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Sciences of the language

Investigating EFL Learners' Strategies to Understand English Idiomatic Expressions.

The Case of Master One Students of English at Biskra University.

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement
for the Degree of Master in Sciences of the language.

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Declaration

I, Benalia Soundous do hereby declare that this submitted work is my original work and has not previously been submitted for any institution or university for a degree. I also declare that a list of references is provided forward indicating all the sources of the cited and quoted information. This work was certified and completed at Mohammed KHEIDER University of Biskra.

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08/06/ 2023

Signature:

Dedication

Praise is to Allah who has given me spirit and courage to overcome all the difficulties and to achieve this modest work.

I dedicate this work to:

My beloved parents: Akila and Kamal. I'm here because of their prayers and douaa as well as their moral and physical support. May Allah prolong their lives.

My dear brothers Rabeh and Siraj who have always made me smile and feel happy, and who surrounded me with love. May Allah protect them.

My soul mate Dalli who has always been a motivating and supportive person in every step I had undertaken. May Allah protect him.

To all the members of my family.

Special thanks go to my close friend Ahlam for her love and kindness in addition to my lovely friends Zineb Samar, Sara, and Israa who shared with me unforgettable memories and have been with me in the bitter and sweet moments.

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Abstract

Idioms and idiomatic language are some of the most interesting and creative vocabulary terms to learn in any language; they are an integral part of the English language, in particular.

Idioms are often used by almost all native speakers to express different meanings in various situations. Hence, it remains a challenge for non-native speakers to understand idioms. This may create a big obstacle in communication and interaction in English. However, EFL learners can refer to a variety of methods and strategies in order to understand English idioms and idiomatic expressions. Indeed, they can rely on translation, guessing the meaning, or finding an equivalent of them in their mother tongue. Therefore, this research aims to explore what strategy EFL students use so as to find the exact meaning of the idiom and achieve its understanding. Hence, this study has undertaken an exploratory study and focused on master one students of English at Biskra University (N°= 40) to be the case study. The objective was to see how familiar students are with English idioms and what strategy they use to understand them. Accordingly, this research was built on the assumption that considering context, being familiar of the mother tongue's cultural and historical idioms as well as using translation are all strategies essential in facilitating the process of comprehending idioms. The researcher opted for a mixed-method approach in which two data gathering tools were used: a semi-structured questionnaire and an idiom quiz. The data analysis showed that the majority of students are familiar with using idioms. In addition, students revealed (through the quiz) to adopt various strategies to understand idioms: Guessing the meaning through context was the most used one then comes finding an equivalent in their mother tongue and, lastly, making direct translations. In short, the results came along with the suggested assumption and, therefore, achieved the intended objectives of this study.

Keywords: idioms, strategies, idiom quiz, guessing through context, translation.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a foreign language

SL: source language

TL: target language

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General Introduction

1. Study background

Learning new words and word combinations is an important part in learning a language, learners often find it difficult when it comes to nonliteral expressions and figurative language when we emphasize on idioms there are some that everyone understands but hardly anybody uses. Some are used and understood in some parts of the English speaking world and not in others.

Because idioms are rooted so strongly in culture and are used in very specific situations, it is difficult for English language learners to know what idioms are used in what situations and by whom. Moreover, the context plays a big role when it comes to understand the idiom. Indeed, Mondria (1996) claims that contextual learning is the most effective method for learning new words.

In other words, having words in a certain context, from which we may deduce the meaning, allows us to learn a wide range of vocabulary. Understanding idioms may create a big obstacle in communication, so EFL learners have a variety of methods to use in order to understand idioms and idiomatic expressions such as direct translation, guessing, memorization, etc.

Therefore, the present study endeavors to shed light on the methods EFL students adopt in order to understand and facilitate the way of comprehending idioms.

2. Statement of the Problem

Studying a foreign language requires mastering different mental skills in order to transmit information to one another at an individual or international level. Moreover, it is a matter of reading between lines, creating vigour and beauty in literary and non-literary work or understanding hidden meanings. This latter is emphasised mostly in figurative speech such as metaphors and idioms.

By focusing on idioms, even upper-intermediate level students sometimes do not seem that they have acquired enough knowledge and practice to deal with them efficiently. In fact, sometimes the surface structure of such expressions plays no role in understanding the intended meaning and sometimes we find that it has illogic meaning. Furthermore, because of idioms' ambiguity, EFL learners -unlike native speakers- can find it hard to predict the meaning, so they tend to use translation or make their first language as reference when it comes to figure out an idiom. However, this process can lead most of times to get another (different) meaning of the actual idiom. On the other hand, there is another way students adopt which is extracting the meaning through the context because idioms are not easy to be understood and their comprehension is something challenging for learners. Besides, EFL learners differ in the method they adopt to infer the idiom's meaning.

Hence, this study aims to investigate the way EFL learners, especially master one students at Biskra University, grasp the meaning of idiomatic expressions whether through making direct translation or by making prediction out of the whole context.

3. Research Questions

This study addresses the following questions:

- To what extent are EFL learners aware of the use of English idioms?
- What are the different strategies that EFL students use to facilitate their understanding of English idioms?

4. Research Assumption

This research is based mainly on the following assumption:

Considering context, relying on the familiarity of cultural and historical idioms of the mother tongue, and mastering translation are all strategies that can play an essential role in facilitating the process of comprehending idioms. Therefore, it is assumed that EFL students use one (or many) of these methods in their own process of understanding English idioms.

5. Aims of the Study

Although the familiarity of idiomatic expressions has a significant role in developing language proficiency and achieving progress, it is hard for EFL learners to find the right meaning especially for those who have no good experience with idioms or have a lack of knowledge of the target culture. Therefore, this study aims to explore the extent of student's familiarity with idioms and to shed light on the method(s) EFL students tend to follow so as to obtain the right meaning.

6. Research Methodology

6.1. Choice of the Method

The design of this study that is followed is exploratory as the researcher investigated the methods that are mostly used among EFL students when it comes to figure out the right meaning

of idiomatic expressions.

6.2. Population and Sampling

This study focused on master one sciences of the language students of English at the university of Mohamed Kheider in Biskra for the academic year 2022/2023. Their level is quite enough to allow them to understand such figurative language and complex expressions. Also, they have studied the idioms course in this year.

A sample of 40 students (representing 20% of the whole population) has been selected. Students have been chosen randomly to work with.

6.3. Data Gathering Tools

The data of this research have been collected through a semi-structured questionnaire and an idiom quiz (small test).

Results have been examined quantitatively. On the one hand, the semi-structured questionnaire was used to explore the learners' familiarity with English idioms and the way they use specific strategies to understand them. The questionnaire was divided into three sections in order to cover the study's objectives. On the other hand, the idiom quiz was designed to explore students' choice of the strategy to use in order to understand idioms. The analysis of the results were calculated through the EXCEL .

Introduction

This first chapter represents a general overview on Idioms. To start with, figurative language was defined and discussed then light was shed on idiomatic expressions. We gave some definitions and characteristics and explained how they are classified. We also referred to the importance of idioms in learning for EFL students and we mentioned some of the difficulties idioms may cause to language learners.

1. Figurative language

Using figurative language or figure of speech is one of the various ways that people use language to communicate their thoughts and feelings, whether they do it in writing or verbally through actions like speaking or debates. Moreover, in everyday conversation, advertisement, and literary works like poems and novels, it is frequently utilized to convey meaning. Linguists such as Perrine (1988) claim that figurative language is the language that cannot be taken literally, express ideas differently from the norms, or says one thing while implying another. Thus, in the subject of literature, it can express the soul of the style and beauty in language.

Figurative language refers to a situation in which a linguistic expression's meaning is not immediately clear (Vulchanova, 2015). Expressions like “break a leg” or “when pigs fly” do not necessarily mean what they indicate. Indeed, the first idiom means to wish luck for someone (meaning good luck), while the second expression is a phrase used to indicate that something will never occur. It is usually used ironically.

Merriam-Webster (2023) dictionary defines, “a figurative language refers to words or phrases that are meaningful, but not literally true”. Besides, Abrams (1999: 96) defines,

“figurative language is a conspicuous departure from what users of a language apprehend as the standard meaning of words, or else the standard order of words, in order to achieve some special meaning or effect.”

In short, figurative language is the process of giving an utterance a deeper more nuanced meaning that it would otherwise have. Therefore, it is used especially by poets to make language sound more appealing, persuasive, and colorful.

2. Idioms and idiomatic expressions

Being familiar with idiomatic expressions is important for English as a foreign language learner because it qualifies them to communicate and understand what has been spoken or written.

In Celce-Murica's (2008) updated a model of communicative competence, the ability to use idioms is considered as a part of formalic competence which refers to the choice and use of certain pieces/parts of language in communication. Furthermore, Colins Dictionary (2003) defined idioms as "a group of words which have a different meaning when used together from the one they would have if you took the meaning of each word separately." This means that it is a collection of words that, when taken individually, have a meaning that is distinct from the meaning they would have when taken collectively.

Current psycholinguistics support the argument in favor of seeing idioms as a form of "long word whose meaning is obtained directly rather through prior breakdown or examination of the elements" (Gibbs, 1994). Moreover, other linguists as Adelnia and Dastjerdi (2011) view idioms as a crucial occurrence in learning vocabulary, regardless of the context.

In figurative idioms, there are figurative and literal meanings; therefore, listeners have to decide the meaning of a figurative idiom in a particular context. As the website Lemon Grad (2022) elaborates, "an idiom is a phrase or expression that has a meaning that in most cases cannot be deduced directly from the individual words in that phrase or expression." So, when the meaning cannot be inferred from its individual words alone, the phrase can be classified as an idiom.

Crystal (2008: 236) offers one of the most detailed and specific definition of an idiom:

A term used in grammar and lexicology to refer to a sequence of words

which are semantically or syntactically restricted, so that they function as a single unit. From a semantic viewpoint, the meaning of the individual words cannot be summed to produce the meaning of the idiomatic expression as a whole. From a syntactic viewpoint, the words often do not permit the usual variability they display in other contexts. (p. 236).

According to the definition, an idiom is a phrase used in grammar and lexicology to describe a group of words that, because of its semantic and syntactic constraints, functions as a single unit. An idiom's meaning cannot be inferred from the individual words that make it up. Words in idioms are not as flexible as they are in other settings.

