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Learning the English Culture through Idioms

A Case Study: English Learners of IRIS Private School in Tizi-Ouzou

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Dedication

To my mother,

To my brothers and sister,

To my sister in law,

To my nephew "Zakaria",

In the memory of my friend "Hakim Slimani",

To my binomial "Radia",

To all my friends.

Nawel.

To my parents,

Brothers and sister,

To my parents in law,

Brothers and sister in law,

To my husband "Nacer",

To my binomial "Nawel",

And all my "Friends".

Radia.

Acknowledgments

Abstract

The present study explores the effectiveness of learning English culture by studying idioms. Since foreign language learning requires also foreign culture learning, this investigation attempts to determine whether English learners at IRIS private school of Tizi-Ouzou acquire and understand the English culture through learning idiomatic expressions. This dissertation follows the Mixed Method Research, combining the quantitative and the qualitative methods. To gather data, two research instruments are used: students' questionnaire and classroom observation. The data analysis is done through statistical method relying on SPSS for the numerical data. As for the interpretation and the explanation of the results, it adopts the Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) using Conceptual Metaphor Theory of Lakoff and Johnson (1980). The results indicate that there is no explicit way of teaching culture, but learning idioms helps students acquiring the English culture.

Index terms: CMT, English culture, idioms, communication, EFL.

List of Abbreviations

- CMT: Conceptual Metaphor Theory

- EC: English culture

- EFL: English Foreign Language

- FC: Foreign Culture

- FL: Foreign Language

- Hp : Hypotheses

- ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence

- L2: Second Language

- P: Page

- QCA: Qualitative Content Analysis

- SD: Source Domain

- SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

- TC: Target Culture

- TD: Target Domain

- TL : Target Language

- Q: Question

List of Diagrams

List of Tables

List of Figures:

Table of Contents

a) pure idiom

b) literal idiom or transparent idiom

c) Semi idiom

Chapter Two: Research Design

Chapter Three: Findings

Chapter Four: Discussion of the Findings

General introduction

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Language is part of culture and it is a crucial means through which culture is transmitted. Learning a foreign language is not only concerned with the acquisition of the various rules of language (phonological, lexical and grammatical), and the learning of new expressions to be correctly used in communication, but it is also concerned with the understanding and the discovery of the norms and values of the target culture. Therefore, in order to avoid misinterpretations and misunderstanding while interacting with native speakers, foreign language learners should be flexible as much as possible especially concerning the adoption of the target culture.

Idioms can be considered as the print that reflects and mirrors a given society's culture, and as an efficient way of learning a new language and its norms. Through idiomatic expressions, foreign language learners aregiven an opportunityto discover and understand thesubtleties and secrets of the target culture. Idioms are motor engine powers that lubricate the ways and customs which the culture vehicles. In other words, Idioms appear as a valuable bridge, which relates foreign learners to the target culture. To be clearer, a sound link that is built between the two banks allows acquiring the norms, habits, and customs, in addition to social conventions of the target culture.

The English language is particularly full of idiomatic expressions, which are the product of cultural change and development of the English society. When English students learn a new idiom, they do not merely learn new words, but rather a new culture. Idioms disseminate a large amount of cultural factors, such as norms and values. They reflect cultural features that refer to customs and habits that characterize a specific community. Thus, students can learn a lot about the English culture through learning and studying idioms.

Moreover, idioms allow them to learn about different visions of the world. Thus, they acquire another perspective and vision of the world offered by the new culture. In addition to getting a better understanding of the hidden meaning of idioms, the students become accustomed to the richness of the culture and become familiar with thegiven language.

Among the various definitions of idioms are: (1) a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words; (2) a form of expression natural to a language, person, or group of people;(3) the dialect of a people or part of a country.(Oxford Dictionary Online: 2016)

It is not sufficient for the foreign learners to be fluent in the English language, and to have a good linguistic performance. To develop communicative competences, they should go beyond language, study its background, and acquire enough skills about its culture. For a successful communication, language use must be associated with different and appropriate cultural items, and idioms could be used as a valuable resource.

Teaching a foreign language should not only focus on the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing). It should also raise cultural awareness and develop the cultural knowledge of learners. Peck points that ''*without the study of culture, foreign language instruction is inaccurate and incomplete*'' (Peck, 1998:1).

Therefore,both learners and teachers of a foreign language need to be aware and understand cultural differences because as Brown indicates ''*people arenot all the same beneath the skin. There are real differences between groups and cultures*'' (Brown, 1994:167). Using authentic materials like idioms while teaching a foreign language can improve teaching and learning process of the foreign culture, in order to *feel, touch, smell, and see the foreign people and not just hear their language*" (Peck, 1998:3).

Idioms can be an effective material for teaching. They should be taught to FL learners,who need to understand native speakers' language and culture. Language cannot be separated from the culture in which it is deeply embedded. This is why foreign language teachers should not neglect teaching about the different impressions of the target culture, as Rivers rightly argues ''*language teachers cannot avoid conveying impressions of another culture whether they realize it or not*'' (Rivers, 1981: 315).

Learning idioms helps FL learners better communicate as well as learn about the foreign culture and society, where the target language evolves. Through the study of idiomatic expressions, students gain a knowledge and understanding of the culture that uses that language. Incidentally, learners can feel alienated from the native speakers' culture. This, occurs when the learner experiences a deep conflict between the values of his community and that of the target culture. As Marshall says: "*We become frustrated and perplexed when people misunderstand us and we fail to understand them…*" (Marshall, 1989:4).

Interculturality seems to be the remedy against learners' feeling of alienation and marginalisation. It is very important to have enough cultural knowledge about the target culture to be able to maintain an effective and accurate communication with different people belonging to different cultures.

Aims and significance of the study:

This study seeks to probe the effectiveness of using idiomatic expressions in FL teaching and the importance of integrating culture in FL teaching and learning. It attempts to explore the importance of learning English culture through idioms. It differs from the previous studiesundertaken in the department in that it focuses on using idiomatic expressions as material to develop foreign culture awareness in foreign language teaching and learning,

rather than other materials such as the use of literary texts. Besides, to the present state of our knowledge, no study has ever been conducted with this theme in private schools in Algeria.

Research questions and hypotheses

In order to investigate the issue, the following questions will be addressed:

1- To what extent are learners aware about the importance of integrating English Culture in the process of EL?

2- Do idioms contribute to the learners' understanding of English culture?

3- To what extent do teachers resort to idioms as a way of teaching English culture?

To answer these questions, we advance the following hypotheses:

Hp1: -Yes, learnersare aware of the importance of implementingEnglish culture in the process of English learning.

Hp2: -No, learners are not aware of the importance of implementingEnglish culture in the process of English learning.

Hp3: -Yes, idioms contribute to the learners understanding of English culture.

Hp4: -No, idioms do not contribute to the learners understanding of English culture.

Hp5: Yes, teachers resort to idioms as a way of teaching English culture

Hp6: No, teachers do not use idioms to teach about EC.

Research Techniques and Methodology

To carry out this investigation, we adopt a Mixed Method Research. It combines both quantitative and qualitativeresearch methods. The quantitative study, allowsus collectingappropriatedata and the qualitative study to analyse themunder a relevant theoretical approach named "Conceptual Metaphor Theory", developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their work *Metaphors We Live By (1980).*

Structure of the Dissertation

The present study follows the Traditional Complex Model. It involves four chapters, in addition to a General introduction and a General conclusion. The first chapter is entitled a review of the literature. It encompasses the definitions of the main concepts, in addition to the most important literature found on the topic, along with a brief descriptionof the framework to be followed through our research design. The second Chapter presentsthe research methodology chosen to investigate the topic.The third one deals with the Findings, where we present the results of our study. The last chapter isdevoted tothe discussion of the findings and the analysis of the results obtained from the investigation. Finally, a general conclusion closes the research.

Review of the literature

Review of the literature

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the definition of the most important concepts of the study, and to the review of the main literature in the field. It discusses the various definitions of culture and idioms, their necessity to be included in teaching and the theoretical framework and concepts relating to the object of our study.

As a matter of fact, idioms can be considered as a shortcut way of learning about the culture of a language. This work will attempt to shed light on the relationship that exists between idioms and culture, in addition to the important role that idioms play in helping foreign learners to understand the target culture. In order to investigate this relationship, we rely on the notion of conceptual metaphor, developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their work *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). Hence, most of this section reviews the literature concerning this theory.

I.1.Definition of culture

According to the Oxford English Dictionary Online (2016), culture is "*The ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society*". That is to say, Culture is everything that people, who belong to the same community share together. This may include all aspects of human life. Hammerly defines culture as "*the total way of life of a people*" (Hammerly, 1982: 513). In other words, culture is concerned with all the aspects of daily living, whether they consist in the way of speaking, the way of thinking, or the way of practicing religion, until the simplest and smallest details of people's daily life, (how to take coffee, traditional dishes, how to dress in each situation...etc.).

To Kramsch, culture is *"a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting"* (Kramsch, 1998: 10). This means that people, who share the same culture, share also the same perception of the world, the same beliefs and the same behavior. The perception of the external world that surrounds us is related to our culture. Culture determines and shapes our thoughts and our vision of the world. According to the strong version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, there are certain thoughts in one language, which individuals of another language cannot understand. They say, *"we can only perceive and think what our language allows us to perceive, think and say"*. (Whorf & Sapir, 1966:116). That is to say, the perception of the world depends on one's native language and culture. A view midly nuanced by Fodil who asserts « *…la culture se saisit de la langue pour construire du sens, et donc proposer une vision du monde* » (Fodil, 2015 :83-84). We translate it as follows: "…*Culture takes hold of language in order to create meaning and provide a vision of the world"*.

As instances of that, according to the Berber mythology when the weather is sunny and rainy at the same time; this is related to: *the celebration of the wolf's wedding (thamghra n wuccen).*Like other communities, the Berbers 'perception of the environment is related to their culture. A non-native might not understand what the expression means. Another example of cultural popular saying is (*thislithn'Wanzar).* Anzar is the Berber king of rain. A Berber mythology says that during a long drought, the autochthons offered a beautiful girl to Anzar to get rain in return. The bride turned into a rainbow. This is why the rainbow is called (*thislithn'Wanzar).* Beliefs and behaviors are also related to culture. To be a part of the mainstream, people should follow certain patterns of behavior imposed by the society.

Peck describes culture as *"the accepted and patterned ways of behavior of a given people".*(Peck, 1998:1). That is to say, to become widely accepted, and part of social life, people should follow a particular model of behavior which is inflicted by the community and

which the majority of the inhabitants follow. We mean by culture everything that people acquire from the society where they live. Besides customs and traditions, it encompasses taboos and prohibitions, in addition to rituals and ceremonials. Culture largely shapes and influences human thoughts and behaviors, it imposes a set of rules and codes that every member should follow and act accordingly within his society. Larson and Smalley describe culture as a blue print that guides the behavior of people and is incubated in family life (Larson & Smalley, 1972:39). In other words, culture imposes rules and codes to guide people's behavior, and dictate them the rules and the way they should follow, in addition to the manner they should adopt to behave well within the society. Furthermore, it is known that culture is essentially the heritage that is bequeathed from the ancestors. It is transmitted from generation to generation and it includes everything that people learn from an early age, such as language, religion, traditions and norms.

Moreover, Brown depicts culture as *the ideas, customs, skills, arts, tools which characterize a given group of people in a given period of time*. (Brown, 2007a: 122). This means that people who share the same culture are strongly related together to form one single group of folks. In this context, Brown relates culture to the "glue" that binds a group of people together (2007b). That is to say, people with the same cultural background are strongly bound to one another, to mold a culturally homogeneous group who share the same cultural values and social norms, in addition to the same language.

