

I dedicate this work

To my beloved parents,

To my brothers Abdellah & Abderahmane, and sisters: Nour El Houda, Lina and Nouha

To my treasured grandparents,

To my friends: Wassila, Melissa, Serine, and Hanane,

To all my family members,

To my binomial “ Safia ”.

Hanane.

In loving memory of my beloved father,

And paying tribute to him.

To my dearly beloved mother,

To my brothers and sisters,

To my lovely nephews and nieces,

To my brothers in law,

To my binomial “Hanane”,

To all my mates.

Safia.

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Abstract

This current work explores the students' intercultural awareness through interpreting idioms. It seeks to discover whether EFL learners at MMUTO are acquainted with the target language culture, apprehensive with meanings of idioms, and also whether it is essential to integrate cultural insights such as "idioms" to enhance the student's intercultural communicative competence. The central aim of this study is to examine how intercultural awareness affects the understanding of idiomatic expressions in speaking classes among third-year English department students at MMUTO. It also seeks to highlight the significance of intercultural awareness in developing intercultural communicative competence. To reach these objectives, the sample of this study includes 42 students and 5 teachers, to reach the aforementioned objectives, we relied on a mixed method research, which combines both quantitative and qualitative methods. To collect data, two questionnaires were administered: one questionnaire for students and another one for teachers. Numerical data is executed through statistical analysis by using the rule of three. The open-ended questions were analyzed qualitatively. The interpretation of the findings as well as its clarification, follows the qualitative content analysis (QCA) adopting the intercultural communicative competence model developed by Byram (1997). The results show that learners with intercultural awareness can understand better the TC and interpret idiomatic expressions.

Key-terms: EFL, English culture, Idioms, ICC, Intercultural Awareness .

List of abbreviations and acronyms

- **CC:** Communicative Competence.
- **EFL:** English as a Foreign Language.
- **FL:** Foreign Language.
- **IC:** Intercultural Competence.
- **ICC:** Intercultural Communicative Competence.
- **L1:** First Language.
- **MMUTO:** Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou.
- **QCA:** Qualitative Content Analysis.
- **SD:** Source Domain.
- **SLA:** Second Language Acquisition.
- **TC:** Target Culture.
- **TD:** Target Domain.
- **TL:** Target Language.

List of Diagrams

Diagram01. The Teachers' Integration of TC within classroom Activities	29
Diagram02. Teacher's opinion on students understanding of idioms	30
Diagram03. Teacher's Views towards Students' Understanding of Idioms.....	31
Diagram04. Recurrent students' difficulties encountered	32
Diagram05. Teachers' Views towards Students' Understanding of the TC with Idioms.....	32
Diagram06. Student's ability in explaining idioms.....	33
Diagram07. Teachers' Perception on Students' Communicative Competence.....	33
Diagram08. Teachers' Familiarity with Intercultural Awareness	34
Diagram09. The Importance of Learning about the Target Culture	35
Diagram10. Integration of the TC in the teaching process	35
Diagram11. Teachers' Incorporation of Intercultural Activities within Lessons	36
Diagram12. The impact of intercultural awareness on communicative competence	37
Diagram13. Students' knowledge about the English culture.....	38
Diagram14. Learning the English culture in classes	39
Diagram15. Learning Idioms in class	40
Diagram16. Student's understanding difficulties of Idioms.....	40
Diagram17. Impact of idioms in understanding the English culture	41
Diagram18. The Impact of learning English idioms to improve communicative skill.....	42
Diagram 19. Students' definition of intercultural awareness	45
Diagram20. Development factors for communicative competence.....	46

List of Tables

Table 01: (Hildayanti., 2015) Tools to make learning more engaging and interactive for students.....	10
Table03: Teachers' teaching experience0.....	27
Table04: How do teachers teach the TC	27

List of Figures

Figure 01: Canale and Swain's model (1980).....	14
Figure 02: Byram Intercultural Communicative Competence Model (1997).....	22

Table of contents

Dedication	I
Acknowledgments	II
Abstract	III
List of abbreviations and acronyms	IV
List of diagrams	V
List of tables	VI
List of figures	VII
Table of content	VIII

General introduction

• Statement of the problem.....	1
• Aims and significance of the study	4
• Research questions and hypotheses	4
• Research techniques and methodology.....	5
• Structure of the dissertation.....	6

Chapter one: Literature Review

Introduction.....	7
1. Culture.....	7
1.1.Definition of culture.....	7
1.2.Culture and education.....	9
1.3.The importance of teaching TL culture in the EFL classroom	9
2. Using authentic materials to teach about the TL culture	10
2.1.The dangers of authentic materials.....	11
3. Intercultural awareness.....	12
3.1.Defining intercultural awareness.....	12
3.2.Communicative competence.....	13
3.3. Intercultural competence.....	14

3.4. Intercultural communicative competence-----	15
3.4.1. Defining intercultural communicative competence -----	15
3.4.2. The shift from CC to ICC -----	16
4. Idioms.....	16
4.1. Definition of idioms.....	16
4.2.Types of idioms.....	18
4.2.1. Pure idioms.....	18
4.2.2. Semi idiom.....	18
4.2.3. Literal idiom.....	19
4.3.Teaching TL culture through idiom.....	19
5.The Analytical Framework	20
5.1.Byram’s Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence -----	21
Conclusion.....	22

Chapter two: Research Design and Methodology

Introduction.....	24
1. Data collection procedures.....	24
1.2. The participants.....	24
1.3. Data collection tools.....	24
1.3.1.Students’ questionnaire	24
1.3.2. Teachers’ questionnaire.....	25
2. Procedures of data analysis.....	25
2.1. Research method	25
2.2. Quantitative Data Analysis.....	24
2.3. Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA).....	26
Conclusion	26

Chapter three: Presentation of the Findings

Introduction	27
1. Presentation of the teachers' questionnaire results	27
2. Presentation of the students' questionnaire results	37
Conclusion	47

Chapter four: Discussion of the findings

Introduction	48
1. Discussion of the teachers' questionnaire	48
1.1. Discussion of the first research question: the teachers' incorporation of idioms as a teaching material in EFL classrooms as a Bridge to Cultural Understanding	48
1.2. Teachers' View towards the Effectiveness of Intercultural Awareness in Developing Communicative Competence	50
2. Discussion of the results of learners' questionnaire	52
2.1. Discussion of the second research question: Students' intercultural awareness help in interpreting the idiomatic expressions	52
2.2. Discussion of the third research question: Students' intercultural awareness in improving their ICC	55
Conclusion	56
General conclusion	58
Reference list	60

Appendices

General Introduction

▪ Statement of the problem

Language is a set of sounds, rules and written symbols which forms a whole system of communication within human societies that helps them to convey meanings, thoughts and feelings, as Holmes indicates “*Language is one of the most important parts of any culture. It is the way by which people communicate with one another, build relationships, and create a sense of community.*” (Holmes, 2015). Language and culture are correlated to each other. While language is used to communicate with it, culture shapes the feelings, thoughts and identities. It affects and influences the thoughts. It also regulates behaviors and attitudes.

Today learning a foreign language does not simply mean grasping or mastering an academic subject, however, it involves learning new ways of communication that are culturally conditioned. And it is impossible to separate between language learning and acquiring about the TL culture as it is claimed “*We all know that understanding a language involves not only knowledge of grammar, phonology and lexis but also a certain features and characteristics of the culture*” (Qu, 2010, p. 58).

If the members of a speech community tolerate grammar mistakes, cultural errors are not. Following this, the significance of English in the globalized world, one of the primary goal of English language learning and teaching is to foster the learners with intercultural skills so that they can manage to communicate well with people around the world (Baker & Feng 2020).

Thus, to promote intercultural awareness among learners, it is essential for them to have a solid understanding of cultural differences. While there are benefits to learning and interacting with native speakers, there may be challenges that learners need to overcome, as it requires learners to acquire knowledge, interpret differences, and reflect critically on their interaction across cultures.

Therefore, students should recognize that people, who speak a language rather than theirs, do not share the same beliefs, values, concepts and norms, as they do. They need to

acquire that what is tolerable in their culture may not be acceptable in other culture. So, EFL learners must be aware of the TL culture and accept the differences between their cultures which leads to intercultural awareness. , Chen and Starosta (1998) define intercultural awareness as *“the cognitive aspect of intercultural communication competence that refers to the understanding of cultural conventions that affect how we think and behave”* (p. 28).

Eventually, English culture may manifest in using idioms which are *“an expression in the usage of a language that is peculiar to itself either in having a meaning that cannot be derived from the conjoined meanings of its elements (such as up in the air for “undecided”) or in its grammatically atypical use of words (such as give way)”* (Merriam-Webster, 2023). Idioms, then, entails developing abilities and skills that can be of a major help in order to avoid misinterpretations, and misunderstandings while interacting with native speakers. Therefore, acquiring intercultural awareness becomes a necessary competence to help learners to improve their intercultural communicative competence.

Unlike ordinary words or expressions, idioms are characterized by their figurative meaning that exceeds their literal meaning. Idioms' variations are based on the distinction between language and culture. That is to say, idioms have another meaning implemented rather than just the literal meaning for words, they permit us to learn about new perspectives and other horizons given in a new culture that they discovered. Idioms serve well in helping students to acquire intercultural communicative competence Idioms can be a practical teaching material. They should be implemented in the teaching process of the FL learners, who aims to sound like a native speaker, and to understand better both the TL and its culture. This is one of the reasons why teachers of foreign languages should not ignore teaching about the TL culture (Garcia-Ponce, 2021).

Learning idiomatic expressions enhances FL students to overcome the different difficulties that would be encountered during their conversation. Moreover, it helps them to be

better communicators and understand both TL culture and language. It also helps them avoid awkwardness and the feeling that comes when people misunderstand them, and also when they misunderstand people (McDevitt, 1993). All in all, idiomatic expressions can also help learners to communicate and understand better the TL culture so simply, we cannot separate culture from language learning and teaching.

Few studies have been conducted about intercultural awareness and the interpretation of idioms. It differs from the previous studies that were undertaken in the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou that focus on cultural awareness and learning the English culture. The work of Ms. Aguentil Nawel and Ms. Hadjtayeb Radia (2016) entitled *“Learning the English Culture through Idioms a Case Study: English Learners of IRIS Private School in Tizi Ouzou”* aims to probe the effectiveness of using idiomatic expressions in FL teaching and the importance of integrating culture in teaching FL, and the results of the study indicated that there is no explicit way of teaching culture, but learning idioms helps students acquiring the English culture. Ms. Athmani Hana also conducted a study in 2015/2016 which is entitled: *“The Effectiveness of Intercultural Awareness in Improving EF Learners’ Communicative Competence the Case of Third Year English Students at Biskra University”* which investigates the effectiveness of intercultural awareness in improving EFL learners' communicative competence. The results of the study show that the students need to know more about the English culture and understand better the social norms and expressions to effectively communicate with native speakers.

There is a need to increase research knowledge in this area of study that has to do with the intercultural awareness of EFL learners. Since students overestimates the role of intercultural awareness in developing their communicative competence. More precisely, with the interpretation of idioms those native speakers commonly put them in usage in their discussions. These expressions serve well to avoid communication breakdowns and cultural

shock.

This research is significant because it comes to strengthen the previous mentioned works that have been submitted to the English department at MMUTO. Few studies have shown interest in the interpretation of idioms regarding the aspect of intercultural awareness to promote communicative competence for EFL learners and develop skills that will allow them to be competent, adaptable communicators and avoid all sort of cultural misunderstandings. This work centers its focus on enriching, supplementing, and filling that gap by exploring the subject from both sociolinguistic and applied linguistic perspective.

▪ **Aims ad Significance of the Study**

The overall aim of this research is, to investigate the extent to which EFL learners' intercultural awareness helps in interpreting and understanding idiomatic expressions in speaking classes more specifically third year students of the English department at MMUTO. It also aims to raise awareness of students and teachers towards the effectiveness of intercultural awareness in developing communicative competence. Intercultural awareness is important in language teaching and its role in strengthening learners' understanding of the language, improving their performance in intercultural communication, and fostering international understanding and access to cultural knowledge. Therefore, investigating the effectiveness of intercultural awareness in interpreting idiomatic expressions and developing communicative competence is significant for enhancing language learning and promoting cultural understanding.

▪ **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

To address the issue, we ask the following questions:

1. Do MMUTO EFL teachers in the Department of English incorporate idioms as a teaching material to teach the EFLculture?

2. Does intercultural awareness of third-year EFL students at MMUTO help in interpreting the idiomatic expressions?
3. Is third-year students of MMUTO's intercultural awareness important in improving their ICC?

To answer these questions, we advance the following hypotheses:

1. EFL teachers at MMUTO incorporate idioms as a teaching material to teach the EFL culture.
2. Intercultural awareness of third-year EFL students at MMUTO help in interpreting the idiomatic expressions?
3. Third-year EFL students' intercultural awareness at MMUTO is important in improving their ICC.

▪ **Research Techniques and Methodology**

This study relies on a mixed methods research, which uses both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. The quantitative method deals with large samples of participants using close-ended questions, and surveys. Quantitative results are displayed through numbers, ratings and statistics. The qualitative method is immersed on small samples of participants using open-ended questions, interviews and classroom observations. Qualitative results are presented in the form of texts.

We collect data using two questionnaires: one for teachers and one for learners. We count on the learners' questionnaires to learn more on different assumptions and interpretations of the students' intercultural awareness and whether they are communicatively competent in interpreting idiomatic expressions. The sample contains 40 third year students (L3) and 5 teachers of the department of English at (MMUTO). The teachers' questionnaire is designed to know about how they enhance their learners' intercultural awareness and how they present TC idioms in their lessons. This study adopts Byram's model of Intercultural communicative

competence to inspect the findings.

▪ **Structure of the Dissertation**

The current study follows the simple traditional model. It comprises a General Introduction, four chapters and a General Conclusion. The “General Introduction” is a space for the researcher to state the problem, make claims, assert the significance of the research and to establish a niche in previous studies that their work will fill. The first chapter “Literature Review” deals with previous works done in regard on the subject under exploration as well as defining concepts and” further expansion on the theoretical framework. The second chapter in title of “Research Design” ; clarifies the methodology of the study and the instruments used to collect data and the data analysis . The third chapter is “Exposition of The Results” where the findings are to be arranged and demonstrated. The fourth chapter “Discussion of The Results”, which is a room for evaluation of the derived data; answers of the research questions and interviews, and the validation or invalidation of the suggested hypotheses. Lastly, the “General Conclusion” allocates a summary of the work and the conclusion assumed from the discussion chapter. It also exposes the gaps that the study has not managed to occupy as well as further suggestions of research.

Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the review of the literature that is connected to the topic of our exploration, and it gives the definition of the most important concepts of the work. It debates the numerous definitions of culture, idioms, and intercultural awareness, and their prerequisite to be incorporated in the teaching and learning process, as well as, the theoretical framework and notions relating to the research study.

This work sheds light on the relationship between intercultural awareness and idioms. In addition, to the role that idioms play in learning an FL and understanding better the TL and its culture. In order to probe all of these, we confide in the conception of intercultural communicative competence, established by Michael Byram in his work “*Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*” (1997). This chapter also discusses the concept of idiomatic expressions, their importance in language learning, and previous research on teaching and learning idioms for EFL learners in speaking classes. Veritably, idiomatic expressions can be regarded as an effective method and an alternative way of introducing learners to a culture of a given language.

1. Culture

1.1. Definitions of culture

The first definition ever that was given to culture goes back to the 19th century, to a British anthropologist Edward Tylor (1871) who defined culture as “*that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, costume, and another capability, and habits acquired by man as member of society.*” (p. 145). From Tylor’s words, culture is not just limited to one specific area or aspect of human life, but rather it encompasses all aspects of life, it also highlights the idea that culture is something that is acquired by individuals as members of a society.

In Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, culture is defined as "*the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group with its own beliefs.*" It is also referred to as "*art, music, literature, thought of as a group, beliefs and attitudes about something that people in a particular group or organization share*" (Dictionary, 2023, p. 374). Therefore, it is important to understand and appreciate the diverse cultural expressions and beliefs of different groups, as well as the role of shared beliefs and attitudes in fostering social cohesion and personal growth. This understanding is crucial in today's globalized world, where effective communication and collaboration are essential for personal and societal success.

The new encyclopedia Britannica (1991) added that culture is: "*Behavior peculiar to Homo sapiens, together with material objects used as an integral part of this behavior; specifically culture consists of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of art, rituals, ceremonies, and so on.*" (Britannica, 1991), this definition underscores the complexity and nature of culture, emphasizing its role in human behavior, communication, and society. This definition also highlights the importance of cultural exchange and learning, as well as the value of recognizing and appreciating cultural diversity.

Samovar et al, (2000) in their turn define culture as :"*the deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, actions, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and artifacts acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving.*" (p. 36). This comprehensive definition emphasizes the depth and complexity of culture, highlighting its role in shaping human behavior, society, and the transmission of knowledge and traditions across generations.

The concept of culture is broad in its scope; as a result, there is no single definition of it. Up to now, linguists are giving many definitions to culture, and each of them has its own focus on a specific aspect.

1.2. Culture and Education

Culture is dependent on education just as education is dependent on culture (Qvarsell, 2003). Students cannot become proficient in the TL without understanding cultural perspectives. The way learners perceive the incorporation of their L1 in foreign language classrooms is closely related to the relationship between education and culture. Language learning encompasses several dimensions, such as grammatical competence, communicative competence, language proficiency, and cultural knowledge (Thanasoulas, 2001). Thus, it is important for EFL learners to be aware of cultural differences between their own culture and the TL culture.

1.3. The Importance of Teaching TL culture in the EFL Classroom

According to (Emitt, 2003) “*teaching the culture of a target language is unquestionably important for the development of competence in intercultural communication. Therefore, for learners to become communicatively competent, it is essential to teach them both language and culture because language and culture are intertwined*” (p. 44). Therefore, teaching cultural elements in EFL classroom holds a significant importance as it enhances language learning and intercultural understanding.

Moreover, by incorporating TC aspects into EFL instructions benefits students in several ways; first through facilitating effective communication by providing a deeper understanding of the contextual meanings behind language use, introducing authentic cultural elements, such as music, and videos makes the learning experience more engaging and relevant, and by developing cultural competence, promoting, respect, and tolerance among learners, and equipping them with the necessary skills to interact effectively in multicultural contexts.

Additionally, every classroom where culture is taught correctly and where intercultural understanding is the main goal; the learners become more aware of their own culture and have more knowledge about the foreign culture. In these classes, the students learn and acquire the

ability to identify cultural patterns of behavior and communication. They also learn to adapt and navigate within the cultural patterns. (Chastain, 1988).

2. Using Authentic Materials to Teach the TL Culture

(Hildayanti. 2015) says about authentic materials, that there are many components that teachers must consider, including: newspapers, magazines, videos, images, and audio materials (see table 1):

Newspapers, magazines	Contains the latest news on various topics. Topics can be political events, cultural information.
Videos	They provide audiovisual content.
Images	Images can be used to convey ideas and feelings, tell stories and concepts that cannot be expressed with words.
Audio	Can be in the form of music sounds, sounds from voice recorders, and other sound effects.

Table01. Tools to make learning more engaging and interactive for students. (Hildayati, 2015).

Using authentic materials such as magazines, music, videos, or photos during English classes makes learning more interesting and helps students understand the language and culture better. It boosts motivation and leads to improved learning outcomes as David Block (1995) stated: *“Authentic materials bring reality into classrooms and help make learners literate members of society.”* (p. 235-240). Therefore, these authentic materials, especially ones that embody cultural diversity, offer vast advantages for EFL training, including elevated learner's participation in the classroom, cross-cultural comprehension, and language skill growth.

Moreover, authentic materials are important when teaching culture because they provide learners with exposure to the language and culture as they are used in real-life situations. As Kramsch (1993) notes: *“Authentic materials provide learners with opportunities to experience the language and culture in a more meaningful and relevant way”* (p. 207). Adding to this, the use of authentic materials can improve students’ interpretations of TC, and improving their

language proficiency and communicative competence. (Tomlinson, 2012). In addition, teaching with authentic materials would help students in visualizing the different cultural aspects of the language in context; which would lead them to intercultural awareness and accepting the other. For instance, the Muslim community should accept the Christian community and vice versa given the fact that both communities are different in terms of culture and religion.

2.1. The dangers of authentic materials

Authentic materials can prove beneficial for students when they are used in their original form. However, it is crucial to emphasize that the selection of authentic materials should be approached thoughtfully, considering a clear pedagogic objective. Without careful consideration, the use of authentic materials may become discouraging or demotivating for students.

While authentic materials can introduce diversity into the classroom and provide students with real-life language examples, some researchers contended that they may not be ideal, particularly for low-level students. According to Jackie Bolen (2023) “*A careful selection of authentic materials is needed so that the students don’t become frustrated. Nothing is worse than choosing something that is higher-level than your students actually are.*”

However, using only authentic materials with advanced students might make it hard to see the good impact on those who are just starting. To make it work for everyone, it is necessary to think about whether the material fits the topic, if it is useful, interesting, and matches what the students need.

3. Intercultural Awareness

3.1. Definition of intercultural awareness

“Intercultural awareness can be regarded as the foundation of communication. It involves two qualities: one is the awareness of one’s own culture; the other is the awareness of

another culture. In other words, it involves the ability of standing back from our own point and becoming aware of not only our own cultural values, beliefs and perceptions, but also those of other cultures” (Zhu, 2011, p. 116). Therefore, in this case intercultural awareness involves being aware of cultural beliefs, behaviors, values, and perceptions of one's own culture and other cultures by comparing and evaluating them to see the similarities and differences which can be either positive or negative to break down social barriers and prevent any misunderstandings or conflicts.

In the same way, Baker (2011) described intercultural awareness as “*...a conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices and frames of understanding can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context specific manner in real time communication.*” (p. 201). In other words, Intercultural awareness involves the application of knowledge about the TC in real-time communication situations and adjusting to other people's cultures to navigate intercultural interactions.

For language learners, on the other hand, developing intercultural awareness is crucial to communicate effectively and appropriately beyond cultures or within culturally various contexts and to understand, accept and respect cultural diversity.

Intercultural competence in language learning involves learning to recognize, understand, and appreciate cultural differences and to adapt one's behavior to suit the cultural context of communication by developing intercultural awareness, learners can gain a deeper understanding of the cultural practices and beliefs that shapes language use and learn to communicate in a way that is sensitive to these practices. This not only to enhance learners' communication skills by also allows them to develop more empathy and sensitivity towards people from different cultures, leading to more positive and meaningful interactions. Furthermore, intercultural competence in language learning can contribute to greater social integration and cohesion, as learners are better equipped to navigate cultural differences and engage in intercultural dialogue. (Deardorff, 2011, p. 207)

Additionally, Intercultural Awareness holds significant importance in today's world, because it enables individuals to navigate cultural differences and communicate effectively as it also resolves any cultural misunderstanding and promotes respect for diverse cultures. It also

enhances one's ability to manage any multicultural situations and negotiate across culture.

3.2. Communicative Competence

Dell Hymes (1972) introduced the concept of communicative competence in response to Noam Chomsky's theory of linguistic competence (Chomsky, 1957) According to Dell Hymes (1972) "*Communicative competence is the ability to use language effectively in communication situations*". (p. 269). Indeed, language is more than just grammar rules. Social, cultural, and situational aspects also shape it. In simple terms, CC means a person's skill in effectively sharing information in a particular language and situation. It encompasses familiarity with grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and pragmatics, as well as the skill to apply this knowledge effectively to communicate fittingly in diverse social scenarios.

Canale and Swain (1980), defined CC as: "*The ability to use language effectively and appropriately in a range of social and cultural contexts*" (p. 10). They expanded on Hymes' definition by proposing a more comprehensive model of CC. According to their model, CC comprises four components:

1. Grammatical competence: which refers to the mastery of the language code, including vocabulary, word and sentence formation, pronunciation, spelling, and linguistic semantics.
2. Sociolinguistic competence: this component encompasses the sociocultural rules of language use.
3. Discourse competence: this component is related to the learners' ability to combine grammatical forms and meanings in order to create coherent and cohesive utterances.
4. Strategic competence: this competence refers to the ability to solve communication problems as they arise.

This model recognizes that there are many different factors that contribute to effective communication.

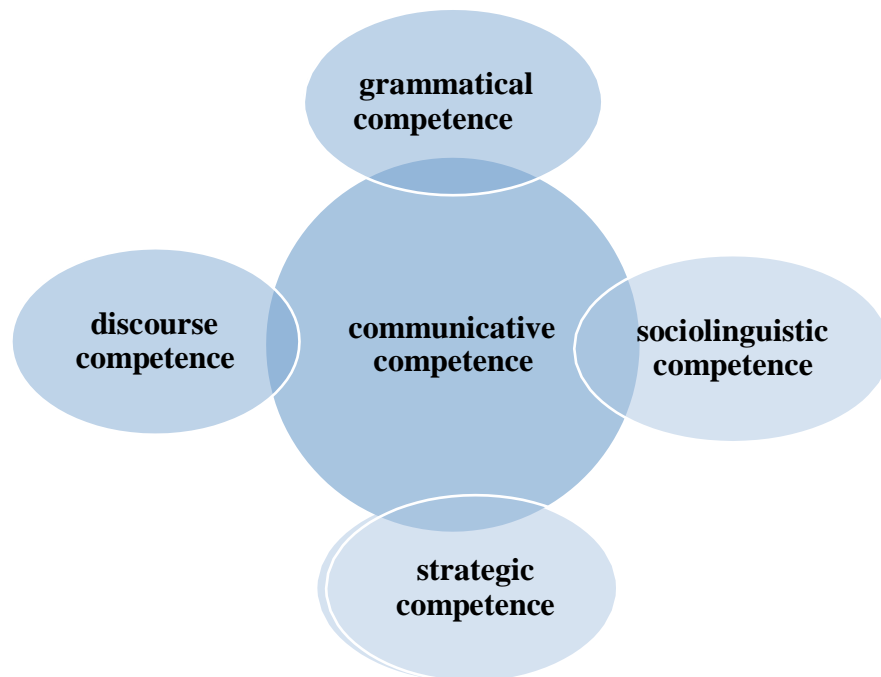


Figure 01. Canale and Swain's model (1980)

3.3. Intercultural competence

Hammer (2003) clarified that intercultural competence is the ability to manage psychological stress, communicate effectively, and establish interpersonal relationships (Hammer, 2003). IC, therefore, highlights three key components: the capability to handle psychological pressure, effectively convey information, and form positive connections with individuals from different cultures. Other scholars have elaborated on these components and added additional dimensions to the definition of IC.. Meyer (1991), describes it as: "*The ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes, and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures*" (p. 195) which emphasizes the importance of adaptability and cultural sensitivity. Similarly, Moran defines IC as the ability to enter other cultures and communicate effectively and appropriately, establish and maintain relationships, and carry out tasks with people of these cultures (2001) and this highlights the importance of cultural awareness, cross-cultural communication skills, and cross-cultural

relationship-building. However, there is a slight difference between IC and cross-cultural communication, IC places a specific emphasis on personal exchanges, emphasizing cultural awareness and communication skills. On the other hand, cross-cultural communication, extends beyond individual interactions, encompassing a boarder range of contexts where cultural differences play a role. Therefore, the key distinction lies in the depth of application.

3.4. Intercultural communicative competence (ICC)

3.4.1. Defining intercultural communicative competence

Intercultural communicative competence is when people learn how to understand and manage to communicate with people from different cultures. As it involves being open-minded to build strong relationships with people from different backgrounds and respect their culture and traditions.

According to Byram (1997), ICC involves the importance of intercultural awareness, sensitivity in effective communication, and collaboration across cultures. It challenges traditional notions of communicative competence and emphasizes the need for a more comprehensive approach to language teaching that incorporates intercultural communication skills.

For FL learners, ICC holds significant importance in today's globalized world; it has contributed to a deeper understanding of the complexities of intercultural communication and the development of intercultural awareness and sensitivity, which are essential skills for effective communication and collaboration in diverse contexts. (ibid) , this means that, ICC goes beyond language proficiency as it equips learners with necessary skills to engage in meaningful interactions by applying cultural knowledge and sensitivity, and it helps them to become more confident, flexible and competent communicators.

3.4.2. The shift from communicative competence to ICC

The shift from communicative competence to intercultural communicative competence highlights the importance of incorporating cultural-specific contexts along with linguistic principles of a particular culture for effective language acquisition. Therefore, an intercultural competent speaker of a foreign language possesses both communicative competence in that language as well as particular skills, attitudes, values, and knowledge about a culture. Being competent in intercultural communication goes beyond just knowing the language, including grammar and vocabulary. It involves not only knowledge or “savoirs” but also skills or “savoir-faire”, allowing learners to engage, communicate, and interact with others. Achieving this doesn’t demand an extremely high level; even basic proficiency is enough. Intercultural competence isn’t something to be learned, it is something to be lived. Speaking another language means embracing a different cultural perspective, and the interaction in this space give rise to a unique third place, as Kramsch points out: *"At the intersection of multiple native and target cultures, the major task of language learners is to define for themselves what this 'third place' that they have engaged in seeking will look like, whether they are conscious of it or not"* (1998, p. 257)

4. Idioms

4.1. Definition of idioms

Oxford’s advanced learner’s Dictionary defines idioms as follows: *“a group of words whose meaning is different from the meaning of the individual words. It is also the kind of language and grammar used by particular people at a particular time and place.”* (Dictionary, 2023). In simple terms, idioms are phrases that can’t be understood by merely examining the meaning of each individual word in the phrase. The word idiom comes from the Greek word *idios*, which means for “one’s own” or “private.” (Bhanoo, 2023).

