EFL Learners' Comprehension of English Idioms at The University Level

Enas Abdelwahab Eltom RahmtAllah

Department of English Language & Literature, College of Languages & Humanities, Unaizah

P. O. Box 5380 Qassim University, Saudi Arabia

*E-mail: enastom@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study aimed to examine the understanding of English idioms among EFL learners at the university level. To do this, an evaluative test was conducted to assess EFL learners' comprehension, and a questionnaire was used to investigate the problems and difficulties they face when learning English idioms. The study involved 85 Saudi female undergraduate English majors at the Department of English Language and Literature, College of Languages and Humanities, Unaizah, at levels seven and eight. The data collected were analysed using SPSS 25. The study results indicated that the learners had sufficient knowledge of idioms and were familiar with idiomatic expressions. However, the results also revealed that some students had difficulties learning idioms. Based on the findings, recommendations have been presented.

1. Introduction

Understanding English vocabulary extends beyond knowing the dictionary definitions of words; it involves grasping words' subtle and suggestive meanings, mainly when used in figurative language. A pivotal element of this nuanced understanding is idiomatic expressions, essential for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) aiming for native-like fluency. Researchers such as Nation & Meara (2002) and Nunan (2003) observe that idioms are not just linguistic flourishes but foundational to mastering the language, enriching communication with vivid, culturally rich meanings that go beyond the literal. Idioms are unique in that their meanings cannot be inferred from the individual words they comprise. Wright (2002) argues that an idiom is a phrase characterised by a set expression native speakers recognise, and it is impossible to invent one's language and employ it figuratively rather than literally. He adds that idiomatic language is the area of language closest to culture. According to Merriam-Webster's dictionary, an idiom is a unique phrase in a language because its meaning cannot be inferred from the individual meanings of its words (like "up in the air" meaning "undecided") or because of its unusual grammatical structure (as in "give way"). The Cambridge Dictionary defines an idiom as a set phrase with a specific meaning distinct from the individual meanings of the words it comprises. Idioms are omnipresent across languages, making conversations more engaging and reflecting their speakers' heritage and cultural nuances. Given their prevalence in spoken and written English, their understanding is crucial for learners, highlighting the pragmatic role of idioms in language acquisition. This aspect of language learning is not merely about building a vocabulary but about achieving a profound, contextually informed grasp of linguistic nuances (Amos & Abas, 2021). Aljabri (2013) mentions that:

> "Idiom studies have a long tradition in the former Soviet Union and Russia, but in the West, idioms have not attracted great attention recently, although some studies were published in the 1960s and 1970s. In spite of the increased interest in idioms over the past several decades, scholars have not been able to agree on a definition of the term. Researchers agree that idioms are very difficult to characterize since it is impossible to define them in an indisputable way. One must distinguish idioms from idiomaticity to make the matter even more complicated."P662

