CHAPTER 7

NON-NATIVE IDIOMS

In this chapter the researcher will describe and analyze the fourth category which has been sub-divided into sub-categories, namely Non-native Idioms. As in the case of Lexico-semantic Reduplication, Lexico-semantic Redundancy, and Similar Expression Substitution, the chapter ends with a summary and quantification of the data under the sub-categories into percentages and frequency counts.

Earlier researchers have referred to two types of Non-native Idioms. The first type was referred to by Crewe(1977) as 'Fractured Idioms' while the second type was referred to by Adegjiba(1989) as 'Loan Translations'. Crewe said that Singaporeans have a tendency to introduce small changes to idioms and other fixed expressions in English, possibly due to unfamiliarity with the exact wording of the original idioms. Researchers of other non-native Engishes such as Platt and Weber(1980) have found the same tendency. Table 7.1 illustrates this tendency:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New English</th>
<th>Non-native Idiom</th>
<th>Native Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Gift of the gap</td>
<td>gift of the gab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigerian</td>
<td>Eat one's cake and have it</td>
<td>Have one's cake and eat it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Guinea</td>
<td>To pass the hard times</td>
<td>to have a hard time or to pass through a difficult period</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The present researcher has seen the same tendency among ME users as
well, and found that the bulk of the data under 'Non-native Idioms' falls into this category. She has given the term 'Adapted Idioms' to this sub-category. The other two sub-categories which she has created are 'Non-native Metaphors' and 'Local Idioms'. 'Local Idioms' are loan translations of idiomatic expressions or proverbs from indigenous languages. Adegbija(1989) mentions idiomatic expressions in Nigerian English which are loan translations from indigenous languages in Nigeria. Hence the three sub-categories under 'Non-native Idioms' in this study are:

7.1 Non-Native Metaphors
7.2 Local Idioms
7.3 Adapted Idioms

7.1 Non-native Metaphors

'Non-native Metaphors' are metaphorical expressions which are original creations or Loan Translations (Adegbija, 1989) of local metaphors that already exist. They are shorter than 'Local Idioms', which are often in complete sentences. They are sometimes original creations by the non-native speakers. The following section describes each of the expressions which the researcher confirmed to be Non-native Metaphors.

7.1.1 all over them

The expression 'all over them' was used in an idiomatic way by an ME user during a Toastmaster's meeting:

'Who likes to have sorrowful faces all over them?'

Here, 'faces' cannot be 'all over' a person! Perhaps the speaker meant 'all around them'?
7.1.2 also ran

This metaphor was often used by the researcher's father in the following way:

' Don't be an also ran in life.'

His definition of also ran is 'a person who is a mere passenger in the journey of life, namely one who participates in everything but excels in none'. It has a derogatory sense of someone who has achieved very little in life.

7.1.3 always comes in

In native usage when one uses the figurative expression 'comes in for something' it means one is about to receive something unpleasant, as in the sentence: 'The government's economic policies have come in for a lot of criticism' (OALD, 2000). It could also mean 'to receive or be the target for abuse or criticism' (Chambers, 1982). At a Toastmaster's meeting the following Non-native Metaphor was used:

'That's where the problem always comes in.'

This figurative usage of 'comes in' is non-native because of its collocation with 'problem' but seems to be similar in its negative connotation to the figurative expression 'comes in for something'.

7.1.4 as time goes by

The expression 'as time goes by' seems to be non-native in the following sentence read in a group essay written by undergraduates:

'The programme focuses on reducing the teen crime and as time goes by it will automatically benefit the society.'

A native equivalent of this expression would be 'with the passage of time'.
7.1.5 by the galore

In native English the word 'galore' is an informal word which means 'in large quantities' as in the sentence: 'There will be games and prizes galore' (OALD, 2000). In the data a non-native utterance was heard, namely, 'by the galore': '...that home gives them **by the galore**.'

A welfare home administrator was talking about a certain children's home that gave a great deal of goodies to the children.

7.1.6 by way of

In native usage when one says 'by way of (something)' it means 'for the purpose of doing (something)' as used in the sentence: 'He did it by way of helping me' (Chambers, 1982).

In a youth newsletter printed by some youths in the Sai Baba organization, a non-native usage of the expression 'by way of' was observed:

'...to serve the needy and the helpless **by way of** human values.'

The meaning of the statement seems a little distorted as the writer meant 'by translating human values into concrete action' or 'by practising human values.' One cannot serve the needy and the helpless 'by way of' human values. The very act of serving the needy is translating human values into action. Hence the native meaning 'for the purpose of doing (something)' is not in usage here.

7.1.7 bring up your confidence

In native usage one can 'boost' one's confidence but one 'brings up' children. To 'bring up' one's confidence is to use 'bring up' in a non-native way. The expression 'bring up' was heard in this context during a Toastmaster's speech: 'You can **bring up your confidence**.'
7.1.8 calling

In the BBC English Dictionary, the following native senses of the word `calling' have been given: if you are `calling' a meeting, you arrange for it to take place; a call for something is a demand or desire for it to be provided; if you call someone's name you say it loudly to get their attention. In all these senses, the subject is always a human being. However, in the data, the native meanings of `calling' have been semantically extended metaphorically as shown below:

`The char kway teow was calling to me.'

The speaker was saying that he was tempted by the aroma of the local dish which is `char kway teow', hence he personified the dish which seems to be figuratively `calling' him.

In this respect, another researcher, Baskaran(1987) has commented on the tendency for ME speakers to create new senses to the word `calling'. She gave four other non-native senses for the word `call' and she categorized all these senses of `call' as `Polysemic Variation'. These senses are:

- to invite (eg. call for dinner)
- to ask (eg. call someone to come
- to order (eg. Teacher calls a boy out)
- to re-employ (eg. Call be back to work)

The example given can be added to the list, whereby the non-native sense of `call' could mean `tempting (someone) by its aroma'.

7.1.9 catalyze

In native usage, the word `catalyze' is only used in a literal sense, namely `to make a chemical reaction happen faster' (OALD,2000). However in a Business news article, `catalyze' was used in a figurative sense:
Mesdaq president said that Venture 2001 seeks to catalyze an entrepreneurial environment.

The writer meant that the project called 'Venture 2001' would act as a catalyst to stimulate greater creative activity in the entrepreneurial environment. Hence 'catalyze' is being used in this article as a Non-native Metaphor.

7.1.10 catch up

The following utterance was referring to how Indonesian maids dye their hair:

'They pull out the hair that did not catch up when dyeing.'

The metaphor 'catch up' is being used here to refer to strands of hair that have not been dyed. In native usage when one catches up with something, one spends extra time doing something because one has not done it earlier (QALD, 2000). However this is not the sense intended here. Here the meaning is 'dyed equally together with the other hair'. Hence here the expression 'catch up' is figuratively used.

7.1.11 coming to the forefront

The non-native expression 'coming to the forefront' does not seem to have any equivalent in native English. It was heard at a conference on Human Resource management and the original sentence uttered was:

'...three important factors coming to the forefront .......'

A native speaker would have probably used 'emerging' rather than the metaphor 'coming to the forefront'.

7.1.12 critical mass

In native usage, the expression 'critical mass' has a literal meaning, namely
'the amount of a substance which is needed for a nuclear reaction to take place' (OALD, 2000). However, during a Toastmasters' meeting, this expression seems to have been used in a metaphorical sense:

'This is something which, when we look round the room, we have a critical mass of potential speakers.'

The speaker was referring to the possibility of newcomers to the Toastmasters' club being trained as speakers in the future.

7.1.13 cross the border

The following comment was made by an undergraduate who was introducing himself to his classmates:

'Please don't cross the border where I am concerned.'

He was warning his fellow course-mates not to take liberties with him. It appears to be a Non-native Metaphor when used in this context.

7.1.14 dump list

In native English when one says one is 'down in the dumps', one means that one is in a state of depression or low spirits (Chambers, 1982). However, the expression 'dump list', which was used by a Toastmaster, appears to be non-native: 'It's just like a dump list, you know.'

She was referring to the process of brain-storming for points before preparing for a speech assignment.

7.1.15 every other day

In native usage one can say 'the other day' but the expression 'every other day' is an idiomatic non-native usage. It was heard in a speech delivered at a Toastmaster's meeting: 'Every other day, I learn new skills and techniques.'
When the ME speaker says 'every other day' he or she does not mean the literal native sense of 'every alternate day' but the figurative non-native sense of 'very often'.

