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Option Linguistics

**Developing EFL Students' Ability in Comprehending Idiomatic Expressions Through  
Text Reading**

**The Case of Master One Students at the Department of Letters and English  
Languages, University of 8 Mai 1945 / Guelma.**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture**

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## Dedication I

*To my shining stars,*

*My lovely **mother** and my beloved **father**, for their unwavering support and constant encouragement throughout my studies, allowing me to chase my dreams.*

*I feel incredibly fortunate and honored to have both of you as my parents.*

*To my pure-hearted sisters, **Fairouz** and **Khawla**, may your lives be forever filled with joy and happiness.*

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*I dedicate it to **myself** above all.*

*To those who dare to dream even in their darkest days.*

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### **Abstract**

The aim behind the current research is to investigate students' and teachers' attitudes towards students' ability in comprehending idiomatic expressions through text reading. Correspondingly, it is hypothesized that the use of reading text would improve students' ability in understanding idioms. To test the validity of the hypothesis, a quantitative-descriptive method was adopted through the administration of two questionnaires which addressed and distributed to 108 first year Master students, and to 13 teachers at the department of Letters and English Language, University of 8 Mai 1945-Guelma. In addition to an idioms' comprehension test to check the effectiveness of text reading in developing EFL students' ability in comprehending idiomatic expressions. The obtained results reveal that both participants show a positive attitude and strongly agree on the usefulness of text reading in developing EFL learners ability to comprehend idiomatic expressions. Based on these findings, it is recommended that teachers should actively engage students in idiomatic learning activities designed for reading skill tasks.

*Keywords:* Idiomatic Expressions, Text Reading, Idioms' Comprehension.

## List of Abbreviations

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**Et al.:** Et alia (and others)

**Etc.:** Et cetera (and the rest)

**Ex:** Extinctive Reading

**FL:** Foreign Language

**i.e.:** id est (that is)

**L1:** First Language

**L2:** Second Language

**SLA :** Second Language Acquisition

**SL :** Source Language

**TC:** Target Culture

**TL:** Target Language

**Vs:** Versus

**%:** Percentage

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## **Generale Introduction**

English is taught as a foreign language in almost every educational system. Therefore, learning it as a foreign language requires learners to differentiate between the literal and figurative meanings of words and expressions. One type of these expressions is called "idiomatic expressions." Idioms are widely spread and used in daily speech. They are also, considered a distinct style of English that makes it sound interesting, creative, and approachable, which has necessitated its incorporation into the learning and teaching process.

### **1. Statement of the Problem**

Language is a medium through which a particular nation's culture, ideas, and history are expressed. This language that people share is made up of a set of common phrases and idioms that have distinctive codes within each community; learning and understanding idioms sparked the interest of all teachers and learners of English as foreign language (EFL). Moreover, the majority of EFL learners in the department of English Guelma University, as well as their teachers, are unaware of the importance of incorporating idioms into the learning and teaching process and how to help students develop their comprehension of the idiomatic expressions when they come across them in texts.

### **2. Research Aims**

The current research aims at investigating whether English-speaking learners, especially First-year master, at the University of Guelma could enhance their comprehension of idioms through text reading or not. Furthermore, it aims at exploring the teachers and the students' perspectives towards the dependence on text reading to improve students' ability to comprehend idioms. Hence, this research addresses the following aims:

1-To investigate teachers' and students' attitudes towards using text reading in order to enhance students' ability in comprehending idioms.

2-To test students' ability to comprehend idiomatic expressions through text reading.

### **3. Research Hypothesis**

The importance of idiomatic expressions raises teachers' awareness towards developing their students' ability to comprehend the idioms through text reading. Thus, we hypothesize that:

The null hypothesis implies that no relation exists between the two variables:

(H0): EFL students' ability in comprehending idiomatic expressions will not be enhanced through text reading.

The alternative hypothesis suggests that there is a relationship between the two variables:

(H1): EFL students' ability in comprehending idiomatic expressions will be enhanced through text reading.

### **4. Research Questions**

The present study targets the following questions:

1\_ To what extent does text reading improve students' ability to comprehend idiomatic expressions?

2\_ Are students and their teachers aware of the importance of comprehending idiomatic expressions through text reading?

3- What are teachers' and students' attitudes toward using text reading in improving idioms comprehension?



## **5. Research Design**

### **5.1. Research Method and Tools**

The present research was carried out through a quantitative-descriptive method in order to collect in-depth information about the topic under investigation. through administering two questionnaires to teachers and their students and an idioms comprehension test to students, at the department of English, 8 May 1945 University of Guelma.

### **5.2. Research Population**

The current research population was chosen randomly; it consists of EFL teachers and First-year Master students at the department of English (Guelma University) because they are advanced learners and more knowledgeable. Due to the nature of our study, two questionnaires will be distributed to one hundred eight students (108) and thirteen (13) teachers. Additionally, fifteen (50) students were chosen randomly from this sample in order to pass a test to test their ability in comprehending idioms through text reading.

## **6. Data Gathering Tools**

In order to answer the aforementioned questions, we tend to go through two different research tools. Firstly, a questionnaire will be addressed to First-year Master students to provide enough information about the issues and difficulties that they face in comprehending idioms, in addition to another questionnaire will be addressed to their teachers at the Department of English with the purpose of knowing the strategies they use to help their students. Secondly, an idioms' comprehension test will be given to First-year Master students, providing them with a variety of idioms in text to testify students' comprehension.

## **7. Structure of the Dissertation**

This research is divided into three chapters: the first two chapters are concerned with the theoretical background of the topic, and the last chapter is concerned with the practical part of reporting and analyzing the students' and teachers' questionnaires, and analysis of the idioms' comprehension test.

The first chapter is entitled "Idiomatic Expressions" it includes a comprehensive overview of idiomatic expressions; their definition, the main difference between figurative and literal language, and idioms' different types and characteristics, as well as the degrees of idiomaticity. Then, it provides an overview of their relationship with other aspects of language. It, also, explains the significance behind their teaching. The chapter ends up with the association of idioms and culture.

The second chapter is entitled "Reading and Reading comprehension" provides a comprehensive overview of reading, its types, models, purpose, and various difficulties that impede EFL learners reading comprehension. Additionally, it takes some effective reading strategies that may help overcome comprehension difficulties.

The third one is entitled "Field of Investigation" it reports, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered from teachers' and students' questionnaires as well as the aptitude. Finally, it contains a general conclusion which in turn contains some pedagogical implication and recommendations, as well as research limitations

# Chapter One:

## Theoretical Overview of Idiomatic Expressions

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## **Introduction**

A language is a medium through which cultural elements, concepts, and abstract meanings are transmitted and perceived. This is precisely where the English language stands out in figurative language elements such as metaphors, proverbs, and idioms that are widely utilized, whether in formal or informal settings. In fact, English is referred to as the “language of idiomaticity”. Accordingly, the present chapter is devoted to providing a theoretical overview of idiomatic expressions. It starts with related definitions, the difference between figurative language and literal language, in addition to types, classifications, characteristics, and the degrees of idiomaticity. Following that, a brief explanation to show the relationship between idiomatic expressions and other linguistic structures. Also, we shed light on the idioms’ comprehension and mastery, the use of idioms, and the importance of teaching them. Finally, this chapter presents a brief explanation about idioms and culture.

### **1.1. Idioms**

When learning a foreign language (FL), students must be knowledgeable about its vocabulary, due to the fact that nothing can be learned or understood if there is no vocabulary knowledge. It is the basis for the development of all language chunks in general and idioms in particular. Idioms play a unique role in the construction of any language as figurative units. Despite the fact that they are among the trickiest and most challenging parts of the English language, teachers and students who teach and learn EFL have recently shown a great deal of interest in acquiring idioms.

#### **1.1.1 Definitions of Idioms**

Idioms are of a paramount importance to FL learners in order to understand and use language in an engaging and a fluent way. As they are among the most complex and challenging

units of language, researchers and experts have agreed on the necessity of defining the concept of idioms. In this regard, Hornby (1995, p. 589) stated that an idiom is “a phrase or sentence whose meaning is not clear from the meaning of its individual words and which must be learned as a whole unit.” Similarly, according to Seidl and McMordie (1988, pp. 11–13), “idioms are an essential part of language; they have a different meaning from the individual meanings of each word.” That is to say, idioms are a group of words whose meaning cannot be deduced from their words.

In addition, Ammer (2003, p. 1) asserted that “an idiom is a set of phrases composed of two or more words that mean something different from the literal meaning of the individual words.” In the same vein, Langacker (1968) argued that “an idiom is a kind of complex lexical item. It is a phrase whose meaning cannot be predicted from the meanings of the morphemes it comprises” (p. 79). Following Ammer and Langacker’s views, another view is proposed by McLay, who added that “all languages have idioms, but an idiom in one language has no direct equivalent in another” (1987, p. 3). Thus, the idiomatic expression “Once in the Blue Moon” is composed of several words (one, in, the, blue, moon) whose individual meanings do not seem to contribute to the meaning of the idiom as a whole, which means something extremely rare in occurrence. Additionally, idioms in other languages do not have equivalents, despite the fact that they are widely used.

To sum up, an idiom is a kind of lexical unit in which the whole meaning of the expression is not apparent from the meanings of its components. This means that non-native speakers or outsiders cannot understand or infer the meaning of the idiom easily from the smaller units that make it up due to its lexical complexity.

## **1.2.Figurative Language VS Literal Language**

Figurative language and literal language are two types of language that are employed in distinct ways to communicate meaning. The use of words in their most basic, simple sense, without any embellishment or elaboration, is referred to as literal language. For example, "I am holding an apple" is a literal statement that should be regarded at face value. On the contrary, according to Ponterotto (1994, p.2), "Figurative language is language which does not mean what it says" i.e., it employs words in ways that are not intended to be understood literally; it involves expressions that their meaning cannot be grasped from the meaning of their constituent parts, but rather to elicit a certain impact or picture. Metaphors, similes, exaggeration, and other literary elements are frequently used in this sort of language. For example, according to Farlex Dictionary of Idioms (2015) the expression "He was as fast as lightning" is a metaphorical phrase intended to convey the sense that the individual in question was extremely fast. Figurative language can be used to bring color and depth to writing, as well as to bring up vivid images in the minds of readers. In contrast, literal language is frequently utilized in technical writing or in circumstances when clarity and precision are more essential than creative expression.

## **1.3.Types and Classifications of Idioms**

Idioms have been classified and categorized from various perspectives, both syntactically and semantically. In his study, Makkai (1972) classified idioms into two types:

### **1.3.1. Idioms of Encoding**

Idioms of encoding are those idiosyncratic lexical combinations that have transparent meaning. This type of idioms could be more easily identified. by comparing the use of appropriate prepositions in other languages. As demonstrated by the use of the preposition "at" in the English expression 'drive at 70 mph' that is used instead of with as in French (drive with 70 mph).

### **1.3.2. Idioms of Decoding (Non-Identifiable)**

Idioms of decoding refer to those non-identifiable and misleading lexical expressions, whose meaning cannot be determined by applying just previously learned linguistic conventions. They typically include expressions such as “beat around the bush” and “fly off the handle.” Idioms of this type can be categorized into two distinct groups: lexemic and semimic idioms.

#### **1.3.2.1. Lexemic Idioms**

In his study “Idiom Structure” in English, Makkai (1972) categorized lexemic idioms into six categories: phrasal verb idioms, tournure idioms, irreversible binomial idioms, phrasal compound idioms, incorporating verb idioms, and pseudo-idioms.

##### **a) Phrasal Verbs**

The first subcategory of lexemic idioms represents phrasal verb idioms. On the one hand, the structure of phrasal verb idioms is always verb + adverb, with the understanding that certain adverbs also occurring as “prepositions” are merely transitive adverbs (i.e., construed with an object), in contrast to the ordinary adverbs, which are intransitive (i.e., not construed with an object) (Makkai 1972, p. 135). Examples of phrasal verbs include “to take part in,” “to come up with.”

On the other hand, Greenbaum and Quirk (1990, p. 336) divide phrasal verbs into three categories: Phrasal verbs: the participle is an adverb (e.g., drink up, find out). Prepositional verbs: the participle is a preposition (e.g., dispose of, cope with). Phrasal-prepositional verbs: with two particles, an adverb followed by a preposition (e.g., put up with).

##### **b) Tournure Idioms**

According to Makkai (1972, p.148) tournure idiom is a “polylexonic lexeme of larger size-level than a phrasal verb insofar as it consists of at least three lexons that are lexemes elsewhere,



as in have it out (with) and have it in for.” Other examples involve: to break it up (to stop fighting), to step on it (to speed up), to let the cat out of the bag (to give away a secret), and to “be up a creek,” (to be in a precarious position).

### c) Irreversible Binomial Idioms

The third subcategory is irreversible binomial idioms. According to Malkiel (1959, as cited in Makkai ,1972, p. 155), it is “a formula consisting of parts A and B joined by a finite set of links, the order of which (in the overwhelming majority of cases) cannot be reversed.” Moreover, Makkai divided binomials, on the basis of their irreversibility or reversibility, into three categories.

Firstly, irreversible idiomatic binomials are a special group of idioms which cannot be changed or reversed. Concerning this category, Makkai (1972, p. 158) indicated that it is impossible to arbitrarily change the order of the constituents. For instance, “spick-and-span  $\neq$  \*span- and-spick” (Merriam-Webster, n.d., Definition 1).

Secondly, reversible idiomatic binomials are described as a category “whose constituents have the freedom to occur in the reverse order, but when they do occur in this reverse order, they no longer refer to the particular institution designated by the binomial form, except as allusions.” (Makkai, 1972, p. 159). As a demonstrative example, he mentioned the expression “salt and pepper” (the institution of common table spices), which is compared with “pepper and salt” (hair color).

Thirdly, non-idiomatic binomials, which are compared to reversible idiomatic binomials the main difference is in the formal structure of non-idiomatic binomials. Makkai (1972, p. 159). claimed that “the link and can be replaced by the link with, as in coffee with cream and coffee with sugar, indicating that one can, and often does, have coffee with either cream or sugar.”

#### **d) Phrasal Compound Idioms**

This type involves utilizing two or more words to form a single thought. For example, “darkroom” means a room in which film is made, handled, or developed and from which the actinic rays of light are excluded “ducktail,” which is a style of haircut; “backfield,” i.e., certain members of a football team or their positions.

#### **e) Incorporating Verb Idioms**

There are four main forms of incorporating verbs that have been restricted by Makkai (1972, p. 168). The first one is noun-verb “sightsee,” which is an idiom with the meaning of to visit famous places as a tourist in organized groups or by oneself. The second one is, Adjective-noun such as “brown-nose” that means to shamelessly flatter someone in order to obtain favor or avoid punishment. The third one is a noun-noun, for example, “mastermind,” i.e., someone or a creative thinker who plans difficult or complicated operations, projects, and plans. The last one is an adjective-verb, for instance, “straphang,” which means to ride a crowded streetcar.

#### **f) Pseudo-Idioms**

According to Makkai (1972, p. 123), pseudo-idioms are “polylexonic lexemes one or more of whose constituent lexons, in spite of being morphotactically permissible words, are not simultaneously realizations of independent lexemes in other environments as well, unless they are BANNED LEXONS.”

Stated differently, pseudo-idioms are phrases or expressions that resemble idioms in form but lack the same figurative or metaphorical meaning. For example, “beat around the bush” is a common idiom that means to avoid addressing a topic directly (Merriam-Webster, n.d., Definition 2). A pseudo-idiom that sounds similar but does not have the same meaning is “beat the bush,” which means to search thoroughly for something (Oxford University Press, n.d.).

### 1.3.2.2. Semimic Idioms

On the other hand, according to Makkai (1972, p. 128) “semimic idioms they usually convey pragmatic meanings related to a particular culture.” They involve:

- Proverbs: for instance, “a bird in a hand is worth two in the bush”, “show of something over.”
- Idioms of institutionalized greeting, such as “how do you do.”
- Idioms of institutionalized politeness: for instance, “may I ...?”
- Idioms of institutionalized understatement: for example, “I wasn’t crazy about him.”

To conclude, there are several types and classifications of idioms provided by other scholars such as Seidl’s (1988) structural and Cowie’s syntactical (1985) classifications which in their turn have various subcategories.

### 1.4.Key Characteristics of Idioms

Idioms play an important role in language learning. They have distinctive characteristics, just as all other linguistic units do. Ghazala provided a brief definition in which he sum up the main features of idioms. According to him, idioms are “special, metaphorical, fixed phrases whose meanings and forms are not negotiable” (2003, p. 204). Moreover, an idiom is a multiword expression that is made up of more than one word; for instance, “fresh as a daisy”, “sick as a dog”, “let the cat out of the bag” etc (Sweet, 1889, p. 139). More interestingly, idioms are distinguished by their figurativeness or semantic opacity, which denotes that an idiomatic expression’s meaning cannot be determined by the individual words that make it up; instead, it has a deeper, more figurative meaning (Dabrowska, 2018, p. 16). Another relevant feature is that, idioms are expressions that are accepted by language users, in addition to their fixity in terms of deriving meaning. Besides, they are peculiarly problematic since there are no universal norms that we can

analogize to idiomatic usages. Hence, they may be more challenging for those learning to speak and write a new language.

In addition to all these characteristics that are significant in the identification of idioms, Baker (1992, p. 63) identified the grammatical and syntactic restrictions of idioms. According to her, a speaker or writer typically cannot perform any of the following with an idiom:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **1.5. Degrees of Idiomaticity**

Idioms have been classified by researchers based on different criteria. The degree of idiomaticity that an idiom has is the fundamental trait that distinguishes it from other types of idioms. Idioms are classified over a spectrum of idiomaticity that ranges from transparent to opaque. As a result, idioms can be classified as follows:

### **1.5.1. Transparent Idioms**

Elkilic (2008, p. 31) stated that, transparent idioms are figurative expressions of which meaning can easily be understood in contrast with opaque ones. Similarly, Cain et al., (2005, p. 67) said that transparency refers to the degree of agreement between the literal and the figurative meanings of an Idiom. In the same vein, Transparent idioms are figurative expressions whose meaning is more easily “guessable” than that of opaque ones (Boers & Demecheleer, 2001, p. 255). Transparent idioms are simple figures of speech whose meaning can be derived from the literal interpretation of the words employed. They are idioms or phrases that have a clear and straightforward meaning and do not need to be explained or interpreted further. For instance, "Piece of cake" means something is easy to do. These idioms can be easily comprehended by native English speakers and are regularly employed in daily discourse.

### **1.5.2. Opaque Idioms**

Opaque idioms are the most challenging type since their meaning is never the same as the literal one. In this case, Cowie (2009, p. 25) defined opaque idioms as the ones of which their idiomatic meaning cannot be elicited from the meaning of their individual words. Besides, Opaque idioms are the ones whose words do not contribute to the understanding of the idioms' meanings (Elkilic, 2008, p. 32). For Cain et al., (2005) “the sense of opaque idioms, such as to wet behind the ears cannot be inferred from the individual words in the phrases or actions they describe” (p.67).