That is because idioms are kind of a private language among the people who know them.

Since idioms are also culturally specific, they are not solely connected to language. The linguist Anatoly Liberman (2023), who has studied and written about the origin of idioms extensively, found that some idioms are highly localized, and never used outside of a small community. He says that although idioms are phrases, we learn them the way we learn words. It is the entire phrase that has a meaning (Liberman, 2023). Often, the order of the words cannot be changed around. We could say that idioms are a kind of literary and cultural shorthand. For example, the phrase “break a leg”, is an expression used by English people (native speakers), to wish for someone “good luck”. The words used in this expression are understandable; however, the meaning itself is implied and hidden at the same time, hard for the learners to deduce it unless they are familiar with it or linguistically competent as native speakers.

Cooper stated that: “*An idiom can have a literal meaning, but its alternate figurative meaning must be understood metaphorically.*” (1998, p. 255). That is to say, to understand idioms one should not consider the semantic level of the phrase but rather; interpret it at a metaphorical level (implied meaning). For example, the expression “once in a blue moon”, means “rarely”. And not really a blue moon, since it does not exist. So you cannot really understand this idiom by only focusing on the word meaning (semantic meaning) but it is hidden within the phrase as a metaphor.

Moreover; according to the Cambridge international dictionary of English: “*idioms are a group of words in a fixed order having a particular meaning, different from the meanings of each word understood on its own*” (English., 1995). That is to say; the words used in these expressions and their grammatical structures remain unchanged, we cannot change their parts of speech because if changed it loses the real meaning that the speaker wants to convey. For instance; the idiom “a snake in the grass”, means “someone who pretends to be your friend while secretly doing things to harm you.” The word ‘snake’ cannot be substituted by the word ‘mouse’ although they share the same function of a ‘noun’.

4.2. Types of idioms

(Fernando, 1996 p31), distinguishes three types of idioms:

1. Pure idioms ;
2. Semi-idioms ;
3. Literal idioms.

4.2.1. Pure idioms

Pure idioms are idioms that cannot be understood literally, it is a figurative meaning. It is where the components of the phrase bear no literal resemblance to the meaning of the phrase such as: “it’s raining cats and dogs”. This expression has no literal meaning. It would never rain cats and dogs, since it is impossible to happen. However; its figurative meaning stands for “raining heavily”. Another example of pure idioms is “spill the beans” which signifies “tell you secrets”. Its meaning can never be deduced or derived by the words ‘spill’ and ‘beans’. It is its figurative meaning that makes sense, though it has no relationship with the literal meaning. “the apple of my eye” is an idiom that Shakespeare used in his a midsummer night’s dream play, that English people tend to use to make reference that “a person is important in one’ eyes.” (ibid).

4.2.2. Semi-idioms

Semi-idioms are idioms that contains a literal part (sense), and another part is a non-literal one. An example is “to cost an arm and a leg”. This expression refers to something which is very expensive. The literal part in this idiom is the word ‘cost’; the non-literal part is ‘arm and leg’. Nevertheless; the language user would need to interpret that by ‘an arm and a leg’, the speaker means that the price of giving thing is overpriced. (ibid)

4.2.3. Literal idioms

For instance, “an elephant in the room” is a literal idiom. This expression means that there is an obvious major problem which people avoid to acknowledge or even discuss it, simply they ignore it. It is called literal because the association to the word signifies exactly what the

one understands, once imagining the scene Here ‘elephant’ is used to make a literal association to something that is big, huge, and very visible to the eye, but people choose to just ignore it and turn a blind eye on it. (ibid).

This is why idiomatic expressions should be taught inside classes. It is very hard for EFL learners to deduce the meaning all alone, since idioms are cultural bonded. So, introducing them in classes to idioms would play a major role and help them in their language performance, to practice the use of idioms and try to deduce the real meaning from the figurative meaning and guide them through the process, would result in competent language learners as well as language users and also the ability to communicate effectively with the TL native speakers without failing a conversation where idioms are being used.

4.3. Teaching TL culture through idioms

Learning idioms helps the learners in mastering the language in context. Giving the fact that all learners ultimate goal that they would like to achieve is to be able to communicate and speak as well as a native speaker. That is why, teachers when they teach idioms they are at the same time teaching culture, simply because when we teach a language we are at the same time teaching and learning about the culture. According to Kramsch :

Culture is not an independent aspect of language learning or teaching, it is a feature of language, it is always in the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners’ proficiency when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them. (Kramsch C. ,1993)

Thus, if EFL teachers make use of Idioms in the classes for their EFL learners, they are somehow teaching and introducing / integrating the culture of TL. So here, we can say that idiomatic expressions are an effective tool to teach culture through; since they offer for learners a new conception of language in order to understand the idiom in question that is metaphors. It is the connection between the idiom and its meaning and brings closer to people’s imagination or mind the real meaning and facilitates the interpretation. And this, should be introduced to

learners through the use of authentic materials such as videos, podcasts, or recordings.

Therefore; during the teaching/learning process in EFL classrooms, as teachers teach a language they would naturally refer to the TL culture whether directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly. Thus, when a teacher is teaching inside EFL classes idioms; they are teaching at the same time the culture of that TL. According to some scholars: “*culture has a crucial role in encoding and decoding messages corroborates with the above mentioned idea that culture is at the heart of communication. Culture as a body of knowledge of common beliefs, behaviors and values appear to be the factor to establish and interpret meaning in both verbal and nonverbal language*” (Oktay Yağiz, 2013, p. 953). So here, we can say that idiomatic expressions are an effective tool to teach culture through; since they offer for learners a new conception of language in order to understand the idiom in question that is metaphors. It is the connection between the idiom and its meaning and brings closer to people’s imagination or mind the real meaning and facilitates the interpretation. And this, should be introduced to learners through the use of authentic materials such as videos, podcasts, or recordings.

5. The Analytical Framework

To address the issue, the research is guided by one theory that is essential in the fields of language and intercultural communication which is: the Intercultural Communicative Competence Model by Byram (1997). The ICC Model is a framework for developing intercultural competence, which is necessary for effective communication in diverse cultural contexts. Byram's model proposes that intercultural competence involves a range of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable individuals to communicate appropriately and effectively with people from different cultures.

5.1. Byram’s Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence

Byram's model of intercultural competence is widely identified as the most used model today. His model is derived from Hymes and Van Ek's model (1986)

The aim of this model is to help educators in grasping the concept of intercultural awareness. Byram (1997) stated: “*This model is intended to help language teachers understand the concept of intercultural competencies*” (p.63–64). Byram identifies three fundamental elements critical for effective intercultural communication: attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

Additionally, he identifies two categories of knowledge:

- a. Knowledge about social groups and their cultures: this category of knowledge involves understanding of the culture of one's own culture and the TC. It includes the knowledge of the social practices, values, and beliefs of different cultural groups;
- b. Knowledge about Interaction process: this category consist of the knowledge of the communication process at the individual and social level, it includes knowledge of the processes of the interaction at the individual and societal level.

Byram also highlights two sets of skills that depend on the attitude and knowledge of the participants: interpretive and relational skills and discovery and interaction skills. Overall, Byram's model of ICC provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the skills and attitudes necessary for successful intercultural communication.

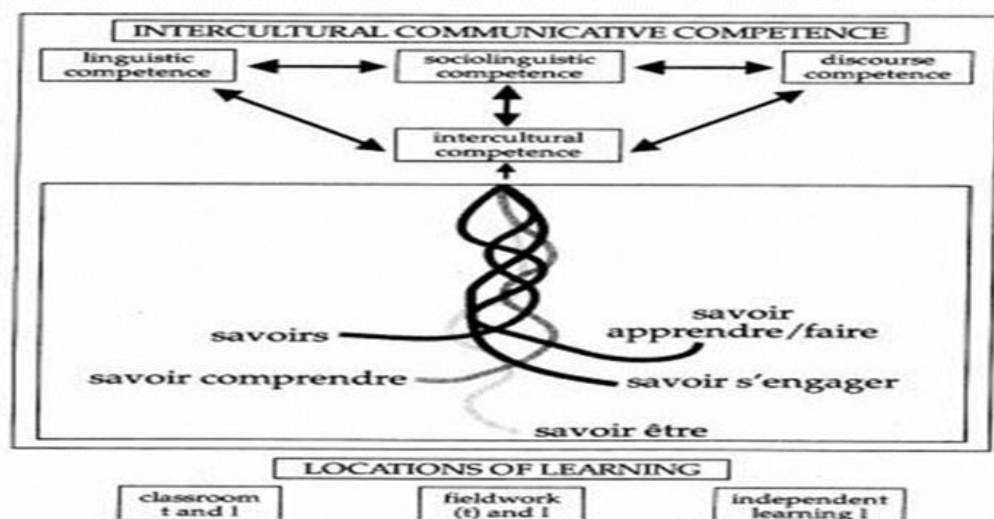


Figure 02. Byram Intercultural Communicative Competence Model (1997)

From the above figure, Byram's model sheds lights on the importance to develop the

ability to communicate with TL speakers and understand the TC to avoid cultural misunderstanding. According to Byram, intercultural competence consists of five distinct but interconnected components: attitude (*savoir etre*), knowledge (*savoir*), interpretation and relationship skills (*savoir comprendre*), discovery and interaction skills (*savoir faire*), and important cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*). By developing these competencies, students can become more familiar when they communicate with native speakers and boost their confidence to encounter any situation in a multicultural world (Byram, 1997).

As Byram (2008) notes: *“The aim of intercultural competence is to help students develop the ability to speak their minds and engage in personal growth that prepares them for life in a multicultural world.”* (Byram M. , 2008), which means, if a student is interculturally aware; it makes from them at the same time interculturally competent. They would be able to express themselves with no difficulties and to interact and communicate with others without any problems. And this prepares them for the real life of a multicultural world.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the important concepts related to the study of culture and intercultural awareness in the EFL classroom. It defines culture and emphasizes its significance in facilitating effective communication, underscoring the role of education in promoting intercultural understanding. The review also explores the concept of communicative competence and its relationship with culture. Intercultural awareness is also explored, and its three main components, the importance of teaching the target language culture is highlighted, and the use of authentic materials is discussed as an effective means of teaching language and culture. Besides, it provides the definition of idiom, type of idioms and their importance in understanding the foreign natives' "culture". The intercultural communicative competence model developed by Byram (1997) is proposed as a useful framework for promoting intercultural understanding and communicative competence.

Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the research design that the investigation adopts. The research design is divided into two sections. The first one is called procedures of data collection, it deals with the description of the participants involved in our research and the tools used to collect data which are one questionnaire for teachers and another one for learners. The second section is named procedures of data analysis, in which there is an in-depth explanation of the methodology used to examine and analyze the results.

1. Data Collection procedures

1.1. The participants

The participants involved in our study are 42 male and female of 3rd year (L3) students, and 5 teachers in the department of English at MMUTO.

1.2. Data collection tools

In order to gather data needed to our research, we used one instrument. We designed a questionnaire for 3rd year students at the department of English at MMUTO, and a questionnaire for teachers of Listening and speaking.

1.2.1. Student's questionnaire

According to Brown a questionnaire is defined as: "*any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers.*" (2001)

A questionnaire is a research instrument used to collect data from participants by presenting a series of structured questions. It is a widely used method for gathering information and opinions from individuals in a standardized and systematic manner. To gather data for this study, a questionnaire of 11 open-ended and multiple-choice questions was developed and administered to the third-year students of the English department at MMUTO.

The questionnaire was administered online and consisted of three sections: the first section is about students general information, the second one is about idiomatic expressions. Lastly, the third section is about intercultural awareness. The survey received a total of 45 responses in June. However, three of the submissions were incomplete, resulting in the utilization of 42 fully completed responses for the analysis.

1.2.2. Teacher's questionnaire

We also created a questionnaire for teachers to gain insights into the integration of intercultural awareness elements into their teaching and their methods for instructing idiomatic expressions. This questionnaire was also administrated online, we sent it via email to 5 teachers in September, and they all responded.

The questionnaire is structured into three sections. The first one focuses on gathering general information about the teachers, while the second one is about their approach to teach idiomatic expressions. Additionally, the third section centers on the practices related to intercultural awareness.

In total the questionnaire comprises 16 questions which encompass both open-ended and close-ended inquiries.

2. Procedures of data analysis

2.1. Research method

In order to conduct the study, we rely on the Mixed Methods approach which is a valuable approach to research that combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods, it is *“a research in which the investigator collects and analysis data, integrates the finding and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study”* (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007, p: 4)

2.2. Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data analysis is a useful method for providing statistical information

and generalizing findings to a larger population. Quantitative data analysis can be defined as *“the process of analyzing data that is number-based or data that can easily be converted into numbers. It is based on describing and interpreting objects statistically and with numbers as it aims to interpret the data collected through numeric variables and statistics.”* (Eteng, 2023).

The data that was collected from the student's questionnaire is analyzed using the rule of three, where the close-ended questions of the questionnaire are transformed into percentages. The percentages are calculated with the following equation $X = Y \times 100 / Z$. the results are displayed in the form of diagrams (graphs, tables, pie-chart).

2.3. Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)

Qualitative content analysis can provide a more in-depth understanding of the experiences and perspectives of individuals. It is defined as *“a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns”* (Hsieh & Shannon 2005, p: 1278), in this research the open-ended questions are analyzed using QCA and are interpreted in form of written materials.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the research design that the study carry, it I divided into two sections, the first one, procedures of data collection has described the participants of the study, then it has presented the instrument of data collection. In addition, the second section explained the data analysis procedures that were used to interpret and analyze the data.

Presentation of the Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate how EFL learner’s intercultural awareness will help them to interpret idiomatic expressions and develop their CC. This chapter is devoted to the presentation of the teachers’ and students’ questionnaire results. It is divided into two parts: the first one will present the results of the teachers questionnaire and the second one will interpret the findings of the students questionnaire. To present the findings, we use both quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

1. Presentation of the teachers' questionnaire results

Section one

1. How long have you been teaching English?

Teacher	Year of experience in English	Percentages
1	20 years	33%
2	11 years	25%
3	2 years	8%
4	8 years	18%
5	6 years	17%

Table03. Teachers’ Teaching Experience

The table displays the number of teachers with their teaching experience. There is a variation of how many years they have been teaching, the number goes from 2 years to 20 years.

