, idioms and other literary forms which both the young and the old unconsciously imbibed. The interviewees lamented that these very valuable aspects of their culture which helped to entertain and mould the youth in the past have been taken over by foreign practices that are destroying the moral fibre of the youth. They mentioned modern technology as a contributing factor to the youth's inability and refusal to appreciate and practise their own culture. They said, compared to modern ways of entertainment today, oral literature entertained as well as taught the youth moral lessons in the past. According to them, the youth rather learn and practise vice through the use of the internet by watching pornographic and other unsavoury sites. They therefore expressed the need for the people of Ho to go back and pick those valuable assets of the dialect and learn them all over again. They said the greatest focus of the people should not be on use of the foreign language to the utmost neglect of their own. They then made a quick reference to the Yoruba, an ethnic group in Nigeria which is another West African country. They said, among the Yoruba, everyone is encouraged to use the Yoruba

language in communicating to one another, even in offices and workplaces. According to the respondents, any Yoruba who is caught speaking English in the office or at the workplace is reprimanded for doing so. The person is then asked to re-express themselves in Yoruba. They also cited the Ashantis as speaking their dialect often wherever they find themselves. They postulated that the people of Ho should emulate the Yoruba and Ashanti example or even surpass it in order to reverse the current negative trend. They also proposed that well packaged and entertaining programmes that incorporate folktales and other forms of oral literary genres should be run on radio and television to whip up interest in the youth.

Most of the respondents noted that the youth were polite to their parents and the elderly in the past and as a result, the latter were also ready to teach them as well as help them in all aspects of life. The reverse is the case these days. The youth of today are disrespectful to their parents and the elderly and as a result, they do not draw closer to the elderly in order to learn from them. The situation has created a yawning gap between the two. The respondents therefore advised that the youth especially those in Ho should begin to show respect to the elderly so that they would also be ready to teach the youth hidden things that they are supposed to know.

It was also suggested by the respondents that non-formal education which was being organised by the Non-formal Division of the Ministry of Education should be revived. They said the programme was organised for adults who could not access formal education when they were young. They averred that the reintroduction of the programme, now for the youth, would help in educating the youth who also did not have formal education. According to them, some of the youth are roaming about aimlessly and this programme would facilitate a better way of organising them and

teaching them to acquire skills including language skills in order for them to function in society. They said some kind of motivation should be given them and this would definitely catch their attention and occupy them thereby preventing them from engaging in vices such as smoking cannabis.

Participants as well mentioned the importance of reading in the learning and acquisition of knowledge and for that matter language. They revealed that language and idioms are inseparable therefore as people learn and acquire language, they also definitely should learn and use idioms in the language. They thus proposed that more books should be published in the Ewe language in addition to the few that are in the system so that the youth especially those who are literate can read and learn since there is a saying that, “Reading is learning”. Those youth who cannot read as a result of lack of formal education should also be taught reading at the non-formal education programme to be organised for them. They, however, posited that the youth lack the interest in reading Ewe books and that they are only interested in reading books that are written in the English language. They recommended that the stakeholders should do all they could to entice and motivate them in a way that would compel them patronise Ewe books even more than they do books written in the English language.

The interviewees once again lauded the importance of the use of one’s native language in communication. They observed that the nations that attach much importance to the development and use of their native language are those that have chalked up steady progress. They mentioned the UK, Germany, China, Spain and Japan as some of the countries that have their own native language as their official language. These countries are developed. One of the factors that are responsible for their development is the use of their own native language in all sectors of their lives.

They also revealed that most of the developing countries are those that are using foreign languages as their official language. They therefore drew a partial correlation between the use of one's own language native language and advancement in the economy of a people. They then concluded that the underdevelopment of Ghana and particularly Ho is due to the neglect of their own native language. They suggested that the native language should be developed in such a way that it can be used as medium of instruction at all educational levels. The respondent ended up once again by accentuating the urgent need for the youth of Ho to be invested with the deep knowledge of their dialect since they are the future custodians of their dialect.

The interviewees finally named the school curriculum developers as being partially responsible for the situation. According to them, curriculum designers, in designing the curriculum, did not apportion enough time for the teaching of the vernacular. They did not also make provision for the local language to be taught as core subject but rather as elective only. They consequently suggested that the educational curriculum be redesigned to favour the teaching of the local language.

4.4 Youth Respondents' Demographics

The background data of youth respondents include the following: sex, age, and work (status). Respondents' background data are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Demographic Data of Youth Respondents

Variable	Respondents	Percentage
Sex: Male	6	50%
Female	6	50%
Age: 17-18	2	16.7%
19-20	2	16.7%
21-22	2	16.7%
23-24	6	50%
Work: Barber	1	8.33%
Dressmaker	1	8.33%
Electrician	1	8.33%
Mob. Money Agents	2	16.7%
Shop assistants	3	5%
Students	4	33.33%

From Table 4.2 above, 50% of the youth respondents were males, 50% were females. It can, therefore, be seen from the table that the number of males equals that of the females. This was to ensure gender parity. The respondents were selected randomly from the various communities in the Ho Township. One (1) of the respondents representing 8.33% of the participants was a Barber; one (1) was a Dressmaker indicating 8.33% of the respondents; one (1) was an Electrician also representing 8.33% of the interviewees; two (2) were Mobile Money Agents representing 16.7% of the total respondents; three (3) were Shop Assistants illustrating 25% of the total number of respondents. Four (4) of the participants also representing 33.33% of the total number were Students. Moreover, the results on the table revealed that two (2) representing 16.7% of the participants were between the ages 17-18 years. Two (2) also indicating 16.7% were between the ages of 19-20 years, two (2) illustrating 16.7% were between the ages of 21-22years, whilst six (6) representing 50% of the respondents were between the ages of 23-24 years. It can be noticed from the table that majority of the respondents were between the ages of 23-24 years.

4.5. Results of Main Responses from the Interview

Research Question 1: How relevant are idiomatic expressions in the use of language in the 21st century?

The data presented under this question examines the perception of youth respondents in five communities of Ho on the relevance or otherwise of idiomatic expressions in the use of language in the 21st century. These five communities include: Ho-Ahoe, Ho-Bankoe, Ho-Dome, Ho-Heve and Ho-Hliha. From the interview conducted, all the respondents freely expressed their views on the issue. A total of twelve (12) respondents were interviewed. The respondents are designated (labeled) with the capital letters of the English alphabet A-L.

Respondent „A“ stated that, *“Idiomatic expressions are very relevant in language use today because they are one of the very treasured expressions our forefathers used to communicate in the past. Throwing away idiomatic expressions from our native language today would mean that we are not growing. It also means we are forgetting our culture. Therefore we need to continue to use them in the dialect.”*

Respondent „B“ indicated that, *“There is the need for the use of idiomatic expressions in oral communication today so that we the youth can also learn how to use them. Maybe a youth may find him or herself in a situation where someone or some people may be planning to harm him or her. In case a native is at the scene and uses an idiomatic expression to alert him or her of the evil intention of the enemies, he or she would understand the idiomatic expression and escape danger. Idiomatic expressions are therefore necessary today.”*

Respondent “C” noted that, *“It is not necessary to use idiomatic expressions in speech nowadays. Because of the way we live our lives today, not everybody understands idiomatic expressions. When idiomatic expressions are used in talking to people, since they don’t understand them, they would have to go and try to find their meaning which wastes time. Another reason why I think idiomatic expressions are no more relevant in the use of language these days is that people don’t even use them in speech today as much as they did in the past. When idiomatic expressions are used in speech these days, children and the youth don’t understand most of them. I also don’t understand most of the idiomatic expressions used in speech.”*

Respondent “D” stated that, *“Idiomatic expressions are still important in language usage these days because there are some secrets that children and other people should not be privy to. Idiomatic expressions are used to conceal such secrets. But because of formal education, we the youth no more use them in the Ho dialect. This is also because we speak English most of the time. Idiomatic expressions are therefore fizzling out very fast from the Ho dialect these days; they are only used by some adults once in a while.”*

Respondent E disclosed that, *“Idiomatic expressions are still relevant in the use of language today. One reason why they are still relevant is that some utterances sound unpleasant so that when people hear them, they feel disgusted or offended. Idiomatic expressions are used in place of such utterances. Adults also use idiomatic expressions to communicate in order to hide some issues from children who are around with them so that the children won’t understand what they are saying. Again, idiomatic expressions are used when drunkards and women who are gossips are around so that they won’t understand what has been said and gossip with it. I would*

therefore say that idiomatic expressions are used to conceal secrets that are not supposed to be exposed to the public or strangers.”