The teaching and learning of idioms, therefore, must be considered. Despite the challenges they present, mainly due to their metaphorical nature, which can perplex non-native speakers, idiomatic competence indicates advanced English proficiency. Some educators and learners might shy away from idioms, fearing their complexity (Liu, 2008; Al-Houti & Aldaihani, 2018), yet avoiding them can hinder natural and fluent communication. This highlights the necessity for EFL learners to engage with idioms actively, as embracing them can significantly enhance communicative competence (Ayed, 2008). Ta'amneh (2021) states that acquiring idiomatic expressions is commonly regarded as a crucial method for learners of a foreign language to attain effective communication. According to Wright (2002), idioms are essential in learning English for three reasons. First, they are widespread, and speaking, reading, or listening to English requires encountering them. Second, the symbolic use of a word is often more common than its literal use. Therefore, understanding idiomatic language is crucial to communicating effectively in English. Third, this language is essential because it is fun to learn and use, aids in memory retention, and makes the learners' English sound more natural with its colourful and exciting idioms. The ease of idiom comprehension among learners is greatly influenced by familiarity, which is determined by the frequency with which an idiom is encountered. This frequency affects when an idiom is learned, with idioms encountered more often being learned earlier due to repeated exposure. According to the "language experience hypothesis," the development of figurative languages, such as idioms, depends on how much one is exposed to expressions that are not meant to be taken literally. This consistent exposure is critical to the steady acquisition of idioms, starting in early childhood and continuing into adolescence (Ortony et al., 1985; Nippold & Taylor,2002; Nippold et al., 1996; Aljabri,2013).   Glucksberg (2001) introduces a classification for idioms based on their compositionality and transparency. He argues that idioms can be compositional, with their literal elements mapping to idiomatic meanings, which can be either opaque or transparent. Traditional views failed to account for processing differences between these types. Transparent idioms allow their meaning to be inferred from their parts, like "spill the beans," where each word contributes to the symbolic meaning. In contrast, opaque idioms like "kick the bucket" do not directly reveal their idiomatic meaning through their constituents. Over time and with frequent metaphorical use, idioms become more semantically transparent, enabling a dual interpretation of their literal and idiomatic components. However, the challenge lies in the idiosyncratic nature of idioms, which can make them daunting for learners, especially those whose first language is significantly different from English, such as Arabic speakers. There is a noted gap in research regarding how well EFL learners grasp English idioms, particularly at the university level in Arabic-speaking regions like Saudi Arabia. This study aims to fill that gap by exploring the comprehension of English idioms among EFL learners at the university level, identifying the specific hurdles they encounter, and suggesting pedagogical approaches that could ease the acquisition of idiomatic expressions, thereby facilitating a smoother path to achieving near-native proficiency in English. The study aims at providing data-supported answers to the following research questions:

- To what extent are EFL learners competent to process English idioms?

- What challenges and difficulties do learners encounter when they learn English idioms?

2. Literature review

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, idiomatic expressions pose significant challenges to learners, particularly those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. The comprehension and use of idioms are crucial for achieving fluency and a native-like command of English, yet learners need help in this area. Many studies have been carried out on idioms and have documented their empirical findings in various sources. The sources include textbooks, newspapers, journals, websites, and research papers. This literature review synthesises various studies' conclusions and pedagogical strategies, highlighting EFL students' challenges in learning and comprehending idioms and the various instructional approaches to enhance their conversational competence. Aljabri (2013) explores the assessment of the familiarity and transparency of English idioms by learners of English as a second language (L2) and examines if these assessments correlate with their understanding. The study evaluates the responses of 90 undergraduate EFL students at two different proficiency levels (Level 1 and Level 4) through tasks that measure their familiarity with idioms, the transparency of the idioms, and their comprehension. The findings reveal that students at Level 4 judged the idioms to be more familiar and demonstrated a higher accuracy in comprehension than those at Level 1. Nevertheless, when it came to evaluating the transparency of the idioms, students from both levels showed similar performance. Al-kadi (2015) investigates how Yemeni EFL undergraduates identify, understand, and apply English idiomatic expressions. His research seeks to uncover the relationship between English language proficiency and the idiomatic knowledge of 63 second-year students from

