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The Impact of Idiomatic Expressions on Developing University Students' Communicative Competence

(A Case Study of Nile Valley University 2015 – 2016)

**A Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
PhD Degree in Applied Linguistics (ELT)**

By:

Adil Ali Mohamed Ali

Supervised by:

Prof. Dr. Mohammed Bakri Hadidi

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Dedication

To the spirit of my beloved mother.

*To the spirit of my beloved father, To my wife for her support
and encouragement.*

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List of Acronyms

No	Acronym	Concept
1	EFL	English as Foreign Language
2	ESL	English as Second Language
3	T/L	Teaching and learning
4	FL	Foreign Language
5	LT	Language Teaching
6	ELT	English Language Teaching
7	SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
8	MWU	Multi Word Units
9	WEUDEL	Webster's encyclopedic unabridged dictionary of the English language
10	CED	Collins English Dictionary
11	AMD	American Heritage Dictionary
12	NSOED	New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary
13	OALD	Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary
14	O.E.D	Oxford EnglishDictionary
15	L2	Second-language learners
16	IEX	Idiomatic Expressions
17	DF	Degree of Freedom
18	NVU	Nile Valley University

Abstract

The study dealt with the area of idiomatic expressions as being important linguistic units for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). These expressions are really a problematic aspect for the students majoring in English that they do not understand them and produce them properly. The main focus of this study is to examine the role of the idiomatic expressions on developing students' communicative competence. This study was conducted at Nile Valley University for the university year 2015- 2016. This study is based on the main assumption that, knowledge of idiomatic expressions is important for Sudanese tertiary level students to promote language fluency. The researcher used the analytical descriptive method. A questionnaire, pre-test, and posttest devices were used as data-gathering tools. The questionnaire was conducted with university lecturers from Nile Valley University and other universities in Sudan who teach English Language. A pre-test and a post-test were conducted for the students majoring in English from the department of English, Faculty of Education, Nile Valley University

The data were analyzed by using (SPSS) Statistical Package for Social Science by Chi-square Test programmes and Alpha coefficient to show the degree of statistical significance and the results of the search hypotheses. The main results revolve around the following: the knowledge of the idiomatic expressions is important to promote communicative competence. There was a significant difference between the students' performance in the pre-test and their performance in the post-test. There was an improvement of the students' performance in the post-test after studying the syllabus that included idiomatic expressions that were designed for them.

The study reached the result that culture is considered as a 'backbone' with regard to enjoyable and effective factors of English language fluency. The

findings show that knowledge of idiomatic expressions is important in promoting language fluency also there is a broad concern on the necessity of the inclusion of idiomatic expressions in university syllabuses (80% of the lecturers). The results also show that effective teaching of idiomatic expressions will result in improving the students' communicative skill. Another result shows that idiomatic expressions are not only marginalized in the syllabuses of universities but also they are not taught effectively.

With regard to the remedial suggestive techniques that might improve the learners' knowledge of the idiomatic expressions that lead to improving their English language fluency, this study recommends that the differences in culturally bound knowledge ought to be given a care in the English language materials especially in teaching idiomatic expressions. It is hoped that from this study, idiomatic expressions should be focused on and included within the syllabuses of universities in Sudan, besides adopting effective methods and effective techniques in teaching such linguistic elements.

مستخلص

تناولت الدراسة مجال التعبيرات الاصطلاحية باعتبارها وحدات لغوية مهمة لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL). تعد هذه التعبيرات جانبًا إشكاليًا للطلاب الذين يتخصصون في اللغة الإنجليزية ولا يفهمونها ويتحدثونها بشكل صحيح. التركيز الرئيسي في هذه الدراسة هو دراسة دور التعبيرات الاصطلاحية في تطوير كفاءة التواصل لدى الطلاب. أجريت هذه الدراسة في جامعة وادي النيل للعام الجامعي 2015-2016. وتستند هذه الدراسة إلى الافتراض الرئيسي المتمثل في أن معرفة التعبيرات الاصطلاحية مهمة لطلاب المرحلة الجامعية من السودانيين لتعزيز طلاقة اللغة. استخدم الباحث المنهج الوصفي التحليلي. تم استخدام استبيان و الاختبار القبلي و الاختبار البعدي كأدوات لجمع البيانات. تم إجراء الاستبيان مع اساتذة جامعيين من جامعة وادي النيل وجامعات أخرى في السودان يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية. تم إجراء اختبار قبلي واختبار بعدي للطلاب الذين تخصصوا في اللغة الإنجليزية في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية ، كلية التربية ، جامعة وادي النيل.

تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام (SPSS) الحزمة الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية من خلال برامج اختبار مربع كاي ومعامل ألفا لإظهار درجة الأهمية الإحصائية ونتائج فرضيات البحث. تدور النتائج الرئيسية حول ما يلي: معرفة التعبيرات الاصطلاحية مهمة لتعزيز الكفاءة التواصلية. كان هناك فرق كبير بين أداء الطلاب في الاختبار القبلي وأدائهم في الاختبار البعدي. كما ان هناك تحسن في أداء الطلاب في مرحلة ما بعد الاختبار بعد دراسة المنهج الذي تضمن تعبيرات اصطلاحية تم تصميمه لهم.

توصلت الدراسة إلى نتيجة مفادها أن الثقافة تعتبر "العمود الفقري" فيما يتعلق بعوامل فعالة في إتقان اللغة الإنجليزية. تبين النتائج أن معرفة التعبيرات الاصطلاحية مهمة في تعزيز الطلاقة اللغوية ، كما أن هناك إجماعاً كبيراً حول ضرورة إدراج التعبيرات الاصطلاحية في مناهج الجامعة (80% من المحاضرين). تظهر النتائج أيضاً أن التدريس الفعال للتعبيرات الاصطلاحية سيؤدي إلى تحسين مهارة التواصل لدى الطلاب. تظهر النتيجة أيضاً أن التعبيرات الاصطلاحية لا يتم تهميشها فقط في مناهج الجامعات بل أيضاً لا يتم تدريسها بشكل فعال.

1Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Study Background

A language is a vessel that contains and exposit culture, thoughts, and history of a given nation. In all languages, there are several devices to convey and perceive cultural aspects, ideas, and abstract meanings showing how people interact culturally and pragmatically. One major linguistic device is using idioms. English language, a case in point, is known as a language of idiomaticity. It is rich in metaphors, similes, phrasal verbs, and figurative speech, conventionally referred to as “idiomatic expressions” or as some linguists call a register that makes a significant portion of academia and everyday communicational English. Cooper (1998, p.255) estimates that “over a lifetime of 60 years, a person would use about 20 million idioms”.

In the body of literature, several attempts have been made to define an idiom. According to Larsen (1984, p.20), an idiom is a “string of words whose meaning is different from the meaning conveyed by the individual words.” This is quite similar to the dictionary definition that an idiom is “a group of words that has a special meaning that is different from the ordinary meaning of each separate word” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2012, p. 870).

Some researchers approached it from different perspectives. They attempted to define the content of idioms. To mention a few, Carter (1998) used the term “fixed expressions”, Moon (1997) picked up the term “multi-word items”, Howarth (1998) prompted for the term “phraseology”, Gläser (1984) adopted the term “phraseological unit”, and more recently Yi (2006) referred to idioms as “multiword expressions”. However, some others preferred the traditional term “idiom”. To elaborate, Mitsis (2004) defined an idiom as a continuum of non-literal expressions starting with usual collocations continues with stable or fixed collocations, metaphorical collocations, and the continuum ends with idioms of absolute abstract

meaning. This continuum provides a spectrum of idioms where there is a possibility for transparency, semi transparency.

Opacity areas in the chain of an idiom. In a word, idioms vary from familiar to unfamiliar and from transparent to opaque idioms. Idioms, by definition, thus, are not literally translatable, as their meanings are unpredictable from the usual meaning of their constituent parts, particularly idioms of socio-cultural, historical, or political backgrounds.

Linguistically speaking, idioms, by their very nature, have certain linguistic features. They operate on three aspects of language: form, meaning, and usage, i.e. they have syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic dimensions. At the syntactical level, idioms are thought of as fixed expressions, inseparable units. For instance, an idiom like *it rains cats and dogs* is fixed and cannot be descended, i.e. there is not a possibility to make any of its nouns (cats and dogs) singular or alter the sequence of the words. In addition, it is impermissible to transform it in any other form. One more example is the idiom *kick the bucket*. It cannot be transformed to the passive form, *the bucket was kicked*. Similarly, phrasal verbs, which constitute an integral part of English language, are irreversible, similar to idioms in nature as they consist of a sequence of words, linguistically are taken as “single lexemes.” A good example to illustrate the point is the phrasal verb “put off” which is a single semantic unit, having a single verb word equivalent, “postpone.” Dobrovol’skij and Piirainen (2005, p.10) contend that idioms must be fixed in their lexical structure, and they must be, at the same time, semantically reinterpreted units and/or semantically opaque.

1.2 Introduction

Idioms are important in all languages; they are part and parcel of human communication. Despite their pervasiveness in English language, they confused the beginner learners to such a large extent. They might cause not only linguistic but also cultural and technical problems to non-English speakers who learn English as an L₂, and these problems may jeopardize

communication (Thawabteh, 2011). This brought about a common belief among several language researchers that a sound knowledge of idioms is inevitable for English proficiency and fluency (Wray, 2002; Liu, 2008; Shirazi and Talebinezhad, 2013), and a lack of knowledge of idioms most frequently poses big misunderstandings. Such idiomatic knowledge involves, according to (Guduru, 2011, p.540), “cognitive processes, complex relationships, and abstract concepts, which are difficult to see, point to, touch, or act out.” Thus, ESL/EFL learners cannot help but learn idioms, not only for academic purposes but also for day-to-day communication.

This chapter demonstrates the statement of the study problem, and objectives of the study, the study questions and the hypotheses in addition to the significance of the study, the methodology, and the procedures of the study, population and sample of the study. Study limits are also presented.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

There is a great concern about linguistic appropriateness rather than accuracy (Shirazi, and Talebinezhad, 2013). Today there is a wide agreement among language learning theorists and researchers that the number of idioms acquired is positively correlated with the degree of success on communicative tasks, suggesting a close connection between idiom acquisition and communicative abilities (Wray, 2002; Liu, 2008; Shirazi and Talebinezhad, 2013). Liantas (2002) thinks that idioms form a large part of natural communication, and a knowledge of idiomatic expressions increases conversational fluency. This was reinforced by an earlier proclaim that idiomaticity would allow learners to produce English more confidently and “with less effort” (Sinclair, 1987, 159). It becomes clear, thus, that idioms are quite essential in the ESL/EFL contexts where L₂ learners’ English proficiency could be assessed on the basis of their good grasp of idiomatic expressions. In other words, the more idioms one knows, the more native-like one’s English will sound, and by learning idioms, one consequently learns a big deal of the culture of the community speaking the language in question.

Researchers like Ellis (1997) and Yorio (1989) suggest that adequate knowledge and appropriate use of idioms in L₂ is an important indicator of L₂ communicative competence. That is why in most rubrics of language skills (e.g. writing) using idioms is assessed as an indication of a good masterpiece.

This research is on the teaching/learning of idiomatic expressions of English (tertiary level students in Sudan), but the teaching and learning of idiomatic expressions and multi-word verb is only part of teaching and learning of vocabulary and, again, the latter (i.e., T/L of vocabulary) is only part of a language development program. It is, thus, important that teaching and learning of idiomatic expressions is placed in its proper perspective. In doing this, we use the principles, techniques, strategies etc. of teaching, learning and assessing vocabulary putting in consideration that these vocabulary components are different (from other vocabulary items) in that they are multi-word lexical items – units larger than words. The present study has been concluded in the context of Sudan which offers a typical setting of an EFL program, characterized by limited exposure to English as a commonly language and hence, restricted scope of practice.

According to above mentioned description, the purpose of this study is to examine the impact of idiomatic expressions on developing tertiary level students' communicative competence.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The vocabulary knowledge of FL is necessary in the sense that words are the basic building blocks of language, the units of meaning from which larger structures such as sentences, paragraphs and whole texts are formed. For learners acquisition of vocabulary is typically conscious and demanding process. Even at an advanced level, learners are aware of limitations in their knowledge of FL words. They experience lexical gaps that are words they read which they simply do not understand, or concepts that they cannot express as adequately as they could in their first language.

Generally, speaking very little has been written on the problems and strategies of teaching and learning of foreign language vocabulary. It is probably assumed that learning of another language vocabulary will be somehow mastered by those interested in the language on their own. There is also a popular perception that learning a foreign language is basically mastering its vocabulary. Many learners see FL acquisition as essentially a matter of learning vocabulary. Therefore, they devote a great deal of time to memorizing lists of FL words and rely on their bilingual dictionary as a basic communicative resource. In popular writing, the expressions such as ‘word power’ are used in this sense. Thus, from various points of view, vocabulary can be seen as a priority area in language teaching/learning. However, LT strategies for teaching of vocabulary seem to be a neglected area which needs attention of the applied linguists and language teachers. Within this general field, the important but overlapping component in the context of ELT seems to be idiomatic expressions that demand a lot of concern for the following reasons:

1. Subjectively and introspectively speaking, and also based on the experience of teachers and learners of English as a foreign language (EFL, it has been observed that these two areas cause a lot of problems and difficulties.
2. Objectively, there is a frequent demand from those possessing the knowledge of EFL that they must have a command of idiomatic expressions in real-life situations (advertisements for job vacancies will bear this out).
3. Idiomatic expressions give the learners the comprehensive knowledge they need to acquire to build their communicative competence and perhaps enhance their communicative performance.
4. Very importantly, this study will particularly be relevant to curriculum developers in that it may help in suggesting the relevant activities,

lessons and exercises about idioms to be built into syllabuses to enhance language fluency?

I.5 Objectives of the Study

These problems reflected above have led the researcher to set the following objectives:

1. To investigate the importance of the idiomatic expressions for Sudanese tertiary level students to promote language fluency.
2. To know the challenges encountered by Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expression.
3. To know the ability of the Sudanese tertiary level students to process and express English idioms

I.6 Research Questions

Main question

To what extent do idiomatic expressions affect developing Sudanese tertiary level students' communicative competence in Nile Valley University?

The following general and inter-related questions could be formulated on the basis of the scope of this study:

1. To what extent is the knowledge of idiomatic expressions important for Sudanese tertiary level students to promote language fluency?
2. What challenges do Sudanese tertiary level students encounter in acquiring idiomatic expressions?
3. To what extent are Sudanese Tertiary level students able to process and express English idioms?

1.7 Hypotheses of the Study

According to the problem of the study the followings will be hypothesized:

1. Knowledge of idiomatic expressions is important for Sudanese tertiary level students to promote language fluency.
2. There are some challenges encountered by Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expression.

3. Sudanese Tertiary level students are not able to process and express English idioms.

1.8 Study Methodology and Instruments

In this study, the researcher adopted the descriptive statistical method, and using the Chi- square test programme as well as Alpha coefficient to analyze the data obtained to realize the goals of this study. To have satisfactory data for this research, the following tools are used:

- a questionnaire for lecturers.
- a pre-test; and a post-test for students.

These written chosen techniques seem to be practical instruments for a study on 'the teaching and learning of idiomatic expressions of English': They could elicit data about the problems and difficulties facing the teaching and learning of idiomatic expressions. They are easy and quick instruments for collecting a considerable amount of data. They are highly effective means of gathering data.

The rationale behind the combination of instruments (the variety and diversity of questions in questionnaire using concrete, verifying examples and the multiplicity of questions and questions' items in the tests) of data collection in this study was to ensure, as much as possible, that our data should truly reflect the claims being made here.

In general, the pre-test is meant for detecting the problems and difficulties encountering the students learning idiomatic expressions while the post-test is intended to measure the impact and the effectiveness of the course which was taught on the performance of the students on this component.

Meanwhile the questionnaire used to serve as validating techniques for the tests, addressed the following issues:

- Eliciting lecturers' views on the position of idiomatic expressions in curriculum, materials, methodology used, and actual classroom practice;
- Familiarity or non-familiarity of the students with idiomatic expressions

- Lectures conception, perception and awareness of the problems , difficulties of teaching and learning of idiomatic expressions.

Thus, the lectures' questionnaire contains 20 questions. For the pre-test and post-test, they include 20 questions each.

The reliability and validity of the questionnaire and the tests were checked by some associated doctors of applied linguistics. The questionnaire was distributed to the lectures of English from different Sudanese universities while the tests were done for the students.

The population of this study was the third year university students of English besides the university lecturers of English language for the academic year (2015-2016). The sample was a purposive selection of students all of whom have studied courses of idiomatic expressions for three weeks. University lectures were selected for the questionnaire samples too.

1.9 The Limits of the Study

This study is limited to the following factors:

1. The examining concentrated on the impact of idiomatic expressions on developing the tertiary students' communicative competence–Nile valley University in academic year (2015-2016)
2. The participating subjects are as follows:
 - (I) Students: The sample examined was a purposive selection of (30) students in the Department of English, Faculties of Education; they were third year students.
 - (II) Lecturers: (30) lecturers of Linguistics and English with different qualifications and experiences participated in this study.
3. The study was conducted in Nile Valley University which is located in Atbara City in The River Nile State.

1.10 The Study Contents

This study consisted of five chapters. Chapter one contains the statement of the problem, the significance; objectives of the research, the research questions, the hypotheses as well.

Chapter Two focuses on the related literature Review. It gives a general overview of the theory of idiomatic expressions and the communicative competence, presents the common problems of acquiring and learning the idiomatic expressions that might face university students and introduces a list of selected previous studies in relation to this study.

Chapter Three involves the research methodology .It demonstrates a clear and detailed plan to collect adequate and reliable data for analysis including the selection of subjects, research instruments, procedures of data collection as well as procedures of data analysis.

Chapter Four is the data presentation, analysis, and discussions of results from the questionnaire, pretest and posttest. Also it contains tables and charts displaying the results, as well.

Chapter Five is the conclusion which summarizes the major findings of the study. It also gives some recommendations to develop students' communicative competence. Suggestions for further studies are also included in this chapter.

To sum up, this introductory chapter presents the study problem, significance, objectives, research questions and hypotheses, methodology, and design of the study. The related literature review will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This research sheds light on the impact of idiomatic expressions on highlights techniques for teaching and acquiring the idiomatic expressions and how these expression develop the communicative competence for the English learners.

This chapter focuses on the theoretical background of this thesis as well as the previous related studies. The main aim of this study is to investigate the importance of the idiomatic expressions for Sudanese tertiary level students to promote language fluency.

Two other sections are devoted to explaining The Problem of Defining Idioms. From there, the researcher will move on to nature, peculiarity, features, structure, and classification of idioms. An issue that cannot be overlooked when discussing the impact of the idiomatic expressions on developing students' communicative competence is the aspects of language and their relation to the idioms. This chapter mostly illustrates fundamental background studies done in the field of impact of idiomatic expressions on developing students' communicative competence. There is the hope that the study helps EFL teachers to become more familiar with idiomatic expressions and leading them to make more objective decisions about how to go about adopting appropriate teaching strategies and techniques to help EFL students improve their English fluency.

In addition, the researcher has presented the communicative competence and discussed the definitions and the components of the communicative competence. Moreover, the Related Previous Studies are discussed.

2.2 The Problem of Defining Idioms

Many researchers have agreed that there is a problematic task of defining an idiom e.g. Makkai (1972); Fernando and Flavell's (1981);

Liontas's (2002c); Simpson and Mendis's (2003); and Grant and Bauer's (2004);) all of them cast doubt, like. Fernando and Flavell (1981, p. 17) on the possibility of having a single definition that may *clearly* show what idiomaticity, in general, is by stating that "perhaps idiomaticity is too complex and pervasive to be captured within the narrow confines of a single definition."

More specifically, Liontas (2002: p. 60) maintains "one of the thorniest issues in idiom research has been the question of how to define *idiom*." In a similar vein, Simpson and Mendis (2003: p. 426) point out that, "as almost all researchers of idioms have noted, defining the phenomenon [i.e., idiom] to be studied is indeed problematic." Furthermore, Grant and Bauer (2004: p. 38) perceive many of the current definitions of an idiom as "descriptions," rather than "definitions." They also describe many of the definitions available in the literature as being "not well-formulated" because they are based on general criteria (e.g., *non-compositionality*) that firstly need to "be clearly defined." Other researchers e.g., (Cruse, 1995; Makkai, 1972; Moon, 1997) also admit how problematic it is to define idioms.

The problem of defining idioms is described by Moon (1997: p. 43) in the following observation:

there are many different forms of multi-word items, and the fields of lexicology and idiomatology have generated an unruly collection of names for them, with confusing results... there is no generally agreed set of terms, definitions and categories in us.

Echoing Moon's observation, Grant and Bauer (2004: p. 40) express their dissatisfaction with the available definitions of idiom by maintaining that "the unspecific definition of an idiom has led to the term 'idiom' encompassing a large 'variety of different types of MWU [multi-word units]." Similarly, Liontas (2002: p. 60) observes that *idiom* has been a "cover term"

for a number of expressions and words. Because of the difficult task of defining an idiom, researchers often tend to:

1. Use a definition in a relatively narrow sense," as Moon did (1997: p. 46), since definitions of idiom appear in the literature with different meanings (*ibid.*);
2. Adopt a working definition when the purpose of their study is not particularly concerned with defining idioms (Abdullah & Jackson, 1999; Simpson & Mendis, 2003);
3. Resort to a "*tentative*" definition as Carter (2000: p. 66) does;
4. Provide examples of what they mean by the term *idiom*, without explicitly stating a definition of that term (Liontas, 2002 :p .12).

The problem of defining idioms seems to stem from the different models and criteria adopted to reach such a definition, which is discussed in some detail in the following section.

2.3 Definitions of the Idiomatic Expressions

Although there is no general agreement on the exact definition of idiomatic expressions, Many attempts have been made to define this term 'idiomatic expression. So, in this section the researcher provides definitions of idioms that are understood and defined by linguists, then there will be a focus on idioms as they given in dictionaries. According to Moon (1997: 46) "idioms are a very complex group: not least because the term 'idiom' frequently occurs in the literature with a variety of different meanings." Liontas(2002: 59) touches on the same point, observing that:

The problem with idiomaticity today is that there are too many definitions for the cover term idiom to be of any practical use to second language acquisition researchers and language-teaching professionals working in second/foreign languages and applied linguistics.

According to Fernando and Flavell (1981: p.7), adopting that criterion alone or any other single criterion in order to define idioms leads to the

problem of having a definition that does not seem to help linguists identify a sample of language elements as *idioms*. This is due to two reasons: first, English, if indeed not all languages, is full of different sorts of peculiarities, semantic, syntactic and pragmatic. That is, much disagreement might arise when it comes to defining an idiom by using the criterion of peculiarity, a semantic, syntactic or pragmatic violation. Second, most English idioms are grammatically well- formed (Cruse, 1995). Definitions of idiom based on peculiarity are considered the "earlier" (Fernando & Flavell, 1981, p.1) or the "classic" (Liontas, 2002c, p. 60) definitions of idiom.

Another earlier view of idiom is preserved in Hockett's "extreme" definition of idiom, as Liontas described it (2002: p. 61). *It is extreme in the sense that it qualifies every morpheme to be an idiom.* Hockett (as cited in Makkai, 1972:p.28) defines *idiom* in the following way:

Let us momentarily use the term Y for any grammatical form the meaning of I which is not deducible from its structure. Any Y. in an occurrence in which it is not a constituent of a larger Y, is an idiom. A vast number of composite forms in any language are idioms. If we are to be consistent in our use of the definition, we are forced also to grant every morpheme idiomatic status, save when it is occurring as a constituent of a larger idiom, since a morpheme has no structure from which its meaning could be deduced.

This definition, once again, does not seem to help identify a specific sample of language as idioms. Nonetheless, Hockett's-definition, as Fernando and Flavell (1981) point out, is an insightful one as it highlights the role of context in identifying idioms.

Moreover, Hockett's definition shares the focus on *non-compositionality* that many recently offered definitions of idiom have (cf. Bortfeld, 2003). *Non-compositionality* may be defined as "the degree to which a multi-word item cannot be interpreted on a word-by-word basis, but has a specialized

unitary meaning" (Moon, 2002, p.44). Non-compositionality appears frequently in the traditional (or classic) definitions of idiom. Cruse (1995, p.37) states that "a traditional definition of idiom runs roughly as follows: an idiom is an expression whose meaning cannot be inferred from the meaning of its parts." Indeed, non-compositionality seems to be the criterion on which most of the definitions of idiom are based, not only the traditional ones. A number of scholars share this position; for instance, Liontas (2002:p.59) takes this position by observing that "it suffices to say that today a majority of researchers has reached the consensus that idioms are, by nature, semantically non compositional." Likewise, Moon (2002: p.47) notes that "idioms rate highly in terms of non-compositionality." Furthermore, Grant and Bauer (2004) touch on the same point, "idioms are widely defined as being non-compositional." With a focus on non-compositionality, Moon (2002:p. 64) defines idioms as:

items which are not the sum of their parts: they have holistic meanings which cannot be retrieved from the individual meanings of the component of words. Idioms are typically metaphorical in historical or etymological terms.

In addition, Moon's definition of idiom, in her introduction to *Collin's Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms* (Moon, 2002, p. v), still maintains the focus on non-compositionality, but that definition is also supported with other criteria; namely, peculiarity, metaphoricity and lexical complexity (i.e., idiom as a multi-word item).

Moon defines *idiom* as follows:

An idiom is a special kind of phrase. It is a group of words which have different meaning when used together from the one it would have if the meaning of each word were taken individually. If you do not know that the words have a special meaning together, you may misinterpret what someone is saying. Idioms are typically metaphorical.

As Moon does, Grant and Bauer (2004:p.38) adopt the criterion of no compositionality to define "core idioms" but in the form of a tri-criterion test. A "core idiom," according to the authors, is "a multi-word, non-compositional and nonfigurative item." By "non-figurative" Grant and Bauer mean "the 'figure' does not give the correct meaning of the MWU" (p. 51). As can be seen from Moon's and Grant and Sauer's definitions, among others', idioms are not only considered non-compositional but an idiom is also defined based on its being lexically complex (i.e., it consists of more than one word).

Cruse (1995: p. 37) maintains the following: "fortunately it is possible to define an idiom precisely and non-circularly using the notion of semantic constituent." As such, Cruse defines, or to use his term *characterizes*, an idiom "as a lexical complex which is semantically simplex" (*ibid.*). Thus, according to Cruse (*ibid.*) an idiom needs to be lexically complex and non-compositional; that is, "it should consist of more than one flexical constituent; second, that it should be a single minimal semantic constituent."

Cruse's examples of what is usually described as idioms include *to pull someone's leg* and *up the creek* (*ibid.*). Cruse's definition is reminiscent of WEUDEL (1996) definition, cited above, which characterizes an idiom as a group of constituents that is not a part of a larger constituent.

Lexical complexity as a distinguishing feature of idioms is indeed prevalent in the various definitions of idiom (Abdullah & Jackson, 1999; Carter, 2000; Cowie & Mackin, 1975; Crystal, 1993; Makkai, 1972; Simpson & Mendis, 2003). Almost exactly, Cowie and Mackin (1975) define idioms as Cruse (1995) does. According to Cowie and Mackin (p. viii), an idiom is "a combination of two or more words which function as a unit of meaning." Although Cowie and Mackin's and Cruse's definitions of idiom, based only on the two criteria of lexical complexity and non-compositionality, show how significant these two criteria are for identifying idioms, there are other criteria in the literature used for this purpose.

First, lexical complexity is closely related to fixedness (fixity or frozenness);

second, non-compositionality is closely related to institutionalization. The criteria of fixedness and institutionalization help distinguish idioms from other phenomena such as metaphor (Cruse, 1995; Fernando & Flavell, 1981; Moon, 2002 for details on the distinction).

According to Carter's definition (2000: p.66), idioms are fixed complex lexemes, "on-substitutable or fixed collocations." Moreover, Crystal (1993: P.34) comments on the fixity of idioms in the following way: "from a syntactic viewpoint, the words [of an idiom] often do not permit the usual variability they display in other contexts." For instance, *skeleton* in the idiom of *to find a skeleton in the cupboard* is always singular, whereas it can be either singular or plural if used in other contexts (e.g., *the archeologists found a skeleton/skeletons in the cave*). However, it should be borne in mind that idioms have varying degrees of fixedness (Carter, 2000; Cruse, 1995; Fernando & Flavell, 1981; Moon, 1998; Prodromou, 2003).

In addition to being fixed, idioms are institutionalized; they are, as Irujo (1986: p.288) puts it, "figurative expressions which have acquired conventionalized meanings." Fernando and Flavell (1981: p.44) defines *institutionalization* as "the regular association in a speech community of a given signification with a given syntactic unit (a compound, a phrase or a sentence), such that the resulting expression is interpreted non-literally." According to Fernando and Flavell (p. 44-45), institutionalization gives more accuracy to a particular definition of idiom by

separating items which show a peculiarity of encoding and are in addition on-literal from those that are nonce-idioms or predictable collocations. Nonce-idioms are coined and used between two or three individuals, either for the moment or for a very limited period of time such as a few days. Hockett (1958: 305) has one such example of a wife teasing her husband who incorrectly identifies as blue the colour of a blouse 'of one of

those indeterminate blue-green shades for which women have a special fancy name.' that's a nice shade of blue is then used idiomatically by the wife to indicate her husband's insensitivity to colour. 'For days thereafter, Mrs. X teases her husband by pointing to any obviously green object and saying *That's a nice shade o f blue, isn't it* (Hockett, 1958: 305).

As can be observed from the previously presented definitions, researchers usually adopt more than one criterion to define idioms. The discussion on the definitions of idiom, presented so far, emphasizes the nature of idioms as:

1. Peculiar (with the sense of syntactic, semantic or pragmatic violation of norms/rules);
2. Non-compositional;
3. Lexically complex (and fixed or semi-fixed);
4. Institutionalized.

A combination of these four criteria seems to help narrow down a set of expressions as idioms (Liontas, 2002:P. 60, holds a similar viewpoint). The current study adopts Abdullah and Jackson's (1999) working definition, which is based on the four criteria just mentioned. Abdullah and Jackson's working definition of idiom is:

an institutionalized linguistic expression that consists of at least two morphemes and involves at least one structural, semantic, or pragmatic; violation; with the purpose of conveying a message other than its literal meaning, and which is only pragmatically interpreted. The pragmatic aspect here might have the form of historical, cultural, situational or contextual information, (p. 85).

Abdullah and Jackson's sample of idioms include: *to play with fire, the straw that broke the camel's back* and *on the tip of one's tongue*.

