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The Effect of Learners' First Language Culture on the Interpretation of English Idiomatic Expressions

The Case of Master Two LMD Learners, Department of Letters and

English Language, University of 08 Mai 1945- Guelma.

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DEDICATION

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Every challenging work needs lots of effort and guidance of elders and especially those who

are very close to our heart.

We dedicate this dissertation which has finally seen light

To our beloved parents without whom, we would not have been what we are, for their

endless love, affection, prayers that make us able to get such success and honor.

To our sisters and brothers, and all members of our families for their encouragements and

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much for us; you are the reason of happiness.

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To the people who don't believe in us, or that we would make it this far.

To everyone who wonders if we are writing about them. We are.

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"For any successful work, it owes to thank many''

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ABSTRACT

The current study seeks to investigate the effect of first language culture on learners' interpretation of English idiomatic expressions. This work explores learners' views about whether their first language culture has an influence on their interpretation and comprehension of English idioms. Idiomatic expressions are culture-bound; consequently, we hypothesize that the first language culture of the learners has a negative effect on their interpretation of those idioms. To achieve the aforementioned aim and to test the hypothesis, the quantitative descriptive method is used through administering a questionnaire. For this reason, fifty-five (55) Master Two LMD Learners; both male and female were chosen randomly as the sample to this study, at the Department of English, 08 Mai 1945 University – Guelma. The obtained results reveal that there is a negative effect of learners' first language culture on their interpretation of English idioms. Thus, this confirms the stated hypothesis identified at the beginning of the research. Therefore, raising learners' cultural awareness and enlarging their cultural knowledge about the differences between both the first and the foreign language cultures become one of the primary goals that should be taken into consideration in the process of foreign language teaching.

Keywords: First Language Culture, English Idiomatic Expressions.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

USA: United States of America

N: Number

Q: Question

LIST OF TABLES

CONTENTS

CHAPTER TWO: IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Learners' Questionnaire

Arabic Summary

French Summary

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In the field of language teaching and learning, learning about culture is crucial since learning the foreign culture is considered as part of learning the foreign language itself. Language is that important component of culture which makes it unique and differentiates it from other cultures. For instance, the way individuals speak is determined by their culture. Thereby, learners should take into consideration the language's culture while learning a foreign language. The latter helps them to reach a considerable stage of language learning as it raises their cultural awareness. Mainly, without regarding the target language culture, misunderstanding of a given language behaviour occurs. In short, mastering a foreign language needs a full understanding of its culture.

Generally, culture is an important aspect in the life of people. It is what distinguishes human beings from other living creatures. It refers to that particular material, social and ideological aspects including religion, beliefs, language, norms, values, and traditions that are acquired, maintained and shared between people as being members of that community. It also reflects the community's worldviews and social awareness as it gives insights about their way of thinking and living. That is to say, culture grows through social interaction between people. In this respect, people acquire certain specific cultural features that are linked to a particular group where they live and communicate with each other. Furthermore, each culture is an intimate part of society due to its embodiment of both past and present achievements as well as it presents provisions about the future of that society.

Idioms are among the most fundamental elements that are considered as a constituent of cultural identity. They are metaphorical and complex phrases with special stylistic features that are widely used by common people in their daily lives. Along with having rich cultural connotations and a variety of forms, idioms are usually colloquial which makes them hard to be understood by non- native individuals. Since idioms are culturally based expressions, the

culture of individuals is what controls their interpretations. Therefore, learning a foreign language's idioms requires learners to take into consideration the cultural context as well as the different meanings that an idiom may have. In other words, idioms have implicit and figurative meanings that cannot be understood and interpreted just through the literal format. In this respect, people from different cultures provide different interpretations of the same idiom.

1. Statement of the Problem

The Algerian culture plays a significant role in learning the English language, in the way that learners use their first language culture to develop the English language culture. In this case, the Algerian culture is considered as a reference point in the process of learning English culture.

Most EFL learners at the Department of English, 08 Mai 1945 University- Guelma come across various problems when it comes to the interpretation of English idiomatic expressions, in the sense that they are not able to provide an appropriate explanation. Moreover, as idioms carry multiple cultural messages, learners misunderstand those messages, so that misinterpretation takes place. This misinterpretation is strongly related to the influence of the learners' Algerian culture. Simply put, learners tend to understand the meaning of idioms by relating them to their first language's culture. In this respect, they tend to use their first language cultural background in order to achieve correct and adequate interpretations. However, this cultural difference between both the learners' first language and the English language cultures leads them to incorrect interpretations. In this way, those divergent cultural aspects are considered as a serious source of difficulty.

2. Aims of the Study

The current study deals with the learners' views about the effect of their first language culture on interpreting English idioms. They have studied English for a considerable period and they have sufficiently exposed to the English culture, so they are expected to have some cultural

background knowledge of the target language that helps them to interpret some idioms. Taking into consideration that the learners 'Algerian Arabic culture affects their understanding of cultural-specific English idioms. Therefore, the main objective is to see whether the learners' L1 culture hinders their interpretations of English idioms and to what extent. Additionally, this study tries to recognize the pitfalls and the major difficulty that learners face while interpreting them.

3. Research Questions

1. Does the learners' first language culture hinder the interpretation of English idioms?
2. To what extent does the first language culture hinder the learners' interpretation of English idioms?
3. What is the major difficulty that learners face while interpreting English idioms?

4. Research Hypothesis

Based on the belief that there is a reciprocal relationship between language and culture, the latter denotes that mastering the English language requires a rich cultural background knowledge. Accordingly, we hypothesize that:

H$_1$: The Algerian Arabic culture has a negative effect on learners' interpretation of English idioms.

H$_0$: The Algerian Arabic culture has no effect on learners' interpretation of English idioms. This implies that no relationship may exist.

5. Research Methodology and Design

5.1. Research Method

For the sake of reaching reliable and accurate results, this research depends mainly on the quantitative descriptive method. The choice of this method is not random since it is considered as the most suitable one for exploring learners' answers, attitudes, and views towards English idioms and the effect of their first language culture on interpreting those idioms. Therefore, it

would allow for answering the research questions and the confirmation or rejection of the stated research hypothesis.

5.2. Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of Master Two LMD learners at the Department of English, Faculty of Letters and Languages, University of 08 Mai 1945-Guelma for the academic year 2019/2020. The sample comprises fifty-five (55) Master Two LMD learners. They are male and female, and they are chosen randomly. The reason behind choosing to work with Master Two LMD learners is that these learners possess an adequate competence in English since they have studied culture and civilization of the target language for five years, and their level is much more advanced than Second and Third-Year LMD English learners; as they have more background knowledge about idioms.

5.3. Data Gathering Tools

To investigate the relationship between the variables, a questionnaire is opted for. This tool is directed to Master Two LMD learners in order to collect data that will help in testing the research hypothesis of whether learners' L1 culture has a negative effect on their interpretations of English idioms.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

After a general introduction, the present dissertation is divided into two major parts: the theoretical part which is made of two chapters that review the related literature. The practical part consists of the third chapter.

The first chapter entitled "First Language Culture". It discusses the concept of culture, including its definition, aspects, characteristics, and the relationship between language and culture, in addition to the history of culture instruction. It also sheds light on the importance of teaching culture, as it stresses the difference between first and second language cultures.

The second chapter named "Idiomatic Expressions" explores definitions of the concept of idioms. It discusses its characteristics and classifications, in addition to some models of their processing and comprehension. Furthermore, it sheds light on some causes of the difficulties of idiom interpretation. Finally, it examines the role of culture on idiom interpretation.

The third chapter "Field Investigation" describes the research method and tools through which the research is carried. It also includes a description of learners' questionnaire, its administration, followed by data analysis and interpretations of the results in relevance to research questions and hypothesis. Finally, this chapter also deals with some pedagogical implications and recommendations, as it highlights many research limitations that are encountered throughout the study.

CHAPTER ONE

FIRST LANGUAGE CULTURE

Introduction

The correlation and relationship between language and culture have been always among the interests of many scholars and researchers. It is undeniable that language reflects, expresses, and transmits culture, while culture influences language. This implies that each of the two notions is considered to be part of the other. More precisely, both language and culture are interrelated and inseparable. This becomes more apparent in the field of language teaching and learning. The fact that many researchers claimed that teaching and learning a given foreign language without considering its culture is deficient and inadequate. This suggests that teaching a foreign language requires not only an emphasis on learners' linguistic proficiency but also taking into consideration the cultural features of that language, and understanding the nature of the relationship between language and culture. Thereby, this would raise the learners' cultural awareness in addition to developing their knowledge and comprehension about the target language's culture.

On this basis, the present chapter will introduce the different definitions of the concept of culture from different views. Then, it will emphasize the culture's aspects and its characteristics. Following this, the chapter will highlight and underline the relationship that exists between the language and its culture and will provide an overview of the history of culture's instruction. Later, it will stress the culture's importance in the field of education. Finally, this chapter will shed light on the differences between both L1 and L2 cultures, and how cultural awareness is crucial for a successful teaching and learning process.

1.1. Definitions of Culture

According to Nababan (1974), the origin of the word "culture" is assumed to be from the Latin noun "cultura" which comes to mean "being cultivated". He argues that the word culture has been synonymous with "civilization" or "society" (p.18). Across the ages, culture has been a field of interest for a variety of disciplines. This indicates that the concept of culture has been

perceived differently, defined differently, and used differently. In this context, the word culture does not lend itself to a single definition due to its complicated and vague nature, as it is affirmed by Samovar and Porter (2003), "Culture is ubiquitous, multidimensional, complex, and pervasive. Because culture is so broad, there is no single definition or central theory of what it is" (p. 8). This can be demonstrated through the following most significant definitions of the concept of culture.