Furthermore, Opaque idioms are idiomatic statements or sayings that are difficult to grasp or interpret because they seem unable to make sense when considered literally. Due to the fact that there are items with cultural allusions, it would be impossible to derive the real meaning of the expression from the meanings of its components. These culturally distinctive factors have a significant impact on idiomatic expression comprehension. For example, “Cat got your tongue?” This is a rhetorical inquiry that asks why someone is not speaking. This idiom's origins are unknown; however, one hypothesis indicates that it may have developed from a medieval punishment in which liars' tongues were cut out and given to cats.

### **1.6. Idiomatic Expressions and Other Linguistic Structures (Multiword Units)**

The complexity and depth of any language is greatly influenced by idiomatic expressions and other linguistic structures known as multiword units, such as collocations, metaphors, and proverbs. Because of their widespread use by people, it can be challenging for language learners to differentiate between these linguistic units and idiomatic expression, which has led a number of researchers and academics to perform many studies in an effort to highlight the important differences between them.

#### **a) Idioms and Collocations**

On the one hand, collocations are an analogy between words that appear often together. For instance, a hot dog, a mother-in-law, and a stiif breeze but not a stiff wind. In that regard, Choueka (1988, p. 609) claimed that collocation is a sequence of two or more consecutive words, that has characteristics of a syntactic and semantic unit, and whose exact and unambiguous meaning or connotation cannot be derived directly from the meaning or connotation of its components. In other words, it is a set of words or phrases that frequently occur together in a specific context or

circumstance. Thus, generating a natural and common combination of words, are referred to as collocational or contextual expressions, in which its meaning cannot be derived from its parts.

Idiomatic expressions, on the other hand, are phrases or sentences with a meaning that differs from the literal interpretation of the words employed. These statements are frequently cultural or historical in nature and are exclusive to a language or dialect. For example, the phrase "kick the bucket" literally means "to die" and has nothing to do with kicking or a bucket.

All in all, Collocational and idiomatic expressions are both significant components of a language, and comprehending both is critical for efficient communication. Idiomatic phrases provide color and character to the language, whereas collocational terms assist in conveying the desired meaning precisely.

### **b) Idioms and Metaphors**

Idiomatic expressions and metaphors are both key language features that enable us to communicate more successfully and expressively. Metaphors play an important role in everyday communication. They have been identified as rhetorical strategies that compare two seemingly unlike items. King (2000, p. 216) defined metaphors as describing something by using an analogy with something quite different. For example, "the words are clear as crystal" is an idiom that expresses the similarity between the words and the crystal in the degree of clarity. King also added that, the ability to explain a complex vague expression making it more understandable and clear is the beauty of metaphors.

Furthermore, metaphors are figurative language devices that depict one thing in terms of another, frequently unrelated object. They are employed to generate vivid and unforgettable images in the minds of the reader or listener. Furthermore, both idioms and metaphors, as Maalej (2005, p. 215) stated, have a power of likening. i.e. they cannot be understood if they are taken literally.

The distinction between the two can be distinguished by the existence of a different basic correlation. The latter is because idioms in the past have an ancient reference that indicates systematic metaphors. Additionally, Maalej stated that, idioms and metaphors are culture-specific aspects of a particular language, i.e., the non-existence of a direct one to one correspondence in the target language (TL) of a particular idiom in the source language (SL) is the result of culture-specific metaphors (2005 p. 215). In the same vein, Maalej said that Culture-specific metaphors are best represented in phraseology. Native language idioms and set phrases can combine ethno-specific elements relevant to its speakers' worldview, national character, and customary social interactions, creating an embodiment of national dispositions and spiritual ideals. Since they are presented metaphorically indirectly and figuratively, culture-specific metaphors generate idioms that have no parallels in another language.

To sum up, Idiomatic expressions and metaphors are both strong communication tools, although they are employed in different ways. Idiomatic expressions are used to convey precise meanings that non-native speakers may not comprehend right away, instead metaphors are used to construct images and parallels that help us understand complicated concepts and ideas (2005, p. 215).

### **c) Idioms and Proverbs**

Like idioms, proverbs “are special, fixed, unchanged phrases which have special, fixed, unchanged meanings” (Ghazala, 1995, p. 142). Proverbs, however, vary from idioms in that they reflect shared cultural knowledge. In other words, proverbs are simple to grasp, and in most circumstances, the speaker only has to say the initial half of the proverb to convey the entire meaning. Thus, “do not count your chickens” is used instead of “do not count your chickens before they have hatched.” Although proverbs are regarded culturally distinctive due to their close



association with culture, many proverbs have exact analogues in other languages. For instance, the English phrase "out of sight, out of mind" has an Arabic equivalent. Idioms and proverbs are not always clear; their meanings might be unclear. Idioms and proverbs are also a part of figurative language that produces cultural information, and their use shows that the person is a part of that social group that uses them (Hatch & Brown, 1995, pp. 202-203).

Proverbs are brief, wise sayings or phrases that reflect a universal truth or piece of practical advice. They are frequently passed down through generations as part of a culture's oral heritage. They may be found in practically every language and culture throughout the world and can address a wide variety of issues, from love and relationships to business and politics. Proverbs are commonly used to provide wisdom and guide humans behavior conduct since they are short and easy to remember.

### **1.7. Idioms Comprehension and Mastery**

Idioms are one of the most difficult language chunks to decode and understand, since their meaning cannot be deduced and comprehended from their constituent words. In this context, D'Angelo Bromley asserted that "idioms add confusion and difficulty to language learning" (1984, p. 272). In the same vein, Cooper added that "sooner or later, imprecise idiomatic usage will cause difficulty even for a student with an excellent knowledge of grammar and a high level of vocabulary attainments" (1998, p. 259). To put it another way, even learners with a vast vocabulary and grammatical components that make up an idiom may confront various challenges in terms of deducing the intended meaning of idioms. People in general, and students in particular, need to be exposed to idioms as much as possible because they are used frequently by native speakers in all discourse forms. Native speakers utter over 10 million idioms, making it necessary for non-native

speakers to develop their ability to comprehend idiomatic expression in order to overcome language barriers.

EFL students should be knowledgeable about idioms of the target culture (TC) that they chose to study for better understanding. Therefore, several researchers emphasized on the necessity to master idiomatic expression. In this vein, Seidl advocated that (1978, p. 8), “The mastery of idiom comes only slowly, through careful study and observation, through practice and experience, but remember: practice makes perfect and all things are difficult before they are easy.” That is, there are multiple ways that assist EFL learners in mastering idioms such as, the wide range of idiom dictionaries for those who wish to learn more about idioms, reading texts, novel, newspapers and magazines, listening to radio programs, television shows and films ...etc. Roleplaying, writing, and interactive activities such as matching the parts of idioms are some activities that can help FL expand their knowledge and use of idioms, guessing the meaning of idioms from context by providing them with multiple choice questions are all ways teachers and students should take into account in order to develop their ability to comprehend and master idioms.

### **1.8. The Use of Idioms**

Because English is known as the language of idiomaticity, EFL learners must comprehend a wide range of idioms in order to achieve better outcomes in acquiring it. Knowing and comprehending idioms facilitates reading English novels, newspapers, or magazines, as well as TV shows, films, and songs. Furthermore, it improves the efficiency and effectiveness of communication. Idioms are also more diverse and humorous on their own, which makes them more engaging and memorable than many other linguistic chunks. Moreover, there are various idioms, each with a specific context in which they should be used. Standard idioms, for example, are appropriate in official settings, but slang and informal idioms are used in casual settings. They are

also used in written or spoken language in ways that are closely tied to the functions they fulfill. The well-known uses of idioms have been discussed by Fernando and McCarthy and O'Dell.

On the one hand, Halliday (1985, as cited in Fernando 1996, pp. 72–74) categorized idioms into three groups according to their functional use: ideational, interpersonal, and relational.

Ideational idioms, also known as ‘the state and way of the world’ idioms, communicate the content of the message and provide a description of the nature of the message that they convey. This type of idiom is frequently used in informal speech or journalism but rarely in formal speech. In their turn, ideas are divided into those that describe: actions (to spill the beans); events (a turning point); situations (to be in a pickle); people and things (a red herring); attributes (cut-and-dried); evaluations (a watched pot never boils); and emotions (green with envy). Additionally, interpersonal idioms can fulfill an interactive function by means of expressing greetings and farewells (good morning); directives (let’s face it); eliciting opinions (what do you think?); agreements (say no more); and rejections (come off it!). Moreover, they may also have the function of characterizing the message. Interpersonal idioms can be used covertly, e.g., believe (you) me,” or overtly, e.g., it’s raining cats and dogs. Furthermore, relational idiomatic expressions essentially perform a connective function, i.e., they bring both cohesion and coherence to the text. Examples of relational idioms include in sum, on the other hand,” in addition, and at the same time.

On the other hand, in addition to Fernando’s functions, McCarthy and O’Dell (2010, p. 8) identified seven functions of idioms that are:

- a) Idioms are used for emphasis, e.g., the singer’s second album “sank like a stone.” (Failed completely).
- b) Idioms are used to agree with a previous speaker, e.g.,

A: Did you notice how Lisa started listening when you said her name?

B: Yes, that certainly made “her prick her ears up.” (Start listening carefully.)

- c) Idioms are used to comment on people, e.g., “Did you hear Tom has been invited to dinner with the prime minister? “He’s certainly” gone up in the world! (gained a better social position -or more money-than before.)
- d) Idioms are used to comment on a situation, e.g., The new finance minister wants to “knock the economy into shape”, (take action to get something into a good situation).
- e) Idioms are used to make anecdotes more interesting; e.g., it was just one disaster after another today, a sort of “domino effect.” (when something, usually bad, happens and causes a series of other things to happen).
- f) Idioms are used to catch the reader’s eye. Idioms, particularly those with strong images, are often used in headlines, advertising slogans, and the names of small businesses. The writer may play with idiom or make a pun (a joke involving a play on words) in order to create a special effect, e.g., “a debt of dishonor” instead of the usual “debt of honor” (a debt that you owe someone for moral rather than financial reasons).
- g) Idioms are used to indicate membership of particular group, e.g., “surfers drop in on someone” meaning to get on a wave another surfer is already on.

### **1.9. The Importance of Teaching Idioms**

Idioms are a difficult and complex linguistic chunk, despite the fact that they provide EFL students with an enjoyable way to utilize and learn a language, helping individuals to communicate effectively by improving their comprehension of what is read and said. Along these lines, Strutz (1996) argued that “no one can be said to be really proficient in a language until he or she possesses an ‘idiomatic’ control of it” (p. 7). Additionally, teaching idioms in EFL classrooms gives students

a greater understanding of western cultures, in part because they give them a chance to learn about the linguistic and cognitive processes involved in the learning of the English language.

Furthermore, Liantas (2017, pp. 9–16) provided five main reasons for teaching and implementing idioms in the curriculum. First, idioms help learners encounter and understand the workings of natural human language; i.e, they help them gain a deeper knowledge of the creative expression of human thought and language development over time. Secondly, learners can go beyond the literal meaning of idioms and see the pivotal role that context plays in the understanding of idiomatic expressions. Thirdly, requiring learners to produce idioms in ways that native speakers use them enhances learners' mastery of them, facilitating the binding and mapping processes of idiom internalization. Fourthly, idioms afford learners the opportunity to examine their own mental images associated with idiomatic phrases and the conceptual metaphors mediating their figurative meanings. Fifthly, the study of idioms in the classroom can help the SLA profession build a systematic program for the development of idiomatic competence in second language learners.

In other words, teaching idioms aids in helping students understand the language because they are used in sense and oral, and written forms. It also helps students develop their ability to understand expressions that are intended in a non-literal sense and to develop mental images in their minds, which in turn may aid them in internalizing and creating idioms. Additionally, by assisting them in developing a methodological framework for idiom education, we will undoubtedly increase their chances of developing idiomatic competence.

To sum up, these five reasons systematically and clearly convey why idiom teaching should be included in the curriculum. It is important to note that EFL educators must focus on EFL learners' development of idiomatic competence, which equips students to comprehend and use

language appropriately and fluently. As a result, the study of idioms should be realized and made a central component of teaching EFL.

### **1.10. Idioms and Culture**

Idioms are culturally distinctive items that have a significant impact on the understandability of language. The English language is particularly rich in idiomatic expressions, which are the product of cultural change and the growth of English society. In light of this, Li (2019) advocated that “idiom learning is essential to second language (L2) learner’s language development, and more importantly, it promotes L2 learners’ better understanding of that language’s history, heritage, and culture” (p. 22). i.e., when English language learners acquire a new idiom, they are not just learning new words; they are also learning a new culture, and their awareness of the history, culture, and tradition of that language will be improved. Moreover, idioms express cultural aspects that refer to conventions and habits that distinguish a certain group and spread a significant number of cultural components, such as rituals and values. Idioms can be studied and learned, which allows students to learn about English culture, have access to the new culture’s unique viewpoints and ways of seeing the world, get a feel for its diversity, and master the language.

### **Conclusion**

Idiomatic expressions are crucial elements of the English language, and in order to become fluent in English language and communicate or interact successfully with native speakers, it is important to master and comprehend idioms. Furthermore, idioms are regarded as the core element of comprehension in any language skill in general and in reading texts in particular. This chapter dealt with varying definitions, figurative language versus literal language, idioms’ different types, key characteristics and degrees of idiomaticity, as well as their relationship to other aspects of

language, followed by idioms' use, and it ended up with the importance of including incorporating them in the learning and teaching process of EFL.

# Chapter Two:

## An Overview of Reading and Reading Comprehension

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## **Introduction**

Reading is now included in almost every educational system due to the importance of English as a global language. It is regarded as a powerful and useful tool for assisting students in learning and mastering EFL. Correspondingly, the current chapter has been divided into two sections. The first section aims at shedding light on reading by providing definitions from various perspectives, including its purpose, its types, and its modes; furthermore, the second section is devoted to providing the definition of comprehension, reading comprehension, the challenges that hinder EFL learners' text comprehensibility, as well as some strategies that enhance students' ability to comprehend the texts.

### **2.1. Reading**

Reading is regarded as the most important receptive skill for learners to master EFL. Thus, Understanding the characteristics of the reading process and what it entails is vital for any reading researcher or learner. In this section, we will define reading from different viewpoints, as well as its types (intensive and extensive), purpose, and its three models (bottom -up, top -down, interactive models).

#### **2.1.1. Definitions of Reading**

EFL learning requires students to be proficient in the language's four skills: listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Reading is thought to be the most crucial, and EFL teachers frequently focus more on it. The notion of reading has been investigated by many researchers and psychologists. According to Anderson (1999), reading is “an active, fluent process that involves the reader and the reading materials in building meaning” (p. 1). That is, it is a process that involves interaction between the reader and the text in order to achieve comprehension. In the same context, Grabe and Stoller (2002, p. 9) pointed out that "reading is the ability to extract meaning from

printed pages and interpret this information appropriately.” The reading process is comprised of two parts: word recognition (the reader's ability to decode the written words) and comprehension (the reader's ability to construct and extrapolate meaning from the text).

Moreover, Nunan (2003, p. 68) mentioned that “reading is a fluent process of the reader combining information from text and their own background knowledge to build meaning.” Stated differently, it is a process in which readers combine different factors in order to build up the text's meaning. They rely on their background knowledge, their language knowledge, and the text content in order to reach adequate comprehension. In addition to Nunan's view, McShane (2005) stated that “ reading is a complex system of deriving meaning from print that requires an understanding of how speech sounds are related to print, decoding (word identification) skills, fluency, vocabulary, and background knowledge, active comprehension strategies, and a motivation to read.” (p 7).

Reading, according to the above definitions, is a complex cognitive activity that involves decoding symbols to create meaning or the capacity to understand and justify meaning through the interaction of the reader and the text. It requires learners to understand its advantages because it is regarded as an effective tool for language acquisition, vocabulary building, and helping readers know how to connect the existing information to the previously learned one. It, also, motivates learners to read and to be able to use the various reading strategies appropriately to achieve a better understanding.

### **2.1.2. Types of Reading**

Foreign language learners have to take into consideration that reading can be divided into two major types that may differ in terms of purpose, level, and length, known as extensive and intensive reading.

### **2.1.2.1. Intensive Reading**

Intensive reading is, also, referred to as "narrow reading" or "a zoom lens strategy." Nuttall (1996, p. 38) claimed that "intensive reading involves approaching the text under the guidance of a teacher or a task that forces the student to focus on the text." Similarly, it is an activity that frequently occurs in the classroom under the supervision and guidance of the teacher. Learners are exposed to relatively short texts that are used either to exemplify specific aspects of the lexical, syntactic, or discursal system of the L2 or to provide the basis for targeted reading strategy practice. In the same vein, Holden (2007) pointed out that the reader is "intensively involved in looking inside the text at the vocabulary and grammar and is concentrating on a 'careful reading' of the text" (p. 158), i.e, it requires all students to read the same text at the same pace and complete exercises designed or assigned by the teacher. Therefore, students may benefit from intensive reading, particularly in terms of learning new vocabulary, practicing grammar, identifying textual elements, discourse markers, and other surface aspects crucial for grasping the literal meaning of the text and improving language proficiency. Moreover, Paran (2003, p. 40) mentioned four main purposes of intensive reading:

- To help learners comprehend written texts.
- To become more aware of text organization to better comprehend.
- To learn how to use and monitor effective reading strategies.
- To develop literacy skills necessary to generate productive expressions in L2.

### **2.1.2.2. Extensive Reading**

Extensive reading (ER) is an approach to language teaching and learning; it is known as "pleasure reading" since its purpose is free, independent reading that is not dependent on either the teacher or the dictionary and it is self-selected. Indeed, it differs from intensive reading, which

depends on the supervision and direction of the teacher who chose the materials to be read, using dictionaries to decode the meaning of words. Thus, ER is about flooding learners with a large quantity of reading materials such as books, novels, articles, etc. As it is defined by Hafiz and Tudor (1989), it involves “the reading of large amounts of material in the second language over time for pleasure or interest and without the addition of productive tasks”. According to Kyung-Mi (2011), who refocused on the idea of reading for pleasure, extensive reading is “reading for pleasure because without enjoying the reading process, it is very unlikely that the readers are going to expose themselves to the floods of written input” (p. 134). In other words, learners read self-selected books that they enjoy reading depending on their interests. Thus, they will be able to read fluently and gain a general understanding in a small amount of time that allows them to read as much as possible of books, etc. Besides recognizing, reporting, and summarizing what they have read.