2. How do you teach the Target Culture?

Method	Role play	Listening to music	Watching movies	Reading books
Participants	4	1	2	3
%	40%	10%	20%	30%

Table04. How do teachers teach the TC

The table above shows that the majority of the participants (40%) choose role playing as a method of teaching about the TC, a considerable number of them (30%) prefer reading books to introduce the target culture to their learners, whereas 20% selected watching movies, while only 10% choose listening to music as a teaching material for their students.

Section two

3. Give your personal definition of idiomatic expression.

This question is addressed to teachers to find out the teachers' knowledge about idioms. Throughout the results, teachers have expressed themselves differently, but indeed all their definitions turn around the same point. Among their responses, one of them declared that idiomatic expressions are **“phrases that have a unique, non-literal meaning,”** and **“idiomatic expressions are phrases that have a figurative meaning, where the literal meaning of the word is different from the meaning it refers to”**, so they all emphasize that idiomatic expressions have meaning that diverge from the literal meanings of the words they comprise. Idioms also characterized by their figurative meaning that is in contrast to their literal meaning **“Idiomatic expressions are phrases that have a figurative meaning.”** Two teachers highlight that: **“This means that the meaning of the whole phrase or expression cannot be deduced from the meaning of the individual words it contains”**. This means that these expressions have meaning that cannot be deduced by analyzing the individual words within them.

4. How often do you integrate activities or exercises about the TC idioms in your course?

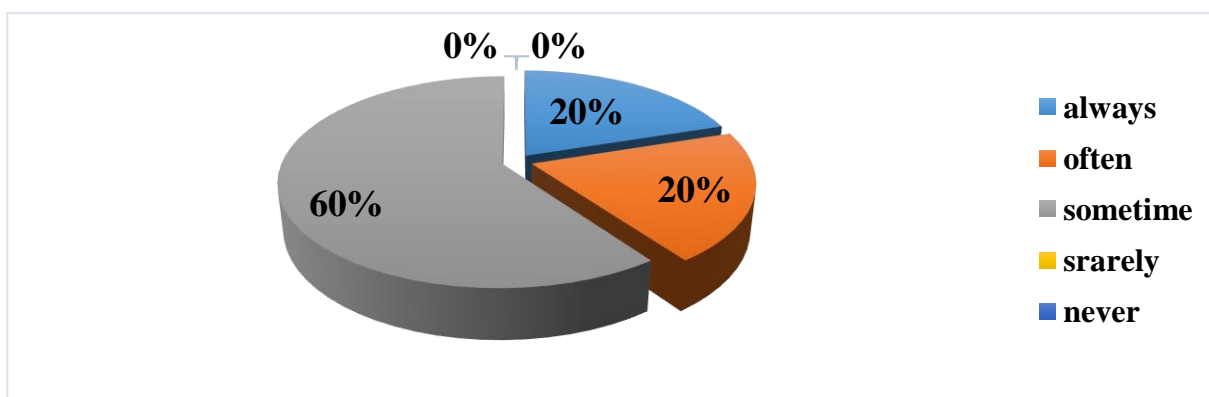


Diagram01. The teachers' integration of TC within classroom activities.

The findings above depict that the greatest part of the participants (60%) affirm that they *sometimes* integrate activities and exercises about the TC idioms, and an equal number of participants (20 %) declare that they **always** and **often** integrate them.

▪ *Justify your answer*

The justifications provided by the teachers regarding how often they integrate activities about the TC idioms in their courses vary based on several factors, including the specific program or curriculum, one of the participants declared: "**according to the program, if it allows to**". Another claimed that it is the teaching style, the perceptions and of the students' needs that influence what to integrate within the activities, he stated: "**I rely on the given program by the administration and I sometimes add more activities on my own if I see that the Students don't get some points**". Or it can significantly vary from module to another as they declared "**It differ from module to module**", "**It depends on the module**" depending of the subject, the teachers may adapt their strategies to align with the specific module. In general, the teachers want to make sure that their students understand, and they do what they think works best to achieve that.

5. In your opinion, do students understand the TC idioms?

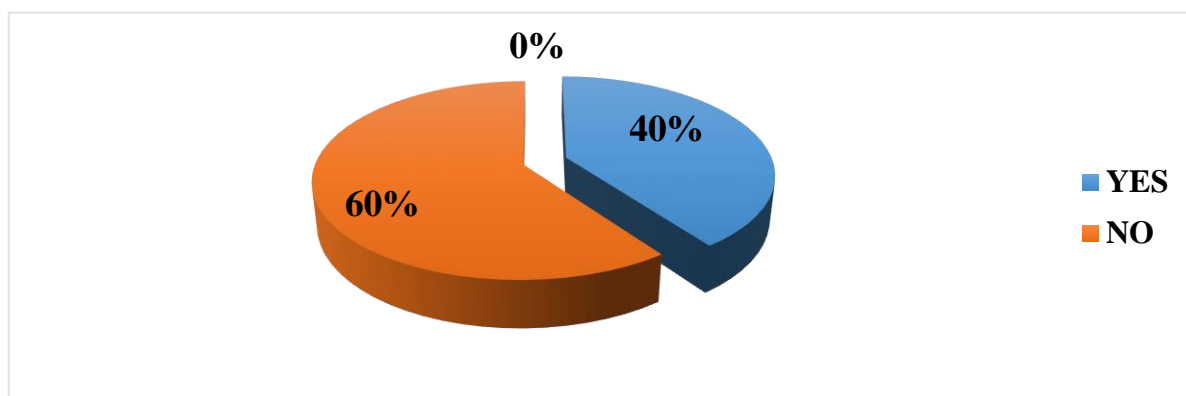


Diagram02. Teachers' opinion on students understanding of idioms

The diagram depicts that 40% of teachers think that students understand idioms whereas 60% of them think that they don't.

▪ *Justify your answer*

The responses provided by the teachers offer insights on the challenges students face when they try to understand idiomatic expressions. One teacher suggested that it is difficult for students to deduce the meaning of idioms as he declared: **“because it is hard for them to deduce the meaning”**. Furthermore, another teacher said that **“Most of the time, it is difficult to get the meaning of the target culture idioms due to their cultural and nonliteral or metaphorical meaning”**, which means that some students face cultural challenges when they try to understand idioms. One more participant emphasized that he makes efforts to facilitate students understanding by making the learning process accessible to everyone as he declared **“I try to facilitate them everything during the course so that they could easily understand idioms and find them interesting”**. Another teacher said: **“[...] it depends on students' background knowledge and understanding during the course”**, so there are some students that understand TC idioms well thanks to their background knowledge and their engagement in the course.

6. Do you think that students encounter difficulties in understanding and using idiomatic expressions?

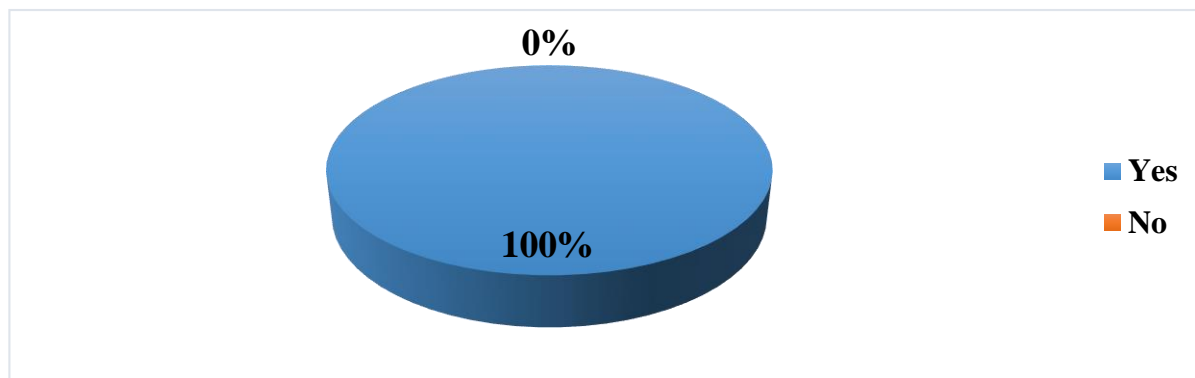


Diagram03. Students facing difficulties in understanding idioms

The diagram above displays that all teachers (100%) think that students face difficulties in using and understanding idiomatic expressions.

▪ *Justify your answer*

The teachers' comments show that students find idiomatic expressions hard at first, but it gets easier once they understand them; as one teacher declared **“the problem relies in understanding the idiom in question and deducing the correct meaning of the idiom and once they learn about it using it becomes much easier”**. Another teacher highlighted that some students find idioms tricky because of their cultural differences by stating: **“occasionally culture might be a challenge in itself for students”** similarly, another teacher declared the following: **“The non-literal meaning and cultural variations make it difficult for students to understand idiomatic expressions.”** Not everyone struggles, though; some students are fine with idioms. One teacher suggested that **“Some students just need practice and time to master them”**

7. What kind of difficulties do they encounter when learning idioms?

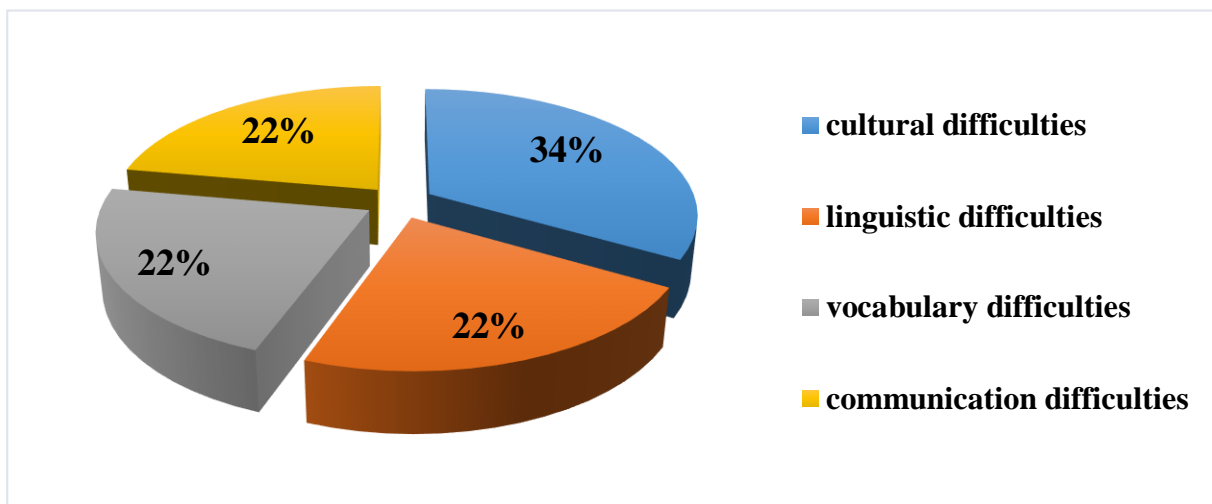


Diagram04. Most difficulties encountered by students while learning idioms

The diagram presented above illustrates that 34% of the challenges encountered by students are attributed to cultural factors, while linguistic issues account for 22%. Additionally, both vocabulary and communication obstacles each contribute to 22% of the difficulties.

8. Do you think that learning idiomatic expressions help the learners understand better the target culture?

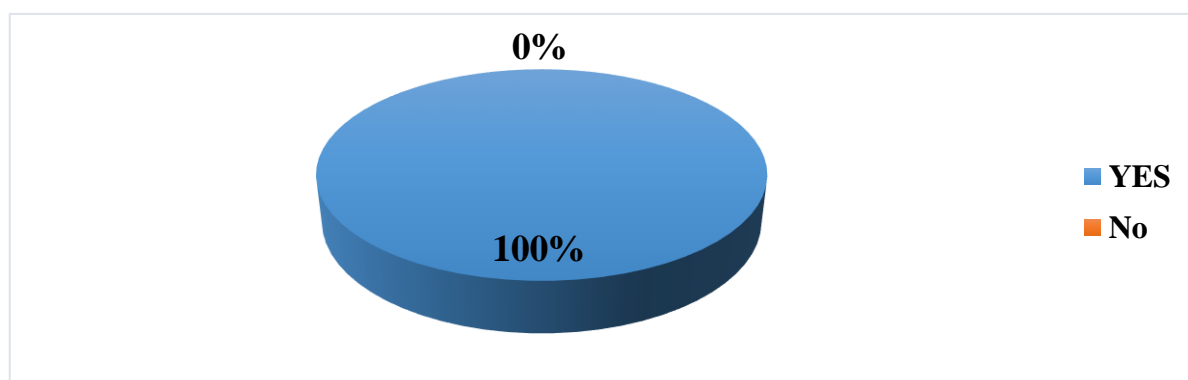


Diagram05. Teachers' views towards students' understanding of the TC with idioms

Diagram (05), it is indicated that all the teachers (100%) believe that learning idiomatic expressions helps learners have a better understanding of the target culture.

9. Are your students able to explain correctly the idioms studied in the classroom?

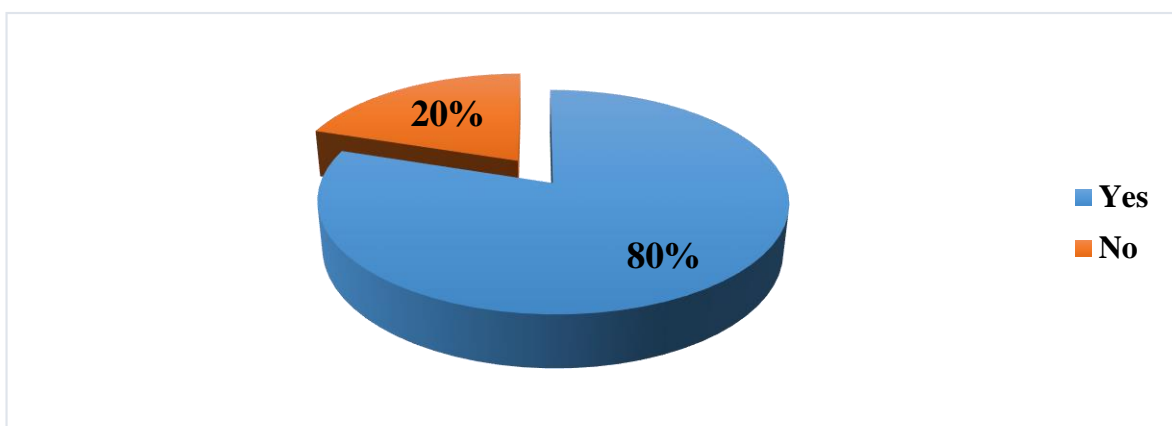


Diagram06. Student's ability in explaining idioms

The diagram demonstrates that the majority (80%) of the teachers do think that the learners are able to explain correctly the idioms in the classroom while 20% do not.