Idioms are probably some of the most challenging concepts to acquire while learning a new language. This is due to the fact that most individuals employ idioms as if their genuine meanings truly make sense as they grow older. The vast variety of idioms that make up the English language itself give it flavor, a startling range of expression, flamboyant personality, and color. Idioms may be found in many walks of life and are used in both spoken and written English. They are typically used by native speakers who have an innate understanding of the language. However, since idioms only exist in one language, their meaning sometimes change or they lose their original meaning when they are translated into a different language.

3. Characteristics of idioms

Idioms are fixed expressions with a figurative meaning that is distinct from the literal meanings of the words that make up the term. They have several characteristics.

First, idioms have a fixed structure that cannot be altered without changing their meaning since they are fixed expressions with a fixed structure. Also, idioms have a figurative meaning that cannot be deduced from the literal meaning of the words that makeup the phrase. (Hedieh, 2022)

Moreover, idioms are frequently employed in informal or colloquial language. Common used idioms are the ones that are often used in every day speech, and their meaning are often understood by native speakers. (Benjamin , 2019)

Fernando (1996) claims that idioms are characterised by three features: Compositeness, institutionalization, and semantic opacity. Compositeness refers to the fact that idioms are made up of multiple words (i.e. more than one-word expression). However, institutionalization implies that idioms are standardized terms that have a purpose. Semantic opacity refers to the metaphorical or nonliteral aspects of idioms, implying that idioms' meaning are not simply the sum of their constituent components. Fernando adds that these characteristics are shared by other multiword expressions such as collocations and proverbs and are not exclusive only to idioms (Ordudari, 2007).

An Idiomatic phrase is characterised as an expression whose meaning cannot be inferred from the meaning of the individual words that compose them. Yet, it is also defined as a phrase, word, or expression that has metaphorical connotation that is commonly understood by local speakers. (Mokhinur, 2020).

According to Johnson (1993), “the meanings of the utterances depend on the meanings of their parts and on the syntactic relation among those parts.” Therefore, idioms are in opposition

to the logical discourse of the framework, which gives them a diverse nature and characterises them as extremely complicated linguistic arrangements.

Furthermore, Cacciari & Tabossi (1988: 668) believe that idioms have characteristics as a sequence of words whose meaning cannot be inferred constructively from the interpretation of that part.

To conclude, all these characteristics can make difficulties when it comes to render them into second language.

4. Classification of idioms

Idioms can be categorized based on their “semantic”, “syntactic”, and “functional properties” (Grant & Bauer, 2004). By stating that idiomatic expressions are specific category of multi-word expression that frequently display semantic non-compositionality (semantic idiomaticity) where the meaning of the expression is not derived from its parts and whose overall meaning cannot be predicted from the meaning of the constituent part.

Nunberg (1978) classified idioms as:

- **Normally decomposable idioms:** in which understanding the figurative meaning is influenced by the literal meaning of the words' constituents. For example, in the expression “button your lips”, the word “button” means “to close”. It depends on understanding the literal part of the idiom.
- **Abnormally decomposable idioms:** the words of decomposable idioms are metaphorically linked to the overall figurative meaning of the idiom.

- **Semantically non-decomposable idioms:** It happens when there is no indication of the idiom's figurative meaning from the literal meaning of the components.

On the other hand, Fernando (1996) grouped idioms into three categories:

- **Pure idioms:** They are a sort of conventionalized, non-strict multiword articulation whose significance can't be perceived by including the implications of the words that make up the expression. "Spill the beans", for instance, is merely an idiom because its actual meaning has nothing to do with beans.
- **Semi idioms:** there is at least one element that is literal and one that has a meaning that is not literal. One kind of semi-idiom is "foot the bill" which means "pay." In this case, the word "bill" is used literally, but the word "foot" is used instead non literally, so both literal and figurative, giving them a meaning that is partially compositional overall.
- **Literal idioms:** For example, "on foot" or "on the contrary" is less complex semantically than the other two, making it easier to understand even if you are not familiar with these expressions.

Emilija (n. d as cited in Ghazala, 2015) suggested a different classification to idioms.

Idioms, here, are classified into five types which are: 1) full/pure idioms, 2) semi-idioms, 3) proverbs, popular sayings and semi-proverbial expressions, 4) phrasal verbs, and 5) metaphorical catchphrases and popular expressions. For example, they are pure idioms is when the components of the expression has no similarity with the meaning of the phrase as in (spill the beans =tell your secret), semi-idioms is when it has at least one literal element and one with no literal meaning (foot the bill=pay) when it comes to the proverb. Popular sayings and semi-proverbial expressions are expressions based on common experience and sometimes they are common traditional saying which explain a truth experience. However, metaphorical catchphrases are

phrases used in order to refer to something else in order to show similarity. Phrasal verbs are combination of verb and another element like proposition or adverb that function as a verb whose meaning is different from the combined meaning.

Makkai (1972) categorized idioms into two major types: idioms of encoding and idioms of decoding. Idioms of the first type have a clear and concise meaning. That is to say, their meaning is obvious and may be best understood by comparing them across languages with the use of the appropriate prepositions. Nevertheless, with idioms of decoding, the meanings are difficult to interpret in advance. Such idioms are deceptive, and it is impossible to comprehend them by relying just on language standards that have been taught and he classified decoding idioms as lexemic and semimic idioms. He adds that lexemic idioms can be categorized into phrasal verbs, whose structure is always verb + adverb.

Moreover, Makkai (1972) refers to tournure idioms which consists at least of three lexemes having a fixed location between the verb and the adverb, irreversible binomial idioms which is a formula consists of A and B that cannot be reversed, phrasal compound idioms such as accident prone, pseudo-idioms, which has a fossilized phrase as one of its components that is meaningless by itself. However, sememic idioms are connected to pragmatism in culture with the intention of conveying 'culture-bound' notions, such as politeness.

In addition, Moon (1996) classifies idioms based on the spectrum of idiomatic. They are the following: 1) transparent Idioms, which are idioms whose meanings can be inferred from the meanings of their component components and are simple to understand and translate; 2) semi-transparent idioms that often have a metaphorical meaning and their component elements play a small significance in understanding the expression's overall meaning. Breaking the ice, for instance, means to make the tension clear; 3) semi opaque idioms whose literal meaning is unrelated to the meanings of the words that make up its constituent parts.

The idiomatic term is divided into two parts, one with a literal meaning and the other with a metaphorical meaning, in other words. For instance, knowing the ropes refers to understanding how a specific task should be carried out; and 4) opaque idioms whose meaning cannot be determined from the meanings of their component pieces since there are elements that have cultural connotations. In fact, opaque idioms are the most challenging sort of idioms because the literal meanings of their parts have nothing to do with the real sense of idioms.

Titone & Connine (1999) allow for the classification of idiomatic expressions into three groups: usually decomposable idioms, abnormally decomposable idioms, and semantically non decomposable idioms. Usually, decomposable idioms are those that have literal application of a portion of the idiom (e.g., the question in pop the question). The referent of an idiom's constituent pieces can be recognized figuratively in expressions known as abnormally decomposable idioms (pass the buck, for instance). However, idioms that are semantically nondecomposable (such as munch the fat) meet the classic criteria since the meaning of the idiom is less likely to be determined compositionally from the words that make up the string (Titone & Connine, 1999). The "noncompositional approach" contends that idioms are encoded and processed in a similar manner to large words. The "compositional approach," in contrast, places more emphasis on the semantic contribution of an idiom's component word meanings in interpretation.

Moreover, Cacciari and Glucksberg (1991) classify idioms as opaque, transparent or quasi-metaphorical. Idioms are expressions like "kick the bucket" that have some semantic restrictions on how they can be understood in terms of the meaning of the individual words. Transparent idioms, on the other hand, are expressions in which there is a direct mapping between the literal and idiomatic meanings of the words. For instance, spill in the phrase "spill the beans" literally means "divulge a secret," and the beans immediately map a secret to the verb "divulge". Last but not least, there are idioms that are categorized as quasi-metaphorical phrases, in which the overall literal meaning of the phrases metaphorically maps onto the idiomatic meaning similar to metaphorical expression. These idioms convey their meaning via allusional content, which means that they simultaneously refer to an ideal exemplar of a concept and to the contextually determined referent in a particular communicative situation.

4. Importance of learning idioms for EFL students

Every language has idiomatic terms that are often and frequently used by native speakers. They are based on the history, legacy, and culture of that particular tongue. Studying idiomatic expressions improves the fluency and native-like pronunciation of language learners. Therefore, idioms and idiomatic expressions shouldn't be disregarded or taken for granted.

Moreno (2011) explains that idioms broaden people's comprehension of a language and give learners information about the target or foreign language's culture and history.

Also, learning English through idioms can guide non-native speakers to better develop their language skills and make their second language appear more native and creative. Idioms are

used in different situations. Being formal or informal, they are a part of everyday life whether in spoken or written English. (Eliana, 2009)

Moreover, the learner of the English language gains a larger vocabulary and lexicon through learning idiomatic expressions. A greater comprehension of the culture and traditions of that particular language is also facilitated by idiomatic knowledge. Through acquiring idiomatic expressions, comprehending their meanings, and using them regularly parallel to English language native speakers, the learner becomes more native-like in the language. Hence, English language teachers should emphasize the importance of teaching idiomatic language to their students.

In the same view, Thyab (2016:105) argues that the usage of idiomatic expressions by those speakers is considered as an important issue and is regarded as an essential part of the English language competence. It is a necessity that all speakers of the English language become aware and proficient in using English idiomatic expressions. It is essential and is considered a big part of English language proficiency to be able to use idiomatic expression when communicating in the English language.

Learning idioms helps students improve their intercultural translation performance. Also, idioms may contribute to interculturality, which means that cultural factors as well as language skills are necessary for intercultural contact; in other words, students may gain insight into a specific civilization by studying idioms, which have a rich cultural past. (Achour, Kouraba, 2016)

Idioms and proverbs encourage students to memorize more new words, which can help them become more fluent language users. Also, by using these culturally specific phrases, they may develop their communication skills and be more effective in cross-cultural situations. In

other words, idioms inspired EFL students to improve their abilities in order to become multicultural.

Increasing comprehension with Idioms, particularly those employed informally, can be difficult for non-native speakers to understand. Understanding idioms can help you read and understand written and spoken language better.