Day and Bamford (1998), on their part, listed a number of principles that they are related to extensive reading:

- 1- Students read as much as possible, perhaps in and definitely out of the classroom.
- 2- A variety of materials on a wide range of topics is available so as to encourage reading for different reasons and in different ways.
- 3- Students select what they want to read and have the freedom to stop reading material that fails to interest them.
- 4- The purposes of reading are usually related to pleasure, information, and general understanding. These purposes are determined by the nature of the material and the interest of the student.
- 5- Reading is its own reward. There are few or no follow-up exercises after reading.

6- Reading materials are well within the linguistic competence of the students in terms of vocabulary and grammar. Dictionaries are rarely used while reading because the constant stopping to look-up words makes fluent reading difficult.

7- Reading is individual and silent, at the student's own pace, and outside class, done when and where the student chooses.

8- Reading speed is usually faster than slower as students read books and other material they find easily understandable.

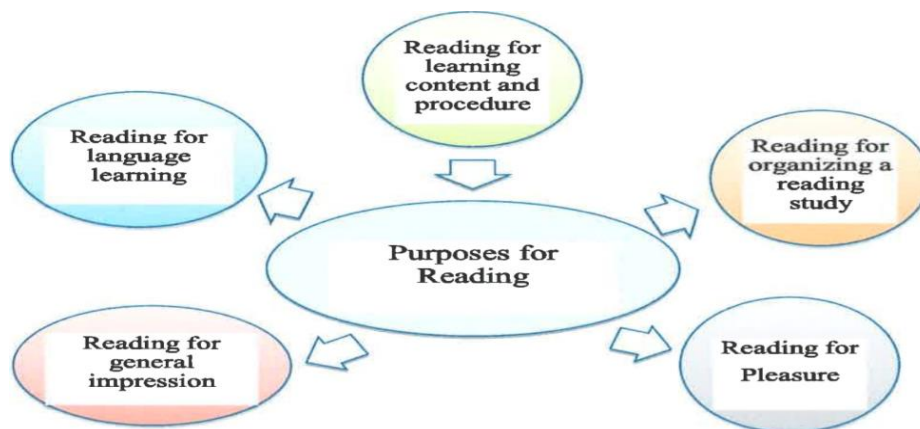
9- Teachers orient students to the goals of the program, explain the methodology, keep track of what each student reads, and guide students in getting the most out of the program.

10- The teacher is a role model of a reader for students- an active member of the classroom reading community, demonstrating what it means to be a reader and the rewards of being a reader. (Day & Bamford, 1998, pp.07-08).

### **2.1.3. Reading Purposes**

Reading serves several functions. Its primary goal is to comprehend the information presented in written materials such as books, novels, newspapers, magazines, etc. Readers engage in the reading process based on their intentions, interests, and needs, which may help them broaden their background knowledge, improve their writing proficiency, attain higher educational qualifications, and build their vocabulary knowledge. Furthermore, Grabe and Yamachita (2022) identified the following six reading purposes: "reading to search for information (scanning and skimming), reading for quick understanding (skimming), reading to learn, reading to synthesize information, reading to evaluate, critique, use information, and reading for general comprehension (in many cases, reading for interest or reading to entertain)" (p. 9). That is to say, readers can use reading to find information they are purposely looking for as well as to synthesize information,

especially in academic settings where readers analyze and evaluate information from a variety of sources and make connections between the information they find and preexisting information in order to come up with something new, also they can summarize and evaluate authors' works in order to maximize their value, and finally, gain a general understanding. Moreover, additional reading purposes are presented in the figure 2.1.



*Figure 2. 1: Different Purposes of Reading (Belferd Benseddik, 2020, p.29)*

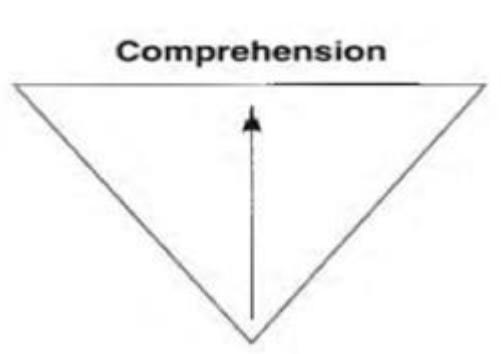
#### **2.1.4. Reading Models**

Reading is an active cognitive process; in order to discover what happens in the reader's brain while reading, researchers and psychologists have proposed various reading models, including bottom up, top down, and interactive models. According to Davies (1995, p. 57), The term 'model' refers to a formalized, usually visually represented theory of what goes on in the eyes and the mind when readers are comprehending (or miscomprehending) text. Thus, we might characterize a model as a systematic set of guesses or predictions about a hidden process, which are then subjected to 'testing' through experimental studies.

##### **2.1.4.1. The Bottom-up Model**

The bottom-up modal is referred to as a "stimulus-driven modal" or "phonics modal". In this model, Davies (1995, p. 58) defined the reading process as "eyes look, letters are identified

and sounded out, words are recognized, words are allocated, and with grammatical class and sentence structure, sentences provide meaning, and meaning leads to thinking.” That is to say, reading begins with decoding graphic symbols into sounds, with the belief that readers first process and understand sounds in speech before moving on to letters, words, and finally the meaning of longer sentences, paragraphs, and texts. As a result, the reader's role is defined as accurately processing these units in order to build meaning from smaller to larger units. This model is criticized because it reduces the reader's role to that of a passive decoder only he or she recognizes printed symbols and overlooks the idea of interpreting the written material.



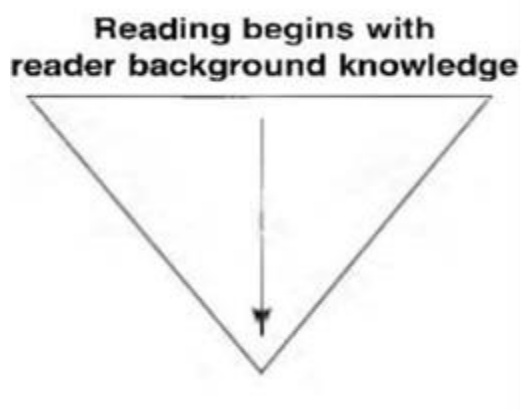
*Figure 2. 2: Bottom-up approach to reading (Anderson, 2003, p. 70)*

#### **2.1.4.2. The Top-down Model**

The bottom-up approach is referred to as “knowledge-based” or “concept-driven”. Davoudi (2005) claimed that "when a linguist reads a text related to his profession, he skips many terms in the text due to his background knowledge, and this does not distort his understanding of the text," while "for a non-professional person, it is impossible to skip any part of the text due to the lack of his background knowledge" (p. 124). That is to say, this model emphasizes the importance of relating background knowledge; i.e., the reader depends on his background and pre-existing knowledge, which would enable him to understand the meaning of the text. Additionally, Lui (2010) asserted that "a top-down reading model is a reading approach that emphasizes what the



reader brings to the text; it contends that reading is driven by meaning and proceeds from whole to part” (p. 154). In other words, a reader's experiences assist him or her in reading, decoding, and making sense of text or building knowledge about the text from the whole (text) to the parts (text, words).



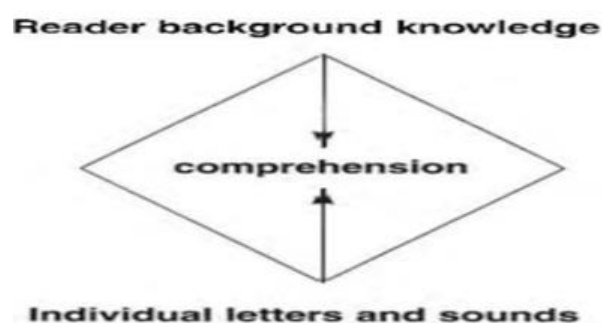
*Figure 2. 3: Top-down Approach to Reading (Anderson, 2003, p. 71)*

Simply put, unlike the bottom-up model, which focuses on moving from smaller units to larger units, the top-down model focuses on making sense of the text from whole to part, i.e., the latter is about what a reader knows linguistically and the former is about what the reader knows contextually. And just like the bottom-up model, the top-down model has received criticism because, when it comes to word recognition, some scholars, such as Harrison, have observed that the good reader has less need to rely on context, whereas the poor reader requires context because he has not yet mastered the word or vocabulary.

#### **2.1.4.3. Interactive Model**

Since both of the previously mentioned models have received criticism, another model has emerged that illustrates the interrelationship between the bottom-up and top-down processes throughout the reading process; according to Eskey (1988) “the interactive model takes into account the continuous interaction between bottom up and top down processing in the construction

of the meaning of the text” (p. 93). Similarly, Nuttal (2000) proposed that top down and bottom up processes are “complementary ways of processing a text. They are both used whenever we read, sometimes one predominates, and sometimes the other, but both are needed” (p.16). That is, they emphasized the significance and strength of relating both models. Because according to these model good readers can decode the letters of words as well as blend their prior knowledge to interpret the text.



*Figure 2. 4: Interactive Approach to Reading Anderson (2003, p. 72)*

## **2.2. Reading Comprehension**

Reading as a fundamental skill for EFL learners necessitates comprehension of the written materials because reading without comprehension is incomprehensible and meaningless. Basically, the current section is primarily concerned with reviewing some aspects of reading. These include the definition of comprehension, reading comprehension, and some factors that influence EFL students' reading comprehension in EFL learning, and it ends up with reading comprehension teaching strategies.

### **2.2.1. Definition of Comprehension**

Comprehending what we read and being able to read has a significant importance in developing reading fluency. In light of this, according to Pang (2000), the word "comprehension"

refers to “an active process that produces the meaning for the printed language and then concerns itself with new words” (p. 14); This means that, the construction of meanings derived from the text. In the same vein, Richards and Schmidt (2002) claimed that comprehension is "the identification of the intended meaning of written or spoken communication" (p. 90). Another view is supported by Mikuleckly and Jefferis (2004), who added that true comprehension is "making sense of what someone reads and connecting the ideas in the text to what he already knows” (p. 74). In other words, it is the reader's ability to accurately understand the written text or passage, as well as connect the main ideas to his or her prior knowledge and experiences. Furthermore, according to Smith (2004), comprehension may be regarded as relating aspects of the world around us—including what we read—to the knowledge, intentions, and expectations we already have in our heads. (p.41)

Comprehension is the prime focus of reading because it is regarded as the process of extracting meaning from the text. It necessitates some interactions between the text's information and the reader's background knowledge. This knowledge includes students' experiences with word meanings, print concepts, graphic organizers, and text structures.

### **2.2.2. Definition of Reading Comprehension**

Extracting and constructing meaning from text, as well as the ability to get and comprehend the meaning behind the words being read are the ultimate goals of reading comprehension. Thus, many researchers and experts have paid close attention to it, and it has been defined in a variety of ways. Consequently, reading comprehension is the construction of meaning of a written or spoken communication through a reciprocal, holistic interchange of ideas between the interpreter and the message in a particular communicative context (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p.39). In other words, it

is the process through which a reader interacts with a book to ascertain its meaning and incorporate it with prior knowledge of the topic or subject of the text under consideration.

In addition, Klingner et al. (2007) defined reading comprehension as “multicomponent, highly complex process that involves many interactions between readers, and what they bring to the text (previous knowledge, strategy use) as well as variables related to the text itself (interest in the text, understanding of texts types).” (p. 8). To put it another way, in order to comprehend a text, readers must integrate what they learn from the written passage with their existing knowledge, skills, and experiences. Besides, to demonstrate how prior knowledge and reading comprehension are related. In the same context, another definition is given by Oakhill et al (2015) they claimed that reading comprehension is a complex task, which requires the orchestration of many cognitive skills and abilities (p. 1). Stated differently, the reader must use cognitive processes including analyzing, synthesizing, interpreting, and critical thinking in addition to relying on his or her abilities, and appropriate strategies in order to achieve adequate comprehension.

To conclude, reading comprehension is a well-organized activity. It entails combining what a reader learns from a text with prior knowledge, skills, and experiences, as well as utilizing his or her various cognitive processes to construct meaning to the text.

### **2.2.3. Reading Comprehension Difficulties**

Reading comprehension in a foreign language is the most crucial skill for students. However, EFL students continue to face numerous difficulties that hinder their comprehension.

#### **2.2.3.1. Lack of Cultural and Background Knowledge**

It is argued that reading texts with unfamiliar contents, due to a lack of prior knowledge, cannot help readers comprehend the passages easily. Readers who are unaware of these differences may be misled, especially when encountering figurative language elements such as metaphors,

collocations, proverbs, and idiomatic expressions, which have different interpretations in each culture. As a result, even if a reader is fluent in a language, reading in that language with high understanding is impossible if the subject or content of the text is unfamiliar to the reader and he or she has no prior knowledge of.

### **2.2.3.2. Working Memory Deficits**

Working memory is the ability to hold information in the mind for a short period of time. Readers' working memory plays a critical role in helping them digest the words they read, and a poor working memory can hinder their ability to decode and comprehend the new information contained in the text. So, if readers struggle with poor working memory, it can make reading—and comprehending—more difficult for them. Additionally, they may have trouble recalling what they have read for long enough to discuss it immediately after reading.

### **2.2.3.3. Syntactic Issues**

The ability to recognize and use a language's grammatical structure is represented by syntax. Many EFL students struggle with reading comprehension and text organization because they do not understand English syntax. Syntactic issues stem primarily from a lack of understanding of acceptable sentence structure and grammar. For example, students who struggle to understand long and complex sentences frequently fail to grasp the author's main point in the text. Moreover, complex noun groups, nominalizations, co-coordinating conjunctions, and participle phrases are frequently the source of reading comprehension issues because they make texts more difficult for EFL readers to understand.

### **2.2.3.4. Lexical Deficits / Lack of Vocabulary Knowledge**

Vocabulary acquisition is crucial in learning a language because languages are built on words. According to Hudson (2007), "vocabulary is a significant factor in reading ability" (p. 227).

In this regard, limited vocabulary and reading comprehension can be linked in such a way that limited vocabulary limits comprehension. As a result, many factors contribute to reading comprehension difficulties. Since knowing a word entails understanding its pronunciation and orthography, as well as its morphology, syntax, and collocational properties, meaning, register, and frequency. Furthermore, it appears that many EFL learners struggle to differentiate between different meanings of the same word, such as homophones and homonyms. Besides figurative language and its various components, which are distinguished by their multiple interpretations.

#### **2.2.3.5. Text Structure and Type**

Text structure and type are one factor that may impede EFL learners' reading comprehension. According to Westwood (2008, p. 35) "Text that is complex in terms of concepts, vocabulary, sentence length, and structure is difficult for readers to process." As a result, EFL learners who are unfamiliar with the different types of texts and how they are structured are likely to know less about the text than other readers; those who are familiar with them are better able to predict what they will read, organize information, judge the relative importance of what they read, and improve comprehension. To summarize, being aware that there are various types and structures of text plays an important role in comprehension because it allows learners to connect ideas by being able to differentiate the main ideas and highlight what is important and what is less important in a written passage.

#### **2.2.3.6. Lack of Reading Fluency**

Another issue that EFL students face is a lack of reading fluency, which has a negative impact on their ability to comprehend the texts they are reading. According to Grabe (2009), reading fluency is "the ability to read rapidly with ease and accuracy and to read with appropriate expression and phrasing". It involves a long incremental process and text comprehension is the

expected outcome (as cited in Grabe, 2010, p. 72). Indeed, reading fluency does, in fact, depend on the following: the ability to decode and recognize words quickly; the ability to make connections between words during reading; and the ability to construct meaning from the recognized words. Slow reading, on the other hand, prevents readers from giving the text's higher-order ideas and concepts their full attention, instead limiting cognitive capacity to the low-level of letters and words. Because they focus on the process of decoding and recognizing words rather than the content and how words are connected, which hinders them from constructing meaning, a lack of fluency is considered one of the main barriers to reading comprehension, and slow readers are likely to be vulnerable to this.

#### **2.2.3.7. Cohesion and Coherence**

Reading comprehension is influenced by coherence and cohesion. A text that is coherent and cohesive is more likely to be simpler to read compared to another that lacks these two features. Coherence and cohesion are important for reading comprehension because they allow the reader to easily shift from one idea to the next. On one hand, If the text lacks coherence, the reader may be unable to follow the writer's flow of thought and may need to read the text several times in order to make connections. On the other hand, cohesion has an impact on the reader's achievement because it requires them to be aware of the relationships that exist between words. Besides assisting the reader in coming up with alternatives for the writer's intended meaning. As a result, cohesion is essential in establishing coherence, and a text that lacks cohesion will not be coherent.

#### **2.2.3.8. Lack of Concentration**

The majority of EFL learners typically struggle with what is known as lack of concentration, which is thought to be another reason for students' decreased ability to focus on what they read and being poor readers due to a variety of factors, including nutrition and insufficient

knowledge, as well as house, school, and socio-cultural environmental factors. Simply put, concentration issues can impair students' ability to learn and remember information, leaving them frustrated with themselves and others. The more readers are distracted or simply not paying attention, the less they understand the texts they are reading.

#### **2.2.4. Reading Comprehension Strategies**

Improving the reading skill is crucial as it plays a fundamental role in any educational system. Especially, it has been proved that using specific reading strategies has a significant influence in assisting EFL learners to approach the text content more effectively. Basically, according to various researchers, the term "reading strategies" has varied definitions. In this vein, Garner (1987) defined them as "generally deliberate, playful activities undertaken by active learners many times to remedy perceived cognitive failure" (p. 95). Which means that good readers are those who rely on using reading strategies in order to achieve a successful reading comprehension. Moreover, due to their great importance It is stated that they are very beneficial for readers who struggle in reading process Mc. Namara et al (2009, p. 218) i.e. they are beneficial in overcoming any reading difficulties EFL encounter while reading. In this context, a light is shed on the main strategies used to facilitate achieving better reading comprehension in general. These strategies are: skimming, scanning, inferring, contextual guessing, summarizing, self-monitoring, making predictions, seeking a clarification.

##### **2.2.4.1. Skimming**

Skimming is a well-known term; it means to take a quick glance, i.e., quickly run the eyes through the text to get a general understanding of the content and its usefulness. Brown (2004, p. 213) argued that skimming is "the process of rapid coverage of reading matter to determine its gist or main idea." In the same vein, Djuwarsih (2006, as cited in Fauz, 2018, p. 14), refocused that



skimming “is a skill of getting general idea of a text.” Therefore, the readers take the main ideas or essence from the reading material without paying heed to all the words and their intended meaning. Generally, in this strategy, the readers focus only on the substantial ideas and skip over the insignificant and marginal parts. Hence, this is what makes it a time-saving reading technique.