10. Have you noticed any difference in the communicative competence of your students when they use the TC idioms?

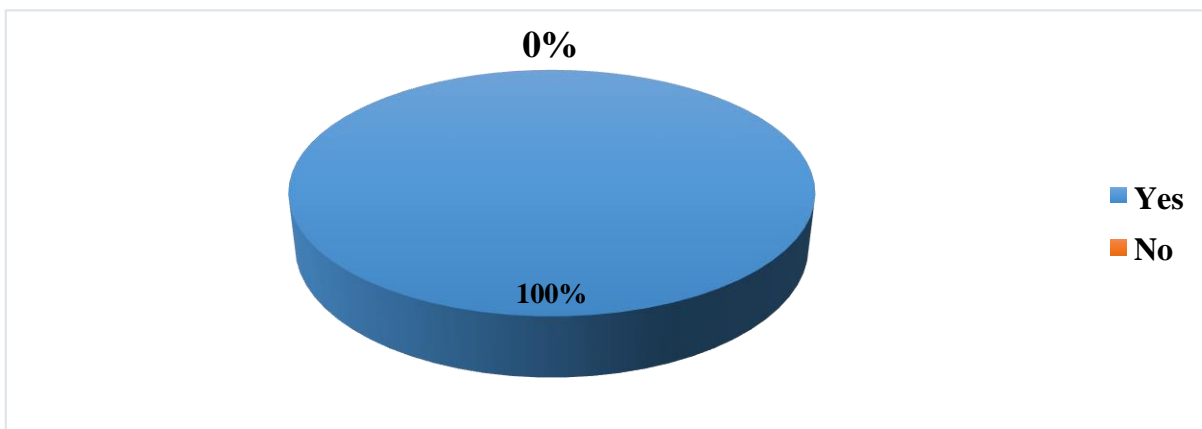


Diagram07. Teachers observations of their students' communicative competence.

The diagram illustrates that all teachers (100%) have observed a notable improvement in their students' communicative competence when they incorporate TC idioms in their communication.

Section three

11. How would you rate your familiarity with the concept of intercultural awareness in language teaching?

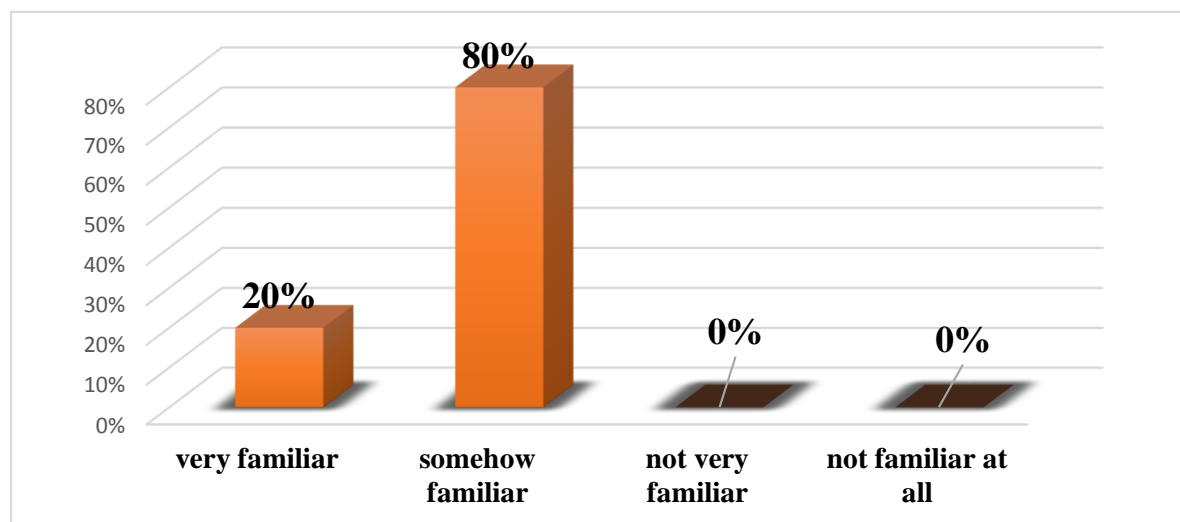


Diagram08. Teachers' familiarity with intercultural awareness

The diagram provided depicts the degree of familiarity that teachers have with the concept of intercultural awareness. According to the data, 20% of teachers reported being highly familiar with the concept. Furthermore, 80% stated that they possess some level of familiarity. It is worth noting that none of the teachers indicated being not very familiar or completely unfamiliar with the concept.

12. Give your personal definition of intercultural awareness

The responses indicate that cultural awareness encompasses two crucial aspects. Firstly, it involves comprehending and valuing one's own culture as well as other cultures. This implies that individuals should be at ease with their cultural identity while remaining receptive to understanding and appreciating different cultures. One of the participants noted: **"understanding and appreciating your own culture and other cultures."** Secondly, intercultural awareness entails recognizing both the similarities and differences between one's own culture and other cultures. It is important to acknowledge the diverse nature of cultures

and exhibit respect for all of them. **One stated: "intercultural awareness means being aware of the similarities and differences between one's culture and other cultures"**

13. Do you think that it is essential for learners to learn about the target culture?

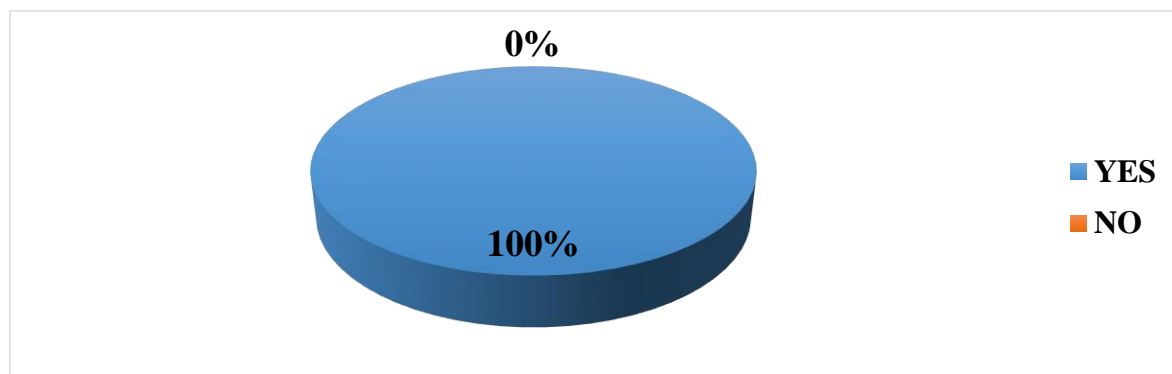


Diagram09. The importance of learning about the target culture

The diagram above illustrates that all teachers (100%) believe that it is crucial for learners to acquire knowledge about the target culture because it plays a significant role in language learning.

14. Do you think that the target culture is enough integrated during the teaching process?

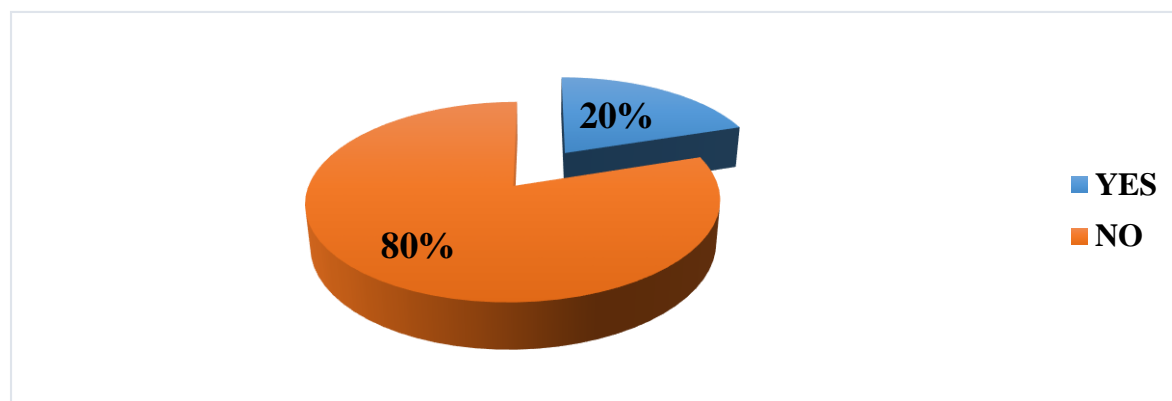


Diagram10. Integration of the TC in the teaching process

The above findings indicate that a significant majority (80%) believe that culture is not adequately integrated into the teaching process, while only a minority (20%) believe that it is sufficiently integrated.

▪ *Justify your answer?*

Teaching often presents challenges when it comes to incorporating cultural elements into the classroom. Due to the lack of time and the appropriate materials needed. One teacher acknowledged the challenge, stating: **“The integration of cultural content into the teaching process can be challenging due to the limited time to cover the syllabus and the lack of resources.”** Teachers often prioritize the syllabus, as one teacher noted **“not much integrated, due to syllabus that we need to accomplish by the end”**, and regardless of the challenges some educators make efforts to integrate cultural elements into their teaching, as one teacher shared: **“Absolutely, the program is very rich and I also integrate TC very often during the lesson”** Furthermore, when teachers recognize the limitations of classroom time they encourage students to explore the TC on their own to deepen their cultural knowledge, as one teacher mentioned: **“The target culture is an essential part of my teaching, I also encourage my students to study more at home to get more knowledge about the TC”**. However, the integration of cultural content in education involve making balance between curriculum demands, efforts by teachers, the ongoing challenges, and promoting independent learning.

15. How often do you incorporate intercultural activities in your lessons?

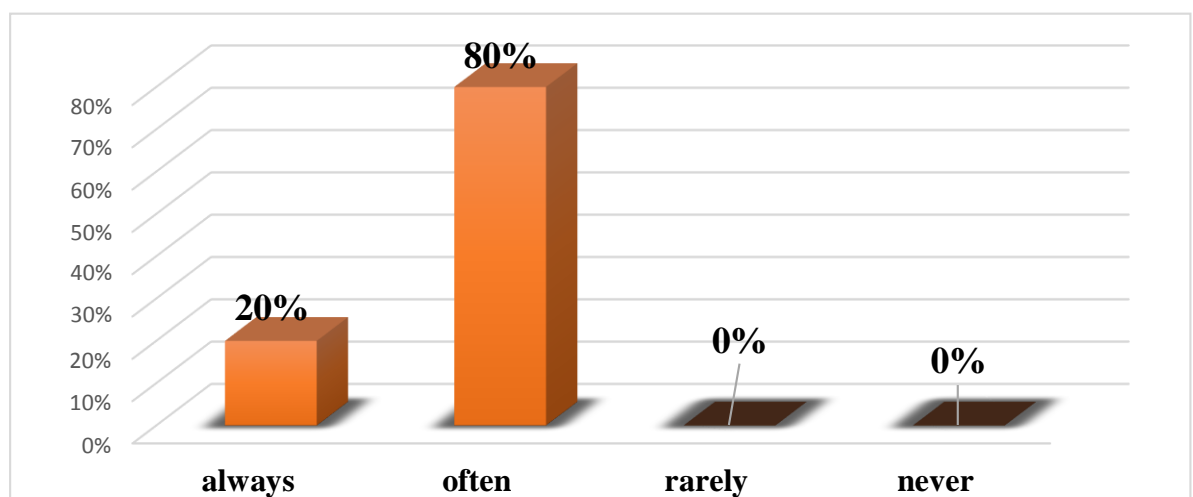


Diagram11. Teachers incorporation of intercultural activities within lessons

The results of displayed above show that that 80% of the teachers frequently integrate intercultural activities in their lessons, whereas only 20% always do so. However, none of them rarely or never integrate these activities.

16. Do you think that enhancing student's intercultural awareness help them to develop Communicative Competence?

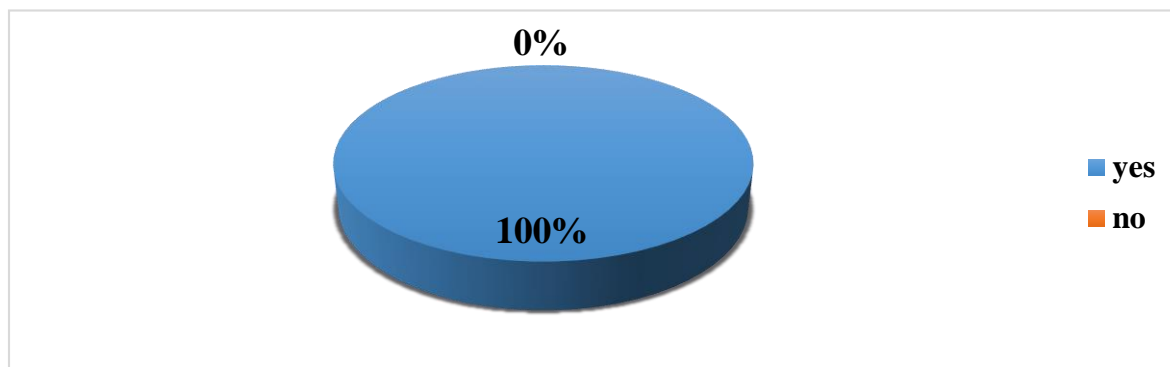


Diagram12. Teachers views towards the enhancement of students CC through Intercultural awareness

The diagram showcases that all teachers, without exception, strongly believe that intercultural awareness is crucial in helping students develop their communicative competence.

Presentation of the Student's questionnaire results

Section one

Q1. How long have you been studying English?

The majority of the students (20) have studied English for 10 years some of them mentioned that they have studied English from middle school until now, 15 of them claim that they have studied for 11 years, whereas 4 have just studied for 12 years and only 3 have studied for 13 years.

Q2. How do you qualify/ assess your knowledge about the English culture?