According to Boas (1940), "the material for the reconstruction of culture is ever so much fragmentary because the largest and most important aspects of culture leave no trace in the soil; language, social organization, religion- in short, everything that is not material" (p. 250). It is also defined as "The arts of describing, showing, or performing that represent the way of life of particular people or group; literature, art, music, dance, theatre, etc." (Cambridge Dictionary,2019). On the one hand, the first definition reveals that culture refers to everything that is not material. Boas suggests that it refers only to social and ideological aspects, for instance, ideas, beliefs, and knowledge of a given social group or community. On the other hand, the second definition highlights that the material aspects are what define a given culture. In other words, the first definition stresses what is unobserved (implicit) while the other one emphasized what is observed (explicit) about culture. The distinction is made by Richard, Schmidt, Platt, and Schmidt in which they state that culture is usually divided into two major categories: big "C" culture that incorporates literature and art, and small "c" culture that comprises attitudes, values, beliefs, and everyday lifestyles (2002, p. 138). Hence the notion of culture is larger than this. Tylor defines culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (1873, p.1). Tylor regards culture as an intricate body that comprises the traditions, competencies, and aptitudes that individuals learn and become conscious of as being members of a given community. That is to say, those beliefs should not

only be learned, but also respected in order to act and behave properly, adequately, and accordingly to the community's members (Goodenough 1957, as cited in Hudson, 1996, p. 71). Furthermore, according to Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010), "culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category from another" (p. 6). They argue that culture is about the acquired and shared cultural features and qualities between individuals as being members of that specific community. However, those different aspects and elements are what distinguish and differentiate one society from the other the fact that they are unique and specific to each society. Moreover, Kluckhohn provides more in-depth definition of culture:

> (1) "the total way of life of a people"; (2) "the social legacy the individual acquires from his group"; (3) "a way of thinking, feeling, and believing"; (4) "an abstraction from behaviour"; (5) a theory on the part of the anthropologist about the way in which a group of people in fact behave; (6) a "storehouse of pooled learning"; (7) "a set of standardized orientations to recurrent problems"; (8) "learned behaviour"; (9) a mechanism for the normative regulation of behaviour; (10) "a set of techniques for adjusting both the external environment and to other men"; (11) "a precipitate of history"; and turning, perhaps in desperation, to similes, as a map, as a sieve, and as a matrix (as cited in Geertz, 1973 p. 4-5).

Kluckhohn views culture as something inherited, learned, and shared by the members of a particular society. It is about their perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes towards everything. For instance, how they behave and adapt to the environment, and how they solve problems.

From the above-cited definitions, it becomes clear that culture is a complex and broad concept and it is hard to define, yet to give it a single, exact, and precise definition since different scholars and researchers in different fields approach it from multiple perspectives. This suggests that all the definitions should be taken into consideration.

1.2. Aspects of Culture

The above-cited definitions showed that culture is composed of different constituent elements. This indicates that culture exists at different levels. At the surface level, there are those explicit products and behaviours. While at the deep level or beneath, there are those implicit aspects which are generally the values and norms that motivate those products and behaviours to take place.

1.2.1. Language

In general, language is the composition of symbols to create words and sentences in order to make communication possible. Language and culture are closely related. Kramsch (1993) describes the relationship between language and culture through which she claims that "Language is the principal means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways" (as cited in Pourkalhor & Esfandiari, 2017, p. 24). Kramsch suggests that language and culture are part of each other. For instance, culture forms the language and language expresses the culture. This means that there is a reciprocal influence between the two concepts. Through language, individuals are able to share, reflect, and express their worldviews, in short, their cultural realities and culture's orientation.

1.2.2. Symbols

According to Hofstede and Hofstede (2010), "Symbols are words, gestures, pictures, or objects that carry a particular meaning that is recognized as such only by those who share the culture" (p. 8). They argue that symbols can only be acknowledged by individuals who share the same culture. This implies that symbols can be diverse but their interpretations differ across cultures. Additionally, Hofstede and Hofstede claim that symbols exist at the surface level, the fact that they can easily appear and disappear through time (p. 8).

1.2.3. Values

Values are considered as the most fundamental element of a given culture. According to Hofstede and Hofstede (2010), "Values are broad tendencies to prefer certain state of affairs over others, they are feelings with an added arrow indicating a plus and a minus side" (p. 9). They state that values tackle issues such as paradoxical versus logical, irrational versus rational, dangerous versus safe, etc. In this respect, values refer to the culture's standards of what should be regarded as socially good or bad. This means that they have a judgmental function, and they are normative in the sense that they specify what should be done and in what manner.

1.2.4. Norms

According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, "norms are the mutual sense a group has of what is right and wrong" (as cited in Shaules, 2007, p. 57). This explains that norms are shared expectations between individuals who belong to a given social group about what is regarded as socially accepted behaviour. Shaules declares that norms can be either formal or informal. The former can be demonstrated through laws, while the latter can be exemplified through customs, for instance "how to shake hands or eat food" (2007, p. 57). Besides the fact that norms and values are often used interchangeably, Shaules makes a distinction between the two notions in which he asserts that "whereas norms define how one should behave, values define how one wants to behave" (2007, p. 58). This reveals that norms are compulsory, while values are optional.

1.2.5. Assumptions

According to Shaules (2007), deep assumptions form the hidden structure in which both norms and values are established. Those assumptions are nearly doubted. They involve assumptions about hierarchy and equality, the degree of gender separation, the importance of independence, and so forth. For instance, bowing when the teacher enters to the class. This represents the norm that is built on the value of displaying respect which is in return based on

the deep assumption that hierarchical relationships are regular and normal, and they require veneration (p. 242).

1.2.6. Artifacts

According to Merriam Webster Online Dictionary (2020), an artifact is "usually a simple object (as a tool or ornament) showing human work and representing a culture or a stage in the development of a culture". To put it differently, artifacts refer to that observable, concrete, and physical products made and achieved by a particular society. They include architecture, buildings, food, literature, art, music, dress, and others.

1.3. Characteristics of Culture

The fact that several definitions were provided about the concept of culture, this explains that culture's complexity lies in its various features. So, culture can be better understood by focusing on its characteristics. Samovar and Porter (2003) propose five features of culture.

Culture is not Innate; it is Learned: It is one of the most important characteristics of a culture. Culture is socially and unconsciously acquired through experiences and interaction in which individuals are born with some needs that would create a given behaviour. This behaviour can only be met through learning (pp. 8-9).

Culture is Transmitted: Culture transfers from one generation to another. It is a continuous and ongoing process. According to Brislin (1993), "if there are values considered central to a society that have existed for many years, these must be transmitted from one generation to another" (as cited in Samovar & Porter, 2003, p. 10).

Culture is Based on Symbols: The fact that culture is learned and transmitted is through the construction of symbols that allow individuals to easily store and transfer them (p. 10).

Culture is Subject to Change: Culture is dynamic. The touch and connection with outsiders and the exposure to external ideas and information have the capability to bring change to any culture. Additionally, culture is "adaptive". Therefore, it can be constrained by

uncontrolled external factors such as, natural disasters, wars, and others that would lead to culture's alteration (p. 10). According to Corbett (2003):

> We must always be aware that the norms, beliefs, practices and language of any group are not static but dynamic – the group is forever negotiating and renegotiating its norms and values among membership. Therefore, the core beliefs – and the language that articulates them – will necessarily change over time (p. 20).

Culture is Ethnocentric: According to Bizumic (2015), ethnocentrism might be referring to the act of judging Other's culture from one's own. It is this belief that one holds in which the values and norms of one's culture are considered to be superior to another one (p. 2). In this light, Keesing (1965) states that "nearly always the folklore of people includes myths of origin which give priority to themselves, and place the stamp of supernatural approval upon their particular customs" (as cited in Samovar & Porter, 2003, p. 11). People are greatly proud of their culture and their identity of belonging, the fact that they see their culture as the center of everything.

In addition to the above-mentioned characteristics, it should be noted that culture is shared by the members of a given society. Those shared cultural aspects are distinct and they are what differentiate one society from another. However, it should also be considered that all cultures are equal and each culture is unique in itself. Hofstede and Pederson affirm by arguing that "no culture is objectively better or worse, superior or inferior, to another" (2002, p. 34).

1.4. The Relationship between Language and Culture

The connection between language and culture has always been an area of interest for different scholars in different fields. According to Brown (2000), "A language is a part of a culture, and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture" (p. 177). He denotes that language and culture are strongly interdependent on each other and they cannot

be detached. In the same way, Sapir and Mandelbaum view that language is one of the culture's aspects which was the first to be produced and expanded, and they considered it as "a prerequisite to the development of culture as a whole" (1949, p. 7). To clarify more, Byram (1989, p. 41) claims that "language pre-eminently embodies the values and meanings of a culture, refers to cultural artefacts and signals people's cultural identity". In this light, language is not only regarded as part of culture, but it also mirrors and reflects individuals' cultural identity since it acts as a tool of transmitting their beliefs, thoughts, and worldviews. This also points out that both concepts shadow each other, in the sense that culture is found or embedded in the language that individuals speak, and at the same time culture influences the way language is used by its speakers. As Sun (2013) states that "if there is no culture, language will be like water without a source or a tree without roots" (p. 371). This emphasizes the fact there is a holistic connection between the two concepts in a way that culture is the source that creates and gives birth to the language.

Due to the manifested relationship and interconnectedness between language and culture, it becomes obvious that learning a new language requires learning its culture. According to Mitchell and Myles (2004), Researchers in the language socialization tradition assume that language and culture are connected and inextricable. Hence, they should go hand in hand and learned simultaneously (p. 235). For instance, Hong (2008, p. 1) advocates that culture should be integrated into language teaching and learning as the fifth skill in addition to listening, speaking, reading, and writing so that learners will be aware of the cultural differences in order to prevent misinterpretations, in the sense that culture determines how individuals receive and perceive messages. As Gao (2006) concludes that "language learning is culture learning and consequently that language teaching is culture teaching" (p. 59). Teaching and learning a particular language requires teaching and learning the cultural features that characterize it. In addition, Gao asserts that language teachers should improve their students' cultural awareness

14

in order to communicate appropriately in a given situation (p.59). More precisely, Edward Sapir (1929) states that:

> The understanding of a simple poem, for instance, involves not merely an understanding of the single words in their average significance, but a full comprehension of the whole life of the community as it is mirrored in the words, or as it is suggested by the overtones… (as cited in Jourdan & Tuit, 2006, p. 63).

This implies that language cannot be taught in isolation from culture, the fact that culture is integrated implicitly in language. Therefore, learning a language requires an understanding of society's culture where the language is spoken as a native one. In short, language should be learned within its context which is sociocultural one.

This strengthened link between language and culture makes it clear that learning a foreign language without taking into consideration its culture is impossible. Consequently, culture's integration in the realm of language teaching and learning is essential in order to completely acquire the target language and to be fully competent.

1.5. Culture's Teaching History

Many scholars claim that the teaching of culture started to gain attention in the sixties and more interest in the nineties. For instance, Risager (2007), declares that culture in a way or another was always present in the content of language teaching (p. 4). Nevertheless, it was only until 1960 that "culture pedagogy" started to establish itself as an autonomous field, and through 1990, the incorporation of culture in language teaching became to be seen as a necessity after recognizing the inseparability of language and culture (pp. 4-5).

According to Risager, from 1880, culture pedagogy was highly based on the concept of "realia" before establishing itself as a separate field. This concept dates back to the 17th century which was about the reading of texts that takes place in an educational context for the purpose of teaching language and literature. However, it can also focus on polite discussions in foreign

languages since more information should be provided about other countries for travel purposes. He suggests that the concept of "realia" deals with three dimensions. "The broad historical dimension" which is about texts' reading, "the locally oriented dimension" related to travel tasks, finally the "everyday oriented dimension" of social life (pp. 25-26).

