

CHAPTER TWO: TYPES OF IDIOMS

I. Definition of Idiom

1. The Creation of Idiom

A study of language in general asks whether there are any special features that every language holds. C.F. Hockett explains, “There are certain matters which are relevant both in understanding how a language works at a given time and also in connection with linguistic change. One clear example of this is idiom-formation.”¹⁴ Every language retains idioms with the specialized features in linguistic forms. Idiom is functional and is one of the manifold figurative speeches in linguistics. It is commonly being used by the people of a particular region or country for informal and formal, spoken and written purposes. And yet, while trying to define the idiom, it is still remains to be complicated and tough to debate upon a precise scope or limitation of it even today.

It is interesting to know how the creation of idiom has taken place. According to Hockett, “the mere occurrence of a nonce-form for the first time does not in itself constitute the creation of a new idiom. An additional ingredient is required: something more or less unusual either about the structure of the newly-produced nonce-form, or about the attendant circumstances, or both, which the form memorable. As we go about the business of living, we constantly meet circumstances which are not exactly like anything in our previous experience. When we react via

¹⁴ Hockett, C. F., *A Course in Modern Linguistics*, oxford & IBH, Indian Edn., 1970, Delhi, p. 303

speech to such partially new circumstances, we may produce a phrase or an utterance which is understandable only because those who hear it are also confronted by the new circumstances. Alternatively, an individual may react to conventional circumstances with a bit of speech which is somewhat unconventional — once again being understood because of context. Given any such novelty, either of expression or of circumstances or of both, the event bestows special meaning on the linguistic form which is used, or the latter becomes idiomatic.”¹⁵

The current information from the internet also adds to that, “This collocation — words commonly used in a group — changes the definition of each of the words that exists. As an expression, the word-group becomes a team, so to speak. That is, the collocated words develop a socialized meaning as a whole and an idiom is born.”¹⁶ Similar to that, John Saeed defines “... an idiom as words collocated together which become fossilized, and fixed over time.”¹⁷ According to the detailed introduction of the Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms (the rest: ODEI), “Historically, **pure idioms** form the end-point of a process by which **word-combinations** first establish themselves through constant re-use, then undergo figurative extension and finally petrify or congeal.”¹⁸

All the above views put emphasis on the passing of TIME. Let us have some examples of phrasal idioms in English for easy understanding, “in

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 304

¹⁶ The on-line Encyclopedia Wikipedia also shows some ideas on the definition of idiom ; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/idiom>

¹⁷ Saeed, John I., *Semantics*, 2nd Ed., Oxford, 2003, Blackwell, p.60

¹⁸ ODEI, 1st Indian Edn., 2007, p. xii

the name of law”. How did it turn into an idiom? At the beginning did it have any particular meaning? Its meaning could have been very simple at least in a sentence at first. But with the passing of TIME, people might have put emphasis on the meaning by the authority of general use and often used it in connection with their favorite issues. Accordingly, it would have turned into a common phrase belonging to the category of an idiom. Let us see two more examples, “little strokes fell great oaks,” belonging to ‘saying’ in the present classification, and “those were the days!” belonging to ‘sentence idiom’. How were these two expressions turned into an idiom? There does not seem to be anything unusual about the form of the utterance. These two above expressions perhaps did not convey anything special in the past, but later on it certainly assumed unique connotations. Along with frequent use, different circumstances can also be a factor in making idiom-formation. For the rest, as guessed normally, might have passed the process as the first instance to be fixed as an idiom.

Hockett says, “in every living language, new idioms are constantly being created, some destined to occur only once or twice and then to be forgotten, others due to survive for a long time. ... But any actual new coinage may constitute a change, no matter how small, in the grammatical systems of the language, and in the course of time the cumulative effect of many such small changes can be great. Thus it is that idiom formation is also an important matter in historical linguistics.”¹⁹ Therefore, in order to become an idiom, there has to be close historical, geographical and cultural forces associated with it.

¹⁹ Hockett, C. F., *ibid.*, p. 303

People living in different cultural regions with dissimilar history may not completely understand particular expressions like idioms. Let us now talk of using idioms in 'SPACE'. Let us ask: how did the Westerners, holding the Christian belief, understand the Buddha's teaching or the Zen Buddhism of the Orient, long time before the Buddhism was transmitted there? In that sense we have to possess the common or similar geographical and cultural base with the person in a talk so that people may conceptually not misunderstand their talk. Those common geographical or spatial factors can play great role in people's communication and conversation.

Apart from time and space, in the creation of an idiom, there seems to be another factor and that is of human-class relating to social and cultural division. For example, there are words like online, offline, window, enter-key, space-bar, IP address and so on. Today's young generation indulges largely into computer world such as computer games, internet chat, emailing, making homepage or own space and so on. They are using and coining new words. So the older generation or anyone who is not much interested in that field, finds the computer world new and strange. Therefore they hardly understand the words used for computer or internet. This kind of miscommunication may occur due to the cultural factor or differences in habit, tendency or daily routine. Besides, the social classes may also divide people. According to the level of knowledge, power, money or beauty, people naturally and frequently communicate with each other within their close categories in the society. In general, one links a social class to a set of linguistic formations. In the ancient times, partitions between social classes were more obvious than in the modern

times. But even today some kind of social gap is still visible, although mass-media like television, newspaper, and internet is available in the society.

Along with these two kinds of geographical and socio-cultural background, we at last got some idea that the creation of idiom is totally dependent on the common use by people and its effect in the society. It is well related to the trend in verbal communication, or all written works of writers. It does need time to be set up in mind of people as well.

2. The Definition of Idiom

Though to explore this issue is quite close to the first subchapter that is The Creation of Idiom, it would be worthwhile to obtain knowledge on the specialty of idiom. Idiom is generally known by the common specialized form which is different from the literal meaning in a sentence. However, an etymological analysis is preferable to begin with the definition of idioms. Thus ‘*idio-*’ and ‘*-ma*’ are two parts of the word ‘idiom’. The former²⁰ denotes one’s own, separate, or distinct; the latter²¹ forming a noun is a substantive suffix indicating the result of verbal action. The term IDIOM, therefore, denotes ‘peculiarity’, especially ‘peculiarity in language’. It was originally derived from Greek ‘*idiōmat-*’ and ‘*idiōma*’ and then Latin word ‘*idioma*’. At last it was derived directly or from the French word ‘*idiome*’ in late 16th century.

²⁰ Ernest Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, Vol. I. *a-k*; Elsevier Pub.; 1966, London, p. 767

²¹ Ibid., Vol. II. *l-z*, p. 918

Roodbergen defines “idioms as a technical term for any complex formation, word, phrase or sentence whose meaning cannot be explained on the basis of its constituents.”²² The introduction in ODEI sheds light on this issue, “The best known approach to the definition of idiomaticity, and one which linguists as well as dictionary-makers have helped to popularize, fastens on the difficulty of interpreting idioms in terms of the meanings of their constituent words. Definitions such as the following are representative of this approach:

... Groups of words with set meaning that cannot be calculated by adding up the separate meanings of the parts.

... Peculiarity of phraseology having meaning not deducible from those of the separate words ...”²³

In addition, Radha Madhab states “idioms-formation in a spoken language indicates a lively way of expressing the specific ideas under specific environs. And these idiomatic expressions, be they semantically excellent or structurally peculiar ones with inordinate audio-effect on the hearers, constitute the idiomatic character of a given expression.”²⁴ In the parallel manner, Ramachandrudu comments, “an idiom is defined as a form of expression, construction, phrase etc., peculiar to a language, a peculiarity of phraseology approved by usage and often having a meaning other than its grammatical or logical one.”²⁵ Although the theories

²² Roodbergen (1974), *Patañjali's Vyākaraṇa-Mahābhāṣya Bahuvrīhi-dvandvika*, Intro. X1-iii fn. 181; this is referred in *Idioms in Kāśikā*, p. 427 fn. 1.

²³ ODEI, 1st Indian Edn., 2007, p. xii

²⁴ Dash, R.M., *Idioms in Kāśikā*, Pratibha Prakashan: 1st Ed., 1996, Delhi, p. 427

²⁵ Ramachandrudu, P., *Sanskrit Idioms, Phrases and Suffixational Subtleties*, Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, 2002, Tirupati, p. xxv

observed above are slightly different, the central part is much close to each other.

According to Jon Wright, One of the reasons idiomatic language is difficult to translate is because it is the area of language closest to culture.²⁶ The recent on-line Encyclopedia, Wikipedia also throws light on the definition of idiom, “an idiom is generally a colloquial metaphor — a term which requires some foundational knowledge, information, or experience, to use only within a culture where parties must have common reference. Idioms are therefore not considered a part of the language, but rather **a part of the culture**. As cultures are typically localized, idioms are often not useful outside of that local context. However some idioms can be more universally used than others, and they can be easily translated, metaphorical meaning can be more easily deduced.”²⁷ This widened view could be the conclusion in the present sub-chapter. Though fixing of definition of idiom is not so easy; to stop our exploration of discovering new fields hereafter is not proper. Therefore the argument on the concept of idiom-definition is currently being done without boundary or limit as an interesting issue “on-line”.

Let us again observe the above different definitions from a common English dictionary, comparing the modern definition to that of Pāli for the better understanding of their relevance. For this study I borrow the

²⁶ Jon Wright, *Idioms Organiser-organised by metaphor, topic and key word*, Global ELT, 2002, Boston, p. 10

²⁷ [http:// en.wikipedia.org/wiki/idiom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/idiom)

methodology of the Webster's dictionary²⁸ so that idiomatic expressions can be arranged, and idiomatic value of Pāli can be pointed out. The following Five significant definitions more or less cover all kinds of different views on the definition of idioms.

1. The language or dialect of a people, region, class etc.
2. The usual way in which the words of a language are joined together to express thought.
3. An accepted phrase, construction or expression contrary to the usual patterns of the language or having a meaning different from the literal.
4. The style of expression that is characteristic of an individual; such as the idiom of Carlye.
5. A characteristic style as in art or music.

Along with Ramachandrudu's view and two kinds of illustrations in the detailed introduction of ODEI, Roodbergen's statement at the beginning agrees with the category no. 3. However, the definition of Radha Madhab, the author of *Idioms in Kāśikā*, an Indian Sanskrit scholar, seems to include all the five categories as well as the latest definition found in the on-line Encyclopedia Wikipedia. The view of the on-line Encyclopedia Wikipedia seems to have the most extended concept. It suggests more potential to interpret idioms in any language in general. It is due to this

²⁸ *Webster's New World Dictionary*: by Macmillan & Co Ltd. 1962, London; the Webster's Dictionary is certainly worthy for this work out of diverse dictionaries that I have come across. There are so many English dictionaries available in the market in reference to the meaning of idioms. They are mostly identical though they are more or less different according to their characteristics or standards such as Oxford English Dictionary, Cambridge English Dictionary, Collins Cobuild English Dictionary etc.

understanding, the idioms are not only considered as a part of a language, but rather a part of a culture.

Let us first observe the category no. 1 and 4 to find their relevance to Pāli. In the Buddha's journey to impart Dhamma, he came across people, as commented above, from different dialects, regions and of various personalities literate or illiterate. In every language or dialect the Buddha saw many peculiar cases with their favorite patterns in set formations and in idiomatic expressions. To develop the intellect of these people, the Buddha had to use many dialects and many literary devices. The Buddhist canon today became a great linguistic and cultural treasure to trace things related to the dialects²⁹ of a people, region, class and so on. In relation to Pāli, it can safely be posited that it was actually the Buddha's stylistic words itself. By means of his wisdom and logical or systematic classification, the Pāli canon had been decorated with many layers of thoughts and ideas. The idiomatic expressions are, therefore, very closely related to the Buddha's moral, philosophical and psychological teachings.

For example, the word 'saṃyojana'³⁰ meant only 'union' or 'conjunction' in the then existing society. After it was adopted by the Buddha, its meaning changed into a psychological and moral connotation meaning 'fetter' or 'bond'. It started being reinterpreted as something that binds a person to the wheel of transmigration (*saṃsāra*). See the term

²⁹ Vit Bubenik, *The Structure and Development of Middle Indo-Aryan Dialects*, 1st Ed., Motilal Banarsidass, 1996, Delhi, p. 3; "there is no reason to doubt that long before the time of the Buddha and Mahāvīra there could have been a dialect in Magadha."

³⁰ D. I. 156; DA. I. 312; A. I. 231, 233; M. I. 9; S. I. 23, etc.; there are 10 fetters tying beings to the wheel of existence. For details see chapter 4.

‘*sotāpanna*’³¹ meaning ‘one who has entered into the stream’. Here the ‘*sota*’ does not simply mean stream but the stream denoting the Noble Eightfold Path³², is much related to morals or ethics. It is the first stage in the realization of Nibbāna. K.M. Gupta especially stated on this, “For Pāli, the subject involved is highly psychological and partly philosophical being abstract, due to which the issue of meaning is very subtle though the master used the then existing vocabulary with redefined meanings to explain the doctrine which had sprung from the mind of the Buddha himself, which can be called the Buddha’s idiolect rooted in idiosyncrasy of himself.”³³ We can, therefore, observe that Pāli is comparatively applicable to two characteristics such as no. 1 and no. 4 out of the five.

The Southern Buddhism, sometimes called Theravāda Buddhism, is based upon Pāli canon and developed mostly in the South Asia. Many things are displayed in Pāli canon, which performs their specific cultural role in a variety of fields like music, art, literature, play and so on. For example, in the *Sāmmaññaphala sutta* (D2) we come across musical instruments such as kettledrums, tabors, horns, cymbals and tom-toms.³⁴ Pāli thus contains the category no. 5 as well.