Idioms are frequently employed in poetry, creative writing, and other literary genres, which helps to increase creativity. You can write more passionately and creatively if you learn idioms. (poets.org .n .d)

They can also enhance critical thinking because many idioms have various interpretations. Indeed, understanding their intended meaning calls for critical thinking. Besides, idioms can help you improve your language proficiency and sharpen your critical thinking abilities.

Furthermore, Lundblom & Woods (2012) emphasised the value of comprehending idioms. They think that since idioms are explicitly taught in academic settings, not understanding them could have a negative impact on students' academic performance, written composition, reading comprehension, and vocabulary, especially since the frequency of idioms in classroom language rises as students' ages and grades rise.

In EFL, where L2 language learners' ability may be evaluated based on their comprehension of idiomatic expression, it is evident that idioms are important in EFL learning and teachers must teach their EFL students with the subject of idioms and proverbs since they have an impact on their performance in the target language.

In summary, idioms are very helpful since they provide you a fresh and original method to communicate. Idioms may be used in a hilarious way, allowing you to express yourself more

honestly and flaunt your personality and sense of humor. So, learning idioms is an important aspect of language learning that can enhance communication, foster cultural understanding, and develop critical thinking and creativity.

5. Difficulties of learning idioms

Learners have difficulty in understanding the meaning and structure of new languages. This is an important issue that should be considered before teaching language items for L2 students. This issue is able to illustrate the fact that while learning idioms, L2 students could experience problems that will affect their communication with the native speakers.

One difficulty is the lack of equivalence. Certain idioms are culture specific; thus, the target language does not have an equivalent for them. This takes advantage of the relationship between language and culture, which led Damen and Savignon (1987) wonder whether culture comes before language or the other way around. When it comes to translation, culture is an integral part of the process.

Moreover, for Johnson-laired (1993), the idiom is considered for native speakers, it's pretty straightforward, but when it comes to non-native speakers, he stands for one challenge and obstacle for EFL learners as most of them do not have an easy equivalent in their native language.

Another significant problem is that dictionaries do not always give or include the right meaning of the idiom, and most of the time it gives the literal meaning of the words composing the expression.

Idiomatic phrases are significant because they lack logic and any connection between their linguistic and idiomatic meanings. That is, their meanings cannot be derived easily.

Moreover, idioms use patterns and formality which vary from language to language. In order to illustrate this concept, Baker (1992) uses Arabic and Chinese as examples of languages that permit some idiomatic expressions in formal written documents.

The context in which the idiom has been utilized varies from the SL to the TL even if there may be an equivalent in the TL. In other words, a TL idiom may have a different connotation than its TL counterpart. An overuse of idioms can be so frequent that they lose their meaning and become clichéd. This might make it challenging for students to comprehend the expression's original meaning and intention.

Idioms can also have regional variants. This simply means that they are utilized differently in various regions of the world. For students who are unfamiliar with the regional variances, this might cause confusion. (open college, 2023)

All in all, idiom learning is a difficult but a rewarding component of language acquisition since it necessitates a thorough grasp of the language, society, and the context in which they are employed.

Conclusion

English language communication can be facilitated by appropriately understanding and utilizing idioms. According to Belousova (2015), understanding and the fluent use of idioms may be considered as symbols of language proficiency since they can be a useful tool for teaching students how to communicate in a variety of context.

The next chapter deals the main strategies that students adopt to understand the idiomatic expressions. Three will be focused on: Translation, context clues, and finding an equivalent idiom in the first language and refer to it.

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Introduction

Idioms are institutionalized expressions whose total meaning differs from the sum of their constituent components “which pose a challenge to our understanding of grammar and lexis that has not yet been fully met” (Fellbaum et al., 2006: 349). It makes sense, that they are difficult for non-native speakers to grasp their exact meaning since they frequently contain symbolic or metaphorical meaning that are not always clear, yet that may pose the challenge in comprehending. A lot of problems emerge when learners try to comprehend idioms because its meaning cannot be derived from its components words. Thus, EFL learners differ in the way they comprehend idioms and there are multiple strategies students adopt such as, guessing through context, make translations, or they try to find an equivalent idiom in their first language. furthermore; in order to investigate the different strategies, the following part represents the most adopted methods and strategies used among students in order to comprehend the idiomatic expressions. The focus will be on three strategies: Translation, guessing through context, and finding an equivalent idiom in the first language and refer to it.

1. Common strategies for EFL idiom comprehension

It is quite difficult to determine what an idiom is and what is not although it is frequently a matter of degree. Idioms cannot be directly translated into other languages since they do not have an equivalent in those languages. This won't work, though, because a Welsh direct translation of an English idiom may not exist if it does not, for instance, have a French equivalent. Problems with word formation make it more difficult to address idiom-related concerns (Palmer, 1981: 81). However, as Pembayun (2018) suggests to find an equivalent idiom in the target language as it makes sense to try and follow the author's lead by including a suitable equivalent in translation. But, it is not always possible to do this. Sometimes the target tongue simply lacks any

appropriate idioms. Learners have encountered an idiom that is essentially untranslatable. The best way in this situation is to explain the idiom's meaning. Because of this, your translation may be a little less poetic, but it is preferable to convey the content than to attempt to invent an idiom where none exists.

Also, Maha (2017) claims that the most popular techniques were predicting the meaning of idioms, guessing their meaning from context, and determining an idiom's meaning based on its equivalent in the mother tongue.

Bobrow and Bell (1973) explain that when we come across an idiom, we initially take it literally. We look for an idiom in our mental idiom dictionary and select its figurative meaning if its literal meaning does not match the context in which the term is employed.

1.1. Translation

1.1.1. Definition of translation

Translation is a mental process in which a text written in one language can be changed into another one. As a result, two languages are used in the translation process: the source language (SL), also known as the original language, and the target language (TL). “the process of converting the meaning of a written message (text) from one language to another.” (Phrase, 2023)

A translator's aim must be to accurately capture the meaning and tone of the original text without making the translation obvious. Although idioms can make this work quite challenging at times, they also give a fantastic opportunity to employ some fantastic imagery in your goal content. (Phrase, 2023)

Idiomatic translation poses a significant problem for both translators and foreign language learners. This latter issue may be the result of the expressions' non-literal meaning. In order to determine the expression's intended meaning, the translator must go beyond the components' declared meanings and read between the lines as Baker (1992) states, "the main problems that idiomatic and fixed expression pose in translation relate to two main areas: the ability to recognize and interpret an idiom correctly, and the difficulties in rendering various aspects of meaning that an idiom or a fixed expression conveys into the target language." (p. 65).

1.1.2. Translation strategies

Baker (2018) postulated that several strategies could be followed when translating idioms.

These strategies are:

a- Use idioms with similar meanings and forms

Idioms are used in Target Language, which have almost the same meaning as source language and consist of equivalent lexical elements. For example, the Arabic idiom "راسا على عقب" has an English counterpart which is "head over heels" Therefore, Arabic idioms, when translated, consist of the same (excluding prepositions) and exact number of words and have the same meaning.

b- Using a similar meaning but different idiom

This means using an idiom in the target language (TL) that has roughly the same meaning as in the source language (SL). However, it lacks corresponding lexical items. For example, the English idiom "One good turn deserves another" is synonymous with the French idiom "À beau jeu, beau retour" ("a good deed deserves a good return") although the lexical items SL

And TL are different.

c- Borrowing a source language idiom

Sometimes borrowing a source language idiom can be a way of translating culturally specific items. For example, the idiomatic word "feedback" is sometimes literally translated into Arabic as راجعة تغذية

d- Paraphrasing

In this strategy, the translator paraphrases source language idioms. An example of this is the English idiom "Scratch my back, I'll scratch yours" translates to "help me and I'll help you in return".

e- Translation with the omission of playing on idiom

In this strategy, only the literal meaning of the word is translated into a context that allows a specific interpretation of an otherwise playful language.

f- Translation by omitting the entire idiom import list

This strategy of omitting the entire source text idiom from the target text is followed when there is no source text equivalent and cannot be paraphrased, or for stylistic reasons.

g- Compensation

The translator sometimes tends to omit or emphasize some feature of the source text language that appears in a certain part of the text and presents it elsewhere in the target text.

Moreover, in order to translate idioms from one language into another, there is the Vinay and

Darbnet Model (1950) which is particularly concerned with the use in various cultural contexts. Idioms are socially and culturally constrained expressions, hence efforts have been made to alter them through borrowing, claue, modulation, and equivalences. (Ayto , 2006)

Furthermore; methods are general approaches to translate a text, whereas procedures are those that are applied to sentences and smaller units of a language in a text. While attempting to create an element of equivalence with the goal of transforming SL into TT, translators employ these approaches. As mentioned, the seven approaches that are most suitable for translating idioms were first offered in 1950 by Vinay and Darbnet .Here some of their approaches include: Vinay and Darbnet (1950)

a- Equivalence

The first approach of the model, Close equivalency, is challenging when there is a complicated language and cultural blending. The terms "literal" and "free" translation are not interchangeable. The same differences have been developed by Darbnet, Hervey, Higgins, and Vinay. They have adopted the mystic number "7" since Newmark (1988: 5) proposed semantic (literal) and communicative (free) translation, whereas Vinay and darbnet enlarged them through adaptation and borrowing. Equivalence, sometimes known as pragmatic translation, is a sort of modulation that focuses on the pragmatic use of language.

b- Borrowing

It is used in conjunction to an explanation and represents the renewal of the vocabulary. The terms “standing”, “gaze”, and “must” are French borrowings from the English language. According to Munday (2001), borrowing is done to boost community pride. It aids in enhancing a language.

c- Calques

It is a special kind of borrowing where the literal translation modifies the SL representation. Calques and borrowings, according to Vinay and Darbelnet (1950), merged in TL by semantic alterations that turn them become false friends. In both English and French, semantic translation and calques are frequently used to increase the vocabulary of the latter language.

d- Literal translation

It is the fourth approach of the model. It is more concerned with syntax than lexicon, and according to Vinay and Darbelnet (1950), it is nearly impossible. This method, which is mutual for languages in the same family, involves word-for-word translation. Vinay and Darbelnet contend that only languages with considerable cultural similarity can be translated literally. Only if the translated text maintains the same grammar, meaning, and style as is the original text acceptable.

e- Transposition

It involves changing one portion of speech without altering the sentence's meaning. Transposition may be required or optional as in the case of the past tense expression "upon her rise", which means the same as "as soon as she got up." by using the reverse direction; this is an example of optional. Here, the emphasis is on grammar, and TL words and structures are substituted with SL words and structures. If the target translation contains an idiomatic rendering, transposition is required because a French noun must be changed to a verb phrase for a stylistically neutral translation. They discovered that it is a typical technique that translators employ to change the framework.

f- Modulation

It is the sixth approach of the model. While this process relates to the semantic level, it also has an impact on syntax and shifts the perspective from SL to TL.

g- Adaptation

It is described by Vinay and Darbelnet (1950) as a technique for establishing equality of the same level that can be used in circumstances other than those of SL.