#### **2.2.4.2. Inferencing**

It is regarded as a vital cognitive learning strategy, especially for reading comprehension. As a result, it has received the potential interest of many researchers. Moreover, inferring is defined as the ability to “read between the lines” which is affirmed by Pennell (2002) who stated that “Inferential comprehension is often described simply as the ability to read between the lines [...] it requires a reader to blend the literal content of a selection with prior knowledge, intuition, and imagination for conjecture or to make hypotheses” (p.1). That is to say, Students need to use their own knowledge along with information from the text to draw their own conclusions to get the implicit meaning an author implies but does not state it directly (explicitly). It involves trying to “get inside the author’s head” to see what he or she really meant when he or she was composing the text. In addition to that, Chikalanga (1992) provided another definition in which he highlighted almost the same points, he claimed that inference is a “the cognitive process a reader goes through to obtain the implicit meaning of a written text on the basis of two sources of information: the propositional content of the text (i.e. the information explicitly stated) and prior knowledge of the reader” (p. 697). In this respect, he highlighted almost the same points. Thus, students should learn from the very beginning that reading is a matter of actively inferring meaning, based on prior knowledge about text.

### **2.2.4.3. Scanning**

Scanning is another effective strategy or tool for speeding up reading. It entails rapidly moving the eyes over a passage to obtain information such as phone numbers, statistics, definitions, and names. Mikulecky and Jeffries (1996) suggested that, “When you scan, you have a question in mind. You do not read every word; only the words that answer your question” (p. 15). Thus, when scanning, students read to quickly find a specific piece of information. They do not read the entire text; instead, they have a question in their heads and read the passage to find the answer.

### **2.2.4.4. Self-Monitoring**

Self-monitoring is a strategy involving “meta-cognitive awareness,” or thinking about the text within one’s inner self and mind. It is the ability to recognize when and what have been read is meaningful or not by monitoring and controlling one’s own comprehension. In other words, it is about tracking the clicks: what the reader understands while reading, and the clunks: a word, phrase, or idea that is a source of confusion, is not clear, or is incorrectly interpreted, which indicates that he or she does not understand. The reader should be able to identify where their comprehension breaks down so that they can stop and fix it until it clicks. After reading, good readers frequently ask themselves, “Does what I read make sense?” “Have I learned what I needed to know?”.

To conclude, this technique is important because it allows readers to adjust their reading if they do not understand something, as well as assist readers in determining whether they need to reread a section or seek additional information to better understand the material. As a result, students cannot effectively comprehend the text unless they are self-monitoring while reading.

#### **2.2.4.5. Summarizing**

Summarization is a process in which after comprehending what he or she read, the reader must restate the same information or main ideas of a given text in his or her own style without straying from the general ideas of the content. It's like making a shorter version of the content with different words but the same meaning. During the summarizing process, students will be able to distinguish between main ideas and supporting ideas, related knowledge and unrelated knowledge. It assists students in organizing their ideas even in long reading passages, which are typically perceived as a threat in summarizing.

#### **2.2.4.6. Contextual Guessing**

It is an effective practical strategy to enhance reading comprehension. It is used for determining the meaning of words based on their context by combining readers' prior knowledge of English or by examining the relationship between the unknown words and other words, sentences, clauses, and paragraphs. In this respect, Nation (1990, p. 130) stated that "guessing from context is undoubtedly the most important vocabulary learning strategy" Its aim is for learners to be able to make a well-informed guess at the meaning of an unknown word in context without interrupting the reading too much. Thus, putting words in context facilitates deriving their meaning rather than examining them in isolation. More importantly, the flow of reading the text or the passage will not disturb the learners because it enables them to comprehend these written materials easily without using dictionary entries.

#### **2.2.4.7. Seeking a Clarification Strategy**

It is a reading strategy that guides students to exploit texts by consulting teachers or secondary resources. It can be used to construct the meaning of unknown words and the multi-level meaning of words, as well as the words and concepts of unfamiliar contexts. It also helps students

to understand the difficult elements of the reading texts by directing them to read and be poised for more comprehension.

#### **2.2.4.8. Making Predictions**

It is a critical reading comprehension strategy to teach and practice with students. It requires students to use what they have read and know about a topic in order to anticipate what will happen in a text or what a text will be about. Furthermore, it requires students to use what they have read and know about a topic in order to anticipate what will happen in a text or what a text will be about. In this respect, Duffy (2007) stated that “predicting is fundamental to comprehension; good readers anticipate meaning. They do this by predicting what they think is going to happen in a selection and by revising their prediction as they read” (p. 101). Stated differently, predicting is fundamental to comprehension because students anticipate meaning by predicting what is going to happen in the topic and by revising their predictions as they read in order to anticipate and predict what the writer is attempting to convey. This is an important way that facilitates rather than hinders their text’s comprehensibility.

#### **2.2.4.9. Visualizing**

Visualization is a useful reading comprehension strategy that can help critical readers interpret or infer meaning from reading texts. It entails forming a mental image of a specific situation, location, or characters, or even a time of reading text at various levels. Visualizing passages can assist students in organizing and remembering information, as well as identifying when information is incomplete or inconsistent. It can be done in a variety of ways, including drawing personalities, asking questions about the five senses, and/or drawing timelines, word, images and map.

### **2.3. The Relationship between Reading and Idioms' Comprehension**

The relationship between reading and idioms' comprehension reading has become an essential skill for EFL learners to achieve proficiency in the English language, especially in terms of understanding a wide range of idioms due to their availability in almost all reading resources such as media, blogs, personal experiences, books, journal and magazine articles, expert opinions, encyclopedias, and online sites. Which led to the necessity of mastering them. In this vein, Wood (2002) confirmed that the mastery of idioms has an important role in the teaching and learning process of English (p. 15). Accordingly, the misunderstanding of idioms may cause several challenges for EFL students. Therefore, research has shown that teaching idioms in context is better for poor readers and comprehenders than teaching them in isolation. On the other hand, it helps proficient readers by allowing them to learn as many idioms as they can, improving their reading speed and fluency, making reading more enjoyable by reading attention-grabbing novels, short stories, etc., and giving them a better understanding of how idioms are used in various cultures.

To sum up, EFL teachers must familiarize their students with idioms by providing them with a variety of reading assignments that consist of idioms, as well as increase their awareness of the usefulness of text reading in developing students' ability to understand idioms.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, it can be duly recapped that reading is an essential skill that EFL learners have to master due to its significant importance whether it the academic or personal levels. The present chapter has discussed a variety of issues, all of which are related to reading and reading comprehension. It has addressed a number of reading definitions as well as two other reading styles, intensive and extensive reading, in addition to its purpose and three modalities, namely bottom-up, top-down, and interactive models that demonstrate how the reader processes reading, or what

occurs in the reader's mind as they read. Furthermore, multiple views on the concepts of comprehension and reading comprehension have been provided, with special emphasis placed on the strategies that assist readers in overcoming the reading comprehension difficulties. Furthermore, it concluded by emphasizing the significance of familiarizing students with the necessity of understanding idiomatic expression in order to gain a better grasp of the texts.

# **Chapter Three:**

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**Appendix B**

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**French summary**

**Arabic summary**



## **Introduction**

This chapter is devoted to the practical framework, which seeks to test students' ability to comprehend idiomatic expressions through text reading. It, also, explores teachers' and learners' attitudes toward relying on text reading to improve their ability to understand the idioms. It includes the analysis of data that has been gathered through the use of two questionnaires that were distributed to first-year master students and teachers, in addition to the idioms' comprehension test, and its analysis. Finally, it highlights the pedagogical implications and limitations of the study, in addition to offering some suggestions and recommendations for further research.

### **3.1. Choice of Method**

In the present study, we attempted to use the quantitative-descriptive method. We employed it because of its significant importance and suitability for fitting the large size of the sample in this study, as opposed to the qualitative approach. In light of this, Jonker and Penink (2010, p. 38) described the quantitative approach as “purely scientific, justifiable, precise, and based on facts often reflected in exact figures.” It governs how descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, tabulation, graphics, and representation, are used. Thus, it is going to be appropriate in processing, analyzing, and describing the essential issues linked to reading, reading comprehension, and its usefulness in improving learners' ability to comprehend idiomatic expressions.

### **3.2. Data Gathering Tools**

In order to investigate teachers' and learners' perspectives toward the impact of text reading in developing EFL learners ability to comprehend idioms, a questionnaire and a test have been selected as the appropriate tools. According to Brown (2001, p. 6), a questionnaire is “any written instrument that presents respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they react

either by writing out their answers or selecting from existing answers.” Furthermore, Dorney (2007, p. 101) asserted that the main advantage of questionnaires is that they are relatively easy to construct, extremely versatile, and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily accessible. In the same vein, Anderson (1990, p. 207) stated that it “it permits the collection of reliable and reasonably valid data relatively simply, cheaply in short space of time.” That is to say, it is a data gathering tool that consists of a variety of question types, most notably closed-ended, open-ended, and ranking ones, to be answered by the chosen sample in order to quickly and easily gather the required information from a large population. Additionally, one of its key benefits is that it maintains anonymity, which puts participants at ease and motivates them to provide accurate responses.

The second type of data is a test, which is defined by Brown (2004) as "a method of measuring a person’s ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain." To put it another way, the test is one of the most crucial tools for collecting data because it aims at testing students' knowledge, ability across a variety of domains in order to verify and testify the research questions and hypotheses.

Therefore, in order to achieve better results in gathering valid and reliable data on the current study under investigation, two questionnaires were submitted for both first-year master's students and their teachers at the Department of Letters and English Language at the University of Guelma. Furthermore, an idioms comprehension test in written form to test to what extent students are able to interpret the intended meaning of idioms in context designed.

### **3.3. Students Questionnaire**

This questionnaire is intended to explore students’ attitudes toward the effectiveness of relying on text reading to develop their ability to understand idiomatic expressions. Additionally,

it deals with the extent to which students are interested in learning idiomatic expression. It is divided into four main sections: the study's population, sampling; research method; description of students' questionnaires; and administration of students' questionnaires.

### **3.3.1. Population and Sample of the Study**

The current research included 108 EFL students who were first-year master's students at the Department of English, University of Mai 1945, Guelma, registered in the academic year 2022-2023. Consequently, the participants were randomly selected to complete the questionnaire. The reason behind choosing first-year master's students is that they are advanced learners and that they have an adequate understanding of the English language, as well as, they are knowledgeable about its culture. Besides, they are already familiar with idiomatic expression in different modules. It is composed of (108) students out of (150). Hence, it can be said that this sample would permit the researcher to generalize the results to the whole population.

### **3.3.2. Description of Students' Questionnaire**

The issues covered in the theoretical part served as the foundation for the design of this questionnaire. It consists of 22 questions arranged in four main sections, each of which is focused on an alternate issue (see Appendix A). In this questionnaire, both closed-ended and open-ended questions are employed. The former includes both yes/no and multiple-choice questions, whereas, the latter includes open-ended questions that permit participants to provide their clarifications. Another common type of questions are rank order item. Along with that, further justifications are required via follow-up questions.

The first section is composed of general information. It is made up of questions concerning students' backgrounds. It consists of four primary questions (Q1–Q4). The second section is devoted to highlighting students' perspectives on idioms' comprehension. Hence, several questions

about idioms are raised, including how students perceive them and what methods of learning they prefer to use in addition to idioms' use. It contains seven items (Q5–Q10). Moreover, the third section investigates learners' knowledge about reading, reading comprehension, challenges that EFL learners encounter while reading, and strategies that assist in overcoming them. It includes eight questions, ranging from (Q11 to Q18). Finally, the fourth section, which is arranged in five questions from (Q19 to Q24), aims at shedding light on the relationship between reading texts and the comprehension of idiomatic expressions, including the last question, which gives students the freedom to add any comments or further suggestions on the ways of teaching idioms in EFL classrooms.

### **3.3.3. Administration of Students' Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was administered at the department of Letters and English Language, 8 Mai 1945, University- Guelma, to First Year Master students on April, 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023. However, due to the specific situation of the holy month of Ramadan, informants were not easily found. The questionnaire was distributed in the presence of the teachers, and it was handed back in the same session. Participants, without hesitation, answered the questionnaire after being informed that their answers would be kept anonymous and used purely for research reasons. They were very cooperative and answered almost all the questions.

### **3.3.4. Data Analysis and Interpretations**

This section consists of the results and findings of students' questionnaire. It is divided into four main parts: general information, students' attitudes towards idiomatic expressions, the second section is about students' views about reading, the last one is about the relationship between idiomatic expressions and reading text.

### 3.3.5.1. Analysis of Results and Findings from Students' Questionnaire

The present section contains a detailed analysis of the questionnaire results.

#### Section One: General Information

**Question One:** Was it your choice to study English?

**Table 3. 1**

*Students' Choice of Studying English*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Yes	83	76.9%
No	25	23.1%
Total	108	100%

As pointed out in table 3.1, the majority of first-year master's students 76.9% indicated that they made the decision to study English on their own. However, 23.1% admitted that they did not make the decision alone. This would mean that most of the students have a favorable attitude about learning EFL. Therefore, it is anticipated that they are interested in learning more about the English language.

**Question Two:** What is your English language level?

**Table 3. 2**

*Students' level of English*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Good	71	65.8%
average	30	27.8%
Bad	07	06.4%
Total	108	100%

The purpose of this question was to know about students' level of English. The results in shown in the table 3.2, and they show that learners' English level differ to some extent. The majority of them 65.8. % stated that their level is good. 27.8% of them thought that their level is average, while the remaining participants 6.4% admitted that they have a bad level. These findings indicate that students' level differ from one to another because of students' individual differences, capacities, and styles. Additionally, a significant number of them typically evaluate their level in a language by how well or poorly they are able to comprehend it and produce it in writing or speaking.

**Question Three:** How many years did you study English?

**Table 3. 3**

*Students Experience in Studying English*

Option	Number	Percentage%
11 years	74	68.6%
More than 11 years	34	31.4%
Total	108	100%

As shown in table 3.3, nearly the majority of students 68.6% asserted that they had been studying English for 11 years. A considerable proportion of students 31.4% acknowledged studying English for more than 11 years. This implies that they either dropped out of school or had a failing academic year. The result also indicates that the vast majority of informants may have sufficient knowledge and experience of the English language. Therefore, the sample is suitable for the study under investigation.

**Question Four:** As a master student, how do you find post graduate studies?

**Table 3. 4**

*Students' Attitudes Towards Studies in Master*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Easy	20	18.5%
Medium	70	64.8%
Difficult	18	16.7%
Total	108	100%

It is important for us to know students' views about post graduate studies. Therefore, according to the obtained results in table 3.4, the majority of participants 64.8% found that studies in master level is neither hard nor difficult. ie. medium. This may indicate that first year master students already have sufficient knowledge about the language, the techniques used in the teaching programs, and the saturation of the syllabus, due to the fact that they have been exposed to academic English for three years. Further, 18.5% of respondents chose the option 'Easy' as they see their level advanced and due to their willingness to learn more about their opted field. However, a small percentage with 16.7% said that it is difficult, because of the absence of specialty which led them to deal with all modules with the same amount of efforts.

**Section Two: Idioms Comprehension**

**Question Five:** Do you think idioms are interesting in learning?

**Table 3. 5**

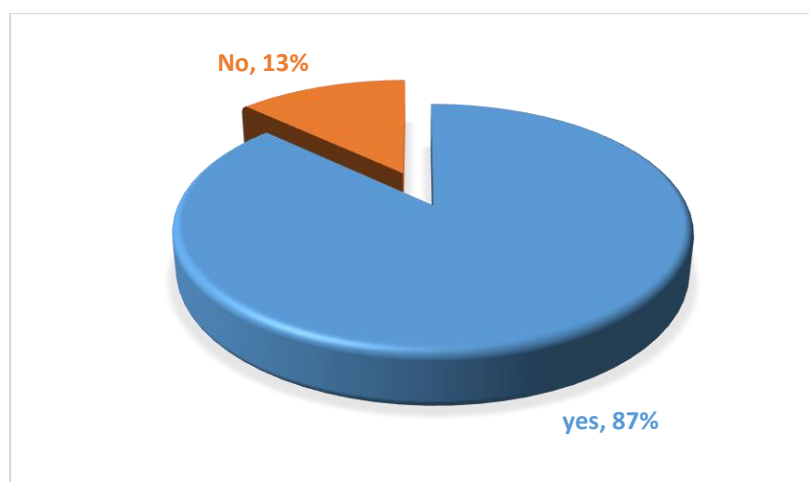
*Students' Views about Idioms*

Option	Number	percentage
Yes	94	87%
No	14	13%

Total	108	100%
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As it is displayed in table 3.5, the overwhelming majority of students 87% were interested in learning idioms. By contrast, 13% were not interested in idioms. This indicates, in spite being a challenging unites of language, learners showed a favorable opinion toward idioms' learning. However, the lack of equivalent in the other languages and cultures, as well as, the difficulty of learning idioms may be the reason why the rest of students are not interested in learning them.

**Figure 3. 1 Students' Views about Idioms.**



**Question Six:** What is the most preferable way for you to learn idioms?

**Table 3. 6**

*Students' Most Preferable Way to Learn Idioms.*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Reading texts and highlighting Idioms.	14	13%
Idioms activities.	67	62%
Taking notes when you hearing or finding an idiom	27	25%
Total	108	100%



As pointed out in table 3.6, which indicates that students' most preferable way of learning idioms is through idioms activities, more than half of students 62% have chosen it due to the fact that it is an easy way that enables individuals to understand the idiom quickly from the context (the event) and helps at reading between the lines, also in order to avoid misunderstanding or miscommunication problems. In addition, a significant percentage 25% prefer to learn idioms by taking notes when they hear or find an idiom. This may be because of the opportunity offered since it allows students to concentrate on the idioms, their meanings, and their application, which improves their knowledge and recall of the material. However, few students 13% prefer to learn idioms through reading text and highlighting idioms, this is because it takes a lot of time and students cannot easily grasp the meaning of the idiom. This reveals that practicing idiomatic expressions in daily conversations is the most preferable way.

**Question Seven:** When do you generally encounter idioms?

**Table 3. 7**

*Students Views about When Encountering Idioms.*

Option	Number	Percentage%
When reading a text, story or magazine	19	17.6%
When watching a movie	65	60.2%
Through daily conversations	24	22.2%
Total	108	100%

According to the obtained results in Table 3.7, the highest percentage of the participants 60.2% declared that they encounter idioms when they watch movies. It is possible that this is due to the fact that they are a generation addicted to movies. 22.2% of students say that they encounter

idioms through daily conversations, this may be because they rely more on speaking. Few students 17.6% say that they encounter idioms when reading a text, story or magazine, it is probably because they are accustomed to reading.

**Question Eight:** Do you use idioms in your daily life (conversations, writings....)?

**Table 3. 8**

*Students' Use of Idioms in their Daily Life.*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Yes	80	74%
No	28	26%
Total	100	100%

From the obtained results in table 3.8, which demonstrates students' opinions about the use of idioms in their daily life, it appears that most of the participants 74% use idioms in their daily conversations or writings. While only, 26% of participants don't use them. As a result, the majority of EFL learners at the department of English are highly influenced by using idioms in their daily speech because they make them appear as native speakers and enhance their speaking fluency.