Language is specific to human beings; it is not only a tool for transmitting and acquiring culture, but also a means for expressing ideas and points of view. People's culture, their way of thinking, their way of perceiving and interpreting the external world, are reflected through the language. Besides, thanks to language, culture is transmitted through different generations. From mouth to ear, it rekindles the culture and allows it to grow and thrive. Language is a part of culture and cannot be separated from it. It preserves the language

from vanishing. Fodil warns « *Qu'on cesse de parler une langue et elle disparait aussitôt. Pareil pour la culture qui ne s'actualise que dans les faits et actes quotidiens.* » (Fodil, 2015 :92). We translate it as follow "*If we stop speaking a language it disappears immediately. The same holds for culture which is actualized in the daily acts and events*". Indeed, too many human languages have already disappeared and many might follow if they are not maintained through courageous linguistic policies.

I.1.1. Acculturation

Acculturation is the process of the adaptation to the foreign culture, by adopting its values and norms, in addition to the way of living, the way of dressing, the manner of thinking, and the way of speaking. According to Herskovits: *Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups* (Herskovits,1936:149).This means that acculturation occurs when two or more different cultures come into contact, this happens when one culture succeeds to influence the other, so that the foreigner adopts the foreign culture by adopting its values and its norms.

Changing the way of being, adopting the language, familiarizing with foods and wearing new clothes are the things that the acculturated person can undertake. Marden and Meyer explain, *"Acculturation" is "the change in individuals whose primary learning has been in one culture and who take over traits from another culture"* (Marden & Meyer, 1968:36).The danger of a total acculturation occurs when a people totally succumbs to that of another, especially a more powerful conqueror. The native Amerindians who adopt English and American culture to the detriment of their own is an example of an absolutely dramatic acculturation.

I.2.culture and language

Though one may not share this extreme view, it should be mentioned that Sapir strongly bonds language to culture. He says that *"Language does not exist apart from culture, that is, from the socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs that determines the texture of our lives"* (Sapir, 1921: 207). In other words, People create words in relation to their environment. If a particular word does not exist in their language, it means that it does not exist in their culture too. Thus cultures, norms, thoughts, beliefs are determined by the language, and in their turn determine and shape people's lives.

Conversely, it can be affirmed that there is a complementary relationship between language and its culture. Bruner states when speaking about language that "*although meanings are "in the mind," they have their origins and their significance in the culture in which they are created*" (Bruner, 1996: 3). That is to say, people do not create words to express things that do not exist in their culture. Language meaning has its roots and origins in the culture from which it evolves. More than that, Hall defines language as "*one of the dominant threads in all cultures*" (Hall, 1981: 36). This means that Language is not only a part of culture, but also it could be considered as the most important aspect of a given culture, since culture is acquired and transmitted thanks to language.

I.2.1. Teaching English culture through language

Because of the importance of culture and the complementary relationship that exists between language and culture, it would seem crucial to integrate it while teaching language. Brown states that "*A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture*" (Brown, 1994:165). That is to say, language and culture are so closely intertwined that they cannot be separated from one another. Hence, their

complementary and mutually reinforcing nature should be taken into consideration to prevent losing the significance and the values of both language and culture.

Duranti defines culture as *"something learned, transmitted, passed down from one generation to the next, through human actions, often in the form of face-to-face interaction, and, of course, through linguistic communication"* (Duranti ,1997: 24). People learn culture thanks to language, it means that they acquire culture from their ancestors, then in turn they follow the tradition by transmitting the values of their culture to the following generations by means of human actions like (dances, sports, drawings), or interaction, in addition to communication. It would seem clear that it is not enough to teach English alone, but the whole process must be accompanied by a thorough account for its culture. Teaching English without its culture could appear ambiguous (meaningless symbol) for EFL students. Politzer explains *"If we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols or symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning"* (Pulitzer, 1959: 100-101).This means that since culture is carried by language, it would be irrational to teach one without the other.Teaching any given language instruction within the classroom should include its culture, because as Peck states "*Without the study of culture, foreign language instruction is inaccurate and incomplete*" (Peck, 1989:1). In other words, if language were not taught within its cultural context, it would be considered as trivial and meaningless.

As can be noticed, the common point defended by the mentioned scholars is that culture is an important part of language teaching, which teachers should not neglect while teaching a foreign language. In the same vein, Kramsch voices that the learner needs to be familiar with how "*native speakers think and react*" (Kramsch, 1983:445). In other words, being familiar with the FL makes students able to maintain an authentic conversation in real

life situation. Furthermore, English language learners ought to accept the target culture, and have to be aware about the differences that exist between their own culture and the target one.

Hinojosa asserts in her turn that "*in foreign language learning, knowledge of linguistic structures alone is not enough; we also have to understand the way of life of a foreign culture and the individuals living it*" (Hinojosa, 2000:112). That is to say, understanding the values of the target culture is an important part of the process of foreign language learning. Culture includes the way people think and interpret words and the world. There are words, attitudes, or actions that can sound rude for some people according to their culture, but for others it could sound very natural. For example, in Kabyle culture, it is impolite and offensive to look at someone in the eye when talking, especially if the other person is from the opposite sex, contrary to the United States where eye contact is very important. In American culture, if a person looks away and does not keep eye contact, this means that he/she is not interested in the conversation.

EFL learners cannot master the target culture if they do not understand its norms, and natives' way of looking at the world. In order to integrate a given society, it is crucial to assimilate the rules and the norms of its culture without losing view of one's own.

I.3. Definition of idioms

According to The English Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, an idiom is ''*a group of words whose meaning is different from the meanings of the individual words*''. This means that idioms are a set of single words that are linked together to form an idiom. The meaning of the idiom cannot be deduced from the meanings of the individual words, but it should be understood as a whole expression. For example, in an expression such as: *Rain cats and dogs* (raining very heavily), people could understand each single word from the sentence,

but it does not help them to deduce the real meaning unless they master the language as well as the natives do.

Idioms are a cultural heritage that has a long history. They are transmitted through generations, and contribute to the richness of the cultural heritage. Makkai points out that the concept of 'idiom' has been in use since antiquity. (Makkai, 1972: 23).In other words, idioms are as old as time because they are ancient culture heritage. Makkai states that the study of idiomaticity has been left widely untouched in scholarly studies, which makes it one of the most under-explored areas of the language. (ibid). That is to say, idioms have been neglected by the scholarly studies,and remediation ought to be provided to cater for this neglect.

Cooper claims, "*An idiom can have a literal meaning, but its alternate figurative meaning must be understood metaphorically*" (Cooper, 1998). As an instance of that, the expression *behind the scenes* can be understood literally, it can be interpreted (at the back of the scenes of a theatre or a circus). Instead, it has another hidden meaning, which cannot be understood semantically, but rather metaphorically which is (in secret). Another example, the idiom*A little bird told me* cannot be understood by the sum of its parts as (speaking to a bird). It stands for the meaning that (someone has learned information from an unknown or a secret source).

An idiom is a "*group of words in a fixed order having a particular meaning, different from the meanings of each word understood on its own."* (The Cambridge international dictionary of English, 1995: 701). This definition has the advantage of explaining that, unlike non-idiomatic expressions, idioms are invariable i.e. we cannot change the words or their grammatical structure. For example, in the idiom *let the cat out of the bag* that means (to reveal a secret), the word 'cat' cannot be replaced by the word 'dog' even if they have the

same function of a noun. Thus, idioms are fixed expressions, which are not changeable, and this needs to be taught in class.

I.3.1. Types of Idioms

According to Fernando, there are three different groups of idioms:

Pure idioms have a purely figurative meaning; non-literal meaning that is to say the meaning cannot be understood literally. Semi-idioms have one literal meaning and one non-literal meaning. Literal idioms where the words have the same meaning as the expression. Both express the same semantic meaning. (Fernando, 1996: 35-36).

In other words, the types of idioms can be explained as follow:

a) **pure idiom:**

The expression *to be in someone else's shoes* is a pure idiom. i.e. (to be in someone else's situation), it is difficult to know exactly what the expression *being in someone's shoes* means. It has a non-literal or idiomatic meaning. It is impossible to be in the shoes of somebody, but it is a figurative meaning of being in his situation. Another example of pure idioms is: *To kick the bucket,* i.e. (to die), its meaning cannot be derived from the meanings of *kick* and *bucket*. It has a figurative meaning, which has no relation with the words *kick* or *bucket* in their literal sense. Moreover, the expression *to burn one's boat* means (to make retreat impossible)*,* is a pure idiom which has its origins in Tarik Ben Ziad's invasion of Spain, when he burnt all his boats to compel his soldiers face the enemy.

b) literal idiom or transparent idiom:

Examples of the literal idiom or transparent idiom: *To see the light* means (to understand). Furthermore: *come to the point* that means (say what is important very quickly).

c) Semi idiom:

Semi idiom has a part with a literal sense, and another part with a figurative sense i.e. in the same expression, we can find in one-part literal meaning, and in the other part a non-literal meaning. Example: *To know the ropes* means (to know how a particular job should be done),*to pass back* means (to pass responsibility).

Idioms are culture specific expressions. The English language is full of idiomatic expressions. They can be hard to be understood by foreign learners, because of their hidden and figurative meaning. Native speakers use idiomatic expressions to say something but to mean something else. This is why it can be difficult for foreign learners to understand the exact meaning of idioms. For that reason, teachers should teach idioms explicitly and draw the learners' attention to their figurative meaning. Besides, idiomatic expressions should be taught in context to focus student' attention to the general context and the situation in which idioms can be used.

Crystal explains that *the use of different kinds of figurative language is found not only in literature, but also in a broad variation of fields such as advertising, journalism, politics and religion* (Crystal, 1995:421). This means that idioms can be considered as an important part of their culture, since native speakers use them in everyday communication not only in poems or novels, but in other fields of the daily life as religion, politics, media. The popularity of idioms helps and contributes to their propagation. Crystal also observes that figurative language cannot only be studied in different texts, but also in various sorts of everyday

conversation. In other words, people use idioms in daily life interactions with friends, family, at work, during holidays.

Ambrose claims that *Idioms are common both in written and spoken language, as well as in both formal and informal contexts* (Ambrose: 181). That is to say, idioms could be used both with friends and families, in addition to schools and administrations. Cooper estimates that speakers (and writers) use *about 1.08 novel figures of speech and 4.08 idioms per minute* (Cooper, 1998: 255), suggesting that *over a lifetime of 60 years, a person would use about 20 million idioms* (ibid). In addition to their use in everyday life, idioms are also ubiquitous in the classroom discourse. According to Cooper, they occupy the second place when the frequency of figurative expressions was examined in the teachers' speech. In Cooper's words, *by eighth grade 11.5 percent of a teacher's utterances, or about one out of ten, contained idioms* (Cooper, 1998:257).Such an extensive use testifies to the popularity of idioms and the necessity of their integration in learning tasks.

I.3.3. Teaching English culture through idioms

When teachers teach an idiom, they also teach a culture, because of the large amounts of values and customs that idioms vehicle. Besides, learning idioms makes the mastery of language easier, and helps to better understand the target language and culture. The learners may feel comfortable when using English and could be able to establish an effective communication with native speakers. Stern distinguishes between three situations in which the teaching of culture can take place:

> 1) Culture is taught in language courses, where students are physically and often psychologically removed from the reality of the second culture. In this case, culture teaching provides background and context and helps the learners visualize the reality. This seems to be the most common situation for teaching culture in many countries where there is no access to the target language's native speakers.2). Culture is taught in a situation, which prepares a student for a visit or work in a new environment. Even though

the student is physically far away from the culture, he/she is psychologically better prepared and also more motivated to learn.3). Culture is taught in the cultural setting (e.g., to immigrants, students studying in a target language community). (Stern, 1992:223).

That is to say, that foreign language learners need to be put in a favourable environment to learn about the second culture. Teachers should help them to acquire a general impression of culture, they should teach the culture in situation and in context. Learners have to know how to use language in each situation, for instance how to apologize, how to congratulate, how to ask for something. Culture teaching could provide some notions of the target culture, and it could seem to be the best way of teaching about the target culture, especially in countries where it is hard to get in contact with native speakers, as is the case in Algeria.