the English Department at Taiz University's Faculty of Education. To address three research questions, Al-kadi utilised three idiom assessments and a questionnaire to inquire: a) How well can Yemeni EFL undergraduates process English idioms? b) Which methods do they employ to learn idioms? c) What obstacles do they face when learning idiomatic phrases? Al-kadi's findings indicate that students who scored higher on the idiom tests also performed better in listening and speaking achievement tests than those who scored lower. The study also outlines significant challenges Yemeni EFL students encounter and the strategies they adopt to overcome these hurdles. Al-Mohizea (2017) studied how Arabic-speaking EFL learners understand body-part idioms using a cognitive linguistics approach. A test was created to assess their understanding of these idioms, examining how factors like similarity to their first language (L1) and idiom transparency, influenced by language proficiency, affected their performance. The study employed a mixed-method design, including think-aloud protocols for data analysis. Results showed a significant correlation between language proficiency and idiom comprehension scores. Additionally, the degree of similarity to L1 and the idioms' transparency were significantly related to performance. Alhaysony (2017) explores the challenges faced by Saudi EFL students at Aljouf University in learning and understanding English idioms. The study, involving 85 male and female primary university students, utilised questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and the Nation's Vocabulary Level Test to assess language proficiency. It finds that students struggle with idiomatic expressions, frequently resorting to strategies like guessing meanings from context, predicting meanings, and drawing parallels to idioms in their native language. The study also discovered that students with lower language proficiency encountered more difficulties, although the differences were insignificant. Additionally, it highlights that a more extensive vocabulary facilitates the use of more effective strategies in learning idioms, particularly those requiring extensive vocabulary knowledge. Research on EFL learners' comprehension of English idioms has identified several key factors. Xie (2017) found that learners' familiarity with idioms positively correlated with their comprehension and that context played a facilitating role. Aljabri (2013) similarly found that higher-level learners rated idioms as more familiar and comprehended them more accurately. However, neither study found a clear correlation between idiom transparency and comprehension. Baleghizadeh (2012) mentions that etymological elaboration can enhance understanding and retention of idioms. These findings suggest that increasing exposure to idioms and providing additional information, such as etymology, can improve EFL learners' comprehension. In their quantitative research, Al-Houti and Aldaihani (2018) explore the perspectives of college students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) on acquiring idioms. The study primarily focuses on understanding the students' viewpoints regarding the significance of learning idioms, the challenges associated with idiom acquisition, and the strategies employed in learning idioms. It also investigates whether age or academic year affects the students' perceptions of English idiom learning. The research involved 218 female EFL students from the College of Basic Education (CBE) in Kuwait, using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire to gather data. Analysis of the questionnaire responses revealed the students' preferred learning strategies and identified the main challenges they face in idiom acquisition. The findings indicate a generally positive attitude towards learning English idioms among the students, with noticeable variations in responses attributed to different factors. Orfan's (2020) study on Afghan EFL students underscores the multifaceted challenges these learners encounter in understanding and using English idioms. The study highlights that cultural differences, lack of exposure, and the intrinsic complexity of idioms contribute to the difficulties faced by students. Similarly, Guo's (2019) investigation into teaching English idioms to Chinese EFL learners from a cognitive linguistic perspective reveals that idiomatic expressions, deeply rooted in cultural and linguistic nuances, often perplex learners who attempt to interpret them literally.

Several studies also propose innovative strategies to mitigate the challenges of idiomatic learning. Baleghizadeh and Bagheri (2012) explore how etymological explanations influence EFL students' understanding and memory retention of English idioms. The study involved 32 upper-intermediate Iranian EFL learners, divided into two intact classes and randomly assigned to an experimental or a control group. Over six sessions, each lasting two hours, both groups were tasked with defining five idioms. However, the experimental group was given these idioms and their etymological backgrounds, while the control group received only the idioms without any etymological information. The findings indicated that providing etymological details significantly enhances EFL students' ability to comprehend and remember idioms. Khonbi and Sadeghi (2017) examine the impact of teaching modes on improving EFL learners' idiomatic competence. The findings suggest that interactive and engaging teaching methods, such as collaborative learning and multimedia resources, significantly enhance students' understanding and retention of idioms. This aligns with My and Van Loi's (2020) study, which investigates the effect of idiom instruction on teenage EFL learners' retention, further corroborating the

importance of the pedagogical approach in idiomatic teaching. Freyn and Gross (2017) conducted a study on the impact of a multimodal teaching strategy on the learning of English idioms by Ecuadorian EFL students. A group of students, serving as the control, received instruction on 20 English idioms through conventional methods. In contrast, another experimental group was taught the same idioms via a multimodal approach. Following the instructions, both groups took a quiz to assess their understanding of the idioms. The results showed that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in idiom comprehension. A recurrent theme in the literature is the application of cognitive linguistic theories to idiom instruction. Both Guo (2019) and HUNG (2019) advocate for a cognitive linguistic approach, arguing that understanding the conceptual metaphors and imagery underlying idioms can greatly facilitate learners' comprehension and memorisation. These studies present experimental results supporting the effectiveness of this approach, indicating that learners who engage in cognitive-based learning activities demonstrate better idiomatic competence. Every day, more researchers and academics become aware of the importance of understanding learners' problems related to understanding idioms and colloquial expressions to find the best way to solve these problems. This study aims to evaluate the comprehension of English idioms among EFL learners at the university level.

