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DOI : 10.32734/lwsa.v7i2.2084
Electronic ISSN : 2654-7066
Print ISSN : 2654-7058

Volume 7 Issue 2 – 2022 TALENTA Conference Series: Local Wisdom, Social, and Arts (LWSA)



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The Language Styles of Chinese Idioms in the Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty Drama by Bai Shan

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the lexical and idiomatic meanings, stylistics, and to find the most dominant language styles in Chinese idioms in the drama Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty. The theories used in this research are semantic theory of meaning variety by Chaer and Chinese stylistics theory by Huang and Liao. The method used in analyzing this research is descriptive qualitative, which aims to describe and explain data in form of words that are Chinese idioms. The results showed that there are 45 Chinese idioms in the drama Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty episodes 1-3 which have their respective lexical and idiomatic meanings according to 汉语成语大词典 *hànyǔ chéngyǔ dà cídiǎn*. The 45 Chinese idioms' meaning, most of them are adjectives. In addition, it includes 18 Chinese idioms in the simile (比喻 *bǐyù*) style, 8 Chinese idioms in the parallelism (对偶 *duì'ǒu*) style, 6 Chinese idioms in the 双关 *shuāngguān* style, and 3 Chinese idioms in the 婉曲 *wǎnqū* and repetition (反复 *fǎnfù*) style, 2 Chinese idioms in the language 拈连 *niān lián* style, Chinese idioms in the language style of hyperbole (夸张 *kuāzhāng*), 对比 *duìbǐ*, 映衬 *yìngchèn*, 仿词 *fǎngcí*, and 排比 *páibǐ* style with 1 Chinese idiom each. The most dominant language style in the idiom is simile (比喻 *bǐyù*) because it is a form of indirect expression of the language ornament in the drama. This research also shows the importance of understanding about Chinese idioms' meaning and language style as one of Chinese oral tradition.

Keywords: Language styles; Chinese idiom; Semantic; Drama

1. Introduction

Language is an arbitrary sound system as an individual substitute tool in expressing something to the interlocutor so that an understanding is formed between the speaker and the interlocutor (Pateda, 2011:6-7). Language can also be used as a medium of communication directly and indirectly (Chaer 2009:76). Therefore, language can be interpreted as a media between individuals to convey their intentions directly and indirectly. As for direct delivery in the form of straightforward delivery of the intent that the speaker wants to convey, at the same time indirectly it can be expressed in several ways and usually uses language that is not the actual meaning, such as using figurative language and idioms is one of them.

Idioms are groups of words that have their special meaning and are different from the meaning of each word in that group of word (Alwasilah, 1985:147). In Chinese, idioms are called 成语 *chéngyǔ*. According to Huang and Liao (2017: 249) in his book entitled 现代汉语:上册 *xiàndài hànyǔ: shàngcè*, idiom adalah “成语是一种是相沿习用、意义丰富、具有书面语色彩的固定短语。” “*chéngyǔ shì yī zhǒng shì xiāngyán xiyòng, hányì fēngfù, jùyǒu shūmiànyǔ sècǎi de gùdìng duǎnyǔ*” means “an idiom is a type of fixed phrase that has been used for a long time, is rich in meaning, and functions as a color enhancer (decoration) in writing”. In addition, Chinese idioms usually consist of three, four, seven, 汉字 *hànzì* (Chinese characters) and so on, but four-character idioms are the most widely used idioms (Zhou and Liu, 2022:48).

In linguistics, there is a branch of science that discusses language style, namely stylistics (Enkvrist, 1973:16). According to Sudjiman (1993:13), stylistics is a way that a speaker or writer uses to express his or her intentions by using language as a means or simply called language style. Meanwhile, according to Keraf (2009: 124), the types of language styles based on language aspects include four elements, namely language styles based on word choice, tone contained, sentence structure, and direct or indirect meaning. According to Keraf (2009:124)'s last elements about the types of language styles based on language aspects relates to Longman's opinion (2003:741) that the meaning of idioms has a different meaning from the words that form them (indirect meaning). Therefore, to know the language style of an idiom, it is necessary to know the meaning of the idiom first, which includes its lexical and idiomatic meanings. In this case, semantic theory is used as a tool to analyze the meaning contained in the idioms studied. Semantics is a field of study in linguistics that focuses on the study of meaning or meaning in language (Chaer, 2013:2).

As the times progress, the use of idioms is not necessarily limited to communication and writing, but is also used in drama. Widarwati and Fanani (2020:2) explained that drama is a story played by an actor to describe art, social life, and various kinds of conflicts in life. Chinese drama is a widely loved television program that has many benefits, both as entertainment, raises motivation in learning Chinese; to increase knowledge in Chinese, especially in vocabulary, pronunciation, and listening to Chinese (Meliana, 2023: 11). Therefore, the researcher used drama and chose *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty* as the data source for this study.

Tales of Tang Dynasty which has the Chinese title 《唐朝诡事录》 *táng cháo guǐ shì lù* is a Chinese drama adapted from a novel by 魏风华 *wèi fēnghuá*. It is mystery and horror genre that has 36 episodes. This drama is quite popular with Chinese drama fans because it has good cinematography as evidenced by the high rating of 9.6 out of 10 on the application called iQIYI. The drama tells the story of the mysterious murder of the city's security chief, followed by the mysterious murders of many brides during the Tang dynasty in the city of 长安 *cháng'ān* so that a new city security chief named 苏无名 *sū wú míng* is chosen and assigned to investigate all these events.

Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty drama has a lot of idioms in the dialog that have a specific language style that is adjusted to the meaning of the sentences conveyed by each character so that researchers only use episodes 1-3 because researchers consider the data obtained from these episodes to be representative to provide an overview of the use of idioms in drama. The following are examples of dialog containing idioms in the drama *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty*.

Example (1) :

苏无名 : 看！一切祥和明媚繁华如梦。

越是花团锦簇它的阴影便越深幽难测。

sū wú míng : kàn! yīqiè xiánghé míngmèi fánhuá rú

mèng yuè shì **huātuánjǐncù** tā de yīnyǐng

Su wuming : Look! Everything is **peaceful, bright**

and prosperous like a dream. The more colorful, prosperous, and beautiful it looks, the darker and more unpredictable its shadow becomes.

Source: *Strange Taled of Tang Dynasty drama eps 01 (05:24 ~ 05:36)*

The example (1) is a dialogue of 苏无名 *sū wú míng*, the male protagonist who is 长安 *cháng'ān* city security chief of the city, explaining his opinion about 长安 *cháng'ān* city to a man named 卢凌风 *lú língfēng*, who is a man and the most potent enemy of 苏无名 *sū wú míng*. Idiom on that dialog is “花团锦簇” *huā tuán jǐn cù*. It has lexical meaning “成团的鲜花和丝织品” *chéng tuán de xiānhuā hé sīzhīpǐn* means “flower bouquets and silk fabrics” and idiomatic meaning “五彩缤纷、灿烂绚丽的景象” *wǔcǎibīnfēn, cànlàn xuànlì de jǐngxiàng* means a colorful, prosperous, and beautiful landscape” (Wang, 2017:543). Based on its lexical and idiomatic meanings, the idiom uses a simile language style (比喻 *bǐyù*) because it uses the simile of 'flowers' as a symbol of beautiful and colorful scenery and uses the simile of 'satin cloth' as a prosperous thing.

Based on idioms 1 and 2 from example 1 above, it can be seen that the Chinese idiom language style is diverse and contains its special meaning that represents life or culture in Chinese society, therefore this study focuses on describing the meaning and language style of Chinese idioms in the *Strange Tales of tang Dynasty* drama episodes 1-3 so as to increase understanding of Chinese Idioms, both in terms of their use in oral tradition or use as daily coversation and the historical and cultural meanings contained therein.

2. Method

Qualitative research is a research method that aims to describe and explain the situation of a problem that occurs. According to Moleong (2005:4), a qualitative descriptive approach is a research approach in which the data collected are in the form of words, pictures and not numbers. Therefore, this research includes qualitative descriptive research because it describes the language style in the data in the form of words in the form of Chinese idioms in the *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty* drama episodes 1-3.

To obtain the appropriate data in this study, the data collection technique *simak bebas libat cakap* (SBLC) is used. The free listening technique is a data collection technique that positions the researcher as an observer or observer of the conversation or dialog that is the subject of research without involving the researcher in the dialog (Sudaryanto, 2015: 204). Then continued with the note technique because it is following Sudaryanto's opinion (2015: 205-206) that the note technique can be done directly after the researcher has finished using the first or second technique by using certain writing tools or media. The initial steps taken by the researcher are watching the drama *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty* episodes 1-3 repeatedly while listening and paying attention to the dialog in the drama to find Chinese idioms (成语 *chéngyǔ*), and then write down the dialogues in *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty* episodes 1-3 that contain Chinese idioms (成语 *chéngyǔ*).

The data analysis technique used is the Miles and Huberman Model data analysis technique. Systematic activities carried out in data such as data reduction, data display, and finally getting conclusions (Miles and Hunerman, 1992:16) After collecting the data that collected use data collection technique *simak bebas libat cakap* (SBLC), the researcher presented the Chinese idiom data (成语 *chéngyǔ*) of *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty* episodes 1-3 in the form of descriptions and tables and write down the lexical meaning and idiomatic meaning of these idioms using *汉语成语大词典* *hànyǔ chéngyǔ dà cídiǎn* as a reference so that they can be identified, grouped and analyzed according to the type of language style based Huang and Liao theory of Chinese language styles. Finally, Draw conclusions by presenting the meaning and style, and include the most dominant language style in Chinese idioms.

3. Discussion

From all the dialogues in *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty* drama episode 1-3, there were founded 45 data Chinese idioms. According Huang and Liao on a book called *现代汉语:下册 xiàndài hànyǔ: xiàcè* (2017:168) explained that Chinese language styles have 20 types and this study founded 11 types of them.

3.1. Simile (比喻 *bǐyù*)

Based on the opinion expressed by Huang and Liao (2017: 168) the style of parable or in Chinese is called 比喻 *bǐyù* which is a style to describe something (A) with another thing (B) that is different but has a common element.