7.1.16 funny thing

In native usage one of the meanings of funny is 'strange' or 'difficult to understand or explain' as in the sentence: 'That's funny - he was here a moment ago and now he's gone' (OALD,2000). ME speakers like to use the word 'funny' to express their feeling of something being strange or 'difficult to understand or explain'. This expression was heard being used by a deejay on the radio: 'Funny thing he did not call me today.'

Another Non-native Metaphor with a similar structure in the data was 'lucky thing' (See 'lucky thing').

7.1.17 go into the section of

In a Masters thesis the following sentence was noted:

'Let us go into the section of discussing what they have said.'

The writer seems to have used a metaphorical expression namely 'go into the section' when beginning a certain chapter or section of the thesis.

7.1.18 go further up

In the following sentence heard during a panel discussion among students, the expression 'further up' was used instead of the word 'progress':

'Some of them may want to remain in the past while some of them may want to go further up.'

The speaker, who was playing the role of a factory manager who wanted to build his factory on Native American land, was arguing that not all the Native
Americans may want to continue their forefathers' livelihood of fishing and hunting, as some may want to seek employment and improve themselves financially. Here the usage of `go further up' seems to be a Non-native Metaphor used as a substitute for `progress'.

7.1.19 gone forward

In the following sentence, which was seen in a Masters thesis on gender stereotypes and language, the expression `gone forward' is a figurative usage which can be categorized under `Non-native Metaphor':

`They have gone forward in their concept of an ideal beauty.'

In addition, the expression has also been categorized under `Semantic Transfer from Mothertongue' (see `Semantic Transfer from Mothertongue').

7.1.20 heating up

In native English `heating up' is usually used literally as in using a heater to heat up a room or building in cold weather (BBC English Dictionary).

However, in the data, `heating up' was used in the figurative sense of `getting more stiff' as can be seen in the following sentence:

`Competition for post-pay subscribers is heating up.'

This seems to be a Non-native Metaphor which is also a Semantic Extension of the native sense of the expression. (see `Semantic Extension').

7.1.21 hold in your hands

The following sentence was heard at a seminar organized by the Sai Baba organization:

`This issue you hold in your hands, has been made possible by some dedicated and talented people.'

This appears to be a Non-native Metaphor, which may also be a Semantic
Transfer from Mothertongue: 'pegang dalam tangan anda'.

7.1.22 in parallel with

The following comment was uttered by a student teacher during an Oral Interaction Test: 'This is in parallel with what Zahid said just now.'

The structure of 'in parallel' appears to be a Non-native Metaphor as well as Semantic Transfer from Mothertongue.

7.1.23 life support system

The following sentence was heard during an Oral Interaction Test:

'Living Skills is a sort of life support system.'

In native usage a 'life support system' refers to a piece of equipment that keeps somebody alive when they are extremely ill and cannot breathe without help' (OALD,2000).

The Non-native Metaphor in the above sentence must have been derived from this sense of a machine for keeping somebody alive. However, in the above context this machine is being compared to a practical subject in school, namely, 'Living Skills'. The speaker meant that like the machine which keeps the patient alive, the practical skills acquired in the subject can help a student handle minor breakdowns around the house.

7.1.24 like mad

The expression 'like mad' seems to be a non-native metaphor which means 'to a large degree'. This is seen in the following sentence uttered by the husband of the researcher: 'Our government recognizes their degrees like mad.'

The speaker was referring to the medical degrees acquired from Indonesian universities.
7.1.25 lucky thing

In the following sentence, the expression 'lucky thing' seems to be a non-native metaphor:

'Lucky thing you did not leave it at home.'

The expression 'lucky thing' does not seem to have any native equivalents in native usage. In native usage such an expression would be substituted with the adverb 'luckily'. A similar figurative expression which was categorized under Non-native Metaphors is 'funny thing' (see 'funny thing').

7.1.26 my pants will go shivering down

At a speech contest organized by the Toastmasters' movement the following comment was given by the most important official at the division level, namely the Division Governor:

'Three years ago, if you ask me to stand up here, I think my pants will go shivering down.'

The speaker was commenting on his own lack of confidence as a public speaker before he joined the Toastmasters' organization. However, the expression 'pants will go shivering down' appears to be a non-native creation.

7.1.27 nightmarish and hair-raising moments

In native usage the word 'nightmarish' would mean 'terrible' or 'frightening'. However, it was used non-natively by a Toastmaster's club official who was describing the experience of the judges of a speech contest:

'It must have cost the judges nightmarish and hair-raising moments to evaluate and judge the contestants.'

In the above context the speaker did not mean that the experience of evaluation is a frightening one. He was merely commenting on the close
competition among the contestants, thus making the task of judging a difficult one. However, the non-native expression used here is an interesting and creative use of metaphor.

7.1.28 one day/one fine day

This is a non-native expression which has a negative connotation. It has the same sense as the native idiom 'One of these days' as used in the sentence: 'One of these days you will come back and ask me to forgive you.' There is a negative sense in this usage which is like a warning to the listener.

7.1.29 on the back of

The following sentence was recorded from a Business news article:

'TRI narrows its losses on the back of commendable subscriber growth.'

The figurative expression 'on the back of' can be considered a Non-native Metaphor here and it means 'as a result of' or 'directly due to'.

7.1.30 ordered around

The expression 'ordered around' was noted in a Masters thesis in the following sentence:

'The thesis is ordered around five chapters.'

Perhaps the writer meant 'organized' rather than 'ordered'. In native usage 'ordered' as an adjective is acceptable, as in the case of 'an ordered existence' (OALD, 2000). However, 'ordered' as a verb is only used to mean 'to tell someone to do something, usually in an unpleasant or dominating way.' It is not used as a verb to mean 'organized'. Hence this usage appears to be non-native and metaphorical.

7.1.31 outlook

In native usage there is a figurative meaning of 'outlook'; when one talks
about the 'outlook' on something, one is talking about the attitude to life and the world of a particular person, group or culture, as in the sentence: 'Most western societies are liberal in outlook' (OALD,2000). A non-native version of this metaphorical sense can be seen in the following sentence taken from a Business news article:

'...bright outlook of the Malaysian economy.'

Here the word 'outlook' means 'future' rather than 'attitude'.

7.1.32 stepped my foot

The following sentence was seen in the Interactive Journal of an undergraduate:

'This is not the first time I stepped my foot in UM but it seemed like one.'

The non-native expression 'stepped my foot' seems to be a direct translation of the BM expression 'menjejak kaki'. A native speaker would have said 'set foot in UM'. As such, this has been categorized as a Non-native Metaphor. It is also an example of Semantic Transfer from Mothertongue (see 'Semantic Transfer from Mothertongue').

7.1.33 talk stage

In the data the non-native expression 'talk stage' was seen in the following sentence:

'He said it was still at the talk stage.'

This expression means 'still at the initial stage before any action has been taken'. It can be categorized as a non-native metaphor.

7.1.34 the time has come

In native English there is a saying which originated from a seventeenth century
play, which is as follows: 'There is no time like the present'. This means that if an action has been decided on, it is best to do it immediately (Chambers, 1982). Perhaps related to this idea is the expression 'the time has come' which was heard at a Sai Baba seminar:

'The time has come to accept and understand this concept of Educare....'

Here the sense of the time being appropriate or opportune for doing something is conveyed through a non-native metaphor which has some resemblance to the seventeenth century native saying.

7.1.35 to switch them into a new era

During an Oral Interaction Test the following statement was heard concerning the students in school:

'The teachers must play their role to switch them into a new era where their daily routine is occupied for them.'

The expression 'switch them into a new era' is figurative and non-native.

7.1.36 twist and turn

The expression 'twist and turn' refers to the usage of deceit or cunning to conceal the truth when relating something to someone. The following remark was recorded in the data: 'Don't twist and turn your story.'

In the local languages the idea of 'twisting' has the figurative sense of being dishonest or changing the facts. As an example, the translation of the above sentence in Malay would have been 'Jangan memutar belitkan cerita itu.' Thus the expression has been categorized as an example of Semantic Transfer from Mothertongue (see 'Semantic Transfer from Mothertongue'). It could also be categorized as an example of 'Non-native Metaphor'.

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7.1.37 when the time is right

This is another non-native metaphor which is often used in the newspapers as in the following sentence:

'The Managing Director said announcements will be made when the time is right.'