However, translation is distinguished by Vinay & Darbelnet's (1950, 2000) taxonomy of translation procedures used to address incompatibilities between SL and TL structures. Borrowing, calque, and literal translation are all examples of direct translation, which typically entails word-for-word quotation of the source content in the target language.

Transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation translation techniques are all parts of an oblique translation, in which the translator interprets, elaborates or summarizes, the explicit contents of the original. The message, which refers to higher-level text elements, in addition to sentences and paragraphs, some situational utterances that convey broader meaning, can also be used in conjunction with these procedures.

1.1.3. Difficulties of translating idioms

Baker (1992: 68-71) outlines the primary difficulties in translating idioms as follow:

- There might not be a TL equivalent for the idiom or fixed statement.
- The idiom or fixed expression may have a comparable equivalent in the target language (TL), but the context in which it is used may differ. The two expressions may also not be pragmatically transferrable.

- The phrase may be employed in the ST simultaneously in both its literal and idiomatic connotations. Also, the play on words cannot be properly replicated in the TT unless the TL idiom matches the SL idiom both in form and in meaning.
- Idiom usage in written discourse can vary according on the source and target languages, as well as the settings in which they can be employed and how frequently they are used.

Idioms are particularly challenging to translate because of their cultural dimensions, connotations and imagery. Which every language has a unique set of idioms that have traditionally been found on behaviors that frequently help to generate a moral.

As a result, Pempayun (2018) claims that finding an equivalent idiom in the target language is the best strategy for translating an idiom. It makes sense to attempt to follow the example of the author of the source material by include a comparable equivalent in the translation.

1.2. Guessing meaning through context

1.2.1. Definition of context

Merriam Webster's dictionary (2023) defines context as “the parts of a discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning”, or it is “the interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs environment, setting”.

Widdowson (2000: 126), when focusing on language meaning, defined "context" as “those features of the circumstance of real language usage that are taken as significant to meaning.”

In addition, he stated, “context is a schematic construct [...] achieving pragmatic meaning is a matter of lining up the linguistic parts of the code with schematic element of the text.” (p. 126).

In the same vein, Yule (2000) gave an essential definition. He stated, “Context is the physical environment in which a word is used.” (p. 128)

According to all these definitions, context can provide clarity to the hidden meaning and give a deeper understanding to the intended message since it offers relevant information and background that helps to interpret a particular situation, event, or statement.

1.2.2. Importance of context in vocabulary learning

It is generally acknowledged that many words in every language have numerous meanings. Of the several meanings that typically exist, a word may only represent one particular meaning when it is employed in a certain context. Thus, the context is everything when defining the meaning of a word. According to Paribakht & Wesche (1999), one of the most popular ways for acquiring vocabulary among second language learners is guessing a word's meaning from its context. Guessing from context strategy is a way to utilize context clues to determine a new word's meaning. With the use of contextual clues and the relationships between nearby words, this method may be utilized to determine the meaning of new words. Moreover, in the absence of dictionaries or human aid, contextual inference, also known as contextual guessing, is a crucial method. It entails guessing the meaning of the target word based on interpretation of its immediate co-text with or without reference to knowledge of the word. (Haastrup, 1989 cited in Parel, 2004). The guessing method offers students many benefits when learning English vocabulary.

Students learn through guessing that word meanings are influenced by context. This method gives students the independence to deal with language issues and increases their comfort level when handling texts. This method gives students a useful tool to understand and to read more quickly. This method also calls on the ability to analyze the text around them and to forecast and check their predictions as they read. Also, it takes the place of using the dictionary, which has the drawback of breaking up the flow of reading. So, this method is really helpful for students in learning vocabulary so that they can recognize the composition of meaning of the idioms.

1. 2. 3. Types of context

Context plays a crucial role in the construction of meaning, and opinions differ about the way to classify it, so we will focus on four types which are: linguistic, situational, cultural, and visual.

1.2.3.1. Linguistic context

It is the relationship between words, phrases, sentences, and even paragraphs. This type of context is also known as ‘verbal context’. Rhalmi (2013: 3) explains that using linguistic context to understand the meaning of words includes a “syntactic and morphological interpretation of the word.”

Moreover, participants in a language event need to be aware of their location in space and time. These characteristics are directly related to the deictic context that is related to the linguistic context, which is defined as the set of deictic expressions, such as the time expressions ‘now’, ‘then’, etc., and the spatial expressions ‘here’ or ‘there’ and the person expressions like ‘I’, ‘you’, etc. Deictic expressions help in the establishment of deictic roles, which result from the fact that, in everyday speech, the speaker addresses himself, another person, a place, or an event. (Effe, Kukkonen, 2020)

However, it is important to note that even knowing an utterance's grammatical structure does not enable one to predict the entirety of its meaning. Chomsky's (1957) example, "colorless green ideas sleep furiously," serves as an example of this. That is to say, despite the fact that Chomsky's commonly used example appears to be grammatically sound, it is meaningless. (search wikiDoc, 2023)

1.2.3.2. Situational context

According to Malinowski (1946), "the study of any language, spoken by people who live under conditions distinct from our own and possess a different culture, must be carried out in conjunction with the study of their culture and of their surroundings." which means that the study of any language spoken by a people who live in circumstances different from our own and possess a different culture must be carried out in conjunction with the study of their culture and of their environment" (p. 306). Malinowski also emphasizes the significance of function words, contending that their meaning is determined by how they are employed in a particular context rather than by the physical characteristics of their referent. He adds, "context of situation identifies the total environment, including the verbal environment and the situation in which the text was produced". (p.306) This means that linguistic choices are affected not just by the topic or subject of communication but also by the kind of social relationship within which communication is taking place.

Understanding and interpreting the meaning of speech and action in a certain scenario depends on the situational context. A joke or gesture, for instance, may have a different meaning depending on the situational context in which it is delivered. In a similar manner, how

a remark or question is understood might vary depending on the social setting in which it is made and the relationships between the parties involved. Situational context is crucial for understanding how many elements affect behavior and decision-making in particular scenarios in research and analysis. Indeed, it aids in the identification of pertinent variables and the comprehension of the complexity of human behavior in various situations (Klein, 2021). This situational context can play a big role in facilitating the comprehending of the idioms by which it gives hints to the situation that the idioms are occur in, so the learner can relate it to idioms.

1.2.3.3. Cultural context

The term "cultural context" describes the traditions, way of life, and historical backdrop of the language communities in which the speakers are active. (Klein, 2021)

Language is a social phenomenon that is directly correlated with societal norms and social order. Hence, none of these characteristics, including social role, social standing, sex, age, etc., can help in intercultural communication and the competent interaction help but also have an impact on language.

Social roles are culturally defined tasks that have been formalized in society and accepted by its citizens. By social status, we refer to the participants' overall social standing. Status will frequently play a significant role in determining who should start the conversation, so it is vital for each participant in the language event to be aware of it or to make assumptions about how they fit into the relationship with the other participants. Moreover, age and sex frequently influence or determine social position. For example, while speaking to an elderly person, a person of one sex may use different terms of address than people of the same sex or age could use in otherwise comparable circumstances. (Kovacevic, Spetic, Pleslic, 2018)

1.2.3.4. Visual context

Video is one of the most well-liked teaching and learning tools for languages. A combination of the linguistic and cultural contexts is a video-graphic or visual context. Due to the emphasis on communicative competence, there has been a significant increase in the usage of films in English lessons. The language used in various contexts is illustrated visually in a way that is not possible with words, which clarifies the meaning. In fact, it proves the well-known saying “a picture is worth thousand words.” (Song, 2010)

Visual context is frequently utilized to communicate meaning and express emotions or ideas in the context of art and design. In a painting, for instance, the use of dark hues and angular pointed designs may evoke feelings of anxiety or tension, whereas the use of vibrant hues and rounded curves may evoke feelings of joy or calmness.

Furthermore, visual context is crucial for our perception of the world around us in daily life. For instance, the context of a stop sign in the middle of a busy intersection informs us when we should pull over, and the context of a restaurant menu informs us of the meals that are available for ordering. (Song, 2010)

1.2.4. Context clues

Context clues are hints that can be used by a student to decipher the meaning of new words that are discovered inside a sentence, paragraph, or passage.

When an obvious hint to meaning is given or when only a broad understanding of the meaning is required for the reader's aims, the reader should rely on context clues. When a specific definition is necessary, when context clues point to many definitions, when new words are present nearby, or when the unknown word is one that is frequently used and will come up again, a dictionary should be examined.

Rhalmi (2013) points out that using contextual clues to determine an expression's meaning is known as 'guessing from context'. These clues may be purely linguistic or situational.

1.2.4.1. Types of context clues

There are various types of contextual clues. The following contextual clues, suggested by Zaimi (2016), are the most frequently used and offered to learners to support their level of understanding of new or ambiguous words and thus they can easily comprehend idioms meaning with no doubt.

a- Definition clues (description clues)

The unfamiliar or new word is formally defined in the sentence or the one that follows, or sufficient explanation may be provided. The words "that is" as well as commas, dashes, and parentheses all serve as definitional clues.

b- Example clues

The new word is typically placed next to an example that clarifies its meaning. When a reader comes across a new word, there may occasionally be an example nearby that clarifies what it means. Terms that provide example clues include "such as" and "for example". (Zaimi, 2016)

c- Synonyms clues (restatement clues)

Synonyms are terms that have the same definition as an unfamiliar word; in other words, they restate the ambiguous words in a way that is easier for the learner to understand. The repetition of ideas stated in familiar terms may help the reader guess the meaning of an unfamiliar phrase.

d- Visual clues

They help the learner in understanding the meaning of a word by providing images, drawings, charts, graphs, or other types of visuals like facial expressions. (Zaimi, 2016)

e- Inference clues

Sometimes, a learner may discover that the meaning of a word is not immediately clear from the sentence. The student should deduce its meaning in this situation by looking at the sentence it appears in. The observant reader may have access to enough clues to infer the meaning from the text.

f- Antonyms clues

They are words whose meanings are the opposite of those of the new term. In order to make the significance of this discrepancy in meanings clear, familiar phrases have been used. The meaning of a known term is contrasted with that of an unfamiliar one in the context clue. Nevertheless, conjunctions such as "but" and "although" may serve as contrast clues.