Respondent “F” noted that, *“Idiomatic expressions are still applicable in the use of language nowadays as it helps to perpetuate or promote the culture of the people. Idiomatic expressions are also used to correct wrongdoing in society. When idiomatic expressions are used to correct people who have done something wrong, once they understand the idiomatic expression, they change from their evil ways. The use of idiomatic expressions to communicate with others also promotes peace among people. Also, there are some issues that are not supposed to be said in plain language in public. Idiomatic expressions are used for such issues so that the speaker won’t sound unpleasant and vulgar. Examples of such issues are issues concerning sex, menstruation and the death of a chief or king.”*

Respondent “G” mentioned in the interview that, *“Idiomatic expressions are still very relevant in the use of language nowadays; they play a crucial role in communication. We have a lot of strangers now staying in Ho and one of the ways that we can be identified as the natives of Ho is when we use idiomatic expressions that are in our dialect. Through the use of idiomatic expressions we are also able to identify people and the clan they come from.”*

Respondent “H” concurred that, *“Idiomatic expressions are still crucial in our discourse in these modern times because there are some issues you wouldn’t want some people who are around to be privy of; you would have to use idiomatic expressions to hide such issues from those people. The use of idiomatic expressions in speech also shows our identity as Ewes. Again, the ability to use idiomatic*

expressions in language also shows that a person is wise. It makes a person use language with propriety.”

Respondent “I” affirmed that, *“Idiomatic expressions are still useful in speech these days because there are some issues that cannot be discussed in public in plain words. We must resort to the use of idiomatic expressions in talking about such things in public. Moreover, the Ho dialect is gradually losing its originality therefore we need to revive it. One way of reviving it is to ensure that we consciously and deliberately use idiomatic expressions in our speech.”*

Respondent “J” said, *“I perceive that idiomatic expressions are relevant in language usage in these modern times. Reporting bad news to people in plain language, that may shock them and even cause their demise, demands that we use idiomatic expressions that would soften the effect of the bad news on the people. Also, when in public you can’t just say in plain words to the people around that you are going to toilet; you would have to use an idiomatic expression in order to lessen the disgust it may cause to the listeners. Moreover, when the elderly are discussing an issue that they don’t want children who are around to understand and broadcast it, they’ll use an idiomatic expression that cannot be understood by the children.”*

Respondent “K” acknowledged that, *“Idiomatic expressions are still useful in communication nowadays because it shows that the user is well versed in a language. They are also used so that strangers who are around would not understand what the speaker is saying. Again, when someone uses idiomatic expressions often, such a person is regarded as mature and wise.”*

Respondent “L” also declared that, *“Idiomatic expressions are still applicable in the use of language today as they are used to mask utterances that are vulgar and*

discourteous. There are some issues that children should not be privy to. Idiomatic expressions are used to hide such issues from them. Likewise children are not supposed to say some things in public in plain words. They must resort to the use of idiomatic expressions in saying such things.”

Research Question 2: To what extent do the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect and what are the implications for the future?

Respondent “A” mentioned that, *“Most of the youth do not even know what idiomatic expressions are. That is their first problem. Secondly, they do not communicate with it. Their parents did not teach them. The elderly people in the extended family and in the communities also did not teach them. The elderly persons in the family from whom the youth can learn idiomatic expressions died before they were born. They are therefore not able to learn idiomatic expressions and use them in speech.”*

Respondent “B” intimated that, *“It is necessary that the youth use idiomatic expression in their verbal communication but they do not do it at all. They have not even heard them before. The adults do not use idiomatic expressions in speaking to them and so the only language they understand and speak is the plain language; nothing else. They do not know anything about idiomatic expressions. Their lives are full of disrespect. They do not want to listen to advice. Even when an older person tries to organise them to teach them how to use idiomatic expressions and other rich aspects of the Ho dialect, they insult them and say their time has passed. It is therefore common these days to hear adults say that the youth of today are disrespectful. The youth say they are living their lives according to the time in which they find themselves. They regard technology especially the mobile phone as more*

important than any other thing. They say they are now living in modern times, in the 21st century, and that their eyes are „opæ“. This makes them to lose all that they need to learn and know about idiomatic expressions and other rich aspects of the dialect from the adults.”

Respondent “C” hinted that, *“The youth do not make use of idiomatic expressions in speech these days. This is as a result of their parents not using idiomatic expressions in speaking to them at home. They were not trained and therefore cannot apply what they were not taught. Only very few adults use idiomatic expressions but they use them for their fellow adults, not for children and the youth.”*

Respondent “D” also revealed that, *“It is the responsibility of the youth of Ho to learn idiomatic expressions and communicate with them in the Ho dialect but because of formal education, we the youth no more use them in the native language. This is also because we learn and speak English most of the time. As a result, idiomatic expressions are fast fizzling out of the Ho dialect these days; only very few adults use them once in a while. Socialization which involves the transmission of our culture from generation to generation is also not being done anymore by our elderly people. The Ho dialect is gradually losing its artistic value and if nothing is done about the situation, everything will be gone in the future. And just as tasteless meal cannot be enjoyed, a dialect that loses its artistic ingredients such as idiomatic expressions would be dull to the ear.”*

Respondent “E” replied and said, *“The youth no more use idiomatic expressions in the native language because most of them did not have the opportunity to learn and use them. This results from the fact that their parents started speaking the English language to them from their infancy and so they do not even know the importance of*

the local language. And since they do not speak the native language, they are also not conversant with idiomatic expressions in the dialect. Some of the youth also do not attach the needed importance to the local language. They prefer speaking the English language more than their own native language. They are shy to speak the Ho dialect because they think that those who speak the local dialect fluently more than English are less knowledgeable. Those of them who try to speak it are also not fluent in it; they always mix it with the English language. But it is necessitous for us the youth of Ho to be well-versed in the use of our own indigenous language and also to know and use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect. Becoming conversant with idiomatic expressions in the local language is beneficial to the students of the Ewe language who study the language as a subject as it can help them to write good essays during their examination and also use such idiomatic expressions in their discourse outside the classroom.”

Respondent “F” also averred that, *“The youth are no more using idiomatic expressions these days in the Ho dialect because they regard idiomatic expressions as outmoded. Those of them who are students think that the use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect is for those who did not have formal education. They also do not regard idiomatic expressions as an important aspect of language. If the situation is not reversed, it will have a negative effect on the dialect and on us as a people because idiomatic expressions form an important part of language. We will also lose the important role that idiomatic expressions play in the use of language.”*

Respondent “G” said, *“What I have realised is that idiomatic expressions seem to be dying out of the Ho dialect. I think the youth of Ho use idiomatic expressions in the dialect but not as often as they should use them. This is because the speaking of the*

English language has become the order of the day. Hardly would you hear them speak the local dialect. And when they do, hardly would you hear them use an idiomatic expression. It seems as if they are shy of speaking their own dialect. They prefer speaking other languages to theirs. They do not appreciate what they have.”

Respondent “H” noted that, *“The youth of Ho do not make use of idiomatic expressions in their speech in the Ho dialect. This is because the behaviour of this generation is quite different. The youth of today think that the use of idiomatic expressions in language is a thing of the past. English has become their preferred language. Those who try to speak the Ho dialect or the Ewe frequently mix it with the English language; everything is mixed up. Another reason for which the youth do not use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect is that they are not being taught in school and in the home. Our grandparents and parents do not use idiomatic expressions for us to also learn from them. Maybe they also do not know them. Moreover, the youth do not seem to know the relevance or value of idiomatic expressions in language usage. If we the youth refuse to learn idiomatic expressions from our elders and start using them in order to transmit it to the future generation, it will negatively affect us. The dialect is gradually dying out. Something needs to be done, by all means, about the situation.”*

Respondent “I” observed that, *“In Ho here, I do not think young people use idiomatic expressions in communication because the adults are no more using idiomatic expressions to communicate with them. The topic is also not being taught in school as it used to be. If nothing is done about the situation, the Ho dialect may gradually die out and in the future there will be no dialect called „Hb dialect””.*

Respondent “J” pointed out that, *“Some youth of Ho, very few though, use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect but not as much as they ought to use them. This is because they do not stay with elderly people to learn from them and so they cannot use idiomatic expressions for others to also learn from them. Civilization and lackadaisical attitude towards the use of idiomatic expressions also greatly account for the youth not being well-versed in the use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect. The youth of today do not care much about how they use language; they use language anyhow anywhere they find themselves which is very bad. We, the youth, therefore need to use idiomatic expressions in our speech.”*

Respondent “K” admitted that, *“The youth do not use idiomatic expressions these days. Only adults use them at their meetings and during festive occasions. The youth do not want to associate themselves with adults and therefore do not learn it from them. It is also because they do not attend social gatherings. When adults use idiomatic expressions for the youth, the youth do not understand them and so they are also not able to use such expressions in speech”*.

Respondent “L” confessed that, *“The youth of Ho are no more using idiomatic expressions that much in their speech these days; they do it once a while. The advancement in technology is one of the causes of the youth’s infrequent and inadequate use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect. Nowadays too the youth don’t attend traditional social gatherings where they can learn idiomatic expressions. They rather prefer going to parties and jams.”*

Research question 3: How can the youth of Ho improve on their use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect?