³¹ D. I. 156; *sota* + *ā* + √*pada* (to go)

³² D. II. 216, 353; III. 102, 128, 284, 286; S. V. 421; M. III. 71; *sammā diṭṭhi* (right understanding), *sammā saṅkappa* (right thought), *sammā vācā* (right speech), *sammā kammanta* (right action), *sammā ājīva* (right livelihood), *sammā vāyāma* (right effort), *sammā sati* (right mindfulness), *sammā samādhi* (right concentration).

³³ Gupta, K.M., *ibid.*, p. 205

³⁴ D. I. 79, “*seyyathā pi puriso addhāna-magga-paṭipanno so suṇeyya bheri-saddam pi mutiṅga-saddam pi saṅkha-panava-dendima-saddam pi*” (suppose a person travelling along a highway would hear the sounds of kettledrums, tabors, horns, cymbals and tom-toms)

Before going for an example for the second definition mentioned earlier (the usual way in which the words of a language are joined together to express thought), some disputable matters on its definition need to be stated. If looked into a little more carefully, one then finds something strange to accept it as a definition of idiom. Though on the face of it, this definition seems workable and also with a wide scope. And yet it becomes very complicated to put some expressions in this category. The second definition assigns any statement expressing some thought in speaking and writing as Idiomatic. It needs, therefore, more additional explanation to make people understand this definition. Let us try to know what the specialty of the second definition is. It may be the situation or condition that would make difference. In this second definition there can be always possibility to be able to be idiomatic expression in some extent. So many confused cases to fix difficult to idiomatic expressions may be carried by this unsealed definition. And so it may also make vague of discussion about the definition of idioms. Let us now see an example for the second definition in the D. There is a phrasal idiom, “*aññamaññassa ujuvipaccanīka-vādā*”³⁵. It is frequently repeated and appears in the Pāli suttas in a specific situation where people argue with each other.

For the definition no. 3 as a special character of idiom, let us study an example for that is the “*brahma-jāla*”³⁶ which is translated as “the Supreme Net”. Only with the word itself, none can decipher a meaning. It requires some knowledge about its background. The term ‘*brahma*’ means ‘divine’ or ‘most excellent’ and the ‘*jāla*’, simply ‘a net’. The word ‘net’

³⁵ D. I. 1, “holding opinions in direct contradiction one to the other”; this appears 3 times only in the Brahmajāla sutta (D1).

³⁶ D. I. 46

seems to be metaphorical being usually used for holding, carrying or covering something. The Buddha used this term for not less than sixty-two kinds of views or opinions that human beings can have in their perception throughout their present, past and future. Man is an animal of views. So Buddha explained all different views in detail in the first sutta of the D and then gave it a name: “*brahma-jāla*”.

In this manner we can figure out that Pāli is able to cover all the five categories of definition of IDIOM elaborated upon by the modern linguists or grammarians. Despite all this, the debate is still going on in search of concrete solution and clarity. Hence, in dealing with idioms in the D in the present study, much broader explanations and standards need to be evolved to collect and subsequently classify the idiomatic expressions.

3. Idiom-Formation of Pāli

What is the language Pāli? Scholars generally are of the opinion that Pāli is an archaic Prakrit and a middle Indian language. Pāli is a mixture of various dialects spoken somewhere in the Indian peninsula, which are descendants of one of the Old Indo-Aryan languages. According to Junghare, “It is very closely related to both Vedic and Sanskrit, although by no means identical with either one of them.”³⁷ This language was written in various scripts. The Pāli canon was first recorded in Ceylon in the first century B.C. It was put in Sinhala characters — by stenciling ōla

³⁷ Indira Yashwant Junghare, *Topics in Pāli Historical Phonology*, Motilal Banarsidass, 1979, Delhi, pp. 1-3

leaves with stylus and treating with dummālā oil.³⁸ On the other hand, Winternitz comments on the oral tradition of Pāli, “Pāli-canon are supposed to have been handed down at first orally until under the Singhalese king Vaṭṭagāmini (BC 104-88), in the first century B. C.³⁹ these were committed to writing. In the opinion of the Buddhists of Ceylon it is the canon which was compiled during the third council, brought to Ceylon by Mahinda and recorded under Vaṭṭagāmini.”⁴⁰ R. Gombrich adds his view to that, “There is no archaeological evidence for the use of writing in India during the early phase of Buddhism, that is, before the time of Aśoka.”⁴¹ He again advises, “Many of the stylistic features of the Pāli canonical texts indicate an oral origin.”⁴² Mark Allon refers A.B. Lord’s statement, “The formula is the product of the constraints of rapid oral verse.”⁴³ According to K.M. Gupta, “The meaningful sounds were the source of any language especially, when writing was not the medium at all and oral medium was thoroughly followed by all ancient speech-communities.”⁴⁴ Many of idioms collected in the present study are of the nature of metaphors and similes which have been used in colloquial or spoken Pāli.

³⁸ Allen, G.F., *The Buddha’s Philosophy*, George Allen and Unwin LTD, 1959, London, p. 69

³⁹ AA. I. 92

⁴⁰ Winternitz, Maurice, *A history of Indian literature Vol. II.*, Motilal Banarsidass, Rep. in 1993, Delhi, p. 10

⁴¹ Gombrich, R., *How Mahāyāna began*, the Buddhist Forum, Vol. I, Ed. T. Skorupski, London, p. 27; cf. Vit Bubenik, *The Structure and Development of Middle Indo-Aryan Dialects*, 1st Ed., Motilal Banarsidass, 1996, Delhi, p. 2; the first authentic document of dialectal differentiation which enables a back-projection to the state of affairs in the 6th/ 5th C. B.C. are the dialectical inscriptions in which Aśoka addressed his subjects in the middle of the 3rd century B.C.

⁴² Ibid., pp. 21-22; R. Gombrich, *Recovering the Buddha’s message*, the Buddhist Forum. Vol. I, Ed. T. Skorupski, London, pp. 7-8

⁴³ Allon, M., *Style and Function*, IIBR of ICABS, 1997, Tokyo, p. 11

⁴⁴ Gupta, K.M., *Linguistics in Pāli*. Sundeep, 2003, Delhi, p. 34

Let us direct our attention towards the present situation of the use of Pāli, so that we can observe the specialty of idiom-formation in Pāli. Nowadays Pāli is no more a spoken language in any region. It has remained only within a religious boundary, i.e. chanting of Sūtra and Vinaya, Dhamma-preaching, study of Buddhism in the academic field and Buddhist associations. However, in countries such as Sri-Lanka, Myanmar, Tai-Land, Laos, and Cambodia belonging to Southern Buddhism in particular, Pāli had played a major role in their cultural and spiritual world through the ages.⁴⁵ Even to this day, Pāli is flowing in their blood and is constantly creating history not in the name of tradition but in the practical life, exerting great influence. That is a language that influences or governs human psychology and culture. The point is that Pāli, the language of Buddhist canon, is still popular, even in the western countries. It is the modern time human intellect becomes quite widely generalized. The Buddha's intuitive message is today influencing the daily life of human beings all over the world in the form of psychology, philosophy, religion, practice or even cultural activities too.

During his time, the Buddha imparted his excellent knowledge and wisdom to the people through this language. Pāli was the common tool or language to communicate his thoughts to those societies. M.G. Dhadphale has furnished some seminal ideas so that we gain more concrete understanding about this matter, "the Buddha as a social and religious reformer could use only one instrument of communication viz. Language. For about forty-five years of his active career he was primarily speaking

⁴⁵ The Northern Buddhist countries have been excluded from Pāli point of view and that is being discussed in the present study.

to the people. In his teaching tours he came across people using different dialects, people literate and illiterate and of various dispositions. To instruct these people he had to use many dialects and many literary devices. The teacher, whose only instrument of imparting his message was speech, must have realized the efficacy of language and also its shortcomings.”⁴⁶ In this processes, we can guess, the Pāli language was probably born with idioms of numerous shape.

However, the formation and existence of idioms in a certain language or languages may be examined from different points of view. Radha Madhab states “A certain linguistic form would mean in a certain way differently from what its components should have meant.”⁴⁷ According to Gupta, “What we call idiomatic expression in Pāli in reference to certain noun-phrases though carry meaning, is related to other parts of the speech in a sentence, though within such phrase, it may be a sentence itself. So for Pāli, the meaning in stages is important to understand the *kāraka* (case or noun inflection) relation exhibited by words acting as nouns and therefore, the study of words is equally important since many words are not simple words, but are phrases and in some cases convey the meaning of an independent sentence.”⁴⁸

Herein Gupta puts especial emphasis on the Pāli word⁴⁹ itself with deep meaning behind along with syntactic relation. That is to say, even a word

⁴⁶ Dhadphale, M.G., *Some Aspects of (Buddhist) Literary Criticism as gleaned. from Pāli Sources*, Adreesh Prakashan, 1975, Mumbai, p. 2

⁴⁷ Dash, R.M., *Idioms in Kāśikā*, Pratibha Prakashan: 1st Ed., 1996, Delhi, p. 428

⁴⁸ Gupta, K.M., *ibid.*, p. 57

⁴⁹ Cf. R. G. Bhandarkar, *Wilson Philological Lectures*, Asian Education Services, Delhi, 1991, p. 276, 292, 294; he estimated that two-fifths of the Pāli vocabulary are

in Pāli is suitable to idiomatic expressions. Let us see an example: there is a word ‘*antevāsin*’⁵⁰ which initially and literally only means ‘staying nearby’. But it signifies something else from the literal meaning of the individual words. And it eventually indicates ‘a pupil’ or ‘a student’ who stays near master to receive instruction. By this example we can recover something new by way of idiomatic formation or expression. That is the relative compound (*bahubbīhi samāsa*). As said just above, it signifies something else from the literal sense, e. g. *lohitamakkhitasīso*⁵¹; whose head is smeared with blood. It means a person. This kind of the relative compound is very close to metaphorical expression. The word is only the sign pointing to a meaning. There is a problem to define what a word is, and distinguish it from a phrase or a sentence. Gupta points out, “also there are words or phrases such as *manasikāra*, *sotāpanna*, *anāgāmi* etc., each of which is treated mostly as a full word, but in fact represents a compound or a phrase.”⁵² In syntactical point of view, on the other hand, in Pāli the use of absolute locative, genitive, or accusative are really rare. Passive participles or gerundives are also highly idiomatic. We will see the examples at the end of this second chapter.

Regarding idiom-formation in Pāli there is another point for consideration. In the prose portions of Pāli canonical sutta texts, individual words are used to form groups of words which are then used as

composed of pure Sanskrit words and the remaining, altered in one or other modes. So several words unknown to Sanskrit, but formed from Sanskrit roots, have come into use.

⁵⁰ D. I. 1; This short compound word ‘*antevāsin*’ is repeatedly and numerous used, appearing 39 times in different case-endings in the D.

⁵¹ “*lohitena makkhitaṃ sīsam (atthi)*”

⁵² Gupta, K.M., *ibid.*, p. 290

fixed units of meaning in a variety of contexts. These fixed units, which can also be called phrases or expressions, may at one level express or depict a given concept, action or event. These units are then used to build up larger units of meaning which in turn may be used in a variety of contexts as fixed units.⁵³ The term ‘formula’ merely refers to the fact that the group of words (large or small) is regularly used to express or depict a given concept, action or event.⁵⁴ According to Mark Allon, “One of the most dominant characteristics of the prose portions of Pāli canonical sutta texts is the use of standardized phrases or passages to express or depict a given concept, action or event. These standardized phrases have been variously called ‘formulae’, ‘clichés’, ‘stock expressions’, ‘stock phrases’ and ‘stereotyped phrases’. This diversity of terminology in part reflects a general uncertainty as to what actually constitutes a ‘formula’, ‘stock phrase’ and so on, and whether, say, a ‘formula’ is different from a ‘stock phrase’ or ‘stock expression’.”⁵⁵

We probably can agree with this interrogative statement. However, in Pāli canon it will be quite complicated to generalize this terminology and to fix it in those above categories. Even if possible, it will be a hard task, because even Mark Allons shows many different words as formula, stock expression, stock phrase and stereotyped phrase which need to be defined. Extending the same argument further, more terms must also be added to it such as phrase idiom, stock idiom, clause idiom, sentence idiom etc. Besides, the problem of metrical length or size of terminology or number of occurring words, phrases, clauses and sentences etc. are to be

⁵³ Allon, M., *ibid.*, p. 9

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

considered. We must at least define some scope for the linguistic study so as to prevent such chaotic state. It will be helpful for the matter of defining many terms. Mark Allon has also concluded, “The term does not refer to a unit of specific size, structure or location within the text, but to the function or use of that group of words within the text or tradition. And in this sense we can have formulae within oral or literate traditions. This is the sense in which I use the word ‘formula’. It is regarded as being synonymous with stock, stereotyped, or formulaic phrase, expression, or passage.”⁵⁶ Milman Parry defines the formula as “a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea”.⁵⁷ This definition of formula seems to be better. However, in the present study for many diverse idioms in different figures of speech and repetitive idioms, the term ‘formula’ or ‘fixed expression’ would be used as representative terms.