1.2.5. Idioms and context clues

Readers can more accurately guess the meaning of new idioms expression by applying context clues, which can help in their comprehension of the content they are reading. For students who want to figure out the meaning of the idioms, context clues are a crucial reading comprehension technique.

Examining the context in which idioms are employed is one method for understanding them. Idioms are frequently employed to express a particular tone or feeling in particular

contexts. You may frequently deduce the meaning of an idiom by focusing on the words that precede it as well as the context in which it is employed. In general, comprehending idioms takes a combination of context awareness, consideration of the tone and emotions being expressed, and sometimes some more research to clarify any ambiguities. Indeed, the meaning of an idiom can be identified by looking at the context or by grasping what a writer is attempting to convey by using context clues knowledge to interpret sentences including idioms.

1.3. Finding equivalent idioms in the mother tongue

Many studies have shown that when students' home cultures and backgrounds are included into the classroom, they perform better and are more likely to be involved in the classroom when these cultures are valued and represented. Frunza (2005) claims,

Every person is a part of culture, and at the same time, contributes to its development. Moreover, culture is made for everybody, for all the people in the world although we find it in the same way as we find language, molded into historical shapes that are specific to certain communities. Culture is not seen as just the things or tools man fashions to make himself more efficient in coping with this day-by-day, year-by-year problems, but as all of his attitudes, assumptions, beliefs, and values – the product of his head and heart as well as of his hands. (p.05)

Since idioms are culturally specific, because idioms as a phenomenon, exists in both language and society which they convey a large amount of cultural information, including: religion,

history, psychology and nationality thus translation can be particularly challenging. In that case, translators should move slowly and thoroughly research the culture of a certain nation in order to demystify and highlight cultural insights that are strongly represented in the linguistic system (Hamane, 2018).

Idioms are terms that have specific cultural connotations, so it is fair to conclude that culture is the most difficult subject to translate. Moreover, since "culture" is a broad term, translators must deal with issues like word confusion including connotations and denotative meanings, modes of address, and challenges with metaphors and idioms. In addition to being bilingual or multilingual, a translator should also be bicultural or multicultural. By transforming the culture of the source language into that of the target language, he/she preserves the essence and spirit of the original language and serves as a mediator between language and culture. (Nedjai, 1998)

In brief, language is a culturally specific phenomenon, and translation involves transforming one culture into a different one. Therefore, political, social, and religious contexts are all included in this process of cultural replacement.

It is possible that some idioms from the mother tongue do not exist in the destination (target) language, and it is clear that the ways in which concepts are perceived and expressed in languages from various cultures vary from one another. Hence, the meaning that is represented in one language by a single word may be expressed in another language by an idiom, a fixed expression, or it may not be expressed at all. Furthermore, there are words that are culturally specific to a language and that communicate characteristics that are unique to that language. In the target language, an idiom could have a similar counterpart with a distinct context of use.

Another category of idioms that poses challenges for translators are those that, while having a surface counterpart in the target language, differs in their implications and usage context. Idiomatic expressions are typically difficult for EFL students to retain and subsequently employ in their endeavor to communicate, especially when they do not correlate to the equivalent idiomatic expressions in their mother tongue, idioms are no exception to the rule that the mother language should always be the first resource taken into account while referring to, while learning a foreign language and translating from a foreign language, the mother tongue is crucial and has a big impact. (Duff, 1989)

In Arabic language, idiomaticity is a linguistic phenomenon that may be used more frequently in spoken than in written language. Arabs utilize idioms to differentiate their language by using a stylistic approach, making the language more beautiful, and avoiding using phrases that might irritate or humiliate others. (Abu Saad's, 1987).

1.3.1. Kharma and Hajjaj classification of Arabic idioms

Kharma and Hajjaj (1989, 27) view that Arabic as well as English are similar in the amount and using of idioms; however, the Arabic use of idioms differ in the dialects and this may not be the same as in the standard Arabic.

Kharma and Hajjaj (1989) classify Arabic idioms into three categories: The first category consists of Arabic idiomatic phrases that are simple to understand since the meaning of the entire phrase is usually close to the sum of its parts. The following are examples:

To die: ينتقل الى جوار ربه

The of bottom the from: من صميم القلب

Center forward: قلب الهجوم

Idioms of the second category, like most idiomatic phrases, can be difficult to understand, especially for those who are not native Arabic speakers. Kharma and Hajjaj (1989:74) gave the following examples:

breathe a sigh of relief : ينزّس ال سعداء:

with heart and soul: قلبا وقالبا

Learn by heart: يحفظ عن ظهر قلب

The third category has Arabic idioms. They are extremely hard to understand since they are so culturally specific. Kharma and Hajjaj (1989:75) suggested:

cannot always have what do you want: تجري الرياح بما لا تشتهي السفن

become absolute or it expired: سكنت روحه

the war broke out : دارت رحى الحرب:

According to Kharma & Hajjaj (1989), each of the above mentioned idioms has a social, political, or theoretical narrative that makes it difficult to understand because it is a culture-bound idiomatic expression. According to them, this is why they are categorized as idioms. Therefore, one must be aware of the narrative and moral in order to understand its stated meaning.

1.3.2. Baker's Taxonomy on Idiom

Idiom are phrases with a specific meaning that deviate from the literal meaning of their words; in other word, they are statements or sentences with a deeper meaning than may be inferred from their constituent words' precise definitions. They frequently symbolize enduring cultural or historical allusions and are frequently employed in ordinary speech.

Baker (1992) suggests the following key ways to address the issues, such as finding a correspondent idiom in the mother tongue.

1.3.2.1. Finding a totally equivalence (Same form and meaning)

This method entails replacing the idiom in the SL with a similar one in the TL that has the same meaning and form. The phrases with similar lexical components and meanings are used to translate the following examples of English idioms into Arabic:

To fish in troubled water : يصطاد في المياه العكرة

To play with fire: يلعب بالنار

Shed light on: يلقي الضوء على

Even though this approach appears to be the best one for EFL learners to simplify the comprehension of idioms, doing so when two culturally dissimilar languages are involved is challenging and "can only sometimes be done" (Baker 1992: 72). Style, register, and rhetorical effect are other considerations that must be made.

1.3.2.2. Finding a Partial Equivalent (same meaning, different form)

Another approach to find an equivalent idiom and refer to the first language is to replace the SL's idiomatic expression with a TL equivalent that expresses the same meaning but has a different form. Contrary to the first strategy, it is frequently possible to locate a fixed expression in the TL that has the same meaning as the SL's but is composed of distinct lexical elements. For instance:

To add fuel to injury زاد الطين بلة

On pins and needles على أحر من الجمر

Forbidden fruit is sweetest كل ممنوع مرغوب

The target language's equivalent of an idiom from the source language (SL) might have a similar form but a different meaning; for instance, the English expression (to pull one's leg) means to play a joke on somebody by making him believe something which is not true. Nevertheless, its Arabic coordinate is يسحب رجله. However, with the idiom "kill two birds with one stone" as well, it is possible that a literal application, or in other words, equivalent translation could happen which has the same meaning in Arabic language.

According to Baker (1992), a translator is more likely to identify an expression as an idiom if it is difficult to grasp in a particular situation. "Put your money where your mouth is", for instance, must be confusing to readers in the target language, and the translator would know that this idiom is not meant to be taken literally.

According to Aldahesh (2013), interpreting ST idioms might to be difficult due to their complexity in terms of semantics, syntax, and pragmatics.

Beyond only transmitting and interpreting lexical terms across languages. It is the process of

transmitting a source language's linguistic and cultural traits to a target language. As a result, understanding the cultural distinctions and the variety of discursive strategies utilized in the source and target languages is both essentially desirable and required for a translator. To evaluate the underlying discourse structure of the source text, the translator should use a number of discourse methodologies. (Razmjou, 2004).

Conclusion

There is no doubt that formulaic expressions like idioms and compound words play a significant role in the acquisition of a second language, and their teaching should be a key component of learning a foreign language since they demonstrate an understanding of the culture of the target language and foster fluency, proficiency, and communicative competence.

Chapter three: Data analysis and discussion of results

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Introduction

Any research must deal with both the theoretical and a practical part. Therefore, this part aims first at explaining the methodology then the analysis of the results that are related to the research questions. Moreover, the chapter outlines the research design and describes the participants as well as the tools used to collect the data and the procedures that are followed in analyzing the data.

1. Context and participants

This study was conducted at the University of Mohamed Khieder in the faculty of Letters and Language at the Department of English in Biskra, Algeria during the academic year 2022/2023.

This research dealt with Master one EFL learners as the population. For the case study, a sample of 40 students was chosen randomly. The average age of the respondents, who ranged in age from 21 to 26, was 23.5. Besides, the participants are male and female. In fact, since this study did not aim to explore the influence of the gender on the way students understand English idioms, it was not considered important.

All respondents were given an equal chance to respond to the test and the questionnaire in a time that did not exceed 30 minutes.

Students were requested to define their gender, age, first language, and year of study in order to gather demographic information about the respondents. The following table recapitulates students' fundamental characteristics.

Variable	Characteristics	Frequency	percentage
gender	female	30	75%
	Male	10	25%
Age	21- 26		
Year of study	Master one	40	100%
First language	Arabic	40	100%

Table 1 : Participants' profile

The table above reveals the participants' profile information. Among 40 participants, 75% were females, whereas 25 % were males. All of them share the same first language which is Arabic. Moreover, most of the participants were in the age of 21- 26 and the average was 23.5. Besides, all of them had a license degree in English language and they were master one English students.