From 1960, culture pedagogy began in the USA with the publication of the most influential books. Namely Lado's *Linguistics Across Cultures* (1957), Brooks' *Language and Language Learning* that comprises a chapter entitled *Language and Culture*. At that time, United States was confronted by globalization's phenomenon which brought contact between people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. So, in order to successfully communicate, individuals were required to have more knowledge about others. As a result, culture pedagogy started to create its path as an educational field, especially with the rise of the Audio-Lingual method and what is known as "cultural relativism" of a harmonious multiethnic society (Risager, 2007, pp. 33-36).

In the 1970s, as Risager reports that "culture pedagogy was still struggling to make cultural content visible" (2007, p. 39). He notes that the expansion of culture teaching came with the rise of "the expanded text concept" which are considered as authentic non- literary texts used in everyday life in general. Thus, the role of culture in language teaching witnessed a considerable improvement (p. 39).

Through the 1980s, the visual aspect of cultural education was reinforced as a consequence of the advancement of video technology. Therefore, learners will have the chance to be exposed and observe the different tangible aspects of culture in real-life situations, especially when it comes to non-verbal codes, clothing of the community, and so forth (Risager, 2007, p. 73).

Over the 1990s, a great interest raised towards implementing cultural aspects in language education all over the world, especially after passing several economic programs such as the "Common Market". Furthermore, as Risager adds that the development of computer programs

and the internet brought contact between learners of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds via emails, even face to face through school trips. This means that they had the opportunity to experience, practice, and learn more about culture in real-life situations and events (2007, p. 105).

1.6. The Importance of Teaching Culture

Since the relationship between language and culture has been investigated by several researchers, the results proved that the two cannot be disconnected. Therefore, teaching culture should be integrated as an essential part in the foreign language curriculum. This indicates that the emphasis should not only be placed on learners' linguistic competence, but also on the cultural aspects embedded in the language with the aim of becoming totally competent communicators. In this respect, Samovar, Porter, and Jain (1981) suggest that:

> Culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted... Culture...is the foundation of communication (as cited in Clouston, 1997, p. 2).

They propose that culture not only directs how communication takes place, but it also identifies how individuals receive and perceive messages and in what situations. This shows that individuals from different cultures perceive and interpret the world differently, hence this would affect the communication process in a manner that individuals use different ways in order to express their thoughts, whether explicitly or implicitly and those different ways would affect their way of using the language (Baranovskaja, 2011, P. 126). So, this indicates that communication will be unequivocally successful only when learners acquire the language's culture. Moreover, learning a given item in a foreign language requires the comprehension of

its meaning and its use in different contexts appropriately (Morgan & Cain, 2000, p.2), if the students are not required by the exact explanations of the given meanings in their cultural context, this would lead to miscommunication or misinterpretation (Arabski & Wojtaszek, 2011, p.37).

Culture is highly important in the context of teaching and learning a foreign language and challenging at the same time, since teaching culture requires full knowledge about both the target and the native culture of the learners. This can be demonstrated through Tomalin and Stempleski (1993, pp. 8-9) who provide brief goals of culture teaching in foreign language classrooms. They advocate that the integration of culture in foreign language learning would:

1. Help students to develop an understanding that all people exhibit culturally-Conditioned behaviour.

2. Help students to develop an understanding that social variables such as age, sex, social class, and place of residence influence the ways in which people speak and behave.

3. Help students to become more aware of conventional behaviour in common situations in the target culture.

4. Help students to increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language.

5. Help students to develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the target culture, in terms of supporting evidence.

6. Help students to develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture.

7. Stimulate the students' intellectual curiosity about the target culture, and to encourage empathy towards its people.

In general, considering all of those goals would encourage the learners to develop positive attitudes towards the target culture through realizing and understanding the differences between

both the native and the target cultures. Therefore, learners will be able to use the foreign language adequately and properly in its context, and to adjust to the other culture when necessary.

The teaching of culture can be concluded by Buttjes and Byram who view that teaching the language in isolation from its culture is defective and this would be regarded as if the language is an independent element of the other "sociocultural phenomenon" (1991, p. 18).

1.7. L1 Culture Vs L2 Culture

The fact that language and culture are intertwined, learning a foreign language requires learners both to understand the target language's culture, and to be aware of the differences between their L1 culture and L2 culture, especially when it comes to the communication process with foreigners. In short, to develop what is known as cultural awareness. Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) define this concept as "the term we have used to describe sensitivity to the impact of culturally-induced behaviour on language use and communication" (p. 5). In other words, cultural awareness is not only about learners' recognition of the differences between the native and the target culture, but also developing this sense of acceptance and the ability to deal with the cultural differences through understanding that cultures are not the same in order to avoid misinterpretation. For instance, Brown (1987) notes that one must discern and understand the differences between the two cultures in order to act appropriately in a given event (as cited in Byram and Morgan, 1994, p. 11). This suggests that learners can only succeed in learning a foreign language through understanding the cultural context that produced it and through differentiating it from their native language's culture. Additionally, Valette (1986) introduces brief goals of culture's instruction for the teacher in foreign language classes in which he states that:

To develop a greater awareness of and a broader knowledge about the target culture; acquire a command of the etiquette of the target culture; understand the differences

19

between the target culture and the students' culture and understand the values of the target culture (as cited in Baranovskaja, 2011, p. 122).

In other words, teachers should have a greater acquaintance about the target culture in return to raise their learners' awareness of the differences between their L1 culture and the L2 culture, and make them understand the belief systems and values upon which cultures are established so that they will be able to make the distinction and use the language appropriately and significantly in a given context.

Conclusion

The present chapter elucidates the interconnectedness between language and culture. It exhibits that both concepts are inseparable units. Consequently, learning a given language without its culture is inconceivable. Given the fact that cultural awareness is an integral part for the teaching of languages, accordingly, both learners and teachers need to understand the cultural differences and differentiate between both L1 and L2 culture in order to enable the learners to acquire the necessary cultural knowledge of the target language with the aim of using it in its relevant cultural context. As many researchers claimed, focusing on raising learners' cultural awareness besides linguistic competence would guarantee the mastery of the target language.

CHAPTER TWO

IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

Introduction

Like any other language, the English language has its own set of idiomatic expressions which build its specificity. English native speakers tend to largely use idioms in their daily lives spontaneously. Therefore, they become part of their language habits as well as an important element of the richness and the particularity of their culture. In this respect, English idioms are not usually understood by non-English individuals since they are not familiar with them. In addition, they are difficult to be translated because they are restricted to the English culture. Generally, these particular forms of language are good ways for language speakers to better express themselves and their thoughts effectively and creatively. However, misunderstanding of those idioms can be raised by non- native individuals due to the cultural differences and experiences.

In view of that, the present chapter aims at clarifying the concept of idiomatic expressions and tries to shed light on some of its key elements. Accordingly, it will review some of the outstanding definitions of idiom along with a focus on culture's influence on the interpretation of English idioms. Additionally, some related issues will be tackled such as, idiom processing and comprehension and the main factors that make the process of idioms' comprehension challengeable.

2.1. Definitions of Idiom

Idioms are considered to be the most prestigious form of language. Recognizing and understanding idioms of a particular language is equal to understanding the culture of that language. For this reason, idioms help in acquiring and learning the foreign language as a native speaker. Undoubtedly, the mastery of idioms makes learners appear competent and fluent in the foreign language.

". . . The word idiom stems from the Greek lexeme *idios*, meaning own, private, or peculiar" (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989, p. 624 as cited in Despoina, 2014, p. 12).

According to Despoina (2014), both "*idiom* and *idiomatic* were used in Greek and French to denote dialectical variability and hence, peculiarity" (p. 12). In this respect, idioms are peculiar form in language and their peculiarity is shown on the semantic and syntactic level. More precisely, idioms differ from ordinary words in terms of meaning and grammar (Flavell, 1994, p. 6). Specifically, learners of English language need to know about idioms because through idiom learning, they become aware of the history and the cultural heritage of English people since these linguistic expressions are rooted in the local culture and customs.

Scholars have various views which make idioms diversely defined. Seidl and McMordie (1988, p. 13) define idiom as a set of words that express meaning which varies from the meaning of these words when they are taken separately. In this sense, an idiom is an expression that has a figurative meaning which cannot be understood literally. Even if individuals know the meaning of each word, the comprehension of the overall meaning fails. In his turn, Langlotz finds that "idioms are peculiar linguistic constructions that have raised many eyebrows in linguistics and often confuse new comers to a language" (2006, p. 1). He highlights the importance of idioms as fundamental expressions in knowing a given language. This fact can be better explained by non-native speakers of a particular language who find hardships in understanding idioms since they are culture-bound items. Furthermore, Zhengyuan (2012, p. 106) explains that an idiom is a vital aspect of language and it is different from ordinary words because of its frozen nature. Accordingly, an idiom is unchangeable neither in form nor in meaning. Moreover, Yagiz and Izadpanah (2013, p. 953) state that idioms reflect elements of the deep and the surface structure of a given culture. They help language learners to appear competent and to perceive things from a native speaker's perspective. Essentially, they acknowledge that idioms provide sights to the basic assumptions, values as well as the practices of a specific language's culture with a focus on their role to achieve the native speaker's competence.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, an idiom is "a group of words used together with a meaning that you cannot guess" (2020). This definition strongly justifies the fact that idioms are not literal. For instance, "*to have bitten off more than you can chew*". This idiom means that you have tried to do something which is very difficult for you. In this case, a person knows only the meaning of the words "*bitten*" and "*chew*" will not be able to interpret the real figurative meaning of the whole expression.

After dealing with many definitions, it can be noticed that idiomatic expressions are peculiar patterns which are concerned with the figurative meaning rather than the literal meaning of their parts. In addition, they share cultural information and enlarge people's understanding and manipulation of a language. On this basis, the comprehension of an idiom is hard to be achieved by non- native speakers but highly mastered by natives. The latter makes a competent language learner takes idioms into consideration as they are an important part of language learning.

2.2. Features of Idiom

2.2.1. Semantic Non- Compositionality

The most apparent feature of idioms is their non-compositionality (Velasco, 2016, p. 136). Idioms are considered as ". . . semantically non compositional strings . . . regarded as linguistic exceptions that stand outside the grammatical norms of the language" (Langlotz, 2006, p. 16). That is to say, idioms are specific patterns of language which oppose the principle of compositionality. The latter argues that the meaning of the different parts of the linguistic entity as well as their structural adjustment determine its whole meaning. Therefore, idioms are problematic for this principle since their overall meaning is not typically the sum of its parts. Fasold states that the meaning of the idiom *"kick the bucket"* cannot be determined neither from the meaning of its separate words (*kick*, and *the bucket*) nor from the way they are put in

the sentence. Hence, idioms get their meaning from "the metaphorical interpretation" (2006, p.141).