Respondent “A” suggested that, *“They have to start teaching the Ewe language from the kindergarten level in order that the children can start learning the language right from that level so that by the time they get to the junior high school level, they will be well versed in the language. The government in collaboration with our community leaders should organise non-formal education programmes for the youth who have not stepped their foot in the formal classroom before so that they can also learn idiomatic expressions through the study of the language. Apart from that, parents and the elderly in the communities can take the initiative by bringing the youth together and talking to them about how to use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect. If the youth humble themselves for the adults and learn idiomatic expressions from them, they can also use such expressions in their communication. This would show how mature and wise they are.”*

Respondent “B” advised that, *“We the youth need to humble ourselves for the elderly in the community in order that they can teach us the rich aspects of the Ho dialect so that when they are no more, we can take over from them. It is the onerous responsibility of the aged and the various community leaders to also organise the youth and train them in the use of the Ho dialect. Some pastors and other religious leaders who are also well-versed in the use of idiomatic expressions can also educate the youth through their sermons in the various churches and mosques.”*

Respondent “C” noted that, *“There are some youth who are not ready to learn about idiomatic expressions but there are some also who want to be educated on such expressions and how they are used in communication. Therefore if something should*

be done at all to promote the use of idiomatic expressions among the youth of Ho, then I suggest that a special course should be run on it in schools so that those interested can be trained as experts who would also train others. This can continue from generation to generation. Also, children at the kindergarten level are being instructed in the Ho dialect and so idiomatic expressions should be one of the topics so that they can start learning it from that level and continue learning it to the highest level of their education. It will do us good.”

Respondent “D” opined, *“I want to plead with our parents and the elderly in our various communities to communicate with us using the idiomatic expressions that are in the Ho dialect. The teachers in our various schools should also communicate with their students using idiomatic expressions. They should not be speaking only English to us; English is not our language. In our various churches these days too, it is the English language that is mostly used in teaching and preaching sermons. Our pastors should begin to preach in the local dialect in our churches so that through that they can use idiomatic expressions for us to also learn from them.”*

Respondent “E” said, *“I think there are two things that can be done to make the youth to overcome the problem of not using idiomatic expressions in speech. The first one concerns our parents. Parents who studied language to a higher level and know the important part that idiomatic expressions play in the Ho dialect should educate those who are not knowledgeable in the use of idiomatic expressions so that they would also see the need to use idiomatic expressions in their speech as well as educate their children to do same. The second solution is that students who are studying the Ewe language in school should use the opportunity to educate their peers on the significance of idiomatic expressions in language and also train them to use such*

expressions in their speech. This will go a long way to project the local language. This will also help preserve the Ho dialect and prevent it from dying out.”

Respondent “F” recommended that, *“First of all, idiomatic expressions should be included as a topic in the syllabus to be taught in schools. It should not just be included in the syllabus but teaching it should be given the needed priority. Secondly, parents should use idiomatic expressions to communicate with their children at home. Not only that, parents should also make their children aware of the significance of idiomatic expressions in the use of language. They should as well encourage their children to speak the native language and not to shy away from doing so, because most of the youth have the perception that those who speak the native language are villagers and since they do not want to be referred to as villagers, they resort to the use of the English language most of the time at the expense of the native language. In addition, public education should be organised to sensitize the public, especially the youth on the significance and usefulness of idiomatic expressions in communication. When this is done, youth who do not have parents to train them and those also who did not have formal education would have the opportunity to be educated on issues concerning idiomatic expressions.”*

Respondent “G” also gave a suggestion and said, *“In my opinion, we need to call on our language experts to educate the youth so that the dialect will not be lost in the future. Our various community leaders should bring all the youth together and organise public education for them on the value of the Ho dialect and also sensitize them on the importance of idiomatic expressions in the use of language. Through this, the dialect will be enriched and given a boost.”*

Respondent “H” indicated that, *“There are several things that we can do to revive the use of idiomatic expressions in the dialect. Speaking the dialect at home is very necessary because there is a saying that charity begins at home. If our parents begin training us by consciously and deliberately communicating with us in the native language using idiomatic expressions, we will take it from there and build on it in school. Again, if in school teachers can cut down a little on the use of the English language and concentrate a bit more on the Ewe language, it will do us good. If not, it will get to a point where we may not even have teachers who will teach the Ewe language. In most parts of Akan land, they speak their native language most of the time. The situation is different in Ewe land. Only few Ewes speak the undiluted Ewe language; most of them prefer speaking the English language. The youth themselves should also have the yearning to learn from their parents and teachers. Even if only one youth is good at using idiomatic expressions, it can start from him. He should be encouraged to educate others.”*

Respondent “I” also advised that, *“The youth should humble themselves and give respect to their parents and the elderly so that they can learn idiomatic expressions from them. Teachers should also take their time and teach idiomatic expressions to their students as well as speak it to them so that they can also educate other youth who are not good at it. It behoves the elderly and other community leaders to also organise public education for the youth on idiomatic expressions. The youth really need to learn the dialect and speak it so that people will know that our dialect also exists.”*

Respondent “J” said, *“Without idiomatic expressions, the Ho dialect is not complete. We must strive to ensure that idiomatic expressions do not fizzle out of the dialect*

because the Ho dialect is a very important dialect and we should not joke with it at all. Teachers in schools should teach it to their students. The mass media is also one of the mediums through which they can reach out to the youth in terms of educating them on idiomatic expressions. Our parents are also there and they can also educate us on idiomatic expressions by speaking it to us and encouraging us to use them as well so that the dialect will be projected and our wisdom will increase.”

Respondent “K” averred that, *“Ewe is taught in schools but they should intensify the teaching of the language in general and idiomatic expressions specifically. The youth should try and be attending public gatherings so that when the adults are using the expressions, they can learn from them.”*

Respondent “L” advocated that, *“The elderly people in our various communities should do all that they can to draw us closer to them and educate us on the essence of idiomatic expressions in speech. We the youth also ought to draw closer to the elderly and show them respect so that we can learn from them. Idiomatic expressions should be included in the school syllabus so that teachers can teach the students. Parents are the first people from whom children acquire language. Those parents that always speak the English language to their children should be educated on the importance of speaking the native language so that they can switch to that.”*

4.6 Discussion of Interview

Research Question 1: How relevant are idiomatic expressions in the use of language in the 21st century?

From the interview, majority of the respondents indicated that idiomatic expressions are still relevant in the use of language in the 21st century because such expressions are one of the treasured expressions their forefathers used in communicating issues to

others in the past. According to the respondents, if people think that idiomatic expressions are no more relevant today and therefore decide to neglect it, it would mean that they are not making any progress in terms of language growth. They said, what their forefathers have left for them should rather be improved upon but not discarded. They added that discarding idiomatic expressions from the Ho dialect would mean that the people are throwing away their culture and thereby forgetting it. They advised that the people of Ho should continue to cherish and use idiomatic expressions in their speech to perpetrate their culture and also try to improve on it as well. It was also elicited from the respondents in the interview that idiomatic expressions are still relevant in the use of language in these modern times so that the youth who are the future custodians of their dialect can also learn how to use them in speech and transmit them to posterity. They also mentioned another relevance of idiomatic expressions and said they are used to conceal information from strangers and also give information to a native in times of trouble so that they can escape from danger.

The interviewees as well admitted that idiomatic expressions are still applicable in the use of language nowadays because the youth need to acquaint themselves with these expressions so that when the need arises for them to use them; they can do so without any difficulty. They, however, lamented that due to formal education the youth of Ho do not learn to use idiomatic expressions in their native language mainly because they speak the English language most of the time. They observed that only few adults still make use of the figure of speech in the local dialect. In effect, idiomatic expressions are fast diminishing from the Ho dialect.

Some of the participants again concurred that idiomatic expressions are still relevant in the use of language in these contemporary times and explained that there are some utterances that are unpleasant, offensive, disgusting and shocking to the ear when they are said in plain language. They said, idiomatic expressions are used to reduce the negative effects of such utterances. They also mentioned the fact that adults use idiomatic expressions to communicate amongst themselves in order to hide some issues from children who are around with them so that such children would not understand what they are saying. The respondents further noted that idiomatic expressions are used when drunkards and women who are deemed to be gossips are around so that they would not understand the conversation and gossip with it. They mentioned sex, excretion, menstruation and the death of a king as some of the issues that are not supposed to be reported to others in public in plain language and that the speaker must resort to the use of idiomatic expressions in such situations. They summed up their submission on this issue by saying that idiomatic expressions are used to conceal information that is not supposed to be in the public domain.

The respondents once more affirmed that idiomatic expressions are still useful in communication nowadays by citing the reason that when idiomatic expressions are used in speech, it helps to perpetrate or promote the culture of a people. They pointed out that idiomatic expressions are used to correct wrongdoing in society. They explained that when an idiomatic expression is used to comment on the wrongdoing of people in order to try to correct and advise them, if they understand the idiomatic expression used for them, they try to change from their evil ways.

In addition to the above, the participants again postulated that idiomatic expressions play a very crucial role in language usage. The participants said there are lots of

strangers residing in Ho these days and one of the ways in which the natives can maintain their identity is through the use of their own dialect, and by speaking the dialect they should use idiomatic expressions peculiar to the dialect. The respondents also asserted that through the use of idiomatic expressions, the natives of Ho could easily be identified by the particular clan to which they belong.