The non-native sense of 'when the time is right' will be semantically opaque to a native speaker. Here only the speaker knows 'when the time is right', so it is a kind of 'inside information' which is being maintained by the speaker who is obviously in a privileged position of power.

7.1.38 where got

ME speakers have a tendency to use 'where got' to mean something like 'That's impossible!' (Shelley, 1995) Sometimes it is just a verbal habit used invariably at the beginning of every 'WH' question as in the following sentence uttered by the researcher's daughter:

'Where got rain just now?'

This has been categorized as a Non-native Metaphor. The following section will summarize the data on Non-native Metaphors.

7.2 Types of Non-native Metaphors

The breakdown of all the types of Non-native Metaphors is shown in Table 7.2 on the next page:
Table 7.2

Types of Non-native Metaphors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Non-native Metaphors</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Verb and Preposition</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Verb and Noun</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Verb and Verb</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Conjunction and Verb</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Preposition and Noun</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Adjective and Noun</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total No. of Non-Native Lexis</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of the 38 examples of Non-native Metaphor, 21 examples involve the use of a verb used in a figurative sense. In Table 7.1 above, this constitutes 55.2% of the Non-native Metaphors, or the combination of 'Verb and Preposition'(31.6%), 'Verb and Noun'(18.4%), 'Verb and Verb(2.6%)' and 'Conjunction and Verb'(2.6%).

Sometimes the verb is at the beginning of the metaphor as in the case of 'bring up your confidence', and 'cross the border'. Sometimes the verb is followed by a preposition as in the case of 'coming to the forefront', 'always comes in', 'as time goes by', 'go shivering down', 'to switch them into', 'by way of' and 'ordered around'. In 13 of the 21 examples the verb is followed by a preposition. This constitutes 34.2% of all the Non-native Metaphors. These are shown below:

1. 'That's where the problem always comes in.'

2. 'The programme focusses on reducing the teen crime and as time goes by it will automatically benefit the society.'

3. 'You can bring up your confidence.'

4. 'They pull out the hair that did not catch up when dyeing.'
5. '...three important factors coming to the forefront.'

6. 'Let's go into the section of discussing what they have said.'

7. 'Some of them may want to remain in the past while some of them may want to go further up.'

8. 'They have gone forward in their concept of an ideal beauty.'

9. 'Competition for post-pay subscribers is heating up.'

10. 'This issue you hold in your hand has been made possible by some dedicated and talented people.'

11. 'Three years ago, if you ask to stand up here, I think my pants will go shivering down.'

12. 'The thesis is ordered around five chapters.'

13. 'The teachers must play their role to switch them into a new era.'

Of the 21 examples, 6 involve the use of a verb and a noun and sometimes a preposition as well. This constitutes 18.4% of all the Non-native Metaphors.

Examples of these are:

14. 'The char keow teow was calling.'

15. 'Mesdaq president said that Venture 2001 seeks to catalyze an entrepreneurial environment.'

16. 'Please don't cross the border where I am concerned.'

17. 'This is the first time I stepped my foot in UM.'

18. 'The time has come to accept and understand the concept of Educare.'

19. 'The teachers must play their role to switch them into new era where their daily routine is occupied for them.

One of the examples involves the use of two verbs, namely:

20. 'Don't twist and turn to your story'

One involves the use of a conjunction and a verb, namely:

21. 'Don't be an also ran in life.'
Five of the Non-native Metaphors involve the use of a preposition and a noun as in the case of 'by way of', 'all over them', 'by the galore', 'in parallel' and 'on the back of'. This constitutes 13.2% of the Non-native Metaphors. Eleven of the Non-native Metaphors involve the use of an adjective and a concrete or abstract noun. The concrete nouns are: 'critical mass', 'dump list', 'nightmarish and hair-raising comments', 'one fine day' and 'every other day'. The abstract nouns are: 'sort of life support system', 'funny thing', 'lucky thing', 'bright outlook', 'talk stage' and 'when the time is right'. This comprises 28.9% of all the Non-native Metaphors in the corpus.

7.3 Adapted Idioms

As mentioned earlier, Crewe (1977) referred to the tendency of Singaporeans to introduce small changes to idioms and other fixed expressions in native English, possibly due to unfamiliarity with the exact wording of the native idioms. He used the term 'Fractured Idioms' to refer to this feature and gave the following examples to illustrate this feature:

a. **Lastly** but not least, I must express my sincere thanks to all who have participated in this cultural evening. (last)

b. We are all aware of the proverb, "Money is the root of." (all evil)

Malaysians have the same tendency to 'adapt' English idioms in this way. Many of the expressions used in the data were of this type. The following section will analyze every one of the lexico-semantic expressions which can be regarded as adaptations of native idiomatic expressions.

7.3.1 A closed mouth gathers no foot

The following non-native idiom was heard during a Sai Baba Leadership Training camp: 'A closed mouth gathers no foot.'
The speaker meant that if we are always talking instead of doing the listening, we can easily say things which are socially embarrassing, and hence silence may be the best alternative on social occasions when we are not sure what we have to do. This non-native creation seems to be a creative blending of elements of two different native sayings namely:

'A rolling stone gathers no moss' and 'To put one's foot in one's mouth.'

Of the two possible native sayings which could have inspired this creation, the second one seems to be more semantically close to what was meant by the speaker.

7.3.2 adding on burdens to her shoulders

At an Oral Interaction Test the following comment was heard:

'Why is she adding on burdens to her shoulders?'

In native usage one can use the idiomatic expression 'to shoulder a responsibility or blame for something' as in the sentence: '...women who shoulder the double responsibility of childcare and full-time work' (OALD, 2000). However, the expression adding on burdens to one's shoulder is an Adapted Idiom in which there seems to be a verb change - the verb 'shoulder' has been changed to 'adding on'. Another non-native metaphor using the word 'shoulders' was seen in the examination script of an undergraduate:

'Therefore it is in the shoulders of the parents and teachers who can change the alarming damage that can be done to our future generation if the children are unable to analyze the news published in the newspaper.'

Here the expression 'in the shoulders' is non-native. A native speaker may
have said: 'It is up to the parents and teachers to shoulder the responsibility of doing something to equip the future generation with the skills required to enable them to analyze the news published in the newspapers.' This idiomatic expression can be considered an Adapted Idiom of 'to shoulder the responsibility'.

7.3.3 A little knowledge can be dangerous

There is a native saying: 'A little knowledge is a dangerous thing' which means that one can easily make wrong assumptions if one has limited knowledge on anything. This native saying has been changed at a Toastmaster's meeting to:

'A little knowledge can be dangerous.'

Here the original idiom has been subjected to word omission whereby the word 'thing' has been omitted by the ME speaker.

7.3.4 A packet of nasi lemak a day invites the doctor

The native idiom 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away' seems to have its own local antithesis in the form of an Adapted Idiom:

'A packet of nasi lemak a day invites the doctor.'

The writer, a student, was commenting on the oily nature of many local dishes, which she blames for the increase in food-related health problems among Malaysians. The original English idiom has been culturally adapted to something more familiar to Malaysians.

7.3.5 a person-in-the-street

The following expression was heard during an Oral Interaction Test:

'Basically I was a person-in-the-street.'

This seems to be an adapted form of the native idiom 'the man-in-the-street'
which means 'the ordinary, typical, average man' (Chambers, 1982). Perhaps this adaptation may have less gender bias in the use of language. It can be considered to be a close equivalent of the original idiom 'man-in-the-street'.

7.3.6 at the corner

In native usage 'around the corner' is a figurative expression which means 'coming soon' as in the sentence: 'There were good times around the corner' (OALD, 2000).

In ME this figurative expression seems to have been changed to 'at the corner' as seen in the following sentence taken from a talk: '...with the due date at the corner.'

The only difference between the native idiom and the non-native one is that in the native one the preposition 'around' has been used whereas in the non-native one it has been changed to 'at'. This could be considered as a close equivalent of the original idiom.

7.3.7 at the end of the whole day

The expression 'at the end of the day' is used in native British spoken English to introduce the most important fact or decision which has been made after everything else has been considered, as in the sentence: 'At the end of the day he will still have to make his own decision.' However, in ME this has been adapted or modified to 'At the end of the whole day'. This can be considered an example of syntactic redundancy.