It should be noticed that the sample of idioms employed in the current study does not include any idiomatic phrasal verbs, nor do they include

proverbs. This is a methodological decision that is based on the following rationale:

1. Following Moon (1998), Grant and Bauer (2004) exclude idiomatic phrasal verbs (and some other multi-word items) from the category of *idioms*.

According to Grant and Bauer, although many phrasal verbs are idiomatic, *"they are such a large group of MWUs that they merit separate and thorough research of their own"* (p. 39).

Simpson and Mendis (2003) express the same; opinion.

2. Idiomatic phrasal verbs have their own characteristic form (that is different from that of an idiom). A phrasal verb consists of a verb plus (a) particle(s).

3. Proverbs communicate certain teachings, or what Carter (2000, p. 68) terms "aphoristic truth," whereas idioms are not usually intended to do the same.

Fellbaum (349) idioms are a class of multi-word units

which pose a challenge to our understanding of grammar and lexis that has not yet been fully met

Also, Fernando (1996: P101) takes idoms as multiword expressions and describes idioms as "conventionalized multiword expressions that are often but not always non-literal". This rather broad understanding of an idiom is more restricted by Moon's concept of

a particular kind of unit that is fixed and semantically opaque or metaphorical, traditionally, not the sum of its parts (Moon 1998:P 4).

Glucksberg (2001:P.68) highlights the „non-logical“ nature of idioms, where it is impossible to discern the relation between the linguistic and idiomatic meaning of an idiom“. Kavka (2003) understands idioms as lexically and syntactically heterogeneous complexes which, on the one hand, work as single forms, further indivisible, and, on the other hand, appear as analysable syntactic structures, eventhough sometimes a little deviant, representing a continuum of various dimensions. Ifill (2002) refers to idioms as fixed expressions the meaning of which cannot be derived from a

combination of the meanings of their component parts. He adds that the elements that make up the idioms are limited in the kinds of variability they are able to demonstrate. Riehemann (2001:27) defines idiomatic words as

words that do not exist as independent words with the same meaning, so not all words that occur in idioms are idiomatic words in that sense.

She further states that idiomatic words can only have one of their literal meanings when they occur by themselves. Flavell (1981:24) goes as far as to claim that idioms are “anomalies of language, mavericks of the linguistic world“. Together with Fernando (1981), they view idioms as a morpho-syntactic phenomenon that manifests the asymmetry between sense and syntax. Kvetko (2009: 13) regards idioms as semantically and formally fixed expressions that may have a literal meaning in some contexts but a completely different sense in another.

According to Makkai (1972:122) idioms are

polylexonic lexemes that are made up of more than one minimal free form or word“ and that are “subject to a possible lack of understanding despite familiarity with the meanings of the components.

Tabossi and Zardon (1993:145-162) regard idioms as

strings of words whose semantic interpretation cannot be derived compositionally from the interpretation of their parts.

Sinclair (1991:172) comes up with a definition that an idiom is

a group of two or more words which are chosen together in order to produce a specific meaning or effect in speech or writing.

Another earlier view of idiom is preserved in Hockett's "extreme" definition of idiom, as Liontas described it (2002c:p. 61). It is extreme in the sense that it qualifies every morpheme to be an idiom. Hockett (as cited in Makkai, 1972, p.28) defines *idiom* in the following way:

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This definition, once again, does not seem to help identify a specific sample of language as idioms. Nonetheless, Hockett's definition, as Fernando and Flavell (1981) point out, is an insightful one as it highlights the role of context in identifying idioms.

Moreover, Hockett's definition shares the focus on *non-compositionality* that many recently offered definitions of idiom have (cf. Bortfeld, 2003). *Non-compositionality* may be defined as

the degree to which a multi-word item cannot be interpreted on a word-by-word basis, but has a specialized unitary meaning (Moon, 2002, p. 44).

Non-compositionality appears frequently in the traditional (or classic) definitions of idiom. Cruse (1995, p. 37) states that

a traditional definition of idiom runs roughly as follows: an idiom is an expression whose meaning cannot be inferred from the meaning of its parts.

Indeed, non-compositionality seems to be the criterion on which most of the definitions of idiom are based, not only the traditional ones. A number of scholars share this position; for instance, Lontas (2002: p. 59) takes this position by observing that

it suffices to say that today a majority of researchers has reached the consensus that idioms are, by nature, semantically noncompositional.

Likewise, Moon (2002: p. 47) notes that "idioms rate highly in terms of non-compositionality."

Furthermore, Grant and Bauer (2004) touch on the same point, "idioms are widely defined as being non-compositional." With a focus on non-compositionality, Moon(2002, p. 64) defines idioms as:

items which are not the sum of their parts: they have holistic meanings which cannot be retrieved from the individual meanings of the component of words. Idioms are typically metaphorical in historical or etymological terms.

Dictionaries of the English language offer two types of idiom definitions: first, idiom as a multi-word vocabulary item of the language; second, idiom as a word with other meanings. *Collins English Dictionary* (CED, 1994:p. 771) gives the following meanings of *idiom*:

1. a group of words whose meaning cannot be predicted from the meanings of the constituent words, as for example (it was raining) cats and dogs.
2. linguistic usage that is grammatical and natural to native speakers of a language.
3. the characteristic vocabulary or usage of a specific human group or subject.
4. the characteristic artistic style of an individual, school, period, etc. [C 16: from Latin idiom a peculiarity of language, from Greek; see IDIOJ.

As a multi-word item in particular, *The American Heritage Dictionary* (AMD, 1997: p. 674) defines an idiom as:

a speech form or an expression of a given language that is peculiar to itself grammatically or cannot be understood from the individual meanings of its elements, as in keep tabs on.

Asimilar definition is provided by *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (NSOED, 1993: p. 1305),

a form of expression, grammatical construction, phrase, etc., peculiar to a person or language; a phrase etc., which is understood by speakers of a particular language despite its meanings' not being predictable from that of the separate words.

This definition can be explained by the definition given in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*(OALD, 2000: p. 643);

a group of words whose meaning is different from the meanings of the individual words; 'Let the cat out of the bag' is an idiom meaning to tell a secret by mistake.

Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language (WEUDEL, 1996: p. 951) defines *idiom* as

an expression whose meaning is not predictable from the usual meanings of its constituent elements, as kick the bucket or hang one's head, or from the general grammatical rules of a language, as the table round for the table round and that is not a constituent of a larger expression of like characteristics.

Dictionary definitions of *idiom* as a multi-word item, such as the ones provided above, characterize *idiom* by its peculiarity, a characteristic reflected in Baugh and Cable's (1993: p.12) definition in their work that was first published in 1957: "a form of expression peculiar to one language." Peculiarity may refer to violation of linguistic norms or rules (Abdullah & Jackson p. 16).

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1976: P 533) gives the following definition: *idiom* is a

peculiarity of phraseology approved by usage though having meaning not deducible from those of the separate words.

A more detailed description is given in Webster's New World Dictionary (1997:P 670): idiom is

a phrase, construction, or expression that is recognized as a unit in the usage of a given language and either differs from the usual syntactic patterns or has a meaning that differs from the literal meaning of its parts taken together.

Online Oxford English Dictionary defines an idiom as a group of words established by usage and having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words.

The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language (crystal, David 1996: p163) relates to an idiom as an expression the meaning of which "cannot be deduced by examining the meanings of the constituent lexemes", the expression being both grammatically and lexically fixed.

Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms (1998:vii) suggests that one of the problems with idioms is that it is often impossible to guess the meaning of an idiom from the words that it contains, emphasizing the fact that idioms often have a stronger meaning than non-idiomatic phrases.

Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary (1995) describes an idiom as a group of words, which when used together in a particular combination, have a different meaning from the one they would have if the meaning of all the individual words in the group was taken.

To sum up, dictionaries provide rather general and brief descriptions of idioms. Linguistic works, on the other hand, which specialize in this particular field of idioms, take into consideration various aspects of idioms and thus can appear to be more descriptive.

2.4 Nature of Idioms

A closer look at the nature of idioms will show clearly the situations surrounding the existence of idioms. Of course, the business of this subtitle will include the behaviour of idioms and reasons for such behaviour via its

disposition to other aspects of syntactic constituents. We shall first examine Wales(1989:51) view thus:

idioms most usually denote phrases or strings of words which are idiosyncratic(idiomatic) in that they are language specific not easily translated into another language and in that their meaning is not easily determined from the meanings of the constitutive parts.

From his point of view, it becomes obvious that an idiom is characterized by special features which make it behave the way it does. They are untranslatable into another language and meaning is taken as whole not as constitutive parts. This exactly is what Wales emphasizes.

From another perspective, Gibbs and Nayak (1989: 305) opine that:

idioms vary regarding the extent to which the meaning of their individual constituent contribute to the overall figurative interpretation and [also] vary in their degree of compositionality (analyzability) and people have strong intuitions enabling them to judge an idiom as being decomposable or non-decomposable.

Here, we can observe that all idioms do not display or show themselves in the same way as regards the contribution of individual words to the idiomatic interpretation. Sometimes, some words point as arrows to the figurative meaning but most often are arbitrarily. This situation paves way for the second aspect of Gibbs and Nayak view that idioms vary in their degree of compositionality. And that is why people can make different intuitions about different idioms. Analyzable idioms are easier to acquire, understand and modify. In other words, analyzable idioms are easier for children to acquire and faster for adults to process.

This situation is very typical of idioms because of the verifiable complex nature of their existence.

In a try to display the varied nature of idioms Villavicencio et al (2005:3) have this to say:

even though some idioms are fixed, and do not present internal variation, such as adhoc there is a large proportion of idioms that allow different degrees of internal variability and with a variable number of elements.

From this view, it is obvious that idioms behave differently, while some allow for internal modifications and topicalization and so on while others do not. This has endemically posed a lot of problem to users of English idioms especially second language users. Here, it becomes obvious that the standard belief that idioms are long words with the internal semantics of their constituents playing no role during processing is inconsistent. Levorato in Gibbs and Nayak (1989:306) goes further that

the relationship between an idioms form and meaning is not completely arbitrary is consistent in general research.

This shows that idioms have a complex nature in terms of form, that is, the structure is not fixed in the meaning which also is not based on the constitutive parts. This implies that the form of an idiom has little or nothing to do with the interpretation or meaning of that idiomatic structure thereby denoting a level of arbitrariness at all times. Also important to note here is the standard belief that idioms are long words with the internal semantics of their constituents playing no role during processing is inconsistent. This goes a long way to reflect the complexity and arbitrariness in idioms.

It is obvious about the nature of idioms is the fact that it defies logic as is conventional of other levels of linguistic representation. Ifill (2002:2) asserts thus

if natural language had been designed by a logician, idioms would not exist.” For this reason, it has-been crying out for explanations as this situation has made it difficult for appreciation or processing of idioms. However, idioms have

continued to exist with many theorist of language seeking an explanation for the behaviour of idioms even though it defies logic.

Ifill (2002:3) notes, that :

idioms are fixed expressions to the extent that the elements which make up the idioms are limited in the kinds of variability they are able to demonstrate.

They differ immensely from literal expression and must be taken as a whole for processing of meaning rather than the combination of the meanings of its component parts. However, there is limit to its fixedness and variability. Some idioms are fixed, and don't present internal variations while a large proportion of idioms allow different degrees of internal variability. The degree of fixedness points to some kind of internal structure existing for idioms from where we can see a split in the type of structure. This is the transparent and non – transparent idiom, which are in other words called opaque and non – opaque idioms.

Villavicencio et al (2005:5) give a supportive insight that

idioms are commonly thought as metaphors that have become fixed or fossilized over time while in some cases the metaphor is transparent and can be easily understood even by non-native speakers.

In such cases where the metaphor is opaque and the idiom is not known by the hearer it can lead to misinterpretation. Nunberg et al (1974:55) in a similar submission assert that:

idioms are a highly heterogeneous kind of multiword expression, ranging from (semi-) fixed cases which only allow morphological inflection, to more flexible one which can undergo different types of syntactic variation and modification.

This shows that an idiom does not have a steady or fixed behaviour enables idioms to yield to some other features like passivisation, variable structure and so on.

Fowler (1970:73) in his own view about the nature of idioms notes:

grammar and idiom are independent categories, being applicable to the same material; they sometimes agree and sometimes disagree about particular specimens of it. The most that can be said is that what is idiomatic is far more often grammatical than ungrammatical, but this is worth saying, because grammar and idioms are incompatibles. The fact is that they are distinct but usually in alliance.

Leggett et al. (1961:299) supports this when he says,

many idioms have unusual grammatical construction and make little sense if taken literally.

In most situations, idioms are not measured or analyzed by the conventions of grammar. They are seen as distinct components and with peculiarity depending on their situation. Bolaji (2004: 578) reflects on the nature of idioms in a little different perspective thus:

the semantic unity of idioms is usually so complete that they typically enter into meaning relations (including collocations) like single lexical items, regardless of their grammatical form or function.

Obviously, the emphasis is centred on the meaning of idiom dependent on the whole rather than the constitutive parts. Also clear in his explanation is the fact that grammatical forms do not affect its corporate existence. In other words, it defies some grammatical conventions as already noted. Gowers (1973:241) notes that when anything in his book is called ‘good English’, ‘idioms’ or ‘idiomatic’, “what is meant is that usage has established it as correct”. Idiom does not conflict with grammar or logic. It is usually

grammatically and logically neutral. From this perspective, it is basic that the nature of idioms requires no judgment or criticism as to its syntactical or compositional structure or status. What is known to be an idiom remains one irrespective of logical or grammatical conflict. In other words, if logic and grammar get in its way, so much the worse for logic and grammar. Logan in Gowers statement of substantiality notes further,

plainly a language which was all idiom and unreason would be impossible as an instrument of thought, but all languages permit the existence of a certain number of illogical expressions: and the fact that, in spite of their vulgar origin and illiterate appearance, they have succeeded in elbowing their way into our prose and poetry, and even learned lexicons and grammars, is proof that they perform a necessary function in the domestic economy of speech.

This goes a long way to substantiate that naturally idiom has come to be part of language irrespective of its conventionalized situation.

2.5 Peculiarity of Idioms

Peculiarity according to Longman English Dictionary means *something that is a feature of only one peculiar place, person, situation etc.*

To this point, it is obvious that some of the peculiarities of idiomatic expressions have been mentioned in the analysis of the nature of idioms. However, this sub-topic shall be concerned with features that are specific to idioms. Let us look at the contributions of different scholars in this aspect.

Leggett et al (1961:298) sees idiom as “*an expression established by usage and peculiar to a particular language.*” The modality of usage of idiom is based on the context of form and existence.

Pulman (1986:3) in his own contribution notes that

the components of idiom have literal meanings but that these are not what is involved in their interpretation as an idiom

[especially the idioms] known or characterized (metaphorically) as a frozen or dead metaphor one cannot arrive at an appropriate meaning for it by processing it as a metaphor.

He further asserts that

idioms have several meanings (or one radically under determined one) the correct one which can only be determined in the context of the idiom. And also perhaps the components do not in isolation have a meaning distinct from their occurrence in the idiom.(ibid)

Gowers (1973:242) asserts that an idiom is defined by the (Oxford English Dictionary) O.E.D as “a peculiarity of phraseology approved by usage and often having meaning other than its logic or grammatical one.” The emphasis on usage is mentioned here as well which implies that idiom defies other conventions or conditions except the condition of use. Usage remains the core determinant in the existence of idioms. He continues that what is meant by idiomatic is that usage has established it as correct. Of course, an idiom by this situation is not subjected to logic. Rather it is usually grammatically and logically neutral.

Loreto and Ian (1986:413) believe that

idiom comprehends the specific characteristics of language, dialect or speech community. Idiom is not based on logic, nor is it the same in two languages or indeed in the same language at different times in its history. It may comprehend the syntactic, lexical and semantic idiosyncrasies of a language and seems to be learnt as we absorb the custom and conventions of our society.

It is clearly from this perspective that idioms adapt to a particular behaviour suitable to it in that language. For them, idioms of English are conventions, habits and peculiarities that allow speakers of English to express

their aspirations, fears, ideals, prejudices and occupations in a unique manner. In a further explanation, they make it clear that idioms can be very opaque (i.e. there is no resemblance whatsoever between the meaning of the idiom and the meaning of the individual word).

Fowler (1970:73) draws the same line of thought when he says that

the most that can be said (about idioms) is that what is idiomatic is far more often grammatical than ungrammatical, but this is worth saying, because grammar and idiom are incompatibles. The fact is that they are distinct but usually in alliance.

In the same way Longman Dictionary of English Idioms notes that

almost all idiomatic phrases fail in one way or another to permit the usual grammatical operations which literal phrases will permit.

The emphasis has continued to insist on the fact that an idiom is established by usage and preferred for different purposes of making expression to produce the desired effect. Bolaji (2004:579) points out that

idiom is a special class of collocations which can be particularly difficult for the non-native learners. They can be particularly difficult because they are collocations whose meanings cannot be deduced from the meanings of the individual collocates in them, and so have to be learnt as wholes.

Here emphasis is on its peculiarity (special class) because meaning can only be learnt as a whole rather than the individual collocations or constituents. Also stressed is the fact that an idiom is particularly difficult especially to non-native learners of which the second language users are very much inclusive.

Vivanco (1986:24) sees idioms from the perspective that they

are lexical units bigger than words and are characterized in different ways. Notably there is much support to the view that even idioms are stored as constituents in the mental lexicon.

This actually shows the extent to which idioms should be approached. It should by this situation be acquired as a strange lexical item. As such, it implies that they peculiarly behave like lexicon and may be approached or appreciated in the same way.

Furthermore, Vivanco emphasizes that idioms are not so syntactically independent because they cannot always work as full sentences, but as part of it. They are unlike proverbs, which represent a complete piece of information because they can work as sentence. In most cases, idioms are used as words, phrases and clauses but rarely used as sentences. It is far from having a static nature since it can be said that an idiom is peculiarly unstable in form.

2.6 Features of Idioms

This sub-topic is closely related to the nature of idioms already treated but for clarity and detail appreciation of idioms' behaviour we decided to examine further the contribution of scholars in this area.

Pulman (1986:1) asserts that

what idioms have in common with other fixed elements is that their meanings are not deducible from the ordinary meaning of their components by the usual rules of compositional semantics.

This points to the fact that one of the commonest features of idioms is its fixity in terms of deduction of meaning.

Pulman notes again that “idioms are pervasive in all styles of language use.” It is very clear that idioms exist in all language with varied styles. The problem is that, most times, learners especially second language learners cannot recognize them. This, Pulman, pinpoints that the problem is that unlike (most) lexical items, (most) idioms have considerable internal structure which seems to interact with the usual productive syntactic and semantic

mechanisms of language in ways that render a ‘look-up’ approach impossible in the general case.

Many idioms are used in various languages without recognition because of their peculiarity. And this has continued to pose much problem in the appreciation, use and interpretation of idioms.

Another feature emphasized by Loreto and Ian (1986:414) is that idiomatic expressions are peculiarly problematic. They state that

because there are no general rules which we can analogize about idiomatic usages, this area can present particular difficulties for learners of a language.

They emphasize that many fluent users of English especially as second language users are aware of most idiomatic expressions.

Fowler (1986:410) draws the same line of thought when he declares that

because they are not governed by rules, idioms usually cause particular difficulty for people learning to speak and write a new language.

Specifically, he notes that second language learners find it difficult to choose appropriate prepositions at a particular situation.

There are many other features of idioms which are however manifested in the different forms of idioms. From this angle, Pulman notes that some idioms can appear in syntactically variant forms while some seem to be a fairly resistant to some particular paraphrase”. Ifill in the same way notes that

we see a division between transparent idioms whose syntactic structure is the same as their counterparts and opaque ones whose syntactic structure is different from their counterparts.

Obviously, this division, to a large extent, dictates how the idioms behave as well as how they are characterized. Pulman (1986:8) introduces another feature taking cognizance of the said variation when he says that

they are in the main capable of internal modification, that is, the components of the idioms which are being modified.” Ifill (2002:17) also notes that “ another way that idioms can show variability from frozen form is through modification.

However, Gazdar 1985 in Ifill (2002:15) points out that

the idioms in which modification works are transparent, so their elements correspond to the elements of the non-idiomatic reading.

In this case, it is remarkable that the modification that works in the idioms make sense with the non-idiomatic paraphrases. Individual words within an idiom can also accept modifications but there are limits as to which ones can. Sometimes when modification occurs, the resultant effect is idiom breaking. Ifill (2002:18) supports this briefly when he says,

the fixedness of idioms is a quality which not only characterizes them, but can fit in with a view of idioms as internally structural lexical items.

The issue of fixedness is not contestable; hence, it is a feature that shows idioms as having an internal structure. The point is that, most cases, individual words in an idiom cannot be replaced by synonyms and still retains the idiomatic reading of the phrase fixed forms. It is for these situations that we can rarely find words for substitution, nominalization, comparatives or superlatives and change of number. Examples are shown below:

Kick the bucket	correct
Hit the bucket	Wrong
Bite the dust	Correct
Biting of the dust	Wrong
One in blue moon	correct
Once in a bluer moon	Wrong
Raining cats and dogs	correct
Raining a cat and a dog	Wrong

A portion of idioms allows different degrees of internal variability.

2.7 Structure of Idioms

Structure according to Trask (1993:263) refers to

the set of syntagmatic relations holding among the elements of a sentence or some, in other words, the particular way those elements are put together to make up that sentence or subpart.

In a simpler form, it is the sequence of linguistic units that are in a certain relationship to one another. In examination of the structure of idioms, we take a closer look at the views of scholars as it bothers on the relationship of collocations of idioms to other parts of the sentence or passage. Gibbs (1993:29) in Ifill 2002 points out that

idiomatic language is remarkably complex and each phrase demands its own analysis in terms of its syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and conceptual properties.

Following this assertion, Ifill (2002) affirms that

this analysis is valuable, as it presents a minimal structure that seems to be common to all idioms.

These lines of thought obviously show that an examination of the study of the structure of idioms is important for the understanding of the nature and behaviour of idiom, figurative language and finally, of language itself. Ifill (2002:2) argues that

idioms are not frozen structure less atoms - they do not have significant internal structure, which is responsible for much of their behaviour. This structure consists of a relationship between the syntax of the idiomatic phrase and the idioms literal meaning (which will then give us a division into two types of idioms) as well as a continuity claim of head to dependent relations within idioms.

Jackendoff (1997) and Gazdaretal (1985) in Ifill (2002:11) support this when they suggested that

some idioms seem to have a more transparent structure than others.

In other words, certain idioms seem to closely resemble their non-idiomatic counterparts syntactically. These transparent idioms can be passivized. The syntax of the non-idiomatic version of the phrase directly maps to the syntax of the idiomatic phrase. They are made up of the same component structure in each phrase.

For example, *spill the beans* means *reveal the secret*

Lay one's card on the table means *making one's feeling known*.

The two examples show that the idiomatic version corresponds with the non-idiomatic counterpart syntactically.

On the other hand, non-transparent idioms are syntactically vague, the elements of this form of idioms do not have a one -to -one mapping with the elements of the phrase's actual non-idiomatic meaning. For example,

Idiomatic	non-idiomatic
Kick the bucket	die.
Bite the dust	to die or become ill.

In the above example, the idiomatic versions do not have one-to-one corresponding mapping with the non-idiomatic counterpart.

Jackendoff (1997) in Ifill argues further one consequence of admitting idioms to the lexicon is that it permits them to have internal structure of some kind. If an idiom is a phrasal list, it represents a linguistics unit – it will have internal linguistic structure: syntax, semantics, morphology (and) phonology. From this, he tries to justify that phrasal lexicon is by definition a phrase and will have the same linguistic make up. He tries also to show that examining to what extent idiom is fixed is a straightforward way of showing that idioms are atomic units, which have internal structure. He gave several examples of differences in the conjugation of verbs in idioms as evidence which indicates

that idioms must have an internal structure. Bolaji (2004: 577) indirectly supports the above and thinks that the semantic unity (of idiom) is usually so complete that they typically enter into meaning relations (including collocations) like single lexical items, and are therefore generally treated as a single lexical items, regardless of their grammatical form or function.

The issue of single lexical item is the same as argued by Jackendoff, which is clearly reflected here. Makkai (1992) in Ifill (2002:7) worked with a model of idioms which described levels of frozenness, and those idioms which were classified as completely frozen exhibit this kind of behaviour as shown by Jackendoff. This implies that there are some contradictions in what is regarded as fixed or frozen atomic units. However, it has been widely noted that individual words in an idiom cannot be replaced by synonyms and still retain the idiomatic reading of the phrase and this is what qualifies them as fixed forms. In other words, the fixed quality of idioms is comparable to individual morphemes in words being non-interchangeable.

Zeavatt (1995: 34) in Ifill asserts that,

if phrasal idioms are fully lexical, then perhaps it is this same mechanism that keeps them fixed.

This does not support the notion that idioms are frozen atomic linguistic unit; but only goes a long way to establish the fact that the words of the idioms are fixed and this is a criterion that makes them idioms in the first place. However, he clarifies that

if idioms are really listemes, then it makes sense that they will have an analogous structure, in terms of fixedness to their companions in the lexicon, individual words.

And just as words can have internal structure, so can idioms. Gazdaretal (1985) in Ifill (2002:13) states that

some idioms, it seems, can accommodate interchangeable synonyms (or closely related words with different senses).

He confirmed that

the idea of lexical variability also points to some kind of internal structure if the individual parts of idioms are allowed to behave as individuals.

He further notes that multiple levels of representation are at work with the idioms and with the phonological and semantic levels playing their distinct roles.

Abelle (1985) in Ifill (2002:5) studied French idioms using Lexicalized Tree Adjoining Grammar, and argued that an idiom's syntactic structure is not fully predictable from its semantic representation. However, Ifill (2002:3) notes that

even when idioms are studied within these theories they still must have structure, and this paper argues for what must be the minimal structural requirements of idioms in any theory of syntax.

This obviously, for him, shows that idioms must always have structure irrespective of its form.

To sum up, the issue of structure of idioms seems to be proved on the basis of its status as lexical, as well with the quality that it can accommodate interchangeable synonyms, exhibit levels of frozenness and that some have more transparent structures than others. Categorically, one would subscribe to the existence of structure in idioms based on the adduced arguments.

Pulman (1986:2) elaborates it thus:

the problem is that unlike (most) lexical items, (most) idioms have considerable internal structure which seems to interact with the usual productive syntactic and semantic mechanisms of a language in ways that render a 'look up' approach impossible in general case.

In other words, for a grammatical theory not to be found wanting in some crucial respect, it must allow for the interaction of the internal structure of idioms. However, it has been a major argument which has always been in favour of interaction of internal structure of the idioms in all theories of grammar.

2.8 Classification of Idioms

There is a variety of criteria according to which idioms can be classified. Kvetko (1996: 21) points to many different aspects that need to be taken into consideration in an attempt to carry out an overall classification. He mentions the semantic and constructional point of view, fixedness and variability, function, stylistics and etymology. However, the understanding of idioms by particular linguists varies and therefore different categorizations arise.

With regard to the compositionality of idioms Glucksberg (2001:73) offers the following division:

- 1- **Non-compositional idioms** – there are no relations between the idiom's constituents and the idiom's meaning cannot be discerned
- 2- **Partially compositional idioms** – there are some relationships between an idiom's constituents and its idiomatic meaning can be discerned and exploited
- 3- **Fully compositional idioms** – the constituents correspond directly with their idiomatic referents.

Cacciari (1993:35), following the same criteria, distinguishes among:

- 1- **Normaly decomposable idioms** that are analyzable and imply conventions whereby each of the idiom's constituents can be used to refer to the idiomatic referent, e.g. (*break the ice, pop the question*)
- 2- **Abnormally decomposable idioms** where we are able to identify this relation only by virtue of conventional metaphors that govern the mapping from constituents to idiomatic meanings, e.g. (*hit the ceiling, throw in the sponge*)
- 3- **Non decomposable idioms** that represent the group of opaque idioms

Kavka (2003:14), however, sees the concept of compositionality in a different light. He considers free combinations as compositional, collocations as semi-compositional and idioms proper as non-compositional.

Based on the level of transparency, idioms can be classified according to the extent to which the meaning of an idiom can be derived from the meaning of its particular constituents. Glucksberg (2001:74) refers to:

- 1- **Opaque idioms** - where the relations between an idiom's constituents and its meaning may be opaque, but the meanings of individual words can nevertheless constrain both interpretation and use
- 2- **Transparent idioms** - where there are one-to-one semantic relations between the idiom's constituents and components of the idiom's meaning.

Furthermore, Glucksberg (2001:75) introduces a quasi-metaphorical type of idiom, the meaning of which is conveyed through its allusion content. These idioms refer to an ideal exemplar of a concept providing at the same time a characterization of an event or situation as an instance of that concept. The notion of the continuum from opacity to transparency leads Cacciari (1993:39) to come up with the following division of idioms:

- 1- **Totally opaque idioms**
- 2- **Retrospectively transparent idioms** – they become transparent once the speaker either knows the meaning or is reminded of the episode or setting that originated the idiom
- 3- **Directly transparent idioms** – the senses of the words lead the speaker to the idiomatic meaning of the string (e.g. by means of the recreation of an analogical or metaphorical mapping)
- 4- **Figuratively transparent idioms** – they are composed of other idioms, or parts that appear in other idioms or as metaphorical devices

Makkai (1972:122) identifies two major types of idioms: encoding and decoding. Idioms of encoding compel the speaker to conform to a particular conventionalized way of speaking while retaining a relatively transparent

interpretation, whereas the meaning of idioms of decoding is not so predictable. Idioms of decoding are classified as lexemic and Semitic (Makkai 1972:122). He defines lexemic idioms as “any polylexonic lexeme which is made up of more than one minimal free form or (morphological) word, each lexon of which can occur in other environments as the realization of a monolexonic lexeme“.

According to Makkai, the lexemic idioms include:

- 1- **Phrasal verbs** – the constituent structure of this type of idiom is always verb + adverb
- 2- **Tournure idioms** – consist at least of three lexemes, having a compulsory *it* in a fixed position between the verb and the adverb (Makkai 1972: 148)
- 3- **Irreversible binominal idioms** – defined as a formula consisting of parts A and B the order of which cannot be reversed (Makkai 1972: 155)
- 4- **Phrasal compound idioms**
- 5- **Pseudo-idioms** – all lexemic idioms one of whose constituents is a fossilized term that does not make any sense on its own, such as *spic and span* (Makkai 1972: 169)

On the other hand, sememic idioms are considered to be of a higher and more abstract linguistic level. They correlate with institutionalized culturally pragmatic meanings and their purpose is mainly to express culture-bound notions, such as politeness, understatement etc. Makkai (1972: 172) goes as far as to distinguish idioms of institutionalized politeness, detachment or indirectness, idioms of greetings and proposals encoded as questions.