Another response elicited from the respondents reveals that idiomatic expressions are very vital in human discourse as the ability to use these expressions in the native language marks one as a member of a particular speech community. They again said the use of idiomatic expressions in speech distinguishes one as a wise person and that it also makes one to use language with propriety.

The respondents in the interview again insisted that the use of idiomatic expressions in language is still significant in this 21st century but lamented that the Ho dialect is gradually losing its originality as a result of the people not paying serious attention to the dialect. They, therefore, expressed the need for it to be revived. They said one way by which the dialect could be revived is through the constant use of idiomatic expressions in the dialect.

One of the participants, however, noted that the use of idiomatic expressions is not necessary in contemporary times because of change in the lifestyle of people. This respondent said, not everybody understands idiomatic expressions and when these expressions are used for people, they would then have to do a research to find out the meaning of the expression before acting on it or reacting to it which takes a lot of time. According to this respondent, idiomatic expressions are not necessary these days because people do not even use them again as much as they did in the past. It was also pointed out by this respondent that when idiomatic expressions are used for children

and the youth these days, they do not understand them in order to act on them. It was also deduced from the response that the participant also frantically does not understand idiomatic expressions used in the Ho dialect.

Research Question 2: To what extent do the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect and what are the implications for the future?

In response to the above research question, some of the participants stated that most youth in Ho do not know what idioms are. And since they do not know idioms, they do not use them in speech. These respondents said, their parents, the elderly people in the extended family and the adults in the community do not teach them. They also do not communicate it with them in their speech. According to these participants, some of the youth could not learn it from the elderly people in the family because these elderly people had died before they were born.

The respondents also indicated that it is very necessary for the youth of Ho to use idioms in expressing themselves in the Ho dialect but unfortunately, they do not do so. According to them, most of the youth have not even heard of idioms before, that is, they do not know what they are. The only way they express themselves in the Ho dialect is always through the use of plain language no matter the situation in which they find themselves. They also cited disrespect for elders on the part of the youth as being one of the reasons for which they are not able to learn from their parents and the elderly. They also do not listen to advice from the elderly. They consider the ways of the elderly as old-fashioned. They regard themselves wiser and smarter than the adults. They consider themselves as being in the 21st century where they regard other things like technology as more important than the use of idiomatic expressions in

speech. They said, the youth rather give names to those adults who try to bring them together to educate them on idioms and other rich aspects of the Ho dialect as well as other aspects their culture. They say the time of the elderly has passed. This contemptuous attitude of the youth towards the aged in society has made the elderly to also deliberately shirk their responsibility of socializing the youth. It is common these days to hear the adult say the youth of today are disrespectful. All these make the youth forfeit all that they are supposed to learn and know about idioms.

Another response elicited from some of the respondents also revealed that the youth of Ho do not make use of idiomatic expressions at all in the Ho dialect these days. These participants maintained that, parents' not using idiomatic expressions in speaking to their children at home is one of the causes of the problem. Since the youth were not trained or educated on the use of idiomatic expressions in speech, they cannot do so. They said, these days, only very few adults use idiomatic expressions among themselves, not for children and the youth.

In addition to the above, other participants, in reply to this research question, established that it is the responsibility of the youth of Ho to learn and communicate with idioms in the Ho dialect. They, however, regretted that the youth do not make the effort in learning and using idiomatic expressions in their native language largely due to formal education. They said that the youth learn and speak the English language most of the time. As a result of the concentration on the English language to the neglect of the native language, idiomatic expressions are gradually fizzling out of the local dialect. The participants stated that socialization which comprises the transmission of a people's culture as a whole from one generation to the other is no more being carried out by the elderly people in the society. They then observed that

the dialect is losing its artistic value, in effect, and if nothing is done to ameliorate the situation, everything would soon be gone. They finally quipped that just as a tasteless meal cannot be enjoyed when being eaten, a dialect that loses its artistic value would sound repulsive to the listener when spoken by the interlocutor (speaker).

It was again disclosed by the participants in the interview that the youth of Ho do not use idiomatic expressions in their discourse because they were not presented with the opportunity to learn and be able to communicate with such expressions. According to the respondents, parents started speaking the English language to them right from their infancy. Consequently, these children regard the English language as more important and more prestigious than their own God-given native language. They, therefore, do not attach the needed importance to the learning and speaking of the dialect. Inferring from these respondents, the youth prefer speaking the English language more than they do the Ho dialect because that is what they were taught. Gathering from these interviewees, it seems as though the Ho youth are shy of speaking the Ho dialect. The youth also have the erroneous impression that those who speak the local dialect more fluently than the English language are less knowledgeable. And since they do not speak the dialect, they are as well not conversant with the idiomatic expressions that are in the dialect. Those youth who attempt to speak the Ho dialect also do so with very little fluency thereby frequently mixing it with the English language. The participants then emphasized the concern that the youth of Ho ought to be educated on the use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect so that they can become familiar with them as well as communicate with them thereby perpetrating the culture and tradition of Ho. They also said becoming conversant with idiomatic expressions in the local dialect would help students to perform well in the study of the Ewe language as a subject. It would help the students

to enrich their essays during examination as well as their discourse outside the classroom which would distinguish them as being wise or expert in the use of language.

Again, the participants maintained that the youth of Ho are no more using idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect because they regard the use of idiomatic expressions in speech as outmoded. They added that students especially think that the speaking of the Ho dialect and for that matter the use of idiomatic expressions in the dialect is for people who did not have formal education. This is because they do not regard idiomatic expressions as an important aspect of the dialect. They also perceive people who did not have formal education as not knowledgeable. The respondents lamented that if the trend is not arrested, this could have a negative effect on the growth of the dialect as well as on the people of Ho because, according to the participants, idiomatic expressions form an important part of the dialect.

It was additionally confirmed by the interviewees that the youth of Ho do not communicate with idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect. The reason adduced for this state of affairs is that the behaviour of this generation is different and strange. The youth believe that the use of idiomatic expressions, especially in the Ho dialect, is a thing of the past. According to the respondents, the English language has become the preferred language of the youth. The respondents also admitted that majority of the youth who speak the Ho dialect frequently mix it with the English language. It was also gathered from the response of the participants that the youth do not communicate using idiomatic expressions because they are not being taught the topic by teachers in school. Parents also do not communicate it with them at home. These respondents mentioned that the parents and the grandparents of these youth are also not well-

versed in the use of idiomatic expressions in the dialect and so they could not help their children with it.

It was, however, indicated by one of the respondents that very few youth of Ho use idiomatic expressions in their speech in the Ho dialect but not as much as they ought to use them. This results from the fact that most of them do not draw closer to elderly people in the community to learn from them. This respondent also mentioned civilization and lazy attitude of the youth as being responsible for the predicament. He said young people nowadays do not care much about the appropriateness of their utterances before they speak. He noted that the youth use language anyhow anywhere without taking into consideration the suitability of their utterances in the situation they find themselves. He described the situation as very appalling and implored the youth to learn and use idiomatic expressions when necessary.

Research question 3: How can the youth of Ho improve on their use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect?

In response to the above research question of how the youth of Ho can improve on the use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect, some of the respondents suggested that the teaching of the Ewe language should be given a serious attention right from the kindergarten level of education. It was also mentioned by the respondents that teachers at the senior high school level should not teach the language only as a subject but also endeavour to communicate more in the dialect with the students. More emphasis should be laid on the teaching and use of the local language. The participants also proposed that the government should collaborate with community leaders and organise non-formal education programmes for the youth who did not have formal education so that they can also have the opportunity, among others, to be educated on the use of idiomatic expressions in the native language.

The participants maintained that parents also have a major role to play in educating their children on the importance of idiomatic expressions in the use of language. They advised that parents should communicate with their children in the Ho dialect and ensure that they use idiomatic expressions in their speech. The participants again advocated that parents should reduce the unrestrained use of the English language at home. It was put forward by the respondents that parents who studied language to a higher level of education should educate those who are not knowledgeable in idioms so that they can also in turn educate their children. It was clear from the interview that some of the youth are not even willing to speak the native language. In other words, they are not interested in speaking the Ho dialect. It was therefore suggested that the parents and other community leaders in the various communities in Ho should, from time to time, organise the youth and give them public education to whip up interest in them to learn to speak the dialect. They should encourage them not to shy away from speaking the dialect. The respondents also noted that the youth need to humble themselves and give respect to their parents and the elderly in society so that they would be willing to teach them about idioms and other rich aspects of the Ho dialect.

The participants also stated that a specialist course should be run for people to train them to be knowledgeable or experts in the use and the teaching of the local language with special focus on idiomatic expressions so that these people can in turn educate the public, especially the youth, on issues concerning the use of the local dialect. The interviewees again pointed out that pastors and other religious leaders who mostly use only the English language to preach sermons should use the Ho dialect so that they can have the opportunity to use idiomatic expressions for the youth to learn it from them. The respondents also proposed that students who are studying language in the senior high school should use the opportunity to educate their peers, who do not have

such an opportunity, on the significance of idiomatic expressions and train them as well on how to use the expressions in their right context in speech. This will go a long way to project the dialect.