7.3.8 battling our wits

In British English a 'Battle of Wits' is a certain verbal contest when each side uses their ability to think quickly to try to win in a verbal contest (OALD, 2000).
It can also be used generally as an idiomatic expression for any contest in which you have to think quickly and use your wits to win.

However, during a Toastmaster's speech, this idiom was adapted in another context:

'My wife and I were battling our wits in order to finish an assignment.'

The speaker was describing the problems which he and his wife faced when they accepted a certain project which had to be completed within strict deadlines. However, the 'wits' here are not even semantically related to the original sense of the Battle of Wits or the idiomatic sense. It is an Adapted Idiom which has been used in a new context. The change from 'Battle' to 'battling' has been considered an example of change from noun to verb.

7.3.9 buy into our belief

In native usage, one can say 'I'll buy that' as meaning 'I'll accept that explanation although it seems rather surprising' (Chambers, 1982). In the following sentence heard during a Toastmaster's talk to school teachers, the expression 'buy into our belief' is an adapted form of the above native metaphor:

'How they respond to us will contribute to how they buy into our belief.'

This adaptation can be considered an example of syntactic redundancy.

7.3.10 buzzing word

In native usage the 'buzz word' is 'a word or phrase, especially one connected with a particular subject, that has become fashionable and popular and is used
a lot in newspapers’, as seen in the sentence: ‘Digital is the buzzword of the moment in communicative technology’(OALD, 2000).

At an international conference on Language and Empowerment this expression seems to have been changed to ‘buzzing word’ as seen in the following sentence taken from the presentation of a ME speaker:

‘This is the buzzing word often used in organizations nowadays.’

It is obvious that the speaker means ‘buzz word’ but by adding the suffix ‘ing’ she has created a non-native version of the same expression. This can be considered an example of a change from noun to verb.

7.3.11 called...names - name-calling

In native English ‘name-calling’ is only used as a noun - it is the act of using rude or insulting words about somebody as in the sentence: ‘They were subjected to name-calling and jokes at their expense’(OALD, 2000). In ME this idiom has been adapted to a non-native form as shown in the following sentence: ‘The children called one another names.’

This can be considered an example of change from noun to verb.

7.3.12 catching two fish with one hook

The native idiom ‘To kill two birds with one stone,’ means to achieve two goals with the same effort. The non-native one may be a Semantic Transfer from Mothertongue: ‘Menangkap dua ekor ikan dengan sebentuk matakail.’

Here the figurative meaning has been adapted from the original native idiom, but the adapted version is more culturally acceptable to Malaysians. Hence this can be considered an example of cultural adaptation. No Malaysian in his right mind would kill birds with stones when he can catch them and sell them at a profit to the pet shops! This non-native idiom could be categorized as both
an Adapted Idiom as well as an example of Semantic Transfer from Mothertongue.

7.3.13 caught fire
The following sentence was heard during a Leadership Training course:
`The youth, he came back and started a movement which caught fire.'
Perhaps a native speaker would have used the following simile:`...which spread like wildfire.' The expression `caught fire' is an example of the use of a close equivalent of the native idiom.

7.3.14 eye-opening
The native idiom `eye-opener' means `something which reveals an unexpected fact' (Chambers, 1982). However, during a Toastmaster's meeting, a guest speaker modified this to `eye-opening':
`It is an eye-opening for me to come to this Toastmasters' club.'
This is an example of the change from a noun to a verb.

7.3.15 firing away at us
During a talk to secondary school teachers by some Toastmasters, the following statement was made by a young man:
`He was firing away at us but unfortunately none of them hit the target.'

The young man was not talking about a real shoot-out, but about a speaker who was presenting his speech at such a fast pace that the people in the audience could not make sense of the presentation. In native usage when one says, `Fire away!' one means `begin doing something, or go ahead' as in the sentence: `I'm ready to start writing what you're going to say - fire away!' The
above non-native usage of 'firing away' seem to be an adaptation of this sense. Hence this can be considered an example of the use of a close equivalent of a native idiom.

7.3.16 fingers are pointed at

In native usage, when one says 'the finger of suspicion is pointed at somebody', that person is suspected of having committed a crime or having been responsible for doing something wrong (OALD, 2000). 'To point the finger at someone' is to call attention to someone by blaming them for something. This is illustrated in the following sentence: 'Although I do not wish to point the finger at anyone in particular, certain people in this office have not been working as well as they might' (Chambers, 1982). In this sentence the expression is used in the active form. An adapted form of this idiom is in the passive form - 'fingers are pointed at', observed in the following sentence read in a Business news article:

'When people begin to question about the clearance of water catchment areas... fingers are pointed at structure plans as inadequate tools for the prevention of such occurrences.'

There are three differences between the native version and the non-native one. The native one is in the active voice while the non-native one is in passive voice. Secondly, the native one involves a human agent - 'somebody' - while the non-native one involves a non-human agent - 'structure plans'. Thirdly, in the native idiom, the noun 'finger' is singular while the same noun is plural in the non-native one('fingers'). Hence this can be considered as a close equivalent of a native idiom.
7.3.17 food for thoughts

In native usage 'food for thought' is 'an idea that makes you think seriously and carefully'(OALD,2000). As is the case with most native idioms, the nouns are always in the singular form. However, ME users seem to have a tendency to pluralize the nouns in idioms. Hence, an adapted version of 'food for thought' which was heard recently at a Toastmaster's meeting is in the following utterance:

'After some food for thoughts....'

The semantic sense of the non-native version is the same as that of the native version. Hence this is the use of a close equivalent of a native idiom.

7.3.18 from the mouth of

The native expression 'on everyone's lips' refers to something which is being talked about by a certain group of people. An adapted form of this expression was heard at a Toastmaster's meeting: 'from the mouth of an evaluator.'

The speaker has culturally adapted the native 'lips' to the non-native 'mouth' thus making the expression non-native expression. This could also be a Semantic Transfer from Mothertongue as in BM 'dari mulut' cab be translated to be 'from the mouth'.

7.3.19 gave me a spark

In native usage, a spark can be a small amount of a particular quality or feeling as in the sentence: 'For a moment she felt a spark of hope'(OALD,2000). The semantic senses of the native expressions 'gave me an insight into' as well as 'throws light/sheds light on (something)' seem to have combined and
adapted to "gave me a spark" in the following sentence seen in the examination script of a student:

'I once again would like to express my gratitude to you for highlighting the ideas or the recommendations you gave because it really gives me a spark to what I should do to my children and students.'

Here the writer captures a sudden feeling of motivation or resolve as to what she should do. The expression "gives me a spark" can be considered to be a close semantic equivalent of the native expression "throws light on".

7.3.20 gave me the creep

At a Toastmaster's meeting a young speaker made the following descriptive comment about a paved pathway in the midst of a dark jungle at night - an experience he was recalling as a boy scout on a camping trip:

'No matter how nicely paved it was, it still gave me the creep.'

In native usage "to give somebody the creeps" is an expression which means to make somebody nervous and slightly frightened especially because somebody or something is unpleasant or strange, as in the sentence: "This old house gives me the creeps" (OALD, 2000). The young ME speaker adapted this idiom by deleting the 's' in 'creeps.' This is a close equivalent of the original idiom.

7.3.21 get a picture

In colloquial native usage, to 'get the picture' means to understand the situation, especially one that somebody is trying to describe to you (OALD, 2000). In the data, the present researcher came across 'get a picture' which is an adapted version of the original native idiom 'get the
picture'. The original sentence is as follows:

'I must refer to the lectures to **get a picture** of our work.'

This non-native version has the same semantic sense as the original native expression 'get the picture'. It can be considered an Adapted Idiom of the original native expression 'get the picture'. This is a close equivalent of the native idiom.

**7.3.22 give words or two**

The native expression 'to say a few words' means to give a short speech. At a Toastmaster's meeting, the Master of Ceremonies, the 'Toastmaster of the Evening' invited a guest to speak by using a non-native expression, namely 'to give words or two' in the following sentence:

'I would like to give her the encouragement by allowing her to **give words or two**.'

This is a close equivalent of the native idiom 'to say a few words.'

**7.3.23 given the nod**

In native usage to 'get the nod' is an idiomatic expression which means 'to be chosen for something', or 'to be given permission or approval to do something' as in the sentence: 'He got the nod from the team manager (meaning he was chosen for the team')(OALD,2000).

The following idiomatic expression was seen in a Business news article:

'PMC has been **given the nod** by the Securities Commission to set up a new branch office in Puchong.'