The Pāli, in fact, is a language covered with idioms. ALL THE DHAMMAS THE BUDDHA PRECHED CAN BE THOUGHT OF BEING IDIOMANTIC. W. Geiger states, “Pāli is a Middle-Indian IDIOM, which is characterized by the same peculiarities which distinguish the Middle-Indian from the Old-Indian.”⁵⁸ Herein the word ‘idiom’ is used but it has a reference to Otto Franke’s work: *Pāli and Sanskrit*. But there is no further statement about why he put the word ‘idiom’ in his book. However, we are not certain whether that word ‘idiom’ is to be

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 13-4

⁵⁷ Cf. ibid., p. 10; H. Lloyd-Jone, *Becoming Homer*, New York Review of Books, XXXIX, no.5, March 5, p. 52

⁵⁸ Geiger, W., *Pāli Literature and Language*, Eng. Trans. by Batakrisna, G., Munshiram Manoharlal, Ed. 2004, Delhi, p. 1

understood as ‘language’ in general. M. Winternitz also described, “The Buddha makes use of the same IDIOMS and phrases as his opponent.”⁵⁹ According to T.W. Rhys Davids, “Buddha, like other Indian teachers of his time, taught by conversation. A highly educated man (according to the education current at the time), speaking constantly to men with similar education, he followed the literary habit of his time by embodying his doctrines in set phrases, sūtras, on which he enlarged on different occasions in different ways. On the absence of books — for though writing was widely known, the lack of writing materials made any lengthy written books impossible⁶⁰ — such sūtras were the recognized form of preserving and communicating opinion. These particular ones were not in Sanskrit, but in **the ordinary conversational IDIOM of the day**, that is to say, **in a sort of Pāli**.”⁶¹

As observed in the first chapter the main character of the Pāli canon is the Buddha himself. The Dhamma consists of a lot of material involving psychology, philosophy, religion, ethics and so on. We have to consider more closely his particular personal style of speech and the meaning behind it, and we may then gradually understand why Pāli language itself is IDIOMATIC. Therefore we can conclude according to the above scholars that they certainly connote that the language Pāli is IDIOM

⁵⁹ Winternitz, Maurice, *ibid.*, p. 68

⁶⁰ Most probably ‘writing’ was used only for memoranda. But the earliest records of any extant were the Asoka Edicts, and they were written on stones.

⁶¹ Rhys Davids, T.W., *Dialogues of the Buddha, Vol. I*. Eng. Trans. of the D, 1st Indian Edn., 2000, Delhi, p. xvi

itself⁶² from the point of historical and cultural background and linguistics.

II. Types of Idioms

Noam Chomsky states, “Stimulated by appropriated and continuing experience, the language faculty creates a grammar that generates sentences with formal and semantic properties.”⁶³ Thus semantics and syntax rules or conventions determine the meaning of the sentences in a language. It is understood by way of the communicator’s intention. The important criteria for classifying idioms in Pāli could be analyzed in two ways of syntax which is close to grammar and semantics that is meaning. Gupta points out, “All the words are related to each other both by way of syntax and also meaning. Syntax shows the relation of words in a sentence which is a unit of expression or proposition. Semantics describes the meaning of words and sentences in various ways.”⁶⁴ The Buddha, in his journey to impart the Dhamma, had also used a number of splendid expressions to make his preaching comprehensible with the help of syntactic as well as semantic factors.

Idioms in the D contain many structural varieties of syntax and semantics. For the classification of idioms from the point of view of semantics and syntax, all idiomatic expressions may not be mutually

⁶² Cf. Jon Wright, *Idioms Organiser-organised by metaphor, topic and key word*, Global ELT, 2002, Boston, p. 9, “All native speaker English is idiomatic”

⁶³ Noam Chomsky, *Reflection on Language*, Pantheon Books, 1975, NY, p. 36

⁶⁴ Gupta, K.M., *ibid.*, p. 8

exclusive. What it means is that the two factors, semantics and syntax, can overlap each other which can be called as syntactico-semantic.⁶⁵ Here the term syntactico-semantic denotes difficulty in separating the syntactic component from semantic that exist in a sentence in Pāli. That is to say, the syntactic analysis always works in association with the semantic. The degree of overlap between two linguistic terms may only differ in the D. For example, there is a term “*puthujjano*”⁶⁶. It is a compound word joining adjective term ‘*puthu*’ with masculine noun ‘*jana*’: *puthu* (adj., separated) + *jana* (m., person). According to the present study, this compound word is NP belonging to phrasal idiom in syntax and it overlaps with Icp belonging to semantics as well.

Let us see one more example, “*etth’ eva te sattadhā muddhā phalissati*”⁶⁷. This is quite often used while giving somebody an oath of desecration or warning. If the word structure is analyzed, then it comes out as below.

A (adv.) + A (emphatic part.) + Sm⁶⁸ (2nd pron. gen. sg.) + C (the object of prep. ‘into’)⁶⁹ + S (m. nom. sg.) + V (fut. 3rd. sg., √*phal*, to split)

⁶⁵ Cf. Sharma, R.N., *Aṣṭādhyāyī of Paṇini-Vol. I*, Munshiram Manoharlal, 1987, Delhi, pp.57-8; Gupta, K.M., *ibid.*, pp. 60-71; in these texts we can see the term syntactico-semantic or semantico-syntactic.

⁶⁶ D. I. 3, “worldling”; this appears 29 times in the D.; ref. PED. p. 466

⁶⁷ D. I. 94, “Your head will split into seven pieces right here”; this appears 4 times in the D.

⁶⁸ Subject modifier: In grammar, a **modifier** (or qualifier) is an optional element in phrase structure or clause structure; the removal of the modifier typically doesn't affect the grammaticality of the construction. Modifiers can be a word, a phrase or an entire clause. Semantically, modifiers describe and provide more accurate definitional meaning for another element. In English, adverbs and adjectives generally function as modifiers, but they also have other functions.

» S+V+C+A

If it is put in a syntactic structure like in English grammar, then this sentence comes under [S+V+C+A] in clausal idiom belonging to syntax and also overlaps with Fhp⁷⁰ and Ist belonging to semantics. Accordingly all sorts of idioms in the D would be classified under these two technical terms, syntax and semantics in the present study. Nonetheless, many idioms under the present classification are nothing but the Pāli figures of speech in semantics but not so complicated.

1. Syntax

Syntax is a matter of grammatical concern. Syntax covers the entire parts of speech in a sentence. Syntactic relation among the words exposes the meaning which depends on the context and the verbs as well. “It is helpful to determine what kind of pattern an idiom corresponds to, how an idiom can be broken down into elements smaller than itself, and what other elements precede, follow or interrupt it.”⁷¹ According to ODEI, “the information about syntax is essential for a variety of reasons. First, it enables the person to compare like with like and to build up a general categorization of idioms. Second, it is important for the one to be able to locate and identify the exact point or points in idioms at which lexical choice can operate.”⁷² Besides, “in this way, the syntactic relationship of

⁶⁹ The term “*sattadhā*” is an adverbial complement. The suffix ‘*dhā*’ is added to the numerals in the sense of ‘ways, times, piece’, or ‘-fold’ to make an adverb.

⁷⁰ The capital letter ‘F’ in Fhp means an item belonging to ‘figures of speech’ in semantics.

⁷¹ ODEI, 1st Indian Edn., 2007, p. xxvii

⁷² Ibid.

the parts to the whole is made clear. Such guidance has the further advantage that it helps to explain structural changes or transformations.”⁷³

In the word-structure in Pāli, there are four parts of speech such as noun (*nāma*), verb (*ākhyāta*), prefix (*upasagga*) and indeclinable (*avyaya*) or particle (*nipāta*). Pāli is a highly inflexional language. The uninflected form of a Pāli-word is called stem (*liṅga*; e.g. *buddha*) which is again derived from verbal roots (*dhātu*; e.g. $\sqrt{\text{buddh}}$). There are also certain uninflected words used in sentences like indeclinable words including adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, particles, interjections and so on. In order to modify, intensify and sometimes totally change their meaning,⁷⁴ some verbs and nouns are derived with the prefixes or suffixes⁷⁵. That is to say, many words in Pāli are formed from the roots along with prefix and suffix. The form of the verb is the first stage of its (root's) transformation and then the verb takes the conjugational sign to indicate specific function in a sentence. On the other hand, the nouns are generated from the verbs by means of some suffixes, passing through the primary derivational process (*kitaka*; verbal root + suffix = subs.) and the secondary derivational process [*taddhita*; subs. (or subs. + suffix) + suffix].

According to M.R. Kale, “under syntax in Pāli, the area of study is wide covering the eight cases of nouns and pronouns, participles and gerundial formations including infinitive mood and tenses and moods of verbs and also indeclinable like adverbs, particles, conjunctions and so on. But

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Joshi. J.R. & Koparkar, D.G., *Introduction to Pāli*, Uni. of Pune, 1985, Pune, p. 73

⁷⁵ In Pāli the term ‘*upassga*’ means all three of prefix, affix, and suffix in general.

among all, chief area is the study of *kāraka* (the relation of noun and verb in a sentence, case-relation) relation where grammar and practical usage meet.”⁷⁶ Kale insists that the *kāraka* relation is the heart of syntax in all inflectional languages and so in Pāli. Adding to it, Gupta says, “All nouns in a sentence are said to be governed by syntax relations and represented by their inflectional suffixes denoting particular type of *kāraka* and through this, different words which are used as nouns show their position with the subject through *kāraka* relation.”⁷⁷ This is the very usage of *kāraka* suffixes. The case or inflectional-ending that is called as ‘*vibhatti*’ (Skt. *vibhakti*) are grouped under eight categories which govern nominal endings. It is the structural expression of sentence with syntactic components. In a sentence a noun in nominative case generally shows its gender (m./nt./fem.) and number (sg./pl.), for example, ‘*naro*’ with the nominative case ending ‘-o’ indicates the masculine gender and the singular number.

Pāli language is very flexible and so we could see more than one form of inflectional signs for the same case that seems to be produced from a number of dialects.⁷⁸ This point also denotes that the strict case-ending or inflectional sign is not very important but the meaning in which speaker wants to express and the listener’s linguistic nature living in different regions. Such expression again points out the syntactico-semantic aspect of the language. There are three grammar texts⁷⁹ in Pāli: Kaccāyana-

⁷⁶ Kale, M.R., *A Higher Sanskrit Grammar*, M/s. Motilal, 1961, Delhi, p. 468

⁷⁷ Gupta, K.M., *ibid.*, p. 52

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 61

⁷⁹ Cf. Geiger, W., *ibid.*, pp. 50-55; the exact grammatical works came out on the date of 12th century first. “That is Kaccāna (some say that it is written before all other Pāli

vyākaraṇa, Moggallāna-vyākaraṇa, and Aggavaṃsa's Saddanīti. Pāli grammarians mainly composed the grammar for the better understanding of the Buddha's teaching. The last one⁸⁰ is exhaustive in the treatment of *kāraka* and is followed in Burma. The Aggavaṃsa mentions six *kārakas* only and he quotes that the other two vocative and genitive are not *kāraka*.

There is the verb separated from the noun due to its role. It indicates action or state in a sentence. All expressions in any language are governed by the verb. The meaning of the verb also governs the nominal inflection. As Speijer comments, "the manifold relations between nouns and verbs or noun and nouns are signified by cases, by the periphrases of cases, by compounding."⁸¹ The verb normally shows the tense, person and number. For example, there is a verb '*pacati*' (\sqrt{paca} , to cook) meaning the present tense, the 3rd person and the singular number. Gupta states, "It is tense and gender that separate the verb from the subject respectively, while person and number are common to both the subject and the verb. The specification of the person and the number both in the subject and the verb ensures that the subject and verbs are bound by concord (*sambandha*) irrespective of the place of the words."⁸² This concord enables the free

grammars perhaps after 6th century AD and before 11th century AD.). The date of this book being 1175-1181 AD, second being that of Moggallāna's in and during 1153-1186 AD and the third is Aggavaṃsa's Saddanīti in and during 1154 AD and all these traditions appear to have sprung up approximately at the same time, the first in India, the second in Sri-Lanka and the third in Burma."

⁸⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 55; EB. VII. P. 276; R.O. Franke has shown the Saddanīti is based on Kaccayāna. ... But Aggavaṃsa utilized for his work also the Sanskrit grammars such as those of Pāṇini, etc. This work deals with mainly the language of the canonical literature and the writings of the Ācariyas as well.

⁸¹ Speijer, J. S., *Sanskrit Syntax*, M/s. Motilal, 1973, Delhi, p. 24

⁸² Gupta, K.M., *ibid.*, p. 52

word-order in Pāli like any other inflectional language.⁸³ A sentence consists of two parts: subject and predicate. The subject may be a noun, an adjective, a participle declinable, or even an indeclinable particle. There must be concordance between subject and predicate. The subject must always agree with the verb in the predicate in number and person, e.g. “*so gacchati*” (he goes), “*te gacchanti*” (they go), “*aham gacchāmi*” (I go), “*mayam gacchāma*” (we go). And if the predicate is an adjective or declinable particle, it must agree with the subject in number, gender and case, e.g. “*so bhagavā abhayo*” (the Exalted One is fearless), “*buddho loke uppanno*” (the Enlightend One is born in the world).

In Pāli there is **no fixed word-order**. According to A.K. Warder, “In Pāli word-order is not important. In the normal prose-order of a sentence is: agent-attribute-patient-action, thus placing the verb usually at the end. The order however, is very rarely of grammatical value i.e. the agent will still be the agent even if it follows the patient or the verb, but it is stylistically important.”⁸⁴ The Indian stalwart lexicographer Apte gave us conclusive statements over the issue of word-order, “**the grammatical inflection itself shows the relation in which one word stands to another** ... though grammatical order, there is a sort of logical sequence of ideas... where words must be so arranged so that ideas will follow in their natural order... natural connection...”⁸⁵ For Indian grammarians,

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Warder, A. K., *Introduction to Pāli*, PTS, 1963, London, p. 15

⁸⁵ Staal, J. F., *Word Order in Sanskrit and Universal Grammar*, D.R. Publishing Co., 1967, Holland, p. 1

word-order had no importance but *kāraka* and other grammatical relations are significant.⁸⁶

As explained above, Pāli language does not have word-order. The structural analysis of all components can therefore be shown as if something unfolded disorderly on the street market. But those disorderly word-structures can be considered to be very rhythmical, literary or poetic, being able to express things in a sensitive and beautiful way, with their own rule or system which is called ‘*vibhatti* (case)’ and ‘*gana* (conjugation)’ to put the meaning in a sentence. The words, phrases, clauses and sentences with idiomatic expressions in the D would be analyzed by means of a grammatical code under syntax. However, simple clauses or sentences having fundamental relation would be only dealt with for the analysis of the clausal idioms in the present study. They are classified under two general headings: clausal idiom and phrasal idiom. Within these two are several dominant sub-categories.