2.2.2. Institutionalisation

Institutionalisation refers to the process "by which a standard construction becomes more current in a speech community and is reproduced as a memorized sequence because of its specific meaning or pragmatic function" (Barkema, 1996, p. 135 as cited in Langlotz, 2006, p. 99). Namely, it is about the degree of the familiarity of idiomatic expressions in a given society where they are seen as a sociolinguistic criterion which establishes most of the community's identity. Due to the fact that idioms are shared and daily used expressions between members of the society they bring them all together as well as they distinguish them from others. For this reason, they present difficulties for non-native speakers.

2.2.3. Structural Flexibility

Torner and Bernal claim that unlike ordinary words, idioms contain a collection of unchangeable and frozen words. Language speakers are obliged to use idioms as they are even if their form is grammatically incorrect. As a result of this fixedness, idioms do not allow variation in the word order which means that the parts of idioms cannot be rearranged in addition to the impossibility of the addition or deletion of any of its elements. Accordingly, idioms are invariable in both form and meaning (2017, pp. 79-80) and vary according to their degree of frozenness. More accurately, the more an idiom is fixed, the more it tolerates neither semantic nor syntactic modifications (Cacciari & Tabossi, 1993, p. 80). "Most idioms are known to be lexically fixed, meaning that the substitution of a near synonym (or a closely-related word) for a constituent part does not preserve the idiomatic meaning of the expression" (Fazly, Cook, & Stevenson, 2008, p. 64). This shows that due to the inflexible nature of idioms, the figurative meaning of an idiom will be lost if one of its constituents is replaced by its equivalent.

2.2.4. Figurativeness

In addition to the above-listed features, the basic characteristic of an idiom is that the words are used metaphorically (Mantyla, 2004, as cited in Dabrowska, 2018, p.18). For instance, the idiom *"to bury the hatchet"* means to become friendly again after a disagreement. However, the meaning of the words *"to bury"* and *"the hatchet"* are different from the meaning of the whole expression. So, it should be noted that the structure plays a small or no role in the comprehension of the figurative meaning of the whole idiomatic expression.

2.3. Classification of Idioms

Most of language experts assume that it is better to use idioms than non-figurative language since they are more descriptive, impressive, and strong expressions. Yet, it is hard to classify them due to their challenging nature (McPherron & Randolph, 2014, as cited in Kovacs, 2016, p. 88). In light of this, many linguists introduce different ways of idiom categorization which is based on syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic areas.

According to Seidl and McMordie (1988), idioms are classified into three basic types based on both the correctness of structure and the clarity of meaning. Idioms with irregular form and clear meaning as *"do someone proud"*, idioms with regular form but unclear meaning like *"cut no ice"*, and irregular form and unclear meaning like *"go great guns"*. The majority of idioms belong to the second type where the structure is grammatically incorrect and the meaning is obvious (p. 13).

Semantically speaking, idioms can be unchangeable and changeable in terms of their inflexibility. On the one hand, unchangeable idioms do not allow any modifications. On the other hand, changeable idioms tolerate some variations (Kvetko, 2009, as cited in Kovacs, 2016, pp. 90-91).

Idioms can be also verbal, verbless, and sentence idioms. Verbal idioms contain a verb and an object such as *"open somebody's eyes"*. Verbless idioms do not have a verb; they are

rather nominal, adjectival, or adverbial idioms, for example, *"a square peg in a round hole"*. Sentence idioms consist of the compound sentence system like *"talk of the devil and he'll soon appear"* (Kvetko, 2009, as cited in Kovacs, 2016, p. 91).

2.3.1. On the Level of Compositionality

Glucksberg classifies idioms according to the dimension of compositionality into non-compositional idioms, partially compositional idioms, and fully compositional idioms (2001, p.73-74).

2.3.1.1. Non-Compositional Idioms

For non-compositional idioms to be understood, one does not have to understand the individual meaning of their parts. Mainly, because there is no systematic relation between what the idiom really means and the meaning of the words constituting it. Thus, the comprehension of the non-compositional idioms is a challenge.

2.3.1.2. Partially Compositional Idioms

Partially compositional idioms have certain relation between the idiomatic meaning of the idiom and its parts. In the sense that, partially compositional idioms tolerate variations in tense. For instance, *"kick the bucket"* can be used with auxiliary as *"he might kick the bucket"*. However, the literal meaning of *"to kick"* still does not help in understanding the real meaning "*to die".*

2.3.1.3. Fully Compositional Idioms

Compositional idioms are considered to be the easiest type since the literal meaning helps in fully understanding the figurative meaning, for instance, *"To pop the question"* directly signals the meaning of *"suddenly utter"*. The analysis of the parts of the idiom leads to the correct interpretation of the figurative meaning. This confirms that "compositional idioms are understood more quickly than non-compositional ones'' (Gibbs, Nayak, & Cutting, 1989 as cited in Glucksberg, 2001, p. 74).

2.3.2. On the Level of Transparency

Glucksberg also identifies another categorization of idioms according to their degree of transparency into opaque idioms, transparent idioms, and quasi metaphorical idioms.

2.3.2.1. Opaque Idioms

Glucksberg states that it is impossible to infer the actual meaning of the idiom from the meaning of its components (2001, p.74). As a result, the process of idiom understanding will be complicated. A good example of opaque idioms is *"kick the bucket"*. Moreover, D'arcais asserts that "most opaque idioms are fossils in which the literal meaning is no more than philological curiosity" (Cacciari & Tabossi, 1993, p. 80). Thus, the literal meaning is needless in understanding opaque idioms. They are considered as the most difficult type since they contain elements that are culture-based which lead to their misinterpretations by individuals who lack the cultural knowledge of the language.

2.3.2.2. Transparent Idioms

Transparent idioms are easy to be understood since there is a kind of "metaphorical correspondences between an idiom's words and components of the idiom's meaning" (Glucksberg, 2001, p. 74). The latter indicates that the idiom constituents have a very close meaning to the whole meaning of the idiom. Accordingly, Glucksberg demonstrates that:

> The elements of the idiom spill the beans map onto the components of the idiom's meaning. Spill corresponds to the act of revealing or letting out, and beans correspond to the material that heretofore had been concealed or otherwise unknown (2001, p. 74).

In transparent idioms, the words have a literal meaning but when put together they establish a figurative meaning which facilitates the interpretation of the idiomatic sense of the expression *"spill the beans"* (Glucksberg, 2001, p. 74).

2.3.2.3 Quasi Metaphorical Idioms

In this This type of idioms, the literal analysis of the idiom meaning results in a correct interpretation of its figurative meaning. They are called quasi metaphorical because of their use of the same communicative strategy of metaphors (Glucksberg, 2001, p.75).

In brief, there are various classifications of idiomatic expressions depending on what aspect is taken into consideration. Other features provide other types and other classifications including types as non-identifiable and identifiable idioms, pure, literal, and semi idioms.

2.4. Models of Idiom Processing and Comprehension

Like any other form of language, idioms received certain attention about their process of comprehension. Two models have been established: the Non-Compositional Model and the Compositional one.

2.4.1. The Non-Compositional Model

This model views idioms as non-compositional linguistic entities where the literal meaning of its individual parts does not determine the exact figurative meaning of the whole idiomatic expression (Dabrowska, 2018, p. 54). The non-compositional model is regarded as "direct look-up models" due to their arbitrary nature and that the meaning of idioms is retrieved not from the words constituting it but form direct processing of the whole idiom (Glucksberg, 1993, p. 4, as cited in Dabrowska, 2018, pp. 54-55). This model contains three main hypotheses: the Idiom List Hypothesis, the Lexical Representation Hypothesis, and the Direct Access Hypothesis.

2.4.1.1. The Idiom List Hypothesis

First of all, The Idiom List Hypothesis entails that unlike normal words, idioms are stored in a special idiom list that is characterized by the use of an idiom processing mode. In this hypothesis, individuals tend to access the literal meaning of the parts of the idiom separately before the access of its figurative meaning. Hence, in case they are familiar with the idiom at

hand, the idiom mode is directly activated in order to figure out its idiomatic meaning (Bobrow & Bell, 1973, as cited in Swinney & Cutler 1979, p. 524). This hypothesis proposes access to the literal meaning first. However, only if the literal meaning of the idiom is inappropriate and its analysis fails, the access to the figurative meaning is activated.

2.4.1.2. The Idiom Representation Hypothesis

In contrast to the previous hypothesis, the Lexical Representation Hypothesis indicates that idioms are like any other words which are stored and analyzed in memory. Both the literal and idiomatic meanings are activated simultaneously. This means that the access to the meaning of the individual words of the idiom as well as the figurative meaning happen at once (Swinney & Cutler, 1979, p. 525).

2.4.1.3. The Direct Access Hypothesis

The third model suggests that the figurative meaning is processed before the literal meaning of an idiom. In this respect, there is a direct access to the non-literal meaning of the idiom and individuals appear to directly interpret idioms figuratively. The access to the literal meaning of the idiom occurs only if the figurative interpretation fails (Gibbs 1980, 1986, as cited in Cacciari & Tabossi, 1988, p. 668-669). Therefore, individuals seem to process idiomatic expressions faster than literal ones.

2.4.2. The Compositional Model

The idea behind this model is that idioms are processed like any other words in memory. In addition, idioms vary according to their degree of compositionality in the sense that the extent to which the individual parts of the idiom contribute to the interpretation of its figurative meaning differs (Dabrowska, 2018, p.57-58). This model includes the Configuration Hypothesis, the Conceptual Metaphor Hypothesis, and Idiom Decomposition Hypothesis.

2.4.2.1. The Configuration Hypothesis

The configuration hypothesis assumes that there is a specific word configuration which determines the figurative meaning of the idiom. The meaning of this configuration word is activated if there is a sufficient portion of the expression which helps in identifying the configuration of an idiom. Besides, there are some words which are more important than others in idioms which are called the key. Once the idiom key is accessed, the idiom can be recognized. Until this key is perceived, the idiomatic expression is processed literally (Everaert, Vanderlinden, & Schreuder, 1995, p. 284). According to this hypothesis, "idioms can be processed faster than literal expressions because it is not necessary to process all idiom words to recognize the configuration" (Everaert et al., 1995, p. 284). Owing to the flexible nature of some idioms, it is not obligatory to have a certain word order so that to figure out the configuration.