**Question Nine:** Do your teachers use idiomatic expressions while teaching?

**Table 3. 9**

*Students Views about The Use of Idioms by Teachers.*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Yes, they do	66	61.1%
No, they do not	42	38.9%
Total	108	100%

The above table 3.9, sheds light on students' views about teachers' use of idiomatic expressions inside the classroom. More than half of the sample 61.6% said that their teachers do use idiomatic expressions while teaching. However, 38.3% of the participants stated that their teachers do not use idiomatic expressions in their teaching. This may indicate that most of the teachers' direct students' attention towards idiomatic expressions while teaching.

**Question Ten:** Could you please define what is an “idiom”?

The majority of the students who took part in this questionnaire agreed that idioms are expressions and phrases with "figurative", "implicit" or "hidden meaning" that cannot be deduced from the individual words. They also added that idioms are expressions that are culturally transmitted in particular societies and that they differ from one culture to another, i.e., they do not have an equivalent in other cultures.

### Section Three: Reading

**Question Eleven:** Which of the following skills are you most interested in developing? (rank them in order from 1 to 4).

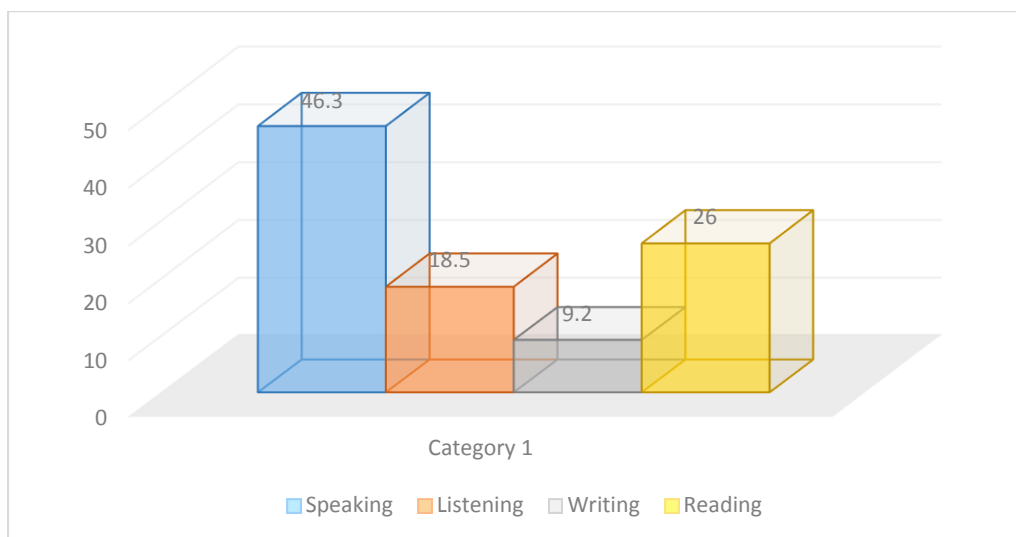
**Table 3. 10**

*Students' Preferable Skill.*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Speaking	50	46.3%
Listening	20	18.5%
Writing	10	9.2%
Reading	28	26%
Total	108	100%

According to the gathered data in the preceding table 3.11, it is evident that less than half of the participants 46.3% focus on improving speaking skills. This indicates that students prefer speaking because they learn English to communicate appropriately. Additionally, 26% of them said that they enjoy reading. May be due to its significant importance in learning any language, including its vocabulary in general and its idioms and lexical chunks in particular. Nevertheless, in comparison to other skills, listening and writing are almost uninteresting. In light of this, only 18.5% asserted that they are interested in listening, whereas 9.2% of the whole sample reported that they like writing, which may contribute to helping them express their feelings. Therefore, the findings show that the overwhelming majority of informants preferred speaking and reading, owing to their vitality in fostering EFL students English language acquisition.

**Figure 3. 2 Students' Preferable Skill**



**Question Twelve:** How do you consider your reading proficiency level in English?

**Table 3. 11**

*Students Level of Reading Proficiency.*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Very good	22	20.4%
Good	68	62.9%
Average	14	13%
Poor	4	3.7%
Total	108	100%

As seen in table 3.11, nearly the majority of students 62.9% have evaluated their reading proficiency level as good. In addition to that, 20.4% of informants indicated that their level is very good; they may be the ones who interested in developing reading. However, 13% respondents estimated their reading proficiency as average, which can be because they read only for specific purposes, especially studies. Moreover, a significant number of learners mentioned that they have a poor level 3.7%, which may be resulting from their limited experience with reading materials, inadequate reading tasks in the classroom, or students are not interested in reading. Thus, since almost all students' reveal a satisfaction toward their level, it may denote that reading has significant importance.

**Question Thirteen:** What is your purpose behind reading? (you may tick more than one answer)

- a- To broaden your vocabulary knowledge
- b- To get higher educational qualifications
- c- To improve your speaking and writing proficiency
- d- To comprehend idiomatic expressions

**Table 3. 12**

*Students' Reading Purposes.*

Option	Number	Percentage%
A	34	31.5%
B	8	7.4%
C	35	32.4%
D	4	3.7%
A+B	7	6.5%
A+C	11	10.2%
B+C	9	8.3%
Total	108	100%

This question was asked to explore the most important purposes behind motivating learners to read. Accordingly, as displayed in table 3.12, most of the students 32.4% advocated that they read for the sake of improving their speaking and writing proficiency. 31.5% answered that the main goal behind reading is that they want to broaden their vocabulary because having different vocabularies allows them to comprehend the texts they are reading. However, 10.2% of the respondents indicated that reading helps them broaden their vocabulary knowledge and improving their speaking and writing proficiency, and 8.3% stated that it aids them in getting higher educational qualifications. While the rest of the participating sample 3.7% claimed that reading is useful in assisting them to comprehend idioms. This implies that reading is an effective skill for EFL learners to achieve different goals, namely, improving their speaking, writing, vocabulary, which in turn help them enhance their academic performance, and familiarize themselves with idioms.

**Question Fourteen:** How often do your teachers provide you with reading tasks?

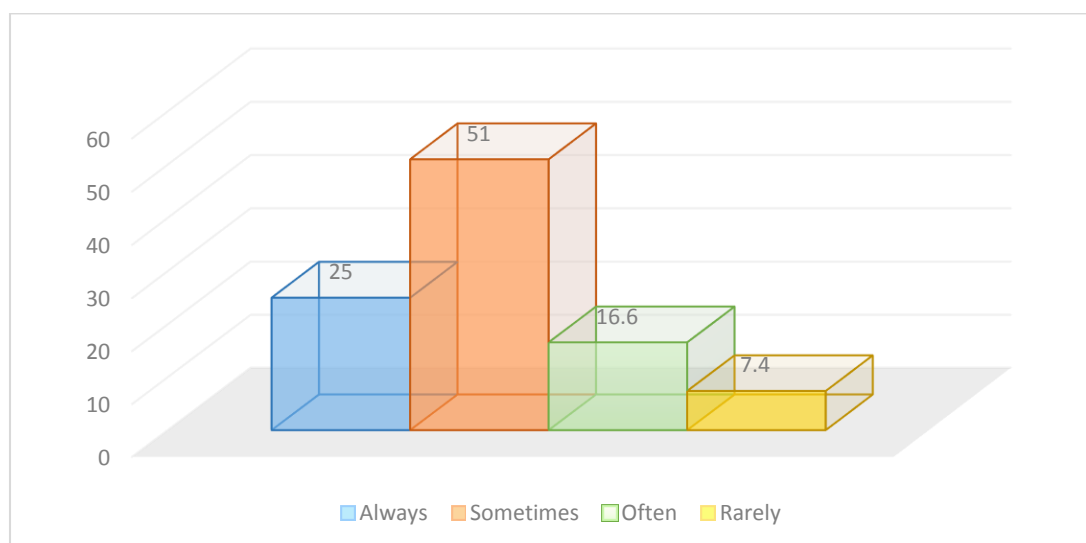
**Table 3. 12**

*Students Views about Teachers' Frequency of Providing Reading Tasks.*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Always	27	25%
Sometimes	55	51%
Often	18	16.6%
Rarely	8	7.4%
Total	108	100%

According to the participants' responses, the highest percentage of them 51% said that their teachers sometimes provide them with reading tasks. Whereas, 25% who declared that their teachers always assign them reading activities. 16.6% said they are often provided with reading tasks, while only a few of them 7.4% claimed that they are rarely exposed to reading tasks. As a result, this means that teachers have to help their learners read more effectively by providing them with a wide range of reading tasks.

**Figure 3. 3 Teachers' Frequency of Reading Tasks.**



**Question Fifteen:** What type of texts do you enjoy reading?

**Table 3. 13***Types of Texts*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Narrative texts	40	37%
Argumentative texts	26	24%
Expository texts	17	16%
Descriptive texts	25	23%
Total	108	100%

This question seeks to highlight the preferred texts of first-year master's students. According to the results presented in table 3.14, 37% affirmed that they thoroughly enjoy reading narrative texts. Meanwhile, 24% showed their interest in reading argumentative texts; on the other hand, 23% declared that they are fond of reading descriptive texts; and the remaining percentage of the respondents 16% stated that they enjoy reading expository texts. Additionally, in this question, respondents are required to justify their answers. Therefore, some of their justifications are presented as follows:

- “Narrative texts attract readers' minds because they convey ideas and messages in an enjoyable way. They also said that they enjoy reading stories and tales”.
- “Students like descriptive texts because they give them a vivid picture and create an unforgettable picture in their minds; they are easier to understand; they help in grading vocabulary in order to use it in similar situations; they are helpful in activating imagination; they have a fruitful vocabulary and an attractive style”.



- “They express their interest in reading argumentative texts because they aid in developing their judgmental abilities, help in knowing people's different ways of communicating with others, and aid in giving opinions”.
- “They like reading exploratory texts due to their credibility in exhibiting facts and exploring new things”.

From the justifications given it can be inferred that a significant majority of respondents prefer reading narrative and descriptive texts because both of them share characteristics that help them improve their writing and speaking skills, engage readers in stories by enabling them to visualize people, places, and things, and make them feel as if they are a part of the story. Notably, the importance of the previously mentioned types of argumentative and expository texts should not be neglected. owing to their effectiveness in enhancing speaking, writing skills and expanding learners' knowledge.

**Question Sixteen:** During the process of reading, do you understand every single word?

**Table 3. 14**

*Students' Understanding of Words.*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Yes	33	31%
No	75	69%
Total	108	100%

As pointed out in the table 3.15, a significant number of respondents 69% mentioned that they do not understand every single word during the process of reading as a consequence of their limited vocabulary and knowledge. In addition, 31% of them reported that they understand every

word. This signifies that students should read more to increase their vocabulary and lexical knowledge because they are going to discover and learn new terms as they do so.

**Question Seventeen:** How do your teachers help you when you do not understand the texts?

**Table 3. 15**

*The Most Commonly Used Techniques by Teachers to Increase Learners' Comprehension*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Asking you to use dictionaries	36	33.3%
Asking multiple questions	42	38.9%
Explaining through using L1	30	27.8%
Total	108	100%

This question attempts to determine the strategies teachers rely on to help their students comprehend the texts. As illustrated in table 3.16, the large proportion of the participants 38.9% stated that their teachers tend to ask multiple questions in order to help them understand. Whereas, approximately 33.3% declared that asking them to use dictionary definitions is the most demanded way from their teachers. The remaining percentage 27.8% said that their teachers rely on explaining the texts through L1. This means that teachers should focus on using dictionaries and asking multiple questions to help students develop their ability to comprehend text, rather than giving them a clear explanation.

**Question Eighteen:** What are the obstacles that hinder your understanding of texts?

**Table 3. 16**

*Text's Comprehension Obstacles*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Lack of cultural and background knowledge	56	51.85%
Lack of reading fluency	19	17.60%
Lack of concentration	26	24.07%
Inability in comprehending idioms	7	6.48%
Total	108	100%

The aim of this question is to discover texts' comprehension problems. So, the results' 51.85% show that the first reason behind students' misunderstanding of texts is due to a lack of cultural and background knowledge of the English language since there are cultural differences. Furthermore, 24.07% reported that a lack of concentration is the problem that affects their comprehension, which can be related to the environment surrounding the learner while reading, whether in the house or university. Also, 17.6% responded that they lack reading fluency. i.e., a slow speed of reading that may hinder the learner's ability to read more materials. while the lowest percentage 6.48% of them indicated their inability in comprehending idioms. For instance, a student who always tends to read only one type of text will fail to identify the other types because of their different structures. Consequently, the more students understand that there are several types and that each type has its own distinctive structure, the better they will be able to overcome the challenges they confront while reading.

#### **Section Four: Relationship Between Idioms and Reading Text**

**Question Nineteen:** In your opinion, is reading important to improve a student's ability to understand idiomatic expressions?

**Table 3. 17**

*The Significance of Text Reading for Understanding Idioms*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Yes	87	80.6%
No	21	19.4%
Total	108	100%

This question aims to know students' views about the importance of reading in improving their ability to understand idiomatic expressions. As shown in table 3.19, nearly all the participants 80.6% declared that reading is important to improve a student's ability to understand idiomatic expressions. As a result, some of their justifications are as follows: Reading provides the reader with a chance to explore other cultures and learn more about their expressions. Reading helps the student understand the context, so he can grasp the meaning of the idiom. It makes us more skilled at reading between the lines. However, a small percentage 19.4% say that reading is not important to improving a student's ability to comprehend idioms. This is may be because sometimes the text contains difficult or complex words that are impossible to understand or grasp. Also, it is important to pay attention to other ways to learn and understand idioms, such as listening to native speakers while they use their idioms and engaging in conversations. This implies that in order to get the meaning of idioms students tend to rely on other ways such as dictionaries, memorization...

**Question Twenty:** Which of these reading comprehension strategies is effective for getting the meaning of idioms?

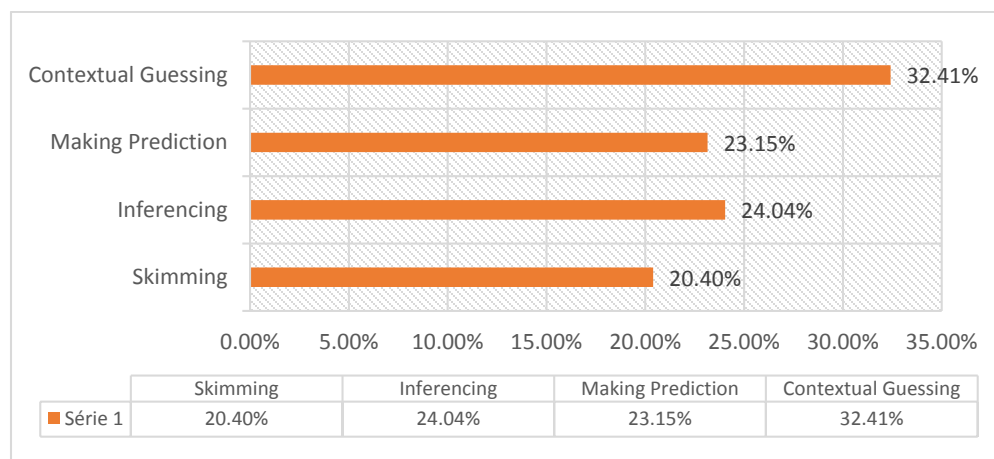
**Table 3. 18**

*Students' Views about The Efficient Reading Comprehension Strategies for Understanding Idioms.*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Skimming	22	20.4%
Inferencing	26	24.04%
Making Prediction	25	23.15%
Contextual Guessing.	35	32.41%
Total	108	100%

As depicted in the preceding table 3.20, the majority of respondents 32.41% indicated that contextual guessing is the most effective reading comprehension strategy for determining the meaning of idioms. By contrast, 24.04% of respondents indicated that making inferences is a more efficient way of getting the meaning of idioms. Only 23.15% of respondents favored making predictions, and the rest of the respondents 20.40% believed that skimming is the best technique for deducing the meaning of idioms. As a result, teachers should consider the value of contextual guessing and inference-making in their classrooms by giving students reading assignments that require them to infer the meaning of idioms from contexts. Thus, texts help students to make interpretations based on what is read. Correspondingly, contextual guessing through text reading widen students' vocabulary in general and strengthen their idioms comprehension in particular.

**Figure 3. 4** *The efficient reading comprehension strategies for understanding idioms.*



**Question Twenty-One:** Do you confront any difficulties in grasping idiomatic expressions' meaning while reading texts?

**Table 3. 19**

*Students' Difficulties*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Yes.	78	72.22%
No	30	27.78%
Total	108	100%

According to the findings in table 3.20, the overwhelming majority of participants 72.22% said they encountered problems in understanding idioms. Meanwhile, the remaining participants 27.78% asserted they have no difficulty in understanding idioms while reading texts. Thus, the results indicate that only few first-year master's students face a variety of challenges while attempting to comprehend the meaning of idioms when reading.

**Question Twenty-Two:** If yes, which kind of difficulties do you usually encounter?

**Table 3. 20**

*Kinds of Difficulties*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Lexical	18	16%
Syntactic	14	13%
Guessing the words' meaning	31	29%
Lack of cultural knowledge	45	42%
Total	108	100%

This item aims at shedding light on the most problematic factors that hinder students' understanding of idioms. A significant percentage of the respondents 42% stated that they face a lack of cultural knowledge, whereas 29% of them stated that they have a difficulty in guessing the meaning of words. Furthermore, only 16% of the participants reported that they face lexical difficulties, while the remaining respondents face syntactic difficulties. In the light of this, since idioms are cultural aspects, students have to broaden their cultural knowledge by reading as much as they can different materials that may assist them in enriching their vocabulary and becoming familiar with the various structures in order to overcome the challenges they confront while reading.

**Question Twenty-Three:** To what extent do you consider that relying on reading texts is an important way to comprehend idioms?