Table 1. Chinese Idioms in the Simile (比喻 *bǐyù*) Style

Chinese Idioms	Pinyin	Idiomatical meaning
花团锦簇	<i>huā tuán jīn cù</i>	Colorful, prosperous, and beautiful
水落石出	<i>shuǐ luò shí chū</i>	The truth is revealed
束手就擒	<i>shù shǒu jiù qín</i>	Self-surrender
顺藤摸瓜	<i>shùn téng mō guā</i>	Find out
如花似玉	<i>rú huā sì yù</i>	So pretty
危机四伏	<i>wēi jī sì fú</i>	Dimana-mana berbahaya
刮目相看	<i>guā mù xiāng kàn</i>	Admiration or respect
豆蔻年华	<i>dòu kòu nián huá</i>	youth
探囊取物	<i>tàn náng qǔ wù</i>	Very Easy
倾家荡产	<i>qīng jiā dàng chǎn</i>	Bankrupt
自作主张	<i>zì zuò zhǔ zhāng</i>	Make your own decisions
飞黄腾达	<i>fēi huáng téng dá</i>	Career advancement
兴师问罪	<i>xīng shī wèn zuì</i>	Criticize and attack
九牛一毛	<i>jiǔ niú yī máo</i>	Small amount
目中无人	<i>mù zhōng wú rén</i>	Underestimating others
负隅顽抗	<i>fù yú wán kàng</i>	Resist and reject violently
一网打尽	<i>yī wǎng dǎ jìn</i>	At once
獐头鼠目	<i>zhāng tóu shǔ mù</i>	Ugly

The following is an example of Chinese idiom data with simile style (比喻 *bǐyù*)

Data 2

水落石出 *shuǐ luò shí chū*

苏无名 : 凡害怕不吉利的皆因深陷迷雾。一旦水落石出恐怕只会惊讶真相其实离我们很近。

sū wúmíng : hàipà bù jí lì de jiē yīn shēn xiàn míwù. yīdàn shuǐ luò shí chū kǒngpà zhǐ huì jīngyà zhēnxiàng qíshí lí wǒmen hěn jìn.

Su Wuming : Any who fears of being caught in the fog. Once **the truth is revealed**, only to be surprised that the truth is very close to us.

Source : *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty drama eps 01 (19:54 ~ 19:57)*

Context : Su Wuming had a dialog with Su Family's servant Su Qian. In their dialog, they discussed the mysterious death of the old Chang'an City Security Chief in his residence and indeed one day the truth of his death would be revealed.

Chinese idiom 水落石出 *shuǐ luò shí chū* has the Chinese lexical meaning of "水落下去后, 石头就显露了出来" *shuǐluò xiàqù hòu, shítou jiù xiǎnlùle chū lái*. which means "once the water flows down, the stone will be seen", and the idiomatic meaning "真相大白" *zhēnxiàng dàbái* which means "the truth is revealed" (Wang, 2017:1200).

Based on the lexical and idiomatic meanings of the idiom 水落石出 *shuǐ luò shí chū*, the idiom is a simile (比喻 *bǐyù*) of the 借喻 *jièyù* type because it uses 'after the water flows, the stone will be seen' as a simile for the truth to be revealed. In addition, there are no comparative words such as 如 *rú*, 似 *sì*, 变成 *biànchéng*, etc. in this idiom, which further confirms that this Chinese idiom is a simile (比喻 *bǐyù*) of the 借喻 *jièyù* type because there are no comparative words in this type of language style.

3.2. Parallelism (对偶 *duì'ǒu*)

Parallelism or *duì'ǒu* (对偶) is a language style that uses two characters, words, to phrases or sentences that have the same structure and number of words, have a strong rhythm, meaning that they are related and arranged in an orderly manner (Huang and Liao, 2017:207).

Table 1. Chinese Idioms with parallelism language style (对偶 *duì'ǒu*).

Chinese Idioms	Pinyin	Idiomatical meaning
穷凶极恶	<i>qióng xiōng jí è</i>	So cruel
一清二楚	<i>yī qīng'èr chǔ</i>	Very clear
神机妙算	<i>shén jī miào suàn</i>	A great approximation
乱七八糟	<i>luàn qī bā zāo</i>	Very messy
推三阻四	<i>tuī sān zǔ sì</i>	Make every effort to resist
千娇百媚	<i>qiān jiāo bǎi mèi</i>	Graceful and mesmerizing
奇花异草	<i>qí huā yì cǎo</i>	Rare plants and flowers
无能为力	<i>wú néng wéi lì</i>	Cannot do anything

The following is an example of Chinese idiom data with parallelism style (对偶 *duì'ǒu*).

Data 19

穷凶极恶 *qióng xiōng jí è*

苏谦 : 县尉, 我听说这里还有很多逃犯, 杀人越货之輩穷凶极恶之人您可要小心哪。

sū qiān : xiàn wèi, wǒ tīng shuō zhèlǐ hái yǒu hěnduō táo fàn, shā rén yuè huò zhī bèi qióng xiōng jí è zhī rén nín kě xiǎoxīn nǎ.

Su qian : Chief of security, I heard that there are still many fugitives here. Killing people and smuggling goods is **very cruel**. You must be careful.

Source: *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty drama eps 02 (10:59 ~ 11:10)*

Context : Su Qian, who was the head butler of the Su family, warned Su Wuming that the area they were visiting was very dangerous because there were still many criminals who often smuggled goods and killed people very cruelly.

Chinese idiom 穷凶极恶 *qióng xiōng jí è* has the Chinese lexical meaning "有凶残恶毒的之事" *yǒu xiōngcán è'dú dí zhī shì* which means "there are cruel things", and there is also the idiomatic meaning "极端凶恶" *jíduān xiōng'è* which means "very cruel" (Wang, 2017: 979).