2. Research approach

In order to answer the research questions and identify the strategies that are adopted by students to understand the meaning of English idioms, this research dealt with the mixed method approach which consists of both qualitative and quantitative approach. A quantitative approach is an approach that seeks to gather and analyze the numerical data. In our case, they were obtained from a semi-structured questionnaire and a quiz. The qualitative approach, however, is an

approach that describes the way/method students have used so as to understand the meaning of the idioms.

3. Reliability and validity

First of all, a pilot test was used to establish the reliability and validity of the questionnaire and the idiom quiz. The pilot testing helped to determine whether or not the test was well understood by the respondents. To do so, the pilot test was administered to three students, belonging to the sample of the study. In this case, both the correct and the wrong answers were important for the researcher in order to manage making some changes in order to be understood for all the participants.

4. Data collection tools

Data collection tools are used by researchers to obtain the necessary information in order to solve problems or suggest solutions.

The data of this study was first collected through a semi-structured questionnaire which was used to explore the learners' familiarity with some English idioms and the strategy they use to understand them. And then an idiom quiz to investigate the most method used to comprehend idioms among three suggested methods which are translation, find an equivalent in first language, or guessing meaning through context. This study required to use both a questionnaire and a test (quiz).

4.1. The questionnaire

The questionnaire was semi-structured. It was divided into three sections in order to cover the study's objectives. The first section was about the students' profile information (age, gender, etc.), whereas the second section was about learning the English idioms and their importance, and the last section was concerned with the comprehension of the English idioms and the

relationship between idioms and culture and context. It helped in generating and collecting data in a short time with a large number of students.

4.2. Idiom quiz

This second tool was a task with multiple choices comprising 10 sentences. Each sentence contained an idiom or idiomatic expression. Students had to choose between three options to guess the correct meaning of the idiom. After that, students were given three options among which they had to choose one to determine the strategy they used to understand those idioms. The aim of the idiom quiz served to put things into practice by trying to identify the most common strategy used by students.

5. Data analysis procedures

Since the data collection tools for this study were a semi-structured questionnaire and a test/quiz, the data analysis procedures that contribute in the analysis of the results was the EXCEL. Specifically, in this research, there are two main constructs: the students' familiarity with idioms and the method/strategy students use to understand idioms.

On the one hand, in order to deduce the students' familiarity with idioms, the data was tested quantitatively by using EXCEL since it helps in summarizing the results into bar graphs, and the number of correct and wrong answers was calculated for each student. Furthermore, the questions of the questionnaire were analyzed by calculating the mean and the standard deviation for each item. The mean is the average of all scores; however, the standard deviation is a measure of how the numbers are close to the mean. On the other hand, to deduce the methods used by the students to recognize the meaning of the idioms in the quiz, EXCEL was also used to summarize the results into bar graphs.

6. Analysis and discussions of the results

This part of the study represents the analysis of the data obtained through the collection tools. The data were collected and analyzed in order to explore the strategies most of the EFL students adopt in order to recognize the meaning of the English idiomatic expressions. The data were obtained from 40 master one students at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra, Department of English. The participants were asked to answer a questionnaire and to do an idiom quiz. The data analysis included calculating the percentage of correct and wrong answers for each participant, and creating descriptive statistics for the last question in the questionnaire.

The data were analyzed to determine the number of students' correct and wrong answers. All the answers were examined for each participant. The number of correct answers and their percentage was calculated to show the participants' familiarity with idiomatic expressions. Moreover, the wrong answers and their percentage were calculated to show the participants' unfamiliarity with idiomatic expressions.

5.1. Students' Familiarity with idioms

The data were analyzed to determine the number of the correct and wrong answers for the students. All the answers were examined for each participant. The number of the correct answers and the percentage was calculated to show the participants' familiarity with idiomatic expressions in addition to the wrong answers and the percentage were calculated to show the participants' unfamiliarity with idiomatic expressions.

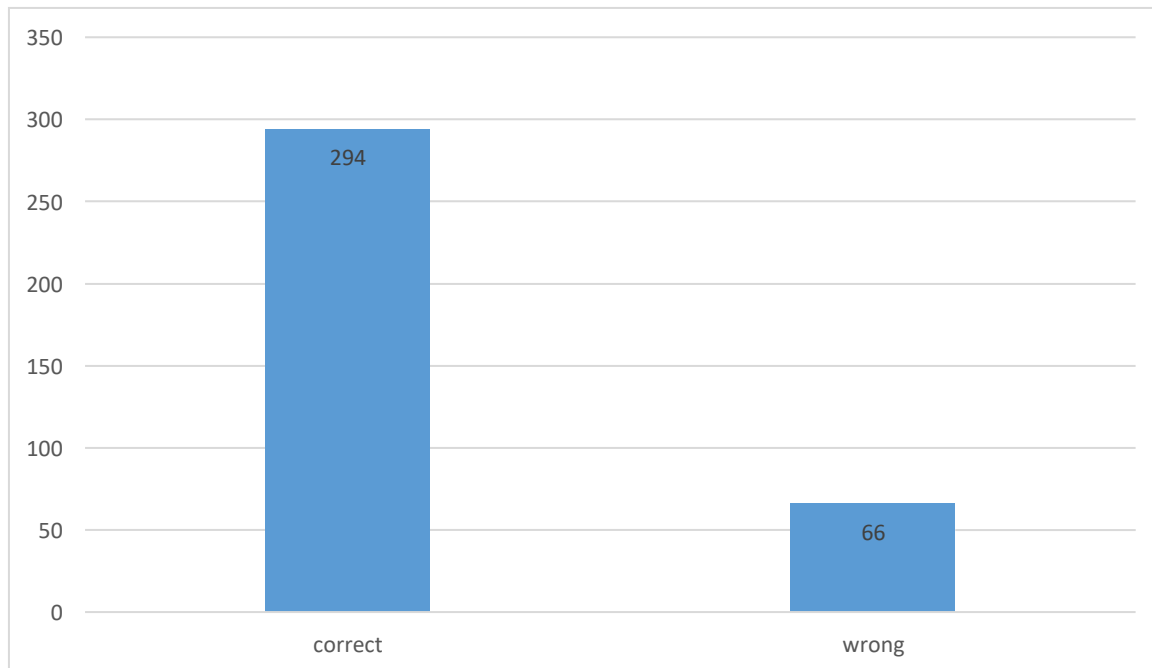


Figure 1 Bar chart of the respondents' familiarity with idioms

Figure 1 shows the analysis of the questions about the extent to which students are familiar with idioms. Students had to tick the correct answer that shows the meaning of the idioms from the given multiple choices. The researcher counted the number of correct and wrong answers for each student. The figure shows that there are 294 correct answers which means that most of master one students had high scores of correct answers. However, the number of wrong answers was just 66 answers which means that a small number of master one students had low scores of wrong answers. Moreover, the percentage were 81, 66% for the correct answers and 18,33% for wrong answers. So, these results signify the students' familiarity with idiomatic expressions whereas the wrong answers show an unfamiliarity with them.

5.2. Students' strategies for idiom comprehension

In this part, the researcher tried to figure out the most strategies students can use in order to understand the meaning of English idioms. For this sake, the researcher designed an idiom quiz in order to collect data. The quiz consisted of 10 sentences; each sentence comprising an idiom and three methods. The participants had to find the appropriate meaning of the idioms and mention the specific strategy they used. There were three methods to choose from: Finding an equivalent idiom in the first language, making translation, and guessing the meaning of the idiom through the given context. Results are displayed in figure 2 below.

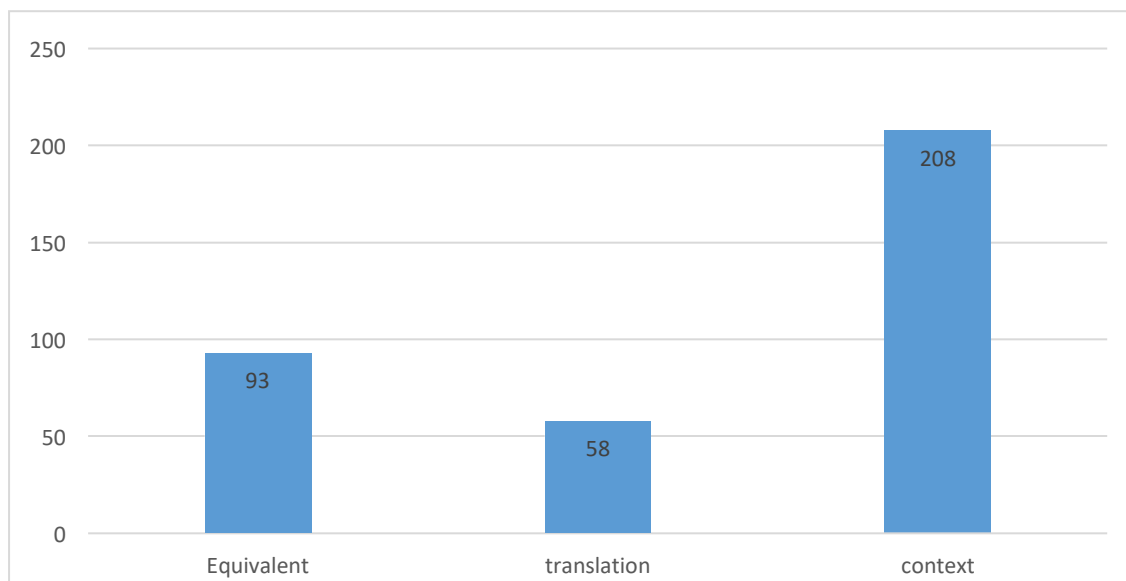


Figure 2 Bar chart of the most strategies student's use to understand idioms

The figure shows that 93 of the participants use the strategy of “finding an equivalent idiom in the first language”, making a percentage of 25.90%. However, “translation” was a less common strategy for students since the total number is somehow low with a percentage of 16.15%. Finally, the last strategy that is represented in the seemed to be adopted by most of the

participants representing 208 with a percentage of 57.93%. Therefore, “figuring out the meaning of the idiom through context” has been revealed as the most used strategy.

5.3. Participants’ learning and comprehension of idioms

This section represents the analysis of the questionnaire’s questions about the respondents’ learning and understanding of the idiomatic expressions among Master one students.