Lakoff suggests that idioms are motivated by conceptual mappings: "*what it means for an idiom to 'be natural' or 'to make sense' is that there are independently existing elements of the conceptual system that links the idiom to its meaning*" (Lakoff, 1987:449). For instance, the idiomatic expression *ideas are food* permits us to understand one kind of thing (ideas) in terms of another (food) as Lakoff & Johnson explain "*in essence, a means of understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another*" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 42). The independent element, which links the idiom to its meaning, is (digestion) or (hunger). *Ideas are food* means that learning is like nutrition. It is a metaphor that thoughts are like food (anyone eager to learn). Using metaphor helps to better understand the idioms' meaning. The common relationship that exists between the concept *ideas are food* makes strong connection between the idiom and its meaning. Metaphors bring the real meaning closer to the people's mind, and help to better assimilate the interpretation.

I.4. Understanding idioms

Idioms could be considered as the most difficult items of language faced by language learners. Idioms are expressions, which consist of grammatical structures, but their meaning requires extra knowledge on the part of the reader. That is to say, he establishes a meaning in his mind different from the one composed by the sum of the words which compose the sentences (which consist of grammatical elements like nouns and verbs), or what is called the proposition. Consequently, due to the figurative nature of idioms, the listener draws a wrong picture in his mind, and becomes confused as Bromly writes, *"idioms add confusion and difficulty to language learning"* (Bromly, 1984: 272). It means that, if the listener does not know any information about the context or the cultural background in which the idiom is uttered it would be a total bias for him. Thus, it would be difficult to communicate with native speakers, and integrate into their society.

Cooper also agrees 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*" (Cooper, 1998: 259). Therefore, the idiomatic awareness should be developed during the process of language learning not only in learning academic language, it also includes watching TV shows and movies.

I.4.1. Cultural components in idioms

As mentioned previously, culture plays a crucial role in understanding linguistic expressions and giving out cultural knowledge. Teaching the English language should focus on the perception of the world through culture. Especially, the role of culture occurs when comparing idioms from different languages because every language conveys its own culture, its specific traditions and values. Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen identify five types of cultural aspects underlying figurative units.

1) Figurative elements:

The first type consists of *figurative elements* underlying *cultural knowledge*. It includes all types of social experiences and behavior as well as the social interaction within a community to understand the behaviors, traditions and attitudes of different people. For example, people from different cultures perceive colors differently. We can take the example of the English Idiom *to be green with envy*, which means (to be jealous). In comparing this idiom to other cultures, we find equivalents like German *to be yellow with envy*, or French *être noir de jalousie.*

Thus, these idioms reflect people's attitudes towards these colors. People from different cultures perceive fruits differently too, if we take the English *Apple of his eyes* that means (his favourite one), we find an equivalent in French language *prunelle de ses yeux.* Therefore, the two cultures have different cultural usage of fruits.

2) Material culture:

Figurative units of the second type contain *material culture*. That is to say elements and image which belong to the environment, or the artifacts which are specific to a given culture. For example, the term 'Rosetta Stone' which is an artifact found in Rosetta in Egypt in 1799, deciphered by Champollion and now placed in the British Museum, has been used in many idiomatic expressions to describe a situation of solving a problem or a puzzle. According to Online Oxford Dictionary, it is *"something, especially a discovery that helps people to understand or find an explanation for a mystery or area of knowledge that not much was known about"*. Its text is written in three scripts: hieroglyphic, demotic, and Greek. The deciphering of the writings has helped archaeologists to understand and translate many other ancient Egyptian texts. For these reasons, the word is used to speak about something that helps people to find explanations for what is difficult to understand. For Example: *"The*

similar values may be a Rosetta stone that will serve to allow a common language to emerge regardless of where either group is, or is perceived to be, on the political spectrum."(Oxford dictionary, online).

3) Textual dependence

The third type of figurative units is called *textual dependence*. It includes the literature of that culture as *historical events, quotations* or *allusions* from authors and texts. For example, the idiom *Send Owls to Athens* originated from the Aristophanes satirical comedy *'Birds'* (414 BC, Greek 'Ornithes, verse 301). This means (to do something useless like bringing owls to Athens while it is full of owls).

4) Figurative units:

The fourth type deals with *figurative units* which are related to fictional domains, including *ancient beliefs*, and *ways of perceiving the world* such as *religion, superstitions*, and *mythology;* alternatively, the *spiritual life* of the people of a given community. An instance of that is the idiom *to eat the liver*, which means (to be very angry). It is interpreted within the ancient Greek pre-scientific myth of Prometheus. Zeus was angry and punished him by sending him an eagle to eat his liver.

5) Cultural signs:

Type five deals with *cultural signs*, the cultural symbols of a society. In this type, the significant cultural knowledge is mainly expressed in one single word and not the completely figurative unit. One can recognize the relationship between the literal and figurative readings only by the semiotic knowledge one has about the symbols and their meaning in that culture. There is, for example, an idiom which says a*s wise as an owl*. In the Greek culture, an 'owl' is a symbol of intelligence and intellectuality; it is the symbol of the goddess of wisdom.

(Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, 2005Cited in Jezikoslovlje, 2005: 7-35). Contrary to the Kabyle culture, in which the owl represents doom, darkness and death.

I.5. The importance of teaching culture within EFL classroom

Brown argues that "*Whenever you teach a language, you also teach a complex system of cultural custom, values and ways of thinking, feeling and acting*" (Brown, 2000:64). This means that to be communicatively competent, it is crucial for teachers to include teaching cultures in addition to teaching language. Peterson and Coltrane state that *the mastery of language by students occurs only if they learn both its linguistic and its cultural norms* (Peterson and Coltrane, 2003:1-2), that is to say, English language learners should be able to maintain an authentic conversation in real life situation, outside the classroom.

According to Tomalin and Stempleski, the goals of cultural instruction teaching of culture should help students:

> To develop an understanding of the fact that people exhibit culturally-conditioned behaviors; to develop an understanding that social variables such as age, sex, social class, and place of residence influence the way in which people speak and behave; to become more aware of conventional behavior in common situations in the target culture; to increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language; to develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the target culture, in terms of supporting evidence; to develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture; to simulate students' intellectual curiosity about the target culture, and to encourage empathy towards its people. (Tomalin and Stempleski,1993:7-8).

In other words, the aim of culture instruction is to make students aware that people behave differently, according to their culture. All over the world, society imposes set of rules to follow. Gender and age differences influence people's way of speaking and acting. Moreover, people belonging to different social classes speak and behave differently too. For instance, the duchess of Cambridge Catherine Middleton was obliged to learn good manners of well behaving in order to be accepted within the royal family. Moreover, when interacting with

native speakers, it is important for learners to know how to behave in different situations. For example, Japanese culture considers burping at the table as a very bad manner. British culture considers that eating with fingers is inadmissible, (even pizza, chicken). For British culture, it is crucial to use knife and fork while eating.

Furthermore, teachers should explain that the same words could have different connotations. For example, (buddy, friend, mate) all these words mean the same thing, that is to say they have the same denotation (friendship) but they have different connotations, as friend is formal, buddy is more familiar and informal, mate is more used for a surface relationship (classmate, fellow worker). Learners should pay attention to the different connotations of sentences or words. To sum up, learners need to know that there are cultures, which are different from their own. To integrate the TC, they ought to gather enough information about it.

I.5.1. Communicative Competence

According to Online Oxford Dictionary, Communicative Competence is *"person's ability to communicate information and ideas in a foreign language"*, in other words, to use appropriately the rules of a particular language in a particular situation.

Hymes says:

> I should take competence as the general term for the capability of a person. Competence is dependent on both (tacit) knowledge and (ability for) use. … The specification of ability for use as part of competence allows for the role of no cognitive factors, such as motivation, as partly determining competence. In speaking of competence, it is especially important not to separate cognitive from affective.(Hymes, 1972: 282-283).

In other words, competence can be considered as the term which expresses the capability of using the language effectively. Competence includes both the implicit (tacit) knowledge and the ability of using the knowledge. Ability, as a part of competence, is concerned with the

non-cognitive factors such as motivation. Competence encompasses the cognitive part that is consisted of the knowledge, rational and logical thought, and the affective part which is concerned with the feelings, emotions and sensations.

Saville Troike discusses what communicative competence involves in the following terms:

> Communicative competence entails knowing not only the language code or the form of language, but also what to say and how to say it appropriately in any given situation. It deals with the social and cultural knowledge that speakers are presumed to have which enables them to use and interpret linguistic forms. It also includes knowledge of who may speak or may not speak in certain settings, when to speak and when to remain silent, how to talk to persons in different statuses and roles, what nonverbal behaviors are appropriate in various contexts, what the routines for turn taking in conversation, how to ask for and give information, how to request, how to offer or decline assistance or cooperation, how to give commands and the like (SavilleTroike,1996:363).

This long definition has the advantage of showing that knowing the form of a language is good, but it is not enough. To be communicatively competent, knowing the functions of language, remains one of the most important aspects of language learning. It is important to know how to use the appropriate words and expressions in a given situation, and applying them in the appropriate way. Spitzberg & Cupach precise that *"The term communicative competence often applies a focus on appropriate symbolic behavior manifested in social and interpersonal contexts"* (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1989:6). It means that it is important to know how to ask for something, or how to apologize, how to express feelings and points of views, and how and when the use of formal or informal speech is necessary.

I.5.2. Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

ICC is the competence to understand various cultures than our own and to be able to interact and to communicate effectively in a foreign language with native speakers belonging to different cultures. It includes also the capacity to understand their way of being, their

behaviors and their culture. Moreover, it is the ability to understand and to accept that each society has its own way of perceiving or viewing the world, and that the perception is closely related to the culture. It means that, the way of perceiving the world is related and determined by our own culture. Stern distinguishes different basic principles of the ICC "*the acquisition of cultural awareness, understanding, knowledge, and to a certain extent, cultural 'proficiency'*" (Stern, 1983:127).In other words, cultural proficiency occurs when people are aware about the foreign culture, by understanding it and knowing its norms and values. Language vehicles a large amount of cultural perspectives. Thus, when teachers teach English, they should also transmit values and customs of the target culture.

I.6. Using authentic Materials to teach about culture

To attract learners' interest and to facilitate the learning of English and its culture, it would be better if teachers use authentic materials such as magazines, videos, or pictures while teaching. Smith states that the use of realia "*can enhance linguistic and cultural comprehensibility, which are both prerequisites for real language learning*" (Smith, 1997:1). As instances of that, using realia improves the learners' understanding of the culture and language, because both of them are preconditions for language learning. He adds in this context that Virtual Realia can improve the quality and availability of culturally-based, authentic …materials. It was designed with the belief that studying a foreign language is a means to a greater end—communicating meaningfully with another culture and its people (Smith, 1997:4). That is to say, using virtual realia such as videos which may contain native speaker's conversation during the class may motivate the learners and help them to be successful communicators with native speakers.

Computers and internet are also authentic materials that could play an important role in learning a new language and its culture because, as Hackett points out the internet

"provides a direct, immediate link to the target culture" or can serve as *"a multimedia mirror on the target culture"* (Hackett, 1996:3). In other words, the web makes the world as a small town. Internets allow us to learn about different cultures all over the world, without even moving from our seats. Just a click on a link and we are ready for the discovery of new cultures.

Stern (1992) presents eight approaches and techniques to teaching culture, we need only three to be included and they are as follows:

- Creating an authentic classroom environment (techniques include, for example, and exhibitions of realia);

- Providing cultural information (for example, their way of speaking, way to dress...).

- Making use of cultural community resources (for example, when a foreign language learning takes place in the target-language community, the everyday environment can be used as a resource). In other words, using authentic realia (videos, songs) providing students with information about the target culture (language, food), using every day's environment as a resources that is to say how to talk in different situations (how to apologize, how to ask for something) are all techniques that teachers should follow to teach culture. In our research, a special interest will be devoted to check whether idioms are used in the classroom as authentic materials to teach about foreign culture.

I.7. Culture and metaphors

Lakoff states that Metaphor *"is a cross domain mapping in the conceptual system"* (Lakoff, 1993: 203). This means using one concept in relation with another concept, or expressing one concept in term of another one which is different. For instance: the famous metaphor *all the world is a stage,* Shakespeare compares between (world) and (stage).