In a semantic sense it means the same as the native idiom 'get the nod', but it is clearly an Adapted Idiom as the original version 'get' has been changed to 'given.'
7.3.24 giving rooms

In native usage, when one says 'giving room for something' one is talking about the possibility of something existing or happening, as in the sentence: 'He had to be certain. There could be no room for doubt' (OALD, 2000).

The native version of this is 'giving rooms' as used in the following sentence heard at an Oral Interaction Test:

'Why are you giving rooms for the problem to grow and grow?'

This non-native version has the same semantic sense as the native version, though the idiom 'room' has been pluralized. It can be considered as a close equivalent of the original idiom.

7.3.25 happily ever after

In all native fables and tales, at the end the main characters 'live happily ever after'. This phrase seems to have been adapted idiomatically in the following expression heard in a Toastmaster's speech on an adapted form of the fable 'Rumplestilskin':

'...and everybody is happily ever after.'

This could be considered a close equivalent of the original expression 'live happily ever after'.

7.3.26 heart-and-heart talk

The native expression 'have a heart-to-heart talk' means to 'have a conversation in which two people talk honestly about their feelings and personal problems' (OALD, 2000).

This idiomatic expression has been adapted in the following sentence heard during an Oral Interaction test of in-service teachers:

'Daud should have a heart-and-heart talk....'
The speaker was referring to a situation in which the main character, a young teacher named Daud, was in a difficult situation in a new school. In the ME adapted version, the preposition 'to' has been replaced with the conjunction 'and'. This can be considered a close equivalent of the original expression.

7.3.27 here and there and there and here

In native usage the figurative expression 'here and there' means 'in various places'. However, in a comment made by my husband while talking on his handphone the expression was extended to 'there and here' as well:

'Now I realize these fellows are giving here and there and there and here.'

This non-native adaptation of 'here and there' has the effect of 'Lexical Double Effects' with a difference - there is a reduplication of the sound effects of 'here and there' in the non-native 'here and there and there and here'(see 'Lexical Double Effects'). This can be considered an example of syntactic redundancy.

7.3.28 hitting on the target of

In native usage the 'target' can be used figuratively as a verb as in the sentences: 'The campaign is mainly targeted on the young'/'a new magazine that targets single men'(OALD,2000). The meaning here is 'to try to have an effect on a particular group of people.' The non-native equivalent of this is seen in the following utterance heard at a women's camp organized by the Sai Baba organization:

'Here we are hitting on the target of women.'

The sense here is the same as the native sense of 'targeting' but the structure is non-native - 'hitting on the target'. The speaker seems to have borrowed the expression from the literal sense of hitting a tangible target as in the
sentence: 'The missiles are mainly targeted at the United States' (OALD, 2000). As the speaker seems to have changed 'targeting' to 'hitting on the target of' this could be considered an example of verb change.

7.3.29 in her heart

The native expression 'at the heart of the issue' refers to 'the most important part of the issue' as in the sentence:

'The distinction between right and wrong lies at the heart of all questions of morality' (OALD, 2000). As such, the non-native expression 'in her heart' in the following sentence could be an adapted idiom:

'She has the students' welfare in her heart.'

The speaker may have meant 'She has the students' welfare at heart. In native usage 'at heart' means 'really' as in: 'He seems rather stern but he is at heart a very kind man.' The adapted idiom is a close equivalent of the original version.

7.3.30 In one way or another

In native usage the idiom 'one way and another' is used informally when one considers various qualities, features etc. of something, as used in the sentence: 'This has been a very trying week, one way and another' (Chambers, 1982).

In ME the above native expression has been modified to 'one way or another' which is used to mean 'in whichever way possible' as in the following sentence:

'You should not be suffering from asthma every night. In one way or another you have to solve this health problem of yours.'

As this is a close equivalent of the native version, it has been categorized as an Adapted Idiom.
7.3.31 in the heydays

The native version of this expression is 'in its heydey' and it is usually in singular form. It means the time when somebody or something had most power or success or when it was most popular, as in the sentence: 'In its heydey, the company ran trains every fifteen minutes'(OALD,2000).

A non-native version of this expression was noted in the following sentence taken from a Business news article:

'He added that overall production of carbon steel pipes from local manufacturers has dropped to 60,000 metric tonnes per month compared to 120,000 MT in the heydays.'

This non-native usage appears to be a close equivalent of the native idiom.

7.3.32 join her onto her bandwagon

The native idiom 'jump on the band wagon' is a derogative usage which means to take part in something, or show interest in something because it is fashionable or because it is going to be of some advantage to oneself(Chambers, 1982).

In the following sentence heard at a Toastmasters' meeting, this idiom seems to have been adapted:

'I urge you to subsequently join her onto her bandwagon.'

In the above usage, there is a positive connotation rather than the negative native connotation. There are also other changes in the original idiom, such as the expression 'join her onto her bandwagon' rather than the native 'jump on the bandwagon.' This adaptation can be considered an example of verb change.
7.3.33 juggles with so many things

At a ladies' seminar organized by the Sai Baba organization, the following comment was made by the national coordinator:

'We have more problems than the men because we have to juggle with so many things.'

In native usage, the figurative usage of 'juggle' as in the above context, would mean 'to try to deal with two or more important jobs or activities at the same time so that you can fit all of them into our life' as in the sentence:

'Working women are used to juggling their jobs, their children's needs and their housework' (OALD, 2000). The native expression does not have the preposition 'with'. In addition, in the native context, one juggles different responsibilities or duties, while in the non-native sentence, one 'juggles with so many things'. In this sentence 'juggles with' can be considered an example of syntactic redundancy.

7.3.34 Killing two birds with a stone

During an Oral Interaction Test, the following non-native idiom was heard:

'Killing two birds with a stone.'

This seems to be an adapted form of the native proverb: 'Killing two birds with one stone.' It is a close equivalent of the original proverb.

7.3.35 kith and kins

In native usage 'kith and kin' is an old-fashioned idiom which means 'relatives' (OALD, 2000). The following non-native version was observed in the data: 'kith and kins'. By pluralising 'kin' the ME speaker has adapted the original expression to non-native usage. This is because ME speakers have a tendency to pluralise abstract nouns in native expressions. The non-native
version is a close equivalent of the original expression.

7.3.36 like a blink

The sentence below was seen in the Interactive Journal of an undergraduate:

'It was just like a blink from the first day till today.'

The writer must have adapted the native idiom 'in the twinkling of an eye' as in the sentence: 'Suddenly in the twinkling of an eye, her whole life had been turned upside down'(OALD,2000). The non-native expression is a close equivalent of the original expression.

7.3.37 make a mole into a mountain

The native idiom 'Don't make a mountain out of a molehill' is a proverb which means making an unimportant matter seem important (OALD,2000).

Perhaps the concept of a 'molehill' is an unfamiliar one to most Malaysian English speakers. They seem to prefer 'moles' to 'molehills'. This may explain the fact that on two occasions the following non-native version of this native proverb was heard, namely:

'Don't make a mole into a mountain.'

This seems to be an interesting reversal of word order in the non-native version of the original proverb. The non-native idea of a mole being regarded as a mountain seems to have replaced the native idea of a molehill being regarded as a mountain.

7.3.38 many a times

In native usage 'many a ____' is a formal, old-fashioned expression. It is used with a singular noun and a verb to mean 'a large number of' and an example of a sentence with this expression is: 'Many a good man has been destroyed by drink'(OALD,2000).
In the data, an adapted form of this was: **many a times.** This non-native version seems to have a plural noun, whereas in the native version, the noun is always singular. It can be considered as the use of a close equivalent.

**7.3.39 men-in-the-street**

In native usage 'the man(or woman) in the street' is an expression meaning an average man(or woman). As mentioned earlier, ME speakers have a tendency to pluralise even native idiomatic expressions as in the case of the expression 'men-in-the-street.' This could be regarded as the use of a close equivalent.

**7.3.40 mind-warming - heart-warming**

At a Toastmaster's meeting the following comment was made by one of the officials:

'I believe this is a very constructive and **mind-warming** session.'

The expression 'mind-warming' is similar to a native expression namely 'heart-warming.' As in the case of 'last of all', the speaker may have meant to say 'heart-warming', but instead created an adapted idiom similar to 'heart-warming'. This could be considered as use of a close equivalent.