2.4.2.2. The Conceptual Metaphor Hypothesis

This hypothesis is based on the idea that metaphors are highly crucial in the comprehension of the different forms of language. The latter makes conceptual metaphors facilitate the understanding of idioms. Consequently, the parts of the idiomatic expression help in determining the figurative meaning of the whole expression (Gibbs, Bogdanovich, Sykes, & Barr 1997, as cited in Dabrowska, 2018, pp. 58-59).

2.4.2.3. The Idiom Decomposition Hypothesis

The Idiom Decomposition Hypothesis refers to the analysability of idioms. It stresses idioms as "analysable linguistic strings" (Langlotz, 2006, p. 36, as cited in Pitzl, 2018, p. 73). This entails that certain idioms get their figurative meaning from the metaphorical meaning of its parts. They are called decomposable idioms. For instance, the idiom *"to play with fire"* means to do something risky. In this regard, the word *"fire"* contributes to the meaning of *"dangerous"* and *"risky"*.

While other idioms that cannot establish their figurative meaning from the literal meaning of its individual parts are called non- decomposable idioms. A good example is *"kick the bucket"* in which both the meaning of *"kick"* and *"the bucket"* cannot infer to the figurative meaning *"to die"* (Gibbs, 1993, p. 62, as cited in Pitzl, 2018, p. 73).

2.5. Causes of Difficulties in Idiom Comprehension

Unlike native speakers, non-native speakers of English find more difficulties and challenges when it comes to idiom comprehension, production, and learning (Heredia & Cieślicka, 2015, p. 177). In this respect, learners of English tend to face some obstacles that make the process of idiom comprehension and interpretation problematic. This difficulty is mainly due to the following main causes:

2.5.1. Non Literalness of Idioms

Alhaysony states that "in order to understand idioms, learners are required to go beyond simple word-by-word comprehension and integrate figurative meaning" (2017, p. 70). Since most of learners are unable to guess the figurative meaning of idioms, their non-literalness is considered as the most apparent cause which raises hardships for learners and makes the task of interpreting idioms appropriately challengeable.

2.5.2. Lack of Familiarity

Idioms are seen as a source of difficulty for learners of English "due to the lack of familiarity of the source context from which the idiom is derived". This entails that the knowledge of the background context is highly crucial in understanding idiomatic expressions because there are unlimited numbers of idioms that infer meaning from different topics including sports, music, and art (Burns & Richards, 2018, p. 178). Thereby, without a considerable awareness of such contexts, the comprehension of related idioms seems to be impossible.

2.5.3. Lack of Exposure

The lack of exposure to idioms is another reason for their misunderstanding (Prodromou, 2008, p. 45). Non-native speakers of the language do not get in touch with idioms in interactive occasions in their daily life, so they do not have background knowledge about how they must operate them.

2.5.4. Culture

Idioms are problematic to non-native speakers since they present not only linguistic challenges but also cultural ones (Alhaysony, 2017, p. 71). In this respect, idioms are the form of language that shares historical and cultural information and helps learners to gain deeper insights towards the customs and the lifestyles of a given community. Language learners find difficulties in understanding idioms since they are not familiar with the culture they are derived from.

Due to the fact that cultures differ, individuals misinterpret idioms depending on their cultural heritage and knowledge. More precisely, their culture misleads them towards providing an adequate interpretation of idiomatic expressions.

2.6. The cultural Role in Idiom Interpretation

According to Wang (2018), "there is always inherent connection between language and culture" (p. 295). In this context, language and culture are two inseparable elements and idioms are widely recognized as the essence of language. Therefore, they are closely connected and cannot be separated from culture.

Idioms are a unique form of figurative language which is highly linked to culture. In that case, the language used in a particular speech community reflects the different cultural aspects of that community and differentiates it from other societies. Szerszunowics finds that "certain idioms developed mirroring the local culture and beliefs, expressing the local identity of the language users" (2007, p. 440). Accordingly, idioms express the identity of members of a

certain community. Similarly, Liu declares that idioms are "heavily culturally-loaded phrases or sentences … and closely tied to distinctive cultural features and attitudes" (2012, p. 2359). This shows that idioms are rich of cultural connotations and present particular aspects of a given culture. Wang argues that idiom "reflects unique cultural elements such as natural environment, religion, custom and, habits, etc. The relationship between idiom and culture is actually the one between language and culture" (2017, p. 156). Thus, an attempt to understand an idiom needs knowledge of the culture where this idiom is used.

Culture plays a significant role in understanding idioms since they are culture-bound strings. Bortfeld (2002, p. 276) declares that non-native speakers of the language consider idiomatic expressions arbitrary due to the differences between their own culture and the culture of the language they speak. Additionally, native speakers use idioms automatically and spontaneously whereas foreigners tend to find it difficult to analyze and conclude the figurative meaning of the idiomatic expression. The importance of culture appears when idioms from different languages are compared. It can be seen how things change cross cultures in the sense that what seems to be normal in one culture is not in another. As a result, different cultures perceive things differently and interpret idioms differently.

Szerszunowicz (2007, p.441) claims that idioms of a given language are a reflection of the cultural identity of a given community or group; they are the expressions that exemplify their identity in addition to their views and perceptions they have about the world. Moreover, according to Rizq (2015), "idiomatic expressions carry within them the history, heritage, culture and, customs of its native users" (as cited in Abid Thyab, 2016, p.108). In this sense, idioms are particular form of language that represents the culture of the individuals through their embedded cultural meaning.

According to Abid Thyab (2016) "The link between an idiom and its meaning could be based on physical experiences, which are universally shared or based on specific domains,

which are culturally specific" (p.106). This implies that in order for non- native speakers to understand the meaning of the idiom, they need first to recognize what it based on. What makes idioms difficult is their meanings since they cannot be comprehensible at the literal level (Gumar Karam, 2017, p.7). This difficulty of their meanings is mainly related to their cultural specificity and particularity. On this basis, Saeed Nasser affirms that this notion of particularity suggests that idiomatic expressions are specific to a given language or a given culture (2019, p. 316). Consequently, in order to accurately interpret those idioms, it is necessary to be familiar with the language's culture.

Conclusion

As a conclusion for this chapter, it can be said that idiomatic expressions are a particular form of the English language which are considered to be highly limited to the English culture. Scholars provide different models of processing and comprehension of idioms. They are figurative, fixed, and culture-bound expressions that make the process of their comprehension etchable and challengeable for non-native learners. In this respect, having background knowledge and to be largely exposed to such expressions in the daily lives are all elements that help learners to be familiar and to know more about the culture in order to facilitate idioms' comprehension and interpretation. Furthermore, this chapter concludes that there is a reciprocal relationship between language and culture in the sense that culture plays an important role while dealing with idiomatic expressions. This denotes that the more the learners are aware of the cultural specificities as well as the cultural aspects of a given language, it will be easy for them to successfully interpret idioms.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Learners' Questionnaire

Arabic Summary

French Summary

Introduction

The present chapter is the fieldwork of this research. It aims to investigate the effect of learners' L1 culture on their interpretation of English idiomatic expressions. To do that, data are collected through using a questionnaire. This questionnaire is administered to fifty-five (55) learners at the Department of English, 08 Mai University- Guelma. Subsequently, analyses and interpretations of data from the questionnaire are presented so as to confirm or reject the research hypothesis. Furthermore, the pedagogical implications are dealt with together with the limitations of the study which stand as an obstruction for the quality of the research.

3.1. Learners' Questionnaire

3.1.1. Sample

The population of the present research consists of Master Two LMD learners at the Department of English, 8 Mai 1945 University- Guelma during the academic year 2019-2020. Therefore, fifty-five (55) Master Two LMD learners are chosen randomly as the sample of this research since the entire population consists of one hundred and twenty-four (124) learners. It is believed that the selection of such sample is based on the consideration that Master Two LMD Learners have already studied culture and civilization of the target language for five years and their level is much more advanced than Second and Third-Year LMD English learners. Furthermore, those learners possess an adequate competence in the English language and have considerable background knowledge about idioms and culture of the foreign language.

3.1.2. Description of the Questionnaire

The learners' questionnaire consists of twenty-six (26) questions that are arranged from general to specific. It is an amalgamation of different types of questions ranging from dichotomous questions (Question 09, 12, 14, 18, 19, 20, and 23), open-ended questions (Question01, 02, 03, 06, 16, and 26), multiple-choice questions (Question 04, 08, 12a, 21, and

24), and scale items questions (Question 05, 07, 10, 11, 13, 17, 22, and 25). Furthermore, the questionnaire is composed of three main sections which can be described as follows:

Section One: General Information (Q1 to Q5).

This section attempts to obtain general information about students such as their age, their gender, their aim behind learning English, and others.

Section Two: Idiomatic Expressions (Q6 to Q15).

This section seeks to investigate learners' awareness about the importance as well as the significance of idioms in the development of their level in English. It also aims at elicitating information concerning learners' level of idioms' comprehension in addition to the difficulties they face while dealing with them.

Section Three: The Effect of L1 Culture on Learners' Interpretation of English

Idiomatic Expressions (Q16 to Q25).

The main aim of this section is to investigate how learners get the meaning of the idioms and if their L1 culture has an influence on the process of how they comprehend and interpret them. This section also invited the learners to add further comments and/or recommendations in regard to the topic in question.

3.1.3. Administration of the Learners' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is administered electronically (via facebook group and email) to Master Two LMD learners of English, 8 Mai 1945 University- Guelma on June 09th, 2020. Fifty-five (55) of the participants have responded to this questionnaire since they are informed that their responses will be dealt with confidentiality and used only for research purposes. Almost all the questions are clear enough in order to help the learners understand and thus to provide the most appropriate responses without any potential difficulty.

3.1.4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

3.1.4.1. Analysis of Results and Findings from the Learners' Questionnaire

Section One: General Information.

Question One: How old are you?

Table 3.1

Learners' Age

Age	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
22 years	2	4%
23 years	37	67%
More than 23 years	16	29%
Total	55	100%

Table 3.1 demonstrates that the majority of learners (67 %) are 23 years old. (29 %) of learners are more than 23 years old, while (4 %) of learners are 22 years old.

Question Two: What is your gender?

Table 3.2

Learners' Gender Specification

Gender	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Male	8	14.54 %
Female	47	85.46 %
Total	55	100 %

According to table 3.2, the majority of learners (85.46 %) are females, while few of them (14.54 %) are males. This implies that the number of females is more than males. The latter

may indicate that females are more interested in learning the English language rather than males who in return prefer to study scientific specialties.

Question Three: How long have you been studying English?

Table 3.3

Period of English Instruction

Years	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
12	48	87 %
More than 12	7	13 %
Total	55	100 %

According to the results exposed in Table 3.3, the majority of learners (87 %) state that they have been studying English for twelve (12) years. This indicates that they were successful in their academic career. Seven (7) learners (13 %) declare that they have been studying English for more than twelve (12) years. This suggests that they have dropped a year or two and/or failed in their studies once or more.