According to him, the world is like a huge theatre and humans are the actors. Each one has a role to play.Lakoff and Johnson state that:

> The concepts that govern our thoughts are not just matters of the intellect. They also govern our everyday functioning, down to the most mundane details. Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:3).

In other words, our thoughts are not only controlled by our intellectual level, or solely our intelligence. They are also influenced and shaped by metaphor. Metaphor occurs at the level of thinking, and everything in our life is related to it. It influences our perception of life until the smallest details of our everyday life and it shapes our relationship with other people. They add that: "*Metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature*." (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 3). This means that our thoughts, ideas, and our behavior are metaphorical by nature.

I.7.1.The Theoretical Framework

To tackle the issue of learning English culture through idioms, we refer to the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), known also as Cognitive Metaphor Theory by George Lakoff & Johnson (1980). Lakoff suggests that idioms are motivated by conceptual mappings: "*what it means for an idiom to 'be natural' or 'to make sense' is that there are independently existing elements of the conceptual system that links the idiom to its meaning*" (Lakoff, 1987: 449).It means that Metaphor influences our perception of reality; because our culture is present in each experience, we live, we link all events to our culture. Lakoff & Johnson claim, "*All experience is cultural through and through [...] we experience our 'world' in such a way that our culture is already present in the very experience itself*" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 57), that is to say, our culture is ubiquitous in all the experiences we go through. It is

steeped in our thoughts and it controls our vision of the world. Therefore, we perceive the world through the culture's glasses.

I.7.2. Definition of Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), known also as Cognitive Metaphor Theory was developed by the two researchers Lakoff and Johnson, in 1980. With their publication of *Metaphors We Live By*, the theory became widely known. The fundamental principle of CMT is that metaphor occurs at the level of thinking. Technically, it links two conceptual domains: The "Source domain" (SD), and the "Target domain" (TD). The SD is the "concrete one", and the TD is refers to the "abstract domain". The SD consists of literal words and expressions, which represent abstract concepts, and words that are used figuratively. The TD is the metaphorical meaning that we try to understand. Therefore, in CMT, we do not deal with words literally or semantically, but focus on their intended meanings. Thus, this theory can be applied to idioms because they are expressions which contain words from the source and the target domains. That is to say, they are made of concrete words from the SD which should be understood figuratively in the TD.

Proponents of Conceptual Metaphor Theory argue that thought should have priority over language. To be clear, CM aims first at understanding the cognitive representations hidden behind the figurative language, and how CM manage to form target domains in terms of source domains. Lakoff and Johnson consider these representations as being conceptual and metaphorical. They explain this phenomenon in their own words: *"The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of things in terms of another. The concept is metaphorically structured, and consequently, the language is metaphorically structured"* (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:5)*,* for instance *Life is a Journey,* (travel) or (trip) do not take a long time, and it is not lifelong. Life is compared to a journey because it moves fast

too.Therefore, what is important in a metaphor is to understand a meaning from concepts, which have another literal meaning.

Mainly in CMT, Lakoff and Johnson put stress on non-literal language, and find that figurative expressions, which are related to a given thought, are organized by metaphorical structures. They mean that a speaker is at first a conceptualizer i.e. the speaker speaks about one concept but means another concept. Thus, the conceptual metaphor approach is a very clarifying tool for understanding the hidden meaning. For instance, when analyzing the idiom *Acoustic perfume* which means (very noisy), in terms of source domain, the expression shows that the word 'perfume' can be perceived as a sound that we can hear. This seems not logical and biased for a non-native speaker without any cultural knowledge of the target culture. In terms of the target domain, the targeted concept is 'noise', used in a metaphoric structure. As it is claimed by Lakoff and Turner (1989) "*metaphors hide aspects of the target domain*", Lakoff and Johnson say that there is no direct way of perceiving abstract notions and we cannot talk about them without metaphor. They cannot be understood without concrete notions or experience. For example, *love is war,* (love) is an abstract notion that we relate to a concrete concept, which is (war).

To understand better the issue of source and target domains, we can look at *'figure*1'; it explains the relationship between words, metaphor , and figurative meaning.
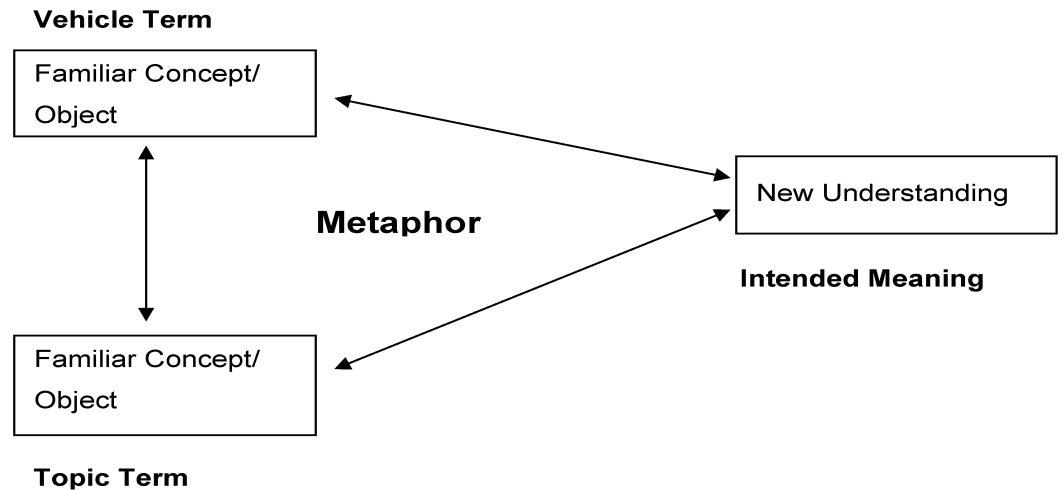
Figure 1. Metaphorical paradigm (adapted from Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

The metaphor is transmitted by the vehicle concept, which is concrete, and the topic object, which are joined semantically to form a metaphor. Through source and target domains, we deduce the meaning meant by the metaphor and form a new different understanding. For example, the expression *Sarah is a nice bit of crumpet*, syntactically, the sentence makes sense because it is grammatically correct. In other words, *Sarah* is the subject, *is a nice bit of crumpet* is the predicate, but in reality; Sarah is a person not a bit of crumpet. Thus, the listener deduces that the expression is a metaphor. If a listener or reader knows what crumpet is, he would probably understand the figurative meaning that (Sarah is beautiful and delicious), because *crumpet* is a kind of cake originated from the United Kingdom. So, the cultural knowledge is very important to understand figurative expressions.

I.7.3. Conceptual metaphor and semantic motivation of idioms

Lakoff and Johnson established three fundamental types of conceptual metaphors: *structural, orientational*, and *ontological.*

a) **Structural metaphor and idiom:**

Many idioms are based on metaphor. Lakoff and Johnson state that: *Metaphorical concepts like TIME IS A RESOURCE are called structural metaphors as they allow us to use a highly structured and definite concept like RESOURCE to structure a less definite or abstract one like TIME* (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 65).For instance, *time is money*, proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), (Money) structures something abstract which is (time). Money can be seen and touched, however, no one knows how time looks like, it cannot be seen neither touched. Therefore, we use a concrete concept (money) to structure an abstract thing which is (time). A structural metaphor is a conceptual metaphor, to use one concept to structure another one. So one concept is used to talk about another concept, which is different. (One concept that expresses and means another concept).

b) **Orientational Metaphor and Idioms**

Orientational metaphor does not use one concept to structure another one but it organizes "*a whole system of concepts with respect to one another*" and "*Spatial orientations arise from the fact that we have bodies of the sort we have and that they function as they do in our physical environment*" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:14). That is to say, we can move our bodies and change orientation up or down in our environment.

The central concepts emerging from this concern orientation like (UP-DOWN IN-OUT FRONT-BACK NEAR-FAR). (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 57).The metaphorical concept Happy is up, can be supported by the assumption that an erect posture means self-confidence, well-being and happiness, while a bent position means the opposite (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:15). We choose to think in orientational metaphorical concepts to conceptualize emotion, for instance of that, *happy is up* to express happiness, we may say *sad is down* to express sadness.

The concept WARM-COLD can serve as another example. AFFECTION IS WARMTH is grounded in our physical perception that we prefer a warm surrounding to a cold one (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), for instance (WARM-COLD), when someone is happy and satisfied he could say, "It warms my heart". However, the expression *he is cold and distant person* could be used it to describe someone with whom we do not feel comfortable.

Up/down orientations are examples to illustrate how orientational metaphors can motivate idiomatic expressions. GOOD IS UP; BAD IS DOWN. Lakoff& Johnson mention:

"*The physical basis for personal well-being: happiness, health, life, and control-the things that principally characterize what is good for a person-are all up*" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 16). Let us look at the examples of idioms motivated by this orientational metaphor. (1) Things are *looking up* (it means that things are getting better). (2) It is polite to *yield up* your seat on the bus to an old lady (to make a good action). (3) The man has *fallen on evil days* since he lost his job (he has troubles and problems). (4) He lives *down and out*(he has nothing neither job nor money). (5) *Gone up* in the world! (To succeed).

c) Ontological Metaphor and Idioms

Ontology is the nature of existence and being in the world. It tries to explain the relationship between human beings and the external word. Lakoff & Johnson say, "*Each of us is a container, with a bounding surface and an in-out orientation. We project our own in-out orientation onto other physical objects that are bounded by surfaces*" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 29). In other word, each individual is like a recipient surrounding by surface that separate him from the rest of the world. Individuals interpret their experiences in term of substances and entities, that is to say, they relate and interpret abstract things like feelings, emotions, and ideas as something concert like human, substances. Examples of Container or ontological metaphor:

He *fell **in** love* with her (another physical aspect). *She cannot get the song **out** of her head* (she did not stop humming a tune). Ontological or idioms have an *inside* and an *outside*. For instance: He **fell *in* love** with her. He is ***out* of sight.**

Love and sight are abstract concepts but we see them as concrete ones thanks to the conceptual metaphor. Containment metaphor is an ontological metaphor which have an inside and outside.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the important concepts related to the study; it comprises a brief introduction, definition of culture, the goals and the importance of cultural instruction in the EFL classroom. Besides, it provides the definition of idiom, type of idioms and their importance in understanding the foreign natives' culture. Furthermore, it has discussed the necessity of teaching English culture through language and idioms via authentic realia and materials. Finally, general description of CMT and of the theoretical framework proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) has been introduced and adopted to be relied upon for the analysis of our results.

Research design

Introductions

This chapteris devoted tothe methodological part of the study. It contains the description of the techniques and procedures of data collection and data analysis used in our research. The research design is divided into two sections. The first one is called procedures of data collection, it deals with the description of the research method, the participants involved in our research and the tools used to collect data. The second section is named procedures of data analysis. It undertakes the interpretation of the results and states the framework (approach) to be used, the framework developed by Lakoff and Johnson in 1980, which accounts two conceptual domains at the level of thinking, Source domain and Target domain.

II.1. Procedures of Data Collection

II.1.1. Research Method

In order to conduct the study, we rely on the Mixed Research Method. It is a combination between the qualitative and the quantitative researches. The quantitative method permitted us to gather information and data. The qualitative method allowed us to analyse the collected data and helped us to reach answers to the research questions and confirm or refute the validity of the hypotheses. As it has been explained by Creswell et al *"Mixed methods research, the research paradigm that encourages the combined use of qualitative and quantitative research elements to answer complex questions''* (Creswell, 2003: 6). It means that the descriptive qualitative research method permits us to analyse the data gathered from quantitative research.

II.1.2. Participants

The participants involved in our study are students of English language at IRIS private school of Tizi-ouzou. This sample was not chosen randomly. It targets students of English in a private school because idioms are frequently used in their course book 'New Headway' and they are therefore highly exposed to the use of idioms. The total number of English students at IRIS school is forty (40) students from different age and interests. They are divided into different groups according to the level of learning.