**7.3.41 my lucky star**

The native idiom 'thank your lucky stars' means to 'feel very grateful and lucky about something'(OALD,2000). In the following utterance made during a Toastmaster's speech, this expression seems to have been adapted by the ME speaker and thus used in a non-native way:

'It was my lucky star when I reached the river.'

The speaker was expressing her relief when she reached a river after venturing alone in a cave in Sarawak. Note that the non-native version omits
the verb 'thank' which is present in the original native version. Hence this is an example of word omission.

7.3.42 narrows its losses

In native usage 'narrows' is used as a phrasal verb in the following way - when one narrows something down (to something), one reduces the number of possibilities or choices as used in the sentence: 'We have narrowed down the list to four candidates' (OALD, 2000).

In the data the word 'narrows' was used non-natively in the following sentence taken from a Business news article:

'TRI narrows its losses on the back of commendable subscriber growth.'

In the above context, the process of 'narrowing' is a synonym for 'reducing losses'. Hence this is a use of a close equivalent to the native idiom.

7.3.43 nature's lover

In native usage a 'nature lover' is a person who 'likes or enjoys the world of nature' (OALD, 2000). However, in the non-native version this has been modified to 'nature's lover.' The semantic sense is the same but the addition of the possessive form (')s has caused this expression to be an Adapted Idiom. This could be considered as the use of a close equivalent to the native idiom.

7.3.44 it oils, it greases

The following was heard during a conference presentation:

'...so that it facilitates, it oils, it greases the process of negotiation.'

In British English, the expression 'oil the wheels' is similar to the American English expression 'grease the wheels' which is an idiomatic way of saying 'to help something to happen easily and without problems, especially in business
or politics (OALD, 2000).

In the ME expression recorded in the data, this figurative expression has been shortened to just ‘it oils, it greases’. The semantic sense seems to be the same but the form has changed. Hence this can be regarded as an Adapted Idiom as it is a local version of the native figurative usage of ‘oils’ and ‘greases’. This usage could be regarded as an example of syntactic redundancy. In addition, the repetition of synonyms of ‘facilitates’ such as ‘greases’ and ‘oils’ make these Redundant Synonyms (See ‘Redundant Synonyms’).

7.3.45 put an end to

In native usage when one says ‘to put a stop to’ one means ‘to take action to stop something’ (OALD, 2000). The following expression appears to be a non-native adapted version of this native idiom: ‘put an end to (the nonsense)’. This expression is an idiomatic way of saying ‘to stop something wrong from being continued’. It is an example of the use of a close equivalent to the native idiom.

7.3.46 putting in

In native usage, a group of people can ‘put their heads together’ to solve a problem. There is also the native abstract noun ‘input’. This seems to have been converted to a verb in the following adaptation of this native idiom:

‘All of us are putting in to solve this problem.’

7.3.47 put their legs back

During an Oral Interaction Test, the following was heard:

‘If this does not happen, the students will put their legs back in all situations.

The speaker meant that the students will not take the initiative unless their
teachers motivate them to do so. The expression 'put their legs back' appears to be a non-native version of the native expression 'take a back seat' meaning 'not taking an active role' or 'have a laid-back attitude' meaning 'seeming relaxed and not to worry about anything'. Perhaps this non-native version is related to the Malaysian cultural expression 'to shake legs'. If that is so, this could be a case of cultural adaptation.

7.3.48 Rules are to be broken

There is a native proverb: 'Rules are meant to be broken'. An ME speaker modified this during an Oral Interaction Test at the university recently:

'Rules are to be broken.'

Here the speaker has reduced the original idiomatic expression 'meant to be broken' by one word 'meant'. This is an example of word omission whereby ME speakers have a tendency to reduce native idioms by leaving out words.

7.3.49 save the last for best

Some time ago there was a well-known song in the American pop-charts entitled 'Save the Best for Last', popularized by a singer named Vanessa Williams. This seems to have become modified into an ME idiom in the following utterance heard at a Toastmaster's meeting:

'We decided to save the last for best.'

This is an example of reversal of the word order, specifically the words 'best' and 'last' in the original title of the song.

7.3.50 slip of tongue

In native usage 'a slip of the tongue' is a small mistake in something that you have written or said. As was the case with the earlier idiom 'rules are to be broken', an ME speaker was heard omitting the articles and thus reducing
this idiomatic expression as well, to: `slip of tongue'. This is an example of word omission.

7.3.51 Charity starts at home

In the Interactive Journal of a student, the following adapted idiom was seen: `As the saying goes, "Charity starts at home." This is an adaptation of the native proverb `Charity begins at home.' The speaker has used a close equivalent of the original proverb.

7.3.52 step on somebody's mark

In British English `to tread on somebody's toes' is an informal idiomatic expression which means `to offend or annoy somebody, especially by getting involved in something which is their responsibility' as used in the sentence: `I don't want to tread on anybody's toes, so I'll keep quiet' (OALD, 2000). The American English version is `to step on somebody's toes'.

In the data this expression seems to have been adapted by a ME speaker in the following way: `In order that Jane should not step on Mrs Sally's mark....' It appears here that the speaker has blended two figurative expressions which are semantically different. The first one is `to step on somebody's toes', and the other one is `to toe the mark' which is an American English idiom. It means `to say or do what somebody in authority asks you to say or do, even if you do not share the same opinions.'

The British English equivalent of this idiom is `to toe the line', as in the sentence: `One or two of them refused to toe the line' (OALD, 2000). The ME speaker has confused the two idioms and combined them into a new non-native one. Semantically the sense is still that of the British idiom `to step on somebody's toes.' This is an example of creative blending.

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7.3.53  story went round town

The following expression was heard at a Toastmaster’s meeting:

`...and the story went round town....’

The speaker was referring to a certain person who had made news on the local grapevine. This idiom may be a modified form of the native expression `talk of the town’ meaning `someone or something that everyone in society is talking about’ as used in the sentence: `Their divorce is the talk of the town’(Chambers, 1982). The expression `story went round town’ is an example of the use of a close equivalent of the original idiom `talk of the town’.

7.3.54 take my hats off to you

A comment made at a Toastmaster’s meeting was recorded as

an Adapted Idiom:

`I’d like to take my hats off to you.’

This is a close equivalent of the native expression `take my hat off to somebody’. In British English or American English it is an informal way of saying that you admire somebody for something which they have done (OALD,20000). In the native version the word `hat’ is always in the singular form.

In Malaysian English the singular form `hat’ has been pluralised to `hats’, but the native meaning has been retained.

7.3.55 Think of the Devil

In native English, people use the colloquial expression `talk of the Devil’ when somebody they have just been talking about appears unexpectedly (OALD,2000). An adapted version of this expression was recorded at a Toastmaster’s meeting when the same situation was encountered:

`Think of the Devil.’
This is an example of the use of a close equivalent to the native idiom.

7.3.56 to be as Jack as a dull boy

There is a native proverb: ‘All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.’ This native proverb seems to have been adapted and incorporated in the following statement made by an undergraduate who is also a Primary school teacher:

‘Definitely we don’t want our children to be as Jack as a dull boy, just studying - skinny and weak.’

Due to the omission of several words in the adapted proverb, this could be regarded as an example of word omission.

7.3.57 under the nose of/under the eyes of

During an Oral Interaction Test the following statement was made using the idiomatic expression ‘under the nose of’ or ‘under the eyes of’:

‘I am very sure that they have no choice but to be under the nose of their teachers.’

In native usage the expression ‘to be under someone’s very nose’ means ‘to be right in front of someone’ or ‘to be clearly seen by someone’ as in the sentence: ‘The book I was looking for was right under my very nose’ (OALD, 2000). It can also mean ‘while someone is there’ as in the sentence: ‘He stole the jewels from under my very nose.’ The above expression may be an adaptation of these senses.

During another Oral Interaction Test session, a similar expression was used in the following statement:

‘It could still be under the eyes of the teachers.’

The speaker was talking about school projects that were carried out during school vacation under the supervision of the teachers. Both the expressions
`under the nose of` and `under the eyes of` can be regarded as use of close equivalents of the native idiom, `to be under the very nose of someone`.

7.3.58 a very deep scar

During an Oral Interaction test, the following statement was made:

`Personally I feel if we cane a child it will have a very deep scar on the child`.

The expression `a very deep scar` appears to be referring to a physical scar, from a native viewpoint. A native speaker would have said: `cause a deep emotional scar in the child` rather than `have a very deep scar on the child`. The above non-native version appears to be a close equivalent of the native concept of `emotional scar`.