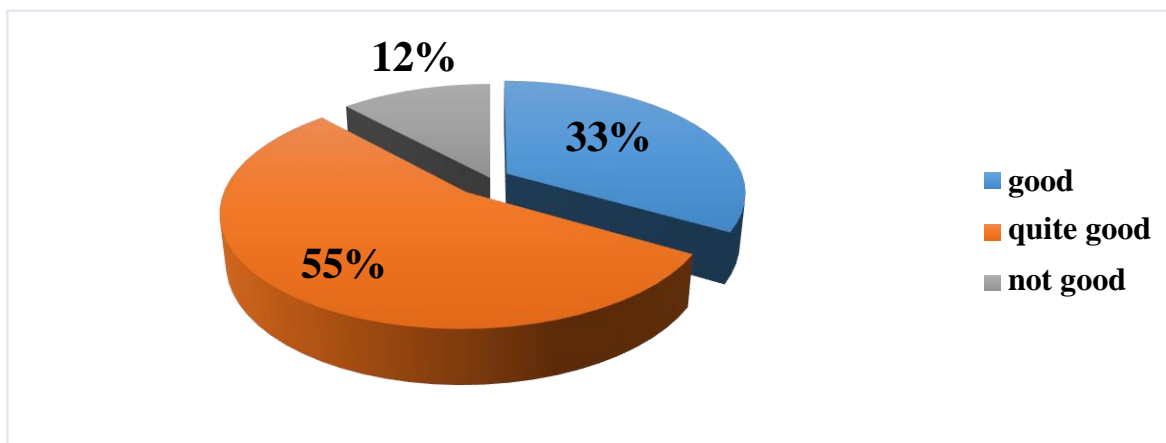


Diagram13. Student’s knowledge about the English culture

▪ *Justify your answer*

Many students have developed an interest in English culture, which plays a significant role in shaping their education. One participant declared: **“I love English culture so I'm always digging into it to know more and more”**. A substantial number of students shared their methods and sources for acquiring knowledge about the culture. One student mentioned, **“Thanks to our teachers and online resources, I have a comprehensive package for learning.”** He carried on stating, **“I enjoy reading books, watching movies or documentaries, and listening to podcasts, as they greatly aid my understanding.”** Some students have been studying English for a considerable amount of time, allowing them to have extensive exposure to the culture. As one learner explained, **“I started learning English in primary school, so I have a strong foundation.”**

Interactions with foreign friends were also mentioned as contributing factors to their understanding of English culture. As one learner emphasized, **“I have had numerous encounters with people from different countries.”** Many learners expressed that their learning about the culture is an ongoing process. As one learner asserted, **“English culture is vast, and I continue to learn more over time.”** However, a few students admitted to having

limited exposure to English culture. One participant expressed, "**My knowledge is somewhat limited, as I am not very familiar with English culture.**"

Q3. Do you learn the English culture in your classes?

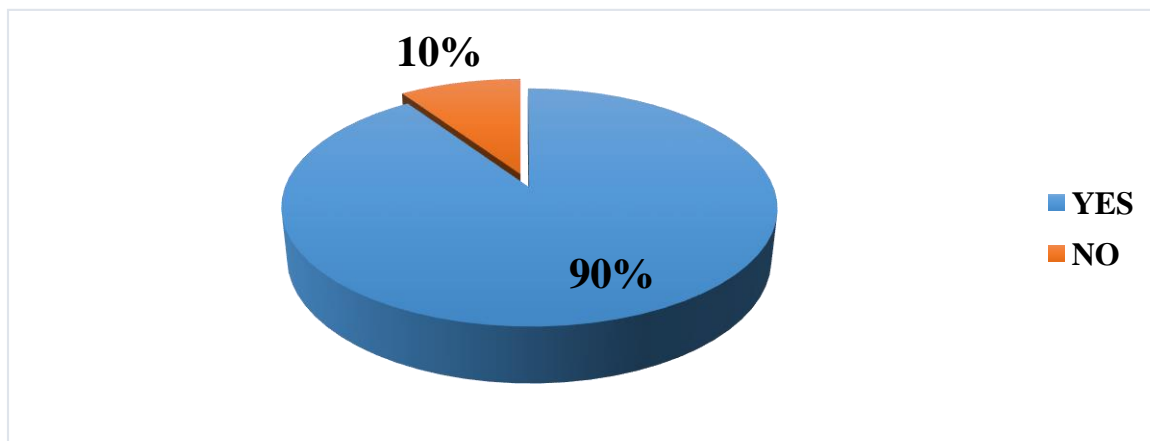


Diagram14. Learning the English culture in classes

The diagram depicts that the majority (90 %) of the learners highlighted that they learn about the English culture in their classes while only 10% claimed that they do not.

Section two

Q4. What is an idiom?

Many students described idioms as expressions that carry a meaning beyond their literal interpretation, stating that "**An idiom is a phrase that carries a meaning beyond its individual words.**" The respondents frequently mentioned that idioms involve figurative meanings that are different from the words' literal meaning, highlighting that they "**Have a figurative meaning, not similar to the literal meaning.**" The learners also noted that idioms have implied or hidden meanings, stating that they are "**Expressions that have an implied meaning rather than its literal meaning.**"

Most of the answers revealed that idioms "**...usually used by different cultures to mean a certain thing...**", emphasizing that idioms can be culture-dependent and may not have direct translations to other languages. The learners indicated that idioms are part of natural

language usage, and native speakers incorporate them into their speech as a regular part of their usage, stating that idioms are **"Expressions that native speakers of a specific language use that have a special meaning."** Some students suggested that idioms are like a language puzzle or code for non-native speakers, claiming that **"A word or phrase that doesn't mean what they say they are, like a code"** and **"it is like a language puzzle."**

Q5. Do you study about idioms in your classrooms?

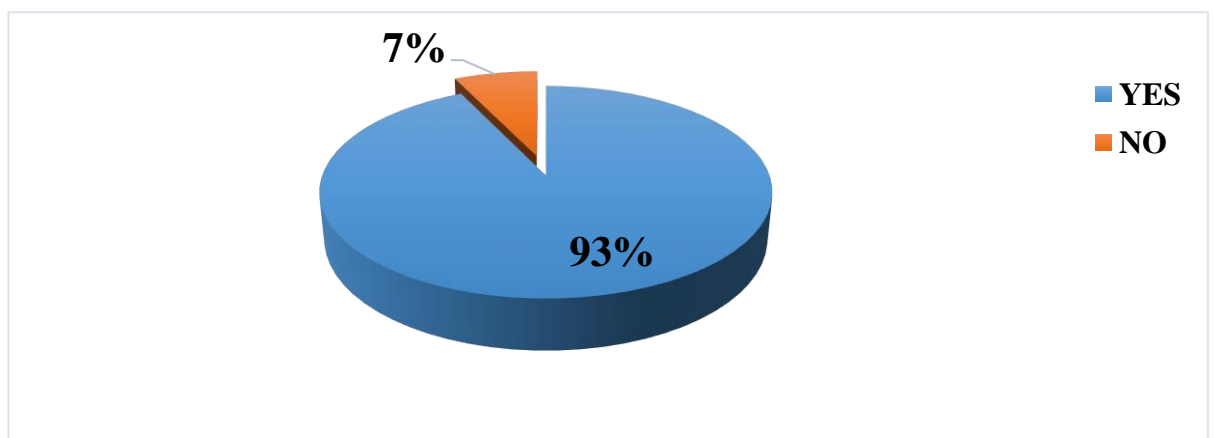


Diagram15. Learning idioms in class

The results indicated in the diagram shows that the great majority do study idioms in their classrooms, meanwhile only 7% don't.

Q6. Do you have / encounter difficulties in understanding the studied idioms?

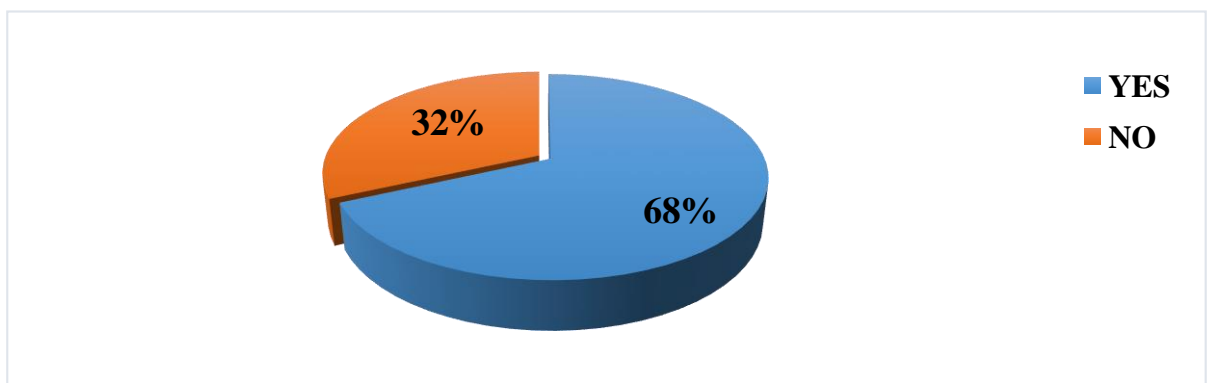


Diagram16. Student's understanding difficulties of idioms

As shown in the diagram above, the results indicated that 68% of the learners do face difficulties in understanding the studied idioms, but 32% of them do not encounter any difficulties in understanding them.

▪ *If yes, what kind of difficulties?*

Many students find it “**Hard to understand the hidden meaning sometimes**”, they often perceive idioms as having meanings that are not immediately obvious from the individual words, and also “**Ambiguity**” that idioms can have when learning new idioms. Some respondents mention that “**vocabulary**” and “**cultural**” differences can pose difficulties in understanding idioms. Few students noted that they are not enough exposed to idioms and they were only studied idioms for a limited time as one learner claimed “**I spent a good two years studying idioms, I believe. However, I still find them insufficient, which makes it challenging for me to fully grasp their meanings and intended references at times**”

Students also mentioned that some idiomatic expressions are specific to native speakers as one learner declared “**some expression are only for the English people to understand.**” However, despite the difficulties, many students mentioned that they make efforts to learn and understand idioms, highlighting that “**They are sometimes hard to understand, but I do my best to learn about them.**”

Q7. Do idioms help you in understanding the English culture?

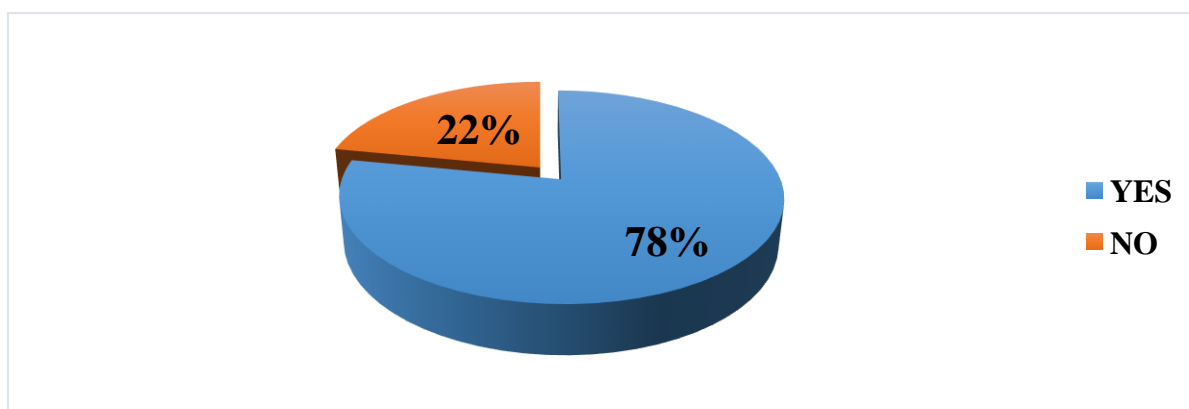


Diagram17. Impact of idioms in understanding the English culture

As indicated above 78% of the learners thin that idioms help them to understand the English culture however 22 % of them don't share the same thoughts.

- *Justify your answer*

For some students, idioms “**reflect people's ideologies in a given society**” they can provide insights into how people in a given society view the world and communicate their values, they described idioms as “**open windows into their world**”. Many learners connect idioms with culture and social norms, and they are seen as a bridge that helps learners understand culture, lifestyle and beliefs of native speakers as they highlighted “**the reflect the culture and social norms of that language, they give a view of English lifestyle and beliefs**” and “**they are part of the culture**”.

Q8. Do you think that learning English idioms would improve your communicative skills?

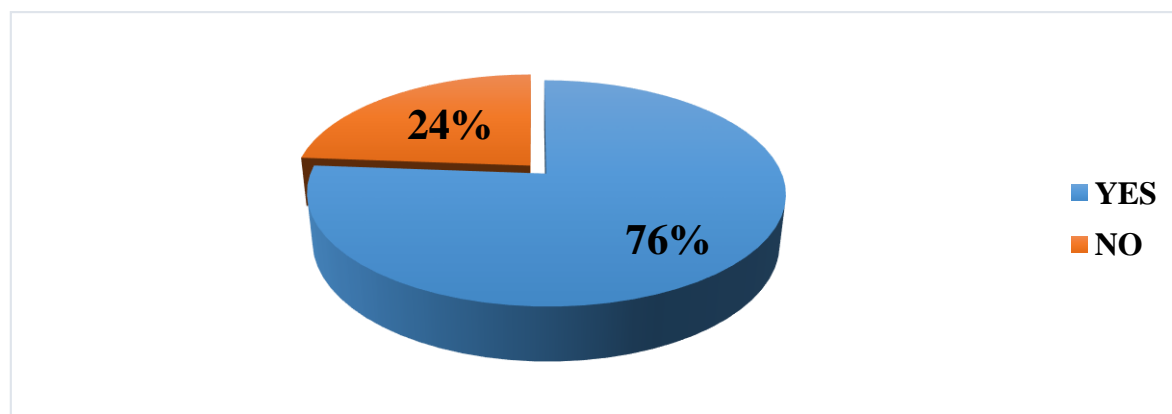


Diagram18. The impact of learning English idioms to improve communicative skills

The above diagram depicts that the majority (76%) of the learners think that learning English idioms would improve their communicative skills, while only 24% don't share the same thoughts.

- *Justify your answer*

Idioms are seen as a way to “**enriches the vocabulary**” of the learners. Many students believe that learning idioms improves their ability to communicate effectively and fluently

especially with native speakers as a learner highlighted that using idioms can aid in achieving fluency, while also facilitating communication with English speakers from various parts of the world. The learners also mentioned that idioms help in better understanding and relating to the TL cultures as they claimed **“it helps in communicating better with that specific culture and relate to their experiences better...”** learners also suggested that the use of idioms in conversations makes individuals feel more natural and at ease, especially when interacting with native speakers, one learner claimed that when he communicates and incorporates idiomatic expressions, he feels comfortable and capable of engaging in a fluent conversation with a person from another country. He followed with the following: **“when I speak and I use idioms I feel like I'm natural and able to make a conversation with a foreigner go very good”**, and **“idioms make the conversation sound natural like native speakers”**.