The Chinese idiom 穷凶极恶 *qióng xiōng jí è* is sequentially composed of 4 Chinese characters, namely '穷' *qióng*, '凶' *xiōng*, '极' *jí*, and '恶' *è*. According to its idiomatic meaning of 'very cruel', the word 'cruel' is derived from Chinese '凶恶' *xiōng'è*, which in the idiom is not directly side by side, but is separated by the word '极' *jí*. This form of script separation, when put together with the other scripts that make up this idiom, is one of the stylistic characteristics of parallelism (对偶 *duì'ǒu*). In addition, the '极' *jí* that separates '凶' *xiōng* and '恶' *è* has the same pronunciation as the '级' *jí* derived from the word '超级' *chāojí* which means 'very' following its idiomatic meaning of 'very cruel'. The idiom also contains the word '穷' *qióng* which rhymes with the final syllable '凶' *xiōng* from '凶恶' *xiōng'è*. From all these characteristics and explanations, the idiom 穷凶极恶 *qióng xiōng jí è* is an idiom with parallelism language style (对偶 *duì'ǒu*).

3.3. 双关 *shuāngguān* Style

双关 *shuāngguān* is a language style that uses words that have the same or similar pronunciation sounds and pays attention to the meaning of the word, which aims to make the reader pay attention to the meaning from two sides, namely the inner meaning and the outer meaning of the word. The proper use of 双关 *shuāngguān* will make the language funny and exiting, and the use of this language style can be adjusted according to the specific context to make the language look more vivid, implicit, etc. (Huang and Liao, 2017:202).

Table 3. Chinese Idioms with 双关 *shuāngguān* Style

Chinese Idioms	Pinyin	Idiomatical meaning
歌舞升平	<i>gē wǔ shēng píng</i>	- A state of happiness and security - Things are safe because many corrupt officials are dead
不知好歹	<i>bù zhī hǎo dǎi</i>	- Ungrateful -Don't know good and right
暴殄天物	<i>bào tiǎn tiān wù</i>	-Wasting stuff -Destroying living creatures in nature
纸上谈兵	<i>zhǐ shàng tán bīng</i>	-Military tactics on paper -Empty theories
指日可待	<i>zhǐ rì kě dài</i>	-Will happen soon -Believe in everything that is pursued
装神弄鬼	<i>zhuāng shén nòng guǐ</i>	-Witch spells to deceive -Creating mischief by cheating

The following is an example of Chinese idiom data with 双关 *shuāngguān* .

Data 27

歌舞升平 *gē wǔ shēng píng*

苏无名 : 绚烂的大唐就像面镜子一面歌舞升平, 而另一面鬼影幢幢。

sū wúmíng : *xuànlàn de dà táng jiù xiàng miàn jìngzi yīmiàn gēwǔshēngpíng, ér lìng yīmiàn guǐ yǐng chuángchuáng.*

Su Wuming : The great Tang Dynasty is like a mirror. On the one hand, it shows **safety and happiness**, but on the other hand, it shows cunning everywhere.

Source: *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty drama eps 01 (05:36 ~ 05:46)*

Context : In the dialog Su Wuming talked to Lu Lingfeng that he thought the dynasty of Chang'an City's atmosphere in the Tang Dynasty was like two sides of a mirror, on one side showing security and happiness, but on the other side showing cunning everywhere.

The Chinese idiom 歌舞升平 *gē wǔ sheng píng* used in the dialog has both lexical and idiomatic meanings. The lexical meaning of the idiom is "为庆祝太平而唱歌跳舞" *wèi qìngzhù tàipíng ér chànggē tiàowǔ*, which means "celebrating peace with song and dance" and the idiomatic meaning is "幸福和平安的局面" *xìngfú hé píng'ān dì júmiàn* which means "a state of happiness and peace" (Wang, 2017: 436).

In the Chinese idiom 歌舞升平 *gē wǔ sheng píng*, there is the character "平" *píng* which means peace. The "平" *píng* that makes up the Chinese idiom 歌舞升平 *gē wǔ sheng píng* and is located at the end is the key to determining the language style used in this idiom. The "平" *píng* which means peaceful has two contexts of meaning which are 'peaceful because the atmosphere is without commotion' and 'peaceful because many corrupt officials died'. Because there are two meanings in this idiom, the style of language used by the Chinese idiom 歌舞升平 *gē wǔ sheng píng* is the style of language 双关 *shuāngguān*.

3.4. 婉曲 *wǎnqū* Style

Wǎnqū (婉曲) is a style of language that deliberately states something indirectly but borrows some synonyms that correspond to the object to express it subtly (Huang and Liao, 2017:207).

Table 2. Chinese Idioms with 婉曲 *wǎnqū* Style

Chinese Idioms	Pinyin	Idiomatical meaning
人心叵测	<i>rén xīn pǒ cè</i>	The human heart cannot be guessed how dangerous it is
平安无事	<i>píng ān wú shì</i>	Safe and sound without any problems
口出狂言	<i>kǒu chū kuáng yán</i>	Talk big or be arrogant

The following is an example of Chinese idiom data with 婉曲 *wǎnqū* style.

Data 33

人心叵测 *rén xīn pǒ cè*

元县令 : 为了赌博, 竟连自己的新婚妻子都卖, 真是人心叵测呀。

yuán xiàn lìng : wèile dǔbó, jìng lián zìjǐ de xīnhūn qīzi dōu mài, zhēnshi rén xīn pǒ cè ya.