7.3.59 We don't preach what we say

In the Interactive Journal of an undergraduate who is also an in-service teacher, the following comment was read:

`What is the use of the government asking the people to respect and appreciate each other's values and rights but we don't preach what we say?`

This writer was commenting on the racism that existed in his school. The original native proverb which seems to have been adapted here is: `Practise what you preach.` In the adapted version, the verb `preach` has changed position. As such, it could be regarded as an example of `reversal of word order`.

7.3.60 When is the buck going to stop?

The native idiom `to pass the buck` means `to make somebody else responsible for what one has to do` (OALD, 2000). A related native idiom is `the buck stops here.` However, during a Toastmaster's speech, the following
was heard:

`...until you recognize the problem and ask, "Hey, when is the buck going to stop?'"

It appears clear that the speaker has adapted the native idiom `the buck stops here' in the above sentence. Due to the use of `stop' rather than `pass', this could be considered an example of `verb change'.

7.3.61 When we throw away the baby together with the bath water

The native idiom `to throw out the baby with the bath water' means `to be so enthusiastic about changing or reorganizing things and getting rid of old ideas, that one destroys or disposes of things that are essential' as used in the sentence: `In abolishing the police force because it was corrupt, the authorities had thrown out the baby with the bath water' (Chambers, 1982).

This native idiom seems to have been adapted in the following sentence heard at a Toastmaster's meeting:

`When we throw away the baby together with the bath water what do we have?'

In the native version the verb is `throw out' but in the non-native version above, the verb is `throw away'. In addition, in the native version the preposition is `with' whereas in the non-native version, it is `together'. Hence this can be regarded as the use of a close equivalent to the native proverb.

7.3.62 will stare at you

In native usage when something `stares you in the face' it is an idiomatic way of describing something that is obvious or easy to see as in the sentence: `The answer was staring us in the face' (OALD, 2000).

A close equivalent of this idiom was heard in the following utterance made by
a paper presenter at a conference on Language and Empowerment recently: 'As you enter the court "Gunakan Bahasa Kebangsaan" will stare at you.' The ME speaker who used this expression was adapting the native idiom but utilizing the same semantic sense. Hence this can be sub-categorized as 'use of a close equivalent'.

7.3.63 worse come to worse

In native usage the expression 'if the worst comes to the worst' means 'if the worst possible thing happens' as in the sentence: 'If the worst comes to the worst and your business fails, you can always sell your house'(Chambers, 1982). In the ME version, this expression has been modified to 'worse comes to worse' as in the following statement: 'Worse come to worse, maybe she has to bring the problem to the Ministry.' It is noted that this non-native version has modified the superlative form to comparative form. In addition, the reciprocal verb 'bring' would be 'take' in native usage (See Variation of Reciprocals). Another example of the adaptation of the idiom 'if the worst comes to the worst' was seen in a student's Interactive Journal:

'Imagine how would I felt and come to the worst I had to run up and down to visit my mother who was admitted in Assunta Hospital for check-up.'

The expression 'to run up and down' can also be regarded as an Adapted Idiom of the native expression: 'run back and forth'(Chambers, 1982). The non-native idioms can be regarded as 'close equivalents' of the native idiom 'if the worst comes to the worst'.

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7.4 Types of Adapted Idioms

Out of the 63 examples Adapted Idioms, it was observed that there were 8 types, namely:

7.4.1 Use of Close Equivalent
7.4.2 Word Omission
7.4.3 Verb Change
7.4.4 Reversal of Word Order
7.4.5 Creative Blending
7.4.6 Cultural Adaptation
7.4.7 Syntactic Redundancy
7.4.8 Noun-verb Conversion

The breakdown of the 8 types of Adapted Idioms is shown in Table 7.3 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Adapted Idioms</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Use of Close Equivalent</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Word Omission</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Verb Change</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reversal of Word Order</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Creative Blending</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cultural Adaptation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Syntactic Redundancy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Noun-verb Conversion</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total No. of Non-Native Lexis:</strong></td>
<td><strong>64</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.4.1 Use of Close Equivalent

The first type involves the use of a close equivalent of an important word such as a verb in the native idiom. A close equivalent of the verb is used in 'When we throw away the baby together with the bathwater'. The native version is 'When we throw out the baby with the bathwater'.

Another example is 'Think of the Devil' which is an adapted form of the native version: 'Talk of the Devil'. Here the verb 'talk' has been changed to 'think'.

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Yet another example is 'caught fire' which is an adapted form of 'spread like wildfire'. In this example, the verb 'spread' has been changed to 'caught'.

7.4.2 Word Omission

This type involves the omission of one or two words. One type of omission seems to be omission of articles. An example is the omission of 'the' in the non-native version of 'when the worst comes to the worst': 'Worse comes to worse'. A second example is the omission of 'a' and 'the' in 'slip of tongue'. Another type of omission is leaving out a part of the idiom resulting in a truncated version of the original idiom. The example 'A little knowledge can be dangerous' is a truncated form of 'A little knowledge is a dangerous thing'. Another example is 'Rules are to be broken' which is a truncated form of 'Rules are meant to be broken.'

A third example is 'to be as Jack as a dull boy' which is a truncated form of 'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.'

7.4.3 Verb Change

The second type involves a change in the tense form of the verb or even a syntactic change in the idiom.

The verb form is changed from one tense to another as in the case of the non-native idiom 'When is the buck going to stop?' This is a modification of 'The buck stops here'. Here the original native idiom has been converted syntactically to a question as well.

7.4.4 Reversal of Word Order

The fourth type involves a non-native reversal of word order in proverbs such as in the case of 'We don't preach what we say' in which the word 'preach' would be at the end in the native version namely: 'We don't practise what we preach'.

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Another example of this is 'Don’t make a mole into a mountain' where the original native idiom is 'Don’t make a mountain out of a molehill.' A third example is 'Save the last for best' which is a line from a song which goes 'Save the best for last'.

7.4.5 Creative Blending

The fifth type involves the unusual creation of new idioms which consist of an odd mixture of elements from different native idioms. An example is 'A closed mouth gathers no foot' which seems to be a combination of two native idioms namely 'A rolling stone gathers no moss' and 'To put one's foot in one's mouth'.

7.4.6 Cultural Adaptation

The sixth type involves a change of the cultural elements involved to convey the same sense in a more Malaysian way. This type of adaptation was also observed by Yen(1990) when she mentioned that the Malaysian expression 'rice bowl' is equivalent to the native speaker's 'bread and butter'. An example of this in this study is 'A packet of nasi lemak a day invites the doctor'. This seems to be an ME antithesis of the native idiom 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away.'

A third example is 'Catching two fish with one hook' which is a non-native adaptation of 'To kill two birds with one stone.'

Another interesting fact which was observed was that, sometimes there were more than one adaptation of a native idiom. An example of this was 'if the worst comes to the worst', which was modified into 'worse come to worse' and 'come to the worse'. Another example is the non-native expressions 'in the shoulders' and 'adding on burdens to one's shoulders' which are
adaptations of the native expression 'to shoulder one's responsibilities'.

7.4.7 Syntactic Redundancy

When analyzing the data, it was observed that some of the adapted idioms contained more words than the original native idioms. In other words, there was a tendency for redundancy.

An example of this is shown below:

Adapted Idiom: At the end of the whole day
Possible native version: at the end of the day

7.4.8 Noun-verb Conversion

Another type of adaptation was the tendency to convert the noun in the original idiom to a verb, or convert the verb in the original idiom into a noun. An example of the former is:

Adapted Idiom: 'All of us are putting in to solve this problem.'
Possible native version: 'All of us are giving our input to solve this problem.'

The following section will summarize the 8 types of Adapted Idioms and some of the possible reasons for the adaptations.

7.5 Summary of Types of Adapted Idioms

'Use of Close Equivalent' involves the use of a close equivalent of an important word such as a verb in the native idiom. An example of a close equivalent of the verb is used in 'When we throw away the baby together with the bathwater'. In the native version, the verb is 'throw out: 'When we throw out the baby with the bathwater'.

'Word Omission' involves the omission of one or two words. Sometimes there is omission of articles, as in the expression 'Worse comes to worse' in which the article 'the' has been omitted from the original native version 'when the
worst comes to the worst'. Sometimes a part of the native idiom is omitted resulting in a truncated version of the original idiom as in 'A little knowledge can be dangerous' which is a truncated form of 'A little knowledge is a dangerous thing'.