3. Method

The methodology of this study is a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis.

3.1 Participants

The research cohort consisted of 85 female students enrolled in the seventh and eighth levels within the Department of English Language and Literature, College of Languages and Humanities, Unaizah. These students demonstrated a spectrum of English proficiency, ranging from above average to average. Before their enrollment in the English department, they had undergone an intensive English course. Additionally, they had extensively covered various communication skills and translation subjects across levels one through six, laying a comprehensive foundation for their linguistic development.

3.2 Instrument

This study was meticulously executed by implementing both an evaluative test designed to gauge the participants' idiomatic competencies and a questionnaire strategically crafted to gather insights and perspectives from the participants.

3.2.1 The Test

The task was multifaceted, involving the meticulous selection of 50 English idioms from a vast pool of 100 idioms. These idioms were carefully curated from various sources, including literary works, social media platforms, movies, and other references. To ensure the utmost quality and alignment with the research objectives, a panel of three esteemed university educators reviewed the 100 idioms. Through a rigorous evaluation, they discerned the 50 most pertinent idioms to the research goals, thus warranting inclusion in the subsequent test. Within the examination framework, each participant encountered a set of 50 items, with each item presenting multiple-choice options ranging from "a" to "d." Among these options, only one was deemed correct, while the others served as distractors. Scoring mechanisms were meticulously designed, with each correct response earning a score of one and incorrect answers garnering a score of zero. A comprehensive frequency analysis was then conducted to ascertain the occurrence of valid cases. This analysis was executed with utmost precision and closely controlled to maintain accuracy. Furthermore, mean and standard deviation calculations were employed to ensure the thorough and accurate examination of all cases. Following the meticulous design and refinement of the test, a preliminary trial was conducted with a cohort of twenty students. This pre-test phase aimed to assess the efficacy of the examination before its administration to the original research sample. Notably, these twenty students were deliberately excluded from the primary research sample to maintain the integrity and independence of the study.

3.2.2 The Questionnaire

The second research instrument employed in this investigation consisted of a 16-item questionnaire administered to student participants. It aimed to gather data on learners' challenges and difficulties while learning English idioms. Employing a standardised Five-point Likert scale, the questionnaire aimed to gauge respondents' perspectives. To validate the questionnaire, it underwent scrutiny by three English language faculty members at the university, who revised enhance clarity and precision, removing any ambiguous or confusing elements. Following this refinement process, the questionnaire was disseminated among participants. Twenty students, who were excluded from the study later, were asked to read each statement of the prepared questionnaire and respond by checking in the right column of their choice from the old version. After collecting the questionnaire's answers, the data were fed and analysed in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). SPSS version (25) for Windows was used to compute descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation) and perform reliability. The reliability of the questionnaire was found to be 0.79.

Table (1) Cronbach's Alpha

N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
16	.797

3.3 Procedure

The following procedures were followed to investigate EFL learners' comprehension of English idioms.
1. Reviewing relevant literature.
2. Developing the study instruments, comprising a test and a questionnaire.
3. Assessing the validity and reliability of the test and the questionnaire.
4. Administering the tools above to a representative sample of seventh and eighth-year university students.
5. Treat the data statistically by using SPSS 25 software.
6. Analyzing and interpreting the study findings.
7- Presenting recommendations based on the outcomes of the investigation.

4. Results and Discussion
This section of results and discussion presents the analysis and results of the test and the questionnaire, which attempt to answer the research questions.

Results Related to Research Question 1: - To what extent are EFL learners competent to process English idioms?