For some learners, idioms assist in expressing **“emotions, opinions and ideas more easily”**, and they also do help to express **“thoughts and feelings precisely”**. The learners also claimed that idioms are a way to improve their communication skills as one of them expressed **“I mean they are a good tool to upgrade the language skills”**, and **“Each time I learn a new idiom, I feel like I got into a new level”**. However, some of them express desire for more practice and learning about idioms as they claim **“we don't learn about them so much we need a lot of practice”**.

Q9. Try to explain the meaning of this idiom

“Break a leg”

Out of 42 participants only 26 explained this common idiom used to wish someone good luck. It's interesting to see that the students provided various ways to expressing the same idea, which reflect the richness of idiomatic language, while some directly said **“good luck”**, others used phrases like **“to do your best”** or **“wishing luck to someone”**. However, 3 students responded by **“I don't know”**.

“Piece of cake!”

The responses from the students to the idiom “piece of cake” all convey a consistent meaning of something being easy or very simple. 37 of them responded by “**Easy**”, which is the correct meaning. Even though the wording may vary slightly like “**It means that it’s bloody easy**”, or “**Something easy to do**”, the overall interpretation remains constant.

“It costs an arm and a leg!”

This idiom, is associated with something being expensive or carry a very high cost. 37 of the students did respond, and their responses indicate that the majority of them have a clear comprehension and understanding of this idiom. The word “**expensive**” was frequently used. Some of them used different words such as “**Pricey**” or “**Cost so much**”, but they all convey the same meaning. Very few students used the word “**hard**”, which might suggest a slightly different connotation.

“Once in a blue moon”.

28 of the participants responded, their responses to this idioms show a consistent understanding among the students, with the term “**rare**” being commonly used. Several students also provided similar phrases like “**very rare**” or “**very rarely**”. A few students explicitly mentioned that it means something occurring “**once in a while**” or “**rarely**”, which aligns with the idiom’s meaning. A couple of students admitted that they “**don’t know**” the meaning.

“Beat a dead horse”.

The responses to this idiom reveal various interpretations. Some students expressed uncertainty by stating “**I don’t know**”. Other students seemed to understand that it is about repeating something or a topic that has already been decided, as they stated “**Someone repeating the same thing over and over**” or “**trying to talk about a specific topic to look for a change but a decision about that topic is already decided.**” Other responses like “**to waste efforts**” or

“repeating useless things” suggest that the students understand this idiom’s figurative meaning, but they didn’t expend further effort to provide a complete statement

“Turn a blind eye”

24 of the participants did answer, the responses to this idiom generally reflect an understanding that involves ignoring or overlooking something. Students used various phrases such as “ignoring”, “to ignore”, and “to pretend like you didn’t see\nnotice”, which all revolve around the concept of ignoring or not paying attention. Some responses, like “get overit” or “walk away”, highlight the student’s recognition that the idiom conveys the idea of choosing to look away or not acknowledging a situation or issue which basically means to ignore it

Section Three

Q10. According to you, which statement defines the most intercultural awareness?

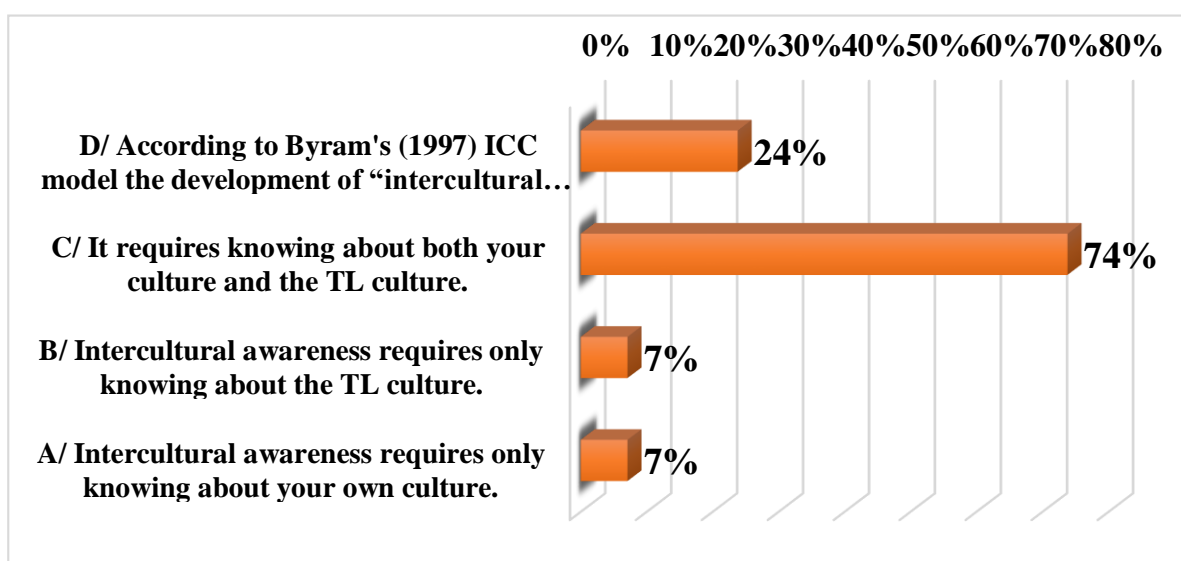


Diagram 19. Students’ definition of intercultural awareness.

Shown in the above diagram above 74% of the learners choose response C which is *The knowledge about one’s culture and the target culture*. 24% of them choose answer D, which is the definition provided by Byram (1997) while 7% choose answer A and B.

Q11. To be communicatively competent, means you need to develop

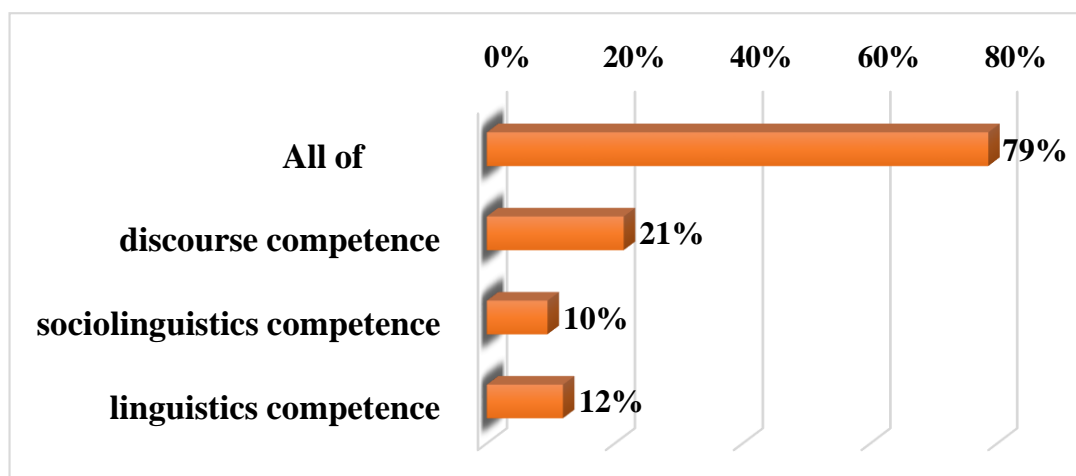


Diagram20. Development factors for communicative competence

The diagram above show that 79% believe that to be communicatively competent one should develop all the competences, 21% of them think that only discourse competence should be developed, 12% think that linguistics competence is more important, while only 10% are for sociolinguistics competence

▪ *Justify your answer*

The learners mention that these competences are important **“to communicate effectively in different contexts”** and **“for a good interaction with others especially native English speakers”**. While some other learners claim that understanding and being aware of the cultural context and society of the person you are communicating with is also stressed as they suggest **“you need to be aware about culture of the society and, know how to use your sentences in the right circumstances.”** Several responses mention that the competences work together to make someone communicatively competent, as the worded **“I believe that being communicatively competent require all of them”** and **“They all work together to make a communicatively competent person”**. Many of the learners stress out that the language rules are seen as crucial to prevent communication barriers as they claim **“I believe that being communicatively competent require all of them since we should know words, rules and**

conversation flow” and “no conversation will go well without know how to link words and masteringthe rules”.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results obtained from the questionnaires of both students and teachers of the Department of English at MMUTO. The first section, has reported the findings of the teachers questionnaire and the second section has displayed the results of the student’s questionnaire. The gathered findings are going to be studied/ discussed in details in the following chapter.

Discussion of the Findings

Introduction

This current chapter is devoted to the discussion of the findings obtained through the analysis of the questionnaires distributed to English students at the department of English at MMUTO. The results are interpreted and discussed by following the theory of Byram. It aims to answer the research questions and to confirm or refute the hypothesis mentioned in the general introduction. The chapter contains two sections, the first one is about the discussion of the findings obtained through teachers' questionnaire, and the second sections about the results collected through students' questionnaire.

1. Discussion of the teachers' questionnaire

1.1. Discussion of the first research question: the teachers' incorporation of idioms as a teaching material in EFL classrooms as a bridge to cultural understanding

This section is concerned with the discussion of the results of teachers' attitudes toward the incorporation and the effectiveness of idioms as a tool to understand the TC and the development of students' CC. The responses of question 14 of the questionnaire (see diagram09) shows that 100% of the teachers think that it is essential for students to learn about the target culture. Moreover, the findings of the teachers' questionnaire (see diagram01) show that 60% of them sometimes integrate activities about the TC idioms in their courses, and this depends on different causes like the program or the module as they claim **“according to the program, if it allows to”** and **“It differs from subject to subject”**. These idiomatic expressions are more than mere linguistic constructs; they serve as a way to transmit cultural connotations and meanings unique to specific societies.

Teachers, therefore, recognize the profound role idioms play in bridging the gap between language and culture which confirm this statement *“culture has a crucial role in encoding and decoding messages corroborates with the above mentioned idea that culture is at the heart of communication.....”* (Oktay Yağiz, 2013, p. 953) which is essential for

enhancing students' intercultural awareness and CC.

So idioms and culture are linked, because idioms are vehicles of cultural expression within language. Hence, in EFL classroom, while teaching the language, teachers inevitably make reference to the TC, whether it is done explicitly or indirectly.

Concerning the outcomes of the questionnaire in diagram03, it showed that 100% of the teachers think that the students find it hard to understand idioms as one teacher declared **“the problem relies in understanding the idiom in question and deducing the correct meaning of the idiom and once they learn about it using it becomes much easier**, but, they do their best to facilitate them during the course, and try to make efforts to integrate more and more, as they declare **“I try to facilitate them everything during the course so that they could easily understand idioms and find them interesting”**.. By addressing the challenges students face, they aim to enhance their intercultural awareness, making it easier for students to navigate the TC. Through their efforts, teachers play a major role for promotion their student's CC, and equip them with the essential means to effectively connect language and culture.

The results also show (see diagram05&07) that 100% of the teachers agree that these idioms do not only help them understand the TC but also to develop their CC which according to Hymes (1972) *“the ability to use language effectively in communication situations”*. (p. 269).

So, idioms are effective to develop CC, firstly because they are part of the culture of the language, and they are also an important part of sociolinguistic competence, which is the ability to use language appropriately in different social contexts, they are also used frequently in daily communication, so learning them can help learners understand and participate in conversations more effectively. Additionally, idioms, help learners understand the cultural context of a language, as idioms often reflect cultural values and beliefs. Furthermore, Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence provides a theoretical construct for teachers to develop intercultural awareness in their students, which is essential for developing CC in a

multicultural classroom. Incorporating idioms onto language learning, can help students understand cultural contexts of a language and develop their figurative idiomatic competence, which can further enhance their sociolinguistic competence.

1.2. Teachers' view towards the effectiveness of intercultural awareness in developing communicative competence

Question 12 was asked to explore the teacher's view towards the effectiveness of intercultural awareness in developing EFL learner's communicative competence. One teachers suggested that intercultural awareness is "**understanding and appreciating your own culture and other cultures**", another one highlighted that "**intercultural awareness means being aware of the similarities and differences between one's culture and other cultures**".

The results indicated (see diagram08) the familiarity among teachers with the concept of intercultural awareness, 20% of them reported being very familiar with the concept, while 80% stated that they are somehow familiar with it. Notably, no teacher indicated being not very familiar or not familiar at all with the concept. These findings suggest that the majority of teachers have some level of familiarity with intercultural awareness, which can be regarded as the foundation of communication. According to them it involves two main qualities: one is the awareness of one's own culture, and the other is the awareness of another culture. In other words, it involves the ability to stand back from your point and become aware of not only our own cultural values; beliefs, and perceptions but also those of other cultures, Teachers should be aware of intercultural competence so they can deliver the cultural knowledge, attitudes, and skills to the language learners in their classroom. They should also focus on making them aware of various cultures other than their own.

This confirms the lines of Deardorff (2011) that summarize the importance of intercultural competence in language learning including recognizing, understanding, and appreciating cultural differences, adapting one's behavior to suit the context of communication,

and developing intercultural awareness. The responses also show (see table04) that approximately 40% of the respondents chose role play as a method of teaching about the TC, while 30% chose reading books, 20 % selected watching movies, and only 10% chose listening to music, these findings highlight the importance of using authentic materials and engaging methods to promote intercultural awareness and develop CC and ICC in multicultural classroom, as David Block (1995) stated: “*Authentic materials bring reality into classrooms and help make learners literate members of society.*” (p. 2). By using authentic materials learners can gain a deeper understanding of the cultural practices and beliefs that shape language use to communicate in a way that is sensitive to the practices. Additionally, authentic materials can help learners develop critical thinking skills and avoid stereotypes, which is essential for IC, and teachers who are aware of various cultural aspects can support students in understanding other cultures and scenarios by incorporating authentic materials.