1.1 Clausal Idiom

A clause is a pair or group of words that consist of a subject and a predicate. However, in Pāli, the subject may not appear openly as a noun phrase. It may instead be indicated by the verb. For example, there is a verb ‘*vadati* (√*vad*, to say)’. This verb indicates ‘he or she says’ with the subject. The most basic kind of sentence consists of a single clause and more complicated sentences may contain multiple clauses, including clauses contained within clauses. It is generally known that clauses are often contrasted with phrases. A clause is said to have both a finite verb

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.60

and its subject, whereas a phrase either contained a finite verb but not its subject (in which case it is a verb phrase) or does not contain a finite verb. For the classification of clausal idiom⁸⁷ the analysis would initially be done by means of syntax so that we can approach each word with the grammatical observation. It is the analytical work with Pāli grammar. The present study would again set up clause patterns or codes according to the structural patterns in English. So this can be a kind of a comparative study of syntactical structure between two languages. All the expressions belonging to the clausal idioms, first of all, are of idiomatic value which means that they have been brought from idioms in semantics. The followings are some instances for clausal idioms.

① [S+V+A⁸⁸]

“*evam me sutam*”⁸⁹ (Thus I have heard)

A (adv.) + S (1st pron. instr. sg.) + V (m. nom. sg.; √*śru*, to listen, pp.)⁹⁰

② [S+V+C]

“*sahitam me, asahitam te*”⁹¹ (I am consistent. You are not!)

⁸⁷ Ref. ODEI, 1st Indian Edn., 2007, pp. xxix-xxxvii; I have especially drawn a way to classify the clausal idioms and the phrasal in the D from the ODEI. In addition, I have also added and subtracted from that for the convenience of this study.

⁸⁸ An adjunct is a word or group of words that indicates the circumstances of an action, event or situation. It is usually a prepositional phrase or an adverb group. According to ODEI, p. xxxii, the adjective can also be adjunct.

⁸⁹ D. I. 1; this is 1st.

⁹⁰ Participle has two characters of the verb and adjective in a sentence. It is a form of a verb and so it is called verbal noun and may also be used as an adjective.

⁹¹ D. I. 8; this is an antithetic clausal idiom.

VC⁹² (nt. nom. sg.; *saṃ* + √*dhā*, to put, pp.) + S (1st. pron. instr. /gen. sg.) + VC (nt. nom. sg.; *a* + *saṃ* + √*dhā*, to put, pp.) + S (2nd. pron. instr. /gen. sg.)

The words ‘*sahitam*’ and ‘*asahitam*’ are participles and they also work for the verb in this clause, and so it comes under VC which denotes that the verb is attached to the complement.

③ [S+V+C+A]

“*etth’ eva te sattadhā muddhā phalissati*”⁹³ (Your head will split into seven pieces right here)

A (adv.) + A (emphatic part.) + Sm⁹⁴ (2nd pron. gen. sg.) + C (the object of prep. ‘into’)⁹⁵ + S (m. nom. sg.) + V (fut. 3rd. sg., √*phal*, to split)

④ [S+V+O]

“*idam avoca bhagavā*”⁹⁶ (The Exalted One spoke this)

O (dem. pron. acc. sg.) + V (aor. 3rd. sg.; √*vac*, to speak) + S (m. nom. sg.)

⑤ [S+V+O+A]

⁹² VC (Verb-Complement) is the code that the verb is attached to the complement. It is applicable to the participle which usually acts as adj. or the verb in a sentence. The participle comes here under the case that the complement or adjunct sometimes works for a verb as there is no particular verb in a sentence. The participles in Pāli take multiplied roles to compose a sentence structure; In English when asked “happy?” it is an omitted-form meaning “are you happy?”

⁹³ D. I. 94; this appears 4 times in the D and it belongs to Sg and Ist in semantics.

⁹⁴ Subject modifier

⁹⁵ The term ‘*sattadhā*’ is adverbial complement. The suffix *dhā* is added to the numerals in the sense of ‘ways’, ‘times’, ‘piece’, or ‘-fold’ to make adverb.

⁹⁶ D. I. 46; this is a part of a sentence belonging to Ist.

“*pure vacanīyaṃ pacchā avaca, pacchā vacanīyaṃ pure avaca*”⁹⁷ (You said last what you should have said first, and you said first what should have said last)

A (indecl.) + O (nt. acc. sg., grd.) + A (indecl.) + SV⁹⁸ (aor, 2nd, sg.; √*vac*, to say)

⑥ [S+V+O+C] (‘that...’: relative clause with objective complement)

“*so dhammaṃ deseti ādikalyāṇaṃ majjhe kalyāṇaṃ pariyosānakalyāṇaṃ sātthaṃ savyañjanaṃ*”⁹⁹ (He teaches the Dhamma that is good in the beginning, good in the middle and good in the end, possessing the meaning and phrasing)

S (3rd. pron. m. nom. sg.) + O (m. acc. sg.) + V (pres. 3rd. sg., √*diś*, to point out, caus.) + C (m. acc. sg., adj.) + [A (m. loc. sg., adv.)] + C (m. acc. sg., adj.) + C (m. acc. sg., adj.) + C (m. acc. sg., adj.) + C (m. acc. sg., adj.)

Let us see the word ‘*majjhe*’ in the middle of this sentence. It is normally used adverbially in the locative case. Herein it is modified word over the next adjective word ‘*kalyāṇaṃ*’ but it is not compounded like other words as ‘*ādikalyāṇaṃ*’ and ‘*pariyosānakalyāṇaṃ*’. In the VRI, however, it appears in the compound word holding its locative case as ‘*majjhekalyāṇaṃ*’. If it is so, then there is no problem to make it compound word acting as C (complement) in this sentence analysis. Besides, it also has no problem to convey sense. It is eventually better to concord it with other complements.

⁹⁷ D. I. 8; this is Fa.

⁹⁸ The code ‘SV’ is applied to the case where only the verb, indicating the person and number, appears without particular subjects in a sentence.

⁹⁹ D. I. 62; this is Ist.

1.2. Phrasal Idiom

Phrasal idioms are more common than the clausal in general. A phrase is a group of words that acts as a single unit in the syntax of a sentence. They are syntactically invariable¹⁰⁰, do not have the subject and the verb, and function as a part of speech like a word or a vocab in a sentence. A phrase also consists of a word group that is centered on the verbal form such as infinitive, gerund, or participle. Most phrases have a central word defining the type of phrase. This word is called the head of the phrase. Some phrases, however, can be headless. That is to say, phrasal idioms can be classified by the head in a phrase. It is also significant that all phrasal idioms function in their turn as the elements in clauses or sentences, the precise element varying both with the type of phrase and with particular instances.¹⁰¹ The following are sub-divisions under phrasal idioms.

① Noun Phrase (NP)

“*bhava-netti*” (D. I. 46; the leash that bounds it to existence)

The term ‘*netti*’ (\sqrt{ni} ; to lead) means ‘a leash’ (*rajjū*) or ‘a rope’ in accordance with the DA¹⁰². In Buddhism this compound particularly connotes ‘craving for existence’ (*bhava-taṇhā*).

“*brahma-jālam*” (D. I. 46; the Supreme Net)

¹⁰⁰ ODEI, 1st Indian Edn., 2007, p. xxiv

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² DA. I. 127-8

The word ‘*brahma*’ herein denotes ‘supreme’ (*seṭṭha*) and so it is called ‘the Supreme Net’ indicating ‘the knowledge of omniscience’ (*sabbaññuta-ñāṇaṃ*).¹⁰³

② Pronominal Phrase¹⁰⁴ (PronP)

“*aññaṃañña*” (D. I. 1; one another, each other, mutually)

The term ‘*añña*’ is a pronoun meaning ‘another’ or ‘other’.

“*yaṃ kiñci*” (D. I. 110; whatsoever)

The relative pronoun ‘*yaṃ*’ is sometimes followed by an indefinite pronoun ‘*kiñci*’ to express the senses ‘whatsoever’ or ‘whosoever’.

③ Adjectival Phrase (AdjP)

“*addhāna-magga-paṭipanno*” (D. I. 1; going along a road for journey)

The first two terms ‘*addhāna-magga*’ are of the same meaning of ‘a road, high road or a road for journey’. The last term ‘*paṭipanno*’ is a past participle and a declinable adjective which denotes ‘going along’. So this compound indicates ‘going along a road for journey’.

“*loma-haṭṭha-jāto*” (D. I. 50; bristled, lit. having hairs erect)

The terms ‘*haṭṭha*’ (√*hr̥ṣ*, to bristle, to be delighted) and ‘*jāta*’ (√*jan*, to be born) are past participles denoting together ‘erect or having something erect’. This compound, therefore, means ‘having hairs erect’ which often appears as the sign of fear or rapture in Pāli texts.

¹⁰³ DA. I. 129

¹⁰⁴ The case of pronominal phrase is very rare in the D because most pronominal phrases are also applicable to the clausal structure with a verb in a sentence.

“*saṃkhalikhita*” (D. I. 63; bright like conch)

The term ‘*likkhita*’ (√*likh*, to cut, to write) is a past participle denoting ‘polished’. This phrasal idiom is used to compare a pure life to a conch in a text. The commentary¹⁰⁵ thus explains that it is ‘like bright conch or clean conch’.

④ Adverbial Phrase (AdvP)

“*piṭṭhito piṭṭhito*” (D. I. 1; closely behind)

The term ‘*piṭṭhito*’ is an adverbial expression from the feminine noun ‘*piṭṭhi*’ meaning ‘(from) behind’. The same word is repeatedly used here to convey succession.

“*paramparā*” (D. I. 239; after the other)

In this phrase the same word ‘*para*’ is repeated to convey adverbial sense.

“*bhūtapubba*” (D. II. 337; in old times or once or once upon time)

This frequently occurs in the cases before parable.

⑤ Verb Phrase (VP)

“*avaṇṇam bhāsatī*” (D. I. 1; One speaks in dispraise of)

In this phrase the key word is the verb. The verb phrase functions as a single verb. A group of words function as a single word. Let us see an example in English, e.g. we lost sight of the ship. However, if the key word is ‘*avaṇṇam*’ in accusative case, then this phrase can be the clause in the form of [S+V+O]. In fact, the verb phrase is very rare in the D.

¹⁰⁵ DA. I. 181, “*likkhita-sankha-sadisa dhota-sankha-sappaṭibhāga*”

“*kammante payojeyya*”¹⁰⁶ (D. I. 71; set a business on foot or engage in a business)

The key word is the verb ‘*payojeyya*’ in the potential mood. Therefore this becomes a verb phrase.

⑥ Prepositional Phrase¹⁰⁷ (PrepP)

“*aneka pariyāyena*” (D. I. 1; in many ways;)

The word ‘*pariyāya*’ denoting ‘way’ or ‘method’ always appears in the instrumental case in the D. It also works adverbially.

“*kim āgamma kim ārabbha*”¹⁰⁸ (D. I. 13; about what, concerning what)

The word ‘*kim*’ is in the accusative case of the interrogative pronoun ‘*kim*’. The next word ‘*āgamma*’ is a gerund and adverb. It is synonymous with the next word ‘*ārabbha*’ denoting ‘about’ or ‘regarding’.

⑦ Interjectional Phrase (IntP)

“*acchariyaṃ ... abbhutaṃ*” (D. I. 2; It is wonderful! It is marvelous!)

The term ‘*acchariyaṃ*’ is very frequently combined with a synonymous word ‘*abbhutaṃ*’ denoting ‘wonderful, marvelous, or extraordinary’ in the D. It often comes out in exclamation or surprise as well.

“*aho vata*” (D. I. 17; O alas!)

¹⁰⁶ *pa* + √*yuj* (to yoke) + *e* + *eyya*, caus. pot. 3rd. sg.

¹⁰⁷ In Pāli there are 20 prepositions (*upasagga*) *ā*, *pa*, *parā* etc. which are prefixed to the roots. At times, two, three or even more prepositions are added to a root. In a number of cases the meanings of roots undergo radical change. From the usage, it appears that some roots take a large number of prepositions and some take only a few.

¹⁰⁸ *ā* + √*gam* (to go) + *ya*, ger. and indecl.; *ā* + √*rabh* (to begin) + *ya*, ger. and indecl.

This is a fixed expression giving exclamation of surprise, astonishment or pain. These two words are indeclinable. The word ‘vata’ is an enclitic particle which never occurs at the beginning of a sentence.