II.1.3. Data Collection Instruments

In order to gather data needed to our research, we used two (2) main research instruments. We designed questionnaires for English students at IRIS private school ofTizi-Ouzou, and we also conducted a classroom observation during courses.

a) STUDENTS' Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a data collection instrument for gathering information about a specific topic. It contains a set of questions addressed for a number of people, which permits to collect a considerable amount of data in a short period of time.

Brown defines a questionnaire as *''any written tool that contains a series of questions and statements which the respondents answer either by using their own words or choosing the answers from those they are provided with''* (Brown, 2001:6).

The questionnaire we administered consists of twelve (12) questions arranged in two (2) sections. The first section is about students' attitudes towards learning English culture. It consists of (5) questions including multiple-choice, and open-ended questions. The second one is about their knowledge about idioms and their attitudes toward implementing them in

the process of English language learning. This section is composed of seven (7) questions, the majority are open-ended. This gave the opportunity to our participants to express their own point of views. The questionnaire was distributed on June 18-25 2016 to (40) students and we received (30) answers.

However, using only a questionnaire as a data collection tool may have lacks and drawbacks. The respondents can be subjective while answering. So, in order to get more reliable results, we adopted another tool which is classroom observation as a second research instrument.

b) Classroom Observation

The second tool we used in our study is classroom observation. Classroom observation is a research technique used by the researcher to record the instructor's teaching practices and students' actions within the classroom. The latter permitted us to collect concrete and valid data obtained from a natural context. In our investigation, we used a structured classroom observation. We developed a checklist of sixteen (16) items to be observed, which are related to teaching English culture and learning idioms. These observations took place from June 11. 2016 to July 02. 2016.We attended different classes with different levels. Due to time limitation we conducted only twenty (20) observations instead of twenty-five (25).

II.2. Procedures of Data Analysis

The collected data from the students' questionnaire and the classroom observation are analyzed and interpreted by different procedures of data analysis. The quantitative data are analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), while the qualitative

data are interpreted and analyzed in relation to aspects of Conceptual Metaphor theory alongwith QCA (Qualitative Content Analysis). Another aspect in this study taken into consideration is the students 'differences in terms of level and attitude towards learning idioms and English culture.

II.2.1. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

In order to analyse the gathered data, we relied on SPSS (17.0) Programme. It stands for Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, and it is a system for analysing data. This is a brief definition taken from the SPSS Base User's Guide. "SPSS is a comprehensive system for analyzing data. SPSS can take data from almost any type of file and use them to generate tabulated reports, charts, and plots of distributions and trends, descriptive statistics, and complex statistical analysis." (www.spss.com),in our case, we used it to analyze quantitative data collected from closed-ended questions, which enables us to get precise percentages. The results are shown in pie charts and histograms.

II.2.2. Qualitative Content Analysis

In order to interpret and analyze the qualitative data reached from students' questionnaire and classroom observation, we adopted the Qualitative Content Analysis. Holsti defines QCA*: "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages"*(Holsti,1969: 14). It is a method used to interpret and analyze texts by identifying its intended meaning. Moreover, Wamboldt states that the main objective of this technique is *"to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study"*(Wamboldt, 1992:314). Hence, we used this method to explain and interpret the data obtained.

II.2. The theoretical Framework

In order to analyze the gathered data, we rely on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), in which Lakoff and Johnson explain the relationship between language and thought. To teach idioms the teachers can also use this cognitive approach, to draw learner's attention on the hidden meaning of idioms. Under this linguistic approach, teachers can show to learners how idioms could be understood by projecting items from a source domain into a target domain. Besides, this cognitive approach to teach idioms is based on metaphor and cultural-awareness raising. That is to say, explaining the cultural background of idioms may facilitate their acquisition.

Kovecses & Szabo(1996) claim that in the traditional view, idioms are considered as a matter of language alone […] which is independent of any conceptual system, it means that this approach is only structural; it focuses on the study of language forms like grammar and vocabulary. However, in this cognitive approach, semantics is given priority. To be clearer, it emphasizes the meaning over the structure. Under these aspects, teachers can adopt a cognitive view that raises students' awareness on the metaphorical and cultural aspects of idioms.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the research design of the study. It has given a general overview about the research methods, the context under which the study is investigated and sample population. In addition, it has presented the instruments of data collection and data analysis, as well as the procedures used to conduct the study. It has given a brief description of the methods used to interpret and analyze data. The next chapter will deal with the findings and data analysis.

Presentation of the findings

Introduction

This chapter deals with the findings of our study. It presents the results obtained from the questionnaire we administered to English students at IRIS private school in Tizi-Ouzou together with the classroom observations that we conducted there. The aim of this study is to know, whether idioms help the students of English at IRIS private school of Tizi-Ouzou to learn the English culture or not. We will present the findings in percentages, in diagrams and pie charts. To reach our aim we divided this chapter into two sections. The first section is devoted to the presentation of the findings of the questionnaires, and the second section deals with the presentation of the results obtained during the classroom observation.

III. 1. Presentation of the Questionnaires' Results

III.1.1. Results of the Students' Questionnaire

Section one:

Question 01: **Do you like to learn about English culture during the process of English learning?**

a. I like to learn about it very much   b. I like to learn about it   c. I do not like to learn about it.
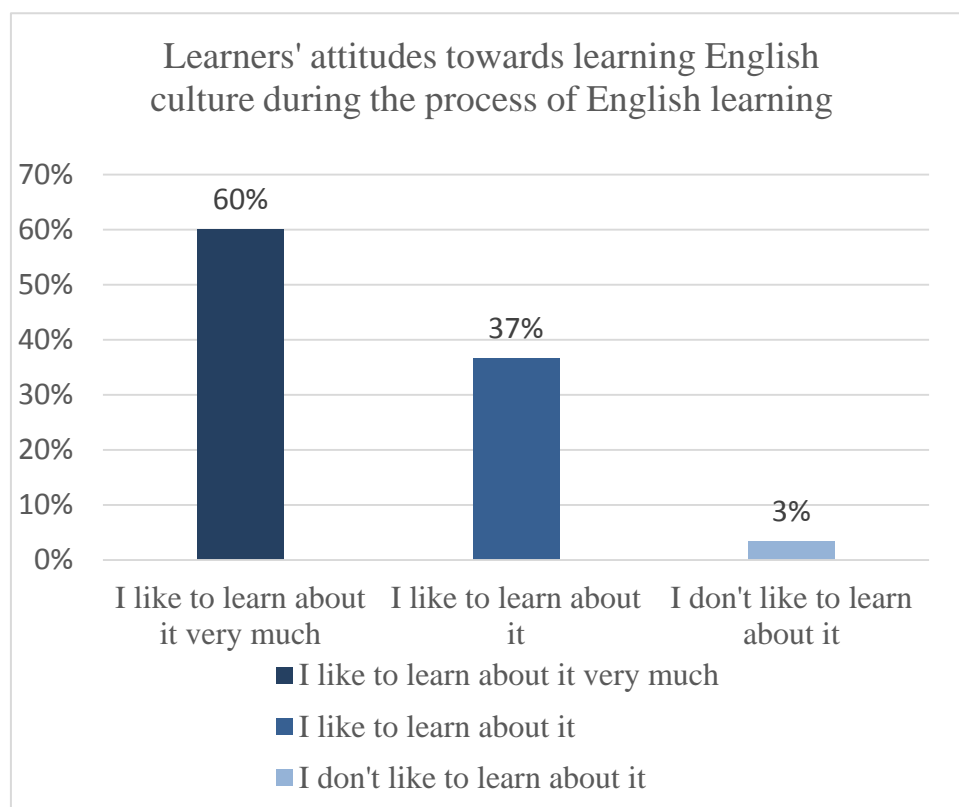
Diagram 01: learners' attitudes towards learning English culture during the process of English learning

The results of this diagram show that the majority of the students from different levels (60%) prefer strongly to learn about culture, while (37%) of them fairly like to learn about culture. Only a minority of the learners (3%) are not interested in learning English's culture.

Question 2: Explain why?

Most of the learners find that it is important to learn the foreign culture to discover new perspectives, different people's values and ways of living. They argue that learning English involves also learning the culture of the native speakers, their customs and their mode of living. The minority of the learners that are not interested by learning English culture argue that it is enough to learn the foreign language without its culture.

Question 03: Do you think that it is important to integrate English culture in the process of English learning?

a. Yes, very important   b. Quite important   c. No, not important

Learners' attitudes towards integrating English culture in the process of English learning

- Yes, very important
- Quite important
- No, not important

70%
23%
7%
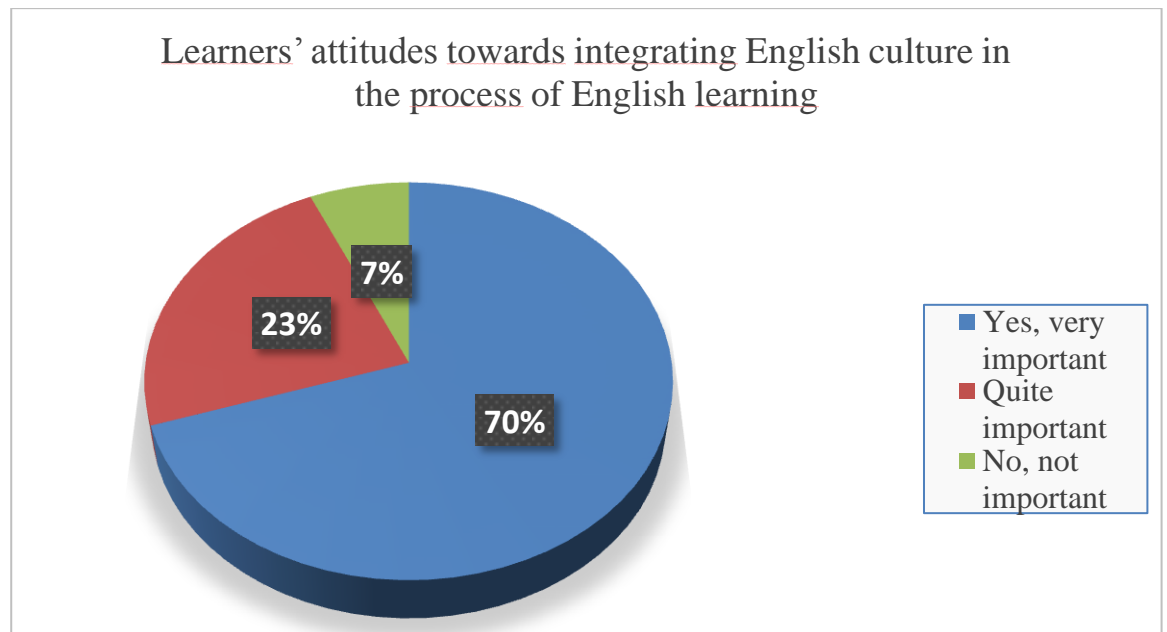
Diagram02: learners' attitude towards integrating culture in the process of English learning

The pie chart demonstrates that (70%) of the students from different levels willingly give the importance of integrating culture in the process of learning. Concerning the (23%) of students claim, that integrating culture is quite important but a low proportion of (7%) of the learners, state that it is not important to learn English culture.

Question 4: Why?

In this context, the students who answered that it is very important to integrate English culture argue that it is necessary to know about English culture. Besides, it helps them to better learn (understand) the English language in order to be ready to undertake a real conversation with native speakers. In the case of those who see that integrating English culture is quite important, they argue that culture can be a good way to learn English but they estimate that it is not the better way of learning a foreign language. For them, learning a language does not necessitate to learn its culture. Algerian learners of English can interact in English by sticking to their own culture.