All the respondent’s student was asked to answer a scale questionnaire. The data were analyzed for each item through statistical analysis including calculating the mean and the standard deviation. in order to get the respondents of how students learn idioms ,and if it is important or not ,their satisfaction with the way teach it ,and what is their point of view about idioms’ relationship with culture (Arabic and English).

N	items	Mean	SD
1	how do you evaluate your proficiency in English language	2.08	0.78
2	is learning idioms important for EFL learner’s proficiency	1	0
3	are you satisfied with the way teachers teach idioms in classroom	1.68	0.93
4	how much idioms are difficult to understand for you	1.74	0.91
5	how much do you take your Arabic culture as a reference to understand idioms.	2.11	0.86
6	is learning about English culture in class is necessary in learning English language	3.65	0.68
7	how much idioms and culture are related to each other	3.54	0.70

Table 2 Participants' learning and comprehending of idioms

Note. SD=standard deviation

Table 2 above represents the respondents' learning and understanding of idioms. It shows the Mean and the Standard deviation for each question in the questionnaire.

The first item represents how students evaluate their proficiency in English language, and the mean in this case is about (2.08), and the standard deviation is (0.78). The second item represents 'yes' or 'no' question which is about the importance of learning idioms for EFL learners' proficiency. All the responses insisted of its importance; the mean was about (1) and the standard deviation was (0). The third item was about the students' satisfaction of the way teachers teach English idioms in the classroom. Results revealed that most of the respondents were not satisfied. The mean was about (1.68).

The fourth item signified learners' difficulty of understanding English idioms. Most answers revealed a real difficulty. The mean was about (1.74). The fifth item in the table dealt with the amount of using the first language (Arabic in our case) as a reference when trying to understand idioms. Most of the students confessed not to take L1 as a reference. The mean was about (2.11).

Item 6 showed the highest mean in the table. It represents the question about the necessity of learning about the English culture in class. In fact, all participants emphasized on the importance of considering the target culture and learn about it. The mean was about (3.65). The last question in the table was about how much idioms and culture are related to each other. Most of the answers showed that they are very related to each other and the mean was about (3.54).

To summarize, the table's highest mean, referring to item number six (3.65), demonstrated that students consider that learning about the English culture in class is necessary in learning EFL. However, the lowest item in the table dealt with how much learning idioms can help in evaluating the proficiency of learning English and the mean in this case was about (1).

5.4. The role of context in understanding idiomatic expressions

The researcher made a descriptive analysis of the last question which is about how context can play a role in understanding the idioms. Most of the participants declared that the context and idioms are related to each other, and that the context has a big role in understanding the idiomatic expressions.

One of the main objectives of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of using contextualization as a strategy to assist foreign language learners in overcoming the different challenges associated with idiom understanding. In reality, the exploratory methodology used in this study has supported the assumption, which holds that providing idioms in context will significantly enhance EFL learners' ability to understand the exact meaning of the idioms. The relationship that learners form between the contextual clues and the idiom to be understood is another way that context helps in the development of their cognitive skills in getting the right meaning.

The results of the idiom quiz demonstrated that adopting contextualization as a strategy (among others) for understanding idioms is unquestionably successful. Additionally, the study's findings showed that context, in particular, improves students' understanding of idioms by limiting the interpretation options to those that are best suited to the context at hand. This not only enables students to comprehend what an idiom means but also when and how to use it effectively in a different daily situation. The study's findings were analyzed, and the results supported the notion that context affects how well people grasp the right meaning of the idioms. In conclusion, students will, to some extent, be able to overcome their idiom comprehension challenges through using the method of guessing the meaning through context.

The researcher's findings support with those of Liontas (2003) in that idiomatic phrases may

be efficiently understood and learned/taught by using context. And it supports the claim that systematic education within the context of meaningful-authentic language usage can improve the acquisition of idiomatic phrases (Liontas, 2003). In that, idiom learning and comprehension are greatly impacted by context, also he stated that learning and understanding idioms are severely hampered by the lack of context. As a result, an idiomatic expression's meaning can be better understood by adding context to it. An idiomatic term may occasionally seem to communicate the same notion or concept as one that has previously been stated in the text.

6. Summary and interpretation of results

6.1. EFL learners' awareness of the use of English idioms

Familiarity defines how frequent an individual faces idiom while using language. In other words, the ability to interpret the meaning of idiom is closely related to idiom familiarity. Idioms can be difficult for non-native speakers to understand and produce, which causes a number of difficulties. Their intricacy is shown in the fact that even native speakers who often utilize them in daily life become difficult and complex. The idioms that are mostly used those which found in the learner's native tongue are the ones that are the simplest for non- native speakers to utilize, whereas comparable idioms, even though they were comprehended just as well as the identical ones, tend to exhibit interference from a native language. As a result, this study shows that the most of the master one students even they found idioms difficult but the most of them they were familiar with the way of using idioms. Since, the first question which is concerned with the degree of familiarity of first year master students with English idioms revealed that the percentage of students' familiarity with English idioms is higher than those who are not familiar with them.

Previous studies have mentioned that idiomatic comprehension accuracy rises during

childhood and improves in adulthood. In Sameer's (2013) study, idioms in both literal and figurative contexts were used, and the subjects were placed in two separate contexts to determine how long it takes for each to be processed. Language consumers are more used to changed idioms in a language the more frequently they appear. This demonstrates that readers get more familiar with changed idioms when they occur more frequently. Exploring the frequency of modified idioms is important to comprehend familiarity since it will reveal the amount of familiarity and comprehension among language users.

6.2. Strategies that EFL learners adopt in order to understand the idiomatic expressions

The findings of both the questionnaire and the idiom quiz showed that the most common method for understanding the exact meaning of idioms is guessing through context rather than translation or finding an equivalent in the first language. This emphasizes how crucial it is to teach and learn idioms in context, as doing so reduces the amount of new figurative language and makes it easier to infer the meaning of the target idioms. This suggests that teachers should give students the necessary tools to use the context to infer the metaphorical interpretation of idioms. Additionally, the findings demonstrated that students' understanding of English idioms relies on translating them into their native tongues (L1). This suggests that instructors and curriculum developers should take into account the fact that students easily pick up idioms that have conceptualizations in both their first and second language. On the other hand, since learners rely on their first language and take it as a reference most of the time for their knowledge and experience with idioms when attempting to understand idioms in a foreign language, it would appear that teachers should make an effort to emphasize connections between the learners' first and target languages, if at all possible. Also, because there is no cultural context for the idioms, EFL students encounter difficulties and challenges. This finding highlights how crucial it is to teach language learners about the cultural context of their language.

7. Discussion of findings

The current study investigated the strategies master one EFL students use when they try to understand English idioms and figure out their meaning. The findings of the study revealed that the majority of students find learning and understanding idioms difficult. Through the results, we could find that students may find difficulty first in the translation process since the analysis of the data showed that few participants depends on the strategy of translation which may be because of their lack of proficiency and practice or their ignorance of the right way of translation. Moreover, the strategy of finding the right equivalent in their mother language is somehow difficult since learners must have a good background about both their first and their target language cultures. In fact, most of the time it is difficult to find the same equivalent shared in different cultures since each culture is controlled by a variety of values and beliefs which can make each idiom related to a specific culture.

The parallels between Arabic and English were classified as identical idioms for the purposes of the current study. The idioms used for the study were chosen based on three categories of idioms: 1) those that have precise equivalents in Arabic like “over my dead body”, 2) those that are articulated similarly in both languages; and 3) those that do not. On the other hand, idiomatic distinctions between the two languages were categorized as various idioms, in order to see if the participants are aware of the idioms in their first culture.

The last strategy that most of the students rely on is guessing the meaning through context. In fact, using contextualization as a technique for idioms learning has certainly a fruitful result, which is noticed from the outcomes of the quiz. This method is found suitable by the participants since it is the most method used that because context helped EFL learners to overcome the difficulties encountered while understanding idioms. the results of the study denote that context

has a positive effect on the comprehension of idioms in the sense that it limits the possibilities of interpretation into the ones which are more suitable to the context provided technique. as well as it helps learners not only to understand the meaning of idioms but also when and how to use idioms appropriately and effectively in various everyday life situations. The assumption which indicates that learner's comprehension of idioms is enhanced due to the context method is accepted and confirmed after the analysis of the study's results.

We deduced that students use certain strategies in understanding idioms; as a result, it is sometimes necessary to combine many strategies to express the meaning because the social context that supports the SL frequently necessitates a modification, an explanation, or a paraphrase rather than, strictly speaking, or a translation.

Hajjaj and Kharma (1989) have shown that there are three different reasons why Arab English learners struggle to understand English idioms. First, idioms have unique elements that generally present a problem to foreign English language learners, not just those who are Arab. These features are both syntactic and semantic in nature. In other words, it is pointless to attempt to break down idioms into its component pieces; instead, students should learn idioms as whole terms with clear definitions. Second, Arabic speakers who are learning English avoid using idioms and preferring use big words, which are typically of Latin origin and mark them as foreigners. Despite the fact that many English idioms have Arabic equivalents, most idioms are not just language-related but also have cultural undertones. As a result, by learning idioms in a second language, students are also deepening their awareness of native speakers' cultures. As (Sánchez, M T. 2007) collaborates that Sometimes more than one technique is required to express the message since the social environment that supports the SL sometimes necessitates an adaptation, an explanation, or a paraphrase rather than a translation strictly speaking.

General conclusion

This exploratory study investigated the way EFL learners understand the idiomatic expressions whether through finding an equivalent idiom in the first language, by guessing the meaning through context or by making translations of the idioms. It also discussed the importance of idioms in enhancing the language skills as well as the difficulties that learners can face when confronted to idioms. Therefore, the study's main concern was about the different strategies that students may use in order to get the right meaning of the idiomatic expressions. The second main point concerns the familiarity of idioms among EFL students of master one at university of Mohamed Kheider. Last but not least, the current study tried to find how context and culture can play a role in simplifying the meaning of English idioms. As a result, the researcher was able to answer the two questions she raised at the beginning of the research work:

1. To what extent are EFL learners aware of the use of English idioms?
2. What are the different strategies that EFL students use to facilitate their understanding of English idioms?