2. Semantics

Idiomacity is largely a semantic matter, and that it is manifested in much the same way in expressions of different structural types.¹⁰⁹ W.A. Ladusaw states that the term semantics covers a wide range of issues involving the meaning, significance, interpretation and understanding of language.¹¹⁰ However, the central problem of semantics is the problem of meaning.¹¹¹ P.C. Chakravarti defines semantics as the science of meaning to deal with internal or psychological aspect of language and to show how particular things are denoted by particular words, how things are named, how meanings are widened or specialized and so on.¹¹² According to Eastman, a modern linguist, “semantics (Greek *semantikos*, ‘significant’)¹¹³ is the study of the meaning of linguistic signs — that is, words, expressions, and sentences. Scholars of semantics try to answer such questions as ‘What is the meaning of (the word) *X*?’ They do this by studying what signs are, as well as how signs possess significance — that is, how they are intended by speakers, how they designate (make reference to things and ideas), and how they are

¹⁰⁹ ODEI, 1st Indian Edn., 2007, p. xi

¹¹⁰ Newmayer, F. J., *Linguistics- Vol. I: Linguistic Theory: Foundation*, Cambridge Uni. Press, 1988, N. Y., p. 500

¹¹¹ Bakhle, S. W., *Nature of Development of Linguistic Analysis*, Datt Sons, 1987, Nagpur, p. 279

¹¹² Chakravarti, P.C., *The Linguistic Speculations of the Hindus*, Uni. of Calcutta, 1933, p. 327

¹¹³ The word is also derived from the Greek word ‘*semaino*’ (to signify, to indicate) and that from ‘*sema*’ (sign, mark or token).

interpreted by hearers. The goal of semantics is to match the meanings of signs—what they stand for—with the process of assigning those meanings.”¹¹⁴ It is known that semantics is usually possible to access by means of the logical and philosophical standpoint in linguistics. He again said, “semantics is studied from philosophical (pure) and linguistic (descriptive and theoretical) approaches, plus an approach known as general semantics. Philosophers look at the behavior that goes with the process of meaning. Linguists study the elements or features of meaning as they are related in a linguistic system. General semanticists concentrate on meaning as influencing what people think and do.”¹¹⁵ Stephen Ullmann suggests, “the sense change will fall into two categories: those based on an association between the senses and those involving an association between the names.”¹¹⁶

Countless idioms in the D are profoundly connected to meaning in general. The Buddha, since he preferred *attha* (meaning) to *nirutti* (language), used words only for the sake of transmitting his profound meaning and not for showing his ability of language or fluent speech. However, the dhamma displayed by him already is full of meaning (*attha*) and phrasing (*vyañjana*) or letters, good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end.¹¹⁷ According to Mishra, “Buddhists though used the vocabulary of existing dialects of those, be it Vedic or otherwise, their signification is certainly twisting and the meaning is somewhat

¹¹⁴ Eastman, Carol M., ‘*Semantics*’, Microsoft® Encarta® 2009 [DVD], Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ullmann Stephen, *Semantics*, Basil Blackwell, 1967, Oxford, pp. 211-22

¹¹⁷ D. I. 63, “*dhammaṃ ...ādi kalyāṇaṃ majjhe kalyāṇaṃ pariyāyosāna kalyāṇaṃ sātthaṃ savyañjanaṃ*”

sectarian.”¹¹⁸ Besides, “the language of Pāli follows a pattern different from common languages in the sense that many verbs are expressed for the same subject and also it is highly inflexional. Another important feature is that the meanings of the words are to be learnt from Pāli sources only though derivable from Sanskrit.”¹¹⁹ F. Edgerton comments, “In Buddhist literature, the relation between the language and its relative concept is not always formative, not direct; because language is mostly related to the concept and the derivative significance. For instance, the word *karuṇa* which has Vedic relevance as to mean ‘acting’, its use in the Buddhist context specify differently, i.e. compassion in contrast to the Vedic subject.”¹²⁰ The ODEI described, “Many idioms are restricted to particular groups of **users** or particular occasions of **use**, or indicate the speaker’s **attitude** to the persons or events denoted, or are used to perform special **functions** (for example, greetings or warnings).”¹²¹

Semantics, as a form of linguistics, tries to set up logical connection between words regarding their meaning in a speech. In the Buddhist semantics, as a significant result in linguistic development in those days, the Buddha with his intuitive wisdom had given various ways for expansion of the meaning of words which was exceedingly related to the ethics, psychology and philosophy. So far as the Buddhist linguistics is concerned, we need to figure out the relevance of those above three aspects: ethics, psychology and philosophy. They often work together in

¹¹⁸ Mishra, M.; *A Comparative and Historical Pāli Grammar*, Aroma Publishing House, 1986, Delhi, p. 69

¹¹⁹ Gupta, K.M., *ibid.*, pp. 191-2

¹²⁰ Edgerton, F, *Language and Literature*, BHS, 1954, Banaras, p. 168

¹²¹ ODEI, 1st Indian Edn., 2007, pp. xxxvii-xxxviii

interpreting the Buddhist technical terms in Pāli texts. For example, the word ‘*taṇhā*’ that was used to denote ‘thirst’, had been expanded into abstracted meaning of ‘craving’ that was ethical and psychological. The word ‘*magga*’ in Pāli texts is not used to mean ‘a simple road’, but ‘a path to a practical scheme of elevation’, following that one is bound to attain cessation of suffering. The word ‘*ogha*’ does not mean simple ‘flood’ of water alone, but ‘clinging’. Anyone would often find change of words or referents from concrete state to abstract that is the major motivation of semantic changes in Pāli texts. The goal of the Buddhists had been to walk on the path of purification to reach Nibbāna which was very difficult to follow for worldlings. This aspect has caused unique changes in the meaning of the then existing words and in worldly usages of common language. Dhadphale comments, “Buddhas spoke not for the pleasure of speaking but to drive home his point.”¹²² Gupta states, “The reinterpretation was possible due to the elasticity offered by the words themselves since the derivation from the roots is wide open and the practical usage of such words was by implication, and not direct.”¹²³

On the other hand, there are some factors that can distinguish semantic idioms from normal descriptions. One, connotation – it is connotation that indicates implication of a word, phrase, or clause, giving additional meaning apart from the literal meaning. A word is both denotative and connotative. The connotative aspect is related to the core of sense behind a word. Expressions in texts devoid of connotative sense are simple descriptions. Two, emphasis – the special emphasis is particularly given

¹²² Dhadphale, M.G., *ibid.*, p. 42

¹²³ Gupta, K.M., *ibid.*, p. 285

by the user's conscious change from the literal meaning of a word, phrase, or sentence construction. There can be a number of methods to give emphasis in speech or written material such as repetition, enumeration, string of synonyms, word-order and so on. Three, figures of speech – as linguistic device, figurative expression is also referred to as figure of speech in general. Figures of speech, word or group of words, is often used to give particular emphasis and show contrast in a context as well as to provide freshness of expression or clarity.

The headings listed below are to classify the predominant idiomatic expressions relating to semantics. Especially the first item, idioms in figures of speech, is of most various and quite rich in number and contents.

2.1. Idioms in Figures of Speech

A 'figure of speech' sometimes termed a 'rhetorical figure' or 'trope' is a word or group of words used in some deviation from the strict literal sense of the word(s), or from the more commonly used form of word order or sentence construction.¹²⁴ According to Y. Shen, "Figurative language is central to both poetic and non-poetic discourse. Throughout the ages, figurative expressions have been featured extensively in the work of both orators and writers alike, which used them to embellish their style, to clarify or illuminate meaning in an efficient, compact manner, or

¹²⁴ Keith Brown, *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistic vol. I*, 2nd Ed. 2005, London, p. 459; this line is referred from Y. Shen's article, titled '*figures of speech*'.

as a particularly effective persuasive device.”¹²⁵ The style of an idiom is regarded as the reflection of certain variable factors in situations in which that idiom is normally used.¹²⁶ **In linguistics, idiomatic expressions are classified on the basis of a variety of figures of speech.** Concerning categorizing the figures of speech, over time these figures of speech have been organized in a variety of different ways in order to make sense of them and to learn their various qualities.¹²⁷ Although many complicated classifications are available in the field of figures of speech, the present study will not go deep into them to avoid complication. The figures of speech in the D are divided into three broad categories according to the difference in methods of expression such as “method of comparison”, “method of emphasis” and “method of variation”.

2.1.1. Method of Comparison

In figures of speech this portion is normally the most significant and well known to people. The method of comparison is a use of a word that diverges from its normal meaning, or a phrase with a specialized meaning not based on the literal meaning of the words in it. There are two objects: the first object is to be described and it is the primary idea (*upameya*). The second object is compared with the first object to discover similarity between them. Here the second object is the supplementary idea (*upamāna*). For example, “a man is like a tiger”. Here a man is ‘*upameya*’ and a tiger ‘*upamāna*’. This is the process of comparing two things having

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ ODEI, 1st Indian Edn., 2007, p. xxxviii

¹²⁷ Scholars of classical Western rhetoric have divided figures of speech into two main categories: schemes and tropes.

a common quality. Simile, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, parable, personification, pun and onomatopoeia come under this category.

A. Simile (Fs) ¹²⁸

This is a method of explicit and specific comparison by means of the words like, ‘like’ or ‘as’ between two kinds of ideas or things. For example, the sentence “She is beautiful like a rose” is a simile. On the contrary, a metaphor does not use ‘as’ or ‘like’ for comparison. The Buddha preferred abundant use of similes (*upamā*) for explaining the complicated and subtle points of teaching in the D. Regarding compilation of similes Mrs. Rhys Davids has done an admirable ground work in ‘*the Similes in the Nikāya*’ in the JPTS (1906-7). However, some of them are closer to metaphorical expression, for example, ‘*āsavānaṃ khaya-ñāṇāya*’¹²⁹ (the knowledge of the destruction of the cankers) and ‘*satte apparajakkhe mahārajakkhe*’¹³⁰ (the beings with little dust and a lot of dust). There are particular words used to construct a simile in Pāli such as *yathā*, *iva*, and *va*.

e.g.) “*rahadam iva vippasannaṃ*” (D. I. 50; as serene as a clean lake)

The term ‘*iva*’ is a particle of comparison. This is a comparison for the Sangha.

“*Sunakkhatto licchavi-putto mayā vuccamāno apakkam’ eva imasmā dhamma-vinayā yathā taṃ apāyika nerayika*” (D. III. 6; Sunakkhatto, the

¹²⁸ The capital letter ‘F’ in the ‘Fs’ indicates ‘figures of speech’ and hence the ‘Fs’ means an item belonging to ‘figures of speech’ in semantics.

¹²⁹ D. I. 83; JPTS, 1906-7, p. 67

¹³⁰ D. II. 38; JPTS, 1906-7, p. 58

son of Licchavi clan, while I told, has departed from this dhamma and principle just as a man belonging to hell)

“*tuccha-kumbhi va naṃ maññe orodheyyāma*” (D. III. 38; we will certainly subdue him like an empty pot)

B. Metaphor (Fm)

This figure of speech uses a word or phrase that denotes one kind of idea or object in place of another word or phrase for the purpose of suggesting a **likeness** or **similarity** between the two in a quality. The metaphorical word is used not in its literal meaning, but in one similar to it. It is also used in an imaginative way. For example, the sentences “Life is a gambling” and “A soldier has a heart of stone” contain metaphor. Gray Louis states, “Metaphor is the chief cause of semantic change”¹³¹

According to M.G. Dhadphale, “in Pāli language ‘*adhivacana*’ is a peculiar term used to convey the sense of a metaphor. The commentators explain ‘*adhivacana*’ as ‘*ativacana*’, which when literally translated means a ‘transcendental meaning’, i.e. a meaning which transcends its primary meaning and suggests ‘a secondary one’.”¹³² The metaphorical expressions (*adhivuttipadāni*) according to Buddhaghosa reveal an unusual or extraordinary view of life (*diṭṭhi*).¹³³ Dhadphale further

¹³¹ Gray Louis, H., *Foundations of Language*, The MacMillan Company, 1939, N.Y., p. 251

¹³² Dhadphale, M.G., *ibid.*, p. 43

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 44; ref. DA. I. 103-4 & its English translation by BB., *The All-Embracing Net of Views: The Brahmajāla Sutta and its Commentaries*, 2nd ed., BPS, 2007, Candy, pp. 128-9, “*atha vā bhūtam attham abhibhavitvā yathā-sabhāvato agahetvā vattanato adhivuttiyo ti diṭṭhiyo vuccanti, adhivuttīnam padāni diṭṭhi-dīpakāni vacanānīti attho*”

comments, “Buddhaghosa’s observation that ‘*adhivacana*’ is ‘that which throws light’ (*dīpaka*) on the view (*diṭṭhi*) of a poet-philosopher has a parallel in the statement of Valery that ‘a metaphor is what is arrived at when one views things in a particular manner.’”¹³⁴ Thus the study of metaphors should yield us the view of a poet and the process of re-visualisation.¹³⁵ However, bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli¹³⁶ suggested a word ‘*pariyāya*’ for metaphor.

e.g.) “*sīha-nādaṃ*” (D. I. 175; lion’s roar)

This literally means the roaring of a lion. It also connotes the fearless sound which is able to break other’s sound, but lifts one’s own. The commentary explains it as the excellent sound (*seṭṭha-nādo*) that a lion roars and the best sound (*utama-nādo*).¹³⁷ It is a very unique term that is often used when the Buddha gives discourses to audience. Afterward its sense has been generalized into the great person’s voice.

“*sabbe va kho ete ... paribbājakā andhā acakkhukā, tvaṃ yeva nesaṃ eko cakkhumā*” (D. I. 191; All those ascetics are blind, without eyes, you alone have eyes among them)

[Views are called *adhivutti* (expression or opinion) because they do violence to the real meaning (*bhūtam attham*) and do not apprehend things according to their true nature (*yathā-sabhāvato*). The *adhivuttīnam-padāni*, therefore, are terms signifying (*dīpaka*) views.]

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 45

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 45

¹³⁶ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, *Pāli-English Glossary of Buddhist Terms*, 2nd Ed. by BB., BPS, 2007, Kandy, p. 124

¹³⁷ DA. III. 844, 879

This expression implies ‘eyes of wisdom’ leading to the last truth, Nibbāna. In general, we could see some metaphorical words with ‘*cakkhu*’ denoting ‘mental eye’ in the D.¹³⁸

C. Metonymy (Fmt)

This figure of speech applies to substitution of a word to suggest what is really meant. It is to use a word or phrase for another to which it bears an important relation such as the effect for the cause, the abstract for the concrete and similar constructions. Bloomfield speaks a single line defined by other scholars; the meanings are near each other in space or time.¹³⁹ Gupta describes, “This metonymy happens due to the operation of **contiguity** of sense-field of the denotative meaning.”¹⁴⁰ Metonymy¹⁴¹ (Greek, *metōnymía* ‘change of name’) is that in which a thing or concept is not called by its own name, but by the name of something intimately associated with that thing or concept.¹⁴² For instance, ‘the Pentagon’, as the five-sided figure, could be used as a metonymy for the department of defense in the USA.

e.g.) “*antevāsi*” (D. I. 1; a pupil, lit. staying near)

The word ‘*antevāsi*’ is derived from Skt. ‘*antevāsin*’. In semantic change, it denotes a pupil who always dwells near his master to receive instruction.