Taking into account the notion of invariability, Fernando (1981:32) offers a classification of idiomatic expressions as follows:

- 1- **Pure idioms** – conventionalized, non-literal multiword expressions, the non-literal meaning is imposed on the idiom as a whole, e.g. *spill the beans*.

- 2- **Semi-literal idioms** – include one or more literal constituents where at least one has a non-literal sub sense, e.g. *foot the bill*
- 3- **Literal idioms** – meet the essential criterion for idioms, which is invariability or restricted variation, they are less semantically complex than pure and semi-idioms, e.g. *on foot, on the contrary*

In accordance with classification based on idiomatic classes, idioms can be divided into sentential and non-sentential (sayings and proverbs). The division can go even further sorting the idioms into verbal and verb less idioms, the latter ones being mainly nominal, adjectival and adverbial idioms (Kvetko2009: 37).

Cowie's (1998:28) classification focuses not only on the syntactical and semantic features of phrasemes, but also on their pragmatic aspect, which indicates that the choice of an appropriate meaning of a lexical unit is reduced to one possibility only. Thus the ready-made expressions like greetings, conversational formulae, proverbs, clichés or sayings, despite being semantically and syntactically compositional, are considered to be non-compositional pragmatically, being restricted to particular social or cultural concepts. In this respect Cowie (1998:29) introduces pragmatic phrasemes or pragmatemes as opposed to the semantic phrasemes whose components are selectionally constrained or restricted by linguistic convention. He sets up three categories within semantic phrasemes that constitute:

- 1- Full phrasemes, or idioms – e.g. *shoot the breeze, pull sb's leg*.
- 2- Semi-phrasemes, or collocations – e.g. *crack a joke, give an ultimatum, launch an attack*.
- 3- Quasi-phrasemes, or quasi-idioms – e.g. *give the breast to sb., start a family*.

2.9 Idioms and Other Aspects of the Language

Any kind of language is not always appropriate in all occasions. In case where a writer or a speaker uses idiomatic language, s/he usually focuses attention on his shared cultural beliefs with the members of his/her

community, and the kind of audience his speech is directed to. In this respect, s/he knows that it is not at ease to deliver a message using figurative language, and to have the same effect on the target reader as it is in the SL. This is mainly because unawareness of the connotations of a given expression or phrase may cause serious problems for those people being addressed. Idioms are also different and each one has a specific context to occur in. Standard idioms for example, are suitable for formal situations, while slang and informal ones are used in normal situations. Native speakers of a language can easily know the different uses of idioms and avoid the pitfalls of inappropriate ones. In case of non-native speakers, it will be better for them to learn idioms of the language the way they learn its other vocabularies, and try to master their appropriate contextual uses.

Idioms' uses, however, are highly related to the functions they fulfil in discourse.

Therefore, Fernando (1996:1) provides three functional uses of idioms. For him, an idiom can be ideational, interpersonal or relational.

- Ideational idioms carry specific experiential representation like for example, "bread and butter" (a simple bread and butter issue).
- Interpersonal idioms are those ones that represent an exchange between a speaker and a listener in a particular discourse, as when expressing conviviality in "bless you" and disagreement in "go to hell".
- Relational idioms aim at connecting different parts of discourse to achieve cohesion and coherence like for example, "in sum", "on the other hand" and "in addition".

According to Langacker (1968:80), "if well suited to the occasion, metaphorical use of idioms is more colourful and effective than straightforward prosaic statements."

The following are the relations between the idioms and the aspects of the language which take part in making the communication more colourful and appropriate.

2.9.1 Idioms and Metaphors

Language is a system of communication that is used by a particular community of speakers. Metaphors constitute a large part of this everyday language. They have been recognized as rhetorical devices that compare two seemingly different objects. King(2000:216) defines metaphors as *describing something by using an analogy with something quite different.*

For example, “the words are clear as crystal” is an idiom that expresses the similarity between the words and the crystal in the degree of clarity. According to King (2000:216), the ability to explain a complex vague expression making it more understandable and clear is the beauty of metaphors. Moreover, both idioms and metaphors, as Maalej (2005) states, have a power of likening .i.e. they cannot be understood if they are taken literally. The difference between the two, however, can be marked through a separate existence of a basic correlation. The latter is due to the fact that idioms in the past have an old reference which represents systematic metaphors. According to Maalej, idioms and metaphors are culture-specific aspects of a particular language, i.e., the non-existence of a direct one to one correspondence in the TL of a particular idiom in the SL is the result of culture-specific metaphors. In this respect, Maalej states:

Culture-specific metaphors are best represented in phraseology. Native language idioms and set phrases can blend together ethno-specific concepts pertaining to the world view of it speakers, to their national character, as well as their traditional social relations, thus becoming an embodiment of national dispositions and spiritual values. They are presented metaphorically indirectly and figuratively, which is why culture-specific metaphors produce idioms that have no corresponding counterparts in another language (2005: 215).

2.9.2 Idioms and Clichés

Prefabricated speech has a great extent use in performed language. Idioms, for example, which are “complex bits of frozen syntax, whose meanings are more than simply the sum of their individual parts” (Nattinger and De Carrico, 1992: 32), are considered as one feature of this type of speech. Idioms, however, are not the only kind of prefabricated speech; there are many other sorts of formulaic fixed phrases like clichés.

Clichés are similar to idioms in that, they include patterns which are relatively frozen, but they are different from them, in the sense that these patterns are usually made up of extended stretches of language. Clichés like “there is no doubt about it” a good time was had by all and “have a nice day differs also from idioms in the way that they are easily understandable from the meaning of their individual constituents. In contrast to idioms, which are often learnt as a single unit without taking into, account the meaning of their parts(ibid.).

2.9.3 Idioms and Proverbs

Like idioms, proverbs “are special, fixed, unchanged phrases which have special, fixed, unchanged meanings” (Ghazala, 1995:142). Proverbs, however, are different from idioms in the sense that they display shared cultural wisdom. In other words, proverbs are easily understandable and, in most cases, the speaker may utter only the first part of the proverb to express the whole meaning. Thus, “do not count your chickens” is used instead of “do not count your chickens before they have hatched”.

Although proverbs are considered as culture-specific because they are very bound to culture, many proverbs have direct equivalents in different languages. For instance, the English expression “out of sight, out of mind” has a similar proverb in Arabic Idioms and proverbs are not always transparent, and their meanings are sometimes ambiguous. Yet learners are fascinated by them since they are always intrigued with expressive colourful language.

Idioms and proverbs are also a part of figurative language that produces cultural information, and their use shows that the person is a part of that social group that uses them (Hatch and Brown, 1995:202-203).

2.9.4 Idioms and Fixed Expressions

Fixed expressions like “having said that” “as a matter of fact” “ladies and gentlemen” “as well as” and “all the best” are similar to idioms in the sense that they allow a little or no variation in form. Fixed expressions, however, are different from idioms in the way that they have almost transparent meanings. Hence, the meaning of “as a matter of fact” for example, can easily be inferred from the meaning of its constituents, in contrast to idioms like “pull a fast one” or “fill the bill” where the meaning of the whole expression is different from the meaning of its parts. But in spite of its transparency, the meaning of a fixed expression, as that of an idiom, is sometimes more than the sum meanings of its components. Similar to idioms, meeting any fixed expression brings up in the mind of the reader all the aspects of experience associated with the different contexts in which the expression is used. This feature is the leading cause to the widespread use of fixed and semi-fixed expressions in any language (Baker, 1992: 63).

2.9.5 Idioms and Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs are the most common type of idioms in English. Many of them carry idiomatic meanings that cannot be inferred from the form, unless the phrase is already known. E.g.

1. After war began, the two countries broke off diplomatic relations (discontinue).
2. Most automobile companies bring out new models each year (to show or introduce).

In addition to all these features that are important in the recognition of idioms, Baker (1992:63) identifies the grammatical and syntactic restrictions of

idioms. For her, a speaker or a writer cannot normally do any of the following with an idiom:

a. Addition: Adding any word to an idiomatic expression would alter its meaning, or remove its idiomatic sense. Thus, adding the adverb “very” to the adjective “red” in „red herring“(very red herring) affects the figurativeness of its meaning completely.

b. Deletion: Deleting the adjective “sweet “and the article “the” from the expressions “have a sweet tooth” and “spill the beans” would change totally their meanings. Hence, (have a tooth)and (spill beans) have no idiomatic sense.

c. Substitution: Idioms accept no replacement of words even if those words are synonyms. For example, “the long and short of it” means the basic facts of a situation. The adjective “long” cannot be substituted by another adjective, like tall, despite they have nearly the same meaning.

d. Modification: Any changing in the grammatical structure of an idiom leads to the destruction of the idiom’s meaning. For instance, the expression (stock and barrel lock) is no more idiomatic because of the altered order of the items in the expression “lock” stock and “barrel” completely.

e. Comparative: Adding the comparative form “er” to the adjective “hot” in the expression “be in hot water” changes the conventional sense of the idiom which has the meaning of “be in trouble”.

f. Passive: The passive form “some beans were spilled” has a different meaning from its active form “they spilled the beans “meaning “they reveal a surprise”.

All these restrictions should be taken into consideration since they affect the degree of idiomacity of lexical items, and they may remove their main feature of figurativeness.

2.9.6 Idioms Versus Collocations

There is one common underlying principle, which is based on the idea that the overall meaning of an idiom does not correspond to the combined

meanings of its components. However, Gill (1991) suggests that this criterion can apply to a wide range of phrase logical structures, such as collocations, formulaic greetings, clichés and other conventionalized expressions.

Kavka (2003:13) outlines the following distinction of the institutionalized expressions:

- 1- **Free combinations** – the meaning of the whole expression is derived by general semantic combinatorial rules from the meanings of respective elements
- 2- **Fixed combinations (collocations)** – composed of two items at least, in which the choice of one imposes restrictions on the choice of the other
- 3- **Proper idioms** – viewed generally as non-compositional

Kavka (2003:23) comes up with a distinctive feature of invariability that sets the typical idioms apart and which allows for a certain degree of variance within grammatical categories, as opposed to absolute non-variability in the syntactic sphere. Kvetko (2009: 37) offers even a more precise picture of possible variants of idioms, stating that idioms can vary on syntagmatic or paradigmatic level, as well as in terms of spelling and geographical variants.

According to Fernando (1981:31) only expressions that are conventionally fixed in a specific order and lexical form, with only a restricted set of variants, are granted the status of idioms. Idioms are also considered as types of “long words” the meaning of which can be accessed directly, without prior decomposition or analysis of the particular constituents, or through the retrieval of their stipulated meanings from the lexicon (Gibbs 1993:57).

The concept of word co-occurrence is considered to be of crucial importance in terms of language interpretation. Sinclair (1991:109) states that there are two ways how the language can be understood. The first one is that language is commonly seen as the result of a very large number of complex

choices that are restrained only by grammaticalness, being more or less a “slot-and-filler“ model. However, this way of seeing language is rather incomplete. Moreover, it is obvious that words do not occur randomly. Therefore, Sinclair (1991:110) comes up with a second concept which is called “the principle of idiom“. According to this principle, language users operate with a large number of semi-preconstructed phrases constituting single linguistic choices that are influenced and limited by register.

Cowie (1998:24) in his book *Phraseology* puts emphasis on the significance of set phrases or phraseme, claiming that people do not speak in separate words but rather in prefabricated phrases that have to be stored and used as a whole. According to him, the main substantive property of a phraseme is above all its non-compositionality that does not enable the phraseological expressions to be constructed from single words according to general lexicological rules. He even regards set phrases as the numerically predominant lexical units that outnumber words approximately ten to one, collocations making up the major part of the phraseme inventory.

2.10 Importance of Idiomatic Expressions to Language Users

worthwhile activity in the classroom? Why is it important, or perhaps even absolutely necessary, for language learners to understand idioms in the target language?

Idioms include all areas of life. Idioms include medical areas, there are color idioms, such as 'a black look' or 'be in the black', food idioms 'piece of cake', business idioms, money idioms, animal idioms and body idioms, such as 'armed to teeth' meaning 'heavily armed with deadly weapons'. (Maftonn and Mazloomi, 2005:p.31-225)

Idioms or idiomatic expressions are used in formal, informal speech and in writing. They are a part of media, standard speech in business and an essential element in education. Idiomatic expressions are part of the average native speakers vocabulary. They are an important part of native speakers language and considered to be mutually shared knowledge among English

native speakers. Thus it is important for the non-native speakers of English to be acquainted to the use of idiomatic expressions because it is an important part of their mastery of the English language.

Idiomatic use is believed to broaden peoples' comprehension and understanding in all the linguistic aspects of life. Idiomatic use is believed to increase peoples' manipulation of language. As a result, idiomatic use ought to be a part of the second-language learners (L₂) vocabulary. Students of English who effectively communicate using idiomatic expressions show a better understanding of English and they have an ability to "communicate on a deeper level of the language'. (Ambrose, 2009: 190) L₂ students can gain more vocabulary through the use of idiomatic expressions, gain a better understanding of the language, achieve more proficiency while using the L₂ or second language and sound more like native speakers because idiomatic usage is considered more natural. As it is stated by Laflin quoted by Ambrose (2009: p193) "if you keep an open mind and play your cards right, your proficiency in English will soon be something to crow about". It is necessary, therefore, that L₂ learners should be acquainted with the use of idiomatic expressions.

Many language specialists pinpoint that knowledge of idioms, that is the ability to comprehend and use them appropriately and adequately is extremely important and considered to be as an indicator of L₂ fluency and a sign of L₂ communicative competence. The ability to produce and comprehend idioms is termed as "figurative competence". Figurative competence, or the sufficient knowledge and appropriate use of idioms in a second/foreign language requires certain skills and includes the ability to produce and use idioms when engaging in communication, whether spoken or written. Thus adequate idiom knowledge leads to better L₂ fluency making second/foreign language learners more L₂ proficient. (Andreou and Galantomos, (2009:319)

2.11 Acquisition of Idioms

Swain (1993: p.159) summarizes the output hypothesis by stating that “through producing language, either spoken or written, language acquisition/ learning may occur” and that the essence of the output hypothesis lies in learners taking responsibility for their own learning. The author claims that by using the target language as frequently as possible, the intuition regarding fluency can be developed. This is true not only when learning idioms but for all educational settings, meaningful practice of linguistic resources permits “the development of automaticity in their use” (p. 159). Swain (1993) also, states that when

learners produce language they are forced to recognize what they do not know, making the gap in their knowledge base visible.

There are at least three responses that learners might have to this gap, one of them being to “identify it and pay attention to relevant input” (Ibid., p.159) which often is provided by teachers. This gives the learners an opportunity to modify their output, making collaborative activities important.

Cooper writes that an area clearly worthy of investigation is how second language learners acquire idioms. However,

most of the research on idioms has Teaching Idiomatic Expressions involved native speakers of English. Models of L₁ idiom acquisition therefore offer a starting point (1999:p. 234).

Cooper (1999: 255) states that

idiom acquisition research has uncovered a number of findings that have pedagogical implication for idiom instruction

The author mentions three competing hypotheses regarding how idioms are processed and these are developed into a systematic plan for teaching idioms in the classroom.

The first one, the *literal first hypothesis*, consists of two modes: one that processes the literal meaning and one that processes the figurative meaning of an idiom. The former is normally the active one while the latter comes into play when the literal meaning does not fit into the speech context.

The second one, the *simultaneous processing hypothesis*, claims that idioms are stored and retrieved in the mental lexicon as chunks. Literal and figurative meaning interact and the interpretation that best fits the context is sorted out.

The *direct access model* is the third one and it only makes use of the figurative meaning of an idiom. This proposes that a literal analysis of an idiomatic expression is very rare.

According to Cooper (1998: p 256) six variables important for idiom comprehension and learning have been revealed. These variables will now be presented and summarized.

The first variable concerns the age of the learner. It reconnects to Piaget's theory of cognitive development – a child moves through different stages of mental development and he or she has to reach a certain level of maturity before being able to acquire certain knowledge. Lundahl summarizes by stating that "*Think before you speak* works as an exhortation within this approach" (2009; p. 151). Cooper (1998: 256) states that

[y]oung children up to the age of about nine generally tend to interpret idioms (and other figurative expressions) literally

The second variable concerns teachers and their use of figurative language in classrooms. Idioms occupied the second place when the frequency of figurative expressions was examined, "so that by eighth grade 11.5 per cent of a teacher's utterances, or about one out of ten, contained idioms" (Ibid., p.257).

Since teachers quite frequently use idioms, they can limit learners' comprehension if they are interpreted literally.

Thirdly, the characteristics of an idiom can determine whether the acquisition of it is easy or not.

Frozen idioms are learned more quickly than flexible idioms because they are heard more frequently in only one syntactic form rather than in several and are, therefore, internalized as a single lexical item (Ibid., p. 257).

The closeness between the idiom's literal and figurative meanings (the metaphoric transparency) is also an aspect that has to be taken into account.

The fourth variable is connected to the context in which the idioms are presented. Idioms that appear in a context are easier for learners to understand since they can make use of previous information to interpret the figurative meaning.

The fifth variable is that it can be helpful to group idioms according to a theme. Cooper (1998: 258) suggests that it can be

*according to the main word they contain, such as verbs" or
"according to their underlying metaphorical themes" such as
"argument is war, e.g., I've never won an argument with him.*

The final variable concerns second language learners. Previous research has shown that idioms that were identical in the first and the target language were the easiest to comprehend and produce. Similar idioms were produced with some interference from the first language while idioms that were completely different in both languages were the hardest both to comprehend and produce. The idioms that were comprehended and produced correctly "were frequently used in everyday speech, were transparent, and [...] had simple vocabulary structure" (Ibid., p. 259).

All of these research findings on idiom acquisition have been used to create teaching suggestions and procedures.

2.12 Communicative Competence

The term of communicative competence has undergone considerable change since of its appearance and it has been influenced by such disciplines as psychology, sociology and pedagogy. Most definitions, though, agree that communicative competence involves one's linguistic

skills as well as social knowledge about what, when and how to say in certain situations. Nevertheless, since the term was used slightly differently by various scholars, it is necessary to examine it in more depth.

As communicative competence is a multifaceted construct, not surprisingly, it has been described by researchers in several ways, everyone putting the emphasis on a different aspect. Hedge (2000), for instance, forms her definition on the basis of the term 'authenticity', defining communicative competence as a concept which

sets out to involve learners in purposeful tasks which are embedded in meaningful contexts and which reflect and rehearse language as it is used authentically in the world outside the classroom (p.71).

2.12.1 The Definition of Communicative Competence

The term communicative competence was suggested by the American socio-linguist Dell Hymes in 1971. Hymes first aimed at extending a major contemporary linguist's, Chomsky's (1965) definition of the term competence claiming that learning a language should entail more than the simple memorization and application of grammatical rules. Hymes pointed out that Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance was superficial; it cannot be applied to properly describe linguistic behaviour. According to Chomsky

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitation (distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors) random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance. (1965, p.3)

Hymes, though, also called attention to the fact that Chomsky's theory only considered homogeneous speech communities, thus excluding sociocultural factors that also largely affect language acquisition and learning. As opposed to Chomsky's theory, Hymes brought the individual, not the communicative system, into focus. In Hymes's words,

It cannot be assumed that the formal possibilities of a system and individual knowledge are identical...I should take competence as the most general term for the capabilities of a person (1971, p.282) .

Hornberger agrees with Hymes in defining communicative competence as

by definition variable within individuals, across individuals and across speech communities, and includes rules of use as well as rules of grammar (Hornberger, 1989p.216).

It is clearly demonstrated in these quotes that what Hymes wanted to emphasize were the individual speaker's underlying knowledge and the understanding of patterns of use.

In his model, Hymes made a clear-cut distinction between two kinds of competence. The first, linguistic competence, concerns the production and understanding of grammatically correct utterances, whereas the second, communicative competence, involves what is appropriate or acceptable to say in a particular situation. He incorporated the twin notions of knowledge and ability into his definition of communicative competence, defining them as the

knowledge as to when to speak when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, what, where and in what manner... and the ability to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others (Hymes, 1972, p.277)

Hymans's framework, described in detail in his pioneering work " On Communicative Competence (1972)

consists of four components, possibility feasibility, appropriateness and occurrence, which he interpreted in the following way (Hymes, 1972, p.284)

- Possibility: the extent to which something is possible within the individual's linguistic system and grammatical knowledge
- Feasibility: what is achievable within the psycholinguistic capacity of the Individual
- Appropriateness: to what extent something can be considered appropriate or acceptable in a particular communicative situation
- Occurrence: to what degree something is actually done

As significant as Hymes's definition of communicative competence was, some of its elements were challenged by several academics. Cazden (2011), for instance, refuted Hymans's own parallelism between Chomsky's grammaticality and his appropriateness .She also claimed that both grammaticality and appropriateness, being "evaluative terms" (Cazden, 2011, p.367) needed criteria for distinction, which both linguists failed to provide. However, in spite of the contradictions, Hayes's framework proved to be a milestone in speaking about linguistic behaviour, and served as a basis for subsequent more elaborate communicative competence.

To sum up, communicative competence has been defined and discussed in many different ways by language scholars of different fields. After this historical overview of communicative competence, the researcher could deduce that communicative competence can be divided into five main components:

1. Linguistic competence
2. Sociolinguistic competence
3. Pragmatic competence
4. Discourse competence

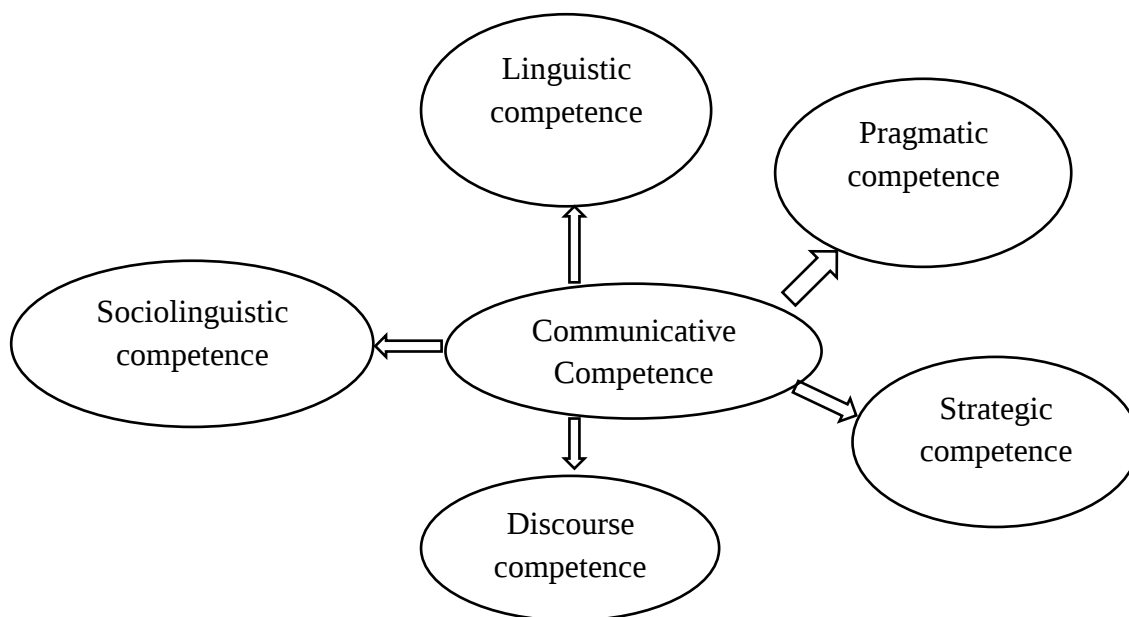
5. Strategic competence

The researcher will discuss these five components of communicative competence focusing on definition of each.

The following diagram summarizes the competences that will be discussed in this study:

Figure (2-1)

Components of Communicative Competence (done by the researcher)



2.12.2 Components of Communicative Competence

The idea of the inherent knowledge the speakers of language have of their language started off simply as linguistic competence. Today, we not only talk about linguistic or grammatical competence, but also about sociolinguistic (or even sociocultural) competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, pragmatic competence, interactional competence, among others. Let us know the components in details.

A. Linguistic Competence

Linguistic competence is also called grammatical competence. Discussing Linguistic competence would entail going back to Hymes. This is because he was the first to introduce communicative competence and to distinguish it from Chomsky's „competence“. Chomsky, the scholar to whom we credit the term „competence“ in linguistics, simply used the term as a

generic name for the totality of the knowledge the native speakers have of their language. It is therefore Hymes who says that the term could have several components within it; hence communicative competence. He says that what Chomsky defined was only grammatical competence, while leaving out the other components.

Yano (2011: p 45) says that

grammatical competence means the acquisition of phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and lexical rules in a language (211:p.31).

He further adds, “Today it is usually called linguistic competence” (211:31). It is obvious that grammatical competence is simply interested in the rules of grammar the users of language possess. This is simply the mastery of the language code – the knowledge of abstract language system. There is no doubt that the knowledge of grammar of a language is essential, as any deviation from the rules results in unacceptable utterances. When, for instance, a learner says: “I am grateful for the information you gave me”, it is the knowledge of the rules that will make a competent user frown at it. Even though there are these rules, there is also room for one to express one’s linguistic ingenuity. This happens in a first language environment as much as in an L₂ situation:

Linguistic innovations do occur in ESL. Such innovations which can be observed to deviate from the norms in English are created to reflect the new linguistic and cultural setting. They include such processes as lexical innovations, neologisms (coinage), semantic extension, use of local idioms and proverbs (Alo2003:p. 118)

This situation is what gives birth to new varieties of English, popularly known as new English. But even in this, the basic structures and rules of the language are always maintained. This underscores the place of grammatical

competence in any communicative situations. However, in as much as this is true, Canale and Swain have remarked that

“it is not clear... in what ways a theory of grammar is directly relevant for second language pedagogy” (1980:p.30).

Grammatical competence, according to them, is only important for any approach

“whose goals include providing learners with the knowledge of how to determine and express accurately the literal meaning of utterances (1980:p30).

But what should remain undoubtedly clear is that grammatical competence has to do with the knowledge of „ sounds, grammar patterns and vocabulary items in the traditional skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (Paulston1992:p. 50), and that it has a place in SLL and forms part of communicative competence.

B. Discourse Competence

There is no better reason to give for discussing grammatical competence before the others than to say that it is the “basic” of all the components. It is not basic in the sense that it is always the first to be learned, otherwise the argument about which of the competencies is to be learned or taught first would surface. So the ordering of these competencies in the present section should not be associated with how important they are. They are equally important for effective communication. That apart, discourse competence was added to the theory of communicative competence by Canale, and he says that “it is the ability to produce and interpret language beyond the sentence level” (1980 :p.3). In the words of J. Richards and R. Schmidt, discourse competence

...concerns the mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve unified spoken and written texts in different genres. By genres, is meant, the type of text for example,

oral and written narrative, an argumentative essay, a scientific report, a business letter, etc (qtd. in Canale 1983:p.9).

While grammatical competence is the knowledge of codes, discourse competence concerns itself with combining these grammatical structures to achieve meaning, cohesion and coherence in both written and oral discourse. But it has to be remarked here that the conditions of oral discourse is quite dissimilar from those of written discourse. The chief reason is that oral discourse, for example, is tied to the moment (and other factors) of its production. This is what Emile Benveniste calls the “instance of discourse” (1971: p.134). This distinction is not of interest here. However, it remains at the centre of any conceptualisation of discourse competence. Celce-Murcia argues that

Discourse competence refers to the selection, sequencing, and arrangement of words, structures, and utterances to achieve a unified spoken message. This is where the top-down communicative intent and sociocultural knowledge intersect with the lexical resources to express messages and attitudes and to create coherent [oral and written] texts. (2007:p.46).

What is obvious in the definitions above is that discourse competence seeks to achieve coherence in discourse by the proper ordering of the structures of the language. This knowledge is relevant, without which communication may break down. Celce-Murcia et al. discuss several sub-areas of discourse competence which include:

- a) cohesion: conventions regarding the use of reference, lexical chains, conjunction, etc;
- b) deixis: those features of language which refer directly to the personal, temporal or locational characteristics of the situation within which an utterance takes place, whose meaning is thus relative to that situation (Crystal 2008: p.133); this Adrian Akmajian et al. classify into two: indexicals and demonstratives (2004: p.255);

c) coherence: expressing intent through appropriate content schema and conventionally recognized means; and

d) **generic structure**: formal schemata that allow the user to identify an oral discourse segment according to their genres (Celce-Murcia *et al* 2007:p. 47)

It is obvious that discourse competence in achieving all of the above makes oral and written discourse coherent and cohesive – and this is needed for understanding to take place.

C. Sociolinguistic Competence

This is actually the component added by Dell Hymes as what distinguishes his model from Chomsky's. Canale and Swain call this sociocultural competence, quoting Hymes as saying that it is

the basis for judgments as to the appropriateness of a given utterance in a particular social context", that is, the rules that make up the structure of speaking or communication in a group and are the basis for the social meaning of any utterance (1983 :p.16).

Celce-Murcia's treatise helps to highlight the importance of this kind of competence, especially in second language learning. She says that sociocultural or sociolinguistic competence refers to

...how to express messages appropriately within the overall social and cultural context of communication. This includes knowledge of language variation with reference to sociocultural norms of the target language. In fact a social or cultural blunder can be far more serious than a linguistic error when one is engaged in oral communication. The pedagogical challenge lies in the fact that second and foreign language teachers typically have far greater awareness and knowledge of linguistic rules than they do of the sociocultural behaviours and expectations that accompany [the] use of the target language (2007:P.46).

And this is a very great challenge to language teaching and learning in L₂ situations like ours. Celce-Murcia rightly proffers a solution which is very close to this study. She says that such competence

can be acquired in part through some knowledge of the life and traditions as well as knowledge of the history and literature of the target language community (2007:P.46).

This is actually what this work seeks to highlight – that through knowledge of the life and traditions, these certainly include idiomatic expressions, of the target language and in the target language, communicative (not just sociocultural) competence can be developed or enhanced. To conclude, sociolinguistic competence includes the knowledge of what discourses or speeches go with what social relationships, what situation and what attitude. It also includes what communicative purpose these discourses or speeches carry out. From the above illustration, it is obvious that sociolinguistic competence has to do with the knowledge of how to use language codes in a way that is socially or socioculturally acceptable.