The present research has been conducted to explore the familiarity of master one students with idioms and the strategies they use to understand them. To reach this objective, we have gone through a theoretical part comprising two chapters to pave the ground to the exploratory work. In the first chapter, we have attempted to spot light on some basic concepts about idioms and a general overview on them, mainly their definition, their different classifications as well as the problems that learners may encounter during the process of understanding their meaning. The second chapter provided the different strategies that would be chosen by students in order to understand the exact meaning of the idiom.

In the practical part, students were given a questionnaire to know their familiarity with idioms

in addition to an idiom quiz to identify the different strategies that students select while trying to figure out the meaning of the idiom. The results obtained, from the idiom quiz, have shown that students' ability to understand idioms is quite good. Moreover, it has been revealed that they are familiar with many English idioms.

However, through the questionnaire, most of the students emphasized on the importance of the idiomatic expressions in enhancing their proficiency of learning the English language even if they have some difficulties in understanding and getting their exact meanings.

After analyzing the study's findings, it is agreed and proven that the context technique does, in fact, improve learners' comprehension of idioms.

Recommendations and implications of the study

Based on the findings of this research, the study might end up with the following recommendations:

Teachers should focus on teaching students English idioms and provide them with a variety of activities to practice and use them in different situations. Additionally, teachers must provide students with effective tools for comprehension. Moreover, it is important to develop foreign language learners' idiomatic knowledge in a methodical and persistent manner. When creating a systematic approach for teaching idioms to EFL students, a language instructor should take into account the students' age and level of language skill. Undoubtedly, students will learn the idioms more effectively if teachers utilize them more frequently in class activities.

On the other hand, the students should be exposed more to idiomatic expressions in classrooms, especially at university to extend their knowledge about them. Moreover, students should have a good cultural background of the first and the target language. This concerns the fixed expressions in general, and idioms in particular. They can help students in getting the true meaning and follow the exact method which can help them get the right meaning behind idioms.

Idiomatic phrases which are culturally distinctive are challenging to understand; the learner must describe the same reality in the target language rather than just translating words or guessing the meaning through context; that is, why idiomatic expressions are crucial components of every language.

According to this research's participants, culture has a significant role in how well participants absorb idioms. Also, there is agreement among them that idioms should be incorporated into university curricula.

Limitations of the study

This research work contains some limitations and has encountered a number of obstacles.

1. The design of this study did not take psychological factors like motivation and interest in learning English idioms into account.
2. The extremely small sample size limits generalizations beyond the sample. The limited number of idioms included in the instrument is another factor limiting the generalization of this study's findings. So, this rather contentious conclusion necessitates more investigation into the impact of length of stay using bigger sample sizes.
3. The absence of supervision in the idiom quiz might have been a concern because no one was watching to make sure that each participant did not turn to others or the internet for assistance.
4. Some students did not answer some of questions in the questionnaire and some of them just let some gaps and did not fill them in the task. This could have had an impact on the general interpretation of results.

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ان العبارات (Idioms) هي بعض من مصطلحات المفردات الأكثر إثارة للاهتمام والإبداع للتعلم في أي لغة. هم جزء لا يتجزأ من اللغة الإنجليزية، على وجه الخصوص. غالبا ما تستخدم هذه العبارات من قبل جميع الناطقين بها تقريبا للتعبير عن معاني مختلفة في مواقف مختلفة. وبالتالي، لا يزال من الصعب على غير الناطقين بها فهمها، هذا قد يخلق عقبة كبيرة في التواصل والتفاعل باللغة الإنجليزية. ومع ذلك، يمكن لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية الرجوع إلى حقيقة الأساليب والاستراتيجيات من أجل فهم العبارات الإنجليزية في الواقع، يمكنهم الاعتماد على الترجمة أو تخمين المعنى أو إيجاد ما يعادلها بلغتهم الأم. لذلك، يهدف هذا البحث إلى استكشاف الاستراتيجيات التي يستخدمها طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية للعثور على المعنى الدقيق للمصطلح وتحقيق فهمه. ومن هنا فقد قامت هذه الدراسة بدراسة استكشافية وركزت على طلبة السنة الأولى للغة الإنجليزية في جامعة بسكرة تم اجراء الدراسة مع (40) طالب. كان الهدف هو معرفة مدى إلمام الطلاب بهذه العبارات الإنجليزية والاستراتيجيات التي يستخدمونها لفهمها. وبناء على ذلك، تم بناء هذا البحث على افتراض أن النظر في السياق العام للجملة، والتعرف على العبارات الثقافية والتاريخية للغة الأم وكذلك استخدام الترجمة كلها استراتيجيات أساسية في تسهيل عملية فهم هذه العبارات. اختار الباحث نهجا متعدد الأساليب تم فيه استخدام أداتين لجمع البيانات: استبيان شبه منظم واختبار مصطلحي. أظهر تحليل البيانات أن غالبية الطلاب على دراية باستخدام العبارات. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، كشف الطلاب (من خلال الاختبار) عن تبني استراتيجيات مختلفة لفهم هذه الأخيرة : كان تخمين المعنى من خلال السياق هو الأكثر استخداما ، ثم يأتي العثور على ما يعادلها بلغتهم الأم ، وأخيرا ، إجراء ترجمات مباشرة. باختصار، جاءت النتائج جنبا إلى جنب مع الافتراض المقترح، وبالتالي حققت الأهداف المرجوة من هذه الدراسة.

APPENDIX I

Student's Questionnaire

Dear students

This questionnaire is used as a data collection instrument for my research about idiomatic expressions and the way they are understood by EFL students.

You are kindly asked to answer the questions. Your participation is of great importance for the completion of this work.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Section One: Profile information

Gender: male female

Age:

What is your first language?

.....

How would you evaluate your general proficiency level in English language?

poor average good very good

Section two: Learning English Idioms

Q1. In your opinion, is learning idioms important for EFL learners' proficiency skills?

Yes No

- Please, justify

.....
.....

Q2. Are you satisfied with the way teachers teach idiomatic expressions in the classroom?

Very dissatisfied dissatisfied neutral satisfied very satisfied

Please, justify your answer

.....
.....

Section three: Understanding English idioms

Q3. How much idioms are difficult to understand for you?

Very difficult difficult neutral easy very easy

Q4. Which method/strategy do you use when you come to understand English idioms?

a- Direct translation into Arabic

b- Guess the meaning through understanding the context

c- See if there are relevant idioms in your first language and search for similarities them with the English ones

d- Another method:

Q5. As EFL learners, how much do you take your culture (Arabic) as a reference to understand idioms?

never sometimes rarely often always

Q6. In your opinion, is learning about the English culture in class necessary in learning EFL?

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

Q7. In your opinion, how much idioms and English culture are related to each other?

very unrelated unrelated neutral related very related

Q8. How can context play a role in understanding idioms?

.....
.....

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix II: Idiom Quiz

Instructions: In order to figure out the most strategy used to comprehend the idioms, read the expressions bellow and underline the appropriate meaning then tick the method you used. If there are other methods, please mention them.

Idiom/idiomatic expression	meaning	The used strategy	If there is another strategy, please mention here
1. This dish is finger-licking good!	a-Cut his finger <input type="checkbox"/> b-Taste so good <input type="checkbox"/> c-No need for spoon <input type="checkbox"/>	a- Equivalent idiom in your first lge. <input type="checkbox"/> b- Translation <input type="checkbox"/> c- Context. <input type="checkbox"/>	
2. My mother never gives me the green light to quit school	a- drive him to school. <input type="checkbox"/> b-give him permission. <input type="checkbox"/> c-support him. <input type="checkbox"/>	a-Equivalent idiom in your first lge. <input type="checkbox"/> b-Translation <input type="checkbox"/> c-Context. <input type="checkbox"/>	
3. You think that I will give you the keys of my car? over my dead body.	a- want to fight <input type="checkbox"/> b-Preventing and impeding. <input type="checkbox"/> c-you need to see the doctor as soon as possible. <input type="checkbox"/>	a-Equivalent idiom in your first lge. <input type="checkbox"/> b-Translation <input type="checkbox"/> c-Context. <input type="checkbox"/>	
4. She had expected him to be all ears when she told him about her wedding plans.	a-To be attentive. <input type="checkbox"/> b-to be happy. <input type="checkbox"/> c-to attend the wedding. <input type="checkbox"/>	a-Equivalent idiom in your first lge. <input type="checkbox"/> b-Translation <input type="checkbox"/> c-Context. <input type="checkbox"/>	
5. When Jane and Tom argue, it's best to sit on the fence and not make either of them angry.	a-undecided <input type="checkbox"/> b-make explanation <input type="checkbox"/> c-run away <input type="checkbox"/>	a-Equivalent idiom in your first lge. <input type="checkbox"/> b-Translation <input type="checkbox"/> c-Context. <input type="checkbox"/>	
6. How can I got you into your thick head that it is dangerous to swim that far out in the sea!	a-to be loyal no matter what. <input type="checkbox"/> b-stupid person <input type="checkbox"/> c-he goes fishing <input type="checkbox"/>	a-Equivalent idiom in your first lge. <input type="checkbox"/> b-Translation <input type="checkbox"/> c-Context. <input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Let's stop Beating around the bush and discuss this problem	a-avoid saying something. <input type="checkbox"/> b-to play in the garden. <input type="checkbox"/> c-search for something. <input type="checkbox"/>	a-Equivalent idiom in your first lge. <input type="checkbox"/> b-Translation <input type="checkbox"/> c-Context. <input type="checkbox"/>	

<p>8. My uncle always strikes while the iron is hot and usually gets the best deals.</p>	<p>a-he is experienced man. b-take opportunity <input type="checkbox"/> immediately. <input type="checkbox"/> c-he is a lucky man. <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>a-Equivalent idiom in your first lge. <input type="checkbox"/> b-Translation <input type="checkbox"/> c-Context <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>9. The city's decision to close the homeless shelter was cold-hearted</p>	<p>a-mercy <input type="checkbox"/> b-thankful <input type="checkbox"/> c-unfeeling <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>a-Equivalent idiom in your first lge. <input type="checkbox"/> b-Translation <input type="checkbox"/> c-Context <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>10. My friend was pulling my leg when he told me that someone took my car.</p>	<p>a-joke. <input type="checkbox"/> b-warn. <input type="checkbox"/> c-bother <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>a-Equivalent idiom in your first lge. <input type="checkbox"/> b-Translation <input type="checkbox"/> c-Context <input type="checkbox"/></p>	