Judge Yuan : For the sake of gambling, he even sold his own wife, thought humans are genuely unpredictable.

Source: *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty drama eps 01 (38:09 ~ 38:15)*

Context : between Judge Yuan has a dialogue with Su Wuming who discussed Song Chai was killed for violating the curfew. In addition, Judge Yuan also said that for the sake of gambling, Song Chai was willing to sell his wife, Miss Dou. Miss Dou was one of the brides who died.

The Chinese idiom 人心叵测 *rén xīn pǒ cè* certainly has a meaning, so it is suitable for use according to the context of the dialogue. The lexical meaning of this idiom is “人心不能推测” *rénxīn bùnéng tuīcè* which means “the human heart is unpredictable” and the idiomatic meaning is “人的心很险恶, 不可推测揣度” *rén de xīn hěn xiǎn'è, bùkě tuīcè chuāiduò* which means "the human heart (mind) is too dangerous to speculate" (Wang, 2017: 1019). Based on its lexical and idiomatic meanings, this idiom is intended to reveal that there are bad things that humans can do because no one can guess what is actually in the hearts and minds of humans.

According to the idiomatic meaning of the Chinese idiom 人心叵测 *rén xīn pǒ cè* which means that 'the human heart (though) is too dangerous to guess or speculate on'. The idiomatic meaning is refined in the lexical meaning of the idiom by stating 'the human heart is unpredictable'. It can be concluded that the idiomatic meaning is not directly expressed, but uses refined words. Therefore, the figurative language used in 人心叵测 *rén xīn pǒ cè* is 婉曲 *wǎnqū*.

3.5. Repetition Style (反复 fǎnfù)

Repetitive language style (反复 fǎnfù) or repetition style is a style of language characterized by the repetition of characters, words, or sentences to emphasize the meaning and emotion of the word (Huang and Liao, 2017: 218).

Table 3. Chinese Idioms With Repetition Style (反复 fǎnfù)

Chinese Idioms	Pinyin	Idiomatical meaning
惟妙惟肖	wéi miào wéi xiào	Similar to the original
自暴自弃	zì bào zì qì	Self-loathing
负债累累	fù zhài lěi lèi	Over-indebted

The following is an example of Chinese idiom data with repetition style (反复 fǎnfù).

Data 36

惟妙惟肖 wéi miào wéi xiào

苏无名：对了，上次见到喜君小姐画的萧将军像真是惟妙惟肖，想必裴侍郎对这位萧将军一定很熟悉吧。

sū wú míng: duì le, shàng cì jiàn dào xǐ jūn xiǎo jūn huà de xiāo jiāng jūn xiàng zhēn shì wéi miào wéi xiào, xiǎng bì pèi shì láng duì zhè wèi xiāo jiāng jūn yī dìng hěn shú xī ba.

Su Wuming: Oh yeah, the last time I met Miss Xijun, I saw the General's painting Xiao really looks like the original.

Source: *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty drama eps 02 (32:12 ~ 32:22)*

Context: In the dialogue between Su Wuming and Deputy Minister Pei, he asked his curiosity why the painting of General Xiao painted by Miss Xijun, who is the daughter of Deputy Minister Pei, was so similar to the original, and it turned out that this was because Miss Xijun was General Xiao's fiancé.

Chinese idiom 惟妙惟肖 wéi miào wéi xiào has special meaning, so it can be adapted to be used in drama dialog or daily communication. Lexically, the Chinese idiom 惟妙惟肖 wéi miào wéi xiào means "精妙和相似" jīng miào hé xiāng sì which means "beautiful and similar" and idiomatically it means: "十分接近原形" shí fēn jiē jìn yuán xíng which means "very similar to the original" (Wang, 2017: 1334). Based on its lexical and idiomatic meanings, the use of the idiom 惟妙惟肖 wéi miào wéi xiào is intended to express a work of art, especially drawings and paintings that are similar to the original.

Chinese idiom 惟妙惟肖 wéi miào wéi xiào is composed by 4 Chinese characters with one same Chinese character written twice which is "惟" wéi. In the Chinese idiom 惟妙惟肖 wéi miào wéi xiào, the "惟" wéi is located on the left and right of the "妙" miào. The repetition of Chinese characters in this idiom twice shows that the language style used is repetition (反复 fǎnfù). The type of repetition is distant repetition (间隔反复 jiàngé liánxù fǎnfù) because of the "妙" miào that separates the repeated characters.

3.6. 拈连 niān lián Style

拈连 niān lián is a style that uses the context of the noun or thing A applied to noun or thing B in a precise way. Object or thing A is generally a concrete object that is placed mainly in the front, while object or thing B is generally an abstract object or thing that is placed mainly in the back. This language style usually aims to make the language more straightforward and more unique, but still has an implicit rhetorical beauty.

Table 4. Chinese Idioms With 拈连 niān lián Style

Chinese Idioms	Pinyin	Idiomatical meaning
出言不逊	chū yán bù xùn	Speaking rudely, disrespectfully
当务之急	dàng wù zhī jí	Prioritized items to be completed first

The following is an example of Chinese idiom data with 拈连 *niān lián* style.