Question 05: Do your teachers teach you about English culture?

a. Always   b. Sometimes   c. Seldom   d. Never
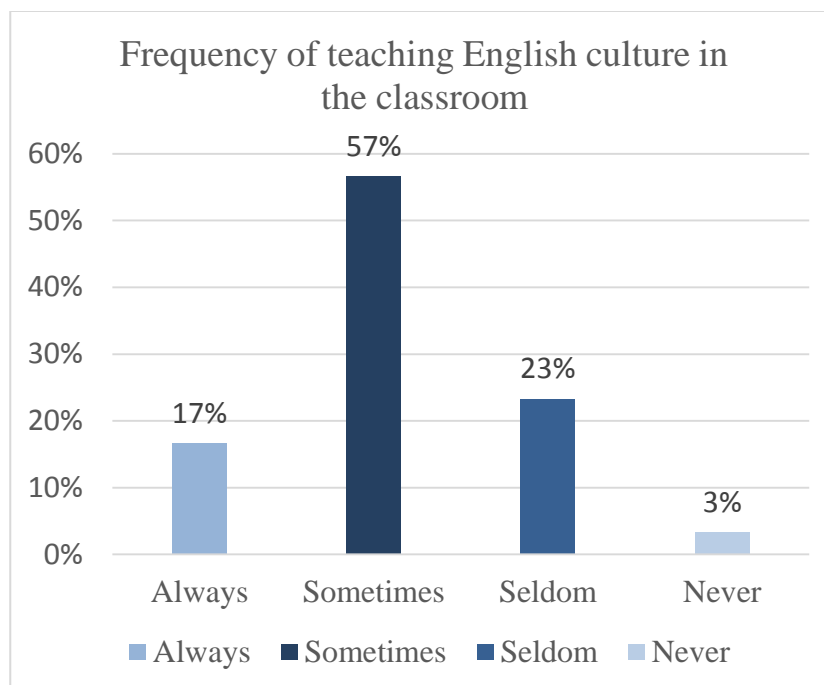
Diagram 03: Frequency of teaching English culture in the classroom

As it is displayed in the diagram above, (57%) of learners from different levels state that "sometimes" their teacher teaches them about the English culture. Whereas, (23%) respond that English culture is "rarely" taught during the English course. Another (17%) of learners argue that their teacher "always" teaches them about the English culture, but a low portion (3%) of the answers are "never".

Section two:

Question one: Do you know about idioms?

a. Yes   b. No

Learners' knowledge about idioms

- Yes
- No

37%

63%
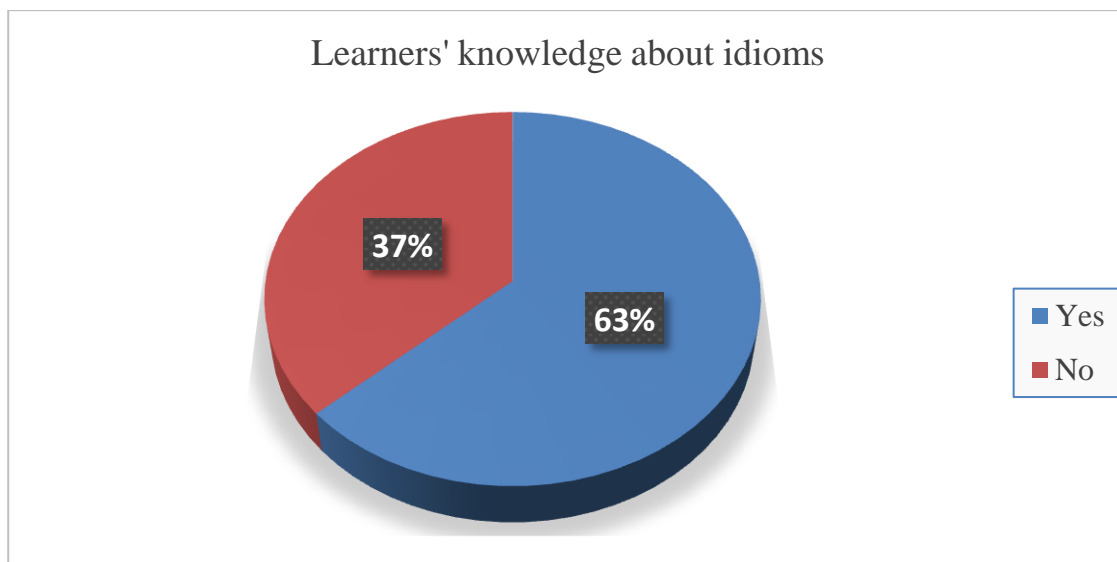
Diagram 01: Students' knowledge about idioms

It is shown in the pie chart that (63%) of the students have knowledge about idioms, while (37%) of them do not know what idioms are.

Question 02: If "yes", please explain?

Most of them gave a definition close to the meaning of idioms: expressions or sentences, which have figurative meaning.

Question 03: Do your teachers use idioms to teach you about English culture?

a. Always   b. Sometimes   c. Seldom   d. Never
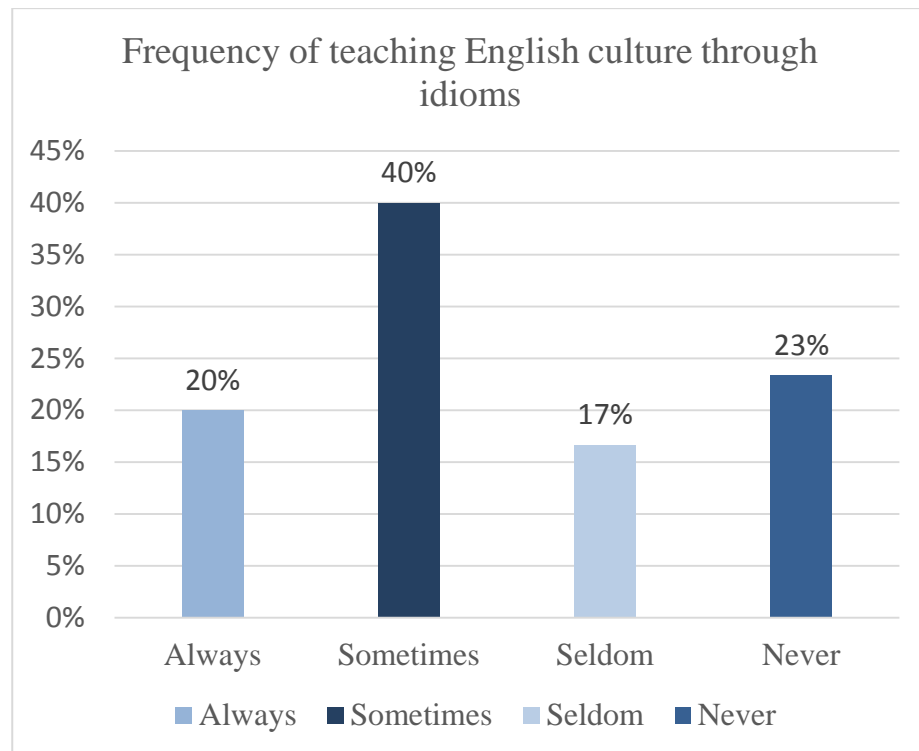
Diagram 02: Frequency of teaching culture through idioms

The diagram above illustrates that only (20%) of the students from different levels respond that their teacher "always" uses idioms to teach them about English culture, while an amount (40%) of students claim that "sometimes" the culture is taught by using idioms. An amount of (17%) answer that the teacher "rarely" uses idioms to teach them English culture. Whereas, a frequency of (23%) respond that their teacher "never" teaches them about culture through idioms.

Question 04: **Do you think that learning English idioms is an important part of English language learning experience?**

a. Yes   b. No   c. No idea

Learners' attitude towards the importance of learning idioms in English language learning experience

- 14%
- 3%
- 83%

Yes
No
No idea
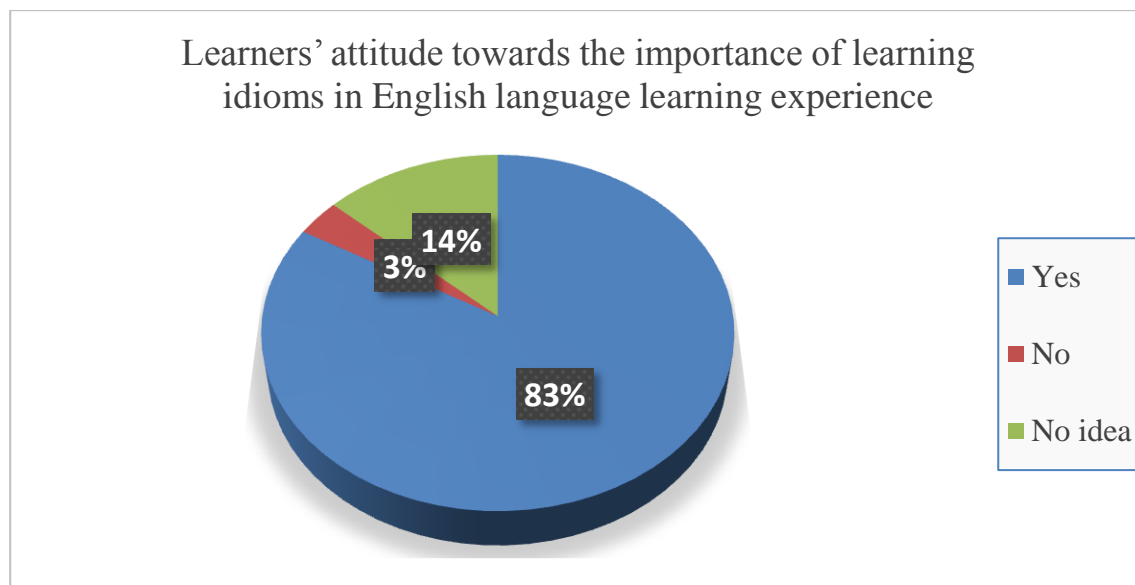
Diagram 03: Students' attitudes towards the importance of learning idioms in English language learning experience

The pie chart displays that most of the learners (83%) from different levels agree that idioms are important part in learning English. While (14%) do not know if idioms are important part or not in English language learning experience. Only a low portion (3%) says that idioms are not important at all.

Question 05: Why?

Most of them state that idioms are a part of English language because they are helpful to learn and understand English, to enrich their vocabulary and their experience as well they argue that it is not sufficient to learn grammar of a language.

Question 06: Do you consider that learning English idioms is necessary for achieving effective communication with natives?

a. Yes   b. No   c. No idea
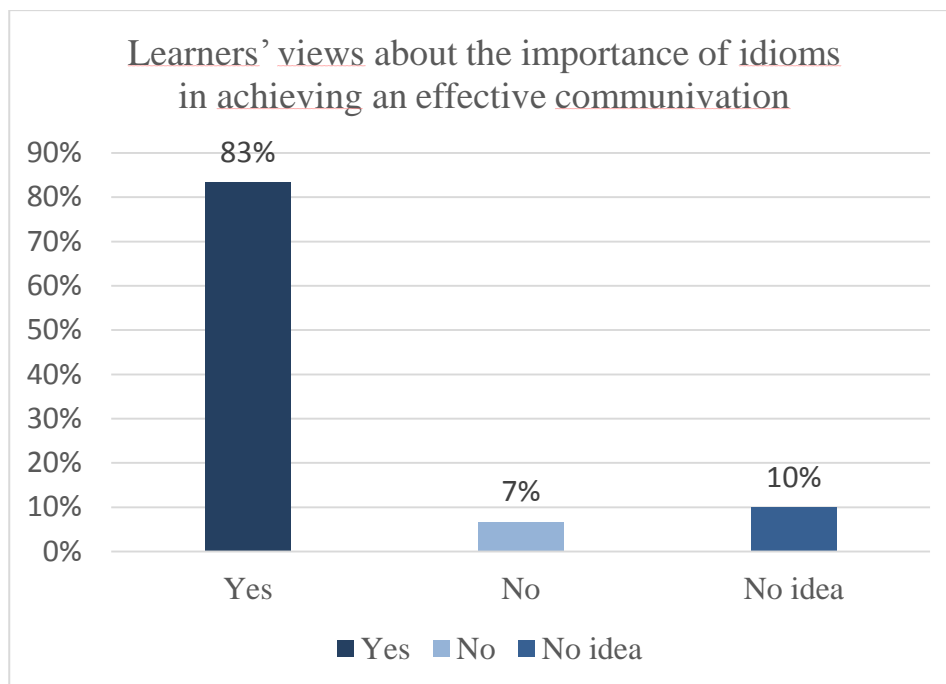
Diagram 04: Importance of idioms in achieving effective communication

As it is presented in the bar chart, the majority of the learners (83%) from different levels answered by "yes", they consider idioms important and very crucial for achieving effective communication with native speakers. Whereas, a portion (10%) of them do not know if idioms really help or not to communicate fluently with natives. by contrast small percentage (7%) disagree that idioms are important in achieving successful communication with natives.