Question Four: What is your aim behind learning English?

Table 3.4

Aim behind Learning English

Aim	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Develop cultural knowledge	47	85.45 %
Develop communicative abilities	40	72.72 %
Develop linguistic abilities	13	23.63 %
Other (s)	2	3.63 %

Concerning the aim behind learning English (Table 3.4), learners were given the chance to choose one or more choices from the three ones. They could select 'other' if they have other

aims that are not mentioned. The vast Majority of learners (85.45 %) point out that they aim to develop their cultural knowledge. This indicates that these learners are learning English for the aim of knowing about the target culture and its components. Less than the majority of learners (72.72 %) choose the second choice which is learning English to develop communicative abilities. This implies that their interest towards leaning English is mainly for communicative purposes. A significant percentage of learners (23.63 %) claim that developing their linguistic abilities is their aim. This suggests that they are aiming at mastering the structural system of the target language. Only two (2) learners (3.63 %) opt for 'other' stating that they learn English to be an English teacher.

Question Five: How would you describe your level of English?

Table 3.5

Appreciation of English Level

Level	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Very good	15	27.27 %
Good	31	56.37 %
Average	9	16.36 %
Bad	0	0 %
Very bad	0	0 %
Total	55	100 %

As it is displayed in Table 3.5, more than half of learners (56.37 %) assume that they have a good level of English, while (27.27%) of learners declare that they have a very good level of English. This indicates that the good learners have developed some language skills that enable them to succeed in their studies, while the very good ones have totally reached those skills. Few learners (16.36 %) claim that their level of English is average. This reveals that they

are not yet to master the language. No learner (0 %) opts for bad or very bad. This means that they do not encounter severe difficulties while learning the language.

Section Two: Idiomatic Expressions.

Question Six: From your own ideas, how would you define an idiom/ idiomatic expression?

According to the vast majority of learners (85.45 %), idiomatic expressions may refer to those expressions that are characterized by special stylistic and aesthetic features and have a figurative meaning that cannot be recognized at the literal level. 14.54 % of learners have added that idiomatic expressions carry particular cultural meanings that can only be understood by the natives and their interpretations differ from one culture to another. This denotes that learners have considerable background knowledge about idioms and they are really aware of their nature.

Question Seven: As an EFL learner, do you agree that idioms are important part in English Language learning?

Table 3.6

Importance of Idioms in Learning English

Extent	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	39	70.91 %
Agree	14	25.45 %
Neither agree nor disagree	2	3.64 %
Disagree	0	0 %
Strongly disagree	0	0 %
Total	55	100 %

According to the findings displayed in Table 3.6, the majority of the learners (70.91 %) respond by strongly agree, while a significant percentage of learners (25.45 %) opt for agree.

This shows that the majority acknowledge the importance of idioms in learning and mastering the English language. Only two (2) learners (3.64 %) state that they are neither agree nor disagree. This suggests that they are neutral and they do not want to give their point of view, or they may have no idea about the importance of idioms in learning English.

Question Eight: Why do you think that idioms play an important role in learning English?

Table 3.7

Reason behind the Importance of Idioms in Learning English

Aim	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Idioms help in the acquisition of vocabulary	0	0 %
Idioms help to understand the everyday language of native speakers	20	36 %
Idioms help to comprehend texts that contain metaphorical meaning	2	4 %
Idioms help in mastering and improving the speaking skills	5	9 %
Idioms help knowing about the history and the cultural heritage of the English people	28	51 %
Total	55	100 %

Table 3.7 shows that more than half of learners (51%) choose the fifth option where they believe that learning idioms help them to enrich their knowledge about the history and the cultural heritage of English people. (36 %) of learners are consistent with the second option that idioms are crucial since they help them to understand the everyday speech of natives. (9%) choose the fourth option where they agree that idioms are important because they lead them to

master and improve their speaking skills. Only (4%) choose the third option where idioms help in understanding texts that contain metaphorical meaning. No learner (0%) opts for the first option where idioms are important because they help to enrich vocabulary. The results obtained from this question denote that the majority of learners are interested in learning idioms in order to know more about the English culture and to improve their communicative abilities rather than other mentioned reasons.

Question Nine: Are you satisfied with your knowledge of English idioms?

Table 3.8

Satisfaction with the knowledge of English idioms

Option	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	15	27%
No	40	73%
Total	55	100%

Table 3.8 demonstrates that 15 learners (27%) are satisfied with their knowledge of English idioms. Yet, 40 learners out of fifty-five (73%) are unsatisfied. This indicates that Master Two learners are disappointed, and want to develop their background knowledge about English idioms more.

Question Ten: How often do you use idiomatic expressions in your learning process?

Table 3.9

Frequency of Using Idioms in the Learning Process

Option	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Always	0	0%
Usually	0	0%
Often	3	5%
Sometimes	10	18%
Rarely	30	55%
Never	12	22%
Total	55	100%

Table 3.9 shows that more than half of the learners (55%) rarely have opportunities to use idioms in their learning process. (22%) represent those who never use idioms, while 18% are those who sometimes have chances to use idioms. (5%) of learners said that they often use idioms. According to the results mentioned above, this denotes that a big number of learners do not have the opportunity to use idioms while learning English.

Question Eleven: How would you find understanding English idioms?

Table 3.10

Idioms' Comprehension

Option	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Very easy	0	0 %
Easy	3	5%
Difficult	44	80%
Very Difficult	8	15%
Total	55	100%

According to the results obtained from table 3.10, (80%) of learners find idioms difficult to understand, while 15% declare that idioms are very difficult. Only (5%) consider the process of idiom comprehension an easy process. No learner (0 %) opts for very easy. This reveals that idioms are considered as a complicated form of language that cannot be understood easily.

Question Twelve: Have you ever faced difficulties while interpreting English idioms?

Table 3.11

Difficulties Encountered while Dealing with English Idioms

Option	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	55	100%
No	0	0%
Total	55	100%

As the table (3.11) shows, all the learners (100%) affirm that they face difficulties while dealing with idioms. That is to say, they have problems in understanding idioms and need more

tasks and activities to develop their knowledge about them in order to decrease those difficulties.

Question Twelve: if yes, what kind of difficulties do you face?

Table 3.11a

Types of Difficulties Encountered while Interpreting English Idioms

Option	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Unfamiliarity of idioms	5	9%
Metaphoricity of idioms	4	7%
Lack of cultural background Knowledge	46	84%
Other	0	0%
Total	55	100%

It is clear from the table (3.11a) that the majority of learners (84%) said that idioms are difficult because they do not have considerable background knowledge of English culture, while 9% of them affirm that the unfamiliarity of idioms is the reason behind this difficulty. (7%) claim that they do not comprehend idioms due to its metaphorical meaning. The result denotes that learners do not have extensive exposure to English culture and they feel unfamiliar with it. Additionally, they do not appreciate their cultural knowledge of the target language, and consider it insufficient.

Question Thirteen: How would you describe your level of interpreting English idioms?

Table 3.12

Appreciation of Interpreting English Idioms' Level

Option	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Very good	0	0 %
Good	0	0 %
Average	35	64 %
Bad	11	20 %
Very bad	9	16 %
Total	55	100 %

Table 3.12 provides the level of the learners in idiom interpretation. It can be noticed that (64%) of the learners are of an average level, while (20%) have a bad level. (16%) consider themselves very bad in interpreting idioms. This may indicate that the majority have acceptable level in idiom interpretation, while the learners who have bad and very bad levels can be explained with the fact that they rarely use idiomatic expressions in their learning process.

Question Fourteen: Do you support the concept of having classes to teach idiomatic expressions to EFL learners?

Table 3.13

Teaching Idioms

Option	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	53	96.36 %
No	2	3.64 %
Total	55	100 %

Concerning the teaching of idioms (table 3.13), the vast majority of learners (96.36 %) point out that they support the concept of having classes to teach idioms. This indicates that they are interested in developing their knowledge and their understanding of English idioms. Only two (2) learners (3.64 %) state that they do not support this concept. This suggests that they are not interested in knowing about idioms and/ or they are unaware of their importance in the learning process.

Question Fifteen: Which method do you prefer to learn English idioms through?

Table 3.14

Methods for Learning Idioms

Method	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
The explicit method	7	12.73%
The implicit method	48	87.27%
Total	55	100%

As it is noticed in Table 3.14, the vast majority of learners (87.27 %) opt for the implicit method. This hints that they prefer to acquire and learn idioms implicitly in their appropriate cultural context. While a very low percentage of learners (12.73 %) select the explicit method. This indicates that they prefer to learn idioms explicitly by providing them with the meaning and the usage of the idiom directly.

Section Three: The Effect of L1 Culture on Learners' Interpretation of English Idiomatic Expressions.

Question Sixteen: In your opinion, what is culture?

According to the vast majority of learners (92.72 %), culture is a complex entity that encompasses the norms, values, religion, ideologies, language, art, literature, beliefs, architecture, traditions, and customs of a particular society or community. Few learners (5.45

%) added that culture refers to every material and non- material aspects that shape individuals' life, identity, and make them unique.

Question Seventeen: Do you agree that culture is a fundamental element in learning a particular language?

Table 3.15

The importance of Culture in Learning a Language

Extent	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	39	70.91 %
Agree	14	25.45 %
Neither agree nor disagree	2	3.64 %
Disagree	0	0 %
Strongly disagree	0	0 %
Total	55	100 %

As shown in table 3.15, the majority of learners (73 %) answer by strongly agree while a significant percentage of learners (25 %) opt for agree. They justify their answer by indicating that culture is the context of language. Therefore, learning a given language requires background knowledge about its context in order to use it appropriately. Only two (2) learners (3.64%) state that he/she neither agree nor disagree. He/she justifies his/her answer by indicating that culture is needed in some areas of learning a language, but it is not the fundamental element of mastering the language.

Question Eighteen: Do you think that idioms are part of culture?

Table 3.16

The Relationship between Idioms and Culture

Option	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	55	100%
No	0	0%
Total	55	100 %

As it is shown in Table 3.16, all the learners (100 %) assert that idioms are part of culture. They justify their answer by indicating that there is a relationship between idioms and culture in a way that idioms carry particular cultural meanings. They added that the bond between idioms and culture is what makes them hard to be understood by non-native individuals.

Question Nineteen: In this case, do you think that the mastery of English idioms is related to the greater background knowledge about the English culture?