**Table 3. 21**

*The Importance of Text Reading in Understanding Idioms*

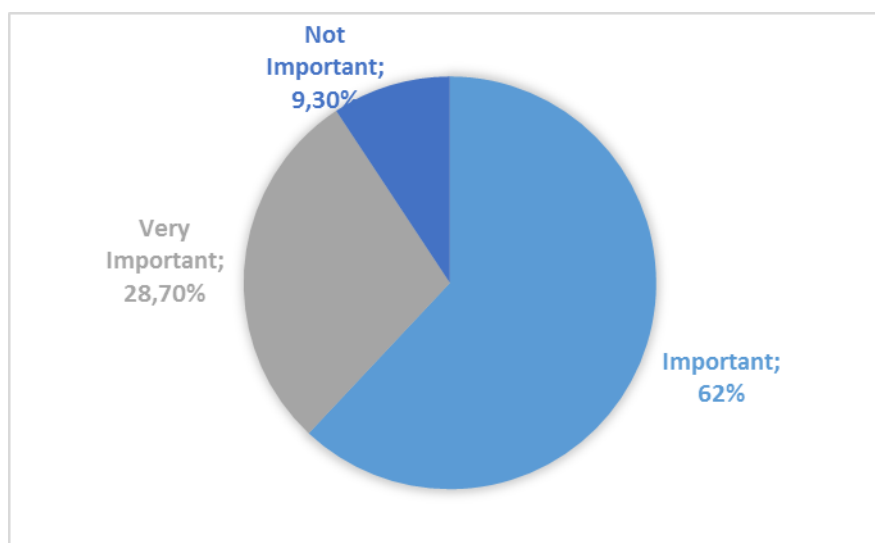
Option	Number	Percentage%
Very Important	31	28.7%
Important.	67	62%

Not Important	10	9.3%
Total	108	100%

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The aim of this question is to know students' opinion about the importance of relying on reading texts to comprehend idioms. As shown in the table 3.22, 67% of the sample declared that relying on reading texts is an important way to understand idioms. While 28.7% said that it is very important way to comprehend idioms. The rest 9.3% show that reading texts is not important way to comprehend idioms. This indicates that students are aware of the importance of text reading in enhancing learners understanding of idioms

**Figure 3. 5 The Importance of Text Reading in Understanding Idioms**



### **Further Suggestions and Recommendations**

The following questions are devoted to the students in order to provide their additional suggestions about the different ways and methods EFL teachers may rely on to teach idioms. Only 10.18% of the students who participated in the questionnaire added their opinions and additional thoughts, while the majority of them said they had nothing to add. Some of them, however,



complimented the questionnaire because it included an interesting element that is idioms. Their further suggestions and recommendations are explained below:

- “A picture is worth a thousand words’ Idioms can therefore be taught via audio-visual aids, such as displaying and showing pictures, drawings, videos, and scenes from movies, as well as listening to broadcasts.”
- “Additionally, role playing can be an effective method for teaching idioms in EFL classes.”
- “Making conversation and introducing idioms that describe each event or situation can help students understand how the idioms are utilized in real-life.”
- “Using oral expression in class is another effective technique to introduce idioms.”
- “Matching idioms to their definitions, multiple-choice questions, and other games that encourage comprehension and mastery of idioms would be the funniest and most enjoyable approach to teach idioms.”

### **3.3.6. Summary of the Results and Findings from the Students’ Questionnaire**

The data gathered from the students’ questionnaire have been presented and analyzed in the previous section. Accordingly, this part attempts to summarize the findings.

The first section is dedicated to providing general information about the students’ sample. The majority of informants declared that studying English was their choice. Their academic level, according to their answers, is good. Most of the students had studied for eleven (11) years. Furthermore, most of the learners claimed that studying for a master’s degree is neither hard nor difficult.

The second section focuses on students’ awareness of idiomatic expressions. According to the findings, it indicates that a vast majority of the participants assumed that idioms were interesting and that students liked learning them. Based on the findings, most of the sample prefers learning

idioms through idioms activities. In addition, the highest percentage of the participants declared that they encounter idioms when they watch movies. Along with that, it appears that most of the participants use idioms in their daily conversations or writings. Furthermore, students claimed that in their answers that their teachers frequently use idiomatic expressions inside the classroom. Also, the majority of the them who took part in answering the current questionnaire agreed that idioms are expressions and phrases with “figurative”, “implicit,” or “hidden meaning” that cannot be deduced from the individual words.

The next section is about students’ attitudes towards reading. It shows that the majority of students indicated that they focus on mastering speaking skills over other skills. Nearly the majority of them have evaluated their reading proficiency level as good. In the same vein, most of the respondents reported that they read for the sake of improving their speaking and writing proficiency. Accordingly, more than half of the students mentioned that their teachers provide them with reading tasks occasionally. More than one-third of the learners stated that they thoroughly enjoy reading narrative texts because they attract their minds and convey the ideas and messages in an enjoyable way. During the process of reading, a significant number of respondents admitted that they do not understand every single word. In that case, most participants said that their teachers tend to ask multiple questions in order to help them understand. Moreover, many students claimed that the main obstacles that hinder their understanding of texts are the lack of cultural and background knowledge of the English language.

The last section aims at revealing the relationship between idioms and reading text. Nearly all students have a positive view on the importance of reading in improving their ability to understand idiomatic expressions. In addition to that, the majority of students like to read text to understand idiomatic expressions. Moreover, one third of the participants indicated that contextual

guessing is the most effective reading comprehension strategy for determining the meaning of idioms. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of participants admitted that they have problems in understanding idioms while reading, which is due to a lack of cultural knowledge. In addition, findings reveal that the vast majority of participants declared that relying on reading texts is an important way to understand idioms.

### **3.4. Teachers' Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is used as a data collection tool to explore teachers' attitudes towards the efficacy of text reading in developing their students' ability in comprehending idioms. It highlights their views concerning the importance of teaching idioms, and their preferable ways to be implemented effectively in classroom settings.

#### **3.4.1. Population and Sample**

The second questionnaire is addressed to Master One teachers at the department of English, University of 8 May 1945, Guelma. It has been sent to 25 teachers. However, only 13 have responded to it. All the teachers who contributed in answering this questionnaire have taught different master one modules and specialties. The chosen sample seems appropriate to provide the needed data concerning the topic under investigation. As university teachers, can identify what helps their students to enhance their ability in comprehending idioms.

#### **3.4.2. Administration of Teachers' Questionnaire**

The present questionnaire was carried out both manually and online. It was distributed in May, during the second semester. However, only thirteen teachers actively participated and humbly responded to the questionnaire; regardless of the fact that it took some time to collect all their responses.

### **3.4.3. Description of Teachers' Questionnaire**

The purpose of the Teachers' Questionnaire is to investigate teachers' perceptions and points of view about the effectiveness of text reading in improving students' ability to comprehend idioms. It contains 18 questions. All of the questionnaire's questions are related to the current research theoretical framework and are organized in four sections in order to obtain information from the informants about the topic under investigation. It includes a variety of questions, for instance, closed-ended items that ask them to choose an answer from a predetermined list of options or to answer "yes" or "no," as well as open-ended questions that ask the respondent to provide feedback in their own words and ranking questions that are intended to get respondents to order the options in a descending order (see Appendix B).

#### **Section One: Background Information (Q1-Q3)**

In this opening section, teachers are required to mention their educational qualifications and their experience in teaching the English language, besides the specialties they have been teaching at the university.

#### **Section Two: Idioms' Comprehension (Q4-Q7)**

This section consists of four questions designed to explore teachers' attitudes and perspectives towards idioms and idioms' comprehension. It also investigates their views about the importance of teaching idioms in EFL classrooms as well as their learners' main obstacles that hinder their ability to comprehend idioms.

#### **Section Three: The Relationship Between Reading and Reading comprehension(Q8-Q17)**

It consists of ten questions. concerned with determining the importance of reading, the reading models that teachers commonly use when dealing with texts, and their attitudes regarding the significance of idioms as components of language. In addition to questions about the usefulness

of text reading in facilitating the understanding of idioms, most importantly identifying learner deficiencies that hinder idioms comprehension while reading, and a question about which reading comprehension strategies may foster idioms' comprehension, in addition to the criteria and teaching resources teachers rely on when selecting texts to assign reading in their classrooms, besides their preferable and suggested ways that encourage and motivate students to enhance their ability to comprehend idioms.

#### **Section Four: Further Suggestions (Q18)**

In this section, we provided teachers with the opportunity and the entire freedom to express themselves; including adding any comments and/or suggestions they may have concerning the topic under investigation.

#### **Teachers' Questionnaire Analysis**

##### **Section One: Background Information**

**Question One:** How long have you been teaching English at university?

**Table 3. 22**

##### *Teachers' Experience in Teaching English*

Option	Number	Percentage%
1 – 4 Years	2	15.3%
4 _ 8 Years	1	7.7%
8 _ 12 Years	5	38.5%
More Than 12	5	38.5%
Total	13	100%

This question attempts to find out how much experience teachers have with teaching English. According to Table 3.24, the highest percentage 38.5% represents teachers who have been

teaching English for more than 12 years. Similarly, the other represents teachers with an experience ranges between 8 and 12 years in the field of English language education. Moreover, a significant percentage 15.3% is for the less experienced teachers who have been teaching English for 1 to 4 years, while the remaining percentage 7.7% is for teachers who have been teaching English more than 4 years (4 to 8 years). As a result, we may assume that most teachers have sufficient experience in teaching English, and consequently, the teaching process will be successful, and they will be able to provide insightful responses.

**Question Two:** Would you mind mentioning your education qualifications?

**Table 3. 23**

*Teachers' Educational Qualifications*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Master	2	15.4%
Magister	10	76.9%
Doctorate	1	7.7%
Total	13	100%

As shown in the above table 3.24, the highest percentage 76.9% is that of teachers who have a Magister degree. 15.4% represents teachers who have Master degree. Meanwhile, 7.7% of teachers hold a doctorate degree. Thus, the results indicate that since the vast majority of the teachers have higher educational qualifications, they can enrich the results by sharing their perspectives on this study.

**Question Three:** What specialty have you been teaching during this period?

**Table 3. 24**

*Teachers' Specialty*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Linguistics	6	46.2%
Literature	4	30.8%
Civilization	3	23%
Total	13	100%

As it is exhibited in table 3.25, nearly half of the informants 46.2% declared that their specialty is linguistics. 30.8% of teachers stated that their specialty is literature, and the rest of the sample 23% mentioned that they teach civilization. As a result, having teachers from various specialties enable us to gather various data from different perspectives.

## **Section Two: idioms' comprehension (Q4-Q7)**

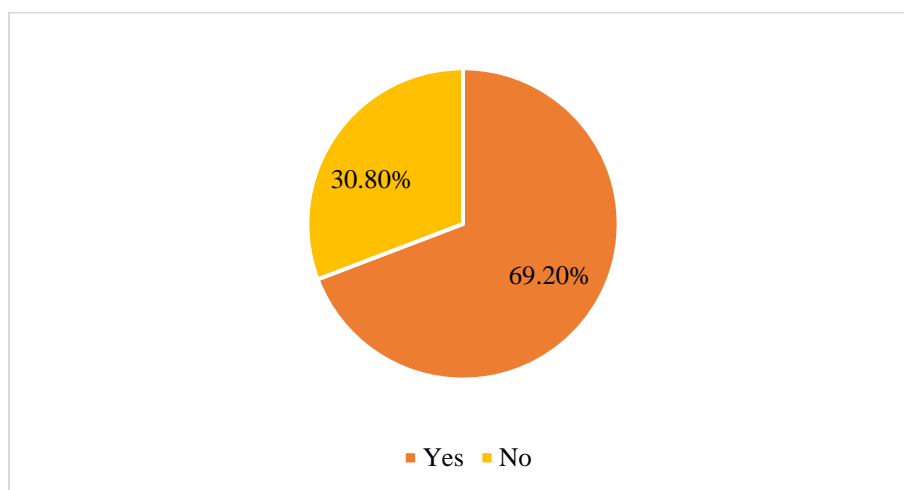
**Question Four:** In your classroom, have you ever taught idioms?

**Table 3. 25**

*Teachers' Attitudes Toward Teaching Idioms*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Yes	9	69.2%
No	4	30.8%
Total	13	100%

As shown in table 3.26, nearly the majority of the teachers 69.2% claimed that they have taught idioms in their classes. Whereas, the remaining percentage 30.8% indicated that they have never taught idioms. This implies that most of the participating teachers may have clear ideas concerning the incorporation of idioms in their lectures. The vast majority of the sample is already acquainted with and has been taught idioms in their classes.

**Figure 3. 6 Teachers' Attitudes Toward Teaching Idioms**

**Question Five:** Do you believe that teaching idioms to EFL students is as important as teaching other components?

**Table 3. 26**

*Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Importance of Teaching Idioms*

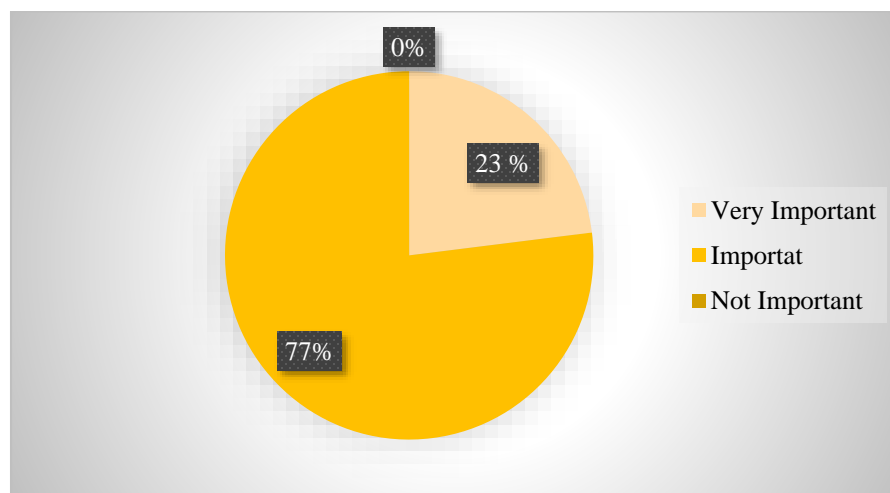
Option	Number	Percentage%
Very Important	3	23%
Important	10	77%
Not Important	0	0%
Total	13	100%

This question aims at figuring out teachers' attitudes towards the importance of teaching idioms in comparison to other aspects of language. Depending on the results depicted in table 3.27. The overwhelming majority of the informants 76.92% agreed that teaching idioms is important. However, the rest of the informants 23.08% stated that teaching idioms is very important. But, none of them stated that teaching idioms is unimportant. This implies that the



majority of participants have positive attitude towards the significance of teaching idioms and understood that idiomatic expressions are essential to help students improve their language skills.

**Figure 3. 7 Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Importance of Teaching Idioms**



**Question Six:** Do you agree that idioms can help students understand the English language?

**Table 3. 27**

*Teachers' Attitudes towards the Contribution of Idioms in Understanding English Language*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Strongly Agree	4	30.8%
Agree	9	69.2
Neutral	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	13	100%

As shown in Table 3.28, 69.2% of the participants opted for agree, along with 30.8% who opted for strongly agree. This means that idioms have a special influence on the English language

since they are widely used in all forms of discourse; hence, the more students know about the meaning of idioms, the more they gain fluency in the language and avoid any misinterpretation and misunderstanding that can be faced because of the inability to grasp the intended meaning of the idiomatic expressions. This, in turn, will be clarified in the analysis of next question.

**Question Seven:** Students' inability to comprehend the meaning of idioms is due to:

- a- There is some unknown vocabulary in idioms
- b- Lack of cultural knowledge
- c- Lack of reading
- d- Lack of familiarity with idioms
- e- Idioms are difficult because they are not taught well in class

**Table 3. 28**

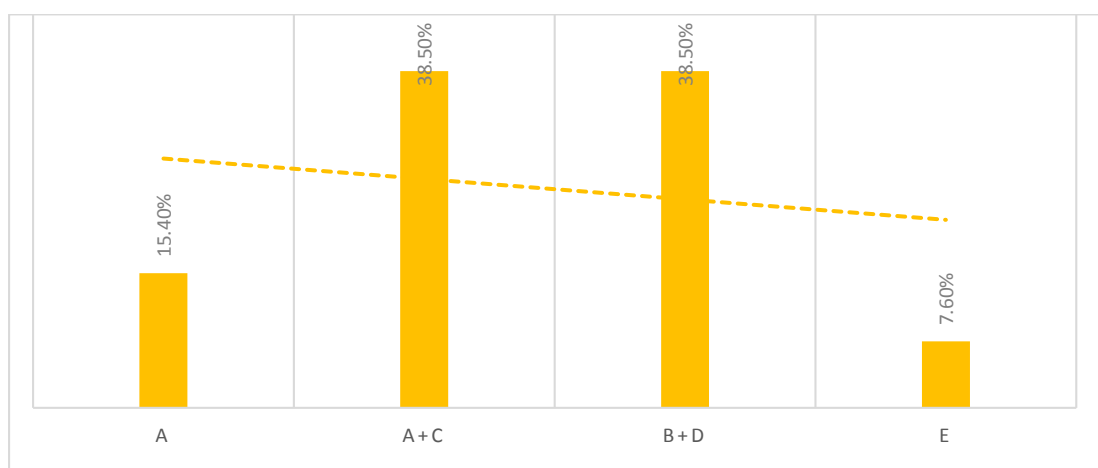
*Causes of Students Inability to Comprehend Idioms*

Option	Number	Percentage%
A	2	15.4%
A+C	5	38.5%
B+D	5	38.5%
E	1	7.6%
Total	13	100%

As it is indicated in table 3.29, less than half of the teachers 38.5% claimed that the reasons behind students' inability to comprehend idioms is due to the lack of cultural knowledge, lack of reading and, identically, lack of familiarity and unknown vocabulary of idioms. Meanwhile, only two teachers 15.4% indicated that only the existence of unknown vocabulary is the main raison. Furthermore, 7.6% of participants answered that students' inability to comprehend idioms is due

to the inappropriate ways of teaching them. Thus, teachers and students' awareness toward learning idioms should be raised through encouraging them to read more about other cultures and how idioms are used in such cultures besides incorporating various ways of teaching them. Nevertheless, only few teachers were aware of the significant role of teaching strategies to help students understand and later make use of idioms. Those teachers appreciate and value the use of idioms because such expressions belong to the category of “nonliteral” or figurative language which is difficult to interpret and to learn.

**Figure 3. 8 Causes of Students Inability to Comprehend Idioms**



### Section Three: Idiomatic Expressions and Reading Comprehension

**Question Eight:** How often do you encourage your students to read in the class?

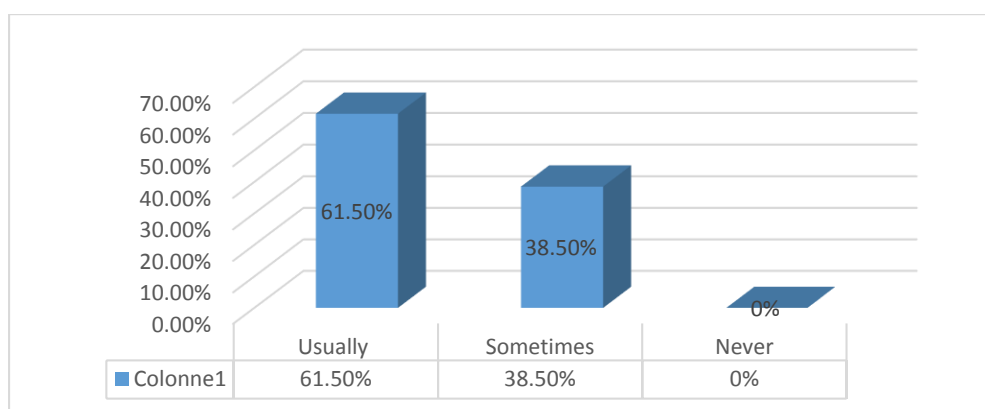
**Table 3. 29**

*Teachers' Frequency in Supporting their Learners to Read inside the Classroom*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Usually	8	61.5%
Sometimes	5	38.5%
Never	0	0%
Total	13	100%

Table 3.30, presents how often do teachers encourage their students to read in the classroom. The obtained results show that more than the two third of the teachers 61.5% motivate their students to read in the class. In contrast, one third of them 38.5% declared that they don't encourage their students to read in their classes. As the vast majority of informants stated that they support their students to read, it indicates that they are aware of the significance of providing students with reading materials because reading teaches students new words and expressions. It gives a better command over the language and particularly over idiomatic expressions.