Data 39

出言不逊 *chū yán bù xùn*

宋柴 : 我父母双亡家, 道中落。窦家早有悔婚之意, 特别是窦玉临屡次出言不逊。

sòng chái : *wǒ fùmǔ shuāng wáng jiā, dào zhōng luò. dòu jiā zǎo yǒu huǐ hūn zhī yì, tè bié shì dòu yù lín lǚ cì chū yán bù xùn*

Song Chai: Both of my parents are dead, and my family is in a slump. The Dou family had long intended to cancel the wedding, especially Dou Yulin who repeatedly spoke harshly.

Source: *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty drama eps 01 (25:00 ~ 25:06)*

Context : Song Chai, who is the husband of Miss Dou, one of the missing brides, dialogued with Su Wuming. Song Chai said that he was not the one who killed his wife; it was the Dou family, especially Dou Yulin (Miss Dou's younger sister) who repeatedly spoke harshly to him and tried to cancel the wedding because since his parents died he had become downtrodden and poor.

The Chinese idiom 出言不逊 *chū yán bù xùn* must have its special meaning so that it is appropriate when used in dialog. The meaning of the Chinese idiom is divided into two types of meaning, namely lexical meaning and idiomatic meaning. The lexical meaning of the Chinese idiom 出言不逊 *chū yán bù xùn* is "言语不谦恭" *yányǔ bù qiāngōng* which means "impolite words" and the idiomatic meaning is "说话不客气, 没有礼貌" *shuō huà bù kèqì, méiyǒu lǐmào* which means "speaking rudely and without manners" (Wang, 2017: 211). Based on its lexical and idiomatic meanings, this idiom is addressed to people who speak impolitely or rudely. Simply put, the idiom 出言不逊 *chū yán bù xùn* can be translated as speaking rudely without manners.

As for the language style used in the Chinese idiom 出言不逊 *chū yán bù xùn* can be seen from the word arrangement and meaning. In this Chinese idiom 出言不逊 *chū yán bù xùn*, the fundamental meaning is found in the word '言' *yán* which can be interpreted as 'words' and '不逊' *bù xùn* which can be interpreted as 'impolite'. It can be seen that the arrangement of the idiom's meaning is continuous, starting from 'words' (noun) and 'impolite' (context). This means that 'disrespectful' refers to 'words' placed first. Thus, it can be identified that the language style used in the Chinese idiom 出言不逊 *chū yán bù xùn* is the 拈连 *niān lián* language style.

3.7. Hiperbole Style (夸张 *kuāzhāng*)

Hyperbole (夸张 *kuāzhāng*) is a style of exaggerating or narrowing the description of objects or people that makes people feel that although it is not accurate, it feels like it is (Huang and Liao, 2017:200). The following is an example of Chinese idiom data hyperbole style (夸张 *kuāzhāng*).

Data 41

家徒四壁 *jiā tú sì bì*

卢凌风 : 你看! 他家徒四壁也印证了这一点。

lú língfēng : *nǐ kàn! tā jiā tú sì bì yě yìnzhèng le zhè yī diǎn.*

Lu Linfeng : Look! He who has nothing proves my assumption.

Source: *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty drama eps 01 (26:15 ~ 26:18)*

Context : Lu Lingfeng and his two followers secretly followed Song Chai to his house. In the dialog, due to gambling, he had nothing.

The Chinese idiom 家徒四壁 *jiā tú sì bì* must have its special meaning so that it is appropriate when used in dialog. The meaning of the Chinese idiom is divided into two types of meaning, namely lexical meaning and idiomatic meaning. The lexical meaning of the Chinese idiom 家徒四壁 *jiā tú sì bì* is "家中空荡荡的只有四局墙壁" *jiā zhōng kōngdàngdàng de zhīyǒu sì jú qiángbì* which means "the house is empty with only four walls" and the idiomatic meaning is "穷得一无所有" *qióng dé yīwúsuǒyǒu* which means "poor have nothing" (Wang, 2017: 588). Based on its lexical and idiomatic meanings, this idiom can be interpreted as a state of being so poor that one has nothing.

According to the lexical meaning of the Chinese idiom 家徒四壁 *jiā tú sì bì* which is 'the empty house has only four walls' sounds widely exaggerated because it is impossible for a house can't consist of only four walls, at least with doors and windows. This exaggeration makes the idiom 家徒四壁 *jiā tú sì bì* a hyperbole or 夸张 *kuāzhāng* in Chinese.

3.8. 对比 *duìbǐ* Style

对比 *duìbǐ* is a Chinese style that compares two different or opposite things or compares opposite aspects of the same thing to each other (Huang and Liao, 2017:216). The following is an example of Chinese idiom data with 对比 *duìbǐ* style.

Data 42

凶多吉少 *xiōng duō jí shǎo*

苏无名：中郎将，我刚才之所以不让你跳窗就因为刚才那两个跳窗户的人恐怕凶多吉少了。

sū wú míng : zhōng láng jiāng, wǒ gāngcái zhī suǒyǐ bù ràng nǐ tiào chuāng jiùshì yīnwèi gāngcái nà liǎng gè tiào chuānghù de rén kǒngpà xiōng duō jí shǎo le.

Su Wuming: General, I cannot let you jump through the window because the the two people who jumped earlier seem to be in **danger**.

Source: *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty drama eps 02 (20:30 ~ 20:40)*

Context: suddenly, a tiger came in and attacked Lu Lingfeng and Su Wuming, then after fighting for a while, the tiger came out through the window. Lu Lingfeng wanted to chase it but was forbidden by Su Wuming because he thought the tiger was a demon who wanted to lure them out and if they follow the tiger, it will be hazardous.