The respondents also mentioned that teachers, parents, community leaders and other stake holders in education should plan and organise massive public education on regular basis to try to reorient the mindset of the youth in order to help erase the perception they hold that those who speak the local dialect are not knowledgeable. This would help erase the mindset that it is those who did not have formal education that are supposed to use idiomatic expressions in their speech. It would as well remove the erroneous impression that those who speak the native language are villagers. The mass media was further mentioned to be one of the mediums through which the youth can be reached in terms of educating them on the use of idioms.

4.7 Results from the Observation

Research Question 2: To what extent do the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect and what are the implications for the future?

The data presented under this question is the results of the observation conducted on four (4) youth groups in the Ho Township to investigate the extent to which they use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect. These groups include participants at a Batik Tie and Dye Production Centre, Mechanic Shop, Fashion Design Shop and Spectators watching football match. The results obtained from the scheduled observation shall be presented first and to be followed by those gathered from the unscheduled observation. Pen and notebook were used to record parts of the conversations that were pertinent to this study.

4.7.1 Results from the scheduled observation

The first scheduled observation took place at a Mechanic Shop in the Ho Township. The participants were all males whose ages ranged from 17 to 25. In the course of the observation, a conversation arose amongst them whilst they were working on one of the cars that were brought to them on that day. One of the participants said to another in the Ho dialect: “Ɖuu ke ɖi ɛke xe nɔviwɛ fi nyitsɔ ta xe kpovitɔwo lee lo”, meaning “The car we’re working on resembles the one your brother stole recently for which reason he has been arrested”. He then asked whether the family is doing something to bail him. The brother of the alleged car thief responded and said, in the year 2016 alone, that was the third time that his brother had stolen a car. He said, for the first two times, their uncle came to his rescue; but this time round their uncle is also fed up with him. Then another participant said to the brother of the thief in the Ho dialect: “Evaglo; nɔviwo ke tsɛ fiɛ fi ŋunu. Ɖke yai, ɖɛko miakɔɛ tsɛ ɛ kpovitɔwɛ lo” meaning “Your brother steals too much. This time round, your family should dash him to the police”.

As they continued working, another conversation occurred at the Mechanic Shop concerning a certain soothsayer and his wife. One of the participants was narrating a story of how a certain renowned soothsayer, who had magical powers and was therefore supposed to see things in the spirit, was unable to notice the infidelity of his wife. The participant said in the Ho dialect: “Ɖwa nuku nam bɛ bɔkɔ ŋutɔŋutɔ tsɛ menya bɛ wolɛ yisrɔ̃ mɔ̃ to yi xa o. Bɔkɔ bubu ye ɖi tsa va gbɔ vakpɔɛ tsinɛɛ bɛ yikpɔɛ bɛ amɛ bubu lɛ srɔ̃ mɔ̃ lɛ wo mɛgbɛ. Ɖke xe wosɛ nyaa ko la, ɛyi lada kɔ kpli ŋutsuɔ” meaning, “I’m surprised that a whole sorcerer did not know that someone else had been having sex with his wife. It took another sorcerer who visited

him one day to tell him that his wife had been having sex with another man. After hearing the news, the soothsayer quickly went to the man in question and fought him”.

In a different conversation at the Mechanic Shop, a participant drew the attention of other participants to a pregnant lady who was passing by and said: “Mikpɔ funɔ ke xe vayiea? Komla ye do fui lo” meaning “Do you see the pregnant lady passing by? It’s Komla who impregnated her”. Another participant replied and said: “Mɛlɛ nu kpɔ lɛ dɔdɔo gake ɛya tɛɛ bɛ yifɔ fu. Gbɛgbɛlɛ yɛ lɛ fu dɛ nɛ” meaning, “She is struggling to survive yet she is pregnant. She is a bad girl”.

On another occasion, one of the participants at the Mechanic Shop had bought three balls of kenkey for lunch and was eating it. He invited only this investigator to his meal. Then another participant asked why he did not invite him. The one eating the kenkey replied jokingly and said: “Mɛlɛ dɛdɛ namuo ta nyɛmayɔ wɛ o”. The other participant replied and said: “Nɛ woe dɛka ɛɛ ŋu dɔ dɔkunu ke petee vɔ ya la, kɛ ɛnye nutsudɔla” meaning “If you alone can eat all this kenkey, then you are a glutton”.

At another time at the Mechanic Shop, in the course of their work, another discussion occurred among the participants. One of the participants seemed to have a problem. He was asked to raise the bonnet of one of the cars for it to be worked on, but he could not do it well. He was complaining of pain as a result of a boil that had developed under his armpit. Then another participant said he was pretending because what he was complaining about was just a very small swelling under his armpit. Then

the participant having the boil said: “Ēlɛ kpoed̄ɛ do gawu” literally meaning “The boil is short but clad in armour”.

The next scheduled observation was conducted at a Batik Tie and Dye Production Centre to examine the extent to which the participants there used idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect. The participants whose ages ranged between 17 and 21 years were all females. In the process of the observation, this investigator took note of the following conversations that ensued amongst them. The first conversation centered on a public toilet that is situated near the Ho Main Lorry Station. One of the participants was trying to recall her experience at the toilet when she had gone there one day to ease herself. She said in the Ho dialect: “Wom̄ɛlɛ af̄ɔdzid̄ɛf̄ɛ dzra ɔ nyuid̄ɛ kura koŋ o; t̄ɛf̄ɛ petee lɛ v̄ɛv̄ɛ paa” meaning, “The toilet is not being taken good care of, and as a result, the whole place smells so badly”. Another participant responded and said, “Wom̄ɛlɛ miaf̄ɛ af̄ɔdzid̄ɛf̄ɛ dzra ɔ nyuid̄ɛ kura o; af̄ɔdzid̄ɛf̄ɛ kew̄ɛ t̄agbe ya tukpokpoew̄ɛ x̄ɔ manȳɛ l̄ɛ ke” meaning “They are not taking good care of our public toilets at all, which is bad; this is one of the causes of candidiasis in ladies”.

In another conversation at the same Tie and Dye Batik Centre, one of the participants was asking another in the Ho dialect to mend “a screen”, which is one of their working tools, with selotape. She said: “W̄ɛ n̄ɛzr̄ɔ ab̄ɛ ŋutil̄aw̄ɛ n̄ɛɛ lo” meaning, “Apply the selotape in such a way that the mended part of the screen will be as smooth as your skin”. In yet another conversation that ensued between the participants, one of them indicated that she would be going somewhere after work and that she would not board a taxi to the place; she would walk there and back. Then another participant responded and said in the Ho dialect: “Wo asim̄ɛ s̄ɛ ŋunu” literally

meaning, “Your palm is too hard”. This means that she is too stingy with money. They continued to work until around twelve thirty in the afternoon (12:30 pm) when they went on break. There was a food vendor in the area. She was selling rice and beans, a meal known in the local Ghanaian parlance as “waakye”. They went and bought some of the “waakye” which they brought to the workplace to eat. As they were eating, the face of one of the participants changed. She quickly said: “Lɛɛ nyɔnuɔ kɔ ɔɔ nɔ ɛgbɛ ya? Nuɔ mɛvivi koŋ o ɔɔ!” meaning “How did the woman cook the food today? It’s very tasteless!” A colleague participant responded and said: “Ɛɛ, nyatɛɛ yɛ lo; ɛgbɛ ya nuɔɔɔ mɛvivi kura o. Ɛke ya ɔɔko miko miafɛ ga fu gbɛ” meaning “It’s true; the food is tasteless today. We’ve thrown our money away”.

The next scheduled observation was conducted at a Fashion Design Centre where the participants were apprentices under training. Both male and female clothes were being sewn there. There were six (6) females and three (3) male participants. Their ages ranged from 19-26 years. As the participants continued to work up to a point in the afternoon around 13 GMT, they started contemplating on going on break. One of them looked at the time and said: “Miatɛ wɛ, ɛɔɔ lɛ nyɛ wu lo” meaning “My friends, I’m feeling hungry”. Another apprentice said: “Ɛsusɔ vidɛ ko miayi ‘break’ ta gbɔ dzi ɔɔnyi vidɛ” meaning, “It will soon be time for break and so be patient”.

4.7.2 Results of uncontrolled observation

This uncontrolled observation was conducted on spectators of football matches that were played at the research site. The observation was carried out on three occasions and lasted throughout the match duration. As the matches were being played, the

following conversations were taken note of between some of the participants. In one of the conversations, a young male participant saw a lady passing by, near the football park where they were watching the match. He started hissing in order to draw the lady's attention towards him. Then another participant, who perhaps was his friend, told him to stop worrying the lady. The other participant replied and said: “Ɛkpɔ bɛ nyɔnuviɛ dzɛ tugbɛ ɲutɔa? Ɖɛɛ bɛ nɛ yi kpɔ yimamɔ oa?” This means, “Can you see that the lady is very beautiful? If you get the chance won't you have sex with her?”