The following sections discuss the frequencies of the idiom's comprehension test by the Respondents

Table (2) Respondents' frequencies of the idioms test

N	Valid	85
	Missing	0
Mean		37.12
Median		38.00
Std. Deviation		9.144
Minimum		14
Maximum		50

Based on the results of the idiom test, it was discerned that the participants' mean overall idiomatic competence score was 37.12, with a standard deviation of 9.1. The highest score for the test was 50, implying that the participants' comprehension of idioms was adequate. The standard deviation indicated that the participants' scores were reasonably dispersed around the average. Most participants' scores fell within two standard deviations above and below the mean, ranging from 50 to 14. these results suggest that most students performed well, with only a minority scoring below 25. The test results confirmed that the students possessed adequate idiomatic competence and familiarity with idioms.

Table (3) Test Marks frequencies

	The mark	Frequency		The mark	Frequency
Valid	14	2	Valid	35	1
	15	1		36	4
	17	1		37	6
	20	1		38	6
	22	1		39	2
	23	2		40	6
	25	1		41	4
	26	3		42	2
	27	1		43	6
	28	6		45	1
	29	1		46	4
	31	1		47	2
	32	1		48	3
	33	1		49	6
	34	5		50	4

Results Related to Research Question 2: - What challenges and difficulties do learners encounter when they learn English idioms?

To answer the second study question, 85 fourth-year English department students, levels 7 and 8, responded to a questionnaire consisting of 16 statements. The questionnaire investigated the challenges and difficulties learners encounter when they learn idioms. For statistical purposes, the researchers assigned numerical values to the responses in the following manner:

Strongly agree = 5

Agree = 4

Neutral = 3

Disagree = 2

Strongly disagree =1

To illustrate the respondents' reactions to each statement, the sum and mean scores were computed. The mean score for item number 1 in the questionnaire, for example, becomes

Mean = (3 x 5) + (16 x 4) +(17 x 3) + (33 x 2) +(16 x 1)

= 15+ 64 + 51+ 66 +16

= 212

= 212/85

= 2.49

The mean score of 2.49 indicates that the average number of students' responses to the given statements was below 3.0 on the scale, which is the neutral point. This means that learners do not consider understanding the meaning of idioms when used in context a challenge when learning idioms. The same method was used to analyse the rest of the questionnaire's items.

The items of the questionnaire which have been used to answer this question were as follows:

1. I find it challenging to understand the meaning of idioms when they are used in context.
2. I often misunderstand idioms' meanings in conversations or texts.
3. Cultural differences make it difficult for me to understand the meaning of many English idioms.
4. I struggle to relate to the cultural or historical background of many idioms.
5. I find it hard to memorise English idioms
6. Recalling the correct idiom during conversations or writing is challenging.
7. I am unsure about the appropriate context for using specific idioms.
8. I hesitate to use idioms in my speech or writing for fear of misusing them.
9. I have insufficient opportunities to practice idioms in real-life situations.
10. I lack access to resources that could help me learn idioms more effectively.
11. My language courses' methods of teaching idioms are ineffective.
12. more interactive or practical teaching methods for learning idioms would benefit me.
13. I feel demotivated to learn idioms due to their complexity
14. Learning idioms is less exciting or engaging than other English aspects.
15. I do not see the importance of learning idioms for my academic or professional goals.
16. I believe mastering idioms is not crucial for achieving fluency in English.

Table (4) Students' Responses to the Questionnaire

The item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	3	16	17	33	16		2.49	1.1
2	2	19	34	27	3		2.88	.87
3	13	49	14	4	5		3.72	.98
4	4	41	30	8	2		3.44	.82
5	2	29	25	25	4		3.00	.96
6	5	34	28	14	4		3.26	.96
7	7	24	33	20	1		3.19	.93
8	11	41	14	15	4	85	3.47	1.07
9	12	34	25	9	5		3.46	1.05
10	7	20	24	27	7		2.29	1.1
11	9	32	26	14	4		3.33	1.02
12	22	45	14	3	1		3.9	.82
13	4	19	22	34	6		2.78	1.02
14	5	10	9	39	22		2.26	1.14
15	4	8	13	39	21		2.24	1.07
16	5	19	22	21	18		2.67	1.2