D. Pragmatic Competence

This is also called actional competence (Jasone Cenoz 2007:p.125). Some researchers (Leech 1983, Thomas 1983 and Kasper 2001) distinguish between two components of pragmatic competence: pragmalinguistic competence “knowledge for mappings of form, meaning, force and context” (Kasper 2001: p.51) and sociopragmatic competence “the link between action-relevant context factors and communicative action” (Cenoz 2007:p.126). When these two components are put together, pragmatic competence is understood as

the competence in conveying and understanding communicative intent, that is matching actional intent with linguistic form based on the knowledge of an inventory of verbal schemata that carry illocutionary force (Celce-Murcia 1995:p. 17).

Cenoz writes that

pragmatic competence is one of the components of communicative competence and it is included as such in the most important models of communicative competence (2007 :p.127).

Pragmatic competence was considered as part of sociolinguistic competence by Canale and Swain. Bachman considers sociolinguistic competence as part of pragmatic competence. This disagreement is not as important as the fact that the two have obvious relationship. And the classification by Leech, Thomas and Kasper above supports this. However, Celce-Murcia thinks that pragmatic competence should be independent of the others.

E. Strategic Competence

Some scholars call this “strategies for language use”. Basically, it has to do with the knowledge of how to overcome communication problems. Celce-Murcia says

it is the ability to compensate for problems or deficits or defects or challenges in communication and do various types of planning (2007:p.42)

R. Oxford who sees it as strategies for language use, says it is the “*specific behaviours or thought processes that students use to enhance their own L₂ learning*” (2001:p.362).

According to Canale, strategic competence is the

mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action for two main reasons: (a) to compensate for breakdown in communication due to limiting conditions in actual communication (e.g. momentary inability to recall an idea of grammatical form) or for insufficient competence in one or more of the other areas of competence; and (b) to enhance effectiveness of communication (e.g. deliberately slow and soft speech for rhetorical effect) (qtd. in Alo2003 :p.119)

It is seen from this that to achieve effective communication, certain strategies need to be internalized should there be communication breakdown. Any speaker without strategic competence would always find him/herself stuck between speeches. Celce-Murcia illustrates this by saying that

we know that learners who can make effective use of strategies (i.e. who have strategic competence) tend to learn language better and faster than those who are strategically inept (2007:p.50).

She further outlines what she calls

“crucial strategies” to include:

- a) Achievement: Strategies of approximation, circumlocution, code-switching, miming, etc.*
- b) Stalling or time-gaining: using phrases like „Where was I?, “Could you repeat that?..etc.*
- c) Self-monitoring: Using phrases that allow for self-repair like „I mean that..., etc.*
- d) Interacting: these are strategies that include appeals for help/clarification, that involve meaning negotiation, or that involve comprehension and confirmation checks, etc.*
- e) Social: these strategies involve seeking out native speakers to practice with, actively looking for opportunities to use the target language (2007:p50).*

What she outlines in the first strategy suitably relates to what Alo says when he writes that

One example of communicative strategy in an ESL setting is the use of code switching and code mixing (2003 :p.119).

All the linguistic aids, strategies and resorts one adopts when one encounters breakdown or any other challenge during communication underscore the individual's strategic competence. There are other competencies like interactional, formulaic, organisational and textual as the model to be

discussed below will show. But any of these can fit into one or two of the above.

A very important contribution of this newest model by Celce-Murcia is that it proves that the

various components of communicative competence are interrelated and that it is very important to properly describe the nature of these interrelationships in order to fully understand the construct of communicative competence (2007:p.44)

The octagon below can be used to illustrate this.

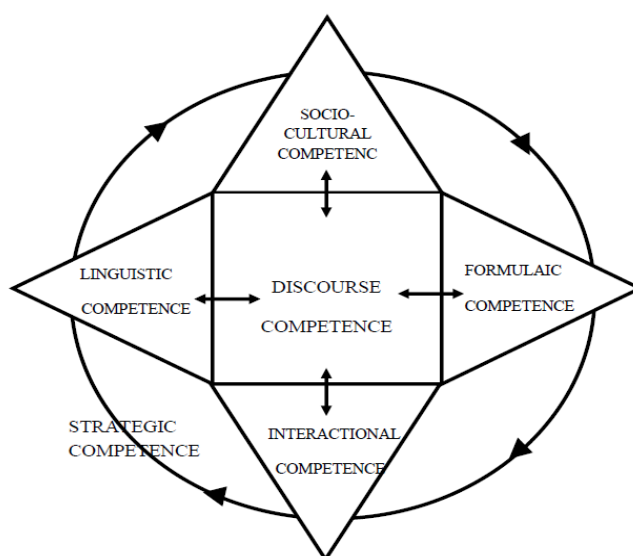


Figure (2-2): Schematic representation of communicative competence (Source: Celce-Murcia 45).

The block inside the octagon is discourse competence, the core or central competence. The four points of the octagon are the sociocultural, formulaic, linguistic and interactional competence. The arrows indicate that the various components are constantly interacting with each other and with the discourse, which is the core competence. This construct shows that all of the sociocultural knowledge, formulaic resources, interactional skills and linguistic codes come together to shape the discourse. The circle surrounding the octagon is strategic

competence, an available inventory of communicative, cognitive, and met a cognitive strategies that allow a skilled speaker to negotiate meanings, resolve ambiguities and to compensate for deficiencies in any of the other competencies (Celce-Murcia2007:p 44).

2.13 Previous Studies

There are many studies in different countries that have been done in the field of pronunciation especially in errors investigation. The problem of English pronunciation has become as phenomena to second and foreign language, (EFL) learners. Here are some international and local studies about pronunciation problems to (EFL) Learners.

The first study submitted by

Ghada Abdelmajid Alkarazoun, (2007), *English Idioms Errors Made by Jordanian EFL Undergraduate Students: A Syntactic and Pragmatic Study*.UNRWA University

Jordan .In her research she used a descriptive Statistic Method and arrived to the following results:

1. The overall weakness in identifying meaning identification might be directly related to the teachers' negligence of teaching idioms in their classes.
2. There has been a clear unavailability of university courses, books, or dictionaries that have focus on teaching idioms and that may lead the (EFL) students to believe that they are not important to be used, learnt or memorized.
3. Idioms, being an important part of language use and existing in spoken and written forms of languages, have been considered a hindrance to the (EFL) students since they do not usually mean what they literally state.
4. The EFL students have demonstrated poor background and low level of knowledge concerning variable definitions of idioms and their features, types, usages, and importance.

5. The EFL students have showed a poor tendency to change their beliefs about the importance of idioms in their daily life usage. That is, the (EFL) students consistently skip learning idioms or using them in spoken or written contexts.

The second study submitted by

Hijab Mohammad Alqahtni(2014).*The Structure and Context of Idiomatic Expressions in the Saudi Press*.The University of Leeds.

He used a descriptive analytic Method and arrived to the following conclusion:

- 1- The Modern Standard Arabic idiomatic expressions were divided up structurally, using grammatical analysis, it was revealed that a number of idiomatic expressions took a new form.This form was designated as ‘the incomplete structure’ since its structure needs an agent/subject or predicate to achieve its full meaning as a sentence.
- 2- The structural syntax of idiomatic expressions complies with that expected in Modern Standard Arabic.
- 3- The most common structure found in Modern Standard Arabic idioms is the verbal one.
- 4- The genitive structure appears in 76 idiomatic expressions and that this structure may perform the idiomatic sense independently or be part of a larger structure (verbal or nominal sentence).
- 5- The idiom has a specific meaning, and this is what distinguishes it from other structures.
- 6- The level of fixedness in idiomatic expressions is varied.
- 7- Some idiomatic expressions need to be understood on a broader level than simply the co-text.

The third study submitted by:

SigritJerimoškin(2011), *The Cognitive Linguistic Approach to Teaching Idioms*:

A Case Study with Estonian Secondary School EFL Students. University of Tartu Estonia .The researcher used the experimental method.

The main findings of the research are as follow:

1. The Cognitive Linguistic approach is a useful method for teaching idioms in EFL classroom because it offers a way of forming links and connections.
2. Using the cognitive linguistic approach had some positive effects on the students as they were able to understand idioms with the use of the conceptual metaphors and the links between the idioms and the metaphors.
3. The students could produce a passage using the idioms that they were taught earlier and additionally, make the passage as cohesive and logical as possible.
4. The Cognitive Linguistic approach can be considered appropriate for secondary school EFL students because it helps the students to make connections between the idioms and the conceptual metaphors.
5. The Cognitive Linguistic approach could be more useful in the EFL classroom than the traditional method.
- 6.Students should be taught idioms, which could be useful for them and are related to the necessary context and those idioms do not need to be of high-frequency.

The researcher recommends that:

1. Teachers should use the Cognitive Linguistic approach, as it could be potentially useful for teaching and understanding the idioms in EFL context.
2. Teachers should be made aware of the Cognitive Linguistic approach and what it entails in order to maximise the effectiveness of teaching idiomatic expressions..
3. Idioms should be taught effectively because they are considered an important characteristic in native speakers' language use.

The fourth study submitted by:

Ngwoke, Festus Uwakwe, (2009). The study title: *Idiomatic Expressions and the Problem of Usage in a Second Language Situation* .University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The researcher used a descriptive analytic Method to achieve the goals of this study. The researcher arrived to conclusion that:

1. Most second language users of English do not know that many idiomatic expressions are usually misused and misinterpreted.
2. The background of students as learners of English as a second language makes them face problems in the learning of the entire language especially the idiomatic expression.
3. Most teachers of English are not grounded in the peculiarities of idioms.
4. The teaching of idioms is almost ignored in the entire senior secondary school curriculum, which contributes generally to the poor acquisition, use, and interpretation of the idiomatic expressions.
5. The non-appreciation of the idiomatic expression in communication and language as a whole, especially by second language users, allows the misuse and misinterpretation of idioms.

The researcher recommends that:

1. Second language users/learners should make a change of attitude from what is previously obtainable to the habit of curiosity and understanding.
2. The approach of idiomatic expression as new vocabulary is recommended as it is definitely a start to the appropriate and effective use of idioms.
3. The idiomatic expression is of very high value to our various writings and should be used more in our study of this linguistic aspect which shall effectively be included in our writings and other tasks of the language.
4. The dictionary should be used regularly to have a massive base and firm grip on idiomatic expressions as well as the entire language usage.
5. For appropriate and effective use of idioms, the learners should be in contact with competent speakers of the language.

The fifth study submitted by:

Maha H. Alhaysony(2017):*Strategies and Difficulties of Understanding English Idioms: A CaseStudy of Saudi University EFL Students*.University of Ha'il, Saudi Arabia.

The researcher followed the descriptive and statistic method in his study. The main findings of the research are as follow:

1. The majority of students face a number of difficulties when learning and understanding idioms.
2. Saudi EFL students face different difficulties because of the lack of cultural background behind the idioms.
3. The importance of teaching and learning idioms in context, as it helps in guessing meaning of the target idioms by limiting the amount of unfamiliar figurative language.
4. Students rely on translating the literal meaning into L₁ as a way to understand English idioms.
5. Students are in need of improving their communication skills through idiom-based learning.
6. Idioms are not part of the courses' syllabi. Additionally, idioms are not taught well in class
7. Guessing from context is the most frequently used strategy in learning idioms.

The researcher recommends that:

1. Teachers should adopt different methods of teaching idioms in order to help students overcome such difficulties.
2. The importance of teaching the cultural context of the language should be considered.
3. Curriculum designers should pay more attention to idiomatic expressions and include them in different courses.
4. Teachers should equip learners with appropriate skills to utilise the context in guessing the figurative meaning of idioms.

5. Students should also be made aware of the fact that improving their idiomatic knowledge could help them express their views in beautiful and flowery language and become more Proficient.
6. Teachers should help in raising students' awareness of idioms' origins
7. Teachers should also improve their cultural knowledge through teacher instruction and many other procedures.
8. Teachers and syllabus designers should consider the fact that students find it easy to learn idioms that have conceptualization in both first and foreign or second language
9. It would be worth investigating the differences between the same idioms' literal and figurative meanings according to the context

The sixth study entitled as:

Effects of Situational and Cultural Context on understanding Idiomatic Expressions in Najdi Dialect submitted by Ghassan Abdulaziz Almahmood, (PhD Dissertation) The University of Leeds (2014). The researcher adopted the cognitive-linguistic approaches. He followed the empirical method in his study and arrived to the following conclusion.

1. The more an individual is familiar with the culture of the idioms target language, the more he or she is able to recognize the motivation behind the idiom.
2. The majority of the second dialect and the second language learners found metonymy-based idioms much easier to comprehend than metaphor-based idioms.
3. Compositional idioms are a complex matter for second language/dialect learners.
4. Islamic-related idioms are much easier to acquire than other idioms.
5. Idioms that are based on universal or near-universal source domains are more readily comprehensible than idioms that are based on conventional knowledge.

6. All first dialect learners rejected unconventional idioms out of the context of use.
7. Second language learners, who encounter idioms much less often, were not heavily affected by idioms' familiarity in judging the compositionality degrees.
8. Familiarity with an idiom affects the representational expression of the idiom in mind.

The researcher recommended that:

1. The operational process of acquisition and comprehension of second dialect idioms should be determined..
2. Second dialect idioms may benefit from further investigations using idioms from another Arabic dialect.
3. Second language learners should familiarize with the culture of the idioms target language.
4. The curriculum should focus on metonymy-based idioms, Islamic-related idioms and universal -based idioms.

The seventh study entitled as:

Idioms and Importance of Teaching Idioms to ESL Students: A Study on Teacher Beliefs by: Sridhar Maisa, & Dr. T. Karunakaran (2013).University of Hyderabad, India, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. The study was conducted as a qualitative investigation to highlight the importance of idioms in language use, English language teaching and strategies to promote idiomatic English at undergraduate level. Five teachers who are teaching at Undergraduate colleges in Hyderabad were chosen to participate in this study.

The findings of that study revealed that:

1. Teaching idioms with specific strategies can help the learner to understand and produce idioms.
2. Knowledge of idiomatic English can promote language fluency.

3. The best way to teach idiomatic expressions is to treat them as new items and try to encourage the learners to guess their meaning from situation and context.
4. Confuse idiomatic expressions with proverbs and colloquial language in teaching.
5. There are certain problems and difficulties students encounter while learning idiomatic expressions.
6. Majority of teachers agree that idiomatic expressions (IEX) are important in everyday English use.
7. Majority of teachers agree that idioms are one of the most difficult areas of English for the foreign learners.
8. There are mixed responses of teachers beliefs on the importance (place) given to the idiomatic expressions among other contents of vocabulary course(s).

Recommendations

1. The learning of idioms should be considered as an integral part of vocabulary learning.
 1. Idioms should be added to the vocabulary being learned by including them in dialogues and stories, which are created to supplement regular materials.
 2. The idiomatic expressions should be treated as new items.
 3. Idioms should be taught with specific strategies to help the learner to understand and produce them.

The eighth study entitled as:

Teaching Idiomatic Expressions in Language Classrooms – Like the Icing on the Cake, by Jessica K. Rodriguez (2013). The objective of his study was to investigate what types of teaching approaches and methods can be used when teaching idiomatic expressions to learners of English. The descriptive approach was towards weaknesses of each approach/method in connection to the purpose of teaching idioms to language learners of English.

The findings of this study revealed that:

1. The procedures used when teaching idiomatic expressions to learners of English are those connected to Multiple Intelligences.
2. Teachers have a great responsibility to create educational settings where all students have an opportunity to develop their knowledge of the target language.
3. Learners apply a variety of strategies when trying to interpret the meaning of idioms, so they are given the opportunity to develop and practice these.
4. Idioms can be taught successfully in many different, creative ways.
5. The teacher can also help raise students' awareness of idioms' origins and improve their cultural knowledge through teacher instruction and many other procedures.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should focus on how much knowledge of the culture (in which the target language exists) learners need in order to acquire specific idioms.
2. How learners comprehend idioms needs to be expanded and used to create instructional materials and teaching procedures with regard to idioms.
3. Creating educational settings is important to develop students' knowledge of the target language.
4. Teachers should use a variety of strategies to teach idioms.

The ninth study titled in: *Arab EFL Learners in Guessing the Meaning of Idioms: Efficiency and Techniques*: by: HaiderAbdul Wahab Ahmad Al-Hassan(2007), University of Bahrain, Kingdom of Bahrain. The study provided a tentative assessment of a sample of Arab EFL majors' efficiency at guessing the meaning of post-lexical level idioms included in some authentic written texts. Moreover, it identified a wide range of techniques that a sample of EFL majors uses to guess the meaning of idioms while reading authentic texts. The study followed the qualitative and quantitative methods.

The findings of this study revealed that:

1. EFL majors seem to have difficulty comprehending unfamiliar post-lexical level idioms by guessing their meaning from context during reading authentic texts.
2. The type of technique(s) that the learners used to guess the meaning of idioms affected the accuracy of their guessing..
3. EFL majors discover meaning from the images, or "vivid" mental images.
4. EFL majors not only recognized idioms as imaginable but they also recognize the metaphoric nature of idioms.
5. EFL learner s may use their L₁ to guess the meaning of post-lexical level idioms.
6. Partial knowledge of idioms could be behind some successful attempts at guessing.

The researcher recommended that:

1. EFL teachers should encourage their students' guessing of the meaning of idioms during reading but direct teaching of idioms and explicit idiom learning (e.g., learning the meaning of an idiom from a dictionary) should go hand in hand with such encouragement.
2. EFL learners should be encouraged to use their own guessing techniques. In general, imposing the use of certain techniques on EFL learners might be counter-productive.
3. EFL teachers should raise the learners' awareness of their guessing techniques for instance, when the learners make guesses, even wrong guesses, of the meaning of idioms, the teacher may ask them to report the way in which they tried to understand the idioms in question.
4. EFL learners should be aware of their guessing efficiency especially as it pertains to post-lexical level idioms.
5. EFL textbook writers should allow more idioms to come into their books.

The tenth study entitled as *Problems of Idioms in Translation Case Study: First Year Master* by: Mezma Meryem (2010). Mentouri University, Algeria. The study was conducted as a qualitative investigation to examine the type of difficulty students of MA, Applied languages studies at Mentouri University Constantine, face while translating idioms and tries to suggest solutions and identify strategies that may help to limit or avoid these difficulties.

The findings of this study revealed that:

1. Students of English really find considerable difficulties in guessing the appropriate meaning of idiomatic expressions.
2. Students' translations of de-contextualized idioms usually end up with unsatisfactory results simply because an idiom is largely related to the situation that gives it a special meaning.
3. Students do not use the accurate strategies that may help to achieve appropriate guesses.
4. Better understanding, using and translating idioms need mastering their situational occurrences and using the accurate strategies to solve the problems of non-equivalence and familiarity with the differences between the source and target languages.

The researcher recommended that:

1. Idioms should be seen in its context to be understood and interpreted.
2. Students should take into consideration the situation because it is apparently essential to make a correct translation.
3. Students should use the accurate strategies to achieve appropriate understanding and guesses.
4. Students should be exposed, more and more, to idiomatic expressions in schools and universities in order to extend their knowledge.

2.14 Summary of the Previous Studies

To conclude, in these previous studies the researcher finds out that most of the studies arrive to the following findings:

- There are certain problems and difficulties students encounter while learning and guessing the meaning of the idiomatic expressions
- There is a problem in teaching idioms. Specific strategies to help the learner to understand and produce idioms should be used in Teaching.
- Idioms are an important part of language use and existing in spoken and written forms of languages.
- The curriculum is not including the idiomatic expressions especially in dialogues and stories, which are created to supplement regular materials.
- There is a problem in students' awareness of idioms' origins and the lack of cultural background behind the idioms.

2.15 Conclusion

This chapter provided the definition of idiomatic expressions, nature, peculiarity, features, structure and the classification of the idioms, aspects of language that are related to idioms. Moreover, in this part the researcher discussed the importance of idioms to language learners and how they can acquire them in addition to that the researcher passed by the definition of the communicative competence, and the components of the communicative competence.

Lastly, it included summaries of the previous studies, and summary of the chapter itself. In conclusion All the above-mentioned studies are in one way or another, relevant to this study. However, the missing gap that this study tries to address is to investigate the impact of idiomatic expressions on developing tertiary level student's communicative competence. The next chapter describes the research methodology.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Introduction:

This chapter is a strategy that paves the way to the research process to be developed in the course of the different steps to achieve the objectives of this research in a logical way. This chapter discusses the philosophical assumptions which were reviewed and presented in chapter one; the interpretive paradigm was identified for the framework of the study.

This chapter discusses the study methodologies, and design used including instruments, data-gathering tools and procedures, as well the analysis methods. Ultimately, using these methods will help to achieve the goal of carrying out high-quality research with credible findings. To achieve this goal, the participants were chosen carefully and selectively as will be explained later. The data collection instruments including various methods such as a survey questionnaire, pre-test and post-test were designed. The procedures of data collection were thoroughly considered. All these matters will be discussed in details in this chapter.

3.2 Research Methodology:

This part gives information about the population, the sample, the data-gathering instruments, as well the statistical procedures that were used in the study. Specifically, having reviewed the literature concerning the examining the impact of idiomatic expressions on developing tertiary level students' communicative competence; the researcher will later discuss the results of the analyses with the purpose of answering the research questions and verifying the hypotheses. For this study, the researcher has followed the descriptive and analytic research method. The object of the collection of census data is to accurately describe basic information about a national population at a particular point in time.

This study starts with stating the problem of the study. Next, suitable hypotheses are stated as tenancy solution for the problem. Afterward, the

sample of the study and the research instruments, which are standardized by calculating their validity and reliability, are chosen. Then the collecting of data is carried out and organized. Finally, analysing and interpreting the results to arrive at generalization concerning the problem.

3.3 Reliability and Validity of Instruments

3.3.1 Reliability and Validity of the Lectures' Questionnaire

3.3.1.1 Reliability of the Lectures' Questionnaire

To get a better estimate of the reliability of the full test, the researcher applied the Coronbach's Alpha method to calculate the reliability of the questionnaire. The Coronbach's Alpha coefficient is (0.745). The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire is calculated by using the square root of Coronbach's Alpha coefficient.

$$\sqrt{0.745} = 0.86$$

The reliability of that form was quite high. Hence, it can be said that the test is reliable.

3.3.1.2 Validity of the Lectures' Questionnaire

The researcher used the Spearman correlation coefficient to calculate the Validity coefficient using the following formula by: (Mahdi, Mohamed (2007:332)

$$\text{Reliability} = 0.86$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Validity coefficient} &= \sqrt{\text{Reliability}} \\ &= \sqrt{0.86} = 0.93 \end{aligned}$$

According to this result, the validity coefficient is high which indicates that the questionnaire is valid.

In addition to that the questionnaire in its initial form has been presented to the supervisor, Dr. Mohamed Bakery Hadidi, who gave his opinion by adding, excluding or amending some of the statements of the questionnaire. He recommended that the statements ought to cover and express the hypotheses of the study and measure them properly.

To verify the validity of the study, the researcher also presented the questionnaire to a committee of six experienced doctors in English Language **Appendix (1)**. They were asked to approve and reassure the validity and to what extents the questionnaire statements and phrases were clear and appropriate to the study. They all gave their valuable contribution by adding, excluding or amending some of the statements of the questionnaire. So the questionnaire validity was of a high stability and an internal consistency.

3.3.2 Reliability and Validity of the tests

Validity is an important relationship between concept and indicator; i.e. does the instrument “hit the right target”, does it measure what it aims to measure? Reliability measure how stable and consistently a measurement is in “keeping the target”, i.e. does the measurement of the same phenomenon gives the same result, when repeated either in sequence or by different observers?

3.3.2.1 Test Reliability

Reliability is the extent to which the scores are consistent and stable (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The researcher used T-test which is a test-retest method to assure the reliability. The researcher ensured the reliability of the achievement test by using the formula of the pearsons’ r LokeshKoul (1993 : P. 240)

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N\sum xy - \sum x \cdot \sum y}{\sqrt{[N\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][N\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

x = Deviation of the X.

y = Deviation of the Y.

x^2 = measurement from assumed mean.

y^2 = measurement from assumed mean.

Table (3-1) Reliability measurement

Students	X	Y	x	Y	x^2	y^2	Xy
1	15	16	1	1	1	1	1
2	16	15	2	0	4	0	0
3	16	19	2	4	4	16	8
4	18	18	4	3	16	9	12
5	14	17	2	2	4	4	4
6	13	14	-1	-1	1	1	1
7	15	16	1	1	1	1	1
8	11	14	-3	0	9	0	0
9	10	11	-4	-4	16	16	16
10	9	10	-5	-5	25	25	25
			$\Sigma -1$	$\Sigma 1$	$\Sigma 81$	$\Sigma 73$	$\Sigma 68$

$$\begin{aligned}
 R_{xy} &= \frac{680-1}{\sqrt{(810-1)(730-1)}} \\
 &= \frac{679}{\sqrt{809 \times 729}} \\
 &= \frac{679}{\sqrt{589761}} = 0.88
 \end{aligned}$$

With reference to the table (3-1), ten students had two tests, The pretest and six weeks later they had the posttest. The degree was out of 20. The researcher reached this result. $r_{xy} = 0,88$. By this result, there is positive correlation which ensured the reliability of the test. The questions were set up to help the researcher mark in short time, as marking is a tedious task. One mark was given for each question to avoid fraction. Finally, the score was calculated and compared .The time of the test was 40 minutes.

3.3.2.2 Test Validity

A test is valid when "it measures what it is supposed to measure" (Oller, 1979, p. 70). Therefore, to ensure that the test employed in the present investigation is valid, the researcher used the Spearman correlation

coefficient to calculate the Validity coefficient using the following formula by: (Mahdi, Mohamed (2007:332)

Reliability = 0.88

$$\text{Validity coefficient} = \sqrt{\text{Reliability}}$$
$$= \sqrt{0.88} = 0.94$$

According to this result, the validity coefficient is high which indicates that the test is valid.

In addition to that the tests items were evaluated by some doctors to validate the suitability of the questions to the students **Appendix (1)**. This suitability is based on students 'levels and abilities. Finally, the suitability of the duration of the test .Necessary changes to the test items were made based on the feedback from the abovementioned experts, whereas the time allotted for the test was found suitable.

3.4 Statistical Calculation

A five-point Likert scale, which is commonly used in questionnaires, was used in the present study. The data has been computerized and analyzed by a popularly used Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) programme.

The questionnaire has been analyzed in terms of frequencies and percentages. On the other hand, the tests have been analyzed in terms of frequencies, percentages, means and alpha- coefficient. The results from the questionnaire and the tests have finally been tabulated and discussed. These procedures are replicable and they produce the same results if the same experiment is done another time or what is known as reliability.

The responses of the questionnaire have been recorded on a list according to (Likert Scale).

According to C. R. Kothari. (2004, p, 86) "*Likert-type scale is considered more reliable because under it respondents answer each statement included in the instrument. As such it also provides more information and data than does the Thurstone-type scale.*"

3.5 Research Design

Research design can be thought of as the logic or master plan of a research that throws light on how the study is to be conducted. It shows how all of the major parts of the research study the samples or groups, measures, treatments or programs, etc– work together in an attempt to address the research questions. Research design is similar to an architectural outline. The research design can be seen as actualization of logic in a set of procedures that optimises the validity of data for a given research problem.

3.5.1 Study Methods

The aim of this research is to examine the Impact of Idiomatic Expressions on Developing Tertiary Level Students' Communicative Competence so the researcher used the descriptive analytical method in an attempt to describe the research problem as it is. According to (Kothari, 2004) *Research methods or techniques, thus, refer to the methods the researcher use in performing research operations. In other words, all those methods which are used by the researcher during the course of studying his research problem are termed as research methods.*

3.5.2 Data - collecting Instruments and Procedures

Data collecting tools are important as they help to ensure the integrity of the research. They give researchers the ability to answer research questions and make it easier for other researchers to repeat and validate the study. So the researcher must ensure that the instruments used are valid and reliable. (Margaret C. et al 2009) claim that:

Improving data collection techniques will enhance the accuracy, validity, and reliability of research findings. Ultimately, using these methods will help to achieve the goal of carrying out high-quality research with credible findings.

3.5.3 Methods of Data Collection

To get reliable and valid data for the study, two instruments of data collection were used (i) a survey questionnaire; (ii) tests (pre-test and post-test). Each instrument has an important role in the survey work, as each instrument is suitable for obtaining a specific type of data. Figure (3-1) below illustrates the two data collecting techniques used in this study:

The two data-collecting tools used in this study

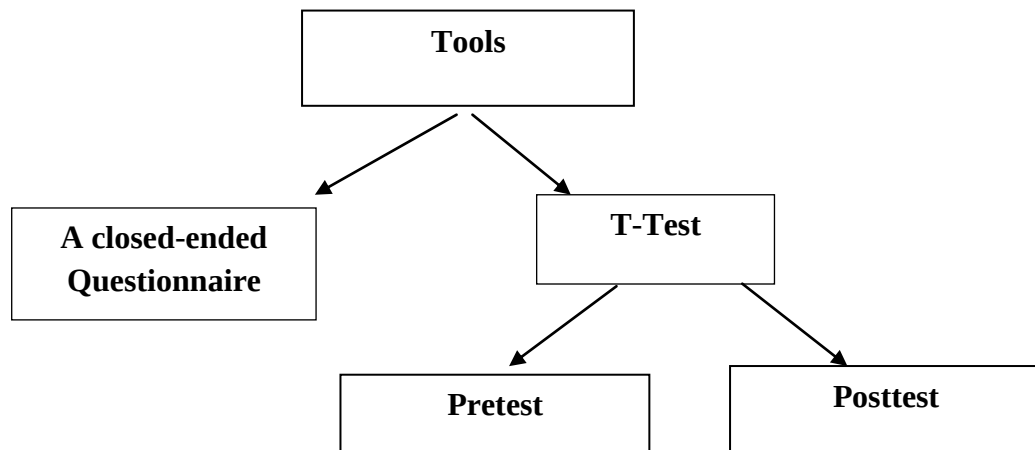


Figure (3-1): Explains the study data - collecting tools .Designed by the researcher

3.6 Procedures of Data Collection

To put in effect these two tools mentioned above, the researcher had to trace the following steps to apply the process of data collection

The first step: The preparation for data collection process:

The process of preparing the data collection is considered the backbone of the research for it paves the route for the study to be carried out at high quality with credible results. Firstly, the researcher considered the data collection instruments and thoroughly selected the following two instruments to achieve the goal of this research:

- (i) A survey questionnaire,
- (ii) a pre-test, and a post-test

In addition, the survey questionnaire for the lecturers and the pre-test as well as the post-test for the students were designed. During this process, the

researcher received a lot of advice from the supervisor and a lot of improvements were made. Furthermore, pilot test and retest were conducted within a group of twenty students majoring in English.