Table 3.17

Relation between the Cultural Background Knowledge and the Mastery of English Idioms

Option	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	54	98 %
No	1	2 %
Total	55	100 %

As it is illustrated in table 3.17, the vast majority of the learners (98%) acknowledge the relationship between the greater cultural background knowledge and the mastery of English idioms. They justify their answer by indicating that idioms have specific cultural meanings that cannot be understood without having background knowledge about the English culture. Only

one (1) learner (2 %) claims that there is no relationship between the greater background knowledge of the English culture and the mastery of its idioms. He/ she justifies his/her answer by indicating that individuals can master English idioms without studying the English culture through a decontextualised memorization of their meanings.

Question Twenty: As an EFL learner, does your first language's culture interfere in your learning process?

Table 3.18

The Interference of L1 Culture in the Learning Process

Option	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	45	81.82 %
No	10	18.18 %
Total	55	100 %

As it is displayed in Table 3.18, the majority of learners (81.82 %) declare that their Algerian culture interferes in their learning process. They justify their answer by indicating that their first language's culture interferes mainly in their writings, perception of various things, and their thought. They add that it influences their comprehension of English idioms in addition to other cultural connotations of the target language. A low percentage of learners (18.18 %) state that there is no interference of their L1 culture in their learning process. This might imply that they are unaware of its influence.

Question Twenty One: Which strategy do you use in order to identify the meaning of an English Idiom?

Table 3.19

Strategies Used for Interpreting English Idioms

Strategy	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Understanding the idiom according to the context	53	96.36 %
Interpreting the idiom according to L1 culture	44	80 %
Taking the meaning of the idiom literally	12	21.81 %
Other (s)	0	0 %

Concerning the strategy used for interpreting English idioms (Table 3.19), learners had to choose one or more answers from the three choices. They could select 'other' if they use other strategies that are not mentioned. The vast majority of learners (96.36 %) point out that they try to understand the meaning according to the context. This implies that they try to understand the idiom according to the surrounding circumstances, ideas, and words, and deduce the hidden and the intended meaning. Less than the majority of learners (80 %) choose the second choice which is interpreting the idiom according to L1 culture. This indicates that these learners rely on their Algerian culture to provide the meaning of the idiom. A low percentage of learners (21.81 %) declare that they take the meaning of the idiom literally. This suggests that they struggle for getting the meaning and/ or they are not able to understand the figures of the utterance.

Question Twenty Two: How often do you interpret English idioms based on your L1 culture?

Table 3.20

Frequency of Using L1 Culture to Interpret English Idioms

Frequency	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Always	0	0 %
Usually	29	52.73 %
Often	8	14.55 %
Sometimes	7	12.73 %
Rarely	6	10.90 %
Never	5	9.09 %
Total	55	100 %

According to the results displayed in Table 3.20, more than half of the learners (52.73 %) choose usually. This indicates that they are highly influenced by their Algerian culture and they consciously rely on it for the aim of achieving correct interpretations. (14.55 %) of learners point out that they oftentimes interpret English idioms according to their Algerian culture, while seven (7) learners (12.73 %) pick sometimes. This might imply that they rely on their culture from time to time. Six (6) learners (10.90 %) agree that they rarely rely on their culture for interpreting English idioms. This suggests that they only rely on their Algerian culture whenever they are confronted with difficulties for reaching an accurate understanding of those idioms. Only five (5) learners (9.09 %) state that they never rely on their culture for interpreting English idioms. This may indicate that they are aware of the fact that idioms are culture-specific and their interpretations differ across cultures, and/ or they are unaware of its influence.

Question Twenty Three: In case you use your L1 culture in order to interpret English idioms, do you always get the correct meaning?

Table 3.21

Frequency of getting the correct meaning of idioms through using L1 culture

Extent	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	0	0 %
No	55	100 %
Total	55	100 %

According to the results shown in table 3.21, all the learners (100 %) agree that interpreting idioms according to their Algerian culture does not always lead to a correct interpretation of English idioms. Mainly due to the differences between cultures. This indicates that the Algerian culture does not always help in English idioms' interpretation.

Question Twenty Four: In this regard, do you think that your native language's culture:

Table 3.22

The Effect of L1 Culture on the Interpretation of English Idioms

Option	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Helps understanding English idioms	3	5.45 %
Hinders the correct interpretation of English idioms	47	85.46 %
Has no influence in the interpretation of English idioms	5	9.09 %
Total	55	100 %

According to the results reported in Table 3.22, the vast majority of learners (85.46 %) claim that their native language's culture hinders the correct interpretation of English idioms. This exhibits that cultures perceive things differently and interpret idioms differently. Therefore, learners' Algerian culture misleads them towards providing an adequate interpretation of English Idioms. Only five (5) learners (9.09 %) state that their culture has no influence on their idioms' interpretation. This hints that they are unaware of its influence and/ or they are aware of the differences that exist between both the Algerian culture and the English culture. Only three (3) learners (5.45 %) assert that their native language's culture helps understanding English idioms. This notes that their Algerian culture does help them to some extent in the interpretation of some specific English idioms. Hence, this also may indicate that some idioms have common interpretations between cultures.

Question Twenty Five: To what extent do you think that your L1 culture hinders the process of English idioms' comprehension and interpretation?

Table 3.23

The Hindrance of L1 Culture on the Interpretation of English Idioms

Extent	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Great extent	38	69.09 %
Moderate extent	12	21.82 %
Limited extent	5	9.09 %
Total	55	100 %

According to the findings displayed in Table 3.23, the majority of learners (69.09 %) announce that their native language's culture hinders their comprehension and interpretations of English idioms to a great extent. This reveals that learners' Algerian culture highly prevents them from getting accurate interpretations. A significant percentage of learners (21.82 %) assert

that their culture hinders their interpretations to a moderate extent, while five (5) learners (9.09 %) claim that it hinders only to a limited extent. This suggests that their Algerian culture hinders only the interpretation of some particular idioms.

Further Suggestions

Question Twenty Six: Do you have any further suggestions/ comments?

Only five (5) learners from fifty five (55) have added further suggestions. The learners' suggestions can be summarized as follows:

- Idioms are helpful for mastering the English language since they help in understanding the daily conversations of the natives.

- Before learning any language, learners need to know about the culture where this language is spoken in order to understand their idiomatic expressions.

- Learners should note that cultures are not the same in order to avoid misinterpretations of idioms.

- There is no better way for learners to be exposed to the English culture like having classes to teach idiomatic expressions.

- Teachers should focus more on idiomatic expressions and cultural connotations of the target language in order to use them appropriately.

From these suggestions, it becomes clear that learners are aware of the importance of idiomatic expressions and their impact on learning and mastering the language. They also stress that idioms should be taught in a way that learners will know more about the target culture for lowering the influence of the native culture.

3.1.4.2. Summary of Results and Findings from the Learners' Questionnaire

Section one which is devoted to enquire about the learners' general information reveals that the respondents are aged from 22 years and more (see table 3.1) in which the majority are females while few of them are males (see table 3.2). It also unveils that the respondents have

been studying English for at least twelve years (see table 3.3), which indicates their familiarity with learning English as a foreign language. Furthermore, the majority of learners state that their main aim behind learning English is to develop their cultural knowledge (see table 3.4), which implies the importance they place on knowing about the target culture. Moreover, the results show that learners' level of English varies from very good, good, to average (see table 3.5).

Section two which is concerned with idiomatic expressions indicates that learners are aware of what idioms are according to their definitions. The majority of learners agree that idioms play an important role in learning English (see table 3.6) in a way that they help them in mastering the speaking skills, as they help them in understanding the everyday language of the native-speakers, and texts that contain metaphorical meanings (see table 3.7). Additionally, the majority of learners declare that they are not satisfied with their knowledge of English idioms (see table 3.8). This is mainly because they rarely use idiomatic expressions in their learning process (see table 3.9) which, in turn, explains why all of the learners face difficulties while interpreting them (see table 3.11), and why the majority consider idioms' comprehension as a difficult process (see table 3.10). This can be related to the fact that the majority consider the lack of cultural background knowledge of the language as the main source of difficulty (see table 3.11a). Furthermore, they clearly declare that their level of English idioms' interpretation varies from average, bad, to very bad (see table 3.12). In this regard, they strongly support the concept of having classes to teach English idiomatic expressions (see table 3.13), through which the majority prefer the implicit method while others prefer the explicit one, depending on learners' learning preferences (see table 3.14).

Section three is about the effect of L1 culture on learners' interpretation of English idiomatic expressions. This section reveals that learners are aware of what culture means since they cover almost all of its aspects in their definitions. Concerning the importance of culture in

learning a language, almost all learners acknowledge its importance in mastering a given language (see table 3.15). In this sense, they are all aware of the link that exists between idioms and culture (see table 3.16), in which they declare that the mastery of English idioms requires higher cultural knowledge of the language (see table 3.17). Moreover, this section discloses that the majority of learners get affected by their L1 culture in their learning process (see table 3.18). Furthermore, the majority of learners interpret English idioms according to the context besides relying on their first language culture (see table 3.19). In addition, the majority of learners state that they usually rely on their first language culture for interpreting English idioms (see table 3.20). As a result, all of them point out that they do not always get the correct meaning of idioms (see table 3.21). Equally, learners' agreements on that their first language culture hinders the interpretation of English idioms (see table 3.22) to a great extent (see table 3.23) explains that learners' Algerian culture affects negatively (according to the respondents' answers) the process of English idioms' interpretation.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the effect of learners' L1 culture on their interpretation of English idioms. Accordingly, a questionnaire is administered to Master Two LMD learners, Department of Letters and English language, University of 08 Mai 1945- Guelma. According to learners' views, English idioms should be integrated in the teaching and learning process; as they would allow them to be acquainted with the necessary cultural knowledge since they rely on their Algerian culture either consciously or unconsciously due to the lack of cultural knowledge about the English culture. Consequently, it is found that their Algerian culture affects negatively the process of English idioms' interpretation.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The current study is conducted to explore the effect of learners' first language culture on their interpretation of English idiomatic expressions. The results unveil that the majority of learners use and rely on their Algerian culture in order to interpret English idioms. More specifically, their L1 culture influences their comprehension of some idioms if not all. Therefore, misinterpretation takes place. This implies that their Algerian culture has a negative effect on their understanding and interpretation of English idioms. That is to say, it misleads them from getting the correct meaning of particular idioms. Hence, it can be concluded that the hypothesis set at the beginning of our research is confirmed, and its three main questions are answered. More to the point, it is found that learners' Algerian culture hinders the correct interpretation of English idioms to a great extent. Additionally, the majority of learners consider the lack of cultural background knowledge of the English culture as the primary cause of difficulty for interpreting idioms. By then, it is appropriate to close up this chapter with some pedagogical implications which are addressed to policymakers, teachers, and learners which may enhance the quality of similar researches in the future. Finally, it sheds light on the major research limitations which serve as a barrier against the smooth progress of the research.

Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations

In light of the obtained results, it is proved that learners' L1 culture, which is the Algerian culture has a negative effect on their English idioms' interpretations. Therefore, this confirms the hypothesis that is set at the beginning of the research. Consequently, a number of pedagogical implications come to be directed to policymakers, teachers, and learners. The latter aims at raising awareness towards the topic under investigation.

1. Policymakers

Based on learners' responses to (Q 14), they strongly value the idea of integrating idioms in the teaching and the learning process (see table 3.13). Hence, policymakers should take a

step further and add one complementary module which would be entirely devoted to English idioms. This would enable the learners to get familiar with the different idioms in their appropriate cultural context. In turn, the teachers should be provided with a source, for instance, the teacher guide that contains the different English idioms, their meaning, and their usage since they are not the native teachers of this language.

2. Teachers

Based on the fact that learners are interested in learning English idioms through both the explicit and the implicit method (see table 3.14), teachers should work towards their needs and preferences. To achieve this objective, teachers should switch between the two methods and vary the activities that are carried out in the classroom through providing the meaning of the idiom and its usage directly, then using it within its context, for instance, in dialogues, passages, texts, etc. As a result, these learners would be given the chance to be equipped with the necessary cultural knowledge about idioms, and where to use them. That is, developing their cultural knowledge about idioms would enable them to reduce the effect of their native culture and differentiating it from the other foreign culture. Additionally, the teacher should play the role of awareness raiser in a way stressing the differences that exist between the two cultures and focusing more on the difficulties that learners encounter while interpreting idioms.

3. Learners

Learners should not only rely on in-class activities to learn about idioms, but they also need to exploit their time outside the classroom. This would give them more and enough time to enlarge their knowledge about the other culture and its idioms, and how its individuals perceive things. The latter may help them to spotlight the differences that exist between the two cultures, and raise their chance to be fluent and communicatively competent in the target language. This can be done through different ways such as movies, TV shows, videos, discussions with native speakers, etc.

Limitations of the Study

In spite of the fact that this research has completed, it witnessed significant limitations that were unavoidable. At the outset, this research was carried out during a global pandemic "COVID-19" which led to the closure of everything in the country to limit its spread through the quarantine and curfew. Consequently, this created a constraint and a difficulty at the level of obtaining the sources in order to complete the theoretical parts since libraries were closed. Additionally, there was limited availability of the e-version books and a lack of primary authentic sources, as well as limited access to the internet connection. At the level of the practical part, this study was supposed to be carried out through the use of a test and a questionnaire, however, due to quarantine, the test was canceled although it was the most useful tool for getting the most appropriate and genuine results. For the questionnaire, it was submitted electronically. Therefore, bias may have been present. That is to say, one may wonder whether they have responded honestly or have attempted instead to give answers that are advantageous to the present topic. Besides, many learners gave incomplete answers and even contradicting responses in many occasions. This may probably the participants chose the answers randomly, or they do not treat the matter seriously. Additionally, many learners do not take part in answering the questionnaire. Consequently, this created a difficulty at the level of getting access to a large sample number. Finally, this epidemic made it difficult to communicate with the supervisor for getting advice and remarks about the whole research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Learners' Questionnaire

Dear Learner,

This questionnaire is part of a research work carried out at the department of English at Guelma University. It aims at investigating the effect of L1 culture on learners' interpretations of English idiomatic expressions. The findings will help to confirm or reject the Master Research hypothesis. Therefore, you are kindly requested to answer the following questions. Please tick /√/ the appropriate box (es) to indicate your chosen answer and make full statements when necessary. Please note that your responses will be dealt with confidentiality and used only for research purposes.

Thank you for your collaboration and the time devoted to complete this questionnaire.

Ms. SAIDIA Imene

Ms. BELGHERBI Nour EL-Houda

Department of English

University 8 Mai 1945- Guelma

Section One: General Information

1. How old are you?

[ ] years.

2. What is your gender?

Male [ ]   Female [ ]

3. How long have you been studying English?

[ ] years.

4. What is your aim behind learning English? (You can choose more than one option)

To develop your cultural knowledge of the language	
To develop your communicative abilities	
To develop your linguistic abilities	
Other (s)	

-If other (s), please specify.

……………………………………………………………………………………………

5. How would you describe your level of English?

Very good	
Good	
Average	
Bad	

Very bad	

Section Two: Idiomatic Expressions

6. From your own ideas, how would you define an idiom/ idiomatic expression?

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7. As an EFL learner, do you agree that idioms are important part in English language learning?

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

8. Why do you think that idioms play an important role in learning English?

Idioms help in the acquisition of vocabulary	
Idioms help to understand the everyday language of native speakers	
Idioms help to comprehend texts that contain metaphorical meaning	
Idioms help in mastering and improving the speaking skills	

Idioms help knowing about the history and the cultural heritage of the English people	
All of the above	

9. Are you satisfied with your knowledge of English idioms?

Yes	
No	

10. How often do you use idiomatic expressions in your learning process?

Always	
Usually	
Often	
Sometimes	
Rarely	
Never	

11. How would you find understanding English idioms?

Very easy	
Easy	
Difficult	

Very difficult	

12. Have you ever faced difficulties while interpreting English idioms?

Yes	
No	

a- if yes, what kind of difficulties do you face? (you can choose more than one option)

Unfamiliarity of idioms	
Metaphoricity of idioms (non literalness of idioms)	
Lack of cultural background knowledge of the language	
Other (s)	

- If other (s), please specify.

…………………………………………………………………………………………

13. How would you describe your level of interpreting English idioms?

Very good	
Good	
Average	
Bad	
Very Bad	

14. Do you support the concept of having classes to teach idiomatic expressions to EFL learners?

Yes	
No	

15. Which method do you prefer to learn English idioms through?

The explicit method (to provide the meaning and the usage of the idiom)	
The implicit method (to provide context such as stories and dialogues)	

Section Three: The Effect of L1 Culture on Learners' Interpretation of English Idiomatic Expressions

16. In your opinion, what is culture?

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17. Do you agree that culture is a fundamental element in learning a particular language?

Strongly Agree	
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	

strongly disagree	

- Please justify your answer.

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18. Do you think that idioms are part of culture?

Yes	
No	

- Please justify your answer.

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19. In this case, do you think that the mastery of English idioms is related to the greater background knowledge about the English culture?

Yes	
No	

- Please justify your answer.

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20. As an EFL learner, does your first language's culture interfere in your learning process?

Yes	
No	

- If yes, please explain how and in what ways?

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21. Which strategy do you use in order to identify the meaning of an English idiom? (you can choose more than one option).

Understanding the meaning according to the context at hand	
Interpreting the idiom according to your L1 culture	
Taking the meaning of the idiom literally	
Other (s)	

- If other (s), please specify.

……………………………………………………………………………………

22. How often do you interpret the English idioms based on your L1 culture?

Always	
Usually	
Often	
Sometimes	
Rarely	
Never	

23. In case you use your L1 culture in order to interpret English idioms, do you always get the correct meaning?

Yes	
No	

24. In this regard, do you think that your native language's culture: (One option)

Helps understanding English idioms	
Hinders the correct interpretation of English idioms	
Has no influence in the interpretation of English idioms	

25. To what extent do you think that your L1 culture hinders the process of English idioms'

comprehension and interpretation?

To a great extent	
To a moderate extent	
To a limited extent	

26. Do you have any further suggestions/ comments?

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

الملخّص

تسعي الدّراسة الحاليّة إلى التّحقيق في تأثير ثقافة اللغة الأولي على تفسير الطلّاب للتعبيرات الاصطلاحيّة الانجليّزية. يهدف هذا التّحقيق إلى استكشاف ردود الطلاّب حول ما إذا كان لثقافة لغتهم الأولي تأثير على فهمهم وتفسيرهم للتّعابير الانجليزيّة. وبالتّالي تفترض الدراسة أنّ ثقافة اللّغة الأمّ للطلاّب لها تأثير سلبي على تفسير هاته التّعابير. من أجل تحقيق الهدف المذكور آنفاً، يعتمد البحث الحاليّ على المنهج الوصفي بواسطة استبيان الّذي يمكّن من الحصول على بيانات كمّية. ولهذا السّبب، تمّ اختيار 55 طالب وطالبة سنة ثانية ماستر نظام ل م د كعيّنة عشوائيّة للبحث، بقسم اللّغة الانجليزيّة، جامعة 8 ماي 1945- قالمة. أظهرت النّتائج المتحصّل عليها أنّ هناك تأثيرا سلبيا لثقافة اللّغة الأولي للطلاّب على تفسيراتهم للتعبيرات الاصطلاحيّة الانجليزيّة، حيث تؤدّي إلى إبهام المعني الصّحيح لهاته التّعبيرات. وبالتّالي، فإنّ هذا يؤكّد الفرضيّة المحدّدة في بداية البحث. ولذلك، يجب زيادة الوعي الثقافي لدي الطلاّب وتطوير معرفتهم الثقافيّة حول الاختلافات الموجودة بين ثقافة اللغة الأولي والثانية واخذهم بعين الاعتبار.

الكلمات المفتاحيّة: ثقافة اللّغة الأولي/ ثقافة اللّغة الامّ، التعبيرات الاصطلاحيّة الانجليزيّة.

Résumé

La présente étude a pour but de démontrer l'effet de la culture de la langue première des étudiants sur leurs interprétations des expressions idiomatiques anglaises. Par la même occasion, cette étude vise à explorer les réponses des étudiants pour savoir si leur culture de langue maternelle a une influence sur leurs interprétations et leurs compréhensions des idiomes Anglais. Par conséquent, l'étude émet l'hypothèse que la culture de la langue première a un effet négatif sur l'interprétation de ces idiomes anglaise. Pour atteindre ces objectifs, la présente recherche adopte une méthode descriptive. Cette dernière se manifeste par l'instrumentation d'un questionnaire dans lequel il permettrait d'obtenir des données quantitatives. Pour cette raison, 55 Etudiants de Master 2 LMD d'Anglais à l'université du 8 Mai 1945- Guelma sont sélectionnés au hasard comme échantillon. Les résultats obtenus ont révélé qu'il y a un effet négatif de la culture de langue maternelle des étudiants sur leurs interprétations des idiomes Anglais, car cela entrave leur sens correct. Ainsi, cela confirme l'hypothèse identifiée au début de la recherche. Par conséquent, la sensibilisation culturelle des étudiants et l'élargissement de leurs connaissances sur les différences entre la culture de la langue première et la deuxième doivent être sérieusement prise en considération.

Mots- clés : La Culture de la Première Langue/ La Culture de Langue Maternelle, Expressions Idiomatiques.