In another conversation, a participant told another that he was enjoying the football match but felt like going to urinate, and that he would miss part of the action. He said, “Mɛyi maɖ aɖuɖ mava. Vɔ nyɛmɛdi bɛ ,match“ ke fe akpa ɖɛkɛ nɛto ɲunyɛ afe o lo. Nɔ kpɔ, nɛmɛva nagblɛ nam” meaning “I'm going to urinate, but I don't want to miss any part of the action, and so when I'm back you'll have to narrate to me part of the action that took place when I was away.”

4.8 Discussion of Observation

During the observation, there were many situations that required the participants to use idiomatic expressions. The following are the situations. At the Mechanic Shop, there was a conversation about one of the participants' brother who had been arrested for stealing a car. During the conversation, one of the participants said to the thief's brother in the Ho dialect: “Nɔviwo ke fiɛ fi ɲunu” meaning “Your brother steals too much.” The participant should have used an idiomatic expression in place of the word “steal.” Instead, he used the plain word. In the Ho dialect, an idiom for the statement: “Nɔviwo ke fiɛ fi ɲunu” (Your brother steals too much) is “Nɔviwo ke fɛ asi lee ɖɛ nu ɲu ɲunu” meaning “Your brother's hand sticks to things too much.” Among the

people of Ho, the plain use of the word “steal” may cause an embarrassment to the person it is used for as well as those who are related to the thief. Within the same thread of conversation, another participant retorted: “Eke yai, deko miakæ tsī ε krovitɔwε lo” meaning “This time round your family must dash him to the police.” This participant said the thief should be dashed to the police. This expression is a metaphor, not an idiomatic expression, since it is things that are dashed to people. In plain, grammatical English, human beings are not dashed to others.

Another conversation among the participants at the Mechanic Shop was about a powerful soothsayer who could not detect the infidelity of his wife in spite of his supernatural powers. According to one of the participants, it was another soothsayer who saw it in the spirit that the wife of the said soothsayer had been having sex with another man. The participant said in the Ho dialect: “Ewa nuku nam bæ bɔkɔ ɲutɔɲutɔ tse mɛnya bæ wolε yisrɔ mɔ to yi xa o” meaning “I’m surprised that a whole soothsayer did not know that someone else had been having sex with his wife.” This participant should have used an idiomatic expression for the word “mɔ” meaning “to have sex” in the Ho dialect. The word “mɔ”, in the Ho dialect, sounds even more profane and vulgar than the English word “to have sex.” Instead of saying : “Mɛnya bæ wolε yisrɔ mɔ to yi xa o” meaning “He did not know that someone else had been having sex with his wife”, he should have said, “Mɛnya bæ amε bubu lε yi srɔ gbɔ dɔ o” whose English rendition is “He did not know that someone else had been sleeping with his wife.”

In yet another conversation, a participant at the Mechanic Shop drew the attention of the co-workers and passed a comment on a pregnant woman who was passing by and said: “Mikpɔ ɛfunɔ ke xe vayiea? Komla yɛ do fui lo” meaning “Do you see the pregnant woman passing by? It’s Komla who impregnated her.” This participant should have used an idiomatic expression “Gonɔ” in the Ho dialect for “pregnant woman.” He should have also said: “Komla yɛ na wotsɔ fo” meaning “It’s Komla who put her in a family way.” Among the people of Ho, the plain use of the phrases “pregnant woman” and “impregnated” may cause an embarrassment to the person they are used for.

In another strand of conversation among the participants at the Mechanic Shop, a participant had bought three balls of kenkey and was eating it. He did not invite his colleagues. Then one of the colleagues said: “Nɛ ɛwoe dɛka ɛtɛ ɲu ɖu ɖɔkunu ke petee vɔ ya la, kɛ ɛnyɛ nutsudula” meaning “If you alone can eat all this kenkey, then you are a glutton.” This participant should have used an idiomatic expression: “Ɛɖuɔ nu abɛ baba nɛnɛ” (He eats like a termite) meaning “He is a glutton.” Among the people of Ho, the plain use of the word “glutton” may cause an embarrassment to the person the word is used for.

In a different conversation among the participants at the Mechanic Shop, one of the participants complained of pain in the armpit due to a boil that had developed there. Another participant said he was feigning the pain because it was just a small swelling under his armpit. Then the other participant replied and said: “Ɛlɛ kpɔeɖɛ do gawu” meaning, “It is short but clad in an armour.” This expression is not an idiomatic

expression but rather an example of personification because human attributes or qualities are given to an inanimate object, “boil”.

At the Batik Tie and Dye Production Centre, the participants engaged in conversations in which required them to use idiomatic expressions. In one of such conversations, a participant complained of how a public toilet facility she had once visited was not well taken care of. She said: “Womɛɛ afɔdzidɛfɛɛ dzra ɔ nyuiɛɛ kura koŋ o; tɛfɛɛ petee lɛ vɛvɛ paa” meaning, “The toilet is not being taken good care of, and as a result, the whole place smells so badly.” This participant should have used an idiomatic expression “amedefe” for “toilet” and “Eɛɛ mumu” or “Eɛɛ ya ɔɛ” (It is releasing air) for “It smells.” Among the people of Ho, the plain use of the words “toilet” and “smell” may cause the feeling of disgust or unpleasantness in listeners.

In another string of conversation at the Batik Tie and Dye Production Centre, a participant asked another participant to mend one of their working instruments or tools called “screen” with selotape. She thus said: “Wɔɛ nɛzrɔ abɛ ŋutilāwɛ nɛnɛ lo” meaning, “Apply the selotape in such a way that the mended part of the screen should be as smooth as your skin.” This expression is not an idiomatic expression but rather a simile, because “as....as” is used to compare how smooth the mended part of the “screen” should be to that of a smooth skin.

In a different stream of conversation at the same Batik Tie and Dye Production Centre, one of the participants said she would be going somewhere after work but she would walk there and back. Where the participant wanted to go is quite far and it would be better for her to go there by transport. Another participant therefore

quipped: “Wo asime sɛ ɲutɔ ta tɛfɛ didi ke tsɛ mɛdi bɛ nɛ yeagblɛ ga aɔo uu o” literally meaning, “Your palm is too hard, that is why you want to travel to such a distant place on foot.” This is an idiomatic expression in the Ho dialect. To say someone’s palm is hard in the Ho dialect means the person is stingy, especially with money. Among the people of Ho, the plain use of the word “stingy” may sound like an insult and may cause an embarrassment to the person it is used for.

In another chat among the participants at the Batik Tie and Dye Production Centre, one of participants expressed her dislike for the “rice and beans”, a meal known in Ghanaian parlance as “waakye” that she was eating for lunch. She therefore said: “Lɛɛ nyɔnuɔ kɔ ɔa nuɔ ɛgbɛ ya? Nuɔ mɛvivi kɔŋ o ɔɛ!” meaning “How did the woman prepare the food today? It’s very tasteless.” This participant should have used an idiomatic expression in referring to the tastelessness of the food by saying: “Nuɔɔɔɔ mɛɛ aɔɛ o” literally meaning “The food has not got hold of the tongue” or “The food has not held the tongue.” Among the people of Ho, the plain use of the word “tasteless”, especially when used by young people for adults, is embarrassing and disrespectful.

At the Fashion Design Centre, a conversation ensued among the participants that necessitated the use of an idiomatic expression. The conversation occurred in the afternoon. A participant complained of hunger. She said: “Miatɔɛ wɛ, ɛɔɔ lɛ nyɛ wu lo” meaning “My friends, I’m feeling hungry.” In the above conversation, the participant should have used an idiomatic expression for “hunger” by saying, “Adoglo lia ati” literally meaning “The lizard has climbed a tree.” Among the people of Ho, the plain use of the word “hunger”, especially in public and among strangers, is a bit embarrassing.

During the observation at a Football Park in the research site, different forms of conversations occurred as well between the spectator participants. As the football match was being played, a male participant spotted a beautiful lady passing by and started hissing to attract her attention. Another male participant who seemed to be a friend to the other participant told him to stop worrying the lady. Then the other participant remarked: “Ɛkpɔ bɛ nyɔnuviɛ dzɛ tugbɛ ɲutɔa? Ɖee bɛ nɛ yi kpɔ yimamɔ oa? This means, “Can you see that the lady is very beautiful? If you get the chance won’t you have sex with her?” This participant should have used an idiomatic expression for the word “sex” by saying: “Ɖee bɛ nɛ yi kpɔ yimadɔ gbɔ oa?” meaning, “If you get the chance won’t you sleep with her?” The plain use of the word “mɔ”, in the Ho dialect, is considered extremely profane.