Besides all these things, a sampling procedure was also carried out in this step to select the most representative sample for studying. At the end, a purposive sample was chosen; this was the all third year students of English at the faculty of Education.

The second step: Carrying out the instruments for the participants:

Concerning the lecturers' questionnaire, it was immediately distributed among the lecturers. After asking for permission from the faculty dean (**appendix.2**), the head of the English department and the staff, the researcher selected group of students to participate in the treatment then ret-test was carried out to the participants

The third step: preparing and carrying out the treatment:

Despite the lack of research studies on the possibility of improving communicative competence through the explicit instruction of idiomatic expressions, the researcher hypothesized that the learners could benefit from teaching of idiomatic expressions. Therefore, the researcher went through the related literature and designed a suggested academic treatment especially for that purpose along with pre and post-tests. The pre-test was taken before the beginning of the treatment application whilst the post-test was taken after the treatment application in order to measure the effect of the treatment (appendix 2).

The programme was applied on the experiment group (a 30-student class) for three weeks in the first semester of the academic year 2016/2107. The treatment was divided into ten lessons. Each lesson lasted for one hour and a half weekly

The fourth step: after collecting data from questionnaire, pre-test and the post-test, a plan for synthesizing and analyzing these data was quickly and thoroughly designed by the researcher to get the results.

Table (3-2): Procedures of Data Collection

Steps	Procedures
1	The preparation for data collection process
2	Carrying out the instruments for the participants
3	preparing and carrying out the treatment
4	Collecting data from questionnaire, pre-test and the post-test.
5	Synthesizing and analyzing these data.

Summaries the steps of Data Collection .Designed by the researcher

3.6.1 The Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a group or sequence of questions designed to obtain information on a subject from a respondent. Questionnaires play a central role in the data collection process since they have a major impact on data quality. Dornyi, Z. (2002:6) defines the questionnaire as: *“A questionnaire is an instrument for collection of data, usually in written form, consisting of open and /or closed questions and other problems requiring a response from subjects,”*.

In this research, a questionnaire was designed for lecturers to examine the impact of idiomatic expressions on developing tertiary level student's communicative competence

One type of survey questionnaires namely closed-ended questions was employed in which the participants were asked to tick one option that was the most appropriate to them.

3.6.1.1 The questionnaire design

In this study, the first instrument of data collection is the closed-ended form questionnaire which was designed to examine the impact of idiomatic expressions on developing tertiary level students' communicative competence as well the plans and techniques to overcome these problems. To ensure validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the following steps have been taken:

The questionnaire was sent for judgment to some of the university doctors who have long experience in the field of English language teaching. The questionnaire has been modified according to the remarks made by these experts.(Appendix4)

The participants' average experience is not less than ten years in teaching English language. The researcher used the five points Likert scale where the respondents can choose from (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree) to ensure validity and reliability. The questionnaire was conducted as follows:

3.6.1.2 Distribution of the Questionnaire

The researcher distributed the final questionnaire form to the respondents. It took three weeks' time to be administered, completed and returned back.

3.6.1.3 Collection of the Questionnaires

Enough time was given to the respondents to fill the sheets offered to them. Then the researcher started to collect the questionnaire forms. Unfortunately, the researcher was faced by some distribution and returning obstacles. (40) Questionnaire sheets were distributed to the lectures, some of them were sent via the e-mail, unfortunately only (30) forms were received back.

3.6.2 The Tests

The second tool of data collection used in this research is the *T-test*. The T-test is used as a tool to assess the score changes that might occur due to the application of the treatment. *T tests* often used to compare the means from two different groups of data. It can help to find out if the means are significantly different from one another or if they are relatively the same. The T-test will be discussed further in the next chapter that deals with the data analysis. Both pre and post tests were designed according to the students' major and level in addition to the treatment material that the experiment group

was going to attend later. It was a minor test of the final one that was to be applied after the period of the treatment programme.

3.7 The Treatment

3.7.1 The Conditions During the Study

Materials were developed and administered during the regular semester of the academic year of the students. 2015- 2016. Thus, the course materials were especially designed for the teaching / learning of idiomatic expressions with emphasis on the specific features that were found to be problematic for the Sudanese learners of English as a foreign language. The course was given to the students of faculty of Education of Nile Valley University. In particular, the target group i.e. 3rd level students, was taught for 4 weeks at the rate of 6 hours per week. It is important to mention here, that having realized the importance of the course on idiomatic expressions for the students of English departments, the administration of the Faculty of Education, Nile Valley University, facilitated the researcher's mission by giving the permission to apply the course (Appendix 3). This course on idiomatic expressions was personally administered and taught by the researcher himself. The classes were conducted in the form group work. It is a formal setting but friendly atmosphere. Some of the methods, classroom practices and teaching techniques used in the course were:

- The student as a researcher, and as a problem - solving person;
- The student as a teacher;
- The main role of the teacher here is that of a facilitator and an advisor.

Then there the following practical steps:

- The learners were given the opportunity to try guessing the meanings of the idiomatic expressions.
- The learners were motivated to set discussions to improve their speaking skill

- The learners were made aware of a wider range of the strategies of learning vocabulary with special emphasis on the strategy of inferring / guessing the meaning from the context.
- The learners were trained to use effectively the guessing from context strategy in handling the meaning of idiomatic expressions.

3.8 Procedures of Data Analysis and Interpretation

In this research study, the responses were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), to obtain accurate results. In order to obtain rich information; the study employed a questionnaire as a main tool and a T-test as research instruments to confirm the data obtained from the questionnaire.

The questionnaire which was used to test the hypotheses of the research was lecturers' questionnaire. This instrument was modified and adjusted by referees, and finally was improved and refined as the final versions of the questionnaire. The hypotheses have been tested to ensure that the statistics have been taken from the study participants to take the decision about the statistical characteristics.

3.9 Summary

This chapter demonstrates a clear and detailed plan to collect adequate and reliable data for analysis including the selection of subjects, research instruments, and procedures of data collection data analysis.

Moreover, this chapter highlights the methodology and the frame work of the present study which mainly concentrates on examining the impact of idiomatic expressions on developing tertiary students' communicative competence.

In addition, it describes the subjects, the techniques, the materials, the treatment and the instruments to be used. It also highlighted the basic issues of validity and reliability and showed how they would be observed in the research. The next chapter is devoted to presentation of the data results, analysis and discussion.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis and Discussion

Chapter Four

Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses and discusses the data which is collected by the researcher to carry out certain results. Therefore, data analysis is a process by which the researcher can carry out interpretation of the results to this data. Victor J. Schoenbach (2004 p.451) stated that,

*“analyzing the data and interpreting the results are the
“reward” for the work of collecting the data.”*

Accordingly, the researcher attempts an analysis and interpretation of the results collected by the different data-gathering tools.

The study was mainly aimed to investigate the impact of idiomatic expressions on developing tertiary level students' communicative competence. However, there were other secondary objectives. The first one was to point out the importance of the knowledge of idiomatic expressions for Sudanese tertiary level students to promote language fluency

The second aim was to identify the challenges, which encounter Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expressions.

The third aim was to know if the Sudanese tertiary level students able to process and express English idioms.

The main data-gathering tool was the questionnaire administered to the lecturers of English language. By using the questionnaire, the researcher intended to identify the importance of the idiomatic expressions and the integration of the idiomatic expressions into language curriculum right from the start. ; lack of knowledge; insufficient time for practicing idioms; and idioms familiarity, difficulties in teaching/learning and understanding idioms, low motivation, and other factors that might affect acquiring and producing idiomatic expressions. In addition, the study aimed at offering possible solutions for treatment and improvements. Specifically, this chapter

was devoted to present the statistical responses from main data gathering-tools which are lecturers' questionnaire and students' test and pretest, in addition to discuss the results revealed by these statistics. Their results were presented and interpreted in the following chapter.

The results of the questionnaire were described and discussed separately in this chapter and then the researcher discussed the relationship between the results of the different tools for testing the three hypotheses, which assumed that;

- (i) Knowledge of idiomatic expressions is important for Sudanese tertiary level students to promote language fluency
- (ii) There are some challenges encountered by Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expression.
- (iii) Sudanese Tertiary level students are not able to process and express English idioms.

In discussing the verification of the hypotheses for the questionnaire, the popular statistical package for social sciences program (SPSS) was used to analyze the collected data. The researcher used the Chi-square test to test the hypotheses. Chi-square test as defined by C.R. Kothari (1999: p. 233)

The chi-square test is an important test amongst the several tests of significance developed by statisticians. Chi-square is a statistical measure used in the context of sampling analysis for comparing a variance to a theoretical variance.

The first tool used in this study was a close-ended questionnaire, which was prepared and checked in collaboration with some English language lecturers. The questionnaire was designed to collect the data that support the study and confirm the findings from the other tool used in collecting the data for this study. With regard to the validity of the questionnaire, a number of six questionnaires were given to six experienced doctors in English Language. They were asked to approve and reassure the validity and to what extents the questionnaire statements and phrases were clear and appropriate to the study.

To calculate the reliability coefficient; the researcher followed the Cronbach's Alpha. The value of the reliability and the validity lies in the range between (0-1) and the value of the reliability coefficient was (0.86), and the validity coefficient value was (0.93) for the lecturers' questionnaire.

On the other hand, the researcher followed the formula of the pearsons'r Lokesh Koul to calculate the value of the reliability coefficient which was (0.86), and the validity coefficient value was (0.93) for the tests. These values show that the questionnaire and the tests were valid and reliable.

4.2 The Questionnaire Analysis Results

This study composed of a lecturers' questionnaire. The aim of this questionnaire was to obtain data to investigate the impact of idiomatic expressions on developing tertiary level students' communicative competence. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for analytical purposes. The results were presented in form of tables and charts as shown below.

4.2.1 Statistic Results of the lecturers' Questionnaire

The lecturers' questionnaire was distributed to (43) lecturers and assistant professors of English language in Nile valley and other Sudanese Universities. The lecturers were selected purposively, regardless of their academic degrees or experience years. Thirty of the questionnaires were returned back to the researcher. The questionnaire consists of twenty items which were structured into three categories as follows:

Category one

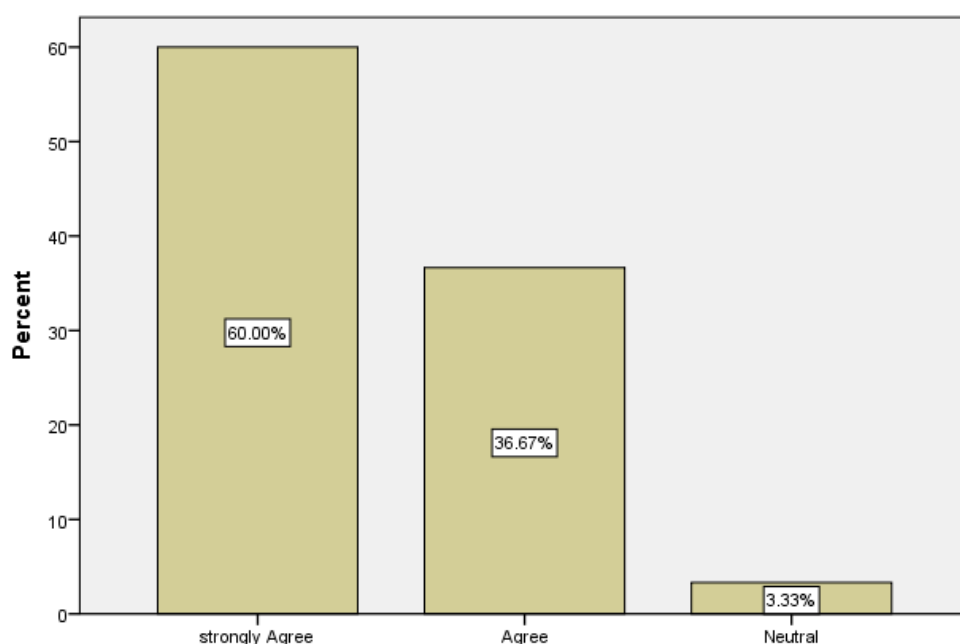
This part focused on the information about the importance of the idiomatic expressions in promoting the students' language fluency. It contains seven items intended to identify the importance of the idiomatic expressions for Sudanese tertiary level students to promote language fluency. The lecturers were kindly requested to indicate their answers by ticking (✓) one of the five options: "Strongly agree", "Agree", "Neutral", "Disagree", and

“Strongly disagree. The following charts and tables show the responses of teachers.

Table (4-1) I believe that idiomatic expressions are common and important in English language studies

measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	18	11	1	-	-
Percentage	60	36.7	3.3	-	-

Chart (4-1) explains that idiomatic expressions are common and important in English language studies

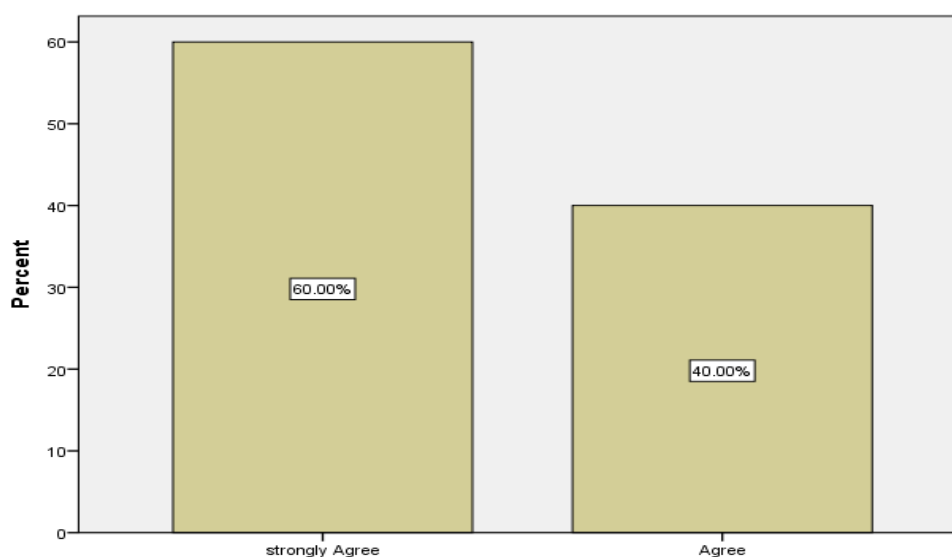


As can be seen in table (4-1) and chart (4-1), most of the lecturers (96.7%) strongly agreed and agreed that idiomatic expressions are common and important in English language studies. (3.3%) of the lecturers were not sure. This reflects the importance of the idiomatic expressions for English language learners and studies.

Table (4-2) Idioms broaden my students' understanding and manipulation of English language

Measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	18	12	-	-	-
Percentage	60	40	-	-	-

Chart (4-2) explains that Idioms broaden my students' understanding and manipulation of English language



From table (4-2) and chart (4-2), it is clear that all the lectures (100%) strongly agreed and agreed that Idioms broaden their students' understanding and manipulation of English language. This might indicate a general awareness about the importance of idioms in improving the students' communicative competence.

Table (4-3) I believe that more idioms should be integrated into language curriculum right from the start.

Measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	13	11	2	3	1
Percentage	43.3	36.7	6.7	10	3.3

Chart (4-3) explains that more idioms should be integrated into language curriculum right from the start.

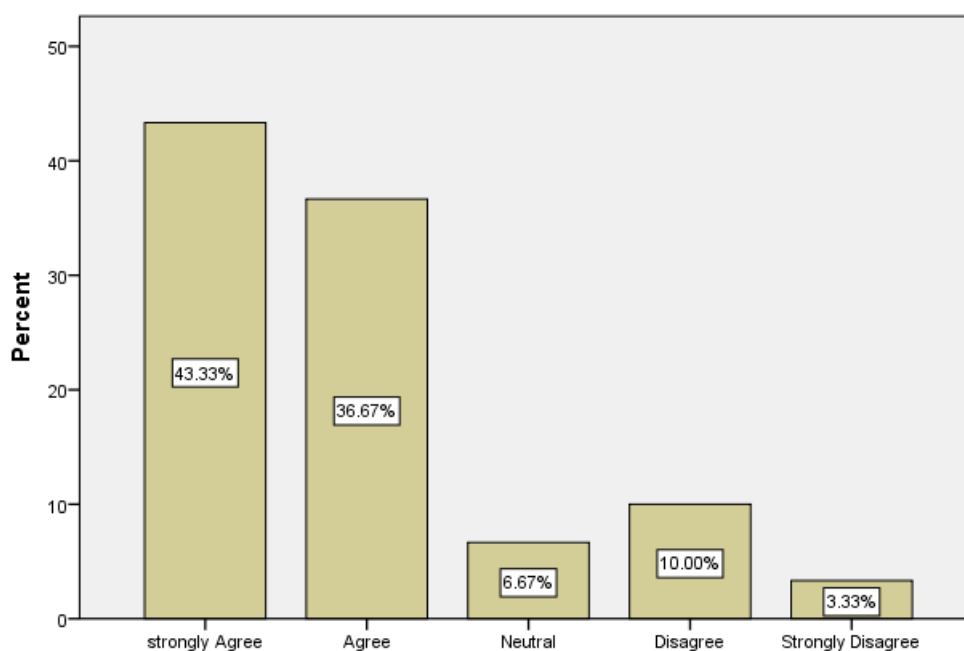


Table (4-3) and chart (4-3) show that 80% of the lectures strongly agreed and agreed that idioms should be integrated into language curriculum right from the start, while the percentage (20%) displays the result of neutrality and disagreement. This indicates that the idioms should be included into English language curriculum from the beginning to enrich the learners' idioms span.

Table (4-4) explains the more idioms a learner knows, the richer his vocabulary knowledge becomes.

Measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	19	10	1	-	-
Percentage	63.33	33.33	3.33	-	-

Chart (4-4) explains the more idioms a learner knows, the richer his vocabulary knowledge becomes

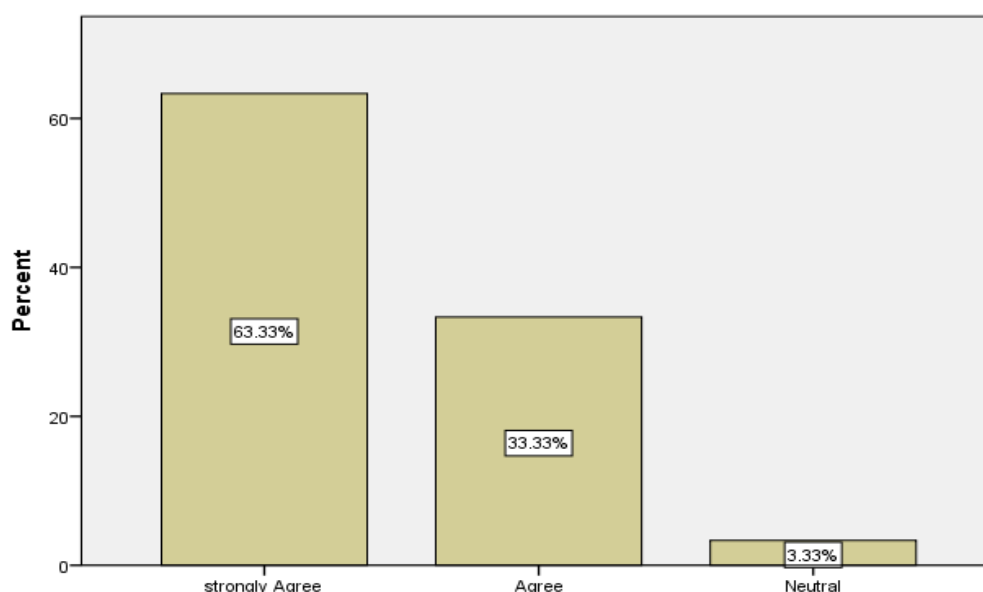


Table (4-4) and chart (4-4) reveal that, a great percentage 96.33% of the participants strongly agreed and agreed that more idioms a learner knows, the richer his vocabulary knowledge becomes, while 3.3% neutral. This insured that idioms increase the proportion and improve the quality of the learners' vocabulary.

Table (4-5) Explains that the correct use of idioms is a significant skill for language fluency.

Measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	16	11	1	2	-
Percentage	53.3	36.7	3.3	6.7	-

Chart (4-5) Explains the correct use of idioms is a significant skill for language fluency.

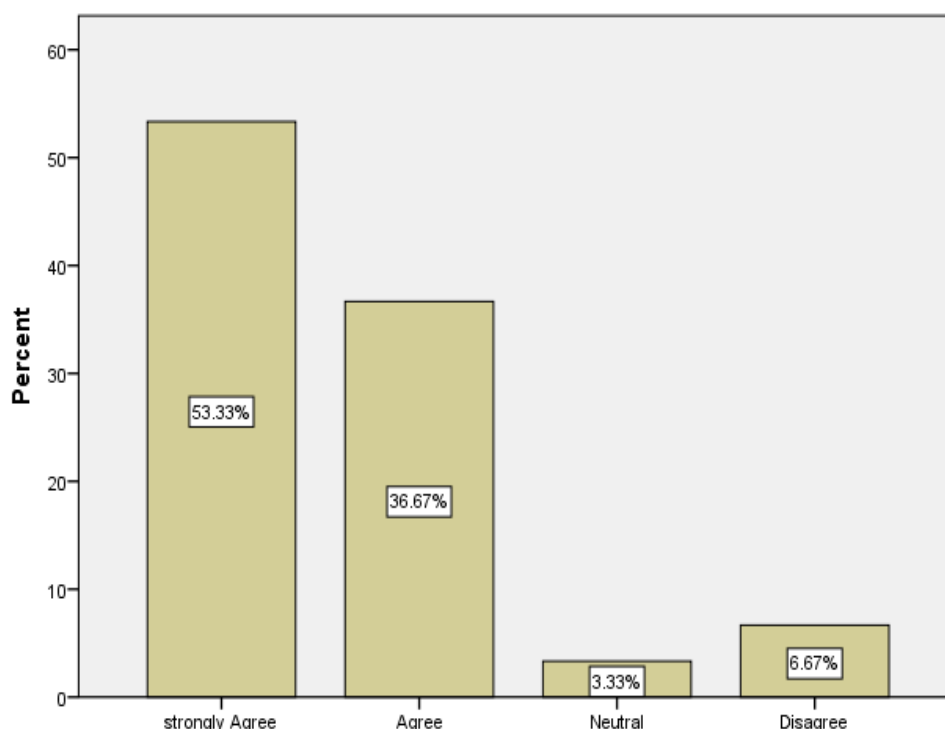


Table (4-5) and chart (4-5) point out that the majority of the lecturers (90%) strongly agreed and agreed that the correct use of idioms is a significant skill for language fluency. 6.3% of the participants disagreed and 3.3 were not sure. This result reveals that a good command of idioms leads to a good language fluency.

Table (4-6) Explains that the idiomatic expressions are a vital part of the standard language, and as such can hardly be avoided.

Measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	10	14	3	2	1
Percentage	33.3	46.7	10	6.7	3.3

Chart (4-6) Shows that the idiomatic expressions are a vital part of the standard language and as such can hardly be avoided.

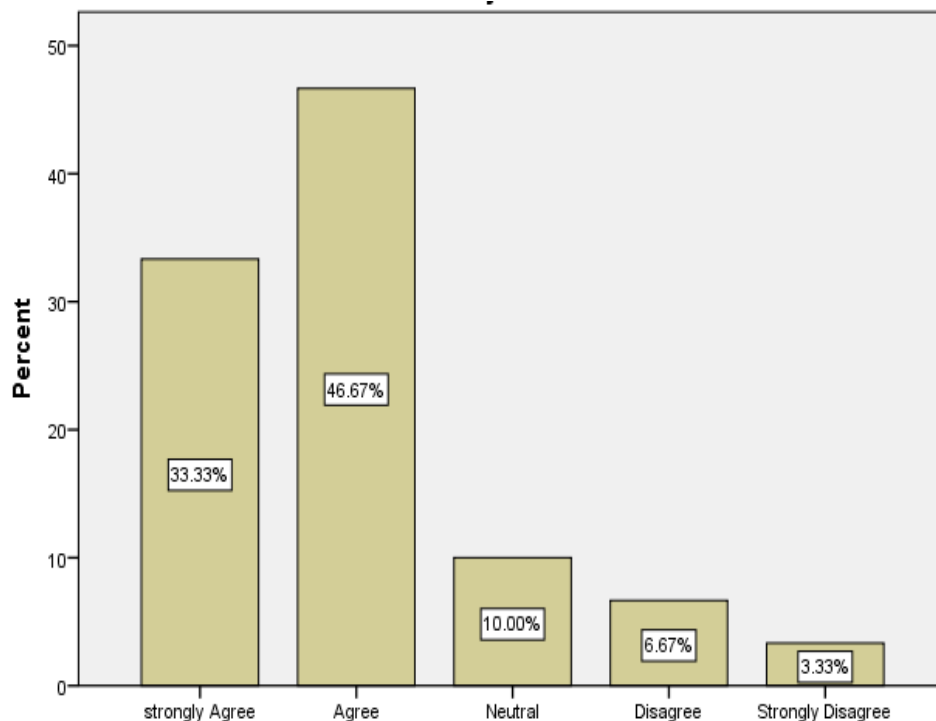


Table (4-6) and chart (4-6) indicate that 80% of the participants strongly agreed and agreed that the idiomatic expressions are a vital part of the standard language and as such can hardly be avoided, 10% disagreed and 10% were not sure.

Table (4-7) Explains that a good command of idiomatic expressions is not important for my students because communicating in simple language is preferable

Measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	9	2	4	10	5
Percentage	30	6.7	13.3	33.3	16.7

Chart (4-7) Explains that a good command of idiomatic expressions is not important.

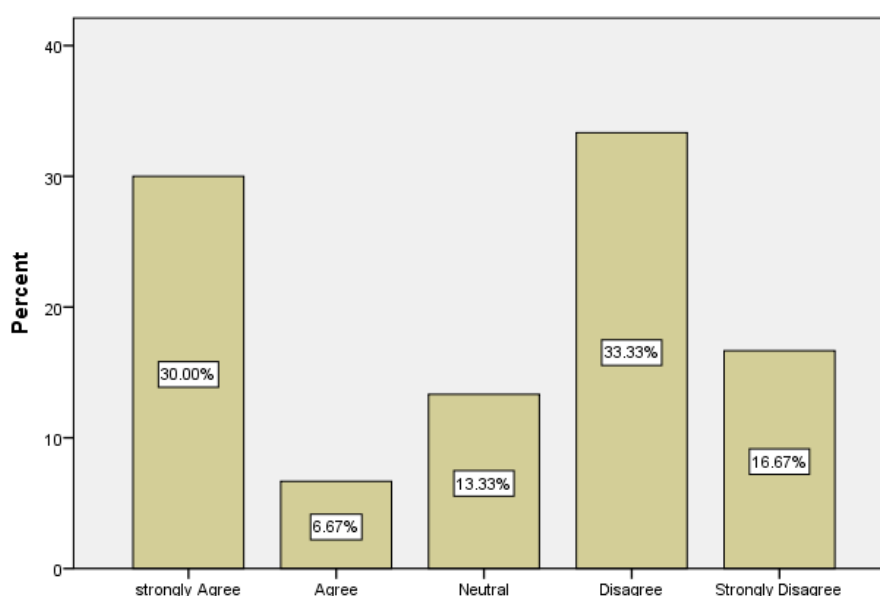


Table (4-7) and chart (4-7) show responses on a good command of idiomatic expressions are not important for the learners. 50% of the lecturers strongly disagreed and disagreed that a good command of idiomatic expressions is not important for the learners because communicating in simple language is preferable. 36.7% agreed and 13.3% were not sure. This shows the importance of the idiomatic expressions for the learners in communicating.

Category Two: students' difficulties in acquiring idiomatic expression

The second category contains seven items intended to elicit the lecturers' opinions about some challenges and difficulties encountered by Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expression. These challenges and

difficulties are assumed to be the structure of idioms; lack of the English social culture; the process of teaching and learning; the absence of idioms in syllabuses and the idioms that are not matching the learners' mother tongue. The statistics are shown in tables and charts.

Table (4-8) Displays that the idioms form and structure have a role in the idiom familiarity to learners.

Measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	12	18	-	-	-
Percentage	40	60	-	-	-

Chart (4-8) Displays that the idioms form and structure have a role in the idiom familiarity to learners

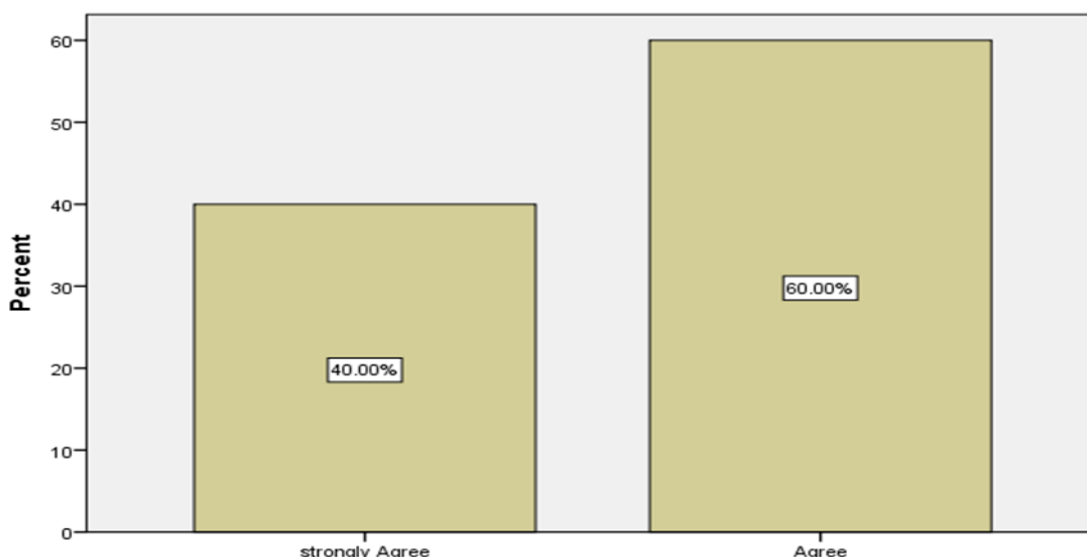
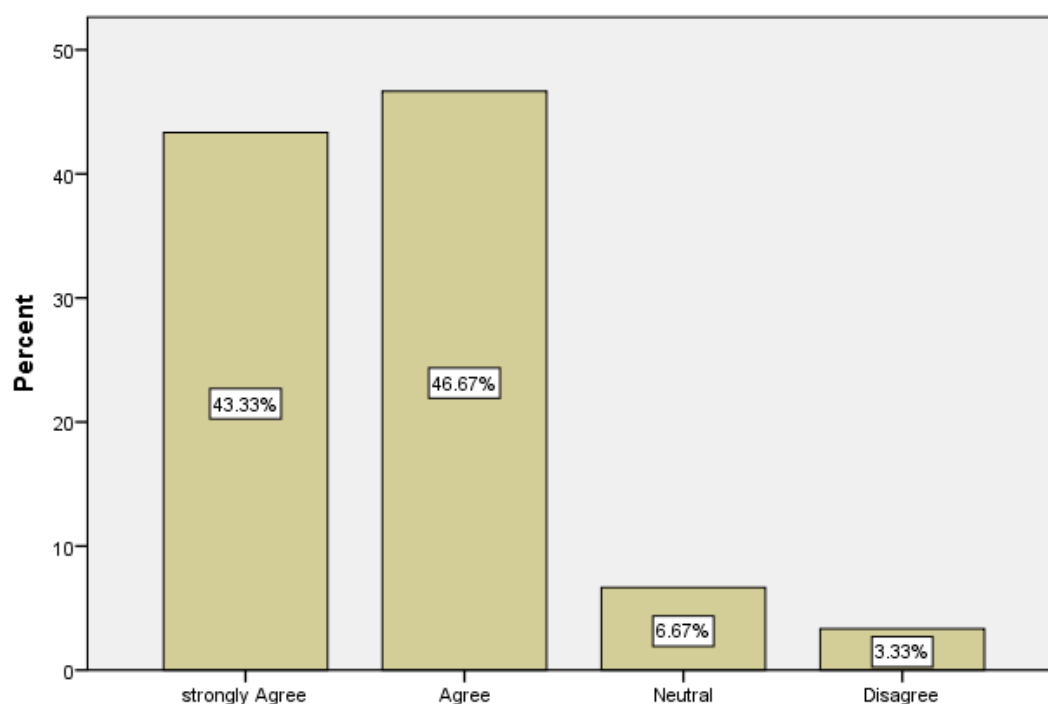


Table (4-8) and chart (4-8) display the statistical analysis on the idioms form and structure have a role in the idiom familiarity to learners. All the participants 100% strongly agreed and agreed that the idioms form and structure have a role in the idiom familiarity to learners. This shows that the form and the structure of the idioms is a real problem, which encounters the learners to understand and process idioms.

Table (4-9) Explains that Idioms, which have unfamiliar words or have no equivalent in Arabic, are difficult to be understood or processed.

Measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	13	14	2	1	-
Percentage	43.3	46.7	6.7	3.3	-

Chart (4-9) Explains that Idioms, which have unfamiliar words or have no equivalent in Arabic, are difficult to be understood or processed.



As shown in Table (4-9) and chart (4-9) that 90% of the lecturers' responses agreed that mother tongue language contributes largely to learners' understanding and processing idioms. Only 3.3% of them disagreed and 6.7% were not sure.

Table (4-10) Shows that idioms of preaching, idioms of social relation and geographical idioms are acquired better through stories, films, newspapers and videos.

Measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	16	12	2	-	-
Percentage	53.3	40	6.7	-	-

Chart (4-10) Explains that idioms of preaching, idioms of social relation and geographical idioms are acquired better through stories, films, newspapers and videos.

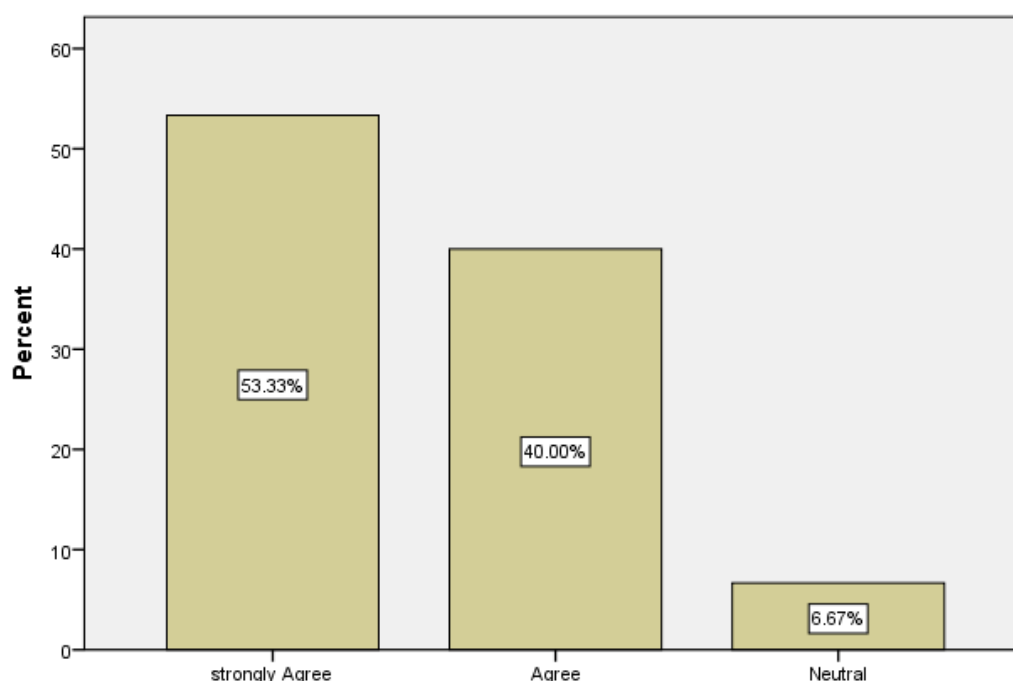
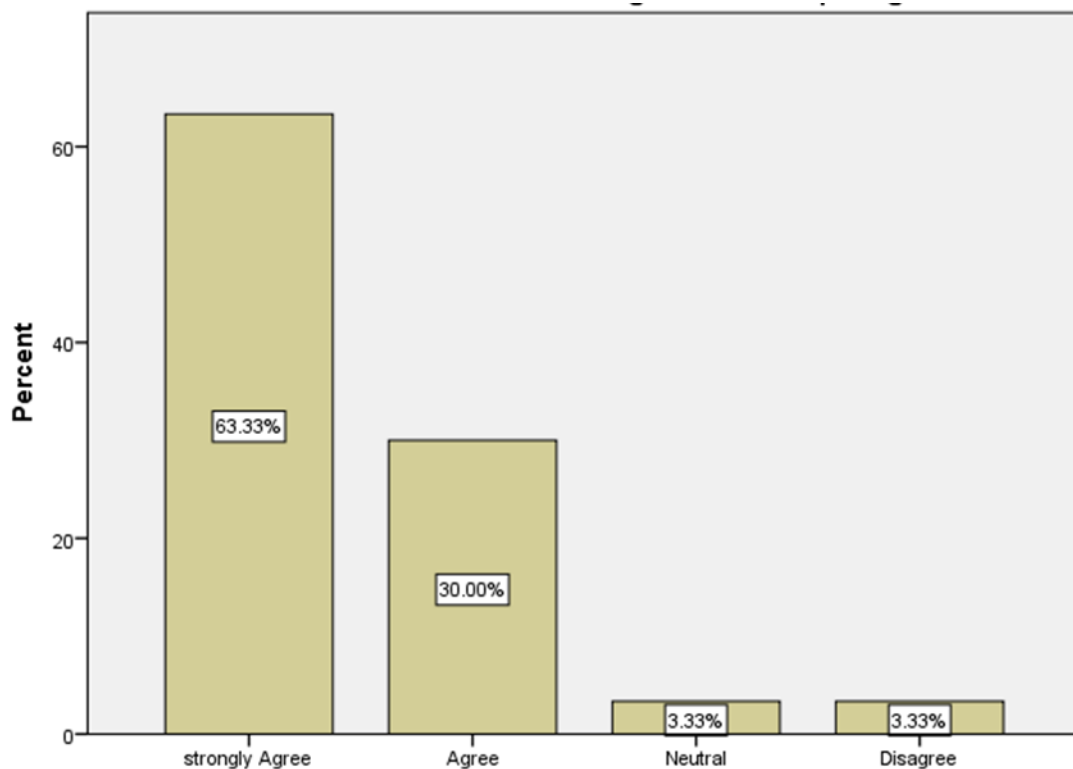


Table (4-10) Chart (4-10) reflect the results of acquiring idioms due to the teaching techniques. It is apparent that the leaners have difficulties in acquiring idioms because of the teaching techniques. A vast majority of the lecturers' 93% strongly agreed and agreed, only 6.7% of them were not sure.

Table (4-11) Explains that the lack of the English social culture leads to disability in acquiring idioms

Measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	19	9	1	1	-
Percentage	63.3	30	3.3	3.3	-

Chart (4-11) Explains that the lack of the English social culture leads to disability in acquiring idioms.

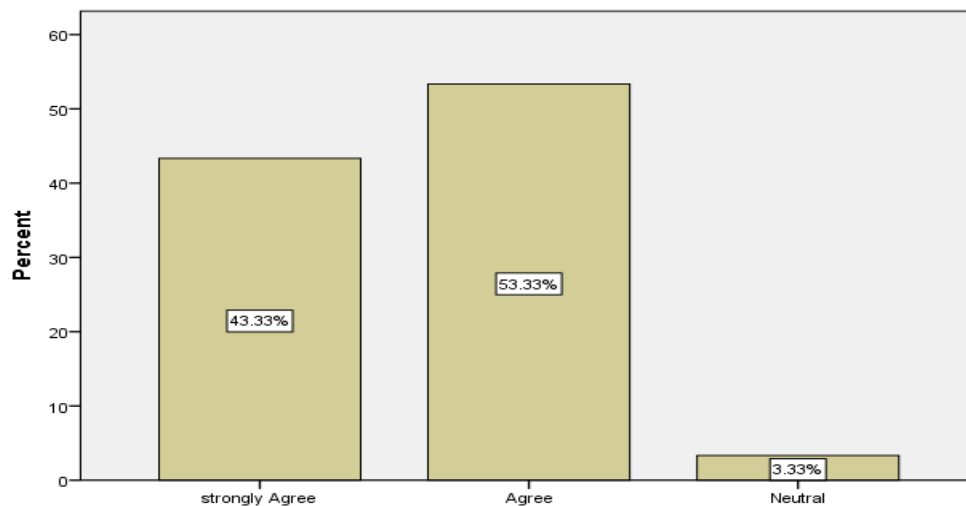


According to table (4-11) and chart (4-11), it would appear that there might be a general agreement towards the importance of the English social culture on acquiring idioms, because 93.3% of the subjects were strongly agreed and agreed. Only 3.3% were not sure whether the English social culture has an effect on acquiring idioms or not. 3.3% were disagreed. Therefore, the lack of the cultural awareness is a big challenge to idioms acquisition.

Table (4-12) Shows that teaching/learning of idioms using a categorization method makes them acquired easily and effectively.

Measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	13	16	1	-	-
Percentage	43.3	53.3	3.3	-	-

Chart (4-12) Shows that teaching/learning of idioms using a categorization method makes them acquired easily and effectively.



The result in table (4-12) and Chart (4-12) reveals that almost all of the subjects, 96.6% strongly agreed and agreed that teaching/learning of idioms using a categorization method makes them acquired easily and effectively. Only 3.3% of the subjects were not sure. This indicates that the teaching/learning of idioms is affected by the techniques.

Table (4-13) Explains that the syllabus lacks idioms so the students encounter difficulties in understanding them.

Measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	9	14	4	2	1
Percentage	30	46.7	13.3	6.7	3.3

Chart (4-13) Explains that the syllabus lacks idioms so the students encounter difficulties in understanding them.

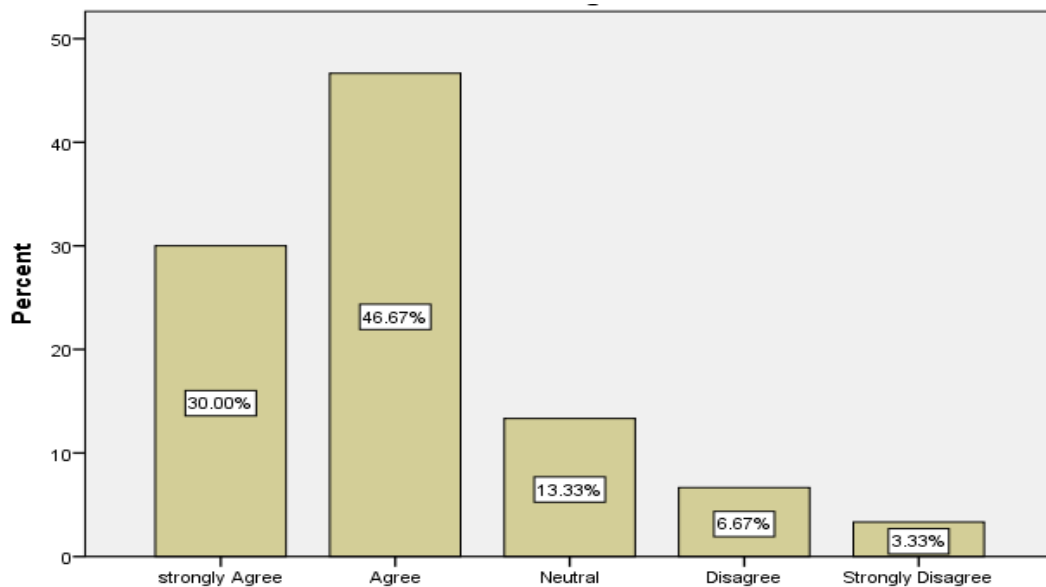


Table (4-13) and Chart (4-13) reflect the result on the absence of idioms in the syllabus leads to difficulties in understanding and processing them. The majority of the lectures, 76.7% strongly agreed and agreed that the absence of idioms in the syllabus leads to difficulties in understanding and processing them. From 13.3% were not sure while only 10% were disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Table (4-14) Explains that the idiomatic expressions aren't given enough attention in the syllabus in my department.

Measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	13	16	1	-	-
Percentage	43.3	53.3	3.3	-	-

Chart (4-14) Explains the idiomatic expressions aren't given enough attention in the syllabus in my department.

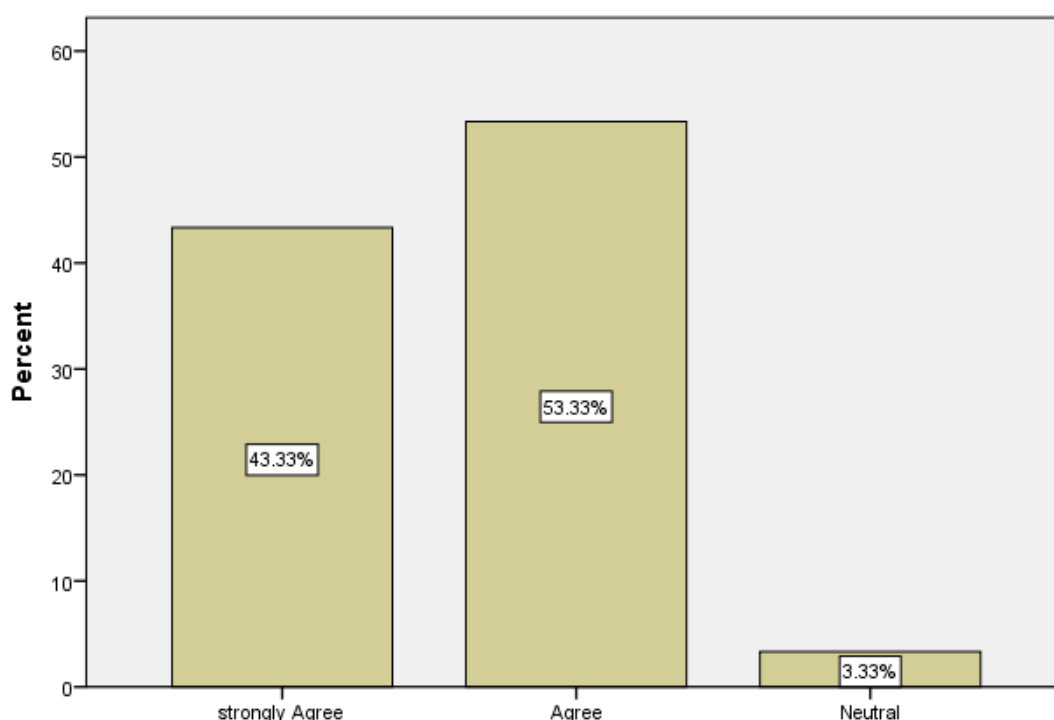


Table (4-14) and Chart (4-14) displays the responses on the importance of the idioms in the syllabus. The vast majority of teachers, 96.6% strongly agreed and agreed that there is no attention given to the idioms in the syllabuses. None of them disagreed and only 3.3% were not sure. This indicates all almost of the lecturers had general awareness about the extensive

Category Three: *students' inability in acquiring idiomatic expression*

The third category consists of six items designed to point out if Sudanese tertiary level students are not able to process and express English idioms and the problems that make them unable to do these tasks.

Table (4-15) displays that students don't differentiate between literal meaning and idiomatic meaning of idioms e.g. to spill the beans.

Measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	10	16	3	1	-
Percentage	33.3	53.3	10	3.3	-

Chart (4-15) displays that students don't differentiate between literal meaning and idiomatic meaning of idioms e.g. to spill the beans.

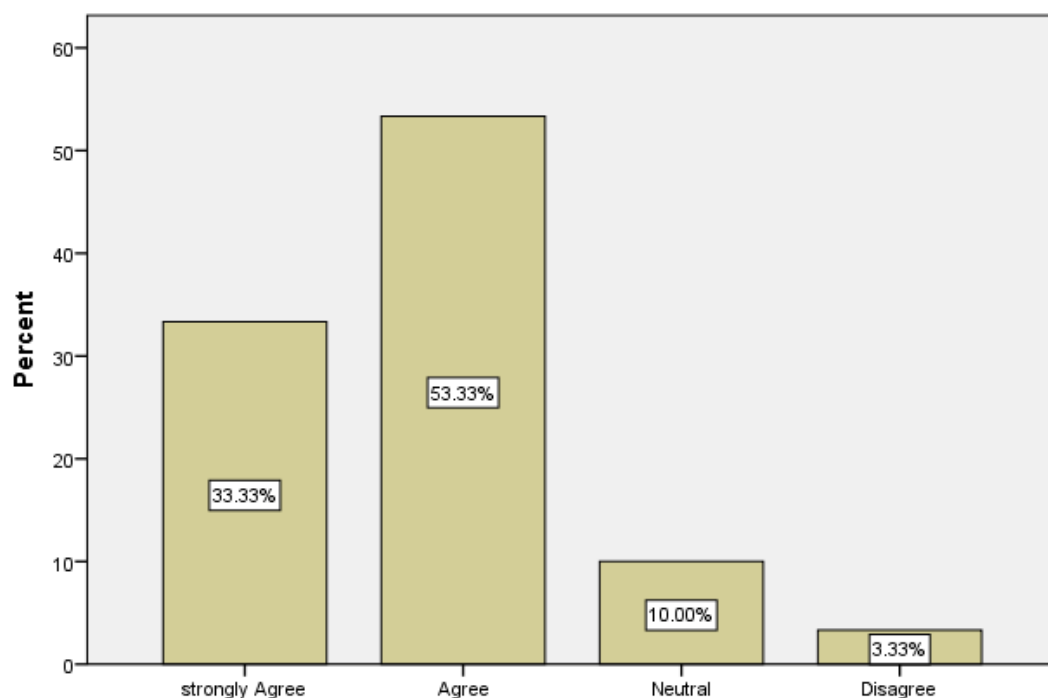


Table (4-15) and Chart (4-15) displays the responses on the students' disability to differentiate between literal meaning and idiomatic meaning of idioms e.g. to spill the beans. The vast majority of lecturers, 86.6% strongly agreed and agreed that students don't differentiate between literal meaning and idiomatic meaning of idioms. 10% were not sure and only 3.3% of them disagreed. This indicates that the students are unable to distinguish between the literal meaning and idiomatic meaning of idioms. This leads to deficiency of fluency.

Table (4-16) explains that the students are confused when they come across an idiom which has an irregular structure (e.g. to be at large) or is grammatically incorrect e.g. I am his friends).

Measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	12	15	2	1	-
Percentage	40	50	6.3	3.3	-

Chart (4-16) explains that the students are confused when they come across an idiom which has an irregular structure (e.g. to be at large) or is grammatically incorrect e.g. I am his friends).

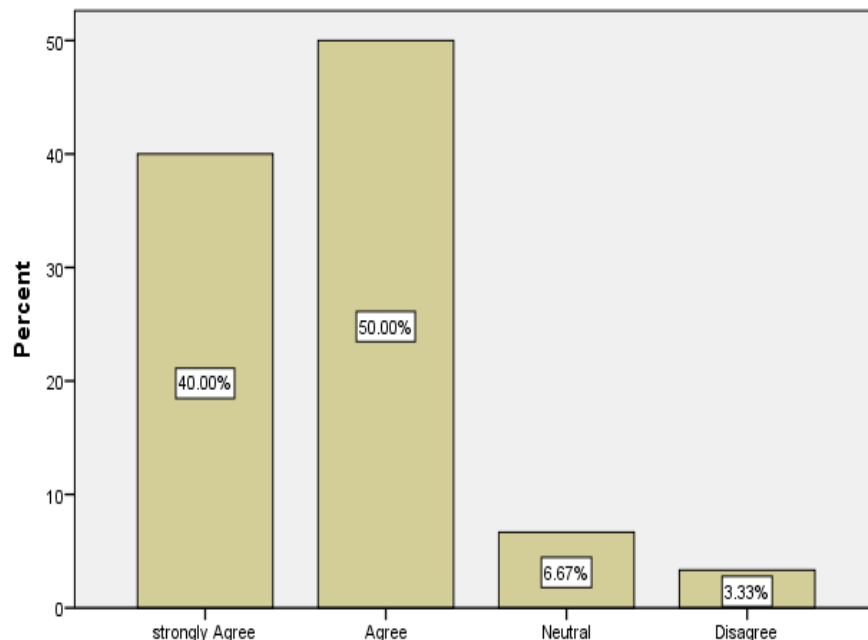


Table (4-16) and chart (4-16) established the disability of students to process and understand the idioms that have irregular structure or grammatically incorrect. According to these responses, almost all of the lecturers, 90% strongly agreed and agreed on the disability of students to process and understand the idioms that have irregular structure or grammatically incorrect. 6.7% were not sure and only 3.3% of them were disagree. This indicates that the students are unable to process and express confused English idioms.

Table (4-17) explains the importance of idioms dictionaries in processing idioms.

Measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	15	14	1	-	-
Percentage	50.	46.7	3.3	-	-

Chart (4-17) explains the importance of idioms dictionaries in processing idioms.

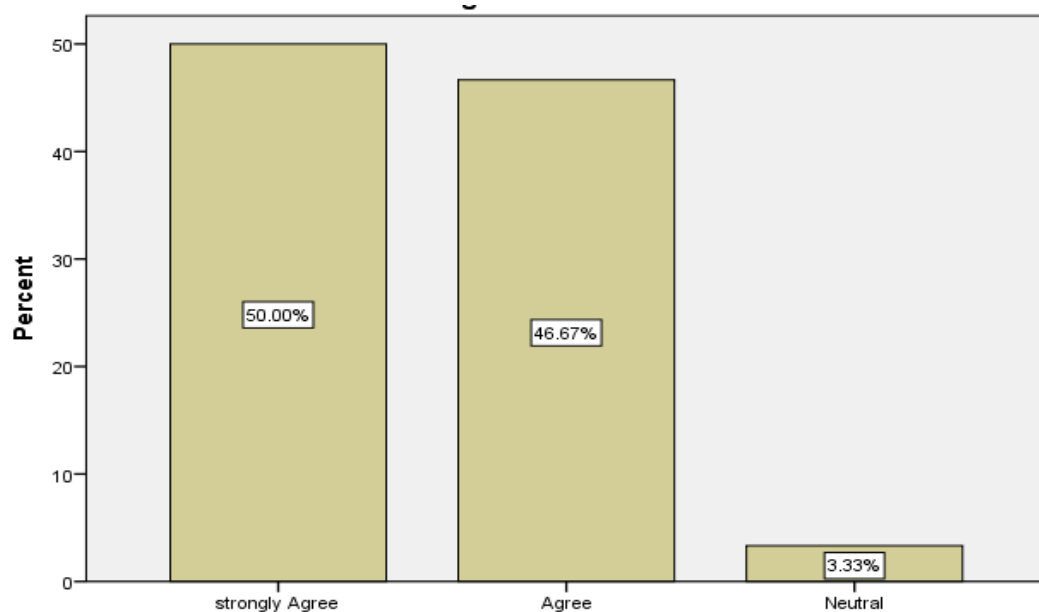
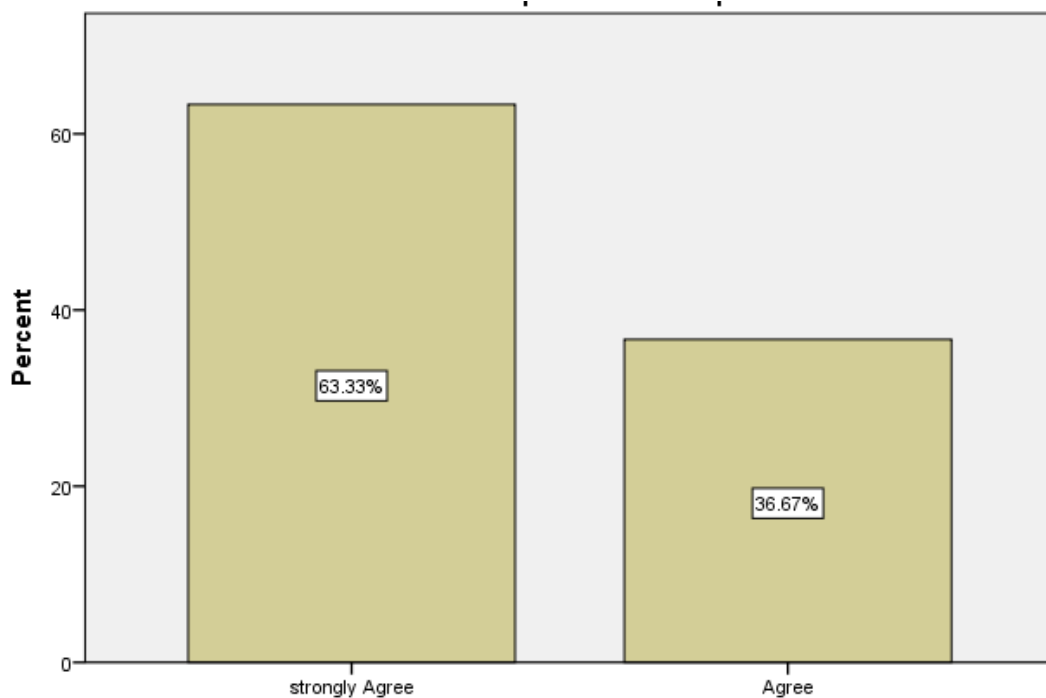


Table (4-17) and Chart (4-17) show the statistics of the importance of the idioms dictionaries in processing and producing idioms. The result revealed that 96.7% of the lecturers strongly agreed and agreed that using idioms dictionaries is important to improve idiomatic and communicative competence. This high percentage indicates a general awareness about the importance of idioms dictionaries.

Table (4-18) explains that the more extensive and comprehensible input of idioms, the more learners' communicative competence will improve.

Measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	19	11	-	-	-
Percentage	63.3	36.7	-	-	-

Chart (4-18) explains that the more extensive and comprehensible input of idioms, the more learners' communicative competence will improve.

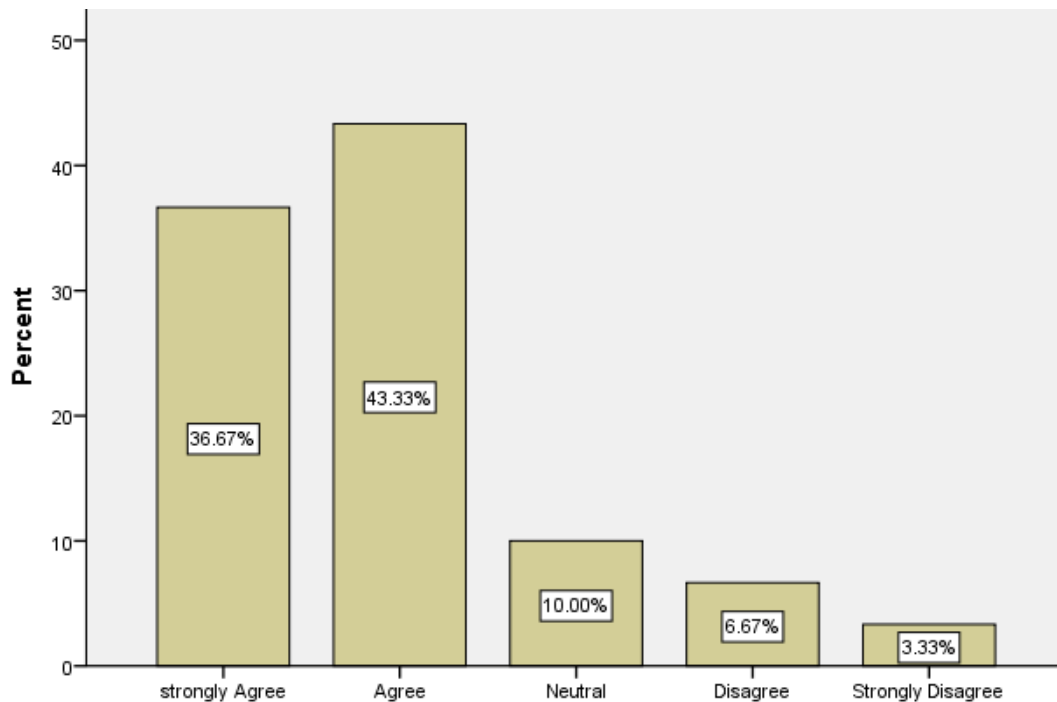


The result of the importance of devoting extensive and comprehensible input to improve the communicative competence is shown in table (4-18) and chart (4-18).all the subjects (100%) strongly agreed and agreed that improving the learners' communicative competence requires extensive and comprehensible input of idioms.