**Figure 3. 9. Teachers' Frequency in Supporting their Learners to Read inside the Classroom**



**Question Nine:** As a teacher when you teach text reading, do you make your students aware of Idiomatic expressions?

**Table 3. 30**

*Teachers' Awareness of Idiomatic Expressions during Reading Texts*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Yes	3	8%
No	10	92%
Total	13	100%

Table 3.31, presents results about teachers' making students aware of idiomatic expressions. Approximately all teachers 92% asserted that they do not make their students aware of idioms while discussing text reading. Whereas, 8% declared that when they teach text reading to their students, they take into account the presence of idiomatic expressions. In fact, idioms are frequently employed in reading materials, so teachers have to recognize the necessity of figuring them out for their students whenever they come across them.

**Question Ten:** If yes, do you do it.

**Table 3. 31**

*Teachers' Encounter Idioms*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Before Reading	3	23.1%
During Reading	7	53.8%
After Reading	3	23.1%
Total	13	100%

As seen in table 3.32, the highest percentage 53.8% of the sample declared that they raise their students' awareness on the existence of idioms during reading. 23.1% of them asserted that they do so after reading and the same percentage 23.1% represents the teachers who stated that they figure out the idioms when they encounter in texts before reading. Thus, it is argued that determining idioms during reading is the most efficient way to raise learners' awareness toward their existence.

**Question Eleven:** Due to your experience, which model, is more effective in helping students understand the reading text?

**Table 3. 32**

*The Effective Model that Help Students in Understanding the Reading Text*

Option	Number	Percentage%
The bottom-up Model	1	7.7%
The top-down Model	0	0%
The Interactive Model	12	92.3%
Total	13	100%

The aim behind this question is to know teachers' views about the most effective model that helps students in understanding the text being read. Approximately the whole sample 92.3% chose the Interactive model as the most appropriate one to help their students understand the reading text. On the one hand, the rest of the teachers 7.7% declared they favor the bottom up modal. On the other hand, none of them preferred the top down modal.

Teachers are required to provide justifications of their choice which are presented as follows:

- As a teacher, I have that tendency to be eclectic. So, I prefer interactive model since it is that homogenous mixture between both bottom-up and top-down processes. I do believe that reading is not only superficial process to grasp meaning of words but rather predict the meaning and draw conclusions in relation to real life experiences or knowledge.
- The third model is highly advisable as it enhances students' interactive skills.
- Students do not just read words and sentences but also make predictions.
- Interaction between students and teachers.
- since the literary text is open to interpretation, students asked to use their mind frequently to predict or guess the function and meaning of phrases and symbolism in literature.
- No idea. It is rarely when I assign reading to my students and usually we target the general idea.

- Using Idiomatic expressions needs to be taught in a module where teachers and students in an informal way, this Can be found during Oral expression sessions.
- Both models are needed, thus, they need the interactive model.
- It helps students to use their own strengths to gain understanding a New information and students are encouraged to share their knowledge with classmates or peers, to interact with others to build meaning and memory from the text.
- Am teaching literature, the title itself is significant and should be discussed even before proceeding with the text then we discuss paragraphs to make them concentrate.
- Because the interactive model will help students involve effectively in the learning process, so that their understanding the reading text will be increased enormously.
- To enable learners, develop a variety of skills.

**Question Twelve:** What is your primary goal as a teacher when you assign reading to your students?

**Table 3. 33**

*Teachers' Primary Goal behind Assigning Reading to Students*

Option	Number	Percentage%
To enable students acquire new vocabulary.	4	30.8%
To increase knowledge about the target language.	5	38.5%
Improve students' pronunciation.	3	23%
To help students comprehend idiomatic meaning.	1	7.7%
Total	13	100%

This question seeks to identify teachers' primary goal when they assign reading to their students. Less than half of the teachers 38.5% claimed that their main aim behind assigning

reading to their students is to increase knowledge about the target language. A significant percentage of them 30.8% declared that enabling their students to acquire a new vocabulary is their primary aim. 23% affirmed that the aim behind providing reading to their learners is to improve their pronunciation. Meanwhile, the rest of the participants 7.7% indicated that helping students to comprehend idiomatic meaning is their primary goal. Moreover, teachers were asked to provide further justifications concerning their choices which are presented below:

1. “Also, to raise the students’ cultural awareness towards the target culture.”
2. “Another aim which I set from the beginning is to lead students to respond to the text in acritical way. to achieve this, I include a task in which students employ their background knowledge and what they learnt from the text either orally or through writing.”
3. “Grammar, spelling, writing”
4. “Learning how to write (the mechanics of writing)”
5. “Through reading, students are subject to successive authentic material. This fact enables them develop knowledge about English vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and associated culture.”

**Question Thirteen:** Do you think that relying on reading texts to teach idioms is an appropriate way?

**Table 3. 34**

*The Usefulness of Text Reading in Teaching Idioms.*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Yes	11	84.6%
No	2	15.4%
Total	13	100%



In response to Q 13, The overwhelming majority of the participating teachers 84% admitted that they rely on reading text as an effective way to teach idioms. However, the rest of informants stated that they do not depend on reading to teach idioms. As a result, the majority agreed on the appropriateness of text reading for teaching idioms.

**Question Fourteen:** What are the most efficient reading comprehension techniques That facilitate idioms' comprehension? (rank them in descending order).

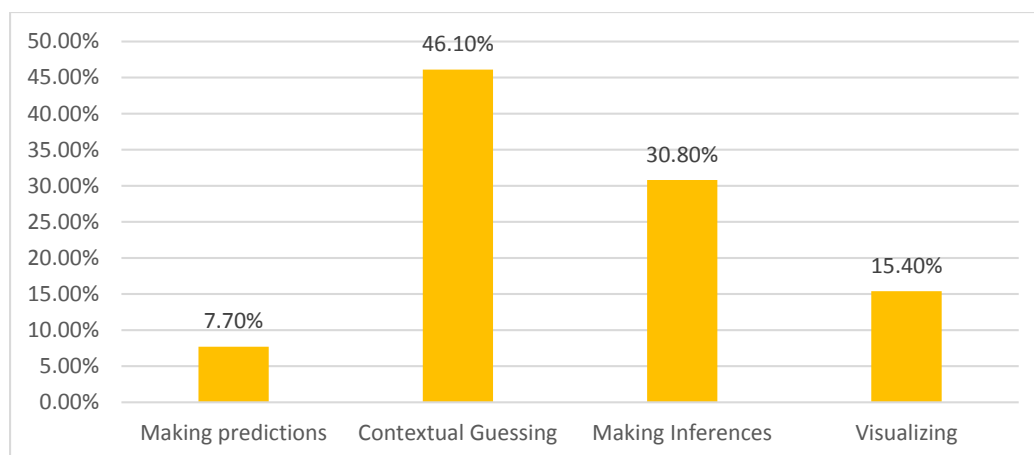
**Table 3. 35**

*The Effective Reading Comprehension Strategies that Facilitate Idioms' Comprehension.*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Making Predictions	1	7.7%
Contextual Guessing	6	46.1%
Making Inferences	4	30.8%
Visualizing	2	15.4%
Total	13	100%

As shown in the table 3.36, the top rank 46.1% is for contextual guessing as the most efficient reading comprehension strategy. Additionally, some teachers 30.8% opted for making inferences, which is placed by the participants in the second rank. While 15.4% of the informants placed visualizing in the third rank, and the rest of the sample 7.7% chose making predictions in the last rank as the less efficient strategy. This means that giving students idioms in context makes it easier for them to infer and guess their meaning, hence, teachers should make sure that their students are aware of the appropriateness of reading comprehension strategies, especially the ones mentioned previously, without ignoring the importance of other techniques as well.

**Figure 3. 10 Teachers Attitudes towards the Effective Reading Comprehension Strategies that Facilitate Idioms' Comprehension**



**Question Fifteen:** What are the criteria that you follow in selecting idioms?

- a- Relevance to the Contents of the Lessons
- b- Cultural Suitability
- c- Fitting Students' Language Level
- d- Frequency in Use
- e- Being up to Date

**Table 3. 36**

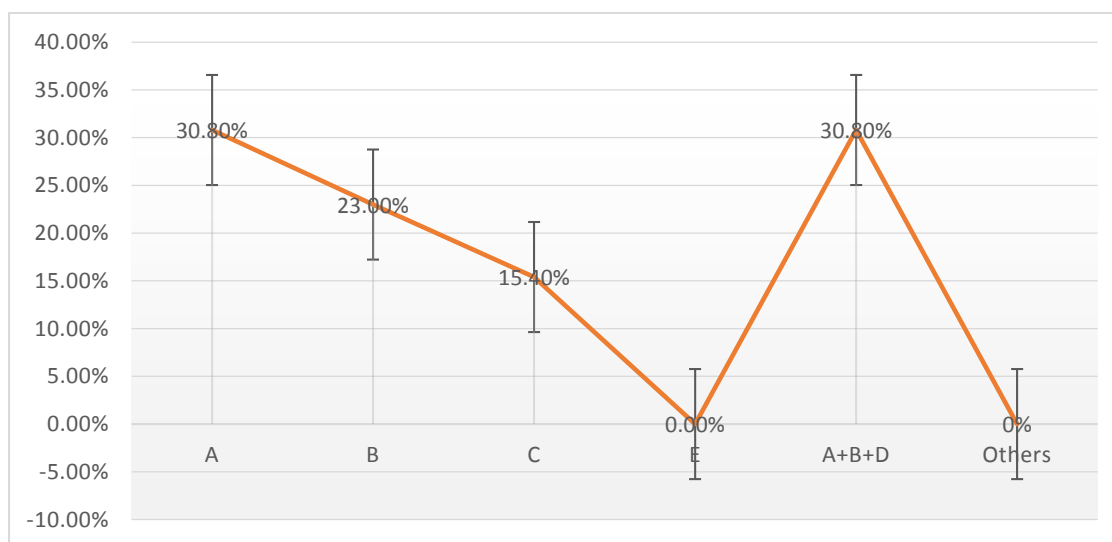
*The Suitable Criteria to Select Idioms*

Option	Number	Percentage%
A	4	30.8%
B	3	23%
C	2	15.4%
E	0	0%
A+B+D	4	30.8%

Others	0	0%
Total	13	100%

According to Table 3.37, which is about the criteria that teachers follow in selecting idioms. One third of instructors 30.8% indicated that they select the idioms in relevance to the contents of the lessons, culture suitability and frequency in use. Meanwhile, 15.4% of informants that indicated that they selected idioms in accordance with students' language level. Therefore, we can say despite the fact that there are a wide range of criteria to depend on, teachers' selection depends on the popularity of idioms, their use depending on what suits students' levels, and their frequent use in each culture.

**Figure 3. 11** *The Suitable Criteria to Select Idioms*



**Question Sixteen:** Which source and teaching material that you use most to choose reading texts?

**Table 3. 37**

*Sources and Teaching Materials Used in Choosing Reading Text*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Texts on Idioms	4	30.8%
Curriculum Books	3	23%
Internet	6	46.2%
Total	13	100%

This question seeks to elicit information about the sources and teaching materials utilized by EFL teachers in selecting reading texts. As displayed in table 3.38, The majority of informants 46.2% indicated that internet is their primary source of selecting the reading text. Additionally, 30.8% of them reported that they preferred choosing text with idioms. While 23% of the participants stated that they choose them from curriculum books. This implies that the Internet is the most preferable source teachers rely on when selecting their texts, since it provides them with huge number of texts with different types, structures, and contents.

**Question Seventeen:** Do you think that introducing texts to students will facilitate their comprehension of idioms? And why?

**Table 3. 38**

*The Effectiveness of Text in Facilitating Idioms' Comprehension.*

Option	Number	Percentage%
Yes	13	100%
No	0	0%
Total	13	100%

As indicated in table 3.39, All the participants agreed on the usefulness of introducing text to students as a way to facilitate idioms comprehension. Meanwhile, none of them neglected its usefulness.

Teachers were asked to provide reasons of what they chose, hence the reasons are quoted as follows:

1. "Of course they do. Since there is a text, there a context. With the existence of context, we make sense out of things."
2. "Texts provide contextual examples of idioms to students, lead them to interact about it by making inferences. They are truly involved in the learning process by making inferences and as such will better memorize idioms."
3. "The meaning of an idiom generally depends on the specific context in which it is used."
4. "contextualization the idiom"
5. "they understand the meaning and make inferences and contextualization about the text to facilitate learning idioms"
6. "If this will ever be my target, I will choose texts that are rich with idioms to help students get acquainted with them".
7. "In Books, students Can read Idioms in their contexts"
8. "I think that social, historical and cultural context of the text should be taken into account"
9. "To grasp them with the meaning, Idioms are not easily grasped, they should be discussed well so students wouldn't forget about them, and would use them in their idiolect"
10. "Because Idioms are expressions whose meanings are not be clear from the words that make them UP, so students have to read texts (that contain Idioms) to infer and guess the meaning of idioms from the context"

11. "To prepare them and provide them with prior knowledge"

#### **Section Four: Further Suggestions**

This section is devoted to teachers to write down their comments or additional suggestions about the difficulties that enable learners to understand idioms and the different techniques that can be used to enhance EFL students' comprehension of idioms. Only 38.4% of the instructors participated and gave their comments and suggestions which they are as follows:

1. "In my humble opinion, teaching idioms through reading text should start first with the literal meaning then moving to the figurative or metaphorical meaning."
2. "I suggest assignments for students to do at home by preparing lists of idioms corresponding to different themes that motivate them."
3. "You could encourage students to practice using idioms and metaphors in their conversations by reading texts of how and when to use the idioms. Idioms are a great way to introduce your students to the endless capabilities in which they can use words. Get your students started by making them understand what idioms are with lots of examples."
4. "using ICT 's, video, reading novels and stories in class"
5. "They should be familiar with the situations they live in."

#### **3.4.4. Summary of Results and Findings from Teachers' Questionnaire**

The practical part of this study attempts to summarize the findings of the teachers' questionnaire after analyzing them in the previous section.

The findings of teachers' questionnaire demonstrate that the majority of teachers have a Magister degree, and most of them have worked as university teachers for more than 12 years, which means that they have enough experience in teaching English.

Concerning the second section, which is about teachers' perspectives towards idioms, it indicates that all the informants have experience with idioms, since the majority of them have taught idiomatic expressions in their classes, and they all agreed on the importance of teaching idioms to EFL students and how idioms can help their students understand the English language. Most of the teachers assumed that the reason for students' inability to grasp the meaning of those expressions are due to their lack of cultural knowledge and their unfamiliarity with words.

In section three, reading comprehension was discussed in relation to idiomatic expressions. More than two-thirds of the participants claimed that they usually encourage their students to read in the classroom. However, the overwhelming majority of the instructors declared that they do not make their students aware of idioms during reading. All the teachers agreed on the effectiveness of the interactive model in helping students understand reading texts. Moreover, most teachers' primary goal while assigning reading to their students is to increase their knowledge of the target language. Additionally, approximately all the teachers agreed on the idea that reading text is the appropriate way to teach idioms. Furthermore, contextual guessing is the most efficient reading comprehension technique that facilitates idioms' comprehension, according to teachers. Most importantly, nearly the majority of the instructors choose idioms that have relevance to the contents of the lessons for their learners. The vast majority of teachers use the internet as a source and teaching material to teach text reading to their learners. Finally, all the participants agreed on the idea that introducing texts to students will facilitate their comprehension of idioms.

To sum up, based on the data gathered through the analysis of teachers' questionnaires, the hypothesis of this study that EFL students' ability to comprehend idiomatic expressions will be enhanced through text reading is confirmed.

Simply put, both teachers and students have positive attitudes towards the use of text reading to enhance students' ability to comprehend idioms.

### **3.5. Students' Test**

An idiom comprehension test has been designed to collect data and validate our hypothesis. The use of this research instrument is justified primarily by the study's goal, which is to test students' ability to comprehend and interpret the intended meaning of idiomatic expressions.

#### **3.5.1. Population and Sample of the Test**

The targeted population is first-year master students registered in the academic year 2022-2023 at the department of English at the University of 8 Mai 1945, Guelma. Only 50 students, chosen at random, participated in the study. This sample was chosen since the participants had already responded to a questionnaire about the study topic, so they were already familiar with it.

#### **3.5.2. Administration of Students' Test**

In order to answer the research questions, and justify the hypothesis an idioms' comprehension test was administered for first-year Master students. It was held in May, During the second semester it was handed to 108 students, however, only 50 students answered, who were randomly selected to test their ability in comprehending idioms. One of the challenges the researcher faced was the teacher's refusal to give the needed time for the test's completion.

#### **3.5.3. Description of Students' Test**

The test consists of a brief text that includes six idioms which was taken from web page American English on Skype entitled "*Bob*". Its language is clear and simple with the most accessible and common idioms in English that match students' levels. Following the reading of the



text, students were required to select the right interpretation of the idioms' meanings from the multiple choices we had already provided them with (See Appendix C).

**Table 3. 39**

*Students Answers*

<b>Idioms</b>	<b>Correct</b>	<b>Percentage%</b>	<b>Incorrect</b>	<b>Percentage%</b>
<b>Sick as a dog</b>	48	96%	2	4%
<b>New lease on life</b>	29	58%	21	42%
<b>A pain in the neck</b>	31	62%	19	38%
<b>Recharge his batteries</b>	34	68%	16	32%
<b>Fresh as a daisy</b>	45	90%	5	10%
<b>Kicked that habit</b>	41	82%	9	18%

### **First-year Master Students' Determining the Meaning of Idioms**

Table 3.40, summarizes the number of students and the percentage of their correct, incorrect understanding of English idioms. An extended analysis on each sentence in the table will be provided in the following discussion.

#### **Idiom one: sick as a dog**

The above mentioned idiom was contextually used for students to well challenge their ability to grasp its meaning. Forty-eight (96%) which means The majority of the participants found it easier to deduce the meaning of such idiom which is extremely sick, whereas only two (4%) of the respondents interpret it wrongly. This Implies that students were able to determine the correct meaning due to its closeness to the Algerian dialect (مريض كى الكلب).