In yet another strand of conversation at the Football Park, a participant told his friend that he was going to urinate and that the friend should watch and narrate to him part of the action that would go on in his absence when he returned. He thus said: “Mɛyi madɔ aɖudɔ mava” meaning “I’m going to urinate.” This participant should have used an idiomatic expression for the word “urinate” by saying: “Mɛyi made asi go me mava” literary meaning “I’m going to put the hand in the pocket.” Among the people of Ho, it is unpleasant to use the plain word “urinate” in public.

From the observation, there were eleven (11) situations that required the participants to use idiomatic expressions. Out of this, it was in only one (1) situation that an idiomatic expression was used, that is, “Wo asimɛ sɛ” (Your palm is hard) meaning “You are stingy.”

4.9 Conclusion

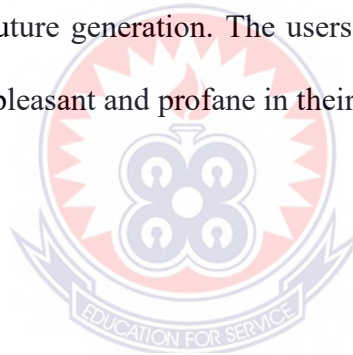
In this chapter, the results of the interview conducted for the adults and the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana on the extent of use of idiomatic expressions by the youth were presented and analysed. The results of the observation conducted on some youth groups were also duly presented and analysed.

Out of the twenty (20) adult respondents interviewed, nineteen (19) of them representing ninety-five per cent (95%) held the view that idiomatic expressions are still relevant in the use of language in the 21st century but the youth of Ho do not use idiomatic expressions in their speech in the Ho dialect. However, one of the 19 adult respondents who said idiomatic expressions are still relevant in the 21st century, stated that a few of the youth use idiomatic expressions but not as much as is expected of them. One (1) respondent, representing 5% of the adult population, noted that idiomatic expressions are not relevant in the 21st century and that the youth of Ho need not use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect.

Out of the twelve (12) youth respondents interviewed, eleven (11) representing 92% pointed out that idiomatic expressions are still relevant in speech in the 21st century but the youth of Ho do not use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect. One of the eleven (11) youth respondents, who said idiomatic expressions are still relevant in the 21st century, however, noted that a few of the youth use idiomatic expressions but not as much as is expected of them. One (1) of the respondents, representing 8% of the total number, noted that idiomatic expressions are not relevant at all in the 21st century.

Results from the observation conducted also corroborate the results of the interviews. Out of the eleven (11) situations that required the participants to use idiomatic expressions, it was in only one (1), representing 9%, that an idiomatic expression was used. The findings from the analysis of the observation results clearly indicate that the overwhelming majority of Ho youth in the Volta Region of Ghana do not use idiomatic expressions in their native Ho dialect.

The foregoing, therefore, suggest that the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana do not use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect. If the trend is allowed to continue, the effect it would have on the future of the dialect is that, its artistic quality would diminish. Another implication is that idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect will be completely lost on the future generation. The users of the language may also sound rude, harsh, impolite, unpleasant and profane in their conversation.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarises the details obtained in the study. The chapter is in three parts. The first part summarises the findings; the second part outlines the conclusions drawn from the research and the third part makes recommendations on ways that the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana can improve on their use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect in order to preserve the quality of the dialect for future generations.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The findings of the study include the following:

How relevant are idiomatic expressions in the use of language in the 21st century?

The findings from the study show that idiomatic expressions are still relevant in the use of language in the 21st century because such expressions are one of the treasured expressions used by their forefathers in communicating issues to others in the past. If people think that idiomatic expressions are no more relevant today and therefore decide to neglect it, it would mean that they are not making any progress in terms of language growth. What their forefathers have left for them should rather be improved upon but not discarded. Discarding idiomatic expressions from the dialect would amount to throwing away their culture.

The findings also indicated that the use of idiomatic expressions in speech is still relevant in the 21st century because it enriches language and makes it interesting to

listen to, thereby relieving stress. The ability to use idiomatic expressions in one's dialect also shows the cultural identity of the user. It also helps preserve the originality of a dialect or language. Again, the use of idiomatic expressions makes people to think deep and makes them to learn and speak with wisdom.

The findings also confirmed that idiomatic expressions are used to hide secrets and information from people. Indigenes use idiomatic expressions to hide some secrets and information from strangers who are not supposed to be privy to such secrets and information. Adults use idiomatic expressions to hide vital secrets and information from children, women and gossips so that they would not go and broadcast such secrets and information. Idiomatic expressions are used to soften the hurtful effects of insults on people.

Again, the study affirmed that the use of idiomatic expressions in speech is still relevant in modern times as it helps to avoid utterances that are vulgar. Idiomatic expressions are used to discuss issues such as sex, excretion, death and menstruation. The findings once more affirmed that idiomatic expressions are used to correct wrongdoing in society. According to the findings, when an idiomatic expression is used to comment on the wrongdoing of people in order to try to correct and advise them, if they understand the idiomatic expression used for them, they try to change from their evil ways.

The extent to which the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect and its implications for the future

The study revealed that the youth of Ho do not use idiomatic expressions in their native Ho dialect. From the study, it was evident that parents and guardians do not use idiomatic expressions frequently at home when communicating with their children.

Some of the parents communicate with their children at home in the English language. This attitude of parents results in the lack of interest in the youth in using idiomatic expressions in their daily conversation both at home and school since they do not become familiar with those expressions in the Ho dialect.

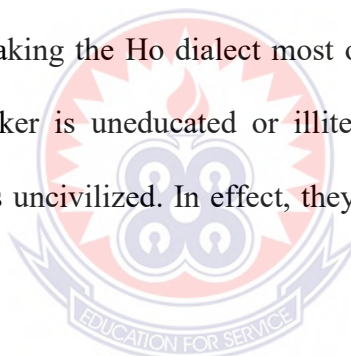
The study also found out that the youth of Ho do not use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect due to the advancement of formal education. The English language is the medium of instruction in schools most of the time; therefore, the students prefer speaking the English language to speaking their own local dialect. Some of these youth also access formal education in towns and cities outside their local communities where they learn and speak other languages like Twi and Ga at the expense of their local dialect. They prefer speaking those languages to the speaking of the Ho dialect. The study revealed that these youth consider those other languages as more prestigious than the Ho dialect and, therefore, shy away from speaking it. As a result, they are not able to use idiomatic expressions in the dialect.

Moreover, the findings reveal that the youth of Ho do not relate well with their parents and adults in their various communities in order to draw closer to them and learn from them. They are, therefore, not familiar with idiomatic expressions and do not also know their usefulness in speech. Consequently, they are not experienced enough to use them in speech and also understand them.

The findings also showed that the youth of Ho consider the use of idiomatic expressions as an outmoded practice in the 21st century in which they find themselves. They think the use of idiomatic expressions in speech is not necessary in these modern times. They, therefore, do not deliberately learn to use them in speech. They are more concerned with issues of technology, especially the mobile phone.

The findings further indicate that the youth of Ho do not use idiomatic expressions in speech because the elderly ones in their families from whom they can learn these expressions died before they were born. The findings also proved that the youth of Ho do not attend gatherings and ceremonies where such expressions are used for them to learn and use them. According to the findings, some of the youth do not attend these public gatherings and ceremonies because they consider such gatherings and the customary practices carried out as fetish due to the proliferation of Christianity.

The findings once again confirmed that the youth of Ho do not use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect because students especially have the impression that only those who did not have formal education are those that speak the local dialect. They also think that speaking the Ho dialect most of the time as well as speaking it fluently means the speaker is uneducated or illiterate. They consider people who speak the local dialect as uncivilized. In effect, they do not have interest in speaking it.



Ways that the youth of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana can improve on their use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect.

The findings showed that lots of effort can be put up by the stakeholders and the youth themselves to help them to improve on the use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect. From the study, it is clear that serious attention should be given to the teaching of the Ewe language whose variety is the Ho dialect. Ewe teachers should be well trained to teach the language so that they can teach it well. More time should be allocated to the teaching of the Ewe language. Serious attention should be attached specifically to the teaching of idiomatic expressions and how they are used in speech.

Findings from the study once again revealed that parents should speak the Ho dialect most of the time with their children at home. They should use idiomatic expressions in their speech as well. From the findings, parents are to encourage their children to speak the dialect. They should also educate their children from time to time on the essence of speaking the dialect so that they would not shy away from speaking it.

In addition, the findings indicate that the elderly and the opinion leaders in the various communities should draw the youth closer to themselves and educate them on the essence of idiomatic expressions in the use of language. They should also organise public education for the youth with the view to socializing them on their cultural practices including the use of idiomatic expressions in speech in order that the youth would become well informed of their own culture so that they can also transmit it to future generation.

Moreover, the findings showed that the youth of Ho have an attitude problem with regards to the speaking of the Ho dialect. The youth regard the Ho dialect as inferior compared to English and other languages. This negative attitude discourages them from speaking the dialect. The findings, therefore, stated that the elderly and the opinion leaders in the various communities should continuously and deliberately work on the attitude of the youth by planning programmes that would generate interest in them towards the Ho dialect. Through that, the youth would also learn the idiomatic expressions that are in the dialect and apply them in their speech.