Table (4-19) explains the using of short idioms for a particular purpose, are easy to be understood or processed.

Measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	11	13	3	2	1
Percentage	36.7	43.3	10	6.7	3.3

Chart (4-19) explains the using of short idioms for a particular purpose, are easy to be understood or processed.



According to table (4-19) and chart (4-19), 80% of the participants strongly agreed and agreed the using of short idioms for a particular purpose was important for acquiring and processing idioms, 10% were not sure, 10% strongly disagree and disagreed. This might indicate that lecturers were aware of the technique of using short idioms to achieve ability of acquiring and processing idioms.

Table (4-20) explains the impact of the idiomatic expressions of the mother tongue language on using English idioms

Measurement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequency	11	13	3	3	-
Percentage	36.7	43.3	10	10	-

Chart (4-20) explains the impact of the idiomatic expressions of the mother tongue language on using English idioms

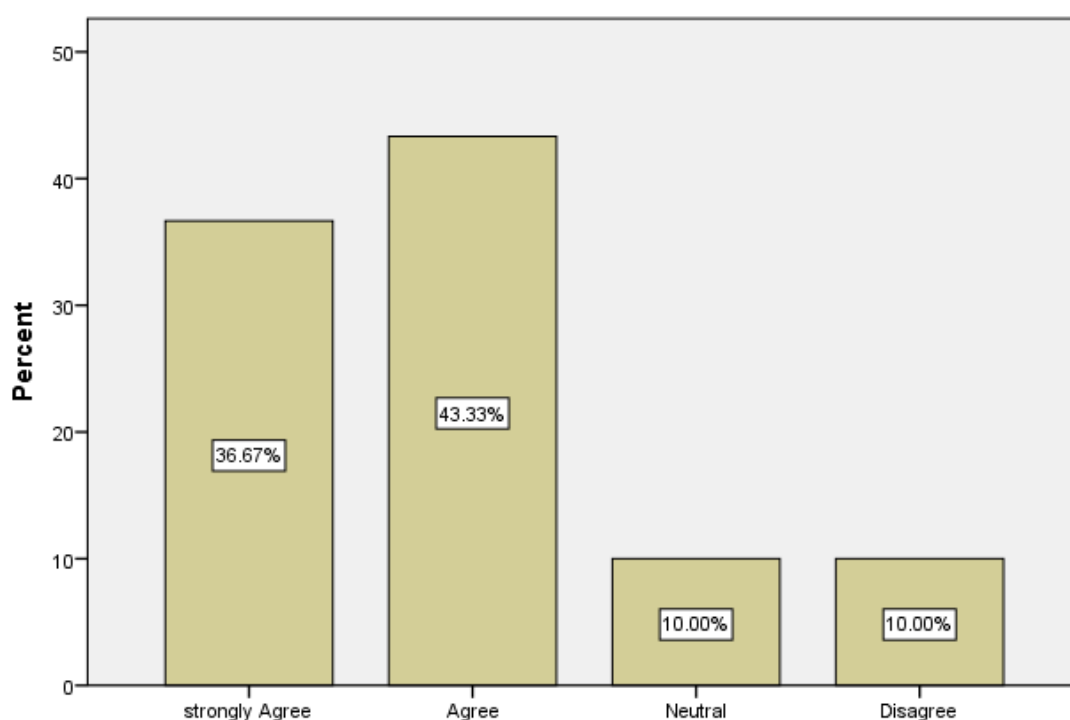


Table (4-20) and chart (4-20) show that a good command of the idiomatic expressions of the mother tongue largely contributes to improving idiomatic and communicative skills. The result revealed that 80% of the lecturers strongly agreed and agreed .Only 10% disagreed and 10% were not sure.

4.2.2 Verification of the hypotheses of the lectures' Questionnaire

4.2.2.1 The First hypothesis

Results and analyses of the first hypothesis, which assumes that “*Knowledge of idiomatic expressions is important for Sudanese tertiary level students to promote language fluency.*”, are illustrated in Table (4-21) below:

Table (4-21) explains Chi-square tests results for respondents' answers about the items of the first category that concerned with the importance of the idiomatic expressions

First Category Items	Chi-square	DF(*)	Alpha coefficient	Result	Attitude
1. I believe that Idiomatic expressions are common and important in English language studies.	14.60	2	0.001	significant	Strongly Agree
2-Idioms broaden my students' understanding and manipulation of English language	1.20	1	0.273	In Significant	agree
3. I believe that more idioms should be integrated into language curriculum right from the start.	20.66	4	0.000	Significant	Strongly agree
4. The more idioms a learner knows, the richer his vocabulary knowledge becomes.	16.2	2	0.000	Significant	agree
5. The correct use of idioms is a significant skill for language fluency.	20.93	3	0.000	Significant	agree
6. The idiomatic expressions are a vital part of the standard language, and as such can hardly be avoided.	21.66	4	0.000	Significant	agree
7. A good command of idiomatic expressions is not important for my students because communicating in simple language is preferable.	7.66	4	0.105	In Significant	agree

Note: DF = Degree of freedom

The lectures answered nine 5-point Likert-style items intended to measure their opinions and ideas of the importance of the idiomatic

expressions to their students in speaking English. According to the above table, the researcher can interpret the results as follow:

1. The calculated value of Chi-square for the Alpha coefficients of the differences for the lecturers' answers in the first item was (0.000) which is less than value of significance at the level (.05%). This indicates that, there are statistically significant differences between the answers of the lectures, which support the lectures who believed that Idiomatic expressions are common and important in English language studies. This result confirmed the first item of testing the first hypothesis which claims that "*Knowledge of idiomatic expressions is important for Sudanese tertiary level students to promote language fluency*"
2. The calculated value of Chi-square for the Alpha coefficients of the differences for the lectures' answers in the second item was (0.273) which is greater than value of significance at the level (.05%). According to table (23), this indicates that, there are not statistically significant differences between the answers of the lectures, which support the lectures who believed that "*idioms broaden my students' understanding and manipulation of English language*". The researcher believes that, this might give an impression that the participants seemed to consider that idioms are just broaden understanding of the culture because less than half of the lectures (40%) agreed that idioms broaden students' understanding and manipulation of English language.
3. The calculated value of Chi-square for the Alpha coefficients of the differences for the lecturers' answers in the third item was (0.000) which is less than value of significance at the level (.05%). This indicates that, there are statistically significant differences between the answers of the lectures, which support the lecturers who believed that more idioms should be integrated into language curriculum right from the start. This result confirmed the first item of testing the first hypothesis which claims that

“Knowledge of idiomatic expressions is important for Sudanese tertiary level students to promote language fluency”

4. The calculated value of the differences for the lecturers' answers in the fourth item was (0.000) which is less than value of significance at the level (.05%). This indicates that, there are statistically significant differences between the answers of the lecturers, which support the teachers who believed that more idioms a learner knows, the richer his vocabulary knowledge becomes. This result confirmed the fourth item of testing the first hypothesis which claims that idiomatic expressions is important for the learners to grade up their fluency.
5. The calculated value of the differences for the lecturers' answers in the fifth item was (0.000) which is less than value of significance at the level (.05%). This indicates that, there are statistically significant differences between the answers of the lecturers, which support the lecturers who believed that the correct use of idioms is a significant skill for language fluency This result confirmed the fifth item of testing the first hypothesis which claims that the well knowledge of idioms leads to language fluency
6. The calculated value of the differences for the lecturers' answers in the sixth item was (0.000) which is less than value of significance at the level (.05%). This indicates that, there are statistically significant differences between the answers of the lecturers, which support the lecturers who believed that the idiomatic expressions are a vital part of the standard language, and as such can hardly be avoided. This result confirmed the sixth item of testing the first hypothesis, which claims that idiomatic expressions are important for English learners to develop language fluency.
7. The calculated value of Chi-square for the Alpha coefficients of the differences for the lecturers' answers in the fifth item was (0.105) which is greater than value of significance at the level (.05%). This indicates that, there are not statistically significant differences between the answers of the

lecturers, which support the lecturers who believed that a good command of idiomatic expressions is not important for my students because communicating in simple language is preferable

The researcher wants to conclude that table (4-21), indicates that, most of the statements in this category are significant, because the value of the Alpha coefficient level is less than 0.05%. If we look on this hypothesis, *“Knowledge of idiomatic expressions is important for Sudanese tertiary level students to promote language fluency,”* we will find that idioms are important for Sudanese tertiary level students in spoken and English.

Taking the results of the first category responses as a whole, the initial hypothesis was proven right. It is fine mentioning that the findings of this study are in accordance with the previous studies mentioned in the literature review earlier. For example, Ambrose (2009: p190) states that knowing much span of idiomatic expressions leads to effective communication in the English language is *“Students of English who effectively communicate using idiomatic expressions show a better understanding of English and they have an ability to “communicate on a deeper level of the language”.*

Lundblom and Woods (2012) have supported this result in their study when they emphasized the importance of understanding idioms. They believe that idioms are clearly presented in academic settings; consequently, failure to comprehend idioms could affect academic performance, written composition, reading comprehension, and vocabulary, especially because the occurrence of idioms in classroom language increases as students advance in age and grade

Furthermore, Thawabteh (2011) illustrated that idioms are one of the universal aspects of all languages; they are considered to be an essential part of human communication. Further, they baffle beginner learners largely. They may cause not only linguistic but also cultural and technical problems for non-native speakers; hence, these problems might affect communication negatively.

However, this result was consistent with the previous studies. For example, (Ghada Abdelmajid Alkarazoun, (2007)) in the findings of her study she points out that Idioms, being an important part of language use and existing in spoken and written forms of languages, have been considered a hindrance to the (EFL) students since they do not usually mean what they literally state.

4.2.2.2 The Second Hypothesis

Results and analyses related to the second hypothesis, which assumes that “*There are some challenges encountered by Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expression*” were discussed in this part. To test this hypothesis, seven items were prepared to elicit the lecturers’ opinions about the factors that might contribute to point out some challenges encountered by Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expression. Table (4-22) below shows the participants’ responses towards hypothesis two:

Table (4-22) explains the Chi-square tests results for respondents’ answers about the items of the second category that concerned the challenges affect acquiring idiomatic expression

Category (2) the difficulties and problems encounter the acquiring of idioms	Chi-square	DF	Alpha coefficient	Result	Attitude
1. The idioms form and structure have a role in the idiom familiarity to learners.	1.20	1	0.273	In significant	Agree
2. Idioms which have unfamiliar words or have no equivalent in Arabic are difficult to be understood or processed	19.33	3	0.000	Significant	agree
3. Idioms of preaching, idioms of social relation and geographical idioms are acquired better through stories, films, newspapers and videos.	19.86	3	0.000	Significant	agree
4. The lack of the English social culture leads to disability in acquiring idioms	29.20	3	0.000	Significant	Strongly agree
5. Teaching/learning of idioms using a categorization method makes them be acquired easily and effectively	12.60	2	0.002	Significant	
6. The syllabus lacks idioms so the students encounter difficulties in understanding them	20.66	4	0.000	Significant	agree
7. The idiomatic expressions aren't given enough attention in the syllabus in my department	19.66	4	0.001	Significant	agree

Note DF = degree of freedom

With regard to the results of testing the second hypothesis, which assumes that *“There are some challenges encountered by Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expression”* the interpretation was stated as follow:

1. According to table (4-22), the calculated value of Chi-square for the Alpha coefficients of the differences for the lecturers' answers in the first item was (0.273) which is greater than the value of significance at the level (.05%). This indicates that, there are not statistically significant differences between the answers of the lecturers, which support the lecturers who believed that, there are some challenges encountered by Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expression. This result did not confirm the first item of testing the second hypothesis which claims that *“There are some challenges encountered by Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expression”*

The researcher would like to note that, basing on table (4-22), more than (40%) of the lecturers agreed that the idioms form and structure is the one of the challenges that faces the learners to acquire idioms. This might give an impression that the lecturers believe that structure of idioms does not affect intelligible familiarity, and that is why these two results are contradiction in terms. The researcher however believes that a tertiary level learner meets some difficulties, because his/her lack of knowledge of the form and structure of idioms affects his/her speaking and this effect is a result of insufficient familiarity of idioms form and structure so it is one of a considerable challenge which faces the tertiary level learners.

2. The calculated value of Chi-square for the Alpha coefficients of the differences for the lecturers' answers in the second item was (0.000) which is less than value of significance at the level (.05%). This indicates that, there are statistically significant differences between the answers of the lecturers, which support the lecturers who believed that Idioms that have unfamiliar words or have no equivalent in Arabic are difficult to be understood or

processed. This result confirmed the second item of testing the second hypothesis that claims, *“There are some challenges encountered by Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expression.”*

Similar studies match with these results. For example, Coridor (1967); Richard (1971) and Selinker (1992) have claimed that native language interference is the most important factor in the target language learning and acquisition and difficulties faced by L2 learners can be attributed to their native language.

3. The calculated value of Chi-square for the Alpha coefficients of the differences for the lecturers' answers in the third item was (0.000) which is less than value of significance at the level (.05%). This indicates that, there are statistically significant differences between the answers of the lecturers, which support the lecturers who believed that Idioms are acquired better through stories, films, newspapers and videos. This result confirmed the third item of testing the second hypothesis that claims, *“There are some challenges encountered by Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expression.”*

4. The calculated value of Chi-square for the Alpha coefficients of the differences for the lecturers' answers in the fourth item was (0.000) which is less than value of significance at the level (.05%). This indicates that, there are statistically significant differences between the answers of the lecturers, which support the lecturers who believed that the insufficiency of the English social culture is a considerable disability in acquiring idioms. This result confirmed the fourth item of testing the second hypothesis that claims, *“There are some challenges encountered by Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expression”.*

Many studies have been undertaken to point out the relation between culture and idioms in improving communicating competence. For instance, according to Scarino (2010, p.324) *“they come to understand culture not only as information about diverse people and their practices but also, and most*

importantly, as the contextual framework that people use to exchange meaning in communication with others and through which they understand their social world."

5. The calculated value of Chi-square for the Alpha coefficients of the differences for the lecturers' answers in the fifth item was (0.002) which is less than value of significance at the level (.05%). This indicates that, there are statistically significant differences between the answers of the lecturers, which support the lecturers who believed that a categorization method in teaching and learning idiom expressions makes them be acquired easily and effectively. This result confirmed the fifth item of testing the second hypothesis that claims, *"There are some challenges encountered by Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expression"*.

6. The calculated value of Chi-square for the Alpha coefficients of the differences for the lecturers' answers in the sixth item was (0.000) which is less than value of significance at the level (.05%). This indicates that, there are statistically significant differences between the answers of the lecturers, which support the lecturers who believed that the syllabus lacks idioms so the students encounter difficulties in understanding them. This result confirmed the sixth item of testing the second hypothesis which claims that *"There are some challenges encountered by Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expression"*. Therefore, in relation to previous studies, this result might be in accordance with the previous studies. Ghada Abdelmajid Alkarazoun, (2007) argued that the lack of idioms leads the learners to ignore them and do not care about them as they consider the idioms are not important. She states, *"There has been a clear unavailability of university courses, books, or dictionaries that have focus on teaching idioms and that may lead the (EFL) students to believe that they are not important to be used, learnt or memorized."*

7. The calculated value of Chi-square for the Alpha coefficients of the differences for the lecturers' answers in the seventh item was (0.000) which is

less than value of significance at the level (.05%). This indicates that, there are statistically significant differences between the answers of the lecturers, which support the lecturers who believed that the idiomatic expressions aren't given enough attention in the syllabus in their departments. This result confirmed the seventh item of testing the second hypothesis that claims, *“There are some challenges encountered by Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expression.”*

On the whole, the findings with regard to the items from 8 to 14 which assumed that there are some challenges encountered by Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expression. These contributed factors might be insufficient to acquire and process the idiomatic expression.

To conclude, the findings obtained from the questionnaire on the difficulties that the participants face in understanding and processing idioms. As shown in Table(4-22), all students seem to have difficulties understanding and processing idioms. This could be related to the fact that idioms are arbitrary and nonliteral (Hussein et al., 2011). The findings indicate that idioms were difficult because they are not part of the courses' syllabi. This finding is supported by Al-Khawaldeh et al. (2016). In other words, and to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there are no courses that are specially designed for learning idioms; instead, idioms might occasionally be explained in other courses. This result supports other researchers' findings that the majority of English-language learners face hardship in acquiring, understanding, and using idioms (Al-Kadi, 2015; Saleh & Zakaria, 2013). Another difficulty could be referred to the lack of cultural background behind the idioms. Similarly, most of the participants pointed out that idioms are marginalised in their EFL courses and that the cultural courses they took were not sufficient, as they are not taught well in the class. This indicates that's tudents were deprived of opportunities to learn idioms properly in the classroom. This supports Saleh & Zakaria's (2013) findings. Moreover, the results illustrated that the participants seem to have difficulty understanding

idioms with no analogue in their L1 (Arabic). This is in line with Pimenova's (2011) findings that L2 idioms with no analogue in the mother tongue are more difficult to grasp and to use. Besides that, the responses indicated that idioms with unfamiliar words and those without context seem to be difficult (Al-Kadi, 2015; Saleh & Zakaria, 2013)

4.2.2.3 The Third Hypothesis

This part of the study briefly covers why students are not able to use and process idioms and the techniques and strategies that lecturers could use in order to understand the needs of learners and how they can be helped to improve their ability to use and process idioms. Recognizing their important roles in guiding and helping students to face such difficulties, all thirty teachers were eager to share their ideas about why students are not able to use and process idioms and teaching techniques they may use in their lessons.

Table (4-23) explains the Chi-square tests results for respondents' answers about the items of the third hypothesis that concerns why are students not able to use and process idioms and the teaching techniques lecturers may use in their lessons

Category (3) the students are not able to produce idioms	Chi-square	DF	Alpha coefficient	Result	Attitude
1. Students don't differentiate between literal meaning and idiomatic meaning of idioms e.g. to spill the beans	18.80	3	0.000	significant	Strongly Agree
2. Students are confused when they come across the idiom which has an irregular structure (e.g. to be at large) or is grammatically incorrect e.g. I am his friends).	10.40	2	0.000	Significant	agree
3. Students do not use idioms dictionaries, which help them to process English idioms.	12.20	2	0.002	Significant	Strongly agree
4. The more extensive and comprehensible input of idioms, the more learners' communicative competence will improve.	2.13	1	0.144	In Significant	agree
5. Explains the using of short idioms for a particular purpose, are easy to be understood or processed	12.60	2	0.002	Significant	agree
6. The impact of the idiomatic expressions of the mother tongue language on using English idioms	11.06	3	0.011	Significant	agree

Note DF=degree of freedom

As can be seen in table (4-23) that, there was a high level of agreement about the significant role in differentiating between literal meaning and idiomatic meaning of idioms. The calculated value of the differences for the lecturers' answers in the first item was (0.000) which is less than value of significance at the level (.05%). This indicates that, there are statistically significant differences between the answers of the lecturers', which support the lecturers who believed that Students do not differentiate between literal meaning and idiomatic meaning of idioms.

According to the statistical analysis, all most of the lecturers, (93.3%) strongly agreed and agreed that students are confused when they come across the idiom which has an irregular structure or is grammatically incorrect. This was supported by the result of Chi-square tests results for the Alpha coefficients of the differences for the lecturers' answers in the second item (0.000), which claims that, idioms are confused and puzzled.

In comments about using idioms dictionaries as an important tool in teaching and learning idioms, the calculated value of the differences for the lecturers' answers in the third item was (0.002) which is less than value of significance at the level (.05%). This indicates that, there are statistically significant differences between the answers of the lecturers, which support the lectures who believed that Students do not use idioms dictionaries, which help them to process English idioms.

Using idioms dictionaries is highly recommended in teaching and learning idioms. Lecturers confirmed the usefulness of the dictionary as a reference to correct and confirm the understanding and processing of idioms even though those unknown idioms were difficult to understand or process. Their ability to process more idioms was improved by using the idioms dictionaries.

In indicating to extensive and comprehensible input of idioms which lead to improve learners' communicative competence, the calculated value of the differences for the lecturers' answers in the fourth item was (0.144) which

is greater than value of significance at the level (.05%). This points out that, there are not statistically significant differences between the answers of the lecturers, which support the lecturers who believed that extensive and comprehensible input of idioms lead to improve learners' communicative competence. This result did not confirm the fourth item of testing the second hypothesis that claims, *Sudanese Tertiary level students are not able to process and express English idioms*

The researcher would like to note that, basing on table (4-23), all most of the participants (100%) agreed that extensive and comprehensible input of idioms lead to improve learners' communicative competence. This might give an impression that the lecturers believe that lack of idioms knowledge does not affect communicative competence, and that is why these two results are contradiction in terms. The researcher however believes that Sudanese tertiary level students are not able to process and express English idioms, because their lack of idioms knowledge affects their communicative competence and this effect is a result of insufficient input of idioms so it is significant source of developing communicative competence for second and foreign language learners

The calculated value of Chi-square for the Alpha coefficients of the differences for the lecturers' answers in the fifth item was (0.002) which is less than value of significance at the level (0.05). This result indicates that the majority of the lecturers had positive attitudes towards the importance of explaining the short idioms for a particular purpose that leads to understand and process them easily and its significant role in helping learners to minimize their inabilities to understood and processed idioms and enhance communicative competence improvement.

In addition, the calculated value of Chi-square for the Alpha coefficients of the differences for the lecturers' answers in the sixth item was (0.011) which is less than the value of significance at the level (.05%). This indicates that, there are statistically significant differences between the

answers of the lecturers, which support the teachers who believed that, the idiomatic expressions of the mother tongue language affects understanding and the of using English idioms

In addition, the items number (1, 2, 3, 5, 6), have statistically significant differences between the answers of the lecturers. This because the calculated value of their significant was less than the value of significance at the level (.05%). This supports the lecturers who believed that: (i) Students don't differentiate between literal meaning and idiomatic meaning of idioms. (ii) Students are confused when they come across the idiom that has an irregular structure or is grammatically incorrect. (iii) Using of idioms dictionaries is highly recommended in understanding and processing idioms. (iv) The importance of explaining the short idioms for a particular purpose to understand and process idioms easily. (v) The effect of the idiomatic expressions of the mother tongue language on using English idioms.

Through the analysis, results and discussion demonstrated above, this study has provided an overview of some of the problems of the inability of producing idioms and the factors behind them. This part interprets the statistics related to the third hypothesis, which assumes that *"Sudanese Tertiary level students are not able to process and express English idioms"*. To test this hypothesis, certain items were prepared to elicit the lecturers' suggestive techniques of possible solutions for students to overcome their inabilities in understanding and producing English idioms that enhance the communicative competence. So what are some of the possible ways of helping students to overcome these inabilities to understand and produce English idioms?

As noted above, these results show the statistical analysis concerning the lecturers' results in deciding on the why the students are not able to understand and produce idioms. Overall, these results might be evidenced in the lecturers' positive attitudes on idioms teaching techniques as well as in the lecturers' awareness of their students' weaknesses and the effective teaching

techniques that should be employed to help them to overcome their understanding and expressing idioms and at the same time help in improving communicative competence.

Based on the above results in table (4-23), the researcher could conclude that the participants have suggested a positive facilitative role of pointing out why EF/SL learners are not able to express idioms. Their responses revealed that, differentiating between literal meaning and idiomatic meaning of idioms is mostly contributed to help students producing idioms. Moreover, the researcher believes that this result showed a good signal that all lecturers were aware of the importance of idioms dictionaries to acquiring idioms. Using of the idioms dictionaries is also recommended to attain a deeper understanding of the use of new idioms' situation that can enable them to have accurate production and comprehension.

Furthermore, providing enough input of idioms help learners to eliminate their inability to produce idioms.

It is worth mentioning that this result was confirmed by Revell, P (2012) as she has put forward that, according to language learning theories such as Krashen's (1982), learners acquire language mainly from the input they receive and they require large amounts of 'comprehensible input' before being expected to speak. On this basis, exposure to the target language would be a critical factor in idioms acquisition.

Other suggestive techniques were used such as explaining short idioms for a particular purpose, for helping in understanding and processing idioms easily and improving fluency.

Moreover, idiomatic expressions that occur in both the learners first and target language are easier to remember and interpret, despite some interference. It has been found that idiomatic expressions that completely differ from the learners' native language are harder and more difficult to process and understand

To conclude based on the above discussion, the researcher could accept the third hypothesis and pointed out that, the lecturers used some techniques to overcome the students' inability and to improve students' communicative competence. It is worth mentioning that the review of the literature on the investigations of acquiring and producing idioms given in the previous chapter was in the line of the result of this study. Idiomatic expression have a figurative meaning that is different from the literal meanings of its composing words within the expression .So, the lecturers has to make sure that the students differentiate between literal meaning and idiomatic meaning .The researcher believes that the students generally need to understand the literal meaning to work out the idiomatic meaning of the idiom. This facilitates in-depth comprehension and memorization of the idioms

Moreover, the researcher believes that the result of this study shows a good signal that all lecturers were aware of confusion of students when they come across the idiom that has an irregular structure or is grammatically incorrect. For example, idioms as *I am good friends with him* and *to be at large* break English grammatical rules .This kind of idioms can be odd or ungrammatical. It creates confusion and makes it a must for learners to deal with as if it were one word.

The researcher insures that using idioms dictionary is recommended to enable the learners to understand and use idioms .Also, it makes them improve their communicate competence

However, the result of this study reflects there is no comprehensible input of idioms. The researcher believes that comprehensible input is a hypothesis that learners will acquire language best when they are given the appropriate and extensive input. Krashen (1985) he states that supported this result

to the extend input hypothesis is applied ,to that extend will language programmes be more productive and efficient for students and easier and more pleasant for teachers.

It was recommended that it is better for learners to begin with short idioms so as to understand and process them easily.

The result of this study shows that the lecturers have to make sure that the students understand well the idioms in their mother tongue; they can examine, compare, and contrast them with idioms in the target language to help them learn idioms. The researcher believes that idioms that are similar to the mother tongue language are easy to be understood and processed. This means that lecturers have to teach the idioms related to the learners' mother tongue first then move to other idioms.

4.3 Analysis and Discussion of Pre-test and Post-test Results

The second data-gathering tool was the tests (Pre-test and Post-test) administered to the students of English language. By using the tests, the researcher intended to investigate the impact of idiomatic expressions on developing tertiary level students' communicative competence. Therefore, this section treats the qualitative data that was gained from pre / post-tests with the students in the experimental group and control group. to analyze the data. The kinds of analyses that were used included Pearson Product Moment Coefficient, which indicates the degree of relationship between groups. The researcher will apply the following procedures to analyze the results were gained from the tests

Procedures

- 1- Calculation of mean of the pre-test scores of both control and experimental groups
- 2- Calculation of mean of the pre and post-test scores of the experiment group
- 3- Calculation of mean of the pre and post-test scores of the control group
- 4- Calculation of mean of the post-test scores of the experiment group and control group

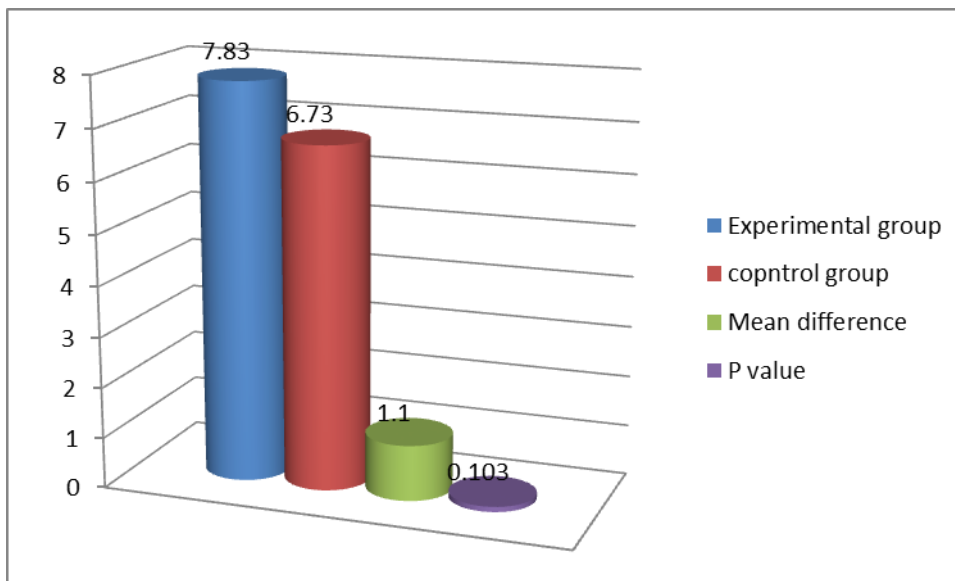
The researcher used a T-test to see whether idiomatic competence scores of the experimental and control groups were different. To answer the questions of the research, the data was gathered and shown in tables and charts. Then, the analysis and discussion of the data were done. The students in both groups did the idiomatic competence tests. Therefore, 60 students in total carried out an idiomatic competence test including 20 questions. Pre-test and post-test scores of the two groups are first shown in tables and charts ,and then, the data from the idiomatic competence tests are also shown in tables and charts then analyzed in details.

4.3.1 Statistical Analysis of the pre-test mean scores of both control and experimental groups

Table (4-24) (Idiomatic competence Pre-test mean scores of the both groups

Groups	N	Mean	Mean difference	Correlation Coefficient	P value
Experimental group	30	7.8	1.10	0.2641	0.103
Control Group	30	6.73			

Chart (4-21) (Idiomatic competence Pre-test mean scores of the both groups)



Sixty students were divided into experimental and control groups. Each group included 30 students. Before the treatment, an idiomatic competence

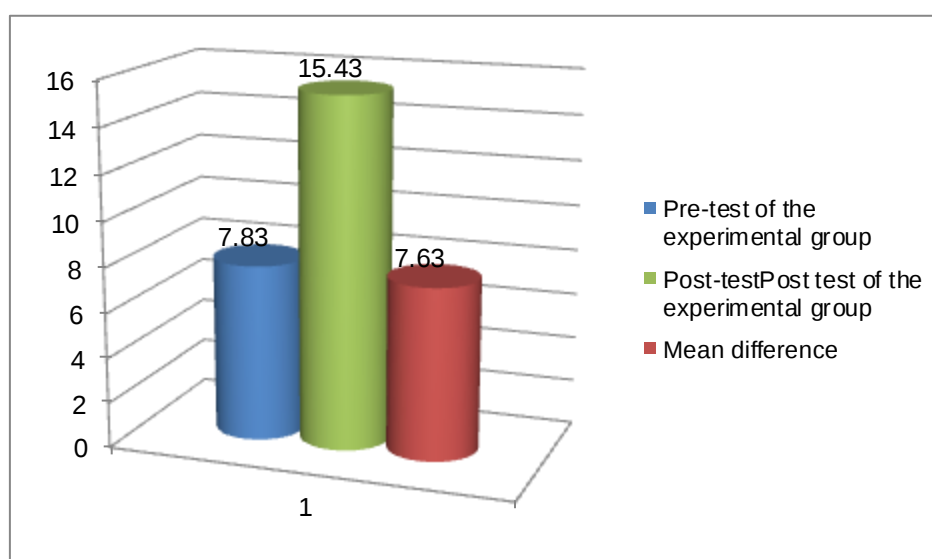
test was applied to see the existing knowledge and acquisition of the students about the idiomatic expressions. As it is seen in table (4-24) and chart (4-21) above, the pre-test idiomatic competence mean score of the experimental group is 7.8 out of 20 questions as the same as the control group's pre-test idiomatic competence mean score is 6.73. Therefore, the mean gain is 1.10. This shows that there was not statistically significant difference and the pre-test idiomatic knowledge scores of the groups are similar. In addition, the P value is 0.103, it denotes that both groups are homogenous and have equal test abilities. The value of the correlation coefficient is 0.264 it is near to zero and this means the relationship between the pre-tests of the two groups is weak and homogenous and has equal test abilities.