¹³⁸ D. I. 86, “*dhamma-cakkhum*”; D. II. 38, “*buddha-cakkhunā*”

¹³⁹ Leonard Bloomfield, *Language*, Motilal Banarsidass, Rep. 2005, Delhi, p. 427

¹⁴⁰ Gupta, K.M., *ibid.*, pp. 420-1

¹⁴¹ Metonymy may be instructively contrasted with metaphor. Both figures involve the substitution of one term for another. In metaphor, this substitution is based on **similarity**, whereas, in metonymy, the substitution is based on contiguity (association) between two concepts of senses, particularly in time or space.

¹⁴² The on-line Encyclopedia Wikipedia; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/metonymy>

This case is used as the effect for cause. In the commentary, it is said, “*ante vasatīti antevāsī, samīpa-cāro santikāvacaro sisso ti attho*”.¹⁴³

“*khattiyo muddhāvasitto*”¹⁴⁴ (D. I. 69; a crowned king)

This phrase literally denotes ‘a head-anointed warrior’ but it connotes ‘a crowned king’ with his head anointed by sprinkling water which is brought from the ocean of the four directions. The real meaning comes due to the contiguity of sense and the effect for cause.

D. Synecdoche (Fsn)

This is a figurative expression where the part is made to stand for the whole, the whole for a part, the species for the genus, and vice versa. Synecdoche is closely related to metonymy. It is sometimes considered a subclass of metonymy.¹⁴⁵ More rigorously, metonymy and synecdoche may be considered as sub-species of metaphor, intending **metaphor as a type of conceptual substitution**.¹⁴⁶ For example, ‘white hair’ stands for

¹⁴³ DA. I. 36, “One who dwells near (master to receive instruction) means a pupil, (or) being near, (or) a student.” Buddhaghosa, without illustration of deep background, commented for the meaning of this word with the four synonyms. It may have been a very commonly used term without doubt even in the time when Buddhaghosa lived.

¹⁴⁴ D. II. 60, 69; *muddhā + avasitta* (pp. *ava* + *√sic*, to anoint)

¹⁴⁵ Ref. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/metonymy>; Metonymy and Synecdoche: sometimes, however, people make an absolute distinction between a metonymy and a synecdoche, treating metonymy as different from rather than inclusive of synecdoche. When the distinction is made, it is the following: when A is used to refer to B, it is a synecdoche if A is a component of B and a metonymy if A is commonly associated with B but not actually part of its whole.

¹⁴⁶ Lanham, Richard A, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms: A Guide for Students of English Literature*, 2nd Ed., California University Press, 1991, Berkeley, pp. 189 ff.. The three terms have somewhat restrictive definitions, arguably in tune with a certain interpretation of their etymologies from Greek:

- Metaphor: changing a word from its literal meaning to one not properly applicable but an analogous to it; assertion of identity rather than, as with simile, likeness
- Metonymy: substitution of cause for effect, proper name for one of its qualities, etc.

an elderly person where a part refers to the whole. On the other hand, “the India won a gold medal” can be used where instead of saying, “the members of the India cricket team won a gold medal” the whole nation is used to refer to a part of it. There is an example for a specific class name used to refer to a general set of associated things, ‘an aspirin’ for any kind of drug which relieves from fever and headache. Actually synecdoche is rather rare than metonymy in the D.

e.g.) “*sahassī loka-dhātu*” (D. I. 46; the thousand world-system)

The partial number ‘thousand’ here connotes the whole world or all the universes that exist. Sometimes in other suttas in the D more numbers are added just as the ten thousand (*dasa-sahassa*, D. II. 12). However, its implied meaning does not change.

“*khādanīyena bhojanīyena*”¹⁴⁷ (D. I. 109; hard and soft food)

These two terms are opposed to each other in the meaning but these two, being clubbed together where a part refers to the whole, connote various kinds of food. It is a very well used expression by laypeople for the meal of the Buddha and the Sangha.

E. Parable (Fpb)

A parable is a brief simple story, in prose or verse, which illustrates a moral or religious lesson. It also is a coherent fictitious narrative to impart ethical teaching and values. It differs from fables that use animals, plants, inanimate objects and forces of nature as characters, while parables generally feature human characters. According to David B. Gowler a

-
- **Synecdoche:** substitution of a part for whole, species for genus, etc.
¹⁴⁷ *khād* (to chew) + *a* + *anīya*, grd.; *bhuj* (to eat) + *a* + *anīya*, grd.

parable is a type of analogy.¹⁴⁸ Christian parables in the Bible have recently been studied as extended metaphors. Parables are favored in the expression of mental concepts. According to H.W. Fowler, “Parables frequently use metaphorical language which allows people to more easily discuss difficult or complex ideas. In Plato’s *Republic*, parables like the “parable of the cave” teach an abstract argument, using a concrete narrative which is more easily grasped.”¹⁴⁹ F.T. George defined parable as “the designed use of language purposely intended to convey a hidden and secret meaning other than that contained in the words themselves.”¹⁵⁰ In Pāli, the Buddhist canon, we find beautiful and veritable flood of parables to captivate and convince the listeners. M. Winternitz states, “A parable is certainly no argument, but on the heart and even on the mind of the listener a parable often has an effect which is more than that of thousand arguments.”¹⁵¹ Most parables in the D begin with particular words such as ‘*seyyathā pi*’, ‘*bhūtapubbam*’ or ‘*iti kira*’. The words ‘*seyyathā pi*’, though translated like as ‘just as’, ‘as if’, or ‘suppose’ in English, belongs to this category, for all illustrations associated with it narrate a moral lesson or philosophical concepts. Besides, the term ‘*seyyathā*’¹⁵² is a word giving a description.

e.g.) “*bhūtapubbam ... sāmuddikā vāṇijā tīradassim sakunaṃ gahetvā nāvāya samuddaṃ ajjhogāhanti*” (D. I. 222; Once upon a time seafaring traders, having taken a landsighting bird in their ship, set out to the ocean)

¹⁴⁸ David B. Fowler, *What are they saying about the parables* (2000), pp. 63, 99, 132, 133, 137

¹⁴⁹ H. W. Fowler, *Modern English Usage*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1958, London

¹⁵⁰ George Fyler Townsend, translator’s preface to *Aesop’s Fables*, Clarke & Co., 1887, Belford.

¹⁵¹ Winternitz, Maurice, *ibid.*, p. 68

¹⁵² *se* (= *taṃ*, Māgadhī form of *so*) + *yathā* + *api*, incl.

“*seyyathā pi puriso evaṃ vadeyya; ahaṃ yā imasmiṃ janapade janapadakalyāṇī taṃ icchāmi taṃ kāmemī*” (D. I. 193; suppose a person would say in this way, “I wish and desire the most beautiful girl in this country!”)

“*iti kira ... sapariggaho tevijjā brāhmaṇā apariggaho brahmā*” [D. I. 247; suppose brahmins learned in the threefold Vedas with belongings (wives and wealth) but Brahmā without belongings.]

The term ‘*kira*’ is an adverb and is presumptive. It connects new point in a narrative with something preceding, either as expected or guessed. It is also translated with ‘*iti*’ like “thus I have heard” that refers to a report by hear-say.

F. Personification (Fps)

This figure of speech is to attribute or apply human qualities to inanimate objects, animals, or natural phenomena. It is also the representation of an inanimate object or abstract concept as if it is a person or living being, as in the sentences “Necessity is the mother of invention” and “India expects every man to do his duty”.

e.g.) “*māra*” (D. II. 104; god of death)

The word ‘*māra*’ is a pure personification of death. (*maccu*; ThagA. II. 46)

“*dibbāni pi mandārava-pupphāni antalikkhā papatanti, tāni tathāgatassa sarīraṃ okiranti ajjhokiranti abhippakiranti tathāgatassa pūjāya*” (D. II. 137; divine Mandārava flowers fall from the sky and they scatter, sprinkle and cover upon the Tathāgata’s body to pay homage to him)

The divine Mandārava flowers, an inanimate object, pay homage to the Buddha before his passing away.

G. Pun (Fpn)

This is a clever or humorous use of a word or phrase that has more than one meaning or of words that have different meaning but sound the same. Hockett defines, “a pun is an utterance susceptible of two (or more) different interpretations.”¹⁵³ He further explains, “A perfect pun involves semantic and grammatical ambiguity in the face of absolute phonemic identity, with both interpretations sensible in the context in which it occurs.”¹⁵⁴ The ambiguity can arise from the intentional use of homonymous, metonymic, or metaphorical language. Puns may be regarded as in-jokes or idiomatic constructions, given that their usage and meaning are entirely local to a particular language and its culture.

e.g.) “*amarā-vikkhepikā*” (D. I. 24; equivocators or eel-wrigglers)

The first word ‘*amarā*’ is the name of a slippery fish (*maccha*), an eel. On the other hand, it also denotes ‘deathless’ according to the commentary¹⁵⁵. The word ‘*vikkhepika*’¹⁵⁶ is an adjective with the possessive suffix ‘-ika’ denoting ‘one who has confusion or ambiguity’. This idiomatic expression eventually indicates ‘those who have endless views and insinuations’.¹⁵⁷ M. Walshe notes for this expression, “A deliberate pun may well be intended.”¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ Hockett, C. F., *ibid.*, p. 90

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 318

¹⁵⁵ DA. I. 115, “*na maratīti amarā*”

¹⁵⁶ *vi* + *√kṣip* (to throw) + *ika*, der. adj.

¹⁵⁷ BB. rendered it as ‘endless equivocators’ and T.K. Rhys Davids ‘eel-wriggling’.

¹⁵⁸ Walshe, M, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, Wisdom, 1995, Boston, p. 80 fn.

“govindo vata bho brāhmaṇo, mahāgovindo vata bho brāhmaṇo” (D. II. 232; this brhmin is really Govinda! He is really great Govinda!)

The term ‘go-vinda’ literally means cowherd but it connotes ‘great person’ or ‘the name of Kṛṣṇa’ (Skt. *Kṛṣṇa*).

H. Onomatopoeia¹⁵⁹ (Fon)

This is the formation or use of words that sounds like their meaning. It is a word that imitates or suggests the source of natural sound that it describes. It is a figure of speech for comparing characteristic sounds and often used repetitively. Hockett states, “onomatopoeia can be judged only in terms of sound and meaning.”¹⁶⁰ According to Bloomfield, “A special type of symbolic form, which is quite widely distributed, is the repetition of the form with some phonetic variations. Closely akin to these are **imitative** or **onomatopoetic** intense forms, which denote a sound or an object which gives out a sound.”¹⁶¹ On the other hand, there is often a large arbitrary element in the phonemic shape of the word. Therefore, onomatopoeias are not universally the same across all languages. In English a bell says ding-dong but in German bim-bam.

e.g.) “gaḷagaḷāyante” (D. II. 131; it sounds ‘gala gala’)

The repeated term ‘gaḷa gaḷa’ is the sound that takes place as heavy rain pours and flows in particular. It is the sound of roaring, crashing or thundering from inanimate nature.

“jīvaṃ jīvaka” (D. III. 201; a kind of pheasant)

¹⁵⁹ Ref. PED, pp. 246-7, there is a detailed note on elements belonging to the onomatopoetic roots.

¹⁶⁰ Hockett, C. F., *ibid.*, p. 299

¹⁶¹ Leonard Bloomfield, *ibid.*, p. 156

This is the name of a bird which utters a note sounding like ‘*jīvaṃ jīva*’.

“*milakkhu*” (D. III. 264; foreign or a non-Arian)

The Sanskrit-form of this word is the ‘*mleccha*’ which means foreigner or outcaste.¹⁶² These people do not pronounce Sanskrit properly due to their accustomed tongue. This term may be coined being dependent on their strange sound. It also occurs in another form ‘*milakkha*’.

2.1.2. Method of Emphasis

Method of emphasis is a technique which involves in expressing an object or contents more strongly for the purpose of showing its significance. With special stress it is mainly used to give deep impression to listener or reader. Besides, it breaks a plain or dull style in being accustomed sensation in speaking or writing. Hyperbole, litotes, repetition, enumeration, climax, anticlimax and exclamation belong to this category.

A. Hyperbole (Fhp)

This is a use of exaggerated terms for emphasis. It is a form of deliberate and obvious exaggeration for effect according to which a person or thing is depicted as being better or worse, or larger or smaller, than is actually the case. The Pāli term for hyperbole would be ‘*atisayutti*’ according to PED. In fact there has no reference ‘*atisayutti*’ for hyperbole in entire Pāli texts. An affix ‘*ati*’ denoting ‘surpass’ or ‘over’ is added to ‘*sayutti*’ which is parted into ‘*sa*’ (short form or abbreviation of *saha*) and ‘*yutti*’ denoting application, use or connection.

¹⁶² Ref. PED, p. 533

e.g.) “*imasmiṃ ca pana veyyākaraṇasmiṃ bhañṇamane sahaṣṣī loka-dhātu akampittha*”¹⁶³ (D. I. 46; When this exposition was being spoken, the thousand world-system trembled)

This special phenomenon is religiously symbolic. It is a fixed formula presenting at the conclusion of the Buddha’s discourse. According to the DA many more occasions are explained in detail about earthquake.¹⁶⁴ It more often appears at the end of in the Mahāyana Buddhist suttas.

“*loma-haṭṭha-jāto*” (D. I. 50; bristled; lit. having hairs erect)

This phrase shows ‘terror and surprise’ in semantics. It denotes bristling or standing erect the hairs of one’s body.