According to Table (4), the average scores for items 1, 2, 10, 13, 14, 15, and 16 fall below 3.0, representing the neutral point on the scale. Conversely, the mean scores for items 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12 surpass 3.0. These results indicate that numerous EFL learners do not think understanding idioms in context, cultivating attitudes and motivation towards idiom acquisition, and recognising the importance and utility of learning idioms are all challenging or complex. However, learners hold differing views regarding challenges such as cultural disparities, memorisation and recall of idioms, usage and application, and instructional approaches to teaching idioms. Additionally, many learners do not perceive practising idioms as complex or demanding. They acknowledge that

while learning idioms can present difficulties, it can also be enjoyable. Furthermore, they highlight the beneficial role of translation courses in aiding idiom acquisition.

5. Conclusions of the Study

The test results showed that the student's performance was reasonably good on the test, which reflects their competence in knowing the meaning of idiomatic expressions and thus being able to use them. The students are students of the seventh and eighth levels in the Department of English Language & Literature, considered advanced levels. They, therefore, studied many subjects that, by their very nature, make understanding and using idioms important, such as communication skills and translation subjects, which, as the students themselves reported, helped with their knowledge of idioms. That is, the level of students was reflected in their understanding and knowledge of idiomatic expressions. The results were consistent with the findings of previous studies (e.g. Liu, 2008; Aljabri,2013; Al-kadi, 2015; Xie,2017), which showed a positive correlation between idiomatic competence and students' competence.

According to the results of a questionnaire distributed among the students, they still require more interactive teaching methods to improve their understanding of idiomatic expressions. Additionally, they find it challenging to learn English idioms due to cultural differences between their native language and English and the cultural or historical background of many idioms. Memorising and recalling the correct idiom during conversations or writing is also a significant obstacle. Moreover, using the appropriate context for specific idioms is challenging, and they need more opportunities to practice idioms in real-life situations. These results align with the conclusions drawn in prior research (e.g., Aljabri, 2013; Al-Houti & Aldaihani, 2018).

In summary, while the study affirms the students' competence in idiomatic expressions at advanced levels, it also recognises their challenges in mastering idioms. The findings emphasise the importance of tailored teaching methods and increased opportunities for practical application to enhance further students' proficiency in language learning.

6. Recommendations

Some recommendations are made based on the above findings.

1. Teachers should adopt interactive teaching methods to assist students in acquiring idiomatic expressions.
2. University-level students should be motivated to use idioms outside their regular classes.
3. Further investigation, mainly through action research, must explore additional linguistic elements such as phrasal verbs, proverbs, and collocations.

References

Akbari, M. (2013). Strategies for translating idioms. *Journal of Academic and Applied Studies*, *3*(8), 32–41.

Aljabri, S. S. (2013). EFL Students' Judgments of English Idiom Familiarity and Transparency. *Journal of Language Teaching & Research*, *4*(4). https://doi.org/10.4304/JLTR.4.4.662-669

Alhaysony, M. H. (2017). Strategies and difficulties of understanding English idioms: A case study of Saudi University EFL students. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, *7*(3), 70–84. https://doi.org/10.5539/IJEL.V7N3P70

Al-Houti, S. K., & Aldaihani, S. M. (2018). Letting the Cat out of the Bag: EFL College Students' Attitudes towards Learning English Idioms. *International Journal of Higher Education*, *7*(1), 140-150. https://doi.org/10.5430/IJHE.V7N1P140

Al-kadi, A. M. T. (2015). Towards idiomatic competence of Yemeni EFL undergraduates. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *6*(3), 513. https://doi.org/10.17507/JLTR.0603.06

Al-Mohizea, M. I. (2017). The comprehension of body-part idioms by EFL learners: A cognitive linguistics-inspired approach. *Journal of Cognitive Science*, *18*(2), 175–200. https://doi.org/10.17791/JCS.2017.18.2.175

Amos, N. T., & Abas, I. H. (2021). An Investigation on the Comprehension of English Idioms Among Moi Primary School Children in Nairobi. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, *12*(4), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.12n.4.p.1

Asri, A. N., & Rochmawati, D. (2017). Innovative teaching of English idiomatic expressions for EFL learners. *JET (Journal of English Teaching) Adi Buana*, *2*(01), 47-58.