The findings as well showed that story telling and other oral literature forms such as proverbs, puzzles and riddles that were used to educate and entertain children and the youth in the past should be revived and modified to suit the modern times so that the youth can learn idiomatic expressions through such programmes. This would help

bridge the language gap between the past and the present, and between the present and the future.

The findings also affirmed that specialist courses should be organised for some people to train them in the Ho dialect with special focus on idiomatic expressions so that these people can in turn educate the youth. It was also confirmed by the findings that students from Ho who are studying the Ewe language in the various senior high schools in the city should use the opportunity to educate their peers.

Moreover, the findings indicate that pastors and other religious leaders who often use the English language to preach sermons should be advised to use the Ho dialect so that they can use the idiomatic expressions that are in the dialect for the youth to learn from them. From the findings, the mass media was also mentioned to be one of the mediums through which the youth can be reached in terms of educating them on the use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect.

Besides, the study established that non-formal education programmes should be organised for the youth, especially those who had little or no formal education, so that they can also be educated on idiomatic expressions and how to use them in speech. The programme should be deliberately planned and tailored towards the youth. It should be very interesting and attractive to them thereby preventing them from going wayward and engaging in vices. The various stakeholders are also to put in efforts that would entice the youth to read more Ewe books from which they can learn idiomatic expressions and use them in speech.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the foregoing findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

The Ho dialect is one of the varieties of the Ewe language and spoken by the people of Ho who form the chunk of the Asogli people. Ho is also the regional capital of the Volta Region of Ghana. The Ho dialect can, therefore, be seen as one of the major dialects of the Ewe language. For the dialect to be maintained or have its status improved, it must be constantly spoken by the people. It can, however, be noted that its use is more of inconvenience to teachers and parents as they prohibit pupil/students and for that matter the youth from speaking the dialect on school compounds and at home. This was a widespread practice in schools in the past and still happens in some schools in spite of the language policy which requires the local language to be used as a medium of instruction in lower primary for children to gain interest in the native language before they attend senior high school.

In many homes in Ho and in school settings, children and the youth are not trained well to speak the dialect with natives, friends and parents at home. This is because the society recognizes those who speak English language fluently as more intelligent. As a result of this, most parents prefer to speak English with their children, thereby making the youth lose interest in speaking the Ho dialect. In effect, the youth of Ho do not use idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are proffered based on the findings earlier stated:

1. Public education should be organised for parents, guardians and other indigenes of Ho to sensitise them on the importance of the Ho dialect in order to change their attitude towards the use of the dialect at home and public places and gatherings. They should be advised to constantly communicate with their children in the local dialect

alongside the English language in order for their children to become familiar with the local dialect and develop interest in speaking it.

2. Headteachers and teachers in the various schools should not prohibit their pupils/students from speaking the dialect on the school compound especially at the lower levels of education.

3. Teachers, parents, opinion leaders and other stakeholders in education should plan and organise public education on a regular basis to try to reorient the mindset of the youth in order to help erase the negative perception that they have about the Ho dialect.

4. Radio stations in the Ho town should be sponsored to broadcast educative and entertaining programmes on idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect targeting the youth. This would help bridge the language gap between the past and the present and between the present and the future because radio stations are sources of information that would generate a lot of interest in the youth on the use of the dialect.

5. Non-formal education programmes should be organised for the youth who had little or no formal education so that they can also be educated on the use of idiomatic expressions in the Ho dialect.

6. Storytelling and other oral literature forms such as folktales rich in idioms, proverbs, puzzles and riddles that were used to educate and entertain children and the youth in the past should be revived and modified to suit the modern times so that the youth can learn idiomatic expressions through such programmes.

7. Specialist courses should be organised for some people to train them in the Ho dialect with special focus on idiomatic expressions so that these people can in turn educate the youth.

8. The various stakeholders are also to put in efforts that would entice the youth of Ho to read more Ewe books from which they can learn idiomatic expressions and use them in speech.



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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS DESIGNED ON THE THESIS TOPIC: “THE USE OF IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS BY THE YOUTH OF HO IN THE VOLTA REGION OF GHANA: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY”

SECTION A – DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF INTERVIEWEES

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Occupation:

SECTION B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is an idiomatic expression?
2. Are idiomatic expressions relevant in the use of language in the 21st century?
 - a) If yes, explain.
 - b) If no, explain.
3. What are the reasons for which the people of Ho use idiomatic expressions in speech?
4. Do you think the youth of Ho use idiomatic expressions in speech in the Ho dialect?
 - a) If yes, how often?
 - b) If no, why?

5. What implications do you think the response to question 4 (b) would have on the future of the dialect?
6. If the response to question 4 is no, what do you think can be done to improve the situation?
7. Give a few idiomatic expressions often used by the people of Ho and their meanings?
8. Do you have something more to add?



APPENDIX B

Table 1: Some Ho/Ewe idiomatic expressions on pregnancy and delivery

Idiom and Literal Translation	Meaning
1. Gonɔ (Owner of a gourd)	1. A pregnant woman
2. Ele dzi. (She is up)	2. She is pregnant.
3. Elia ati. (She has climbed a tree)	3. She is pregnant.
4. Eɖu gari. (She has eaten gari)	4. She is pregnant.
5. Etsɔ fo. (She is carrying stomach)	5. She is pregnant
6. Egbā go. (She has broken a gourd).	6. She is delivered of a baby.
7. Edɔɖi agba. (She is relieved of a burden)	7. She is delivered of a baby.
8. Edo le eme. (She has come out of it)	8. She is successfully delivered of a baby.

Table 2: Some Ho/Ewe idiomatic expressions on hunger and eating

Idioms and their literal translations	Meaning
1. Adoglo lia ati. (The lizard has climbed a tree)	1. It is twelve noon and I am hungry.
2. Mele ɲɔlɪ kpɔm. (I am seeing a ghost)	2. I am hungry.
3. De asi nume. (To put the hand in the mouth)	3. To eat
4. Ðu nu abe baba ene. (To eat like a termite)	4. To over eat
5. Ðu nu abe vetsuvi ene. (To eat like a locust)	5. To eat very heavily

Table 3: Some Ho/Ewe idiomatic expressions on snake bite

Idioms and their literal translations	Meaning
1. Gbe kpæ. (He/She has been seen by the grass)	1. He/She has been bitten by snake.
2. Anyigba fa ðee. (The earth is cold to him/her)	2. He/She has been bitten by snake.
3. Anyigba kpæ. (He/She has been seen by the earth)	3. He/She has been bitten by snake.

Table 4: Some Ho/Ewe idiomatic expressions for death

Idioms and their literal translations	Meaning
1. Ati ge le trõnua si. (A staff has fallen from the priest's hand)	1. The priest is dead.
2. Eyi dze flɛfe. (He/She has gone to buy salt)	2. He/She is dead.
3. Eyi tɔgbuiawo gbɔ. (He/She has gone to the ancestors)	3. He/She is dead.
4. Etrɔ megbe. (He/She has turned his/her back).	4. He/She is dead.
5. Eyi demagbɔnugbe. (He/She has gone on a journey of no return)	5. He/She is dead.
6. Egbe dze. (He/She has refused to eat salt)	6. He/She is dead.
7. Fia la yi amatsi me. (The king has entered herbal medicine)	7. The king is dead.

Table 5: Some Ho/Ewe idiomatic expressions for menstruation

Idioms and their literal translations	Meaning
1. Eḍo asi anyi. (She has put her hand on the ground)	1. She is in her menses.
2. Ekpɔ dzinu. (She has seen the moon)	2. She is in her menses.
3. Meli nyuie o. (She is not well)	3. She is in her menses.
4. Ele gbe. (She holds the grass)	4. She is in her menses.

Table 6: Some Ho/Ewe idiomatic expressions on thievery and cheating

Idioms and their literal translations	Meaning
1. Asidaŋuiwɔla wɔnye. (He/She is skilful with the hand)	1. He/She is a robber.
2. Efe asi léna ɖe nu ŋu. (His/Her hand easily gets glued to things)	2. He/She is a thief.
3. Efe asi tsɔna. (He/She is fast with the hand)	3. He/She is a thief.
4. Edze aye. (He/She is cunning)	4. He/She is a cheat.

Table 7: Ho/Ewe idiomatic expressions on other topics

Idioms and their literal translations	Meaning
1. Ɔofui te axame nɛ. (He has developed boil in the armpit)	1. He has brought a bottle of gin carried in the armpit.
2. Ɖɔ kesekuku na ame. (To put monkey hat on someone's head)	2. To flatter someone.
3. Dadi la fe mo dze go. (The face of the cat has been exposed)	3. The truth has come to light.
4. Ebu ta.(He/She has lost his/her head)	4. He/She died childless.
5. Efe ta te.(His/Her head is swollen)	5. He/She is flattered.
6. Etrɔ megbe de dze. (He/She has turned his/her back to salt)	6. He/She lacks proper training.