“*ito ce pi so bhavaṃ gotamo yojanasate viharati alam eva saddhena kulaputtana dassanāya upasaṃkamitum api puṇṇisenāpi*” (D. I. 117; Even if the venerable Gotamo lives a hundred yojanas away from here, it is fit for any young man of family with faith to approach in order to see him with provisions on his shoulder)

The word ‘*yojana*’ is a measure of length. According to Buddhaghosa one yojana is a distance as much as can be travelled with one yoke of oxen.¹⁶⁵ It is about 7 miles and its 100 times are a quite long distance to walk.

B. Litotes (Fl)

¹⁶³ *vi* + *ā* + *√kr* (to do) + *ana*, der.; *√bhaṇ* (to speak) + *ya* + *mana* (*māna*), pass. ppr.; Locative Absolute construction; *a* + *√kamp* (to shake) + *ittha*, aor. 3rd. sg.

¹⁶⁴ DA. I. pp. 130-1

¹⁶⁵ Ref. PED, p. 559; 1 *yojana* = 4 *gāvuta*; 1 *gāvuta* (a little less than 2 miles) = 80 *usabha*; 1 *usabha* = 20 *yatthi* (140 cubits); 1 *yatthi* = 4 *hattha*; 1 *hattha* is a measure of length from elbow to extended little-fingertip.

This is a form of understatement employed for the purpose of enhancing the effect of the ideas expressed. It is also used in which a certain statement is expressed by denying its opposite and is always deliberate with the intention of emphasis. However, the interpretation of litotes can depend on context, including cultural context. In speech, it may also depend on intonation and emphasis; for example, the phrase ‘not bad’ can be said in such a way to mean ‘good’ or ‘excellent’, “You are not wrong” to mean “You are right”, and “It is not ordinary city” to mean “It is a very impressive city”.

e.g.) “*n’atthi ito bahiddhā*” (D. I. 21; There is no other way outside from here)

“*gāthā ... no dugītā*” (D. III. 97; the verse is not sung wrongly)

“*no aññathā*” (D. III. 103; There is not otherwise)

The term ‘no’ is a negative particle and ‘*aññathā*’ is an indeclinable.

C. Repetition (Frp)

This is a repeated usage of word(s) or group of words **in the same sentence or in the successive clauses or sentences** to create a poetic or rhythmic effect. It is, without particular placement of the words, the simple repetition of words to make emphasis. A.K. Warder gives some definition according to the Paṭṭhāna, “repetition strengthens mental principles.”¹⁶⁶ Mark Allon states, “The repetition encountered in Buddhist texts has frequently been taken to have a mnemonic function.”¹⁶⁷ Those texts were designed to be memorized and transmitted

¹⁶⁶ Warder, A. K., *Indian Buddhism*, Motilal Banarsidas, Rep. 1991, Delhi, p. 311

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Allon, M., *ibid.*, pp. 357-363

verbatim. According to M. Walshe, “the repetitions in the canon have probably two distinct sources. Firstly it is that the Buddha himself developed a standard form for sermons, which he doubtless uttered verbatim, or nearly so, many thousands of times during his forty-five years’ ministry. ... Secondly the repetition will have been inherent in the oral tradition itself. This is always characterized by long repetitive passages and stereotyped epithets and descriptions.”¹⁶⁸ The D is thoroughly permeated by repetitions deep in quality and ample in number. While reading Pāli texts we often observe the wearisomeness of the numerous repetitions which are striking feature of the original and which are omitted due to that reason.

e.g.) “*piṭṭhito piṭṭhito*” (D. I. 1; closely behind)

“*ramaṇīyā vata bho dosinā ratti. abhirūpā vata bho dosinā ratti. dassanīyā vata bho dosinā ratti. pāsādikā vata bho dosinā ratti. lakkaṇṇā vata bho dosinā ratti*” (D. I. 47; How pleasant, O friend, is the moonlit night! How beautiful, O friend, is the moonlit night! How lovely, O friend, is the moonlit night! How clear, O friend, is the moonlit night! How auspicious, O friend, is the moonlit night!)

“*tuṇhī-bhūtaṃ tuṇhī-bhūtaṃ bhikkhu-saṃghaṃ*” (D. I. 50; the bhikkhu Sangha being silent extremely)

D. Enumeration (Fnm)

This is a usage that arranges words, phrases, clauses, or sentences with similar contents or character side by side. It is a figure of speech that

¹⁶⁸ Walshe, M, *ibid.*, p. 49

emphasizes the entire content in enumerating several words, phrases and sentences connected in. Enumeration is also said to be a way to arrange various similar characters or phenomena in the same place of sentence component. It contributes to a detailed account, in which each thing is specially noticed. In the D a number of enumerated cases is observed causing boredom to readers. It is the most common style along with repetition in Buddhist canonical texts. These two figures of speech, enumeration and repetition, often stand out together. Enumeration frequently portrays the same matter from various points of view. There is a particular term to start enumeration, namely ‘*seyyathīdaṃ*’¹⁶⁹ denoting ‘as follows’ or ‘that is (i.e.)’. In the D there are especially two suttas where all items are numerically well enumerated, listed or grouped, namely the Saṅgīti sutta (D33) and the Dasuttara sutta (D34). They entirely enumerate dhammas by means of number. I have, accordingly, excluded the cases applicable to this figure of speech from these two suttas.

e.g.) “*tass’ imāni satta ratanāni bhavanti, seyyathīdaṃ cakka-ratanam hatthi-ratanam assa-ratanam maṇi-ratanam itthi-ratanam gahapati-ratanam pariṇāyaka-ratanam*” (D. II. 16; These seven treasures arise to him as follows: the Wheel treasure, the Elephant treasure, the Horse treasure, the Gem treasure, the Woman treasure, the Householder treasure, the Counselor treasure)

“*dhammā gambhīrā duddasā duranubodhā santā paṇītā atakkāvacarā nipuṇā paṇḍita-vedanīyā*” (D. I. 17; Dhammas that are profound, hard to

¹⁶⁹ *sa + yathā + idaṃ*

see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, unthinkable, subtle, and comprehensible only to the wise)

E. Climax (Fc)

This is an arrangement of words, phrases, or clauses in order of increasing importance, the least forcible coming first and the others rising in power until the last. It sometimes uses the repetition of a word or phrase in successive clauses or sentences.

e.g.) “*sakyā vata bho kumārā, paramasakyā vata bho kumārā ti*” [D. I. 93; O my dear princes as strong as teak¹⁷⁰ (*sāka* tree)! O my dear princes as strong as the best teak]

“*gavā khīraṃ khīramhā dadhi dadimhā navanītaṃ navanītamhā sappi sappimhā sappimaṇḍo*” (D. I. 201; From the cow there is milk, from the milk milk-curds, from the milk-curds butter, from the butter clarified butter, and from the clarified butter ghee)

F. Anticlimax (Fac)

This is an arrangement of words, phrases, or clauses in order of decreasing importance. It can be intentionally employed only for a satiric purpose. It frequently partakes of the nature of antithesis as well. In the D, however, this figure of speech is so rare.

¹⁷⁰ D. I. 92, the source of the name ‘*sāka*’ (teak tree) is derived from this line, “*Te raṭṭhasmā pabbājita yattha himavanta-passe pokkharāṇiyā tīre mahā sāka-sando tattha vāsaṃ kappesum*” (These, being banished from the kingdom, built their residence where there was a big teak tree near a lotus-lake on the slopes of the Himalayas.)

e.g.) “*yasmiṃ padese mahesakkhā devatā vatthūni parigaṇhanti mahesakkhānaṃ tattha raññaṃ rājamahāmattānaṃ cittāni namanti nivesanāni māpetuṃ. yasmiṃ padese majjhimā devatā vatthūni parigaṇhanti majjhimānaṃ tattha raññaṃ rājamahāmattānaṃ cittāni namanti nivesanāni māpetuṃ. yasmiṃ padese nīcā devatā vatthūni parigaṇhanti nīcānaṃ tattha raññaṃ rājamahāmattānaṃ cittāni namanti nivesanāni māpetuṃ*” (D. II. 87; In the place, where the powerful devas take grounds, there powerful king’s ministers are inclined to build residences. Where the mid-powerful devas take grounds, there king’s mid-powerful ministers are inclined to build residences. Where the low powerful devas take grounds, there low powerful king’s ministers are inclined to build residences)

G. Exclamation (Fx)

This is a sound, word, or sentence that is spoken suddenly or emphatically and that expresses strong emotion, such as surprise, exclamation, joy, terror, grief, hatred etc. It depends on the manner in which people express their attitude and emotions. This figure of speech is generally composed of uninflected function words. It sometimes appears as sentence-words and combines with other words to form sentences, but not with finite verbs. Exclamation can be phrase or even sentence, as well as word.

e.g.) “*ramaṇīyā vesālī, ramaṇīyaṃ udenaṃ cetiyaṃ, ... ramaṇīyaṃ cāpālaṃ cetiyaṃ*” (D. II. 102; Vesālī is beautiful, the Udena shirin is beautiful, ... Cāpāla shrine is beautiful)

“*abhikkantaṃ bhante abhikkantaṃ bhante*” (D. I. 85; Excellent, venerable sir! Excellent, venerable sir!)

“*yāva parisudho tathāgatassa chavi-vaṇṇo pariyodāto*” (D. II. 133; How clear and pure the Tathāgata’s complexion is!)

2.1.3. Method of Variation

Method of variation is a technique which makes a fresh sensation giving a change to words, phrases or clauses, as well as changing the order of description so that we do not feel monotonous and tedious. Parallelism, antithesis, irony, oxymoron, paradox, apostrophe and rhetorical question belong to this category.

A. Parallelism (Fpr)

This figure of speech gives two or more parts of the sentences a similar form so as to give the whole a definite pattern. It first juxtaposes opposing words as well as words or phrases with similarity and then sets tone or rhythm. It is often used in poems and canonical texts just like Biblical poetry in Hebrew and Chinese poetry.

e.g.) “*yam aham jānāmi tam tvam jānāsi, yam tvam jānāsi tam aham jānāmi*” (D. I. 88; you know what I know; I know what you know)

“*rājā mahā-sudassano brāhmaṇa-gahapatikānaṃ piyo ahosi manāpo, rañño pi mahā-sudassanassa brāhmaṇa-gahapatikā piyā ahesuṃ manāpā*” (D. II. 178; King Mahāsudassana was the favorite and beloved one of brahmins and householders. Brahmins and householders are also the favorite and beloved ones of King Mahāsudassana)

“*yathā-vādī tathā-kārī, yathā-kārī tathā-vādī*” (D. II. 224; one behaves as he speaks, one speaks as he behaves)

B. Antithesis (Fa)

This is a figure of speech denoting a direct contrast to the original statement. It is the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas to give emphasis, usually in a balanced way. It brings out the ideas by an obvious contrast in the words, clauses, or sentences, within a parallel structure. An example of antithesis is “To err is human, to forgive divine.”

e.g.) “*idam eva saccaṃ moghaṃ aññaṃ*” (D. I. 187; only this is true, the rest is false)

“*evam manasikarotha mā evāṃ manasākattha*” (D. I. 214; pay attention to this way, not that way)

“*sabba-pāpassa akaraṇaṃ, kusalassa upasampadā*” (D. II. 49; not to do any evil, but to do good)

C. Irony (Fir)

This is an expression of something which is contrary to the intended meaning: the words say one thing but mean another. It is a humorous or lightly sarcastic mode of speech, in which words are used to convey a meaning contrary to their literal sense. It often depends on the stress or mood of expression. For example, “This is a nice, pleasant sort of weather” which means the weather is actually terrible and “John is a real genius” in the real sense he is normal.

e.g.) “*eke bhonto samaṇa-brāhmaṇā saddhā-deyyāni bhojanāni bhuñjitvā*”¹⁷¹ ... (D. I. 5; some honorable recluses and brahmins have enjoyed food given out of faith)

Some recluses and brahmins living on food offered by the faithful, cause damage to seed and plant life. They are the subject to be blamed but honorific word is used to address them. The term ‘*bhonto*’ puts this expression an irony.

“*sīho ti attānaṃ samekkhiyānaṃ maññi kotthu “migarājā ’ham asmi,” tath’ eva so sigālakaṃ anadi, “ke ca chhave sigāle, ke pana sīha-nāde ti”*”¹⁷² (D. III. 25; thinking of himself as a lion, a jackal thought, “I am the king of animals”. Nonetheless he howls. “Where are the scurvy jackal and the lion’s roar?”)

This expression indicates a scurvy jackal thinking a lion of himself but sounding howls.

D. Apostrophe (Fap)

This is an exclamatory figure of speech. It is used when speaker or writer breaks off and directs speech to a specific group or person or personified abstraction absent or present. Apostrophe mainly plays a role of drawing the attention of the audience or making them concentrate on some activities. It is often introduced by an exclamation ‘O’. Apostrophe is sometimes used to convey extreme emotion as well.

¹⁷¹ √*dā* (to give) + *ya*, grd.; √*bhuj* (to eat, to enjoy) + *tvā*, ger.

¹⁷² *sam* + √*ikṣ* (to see) + *i* + (*ya*) + *āna*, ppr.; √*man* (to think) + *i*, aor. 3rd. sg.; *a* + √*nad* (to make a noise) + *i*, aor. 3rd. sg.; the word ‘*ke*’ is in m. nom. pl. of the interr. pron. ‘*ka*’

e.g.) “*vadehi bho saṅkha, vadehi bho saṅkha*” (D. II. 337); speak! Mr, conch, Speak!