Ayed, S. (2008). *Avoidance of idioms: An ethnic group identity issue?* (Doctoral dissertation, Concordia University).

Baleghizadeh, S. (2012). The effect of etymology elaboration on EFL learners' comprehension and retention of idioms. *3L, Language, Linguistics, Literature*, *18*(1).

Bortfeld, H. (2003). Comprehending idioms cross-linguistically. Experimental Psychology, 50(3), 217–230. http://dx.doi.org/10.1026//1617-3169.50.3.217

Cambridge University Press. (n.d.). Idiom. In *Cambridge Dictionary*. Retrieved on 21st March 2024, from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/idiom

Freyn, A. L., & Gross, S. (2017). An empirical study of Ecuadorian university EFL learners' comprehension of English idioms using a multimodal teaching approach. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *7*(11), 984-989. https://doi.org/10.17507/TPLS.0711.06

Glucksberg, S. (2001). *Understanding figurative language: From metaphor to idioms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Guo, Y. (2019). Teaching English Idioms to Chinese EFL Learners: A Cognitive Linguistic Perspective. *English Language Teaching*, *12*(5), 145–155. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v12n5p145

HUNG, B. P. (2019). A Cognitive Linguistic Approach to Teaching English Idioms to EFL Students: Experimental Results. *3L: Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, *25*(2). https://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2019-2502-09

Khonbi, Z. A., & Sadeghi, K. (2017). Improving English Language Learners' Idiomatic Competence: Does Mode of Teaching Play a Role? *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, *5*(3), 61-79.

Littlemore, J., & Low, G. (2006). Figurative thinking and foreign language learning. Palgrave Macmillan.

Liu, D. (2008). Idioms: Descriptions, comprehension, acquisition, and pedagogy. Routledge.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). *Idiom*. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved 21st March 2024, from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/idiom

My, V. T. D., & Van Loi, N. (2020). THE EFFECT OF IDIOM INSTRUCTION ON EFL TEENAGE LEARNERS'RETENTION OF IDIOMS. *European Journal of Applied Linguistics Studies*, *3*(1). https://doi.org/10.46827/ejals.v3i1.219

Nation, P., & Meara, P. (2002). Vocabulary. In N. Schmitt (Ed.), *An introduction to applied linguistics* (pp. 35–54). Arnold.

Nippold, M. A., Taylor, C. L., & Baker, J. M. (1996). Idiom understanding in Australian youth: A cross-cultural comparison. *Journal of Speech and Hearing Research, 39*, 442–447. https://doi.org/10.1044/jshr.3902.442

Nippold, M. A. (2006). "Language development in school-age children, adolescents and adults," in *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* (Vol. 6), 2nd ed. Ed K. Brown (Oxford, UK: Elsevier Publishing), 368–372.

Nunan, D. (2003). Practical English language teaching. New York: McGraw Hill.

Orfan, S. N. (2020). Afghan EFL students' difficulties and strategies in learning and understanding English

idioms. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, *7*(1), 1796228. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2020.1796228

Ortony, A., Turner, T. J., & Larson-Shapiro, N. (1985). Cultural and instructional influences on figurative language comprehension by inner-city children. *Research in the Teaching of English, 19*, 25–36.

Ta'amneh, M. A. A. A. (2021). Strategies and Difficulties of Learning English Idioms Among University Students. *Strategies*, *12*(23). https://doi.org/10.7176/JEP/12-23-10

Wright, J. (2002). Idioms Organiser: Organised by metaphor, topic, and keyword. (J. Hill & M. Lewis, Eds.). Language Teaching Publications.

Xie, H. (2017). Investigating Chinese EFL learners' comprehension of English idioms. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *8*(2), 329. https://doi.org/10.17507/JLTR.0802.15