'Verb Change' involves a change in the tense form of the verb or even a syntactic change in the idiom. Often the verb form is changed from one tense to another as in the case of the non-native idiom 'When is the buck going to stop?' This is a modification of 'The buck stops here'. Here the original native idiom has been converted syntactically to a question as well.

'Reversal of Word Order' involves the non-native reversal of word order in proverbs such as in the case of 'We don't preach what we say' in which the word 'preach' would be in second place in the native version namely: 'We don't practise what we preach'.

'Creative Blending' involves the unusual creation of new idioms which consist of an odd mixture of elements from more than one native idiom. An example is 'A closed mouth gathers no foot' which seems to be a combination of two native idioms namely 'A rolling stone gathers no moss' and 'To put one's foot in one's mouth'.

'Cultural Adaptation' involves a change of the cultural elements involved to convey the same sense in a Malaysian way. An example of this is 'A packet of nasi lemak a day invites the doctor' which seems to be an ME antithesis of the native idiom 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away.'

'Syntactic Redundancy' involves the use of redundant words, meaning that the adapted idioms contained more words than the original native idioms. An example of this is 'At the end of the day' while the native version is 'At the
end of the day'.

'Noun-verb Conversion' involves the conversion of the noun in the native idiom to a verb, or the verb in the original idiom into a noun. An example of the former is 'All of us are putting in to solve this problem' while the native version is 'All of us giving our input to solve this problem.'

7.6 Possible Reasons for Adapted Idioms

While Crewe (1977) has attributed the tendency among Singaporeans to adapt native idioms to their unfamiliarity with the exact wording of the original idioms, the present researcher has attributed this tendency to other possible factors as well.

It is possible that ME users may omit one or two words due to unfamiliarity with the original versions, but another possible factor could be linguistic creativity. Some of the Adapted Idioms seem to be creative adaptations which bear some resemblance to the original idioms. One example of this is 'A closed mouth gathers no foot' which seems to be a combination of two native idioms namely 'A rolling stone gathers no moss' and 'To put one's foot in one's mouth'.

ME users also tend to include cultural elements reflecting the lifestyle of Malaysians in their adaptations. An example of this is 'A packet of nasi lemak a day invites the doctor' which seems to be a non-native antithesis of the native idiom 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away' which every Malaysian would instantly understand! Another example is 'Catching two fish with one hook' which is a non-native adaptation of 'To kill two birds with one stone'.

The third tendency for ME users is to use 'verbal short-cuts' by the omission of certain words from the native idioms, which the ME user probably
considers unimportant. One type of omission seems to be omission of articles. An example is the omission of 'the' in the non-native idiom 'Worse comes to worse'. A second example is the omission of 'a' and 'the' in 'slip of tongue'. Another type of omission is leaving out a part of the idiom resulting in a truncated version of the original idiom. The first example is 'A little knowledge can be dangerous' which is a truncated form of 'A little knowledge is a dangerous thing'.

Another possible reason for adaptation is the tendency for substitution. Sometimes a verb is substituted with a close equivalent as in 'When we throw away the baby together with the bathwater'. The native version in this case is 'When we throw out the baby with the bathwater'. Another example is 'Think of the Devil'. This is an adapted form of the native version: 'Talk of the Devil' in which the verb 'talk' has been substituted with the verb 'think'. Another example is seen in 'caught fire' which is an adapted form of 'spread like wildfire'. The verb 'caught' has substituted the verb 'spread'.

The fourth possible reason for adaptation is the tendency for a non-native reversal of the native word order in proverbs such as in the case of 'We don't preach what we say'. The word 'preach would be in second place in the native version namely: 'We don't practise what we preach'.

Another example of non-native reversal is 'Don't make a mole into a mountain' where the original native idiom is 'Don't make a mountain out of a molehill.'

The third example of non-native reversal is 'Save the last for best' which is a line from a song which goes 'Save the best for last'.
7.7 Local Idioms

Unlike Non-native Idioms, which are expressions, Local Idioms are often complete sentences. They are usually a common part of everyday conversations of ME speakers.

7.7.1 I'll catch up with you

The above expression seems to be a popular ME 'closer' used upon taking leave at the end of a conversation and is usually used in informal contexts such as between friends. The native equivalent is 'I'll catch you later' meaning 'I'll speak to you again.' There is a sense of the speaker wanting to continue with the previous discussion on a later occasion, in the native version. However, in the non-native version, there is a sense of wanting to continue the socializing that probably took place before this statement. The ME version hints that the earlier social interaction will be continued at a later time while the native one clearly indicates that the speaker will follow-up on the matter that was earlier discussed.

7.7.2 No money no talk

This is apparently the translation of a Cantonese proverb which is often used by Malaysian Chinese to mean something like the native saying 'put your money where your mouth is' (OALD, 2000). It simply means that one should not suggest any new ideas unless one is willing to spend money on it. This idiom also means that only those who are willing to pay are empowered to make any demands in a negotiation or deal.

7.7.3 running all over the place

The ME expression 'running all over the place' is an idiomatic expression which has the sense of 'working very hard negotiating with many groups or
people to get something important done'. There is also a connotation of being harassed and confused.

7.7.4 Long time no see

This is a locally coined idiomatic expression that according to Shelley (1995) is the 'paragon of pidgin which was used a lot in Malaysia and Singapore before 1960 but which is slowly disappearing as a hackneyed jocose opener.' The researcher was greeted with this expression by an elderly waitress at a restaurant.

7.7.5 so far so good

A non-native expression which is common in spoken ME is 'far so good' which means 'things are alright so far but we are not sure about how they will fare in the future'. There is an element of uncertainty in this non-native expression.

7.7.6 squeezed our grey cells and creativity to the brim

At a Toastmaster's meeting, the following non-native idiom was heard:

'Ve believe we have squeezed our grey cells and creativity to the brim.'

A native speaker would have said: 'We believe we have racked our brains to the utmost' which would have meant the same thing, namely 'to exert one's mind greatly in trying to think of something' (Chambers, 1982).

7.7.7 You can't expect a person to marry today and give birth tomorrow

The above local creation was heard during a panel discussion among in-service teachers who are also undergraduates. The speaker was a middle-aged man with seventeen years of experience as a Primary school teacher and several years as a unionist. He was playing the role of a factory manager whose factory had polluted the rivers in the past. He was appealing to
environmentalists and government officials for more time to be given a second chance to build another factory in Native American tribal land. This was his response when he was criticized by all the officials concerned. This proverb could be a translation of a BM proverb.

7.7.8 You hope the fence to guard the paddy, but finally the fence eats the padi

During an Oral Interaction Test, a student made a direct translation of a Malay proverb:

You hope the fence to guard the paddy, but finally the fence eats the paddy.'

The above is a direct translation of the Malay proverb: 'Harapkan pagar, pagar makan padi.' This expression is a loan translation which could be categorized under both 'Local Idiom' as well as 'Semantic Transfer from Mothertongue' (see 'Semantic Transfer from Mothertongue')

7.8 Sub-categories of Non-native Idioms

In Table 7.4 below, the researcher has divided the three sub-categories of Non-native Idioms into actual numbers and percentages.

Table 7.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-categories</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-native Metaphors</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Idioms</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapted Idioms</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.4 indicates that there are altogether 38 Non-native Metaphors, 8 Native Idioms and 63 Adapted Idioms in the corpus of 109 Non-native
Idioms. 'Adapted Idioms' is the largest sub-category as it constitutes 57.8% of the 109 Non-native Idioms. This large percentage seems to show that ME users, like the users of Singaporean English (Crewe, 1977), have a strong tendency to make modifications to idioms and other fixed expressions in native English.

The second sub-category of Non-native Idioms, namely 'Non-native Metaphor' consisted of 38 examples or 34.9% of the total number of Non-native Idioms. The third sub-category, namely 'Local Idioms' consisted of 8 examples or only 7.3% of the total. However, despite the small number, it was observed that they were all common features of ME.

In conclusion, we have sub-divided Non-native Idioms into three sub-categories, namely 'Non-native Metaphors', 'Local Idioms' and 'Adapted Idioms'. Of these three, the largest sub-category seems to be 'Adapted Idiom' which constitutes 57.8% of the total number. This lends support to earlier research that reveals the tendency for non-native users of English to adapt idiomatic expressions from native English rather than to create new ones.