The Chinese idiom 凶多吉少 *xiōng duō jí shǎo* must have its special meaning so that it is appropriate when used in dialog. The meaning of the Chinese idiom is divided into two types of meaning, namely lexical meaning and idiomatic meaning. The lexical meaning of the Chinese idiom 凶多吉少 *xiōng duō jí shǎo* is "危险的兆头多，吉利的兆头少" *wéixiǎn de zhàotou duō, jí lì de zhàotou shǎo* meaning "there are more dangerous omens than good omens" and its idiomatic meaning "情况不妙，可能出现危险" *qíngkuàng bù miào, kěnéng chūxiàn wéixiǎn* meaning "the situation is inappropriate, likely to cause harm" (Wang, 2017: 1489). Simply put, the idiom 凶多吉少 *xiōng duō jí shǎo* is used when a situation is more likely to cause harm than not.

Based on the lexical and idiomatic meanings of the Chinese idiom 凶多吉少 *xiōng duō jí shǎo*, it can be seen that there are two aspects that are compared in meaning, namely the word '凶多' *xiōng duō* which means 'more bad things' and the word '吉少' *jí shǎo* which means 'little luck'. It can be concluded that the Chinese idiom 凶多吉少 *xiōng duō jí shǎo* is a 对比 *duìbǐ* style. As for the type of 对比 *duìbǐ* style, it is 两体对比 *liǎngtǐ duìbǐ* or two-sided because it compares two contrasting basics of 'many bad things' and 'little luck' together.

3.9. 映衬 *yìngchèn* Style

映衬 *yìngchèn* is a style that aims to emphasize a subject matter using similar or opposite things as explanations to highlight its characteristics (Huang and Liao, 2017:217). The following is an example of Chinese idiom data with 映衬 *yìngchèn* style.

Data 43

以貌取人 *yǐ mào qǔ rén*

苏谦：那个中郎将啊一身的傲气看着就让人害怕。

苏无名：可不能以貌取人啊。

sū qiān : nàgè zhōng láng jiāng a yīshēn de àoqìkànzhe jiù ràng rén hàipà.

sū wú míng : kě bùnéng yǐ mào qǔ rén a.

Su Qian: That General looks arrogant, look intimidating

Su Wuming: Don't judge people by their look.

Source: *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty drama eps 02 (40:57 ~ 41:07)*

Context: Su Qian, who was Su Wuming's family servant, said that when she saw the Lieutenant General named Lu Lingfeng, she felt scared because he looked very arrogant. However, Su Wuming advised that one should not judge someone based on their outward appearance.

The Chinese idiom 以貌取人 *yǐ mào qǔ rén* must have its own meaning so that it is appropriate when used in dialog. The meaning of Chinese idioms is divided into two types of meaning, namely lexical meaning and idiomatic meaning. The lexical meaning of the Chinese idiom 以貌取人 *yǐ mào qǔ rén* is "按照外表判断" *ànzhào wàibiǎo pànduàn* "judging by external appearance" and its idiomatic meal is "只凭外表形象来衡量、判断人的品质、才能或决定对待的态度" *zhǐ píng wàibiǎo xíngxiàng lái héngliáng, pànduàn rén de pǐnzhì, cáinéng huò juéding duìdài de tàidù* which means "Measuring or judging a person's quality, ability, or attitude by his or her physical appearance alone" (Wang, 2017: 1632). So it can be concluded based on

its lexical and idiomatic meanings that the idiom 以貌取人 *yǐ mào qǔ rén* is an expression for judging someone by their outward appearance alone. The use of the word '取人' *qǔ rén* to replace the word '判断' *pànduàn*, which means 'to judge' is a form of using similar things to emphasize '貌' *mào* (outward appearance) so that the idiom is more prominent in meaning-making the Chinese idiom 以貌取人 *yǐ mào qǔ rén* language style 映衬 *yìngchèn*.

3.10. 仿词 *fǎngcí* Style

仿词 *fǎngcí* is a language style formed by replacing one of the word morphemes of an existing sentence with a homophone word and creating a new word according to the required expression so as to give a new and more vivid impression (Huang and Liao, 2017:214). The following is an example of Chinese idiom data with 仿词 *fǎngcí* style.

Data 44

言而有信 *yán ér yǒu xìn*

苏无名：我苏无名，岂是言而有信之人。

sū wú míng : *wǒ sū wú míng, qǐ shì yán ér yǒu xìn zhī rén.*

Su Wuming : I am Su Wuming, I will **not break** my **promise**.

Source: *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty drama eps 03 (13:49 ~ 13:51)*

Context : At first Su Wuming, promised the soldiers some coins if they were willing to help Su Wuming carry out his plan, but the soldiers did not believe him. Not long after, exactly a day after he asked for help, he went to the soldiers and gave them money and they were surprised and Su Wuming said that he was a man of his word. As a result, they were willing to help Su Wuming because they were given money first.