#### **Idiom Two: New Lease on Life**

As displayed in table 3.40, more than half of the sample 58% have recognized the right metaphorical sense of the idioms “new lease on life” that is a chance to continue living. Meanwhile, the remaining percentage 42% failed to infer its meaning. This indicates that the failure to determine the previously mentioned idiom can be probably due to the fact that the test-takers were bothered by the given choices.

### **Idiom Three: A pain in the neck**

As mentioned in table 3.40, the third idiom “pain in the neck,” which means “someone who is obnoxiously annoying”, showed that more than half of the participants 62% chose the right meaning. In contrast, 38% of the participants failed in guessing the right meaning of the idiom. The positive outcomes obtained from students’ answers reveal the effectiveness of context in deducing the meaning of idioms.

### **Idiom Four: Recharge his batteries**

Concerning the expression "recharge his batteries," which is frequently used in English, refers “to rest and relaxation”. From the table 3.40, one can see that most participants 68% have succeeded in grasping its meaning. However, a small percentage 32% have failed to guess the right meaning. From the results, it is noticed that the majority of people who can guess the meaning of that idiom do so because there is a similar expression in Arabic that has the same meaning of recharge his batteries," which is (يشحن طاقته), hence the others who failed to grasp its meaning maybe due to the other choice, which is nearly in the meaning of rest and relax.

### **Idiom Five: Fresh as a Daisy**

Fresh as a daisy is one of the frequently used idioms in English; it refers to “a person who is fully energetic”, henceforth, from the results obtained from students’ interpretation, the vast majority of them 90% find it easy to get its meaning; however, 10% of the remaining respondents

were unable to get what is intended by this idiom. Therefore, the majority of the participants answered correctly because they were able to draw a suitable animated picture of the idiom in their minds, and the reason behind the other percentage failure can be explained by their word-by-word translation.

#### **Idiom Six: Kicked that habit**

The results revealed in table 3.40, indicated that the majority of participants 82% succeeded in guessing its meaning that is “to stop doing bad habits”. However, only 18% of them failed in guessing its meaning. As a result, students’ successful interpretation of the aforementioned idiom may be due to their reliance on L1, through determining literal meaning of such idiom which is (يقطع عن هاته العادة) and the others failure can be explained through their lack of vocabulary size.

#### **3.5.4. Summary of Results and Findings from Students’ Test**

The results obtained from data analysis show that the majority of EFL students at Guelma University succeed in guessing the appropriate meaning of the idiomatic expressions used in text. This is due to the fact that most idioms are similar in meaning to those once used in students’ native language or the Algerian dialect. Idiomatic expressions play a major role, without forgetting the significance of the text given, which provides them with context and facilitates their grasping of the idiom. Moreover, texts help learners to encounter and understand the workings of natural human language in general and the processing of idioms in particular; that is, they help them to gain a deeper knowledge of the figurative expression development over time. Nevertheless, the use of idioms and their high frequency in texts make them an important aspect of vocabulary and help students grasp their meaning.

#### **Conclusion**

This research seeks to investigate teachers' and students' attitudes toward the effectiveness of text reading in developing EFL learners ability to comprehend idiomatic expression.

Additionally, this study adopts a quantitative descriptive method, which focuses on the use of two questionnaires and a test to gather data from both teachers and students. Along with the theoretical parts, these data gathering tools assisted in answering the study's questions and deciding whether to approve or disapprove its hypothesis. Therefore, the results obtained from student and teacher questionnaires as well as the test demonstrate that learners have a positive attitude and strongly agree on the significance of text reading and reading comprehension in the learning process in general and in improving their ability to understand idioms in particular.

In light of this, we denote research goals of this study have been achieved. We approved the hypothesis that implying text reading in the teaching and learning processes play a significant role in enhancing students' ability to comprehend idiomatic expression.

### **General Conclusion**

The present research work aims at examining students' and teachers' attitudes towards students understanding of idiomatic expressions through text reading in developing students ability to comprehend idioms in EFL classes.

The first two chapters are theoretical in nature, where the first provides a general overview of idiomatic expressions, their definition, and their different types and characteristics, in addition to the degrees of idiomaticity. Then, it moves on to provide an overview of their relationship to other aspects of language. It, also, explains the significance behind their teaching. Furthermore, it tackles the relation that connects idioms and culture, besides the main difference between figurative and literal language. Meanwhile, the second chapter provides a comprehensive overview of reading, its types, models, purpose, and various difficulties that impede EFL learners reading comprehension, in addition to some effective reading comprehension strategies that may help overcome these difficulties.

The last chapter deals with the practical part, in which the quantitative descriptive method was used. Two questionnaires were administered; one for teachers and the other for their students, in addition to a test for learners at the department of English at the University of Guelma. It also reveals students and teachers' attitudes towards reading comprehension and its significant role in enhancing students ability to understand idioms and grasp their meaning. According to the data gathered from the teachers' questionnaire and the students' test and questionnaire, the participants agreed that reading comprehension has a positive outcome in helping and developing students' ability to grasp idioms meaning. As a result, the research hypothesis stated at the outset of this dissertation is confirmed.

### 3.6. Pedagogical Recommendations and Implications

The purpose of this study is to investigate students' and teachers' perceptions toward the effectiveness of text reading in enhancing EFL learners' ability to comprehend idioms. Based on the current study's findings, which show that both teachers and students value the importance of incorporating idioms in EFL classes, we can say that, despite their importance, idiom comprehension and teaching continue to be neglected in EFL classrooms. In light of this, various pedagogical recommendations and implications for students, teachers, and university are suggested.

#### For teachers

- The text should be carefully chosen in that it shouldn't neither entirely unfamiliar nor overly familiar, and vary their teaching resources.
- Teachers should expose their students to a range of before, during, and after reading comprehension strategies so that they can choose the one that best suits their needs.
- Teachers need to direct their students' interest towards learning and understanding idioms.
- Teachers should focus more on integrating idioms in their classes.
- Teachers ought to highlight to students the importance of idioms and how using them improves their reading and speaking fluency.
- Teachers should make use of audio-visual aids since they are effective tools for teaching idiomatic expressions and enhance students' comprehension of idioms.

#### For Students

- Students should be made aware of the importance of reading skill. Because Students' greater commitment to reading will positively influence their academic performance and proficiency in language.

- Students had better use different reading strategies to overcome the difficulties they encounter while reading.
- Students ought to read a variety of reading materials to increase their vocabulary, which in turn help them become more proficient in speaking and writing.
- Students must download videos, watch films in order to learn as much as possible of idioms so that they will be like native speakers
- They should use the idioms they encounter in their daily conversations
- Students ought to be aware of the significance of idioms, the use of the various techniques to master them.

### **3.7. Research Obstacles and Limitations**

Despite the fact that this research is finally complete, we have encountered various difficult limitations throughout the conduct of this research. These limitations act as roadblocks that hinder the accomplishment of the present research, limit research findings, and prevent a deep investigation of the present study. These limitations are set as follows:

- Due to time limitations, it was not easy for us to hand out the questionnaire since the students were not available because of the fast.
- Many master's students struggle to find sources related to their topics. Thus, finding reading and idiom sources that were relevant to our research was quite difficult for us.
- Additionally, we encountered some difficulties when administering the teachers' questionnaire. As a result, we emailed them, but only few of them responded.
- Finally, results cannot be generalized to all learners because the sample was restricted to first-year master's students and their teachers.

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## **Appendix**

### **Appendix A**

#### **Students' Questionnaire**

#### **Developing EFL Students' Ability in Comprehending Idiomatic Expressions Through Text Reading**

Dear Students,

You are politely demanded to answer the following questionnaire which is a part of Master Dissertation Research. The questionnaire aims at finding out EFL students' opinions about the role of text reading in developing EFL students' ability in comprehending idiomatic expressions. This will help to gather information about the above title in order to come out with a final result. This questionnaire will only take a few minutes from your time but will help a lot in our research.

Your responses are going to be treated with great confidentiality and care.

Thank you for your collaboration.

Ms Rebai Meryem & Tabouche Nesrine

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University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma, Algeria 2023

**Section One: General Information/ Personal Background**

**Item 01.** Was it your choice to study English?

a) Yes

b) No

**Item 02.** What is your English language level?

a) Good

b) Average

c) Bad

**Item 03.** How many years did you study English?

.....

**Item 04.** As a master student, how do you find studies in a master?

a) Easy

b) Medium

c) Difficult

**Section Two: Idioms Comprehension**

**Item 05.** Do you think idioms are interesting in learning idioms?

a) Yes

b) No

**Item 6.** What is the most preferable way for you to learn idioms?

a) Reading texts and highlighting Idioms

b) Idioms activities

c) Taking notes when you hearing or finding an idiom

**Item 7.** When do you generally encounter idioms?

a) When reading a text, story or magazine

b) When watching a movie

c) Through daily conversations

**Item 8.** Do you use idioms in your daily life (conversations, writings....)?

a) Yes

b) No

**Item 9.** Do your teachers use idiomatic expressions while teaching?

a) Yes, they do

b) No, they do not

**Item 10.** Could you please define what is an “idiom”?

.....  
.....

### Section Three: Reading

**Item 11.** Which of the following skills are you most interested in developing? (rank them in order from 1 to 4).

a) Speaking

b) Listening

c) Writing

d) Reading

**Item 12.** How do you consider your reading proficiency level in English?

a) Very good

b) Good

c) Average

d) Poor



**Item 13.** What is your purpose behind reading? (you may tick more than one answer)

- a) To broaden your vocabulary knowledge
- b) To get higher educational qualifications
- c) To improve your speaking and writing proficiency
- d) To comprehend idiomatic expressions

**Item 14.** How often do your teachers provide you with reading tasks?

- a) Always
- b) Sometimes
- c) Often
- d) Rarely

**Item 15.** What type of texts do you enjoy reading?

- a) Narrative texts
- b) Argumentative texts
- c) Expository texts
- d) Descriptive texts

Whatever it is your answer please justify.

.....

.....

**Item 16.** During the process of reading, do you understand every single word?

- a) Yes
- b) No

**Item 17.** How do your teachers help you when you do not understand the texts?

- a) Asking you to use dictionaries
- b) Asking multiple questions

c) Explaining through using L1

**Item 18.** What are the obstacles that hinder your understanding of texts?

a) Lack of cultural and background knowledge

b) Lack of reading fluency

c) Lack of concentration

d) Inability in comprehending idioms

**Section Four: Relationship Between Idioms and Reading Text**

**Item 19.** In your opinion, is reading important to improve a student's ability to understand idiomatic expressions?

a) Yes

b) No

**Item 20.** Which of these reading comprehension techniques is effective for getting the meaning of idioms?

a) Skimming

b) Inferencing

c) Making Prediction

d) Contextual Guessing

**Item 21.** Do you confront any difficulties in grasping idiomatic expressions' meaning while reading texts?

a) Yes

b) No

**Item 22.** If Yes, which kind of difficulties do you usually encounter?

.....  
.....

**Item 23.** To what extent do you consider that relying on reading texts is an important way to comprehend idioms?

- a) Very Important
- b) Important
- c) Not Important

**Further Suggestions and Recommendations**

**Item 24.** If you have other suggestions concerning the way of teaching idioms in EFL classrooms, please specify them.

.....  
.....

**Thank you for your time and collaboration.**

## **Appendix B**

### **Teachers' Questionnaire**

#### **Developing EFL Students' Ability in Comprehending Idiomatic Expressions Through Text Reading**

Dear Teachers,

This questionnaire is part of a research work that is carried out for a master degree. It aims at investigating teachers' attitudes towards the effectiveness and usefulness of reading texts in enhancing EFL learners' ability to comprehend idioms. You are kindly invited to take part in this investigation by completing this questionnaire. Please, answer each question by ticking (✓) the appropriate box. Your contribution is very appreciated and will be of great help for the completion of this questionnaire. Thanks in advance for your cooperation.

Ms. Rebai Meryem & Ms. Tabouche Nesrine

Department of English

Faculty of Letters and Languages

University 08 May 1945-Guelma, Algeria, 2023

**Section One: General Information**

**Item 01:** How long have you been teaching English at university?

- a) 1- 4 years
- b) 4- 8 years
- c) 8- 12 years

More than.....

**Item 02:** Would you mind mentioning your education qualifications?

- a) Master
- b) Magister
- c) Doctorate

**Item 03:** what specialty have you been teaching during this period?

- a) Linguistics
- b) Literature
- c) Civilization

**Section Two: Idioms**

**Item 04:** In your classroom, have you ever taught idioms?

- a) Yes
- b) No

**Item 05:** Do you believe that teaching idioms to EFL students is as important as teaching other components?

- a) Very Important.
- b) Important.
- c) Not important.

**Item 06:** Do you agree that idioms can help students understand the English language?

- a) Strongly agree.
- b) Agree.
- c) Neutral.
- d) Disagree.
- e) Strongly Disagree.

**Item 07:** Students' inability to comprehend the meaning of idioms is due to:

- a) There is some unknown vocabulary in idioms.
- b) Lack of cultural knowledge.
- c) Lack of reading.
- d) Lack of familiarity with idioms.
- e) Idioms are difficult because they are not taught well in class.

**Section Three: Idiomatic Expressions and Reading Comprehension**

**Item 08:** How often do you encourage your students to read in the class?

- a) Usually
- b) Sometimes
- c) Never

**Item 09:** As a teacher when you teach text reading, do you make your students aware of Idiomatic expressions?

- a) Yes, I do.
- b) No, I don't.

**Item 10:** If Yes, do you do it a. Before reading

- a) During reading
- b) After reading

**Item 11:** Due to your experience, which model, is more effective in helping students to understand the reading text?

- a) The bottom-up model
- b) The top-down model
- c) The interactive model

Whatever your answer please justify

.....

.....

.....

**Item 12:** What is your primary goal as a teacher when you assign reading to your students?

- a) To enable students acquire new vocabulary.
- b) To increase knowledge about the target language.
- c) Improve students' pronunciation.
- d) To help students comprehend idiomatic meaning.

If other(s) please specify

.....

.....

**Item 13:** Do you think that relying on reading texts to teach idioms is an appropriate way?

- a) Yes
- b) No

**Item 14:** What are the most efficient reading comprehension techniques That facilitate idioms' comprehension? (rank them in descending order).

- a) Making prediction
- b) Contextual guessing

- c) Making inferences
- d) Visualizing

**Item15:** What are the criteria that you follow in selecting idioms?

- a) Relevance to the contents of the lessons
- b) Cultural suitability
- c) Fitting students' language level
- d) Frequency in use
- e) Being up to date

Others.....  
.....

**Item 16:** What are the sources and teaching materials that you use to choose reading texts?

- a) Texts on idioms
- b) Curriculum books
- c) Internet

**Item 17:** Do you think that introducing texts to students will facilitate their comprehension of idioms? And why?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Whatever your answer please justify

.....  
.....

**Further suggestions**

**Item 18:** What can you suggest about teaching idiomatic expressions through reading texts in Foreign language classrooms?



.....

.....

.....

**Thank you for your time and efforts**

## Appendix C:

### Students' Test

**Task Required:** Try to determine the meaning of each idiom highlighted in bold as you

Read this short story.

Bob was **sick as a dog**. But after having fully recovered from his illness, Bob had a **new lease on life**. He took up work again, but his boss was a **pain in the neck**. After Work Bob used to go for a walk, which did him a world of good. Just like that, he Could **recharge his batteries**. After the walk he felt **fresh as a daisy**. After getting Home from his walk, Bob had dinner. He used to eat fast food for dinner, but he **Kicked that habit** and preferred to fix something himself. He knew “You are what you eat”.

**Tick the right answer**

#### 1. Sick as a dog:

Enthusiastic

Extremely ill

Not willing to work

#### 2. New lease on life

Chance to continue living

Disordered and diseased

Be on the road of recovery

#### 3. A pain in the neck:

Someone who is obnoxiously annoying

Someone who is delightful and charming

Someone who is overly authoritative

**4.Recharge his batteries:**

To rise vibrational energy

To rest and relax

To be anxious and disturbed

**5.Fresh as a daisy:**

Someone who is awfully tired

Someone who is fully energetic

Someone who is slightly worried or embarrassed

**6.Kicked that habit:**

To stop doing bad habits

To keep repeating the same habits

To be careless about everything

## Résumé

Le but de la recherche actuelle est d'étudier les attitudes des élèves et des enseignants envers l'efficacité d'améliorer la capacité des élèves à comprendre les expressions idiomatiques par la lecture de texte. Par conséquent, on suppose que l'utilisation du texte en lecture améliorerait la capacité des élèves à comprendre les expressions idiomatiques. Pour tester la validité de l'hypothèse, une méthode quantitative-descriptive est adoptée par l'administration de deux questionnaires ont été adressés et distribués à cent huit étudiants de première année Master et à treize professeurs du département de lettres et d'anglais, Université du 8 mai 1945-Guelma. En plus d'un test de compréhension des expressions idiomatiques pour vérifier l'efficacité de la lecture de texte dans le développement de la capacité des étudiants d'FLE à comprendre les expressions idiomatiques. Les résultats obtenus ont révélé que les deux participants avaient une attitude positive et étaient tout à fait d'accord sur l'utilité de la lecture de texte pour développer la capacité des apprenants d'FLE à comprendre les expressions idiomatiques. À la lumière de ces constatations, il est recommandé que les enseignants participent activement aux activités d'apprentissage idiomatique conçues pour les tâches de lecture.

*Mots-clés* : Expressions idiomatiques, Lecture de Texte, Compréhension des Expressions Idiomatiques.

## ملخص

الهدف من البحث الحالي هو التحقيق في مواقف الطلاب والاساتذة تجاه فعالية تحسين قدرة الطلاب على فهم التعبيرات الاصطلاحية من خلال قراءة النص. في المقابل، يُفترض أن استخدام قراءة النص من شأنه تحسين قدرة الطلاب على فهم المصطلحات. لاختبار صحة الفرضية، تم اعتماد طريقة وصفية كمية من خلال إدارة استبيانين تم توزيعهما على مائة وثمانية من طلاب السنة الأولى ماستر، وعلى ثلاثة عشر استاذا بقسم الآداب واللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة 08 ماي 1945. بالإضافة إلى اختبار استيعاب المصطلحات للتحقق من فاعلية قراءة النص في تنمية قدرة طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية على فهم التعبيرات الاصطلاحية. أظهرت النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها أن كلا المشاركين تلقيا موقفاً إيجابياً واتفقا بشدة على فائدة قراءة النص في تطوير قدرة متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية على فهم التعبيرات الاصطلاحية. بناءً على هذه النتائج، يوصى بضرورة إشراك المعلمين بنشاط في أنشطة التعلم الاصطلاحية المصممة لمهام مهارات القراءة.

*الكلمات المفتاحية: التعبيرات الاصطلاحية، قراءة النص، فهم المصطلحات.*