Question 07: As a learner of English language, do idioms help you to understand better the English culture?

a. Yes   b. No
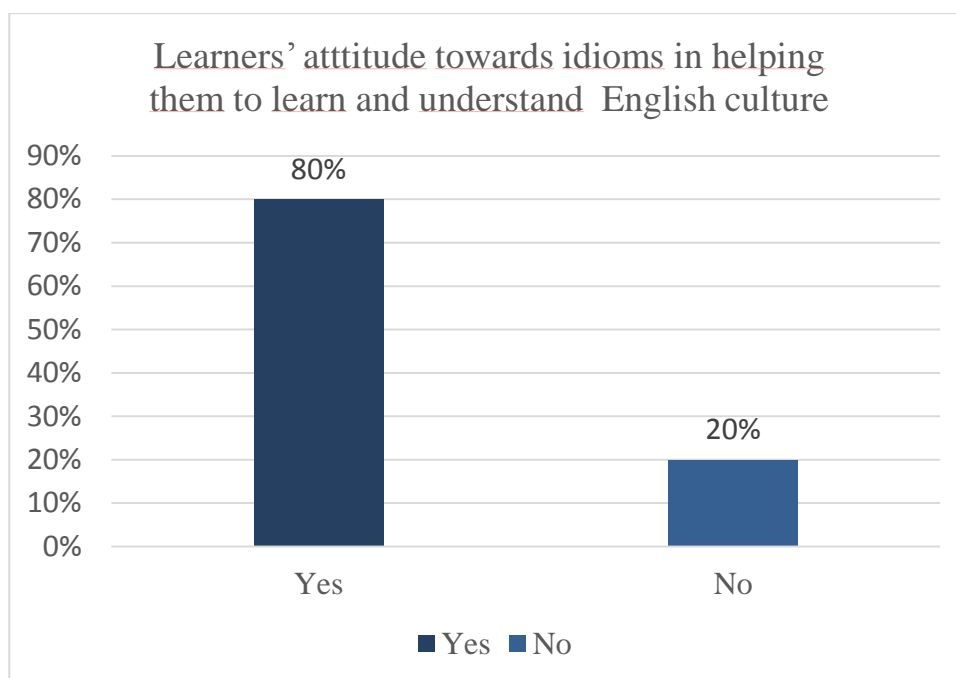
Diagram 05: Students' attitudes towards idioms in helping in understanding English culture

As it is showed in this diagram above, the majority of the students, (80%) from different levels argue that idioms help them to learn about English culture by saying that learning idioms is culture learning. A few of them only, an amount of (20%) claim that idioms do not help them in understanding English.

QUESTION 8: If yes how?

They said that learning idioms is culture learning. Idioms help them to understand the native speakers and to discover their way of living.

III.1.2. Results of the Classroom Observations

To reach our aim, a classroom observation is chosen as a second data instrument for more reliable results. After the approval of IRIS school's manager and teachers, we developed a checklist presented in a table of sixteen (16) items to be observed in relation with learning culture and idioms. We attended different classes of different levels to ensure that the learners' answers of the questionnaire were accurate and compatible with the final results.

The observations took place from June 11. 2016 to July 02. 2016. Due to time limitation we conducted only twenty (20) observations instead of twenty-five(25).

Items to be observed	FREQUENCY				
	Always	**Often**	**Some-Times**	**Rarely**	**Never**
Teachers teach about culture during the foreign language classroom	5	7	5	3	0
Teachers explain the relevant cultural background to students	14	6	0	0	0
Teacher encourages learners to think in the target language	20	0	0	0	0
Teachers use idioms to teach about culture	0	5	6	6	3
Teachers teach idioms in context not in isolation	16	1	0	0	3
Teachers draw learner's attention on the hidden meaning of idioms	17	0	0	0	3
Teachers ask questions which are related to English culture	0	9	7	3	1
In order to teach idioms Teachers, use conceptual metaphor theory	12	5	0	0	3
Teachers encourage students to expand the underlying conceptual metaphor system of idioms to understand the target culture	11	5	1	0	3
Teachers rely on authentic material and real situations to teach about culture and idioms	3	10	6	0	1
Teachers asks learners to do tasks in relation to English culture by using idiomatic expressions	0	0	9	8	3
Learners have previous knowledge about idioms and English culture	0	0	15	3	2
Learners are motivated to learn about English culture by using idioms	10	7	0	0	3
Students learn idioms by heart	17	0	0	0	3
Student create conversations using idioms and act them out	4	7	5	1	3
Learners interact with the teacher when learning about English culture	13	4	0	0	3

Table 1: Results of Classroom Observations about Teaching Culture through Idioms.

The numbers presented in the table refer to the number of times in terms of frequency in which the teachers use of the selected items during each course.

Conclusion

This chapter has revealed the results obtained from the questionnaire answered by students of English at IRIS private school in Tizi-ouzou, and those of structured classroom observation. The results have been presented in the form of diagrams and pie charts. The tools we used have permitted us to gather an appreciable amount of data that will be discussed in the next chapter.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Introduction

      This chapter is devoted to the discussion of the results obtained through the analysis of the questionnaire distributed to the English learners at IRIS school, in addition to the results obtained from the classroom observation. In fact, the results are discussed and interpreted in relation to Lakoff and Johnson Theory of CMT. It aims to respond the research questions and confirming or disconfirming the hypotheses stated in the general introduction.

The chapter comprises two sections, the first one is about the discussion of the results achieved through students' questionnaire, and the second section is about the results obtained through classroom observation.

1. Discussing the Findings of Learners' Questionnaire

1.1. Students' attitudes towards learning English culture and its implementation in the process of English learning

The first section is concerned with students' attitudes towards learning English culture during the English language courses and the importance given to English culture by IRIS school's learners.

 From the learners' responses, we noticed that the vast majority of IRIS school's learners 97% as a whole (60% +37%) "Like"or "strongly like" to learn about culture during the process of English learning (see diagram 01 P. 39), whereas only 3% answered that they "don't like" to learn about English culture. They argue that Algerian learners can learn and speak English without learning its culture.

Even though a short minority of students are not aware of the importance of learning culture while learning English, most of them understand and know the importance of implementing culture in the process of English learning to be able to undertake a real communication with native speakers. They argue that it is important to learn target culture to discover new perspectives, customs and norms, values of the English people. As Duranti points out:

> To be part of a culture means to share the propositional knowledge and the rules of inference necessary to understand whether certain propositions are true (given certain premises). To the propositional knowledge, one might add the procedural knowledge to carry out tasks such as cooking, weaving, farming, fishing, giving a formal speech, answering the phone, asking for a favor, writing a letter for a job application (Duranti, 1997: 28-29).

Some examples of their responses are *"learning English involves also learning the culture of the native speakers, their custom and their mode of living"*, another learner said, *"I like to learn about English culture to better learn and earn English"*. Another one added, *"I like to learn culture because it is interesting and I think that learning culture will facilitate the process of learning English"*. Thus, it seems that a great amount of the respondents is aware of the importance of culture in language learning.

As regards the role of learning culture in learning English , we noticed from the pie chart that the majority of the informants 70% (see the diagram 02 p. 40) stressed its necessity and asserted that it is "very important" to integrate culture learning in the process of language learning. One of the learners argued that "*culture is important to better learn the English language and communicate easily with native speakers"*. Another learner added that *''culture is a key to knowledge and to understand people from other countries while speaking"*. This result goes in tune with Byram & Flemming (1998) who insist that "*target language culture' should be taught along with English to acculturate language learners into the cultures of English speaking countries*". An amount of 23% of learners said that integrating English culture is "quite important", while a small minority 7% answered that it is "not important" at all to integrate English culture while learning English.

As regards English culture teaching, the results show that almost 57% (see the diagram 03 p. 41) of learners stated that "sometimes" their teacher teaches them about the English culture. Whereas, 23% responded that teacher "seldom" teaches them about English culture during the English course.17% of them state that their teacher "always" teaches them about the English

culture but a low portion 3% of the answers are "never". From that point we understand that a very low portion of teachers are not interested by teaching English culture.

We noticed that some teachers do not always give importance to English culture they only focus on teaching the language without integrating its culture. Only an amount of 17% answered that their teachers teach them culture regularly by answering by "always" it means that their teachers are aware about the importance about integrating English culture during English learning. That is explained by Lessard-Clouston (1997) who confirms it by assuming that, *"We should and do teach our students the foreign language culture in our classes when our goal is communicative competence. Not only is culture part and parcel of the process, but the educational value of it within foreign language education is great"*.

1.2. Students 'attitudes towards idioms and their role in learning foreign culture

In this part of our study, the discussion will be on the learners 'perception of idioms and their attitudes towards learning them, and their importance in language learning.As well as idioms' contribution to the learning of English culture. We attempted to know whether IRIS learners had a prior knowledge about idioms in addition to knowing whether teachers resort to idioms to teach about English culture.

The findings obtained show that more than half of learners 63% (see the diagram 04 p.42) know what an idiom is and they almost gave the same definition of idioms, which is an expression with figurative meaning. We can take some examples of these definitions like: *"It is a phrase, sentence or expression that has figurative meaning''*. Another definition *"an idiom is a statement which has a figurative meaning different from the meaning"*.37% of the learners do not know what an idiom is. It is probably because their teachers rarely or never teach them idioms. As we can notice from the learners' answers when we tried to know whether their teachers teach them about idioms or not (see the diagram 05 p. 43), Only a small

rate of 20% of learners' answers is that their teachers "always" teach them idioms, while 40% of students said that teachers "sometimes" use idioms to teach about culture. 17% claimed that the teachers "seldom" use idioms to teach culture, while a rate of 23% answered that their teacher "never" teaches them about the culture through idioms. Tarcaoanu (2012) states that idioms and most figurative expressions are used extensively by native speakers in all form of discourse; they seem to be a neglected topic in L2 or FL teaching materials. According to Asl (2013) and Wray (2000), idioms received less attention in particularly in EFL settings because teachers try to simplify the English language to their students and most of the focus is directed to grammar rules.

A frequency of 83% said that idioms are an "important part" of learning English. They argued that idioms are helpful to learn English, one of the learners said "*I enjoy learning idioms, because I enrich my vocabulary and my experience as well, it is not sufficient to learn only grammar, pronunciation, to master the language*". This approves Jiang stance that, "*language is the mirror of culture, in the sense that people can see a culture through its language*" (Jiang, 2000:328).Whereas 14% of the learners claimed that they "do not know" if idioms are an important part of English learning or not. A very small amount 03% of the learners said that idioms "are not an important" part of English learning experience.

83% of the learners considered that idioms are important to achieve an effective communication with natives (See diagram 06 p. 44). It is noticed that most of learners are aware of the importance of using idioms in culture and language learning. This finding confirms the saying of Cooper (1989) that idiomatic expressions are so frequently encountered in both spoken and written discourse; they require special attention in language programs and should not be relegated to a position of secondary importance in the curriculum.

A portion of 10% of the learners "do not know" if idioms are important or not to be communicatively competent, while an amount of 07% said that idioms are "not important" in achieving an effective and accurate communication with native speakers.

A considerable proportion of the learners 80% said that idioms help them to learn better the English culture, and one of them said, *"thanks to idioms we discover what native speakers say in different situations, and thus we discover their culture, way of thinking and way of living"*. A frequency of 20% answered that idioms do not help them in understanding English culture.