The Chinese idiom 言而有信 *yán ér yǒu xìn* must have its special meaning so that it is appropriate when used in dialog. The meaning of Chinese idioms is divided into two types of meaning, namely lexical meaning and idiomatic meaning. The lexical meaning of the Chinese idiom 言而有信 *yán ér yǒu xìn* is "讲信用" *jiǎng xìnyòng* which means "his word is trustworthy (keeping trust)" and the idiomatic meaning is "说话守信用" *shuō huà shǒu xìnyòng* which means "his word is proven (keeping promises)" (Wang, 2017: 1527). Based on its lexical and idiomatic meanings, the idiom 言而有信 *yán ér yǒu xìn* is an idiom addressed to someone whose words can be trusted and whose promises are always kept. Chinese idiom 言而有信 *yán ér yǒu xìn* is a Chinese idiom formed from the change of one character from Chinese idiom 言而无信 *yán ér wú xìn* which means the opposite of Chinese idiom 言而有信 *yán ér yǒu xìn* which is 'untrustworthy'. Therefore, the Chinese idiom 言而有信 *yán ér yǒu xìn* uses the 仿词 *fǎngcí* style.

3.11. 排比 *páibǐ* Style

The language style 排比 *páibǐ* is used to arrange sentences or sentence elements with the same or similar structure, consistent tone, and closely related meaning to enhance the content and power of language (Huang and Liao, 2017:207). The following is an example of Chinese idiom data with 排比 *páibǐ* style.

Data 45

魑魅魍魉 *chī mèi wǎng liǎng*

卢凌风：魑魅魍魉，杀人害命兜售红茶茶毒士民本将军，今天就要手刃了你这恶贼。

lú líng fēng : *chī mèi wǎng liǎng, shā rén hài mìng dōu shòu hóng chá tú dú shì mín běn jiāng jūn, jīn tiān jiù yào shǒu rèn le nǐ zhè è zéi.*

Lu Lingfeng : You devils and monsters, killing people and selling Black Tea in Chang'an to poison the public, today I will kill you.

Source: *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty drama eps 03 (27:50 ~ 28:15)*

Context : Lu Lingfeng was furious and wanted to finish off the demon and the masked man because the masked man and his accomplice demon managed to kill many royal perjurers, so Lu Lingfeng cursed them saying, they were demons and monsters who harmed Chang'an city by poisoning the people using Chang'an Black Tea sold by the elders and did not hesitate to kill people.

The Chinese idiom 魑魅魍魉 *chī mèi wǎng liǎng* must have its special meaning so that it is appropriate when used in dialog. The meaning of Chinese idioms is divided into two types of meaning, namely lexical meaning and idiomatic meaning. The lexical meaning of the Chinese idiom 魑魅魍魉 *chī mèi wǎng liǎng* is "魑魅和魍魉" *chīmèi hé wǎng liǎng* which means "demons and monsters," and the idiomatic meaning is "传说中的山精和传说中的水怪" *chuánshuō zhōng de shān jīng hé chuánshuō zhōng de shuǐguài* which means "mountain spirit (mountain demon) and water monster"(Wang,2017:193). In conclusion, this idiom is not commonly used today, but is used in dialog or writing about demons. This idiom is intended to denounce demons and monsters in fictional stories.

The Chinese idiom 魑魅魍魉 *chī mèi wǎng liǎng* is composed with the same ending rhythm of 魍'wǎng' and 魉'liǎng'. In addition, each 偏旁 piānpáng (character component) is composed using the same 鬼 *guǐ* form. Not only that, in terms of meaning, the forming word components are '魑魅' *chīmèi* and '魍魉' *wǎng liǎng* which respectively mean demon and monster which have similarities in the form of terrible creatures or can be categorized as ghosts. Thus, the Chinese idiom 魑魅魍魉 *chī mèi wǎng liǎng* uses the language style 排比 *páibǐ*.

Table 7. Chinese Idioms páibǐ Style

Chinese Language Style	Amount of Data	Percentage
Simile (比喻 <i>bǐyù</i>)	18	40%
Paralelism (对偶 <i>duì'ǒu</i>)	8	18%
双关 <i>shuāngguān</i>	6	14%
婉曲 <i>wǎnqū</i>	3	7%
Repetition (反复 <i>fǎnfù</i>)	3	7%
拈连 <i>niān lián</i>	2	4%
Hyperbole (夸张 <i>kuāzhāng</i>)	1	2%
对比 <i>duìbǐ</i>	1	2%
映衬 <i>yìngchèn</i>	1	2%
仿词 <i>fǎngcí</i>	1	2%
排比 <i>páibǐ</i>	1	2%
Total	45	100%

4. Conclusion

From 45 data of Chinese idoms that founded in *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty* drama episode 1-3, the meaning of Chinese idioms in the drama *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty* episodes 1-3 is mainly in the form of adjectives which are classified into 11 Chinese language styles. Including simile (比喻 *bǐyù*) with 11 data, paralelism (对偶 *duì'ǒu*) with 8 data, 双关 *shuāngguān* with 6 data, 婉曲 *wǎnqū* and repetition (反复 *fǎnfù*) with 3 data, 拈连 *niān lián* with 2 data, hyperbole (夸张 *kuāzhāng*), 对比 *duìbǐ*, 映衬 *yìngchèn*, 仿词 *fǎngcí*, 排比 *páibǐ* each with 1 data. Simile (比喻 *bǐyù*) is the most dominant Chinese style used in Chinese idioms in the drama *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty* episodes 1-3 because the drama *Strange Tales of Tang Dynasty* is a drama with a background during the Tang Dynasty which is called one of the golden ages of Chinese literature so that the use of simile style (比喻 *bǐyù*) as a form of conveying intent indirectly by using simile style idioms as oral tradition with the aim of beautify the language in the drama.

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