“*tiṭṭha kāma-vitakka! tiṭṭha vyāpāda-vitakka! tiṭṭha vihiṃsā-vitakka! ettāvatā kāma-vitakka! ettāvatā vyāpāda-vitakka! ettāvatā vihiṃsā-vitakka!*”(D. II. 186; Stop, Sensual thought! Stop, Thought of ill-will! Stop, Thought of cruelty! To this much is only your Sensual thought, thought of ill-will and cruelty!)

E. Rhetorical question (Frh)

This is to ask questions as a way of asserting something. It is not for the sake of getting an answer but to assert the obvious answer to the opponent. No answer, in fact, is expected by the speaker. In the D the indeclinable particle ‘*nu*’ is frequently used to form rhetorical questions. It often combines with other emphatic or dubitative particles ‘*api*’ or ‘*na*’, just like ‘*api nu*’ or ‘*na nu*’.

e.g.) “*tatra ce tumhe assatha kupitā vā anattamanā vā, api nu tumhe paresaṃ subhāsitaṃ dubhāsitaṃ ājāneyyātha*”¹⁷³ (D. I. 3; In that case if you are angry or displeased, could you know other’s good or bad speech?)

“*api nu tathāgato taṃ vācaṃ bhāseyya yā sā vācā dvayagāmīnī*” (D. III. 14; would the Exalted One speak a word leading to a duality?)

2.2. Synonym (Syn)

This is a use of two or more synonyms in the same clause or sentence. Synonyms (*vevacanāni*)¹⁷⁴ are different words with identical or very

¹⁷³ *ā* + √*jān* (to know) + *nā* + *eyyātha*, pot. 2nd. pl.

similar meanings. The word comes from Ancient Greek: ‘*syn*’ (with) and ‘*onoma*’ (name). In the figurative sense, two or more words are often said to be synonymous if they have the **same connotation**. Any part of sentence (e.g. noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition etc.) can be a synonym, as long as members of the series are in the same part of sentence. The Buddha expounded his teaching in manifold ways (*pariyāyadesana*) with synonymous words to put enough emphasis for listeners to remember and understand his teaching deeply. It must be remembered that Pāli is thoroughly Buddhist so that we concern more with typical Buddhist usages. In fact, Pāli, it is not only a question of language, but religion. A chief function of using synonyms is to make meaning clearer and more emphatic.¹⁷⁵ M.G. Dhadphale exposes, “synonymic repetition is perhaps the most striking stylistic feature of the Tipiṭaka.”¹⁷⁶ He further comments, “The synonyms express the richness of the Buddha’s analytic thought, his way of encompassing a subject in all its aspects. One grows richer with the wealth of synonyms, for synonyms exhibit in turn, the varied aspects of things. The Pāli term ‘*vevacana*’ denoting synonym is as much stylistic as semantic, as much decorative as discriminative. In the suttas synonyms are mostly used to emphasize and

¹⁷⁴ DA. I. 108; words that are synonyms are said to be synonymous, and the state of being a synonym is called synonymy. Some scholars in linguistics claim that no synonyms have exactly the same meaning (in all contexts or social levels of language) because etymology, orthography, phonic qualities, ambiguous meanings, usage, etc. make them unique. Different words that are similar in meaning usually differ for a reason: ‘long’ and ‘extended’ are only synonyms in one usage and not in others, for example, ‘a long arm’ is not the same as ‘an extended arm’. Ref. Raja, K. K., *Indian Theories of meaning*, The Adyar Library and Research Center, 1963, Madras, p. 33; Ullmann Stephen, *Semantics*, Basil Blackwell, 1967, Oxford, p. 141-2; Gupta, K.M., *ibid.*, p. 250

¹⁷⁵ Gupta, K.M., *ibid.*, pp. 246-51

¹⁷⁶ Dhadphale, M.G., *Synonymic Collocations in the Tipiṭaka*, BORI, 1980, Poona, p.

clarify certain doctrinal and ethical points. One can never think of the *suttantas* without their wealth of synonymic expressions.”¹⁷⁷ For collecting synonyms in the present study the technical term ‘*vevacana*’ has been searched in the DA along with some other technical terms like ‘*adhivanana*’, ‘*pariyāya*’, ‘*ekattha*’ and ‘*samānattha*’. As the result, the terms ‘*vevacana*’ and ‘*adhivacana*’ are only used in the sense of synonym in the DA.

e. g.) “*appamattakaṃ ... oramattakaṃ*” (D. I. 3; unimportant, little)

These two adjectives denoting little, inferior, mere or insignificant are synonymous according to the DA.¹⁷⁸

“*na brāhmaṇe sakkaronti na brāhmaṇe garukaronti na brāhmaṇe mānenti na brāhmaṇe pūjenti na brāhmaṇe apacāyanti*” (D. I. 91; They don’t honor, esteem, revere, worship, and pay homage to brahmins)

“*asatā tucchā musā abhūtena*”¹⁷⁹ (D. III. 34; untrue, empty, false, unreal)

The four adjectives are synonymous denoting ‘something that is not true’ or ‘false’.

2.3. Saying (Sy)

A saying is a sentence that people often say and that gives advice or information about human life and experience. It expresses a general truth about some aspect of life in an interesting or wise way. There are a number of specific types of saying, such as proverb, aphorism, adage, maxim, cliché, mantra, motto etc. In the present study ‘saying’ is the

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 252-4

¹⁷⁸ DA. I. 55

¹⁷⁹ *asatā*, instr. of *√as* (to be; *atthi*)

representative among this similar group of words. In general the Buddhist canon itself can be called as the book of sayings and so we can also find many splendid sayings in the D.

e.g.) “*ambam vā puṭṭho labujam vyākareyya labujam vā puṭṭho ambam vyākareyya*” (D. I. 57; One asked about a mango would explain about a breadfruit, or one asked about a breadfruit would explain about a mango)

“*atta-dīpā viharatha atta-saraṇā anañña-saraṇā, dhamma-dīpā dhamma-saraṇā anañña-saraṇā*” (D. II. 100; Be an island to yourself, be a refuge to yourself, do not be depend on any other refuge; take the dhamma as an island, take the dhamma as a refuge, do not depend on any other refuge)

The term ‘*dīpa*’ denotes an island according to the commentary.¹⁸⁰ However, in Mahāyana texts it often means ‘lamp’. There is no fixed reference for exact sense about it. The term ‘*atta*’ means ‘not soul or ego’ but oneself. This line is quite a famous golden saying for all Buddhists.

“*yo kho ... mayā dhammo ca vinayo ca desito paññatto, so vo mam’ accayena satthā*” (D. II. 154; The Dhamma and the Discipline I have taught and explained will be your teacher after my passing away)

2.4. Slang (Sg)

Slang are words, expressions, and usages that are casual, vivid, racy, or playful replacements for standard ones, are often short-lived, and are usually considered unsuitable for formal contexts, e.g. Bean is a slang word for head. It is the use of informal words and expressions that are not

¹⁸⁰ DA. II. 548, “*mahāsamuddagataṃ dīpaṃ viya*” (like an island accompanied by the great ocean)

considered standard in the speaker's dialect or language. Slang can be regional in that it is used only in a particular territory. Nevertheless, slang expressions can spread outside their original areas to become commonly used. According to Hockett, "It is not certain whether slang is universal or even widespread, but, wherever it is found, its idiomatic nature is clear. Slang depends for its effect on the striking and far-fetched nature of its semantic overtones and its secondary associations."¹⁸¹

e.g.) "*mogha-purisa*" (D. III. 3; a foolish man)

"*muṇḍake samaṇake ibbhe kaṇhe bandhu-pādāpacce*" (D. III. 81; shavelings, petty ascetics, lowly servants, dark fellows, offsprings born from Brahmā's foot)

These five terms are abusive insulting words.

"*amanussā rittam pi pattam sīse nikkujjeyyūṃ*" (D. III. 203; non-humans would put even empty bowl upside down on the head)

2.5. Idiomatic Repetition

In the D, in the dialogues of the Buddha, there are innumerable idiomatic expressions of a particular type that can be named as **Idiomatic Repetition**. It may be also called as a set or fixed expression. Set expressions, with or without modification in phrases, sentences or paragraphs, are used repeatedly which is quite unique as compared to the style of the modern literary works. The descriptive style in the D shows exceptionally little concern for length and frequency in favor of emphasis and mnemonic function. According to Mark Allon, "there is no attempt on

¹⁸¹ Hockett, C. F., *ibid.*, p. 318

the part of sutta texts to avoid using the same word or expression time and again.”¹⁸² It is closely associated with the tendency for the wording which depicts a particular concept, action or event to be standardized.¹⁸³ For the classification of idiomatic expressions under this heading, the present study has divided it into two parts as two sub-headings: the compound & phrase idiom and the sentence idiom.

A. Compound & Phrase Idiom (Icp)

The compound & phrase idiom here is used to indicate that something consists of one, two or more words, or one or more phrases. In general, this type of idiom appears without subject or verb. In other words, it is formed from two or more syntactically related words to make a fixed expression. In the present study, however, **the frequency of form** is taken as a regulating factor of an idiomatic expression whether it is compound or phrase. If any compound or phrase with philosophical or religious background is repeated in different sentences, passages or suttas in different situations or conditions, it can belong to this category.

e.g.) “*yathābhirantaṃ*” (D. II. 91; as long as one likes)

This is an adverbial compound appearing 8 times in the D. The ‘*yathā*’ is an indeclinable and adverb.

“*aneka pariyāyena*” (D. I. 1; in many ways)

This is a prepositional phrase appearing 32 times in the D.

¹⁸² Allon, M., *ibid.*, pp. 351

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

“*addhagato, vayo anupatto*”¹⁸⁴ (D. I. 47; being advanced age, in the last part of life)

This appears 18 times in the D. In those days this expression was generally used towards respectful spiritual leaders.

“*ida-paccayatā paṭiccasamuppādo*”¹⁸⁵ (D. II. 36 dependent origination that is a conditioned nature of things)

B. Sentence Idiom (Ist)

A sentence (*vyāka*) can include words grouped meaningfully to express a statement, question, exclamation, request or command. As with all language expressions, sentences contain both semantic and logical elements (words, parts of speech). In the D many descriptions can fall in the category of sentence idiom. In particular, the present study has put the genitive absolute and the locative absolute construction in this category, though they do not bear connotative meaning. This kind of construction is syntactically quite idiomatic in Pāli along with Sanskrit. A sentence or a clause in these two has both the subject and the participle put in the genitive and the locative case respectively. When these constructions are translated into English, the relative adverb ‘when’ or ‘while’ should begin the sentence or the clause, for example, “*imasmim ca pana veyyākaraṇasmim bhaññaṃane*”¹⁸⁶ (D. I. 46; when this exposition is being spoken). The agent ‘*veyyākaraṇa*’ and the participle ‘*bhaññaṃana*’ are in locative case, so this is applicable to locative absolute construction.

¹⁸⁴ *addha* + √*gam* (to go) + *ta*, pp.; *anu* + *pa* + √*āp* (to obtain) + *ta*, pp.

¹⁸⁵ *ida* (*m*) + *paṭi* + *aya* (√*i*, to go) + *tā*, der.; *saṃ* + *u* (*t*) + √*pad* (to go) + *a*, der.

¹⁸⁶ *vi* + *ā* + √*kr* (to make) + *ana*, der.; √*bhaṇ* (to say) + *ya* + *māna*, pass. ppr.

In the D, if the same expression, which is called a set or fixed expression including set clauses, set sentences or set paragraphs, repeatedly appears for emphasis and mnemonic function in different places, then it is the sentence idiom. Even paragraphs or long or short passages with stereotyped characters would belong to this category. For example, there is a clause: “*evam me sutam*”¹⁸⁷ This particular opening clause with historical background appears 33 times in the D. The longest repetitive portion in the D is from paragraph number 43 to 98¹⁸⁸ in the Sāmmaññaphala sutta (D2). This longest repetitive portion appears 9 times in different suttas of the first volume in the D.¹⁸⁹

e.g.) “*atha kho tesam bhikkhūnam acira-pakkantassa bhagavato ayam antara-kathā udapādi*” (D. II. 8; when the Buddha has just gone away, these monks newly began to talk together)

This is a genitive absolute construction. The subject ‘*bhagava*’ and the participle ‘*pakkanta*’ are in the genitive case.

“*suṇohi sādhuḥkaṃ manasikarohi bhāsisāmī*”¹⁹⁰ (D. I. 62; listen, and pay attention carefully, I will speak)

This clause probably was in common use in those days by preachers. It is often used before giving a discourse. It appears 18 times in the D.

“*attamanā te bhikkhū bhagavato bhāsitaṃ abhinandun*” (D. I. 46; those rapt bhikkhus are pleased towards the Exalted One’s speech)

¹⁸⁷ D. I. 1, “Thus I have heard”

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 63-85

¹⁸⁹ D3 §2.2, D4 §23, D5 §27, D6 §16-§19, D7 §2-§5, D8 §18-§20, D10 §1.7-§2.36, D11 §9-§66, D12 §53-§77

¹⁹⁰ √*śru* (to hear) + *nā* + *hi*, imper. 2nd. sg.; *sādhukaṃ*, adv.; *manasi* + √*kr* (to make, to do) + *o* + *hi*, imp. 2nd. sg.

At the end of the Buddha's discourse this statement frequently comes out in the texts. It appears 9 times in the D.

*“pubbaṇha-samayaṃ nivāsetvā patta-cīvaram ādāya piṇḍāya pāvīsi”*¹⁹¹

(D. III. 1; in the morning having dressed and taken the bowl and the robe, one has entered into for alms-food)

This is one of the routines for the monks or ascetics every day. It appears 20 times in the D.

¹⁹¹ *pubba* + *aṇha* (Skt. *ahna*) + *samaya*; *ni* + √*vas* (to dress, to dwell) + *e* + *tvā*, caus. ger.; *ā* + √*dā* (to give) + *ya*, ger.; *pa* + √*viś* (to enter) + *si*, aor. 3rd. sg.