2. Discussion of the results of Classroom Observation

The use of Classroom Observation was highly beneficial to our study. It helped us to get more details and to answer our research questions. In addition, to confirm/ disconfirm the questionnaires' results, since it permitted us to observe the data in its natural setting. The observation scheme or checklist we used contains sixteen (16) items which are related to learning culture through idioms. In this chapter, the results will be discussed in detail.

In an EFL classroom, it is crucial to teach about the foreign culture. Teachers should take into account the importance of culture in communication. They should also encourage learners to discover the cultures of English speaking countries and have positive attitudes towards them. Learning culture enables students to know the basis of the social meanings and usages of words, this goes in line with the claim of Angelou:

> Being exposed to the existence of other languages increases the perception that the world is populated by people who not only speak differently from oneself but whose cultures and philosophies are other than one's own. Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry but by demonstrating that all people cry, laugh, eat, worry and die, it can introduce the idea that if we try to understand each other, we may even become friends.(Angelou,1993: 12).

It means to raise the cultural awareness of learners, make them understand behaviours, traditions and values of different people in the world. On the basis of the results, it is noticed that during twenty (20) sessions, only in five (5) courses teachers "always" teach about culture, and during

seven (7) sessions, they "often" teach about culture. Concerning the last eight (8) sessions, teachers "sometimes" introduce cultural elements in five (5) classes, and do it "rarely" in three (3) classes. This means that, learners are not highly exposed to learn the foreign culture, because teachers emphasize more on teaching linguistic competence. This result confirms the one obtained from the questionnaire, where more than a half (57%) (see diagram 05 P. 43) of the learners asserted that their teachers teach them about culture only "sometimes".

In order to teach a foreign language, the instructor needs to make learners think and interact in the English language. It helps them to connect with the target culture and to communicate with native speakers easily. Macaro states that the target language should be the "*predominant language of interaction in the classroom*" (Macaro, 2000:68), because encouraging students to use English in the classroom will help them to be communicatively competent and get high level of proficiency. The point that is noticed during the observations is that teachers at IRIS school "always" encourage the learners to think in English. Learners are not allowed to use their mother tongue when speaking or interacting with teachers in order to avoid bad habit formation.

Idioms show a large amount of cultural features, they reflect the national specificity of people. It is very important for English learners to know them because they are useful aspects of language. Idioms help them to learn about the foreign culture because

> They come to understand culture not only as information about diverse people and their practices but also, and most importantly, as the contextual framework that people use to exchange meaning in communication with others and through which they understand their social world (Scarino,2010:324).

We noticed from the results of the classroom observation that during six(6) sessions, teachers "rarely" use idioms to teach about culture. While they do it ''sometime" in six (6) courses and "never" in the three (3) last sessions. This result confirms the finding of the questionnaire

where (40%)of the informants responded that their teachers ''sometimes'' use idioms to teach them about English culture(see diagram P.41).

Language learners need to have some metaphoric competence to be able to understand natives especially when they use idioms. In this context Littlemore points out that *"metaphoric competence is important for foreign language learners, as it is likely to contribute to their overall language ability."* (Littlemore,2001: 466). It is noticed that when teaching idioms teachers at IRIS school, "always" draw the learners' attention to the hidden meaning of idioms, that is to the idioms' real meaning. They focus on teaching idioms in context not in isolation. This attitude goes in line with the findings of Irujo (1986) who points out that practicing the use of idioms in context is very important for the teaching of idiomatic expressions. It allows students to become confident towards their usage of idioms. Besides, it is very beneficial for learners, to prepare them to maintain a successful communication with native speakers.

The study of idiomatic expressions seems to be difficult for language learners. Liu maintains that "*idioms have rather rigid structures, quite unpredictable meanings and fairly extensive uses, and that they are "a notoriously difficult" but at the same time a very useful aspect of English for language learners."*(Liu, 2003: 671). We noticed from the classroom observation that almost the majority of the learners know what idioms are, and it confirms the questionnaire results which consists of 63% of learners (see diagram 04 P.42) that know about idioms. Concerning the rest of the learners, they find difficulties in understanding idioms due to their figurative meaning. For these reasons, we noticed that teachers always use the CMT to teach about idioms. That is to say, they explain to the learners that there are words from SD which should be understood in the TD. In other words, they teach them the real meaning of the expressions, and then they explain to them the context in which they are used.

According to Lakoff (1987), conceptual metaphor refers to the connection between two semantic areas at the level of thought. And according to Richards, language is virtually metaphorical (Richards, 1967: 80).Lakoff and Johnson claimed that metaphor is not a "matter of language", words. It is our conceptual system that is metaphorically structured and defined (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:6).Samani & Hashemian(2012) assume that conceptual metaphor can facilitate the comprehension of idiom, and the meaning of many idioms depends on the metaphorical conceptual system.

Using authentic material in teaching is important in bringing students into real situations. However, during the observations, we noticed a lack of the use of authentic material at IRIS private school. They only use them in seven (7) sessions out of twenty (20). Teachers rely on listening to natives 'records, but most of the time they rather prefer to use the course book. As far as the classroom activities are concerned, teachers always rely on the course book activities. It means that there is no explicit teaching of culture or idioms.

As regards motivation, it is noticed that learners are always motivated concerning learning idioms and culture. They seem very interested in discovering new things. This result confirms the previous findings, as the majority of learners like learning culture and emphasizes the importance of idioms in language learning. We noticed that they interact with the teacher and with each other when speaking about culture or when learning a new idiom. We also noticed that idioms allow them to get more information about the cultural details of English language speaking countries. This result confirms that of the questionnaire, where the majority of learners (80%) (see diagram 06 P.49) agreed that idioms help them to better understand English culture.

Conclusion

The discussion of the results has permitted us to reach reliable answers for the research questions set in the general introduction to confirm/disconfirm the hypotheses.

Concerning the extent to which learners of IRIS private school of Tizi-Ouzou are aware of the importance of culture in English learning, the first hypothesis we formulated confirms that actually learners give importance to English culture. Regarding the second question which questions whether idioms contribute to the understanding of English Culture or not the third hypothesis is confirmed. From the results of the questionnaire and the classroom observation, we noticed that learners do not lack knowledge about idioms, and stress their importance in English learning. We deduced that idioms contribute to learners' understanding of English Culture. As far as the third question is concerned, we noticed from the classroom observation and the questionnaire that teachers mainly use idioms as a material of teaching English culture but not most of the time.

General Conclusion

General conclusion

Idioms are an important part of learning English culture. They carry a huge amount of cultural items. On the one hand, idioms permit to English learners to be communicatively competent. On the other hand, they allow them to discover the Target Culture and familiarize with its norms and values.

This dissertation has investigated the importance of English culture in the views of English learners of IRIS school, and the contribution of idioms in facilitating and helping learners in acquiring and understanding the English culture. Through the questionnaire and the classroom observation, this study has attempted to discover whether the teachers of IRIS school resort to idioms as English teaching material.

To reach the aim of the study, we have followed the Mixed Method Research which combines both quantitative and qualitative methods. To carry out the investigation, we have developed a checklist of sixteen (16) items to be observed during the classroom observation in addition to the questionnaire. Due to the small number of learners at IRIS private school, we only administered forty (40) questionnaires to different levels, and we received thirty (30). This was one of the weaknesses of the study.

Concerning the quantitative data analysis, a software package SPSS was used for statistical analysis of the data. In addition to the statistical method, we have used qualitative content analysis (QCA) in order to interpret and analyze the obtained data from the questionnaire's open ended questions, and the results of the classroom observation.

We have relied on the framework mentioned previously, the CMT developed by Lakoff and Johnson in *Metaphor we live by* in 1980. Metaphorical awareness has an impact on learners 'success to understand idiomatic expressions since they are encountered in daily language use. Besides, metaphors and idioms have both cognitive and cultural aspects, thus it is useful for learners to use metaphorical competence to understand idiomatic expressions.

As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) point out, using conceptual metaphors in teaching idioms might help language learners become more autonomous in language learning.

The data analysis and the discussion part of the results reached through the classroom observation and the questionnaire have allowed us to answer the research questions mentioned earlier in the general introduction. The final results of the questionnaire and the classroom observation have revealed that the majority of learners like to learn about English culture, they do not hesitate to emphasize on implementing English culture in the process of English learning. They argue that learning English culture helps them to improve their English language in order to be able to communicate easily with native speakers. This confirms the first hypothesis stating that learners at IRIS school are aware of the importance of culture in the process of English learning. As far as the second research question is concerned the third hypothesis is confirmed stating that the majority of the learners found that idioms are helpful in understanding English culture. Additionally, our investigation has confirmed the fifth hypothesis which states that teachers resort to idioms as a way of teaching English culture. As far as the other hypotheses are concerned, they are refuted.

97% of the participants asserted that teachers teach English culture as a whole of (57%+23%+ 17%) but in different frequencies, more than half of them do it ''sometimes'' and 23% ''always''. From the classroom observation we have noticed that the majority of the learners know what an idiom is and this result confirms that of the questionnaire where 77% of learners answered that teachers include idioms in teaching as a whole of (20%+ 40%+17%). English learners at IRIS school agree that idioms are an important part of English learning. 80% of them assert that idioms help them better learn the English culture and this is what we have deduced from the classroom observations where learners were really motivated while learning English culture through idioms.

The investigation suffered from time limitation, and the small number of answers making the sample. Yet, we hope that the results will contribute to the field of research, and will open opportunities for further studies. May be comparing idioms in English and those used in the Berber or Arabic context.

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Appendices

The Students 'Questionnaire

We kindly request you to fill in this questionnaire. Your answers are very important for the validity of our investigation which is "Learning English culture through idioms". This questionnaire is totally anonymous. Choose one answer in the multiple choice questions by ticking off the appropriate answer and express your point of view in the open ones.

Section One:

1) Do you like to learn about English culture during the process of English learning?

    a. I like to learn about it very much ☐

    b. I like to learn about it   ☐

    c. I don't like to learn about it   ☐

2) please, explain: …………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

……

3) Do you think that it is important to integrate English culture in the process of English learning?

    a. Yes, very important ☐

    b. Quite important   ☐

    c. No, not important   ☐

4)Why………………………………………………………………………………………...

5) Do your teachers teach you about English culture?

    a. Always   ☐

    b. Sometimes ☐

    c. Seldom   ☐

    d. Never   ☐

Section Two:

1) Do you know about idioms?

      a. Yes ☐

      b. No ☐

2) If "yes" please explain……………………………….................................

………………………………………………………………………………………………

3) Do your teachers use idioms to teach you about English culture?

      a. Always ☐

      b. Sometimes ☐

      c. Seldom ☐

      d. Never ☐

4) Do you think that learning English idioms is an important part of English language learning experience?

      a. Yes ☐

      b. No ☐

      c. No idea ☐

5) Why …………………………………………………………………………………………...

………………………………………………………………………………………………

……

6) Do you consider that learning English idioms is necessary for achieving effective communication with natives?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

c. No idea ☐

7) As a learner of English language, do idioms help you to understand better the English culture?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

If "yes" How……………………………………………………………….....................

Classroom observation

Items to be observed	FREQUENCY				
	Always	Often	Some-Times	Rarely	Never
Teachers teach about culture during the foreign language classroom					
Teachers explain the relevant cultural background to students					
Teacher encourages learners to think in the target language					
Teachers use idioms to teach about culture					
Teachers teach idioms in context not in isolation					
Teachers draw learner's attention on the hidden meaning of idioms					
Teachers ask questions which are related to English culture					
In order to teach idioms Teachers, use conceptual metaphor theory					
Teachers encourage students to expand the underlying conceptual metaphor system of idioms to understand the target culture					
Teachers rely on authentic material and real situations to teach about culture and idioms					
Teachers asks learners to do tasks in relation to English culture by using idiomatic expressions					
Learners have previous knowledge about idioms and English culture					
Learners are motivated to learn about English culture by using idioms					
Students learn idioms by heart					
Student create conversations using idioms and act them out					
Learners interact with the teacher when learning about English culture					