4.3.2 Statistical Analysis of the Pre-test and posttest mean scores of the experimental group

Table (4-25): Idiomatic competence Pre-test and posttest mean scores of the experimental group

Tests	N	Mean	Mean difference	Correlation Coefficient	P value
Pre-test of the experimental group	30	7.8	7.63	0.547	< 0.001
Post-test of the experimental group	30	15.43			

Chart (4-22) Idiomatic competence Pre-test and posttest mean scores of the experimental group.



After the treatment, an idiomatic competence test was applied to see the existing knowledge and acquisition of the students about the idiomatic expressions. As it is seen in table (4-25) and chart (4-22) above, the pre-test idiomatic competence mean score of the experimental group is 7.8 out of 20 questions is not as the same as the experimental group's post-test mean score which is 15.43. The mean gain is 7.63. This shows that this difference was statistically significant. Also, The P value is less than 0.001. It denotes that both groups are not homogenous and have not equal test abilities. The value of the correlation coefficient is 0.547 is not closer to zero which means there is a tendency for high pre-test scores go with high post-test scores and vice versa .There is also a strong correlation between both tests of the same group, so this correlation was statistically significant.

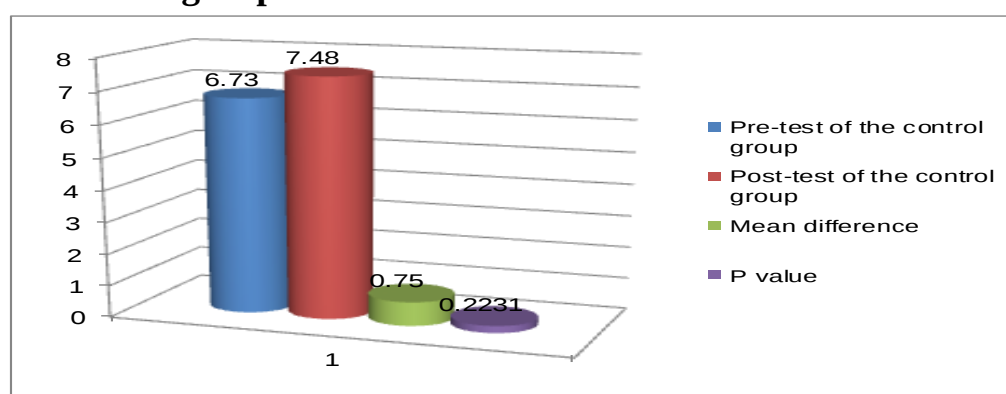
4.3.3 Statistical Analysis of the Pre-test and posttest mean scores of the control group.

To see whether there was statistically significant difference or not between the Pre-test and posttest scores of the group in terms of idiomatic knowledge, t-test was used , and the statistical data about the t-test results are presented in table (4-26) and chart (4-23) below

Table (4-26) Idiomatic competence Pre-test and posttest mean scores of the control group.

Tests	N	Mean	Mean difference	Correlation Coefficient	P value
Pre-test of the control group	30	6.73	0.75	0.8849	0.2231
Post-test of the control group	30	7.48			

Chart (4-23) Idiomatic competence Pre-test and posttest mean scores of the control group.



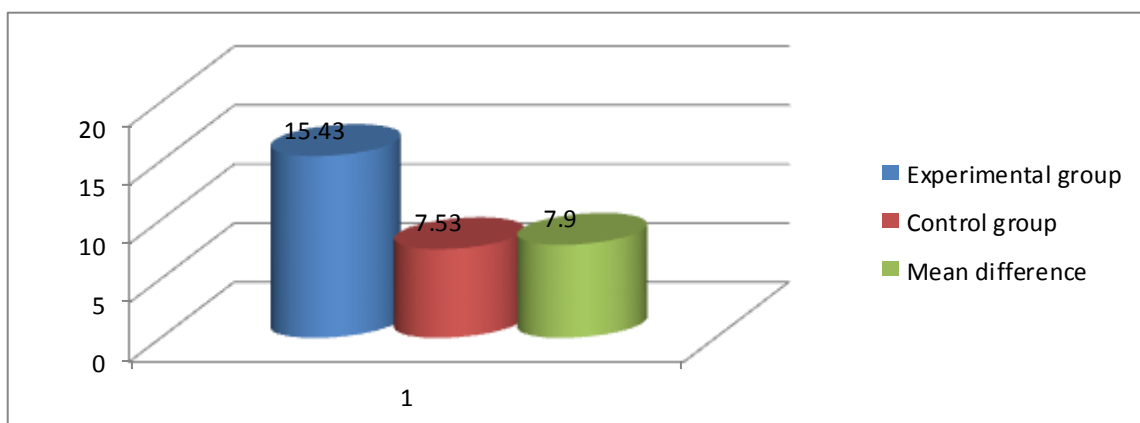
As it is seen in table (4-26) and chart (4-23) above, the pre-test idiomatic competence mean score of the control group is 6.73 out of 20 questions is about to be as the same as the control group's post-test idiomatic competence mean score is 7.48 . Therefore, the mean gain is 0.75. This shows that there was not statistically significant difference and the pre-test and posttest idiomatic knowledge scores of the control groups are similar. In addition, the P value is 0.2231, it denotes that both tests are homogenous and have equal test abilities. The value of the correlation coefficient is 0.8849 it is closer to zero and this means the relationship between the pre-test and the post-test of the control group is weak and homogenous and has equal test abilities.

4.3.4 Statistical Analysis of posttest mean scores of both groups

Table (4-27) Idiomatic competence posttest mean scores of both groups.

Groups	N	Mean	Mean difference	Correlation Coefficient	P value
Experimental group	30	15.43	7.90	0.489	< 0.001
Control group	30	7.53			

Chart (4-24) Idiomatic competence posttest means scores of both groups.



According to table (4-27) and chart (4-24) above, the posttest idiomatic competence mean score of the experimental group is 15.43 out of 20 questions is not as the same as the control group's post-test mean score, which is 7.53. The mean gain is 7.90. This shows that this difference was extremely statistically significant. In addition, the P value is less than 0.001. It

denotes that both groups are not homogenous and have not equal test abilities. The value of the correlation coefficient is 0.489 which is not closer to zero which means there is a tendency for high pre-test scores go with high post-test scores and vice versa .There is also a strong correlation between both tests of the both groups, so this correlation was statistically significant.

Although there was significant difference between the pre-test and post-tests in both control and experimental groups, the mean post test score in the experimental group was significantly much higher than the mean post-test score in control group.

Many evidences can be illustrated through table (4-27) and chart (4-24), which shows the remarkable significance between both groups' performance in the post test. Hence, the hypothesis that assumed higher scoring in the experimental group's post-test than in the control group's post-test was highly ascertained.

The question was stated as follows: "Is there a significant difference between the pre and post-test results of the control group, after the treatment of the experimental group, of their regular English classes (the group who follows the regular curricula without further practice on idioms)?" The hypothesis related to this question was: "There is no significant difference between the pre and post-test results of the control group after their regular English classes." The scores obtained by this group were computed to verify whether the score means of the control group were the same or different. The data, which was presented in Table (4-27) and chart (4-24) shows that there was not a statistically significant difference in the control group's post-tests. Hence, the hypothesis that assumed no higher scoring in the post-test than in the pre-test for the control group was totally rejected and accepted the hypothesis that assumed higher scoring in the post-test than in the pre-test for the experimental group.

Chapter Five

Conclusions

Chapter Five

Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

This study is aimed to investigate the importance of the idiomatic expressions for Sudanese tertiary level students to promote their language fluency, and to know the challenges encountered by Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expression. This study also aims to know the *inabilities* of the Sudanese tertiary level students to process and express English idioms. It also aims at attempting to reach to some treatment strategies or techniques that might help in getting over these difficulties to rise up the student's communicative competence.

After the analysis and discussion of the collected data in the previous chapters, the study is going to point out the findings that have been worked up throughout the research period in light of the analysis and interpretation of data collected by the two data-gathering instruments, which are: (1) a close-ended questionnaire, (2) pretest and posttest.

In this part, the answers to the three research questions proposed in the introduction are going to be summarized. Moreover, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies are included.

5.2 Main Findings of the Study

The findings that have been discussed and stated in this section seemed to confirm that, there is a major impact of idiomatic expressions on developing tertiary level students' communicative competence. Such impacts are made by acquiring idioms and using specific strategies in teaching and learning idiomatic expressions.

In the previous chapters an analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire, and the test and the pretest, for the three research questions of the study were discussed and answered. Each question will be considered separately.

5.2.1 Findings for Study Question (1)

The present study highlighted the impact of idiomatic expressions on developing tertiary level students' communicative competence. The survey results revealed that the knowledge of idiomatic expressions is important for Sudanese tertiary level students to promote language fluency. The results from this study underscores the following findings:

1. Knowledge of idiomatic expressions is important in promoting language fluency. The knowledge of the idiomatic usage of language has become very important and common in English that it can allow the learner to speak or write fluently with using idioms. So, the learning of idioms considered as a backbone in acquiring and producing the language. Therefore, Idiomatic expressions should be created heavily on regular materials.
2. Idiomatic expressions broaden the students' understanding and make them able to manipulate the English language.
3. Idioms increase the proportion and improve the quality of the learners' vocabulary. Thus, the effective use of vocabulary empowers and creates successful communicative competence. In addition, the increasing of vocabulary in any language equips such language with the ability to sustain the increasing daily needs and challenges of effective communication.
4. There is a necessity of the inclusion of idiomatic expressions in university syllabuses (80% of the lecturers). Most of the participants pointed out that those idiomatic expressions are marginalised in the EFL courses and that the cultural courses they took were not sufficient. This means that idiomatic expressions should not only be increased but also taught in the early stages of language learning in intermediate and high school education.

5. Using idiomatic expressions correctly and effectively makes the learners become fluent speakers. This refers to the knowledge of cultural background behind the idioms as well as experience dealing with idioms.
6. Idiomatic expressions are essential and are considered a big part of English language proficiency as such cannot be neglected when communicating in the English Language. Moreover, they are based on language history, heritage, and culture. Burke (1998) claims that
“knowledge of slang and idioms is fundamental to non-native speakers' understanding of the language that native speakers actually use”

5.2.2 Findings for Study Questions (2)

This part was devoted to highlight the findings revealed from the results of the second research hypothesis which claims that: *There are some challenges encountered by Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expression.* These challenges were discussed in this part:

1. The form and the structure of the idioms is a real problem, which encounters the learners to understand and process idioms.
2. Idioms with no analogue in the mother tongue are more difficult to grasp and to use. Besides that, the responses indicated that idioms with unfamiliar words and those without context seem to be difficult to acquired and processed.
3. The students are not equipped with specific strategies for acquiring and using certain idioms like idioms of preaching, idioms of social relation and geographical idioms. Those need interactive situations, and various types of media.
4. Student's lack of cultural background behind the idioms and the differences in culturally bound of the idiomatic expressions knowledge.
5. Idioms expressions are not focused on and included within the syllabuses of universities in Sudan.

6. Students had negative attitudes towards the important role of idioms expressions in English language.

5.2.3 Findings for Study Questions (3)

With the regard to the analysis of the inabilities in acquiring and processing the idiomatic expressions and to overcome these inabilities to achieve the improvements in communicative competence, the results revealed insightful information about the inabilities of not acquiring the idiomatic expressions that might be found in the university students majoring in English at the Faculties of Education in Nile Valley University.

It is worth mentioning that, the study of the inabilities in acquiring and processing the idiomatic expressions analysis and their causes tend to be very useful for both lecturers and students, specifically, in providing students with learning strategies that may contribute to eliminating inabilities as well as helping them to improve their English communicative competence also providing the lecturers with a number of effective strategies and techniques to help in teaching idiomatic expressions more effectively and interestingly. From that, lecturers could find the best way to teach idioms and explain the important concepts that will equip them to improve their students' English communicative competence.

In light of the participants' responses, the researcher would present the findings that might help to minimize inabilities in acquiring and processing the idiomatic expressions that students have while using these idioms. The researcher hopes that these findings could be somehow helpful to teachers and students at the faculty of Education- Nile Valley University to get rid of these inabilities to teach and acquire the idioms effectively to improve fluency. The findings of these inabilities were stated as follow:

1. Students are unable to differentiate between literal meaning and idiomatic meaning of idioms.

2. Using idioms dictionaries is highly recommended in processing idioms as they help learners of English to improve their communicative competence particularly in familiarizing themselves with idioms structure and meanings.
3. Short idioms with simple structure are easy to process and understand by most students because of the high degree of closeness between their literal and figurative meanings.
4. Idioms that are identical in the first and the target language are the easiest to comprehend and produce. Similar idioms are produced with some interference from the first language while idioms that are completely different in both languages are the hardest to comprehend and produce.
5. Exposure to more idioms through intensive comprehensible input of idioms leads to communicative competence improvement
6. The characteristics of an idiom can determine whether the acquisition of it is easy or not. This supported by Cooper

“Frozen idioms are learned more quickly than flexible idioms because they are heard more frequently in only one syntactic form rather than in several and are, therefore, internalized as a single lexical item” (Cooper 1998 p. 257)..

7. Idioms that have an irregular structure or are grammatically incorrect are confused and difficult to be processed.

In conclusion, the researcher would like to draw the teachers' attention to be well-qualified and well-trained in order to overcome the students' inabilities in acquiring and producing idioms in a proper way.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the participants' responses to the questionnaire, the test and pretest, along with the researcher's viewpoint, the conclusions are listed below. It is worth noting that the results obtained from the different tools, helped greatly in pointing out the impact of the idiomatic expressions in developing the students' communicative competence and finding the exact

reasons behind the inabilities of Sudanese university students in acquiring the idioms. The findings led the researcher to state a number of conclusions pertaining to the three research questions:

1. Research question (1) asked to *what extent is the knowledge of idiomatic expressions important for Sudanese tertiary level students to promote language fluency?* In looking at the data for “importance of the idiomatic expressions in promoting communicative competence”, it is generally obvious that the survey results revealed the knowledge of idiomatic expressions is important for Sudanese tertiary level students to promote language fluency. The study findings indicated that the knowledge of the idiomatic usage of language has become very important and common in English that it can allow the learner to speak fluently with using idioms. So, the learning of idioms considered as a backbone in acquiring and producing the language.

Finally, the results showed that Idiomatic expressions are essential and are considered a big part of English language proficiency as such cannot be neglected when communicating in the English Language. Moreover, they are based on language history, heritage, and culture. Also the results revealed that there is a necessity of the inclusion of idiomatic expressions in university syllabuses. Most of the participants pointed out that those idiomatic expressions are marginalized in the EFL courses and that the cultural courses they took were not sufficient.

Referring to the results of this study, the first hypothesis was proven right because the analysis showed that the idioms increase the proportion and improve the quality of the learners' vocabulary. Thus, the increasing of vocabulary in any language equips such language with the ability of sustaining the increasing daily needs and challenges of effective communication. All most of the participants insured that idiomatic expressions broaden the students' understanding and make them able to manipulate the English language .Moreover,Using idiomatic expressions correctly and effectively makes the learners become fluent speakers. The

researcher would like to mention that, understanding and using idioms fluently could be viewed as a sign towards language proficiency as they could be an effective way to give students better conditions to enhance their communication skills in the daily context.

2. Research question (2) asked *what challenges do Sudanese tertiary level students encounter in acquiring idiomatic expressions?* According to the results, these challenges might occur due to the absence of idiomatic expressions in Sudan universities' syllabuses, and thus lead to weakness in acquiring and processing idioms. Furthermore, the participants confirmed that lacking intensive exposure of idioms played a significant role in causing acquiring and processing idioms difficulties; moreover, the study subjects' responses demonstrated that the students in Nile Valley University lack of cultural awareness and the differences in culturally-bound. This reflected in not understanding and producing idioms.

In addition to the above, the participants asserted that idioms familiarity is one of the biggest challenges for students at the Faculty of Education at Nile Valley University to understand and produce idioms. This means that the familiarity with idioms that have the same meaning in the mother tongue language helps second language learners to correctly guess the figurative meaning of second language idiomatic expressions. Also, the participants confirmed that idioms form and structure represent a big challenge to the learners to guess the figurative meaning and process them

Overall, it is worth noting that the participants pointed out that the challenge behind not the students acquiring idiomatic expressions that the idioms are not taught in the categorization method. If we want to better understand and use idioms in our communication, we shouldn't depend only on the definitions, we should analyze the idioms into different categories in terms of structure whether they are related to animals, similes, metaphors etc. Moreover, the researcher would like to draw the teachers' attention to the significant role of leading certain strategies in helping the students to

overcome these challenges and they should do their best to keep maintaining and enhancing the students' acquisition of the idiomatic expressions.

3. Research questions (3) asked, to what extent are *Sudanese Tertiary level students able to process and express English idioms*? This part presents the inabilities of the students to process and express idioms that mapped in the study results.

1. Most of the study participants confirmed that the students have inability to understand the idioms that do not follow normal pattern of the language (e.g. *I am his friends*) also, they cannot distinguish between the literal (linguistic) meanings and idiomatic (figurative) meanings of some idiomatic expressions (e.g. *Lay one's card on the table*). Cooper (1998) supports this point;

[a]n idiom can have a literal meaning, but its alternate, figurative meaning must be understood metaphorically. For example, over the hill can mean on the other side of the hill, but the figurative meaning is to be very old (p. 255)

According to the researcher's point of view, idioms that appear in a context, films, plays and life situations are easier for learners to differentiate between their literal meanings and figurative meanings.

2. The results revealed that participants were aware of the important role of idioms expressions dictionaries. Most of the participants asserted that not using the idioms dictionaries makes the learners encounter inabilities in using and processing idioms properly. Therefore, using special dictionaries that explain idiomatic expressions and their meanings is needed. According to the researcher's point of view, the awareness of using idioms dictionaries in encouraging the learners to improve their abilities in the area of idiomatic expressions is highly recommended for the idioms dictionaries can give the figurative meaning of the target idioms.

In addition to the above, the participants highlighted that the extensive and large doses of idioms remove the students' inabilities of using idioms

successfully. Furthermore, most of the participants confirmed that identical idioms to the learner's mother tongue and short idioms are simpler and easier to process and understand. To reduce the learners' inabilities the teacher should concentrate on idiomatic expressions that occur in both the learners first and target language. It has been found that idiomatic expressions that completely differ from the learners' native language are harder and more difficult to process and understand.

Interestingly, this result pointed out that strengthen the students' abilities to acquire and produce idiomatic expressions is a good way to improve communicative competence.

To conclude, this study had yielded very interesting results that can be beneficial to the teachers of English in general, including the researcher. The result of the participants' responses reflected that lack of cultural awareness, completely different idiomatic expressions to the learner's mother tongue and complex ones, lacking extensive exposure to idiomatic expressions and not using idioms' dictionaries are the strongest factors that contribute on students' inabilities.

Furthermore, the researcher would like to add that, this study is one of the studies that handle some important issues in the aspect of the L2 field. Moreover, this study is of special significance since it was implemented to investigate the importance of idioms in prompting the speaking skill to the students majoring in English at Nile Valley University.

5.4 Recommendations

The present study has conducted to investigate the impact of the idiomatic expressions in developing the students' communicative competence, also to point out the challenges encountered by Sudanese tertiary level students in acquiring idiomatic expression. In addition to that, find out the inabilities which prevent the student from not acquiring and using idioms successfully. Based on the findings stated earlier in this chapter, and for the sake of reducing the number of the challenges and inabilities encountered by

university learners of English as a foreign language and improving the teaching strategies of the idiomatic expressions in the context of the English Curriculum taught at Sudanese universities in general and Nile Valley University in particular, the researcher has figured out some recommendations in the following subsections:

1. Teachers should raise their students' awareness of the importance of the idiomatic expressions in order to be in a parallel position to native speakers in such ways as through

(i) Seminars or in English clubs activities,

(ii) They can also raise students' concern about English idioms in forms of conversations;

(iii) More importantly, teachers need to make the idiomatic expressions lessons more comfortable and interesting.

2. It is recommended that students should be taught about the culture of English speakers and cultural differences. In addition, it is recommended that the differences in culturally bound knowledge ought to be given a care in the English language materials especially in teaching idiomatic expressions.

3. Since the (EFL) students in Nile Valley University have shown a considerable weakness in the idioms test, it is recommended that (EFL) students ought to be exposed to more idioms through intensive communication with native English speakers.

4. The idiomatic expressions are used in daily life by native speakers in the different lifestyles, so it is recommended that more of idiomatic expressions ought to be focused on and included within the (EFL) teaching materials of universities in Sudan and must not be neglected. Therefore, idioms are not to be taught by incidental learning as Learning incidentally is more gradual, slower and lacks the focused attention of explicit learning.

5. Teachers need to make teaching of idiomatic expressions effective by using many activities such as (i) dividing Idioms into Categories; (ii) defining Idioms; (iii) discuss Idioms from Newspaper Comic Strips; (iv) drawing

Idioms;(v) Idioms from TV Shows;(vi) idiom-of-the-Day/week;(vi) idioms in Cartoons .These activities result in improving the students' communication skills frequently.

6. Teachers of English Language should be trained to be aware of the origin of idioms; so that they in turn can improve their students understanding of idioms and help them to remember.

7. It is recommended that teachers should try to highlight connections between the learners' first language and target language because they rely on their first-hand knowledge, backgrounds, and experience of idioms when trying to understand idioms in a foreign language.

8. The learners should make regular use of good idiomatic expressions dictionaries to enable them to have a formidable base and firm grip of this linguistic aspect as well as the entire language usage.Hodges and Whitten(1984:255) assert,

the role of the dictionary should not be neglected when one is in doubt about what preposition to use after a given word.

Bolaji (2004:577) in the same direction asserts,

a good dictionary will contain many idiomatic and non – idiomatic collocations entered and explained under one or other of the components.

These assertions go a long way to show that a good dictionary is inevitable to any second language learner who wants to make genuine headway in the study and use of idioms.

9. Teachers should encourage their students to apply idiomatic expressions outside classrooms and to learn more in their spare time. Moreover, they should be encouraged to listen to news, watch television programs and read materials that include idiomatic expressions.

10. Idioms should be introduced to learners as early stages as possible along with other aspects of semantics, pragmatics, sociolinguist, culture, and conventions of discourse.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

Based on the data in this study, the conclusions drawn and by taking keys from the results, the following topics for additional research are recommended:

1. It would be very interesting to carry out further research on idioms difficulties and strategies of learning using huge samples from different universities and academic levels to support the present study's findings
2. Theoretical study could be conducted to examine the relation between idioms and speech acts.
 1. Moreover, study is required to look at the effectiveness of some particular teaching techniques in prompting students' acquisition of the idioms.
 2. Further comprehensive and large-scale investigations may be conducted to cover other areas that have to do with the idiomatic expressions issue in the Sudanese EFL learning process. Therefore, research will be required in the following themes; insufficient practice, wrong implementation and lacking amount of exposure to the spoken English language which represents such idiomatic expressions. This study was restricted to a specific group of participants. It would be very interesting to conduct a similar study targeting other university students and compare the findings of both studies.
 3. Study is needed to investigate the reasons for weakness in EFL reading, writing and listening skills in relation to idiomatic expressions.
 4. A further study could include factors such as gender, age, linguistic background or other factors relating to the students as well as information concerning the responsibilities of a teacher, which in turn could give important insight into the process of acquiring idiomatic expressions.
 5. It is worth investigating the variation between the same idioms' literal and the figurative meaning according to context.

6. A study could be carried out to investigate the relation between frequency of idiomatic expression, their familiarity to Sudanese English learners and learners' recognition of such idioms compared to infrequent idioms.
7. Furthermore, future studies should compare EFL-majors and non-EFL majors in terms of idiom familiarity, efficiency at guessing the meaning of idioms and the type of techniques they use while guessing.
8. It is an intriguing idea to examine frequently used idiomatic expressions by native English speakers as to include them in the teaching materials.
9. Preparing bilingual dictionaries which make clear existing differences between idioms in Sudanese dialect and their English parallels.
10. Further study is needed to develop reliable and practical tests to assess communicative competence in a comprehensive manner.

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Appendices

Appendix (1)

The Validation jury

Name	University	Position
Dr. Ali Ahmed Hussein	Qatar University	Associated professor
Dr.Alkhair Siddig Ali	Nile Valley University	Associated professor
Dr. Mohamed Suliman	Sudan University	Associated professor
Dr.Bushra Abdulateef	Nile Valley University	Associated professor
Dr. Salah Mohamed Mahjoub	Nile Valley University - Head of the English Department -Faculty of Education	Assistant professor

Appendix 2

TEST FOR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH AT NILE VALLEY UNIVERSITY

A) Choose the idiom which has the best meaning in the context below

1. Tom won't buy that old car because it has too much..... on it.
a. ups and downs b. odds and ends c. wear and tear
2. My..... were very kind to me when I was seriously ill.
a. heart and soul b. rank and file c. flesh and blood
3. The criminal knows the.....of successful robberies.
a. part and parcel b. ins and outs c. ups and downs
4. Alone in the house at night without electricity, I was on
a. heart and soul b. ups and downs c. pins and needles.
5. If you're too..... with your money now, you'll have nothing saved for your old age.
a. big shot b. free and easy c. spick-and-span
6. If you tell too many..... , it will become a habit, and no one will ever believe you.
a. white lies b. second thoughts c. fair and square

B) Choose the best substitute for the idiom in bold:

1. When her friend Anna got into Yale, Nicole was **green with envy**.
a. sick b. happy for her c. very jealous
2. Thanks for baking cookies for me. **You've got a heart of gold**.
a. You're a very nice person.
b. You're a reliable person.
c. You're very generous with your money
3. I know you'll like my cookies since **you've got a sweet tooth**.
a. your teeth are hurting
b. you don't like sweet things
c. you like sweet things
4. I was thirsty. This iced tea is **just what the doctor ordered**.
a. exactly what I needed

b. very healthy for me

c .exactly what my doctor recommended

5.I'm **in good spirits** today because I got a promotion at work.

a . happy

b .drunk

c. tired

C) Choose the phrasal verb which has the best meaning in the context below.

1. Do you ever fail to do your duties or do you always..... them?

a. believe in

b. live up to

c. carry out

2.When the noise I began to speak.

a. broke in b. went without c. died down

3. I tried to get through to him, but I couldn't.....his misunderstanding.

a. work up to b. catch on c. clear up

D) For each proverb ,circle the best meaning.

1. Rome wasn't built in a day.

a) Rome wasn't built to meet today's standards.

b) One can't love and be wise.

c)Great projects take time.

2. Too many cooks spoil the broth.

a) To many cooks, the broth is the first course.

b)A task is at risk when more people are involved than are needed.

c)A penny saved is a penny earned.

3. Don't judge a book by its cover.

a) One should read a book by its cover

b) A book is usually a good friend.

c) Don't judge a thing by appearances.

4. It rains cats and dogs.

a) The cats and dogs come down.

b) It rains heavily.

c) There are many cats and dogs when the rain falls.

5. The used key is always bright .

- a) A key opens the door
- b) Regular practice results in the best performance.
- c) All that glitters is not gold.

6. They see eye to eye.

- a) An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.
- b) People are in agreement.
- c) Two people can look directly at each other.

Appendix (4)

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LECTURERS OF ENGLISH

Dear doctor /

• You are kindly asked to express your opinion by giving a tick mark in the box below each statement:

1. I believe that Idiomatic expressions are common and important in English language studies.

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

2. Idioms broaden my students' understanding and manipulation of English language.

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

3. I believe that idioms should be integrated into language curriculum right from the start.

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

4. I think the more idioms a learner knows, the richer his vocabulary knowledge becomes.

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

5. I believe that the correct use of idioms is a significant skill for language fluency .

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

6. I think the idiomatic expressions are a vital part of the standard language, and as such can hardly be avoided .

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

7. A good command of idiomatic expressions is not important for my students because communicating in simple language is preferable .

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

8. I believe that the idiom form and structure have a role in the idiom familiarity to learners.

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

9. Idioms which have unfamiliar words or have no equivalent in Arabic are difficult for my students to be understood or processed.

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

10. . I believe that idioms of preaching, idioms of social relation and geographical idioms are acquired better through stories, films, newspapers and videos.)

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

11. The lack of the English social culture of my students leads to disability in acquiring idioms that show customs, traditions, beliefs and ideology

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

12. I believe that teaching / learning of idioms using a categorization method(animals ,smiles, customs...etc)makes them acquired easily and effectively.

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

13. The syllabus, which I teach, lacks idioms so my students encounter difficulties in understanding them

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

14. Idiomatic expressions are not given enough attention in the syllabus in my department.

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

15. My students do not differentiate between literal meaning and idiomatic meaning of idioms e.g. to spill the beans.

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

16. My students are confused when they come across an idiom which has an irregular structure (e.g. to be at large) or is grammatically incorrect e.g. I am his friends.)

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

17. My students don't use idioms dictionaries which can help them to process English idioms.

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

18. I believe that the more comprehensible input of idioms, the more learners' communicative competence will improve.

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

19. I think short idioms (phrasal verbs e.g .watch out), which are used for a particular purpose , are easy to be understood or processed.

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

20. I believe that the good command of the idiomatic expressions of the mother tongue language helps to use English idioms.

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly Disagree ☐

Your cooperation and effort are appreciated.

Thank you very much.

Adil Ali (Ph.D. candidate, University of Shendi)