The results displayed in the diagram 11 indicate that the majority of teachers (80%) often integrate intercultural activities in their lessons, while only 20% always do so. Notably, none of the teachers reported rarely or never integrating intercultural activities in their lessons. These findings suggest that most teachers are incorporating intercultural awareness into their teaching practices to some extent, which is a positive sign for promoting intercultural education in schools, and by doing so learners can navigate cultural differences and engage in intercultural dialogue, contributing to greater social integration and cohesion. Overall, promoting intercultural awareness through the use of authentic materials is crucial for developing both: Communicative competence which is defined by Hymes (1972) as “*the ability to use language effectively in communication situations*” (p. 269), and Intercultural competence, Meyer (1991), describes it as: “*The ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes, and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures*” (p. 198)

Byram’s model of ICC highlights that the teachers can promote ICC by using his model

and various strategies to incorporate cultural knowledge into language teaching and learning to develop foreign language learners' ICC which is important to navigate cultural differences and engage in effective communication

2. Discussing the results of learners' questionnaire

2.1. Discussion of the second research question: Students' intercultural awareness help in interpreting the idiomatic expressions

This section is concerned with students' opinions about learning English idioms and its importance in understanding the TC in their classes, its importance in understanding better the TC and also the impact of idioms in ameliorating their communicative skills

From the learners' replies, we noted that the vast majority of the learners 93% (see diagram 15) learn about idioms in their classes, whereas; only 7% of them replied that they “**don't study**” about English idioms. The results suggest that idioms are an integral component of the curriculum in FL classes. It indicate that teachers are actively introducing idioms to students. Teaching idioms should be an integral part of language teaching programs from beginning levels and taught in naturalistic contexts with ample chances of practice Irujo(1986),.However, while teaching idioms, difficulties arise since it is hard to predict the meaning from the first trial or look.(zhang,2009). The 7% who indicated that they don't study idioms might belong to classes that do not emphasize idiomatic expressions in their teaching materials. Overall, the high percentage of students learning about idioms indicates the recognition of the importance of idiomatic expressions in FL learning, as they play a crucial role in understanding language use in real-lifecontexts and enhancing cultural and CC.

When the students' were asked whether idioms help them to understand the English culture or not (see diagram17), the majority of them 78% indicated that idioms really help them in understanding the English culture. They even argued that idioms can provide them with insights into how people in a given society view the world and communicate their values, they

also described idioms as “**open windows into their culture**”. Some of them highlighted that “**they reflect the culture and social norms of that language, they give a view of English lifestyle and beliefs.**” Therefore the students believe that idioms have the ability to convey cultural aspects, historical context, and different communication styles. So idioms are a very important part of culture and culture is important to language learning as Emitt (2003) asserts: “*teaching the culture of a target language is unquestionably important for the development of competence in intercultural communication. Therefore, for learners to become communicatively competent, it is essential to teach them both language and culture because language and culture are intertwined*” (p. 44).

Regarding the impact of idioms in improving students’ communicative skills, nearly the majority 76% of the learners think that learning idioms would improve from their communicative competence, and the minority 24% don’t think that it would benefit them (see diagram 18). Thus; learning idioms is a major difficulty for many language students in achieving a more natural sounding target language competence. (Cooper, 1998, 1999)

Many students’ who believed that idioms would ameliorate their competency in communication claimed that idioms make the conversation sound natural like native speakers and they can express their emotions, opinions, ideas more easily. Idioms, are an essential part of vocabulary knowledge, and idiomatic knowledge which can help learners to become proficient in the target language in use. (Boers et al., 2006). However, the others expressed the need to learn more and to practice. As they said that “**we don’t learn about idioms so much we need to do a lot of practice.**” The results highlight that idioms have a valuable role in enhancing student’s ability to communicate more effectively, and they also bring a level of authenticity and fluency to their conversation, which is a vital aspect of language acquisition, because in real-world communication, idioms are frequently used, and understanding them and using them correctly can greatly enhance the learners’ ability to engage with others.

In question 9, we have given them some idioms to interpret. Mainly, we can say all the

participants except few of them did interpret the idioms correctly. These findings suggest a positive level of familiarity and understanding among the majority of the students regarding the idioms presented to them.

For example, the idiom “**break a leg**”, out of 42 participants only 26 explained this idiom, 23 students’ did interpret the meaning correctly which is “**wishing for someone good luck**”, and this reflects the students acquaintance with this idiomatic expression.

Another idiom that they interpreted “**piece of cake**”. Almost all the participants did get the meaning, 37 out of 42. They explained by one word “**easy / very easy**”. The overall of the responses show that the students are really familiar with this idiom.

“**It costs an arm and a leg!**” is another idiom that was interpreted correctly by 34 students and this indicates that the majority have a clear comprehension and understanding of this expression. Their interpretations were mainly between “**very expensive**” and “**pricey**”. However, very few of them (3 students) used the word “**hard**” as a meaning of the idiom.

“**once in a blue moon**”, 28 of the participants responded to this expression, showing a consistent understanding between the students through the use of the terms “**rare**” or “**very rare**”, few of them used the phrase of “**once in a while**”, while 2 of the participants admitted that they didn’t know the meaning of this idiom.

“**Beat a dead horse**” In this idiom, we have noticed that only 17 out of 42 participants did respond to it. Their interpretations varied between, “**someone repeating the same thing over and over**”, or “**arguing/convincing someone but without succeeding**” and other responses like “**waste of efforts**”. Altogether, learners know about the idiom’s meaning but they didn’t make much efforts to provide a complete statement.

“**Turn a blind eye**” For the last idiom, 24 of the participants have answered to it. The students explained its meaning through varies phrases such as “**ignoring**”, “**to ignore**” or “**to pretend like you didn’t see**”. And this depicts the students’ recognition of the meaning behind the suggested idiom. Thus, few students responded by saying “**walk away**” or “**keep silent**”.

Which is very near to the right answer, student's competence in interpreting these idiomatic expressions highlights their growing intercultural awareness, which allows them to bridge language and culture effectively. It empowers students to not only communicate with linguistic accuracy but also with cultural sensitivity. The positive results suggest that students are on a path to better understanding the cultural connotations within idiomatic expressions, which are essential for achieving CC in English.

To conclude, from the previous interpretations of idiom that was done by the participants, we can say that the students are intercultural aware, and able to understand the TL culture as it is depicted in their own interpretations. And also it gives an insight to the learner's communicative competence.

2.2. Discussion of the third research question: Students intercultural awareness in improving their ICC

This section deals with the discussion of the learners' perception of intercultural awareness, and the competences to develop to be communicatively competent. The results gathered, show that more than half of the learners 74% (see diagram19) know what an intercultural awareness is. They were given definitions to choose the majority chose answer "c", which says: **"intercultural awareness requires knowing about both your culture and the TL culture."** 24% responded by choosing answer "d" that goes: **according to Byram's (1997) intercultural awareness refers to the ability to reflect critically and evaluate documents and events from an ethno-relative perspective."** Meanwhile the 7% learners', half of them did choose answer "b" and the others chose answer "a", which were wrong answers. Answer "b" says: **"intercultural awareness requires only knowing about the TL culture."** And answer "a" says that **"it only requires to know about your own culture."**

Question 11 was asked to investigate students' knowledge about the competences or skills needed in order to be communicatively competent. 79% believe that being communicatively competent needs to develop all of the cited competences. (See diagram20).

21% perceive that they only need discourse competence to develop. 12% think that the linguistic competence is the most important one to develop, while only 10% did pick the sociolinguistic competence. Intercultural awareness is crucial for learners to develop their ICC, because when students comprehend that intercultural awareness necessitates knowledge of both their culture and TL culture they will start to appreciate the differences between these cultures, and this understanding is the foundation for building effective communication skills, which according to this statement: *“Intercultural awareness can be regarded as the foundation of communication. It involves two qualities: one is the awareness of one’s own culture; the other is the awareness of another culture. In other words, it involves the ability of standing back from our own point and becoming aware of not only our own cultural values, beliefs and perceptions, but also those of other cultures”* (Zhu, 2011, p. 116).

Therefore, intercultural awareness is important for EFL learners, to be communicatively competent and interact with speakers of other languages and develop relationships. As Baker (2011) affirmed about the essence of intercultural dimension is *“.....understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices and frames of understanding can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context specific manner in real time communication.”* (p. 202).

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the results provided by the students and the teachers’ questionnaires, the gathered data from the research instruments have helped us to reach our research aims and provide the necessary answers to the asked questions, and confirm the hypotheses stated in the general introduction. From the results of the teachers’ questionnaire we deduce that teachers use idioms as a teaching material to teach about the TC because they offer cultural understanding into societal standards, principals, and beliefs which answer the first question and confirm the first hypothesis. The students’ questionnaire showed us that students with intercultural awareness can better understand the idiomatic expressions and their

cultural significance, and this has answered the second question and confirmed the second hypotheses. Idioms allow the learners to get insight into the thoughts, emotions, and views of the speaker's background, and by understanding idiomatic expressions and their cultural significance, students can better communicate with people from different cultures and avoid misunderstandings, and this answers the third question and confirm the third hypotheses.

General Conclusion

General conclusion

This research was conducted to explore the students' intercultural awareness through interpreting and understanding idiomatic expressions in speaking classes, specifically third year students of the English department at MMUTO. The main objective of this research is to examine how intercultural awareness among EFL learners contributes to their interpretation and comprehension of idiomatic expressions in speaking classes, particularly among third-year students in the English department at MMUTO. Additionally, this study aims to enhance awareness among both students and teachers regarding the significance of intercultural awareness in the development of intercultural communicative competence. We developed three main hypotheses within this study the first one is about teachers' incorporation of idioms as a teaching material to teach the EFL culture. The second is to discuss intercultural awareness of third-year students helping them in interpreting the idiomatic expressions, the last one is about third-year students' intercultural awareness importance in improving their ICC.

To reach this end, the study relies on the mixed methods research, which involves the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. Two questionnaires are used, one for the teachers and one for the learners. The participants of the study are five teachers from the department of English and 42 of 3rd year students at the departments of English at MMUTO. In doing so, the study adopts Byram's model of ICC which is a combination of five elements: attitude, knowledge, interpretation and relationship skills, discovery and interaction skills, and important cultural awareness to inspect the findings, this model emphasizes the importance of developing critical intercultural cultural awareness.

To interpret the results, we combined quantitative data analysis where we used the rule of three to interpret the numerical results, which were next presented in form of diagrams or tables, and the qualitative data analysis, where we used Qualitative Content Analysis as a tool to present all the results in form of texts.

From The findings of the study we reached the results that teachers use idioms as a teaching material to teach about the TC because they help to develop the intercultural cultural understanding and push the learners to be communicatively competent and avoid cultural misunderstandings. The teachers unanimously agreed that there is a strong connection between idioms and culture, they use different teaching methods to help learners understand idiomatic expressions.

Based on the results of the teachers' questionnaire, it is evident that teachers utilize idioms as a teaching resource for teaching about the TC. This is because idioms provide cultural understanding of societal norms, principles, and beliefs, which addresses the first question and supports the first hypothesis. The students' questionnaire revealed that students who possess intercultural awareness are better able to comprehend idiomatic expressions and their cultural significance. This addresses the second question and confirms the second hypothesis. Idioms enable learners to gain insight into the thoughts, emotions, and perspectives of individuals from different backgrounds. By understanding idiomatic expressions and their cultural significance, students can effectively communicate with individuals from diverse cultures and prevent misunderstandings. This answers the third question and confirms the third hypothesis.

Our study had some limitations. We used online surveys for both teachers and students, some of the participants did not complete all the questions, which left gaps in our data, and we also didn't have enough time to get as many responses as we wanted. This means that our findings might not represent everyone's views. We also used only one research instrument, which is a questionnaire. Despite the limitation of our study we hope that the findings still provide valuable insights into the role of intercultural awareness in interpreting idiomatic expressions in speaking classes. Additionally, in the expectation that this study will inspire future research in this area to deepen this topic we recommend for students to investigate the challenges that learners face when learning idioms and strategies to overcome these challenges.

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Appendices

Appendices

Teacher's questionnaire

EFL Learners Intercultural Awareness in Interpreting Idiomatic Expressions in Speaking Classes.

An Exploratory Study on 3rd Year Students in the Department of English at MMUTO.

Dear Teacher,

We appreciate your willingness to participate in this research study that aims to explore the role of intercultural awareness in the development of FL learners' communicative competence. The study also aims to investigate the impact of integrating intercultural awareness in the teaching and learning process on EFL learners' proficiency and their ability to interpret idiomatic expressions in speaking classes and communicate effectively with native speakers. The questionnaire is divided into two sections; the first one is about idiomatic expressions and the second one is about intercultural awareness.

By responding to these questions you will help us to get valuable data for our study.

Please note that your responses will remain anonymous and confidential.

Section one

1. How long have you been teaching English?

.....

2. How do you teach about the Target Culture?

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| a) Through watching movies | <input type="text"/> |
| b) Through reading books | <input type="text"/> |
| c) Through listening to music | <input type="text"/> |
| d) Through role plays | <input type="text"/> |

Section two

3. Give your personal definition of idiomatic expression.

.....

4. How often do you integrate activities or exercises about the TC idioms in your course?

- a) Always
- b) Often
- c) Sometimes
- d) Rarely
- e) Never

• **Justify your answer**

.....

5. In your opinion, do students understand the TC idioms?

Yes No

• **Justify your answer**

.....

6. Do you think that students encounter difficulties in understanding and using idiomatic expressions?

Yes No

• **Justify your answer**

.....

7. What kind of difficulties do they encounter the most?

- a) Linguistic difficulties
- b) Cultural difficulties
- c) Vocabulary difficulties
- d) Communication difficulties

8. Do you think that learning idiomatic expressions help the learners understand better the target culture?

Yes No

9. Do students are able to explain correctly the idioms studied in the classroom?

Yes No

10. Have you noticed any difference in the communicative competence of your students when they use the TC idioms?

Yes No

Section three

11. How would you rate your familiarity with the concept of intercultural awareness in language teaching?

- a) Very familiar
- b) Somehow familiar
- c) Not very familiar
- d) Not familiar at all

12. Give your personal definition of intercultural awareness:

.....

13. Do you think that it is essential for learners to learn about the target culture?

Yes No

14. Do you think that the target culture is enough integrated during the teaching process?

Yes No

• **Justify your answer**

.....
.....
.....

15. How often do you incorporate intercultural activities in your lessons?

a) Always

b) Often

c) Sometimes

d) Rarely

e) Never

16. Do you think that enhancing student's intercultural awareness help them to develop Communicative Competence?

Yes No

The Students' Questionnaire

Dear students, you are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire. Your answers would be of a major help to complete our dissertation which is entitled “EFL learners intercultural awareness in interpreting idiomatic expressions”. This questionnaire is absolutely anonymous. Your honest opinion is welcomed. In the multiple choice questions; please do choose one convenient answer by ticking it off, and express your view in the open ones. Your contribution is crucial and would be much appreciated.

Thank you.

Section one

1. How long have you studied English?

.....

2. How do you qualify/ assess your knowledge about the English culture?

- a) Good
- b) Quite good
- c) Not good

• **Justify your answer**

.....

3. Do you learn the English culture in your classes?

Yes No

Section two

4. What is an idiom?

.....
.....

5. Do you study about idioms in your classrooms?

Yes No

6. Do you have / encounter difficulties in understanding the studied idioms?

Yes No

If yes, what kind of difficulties?

.....
.....

7. Do idioms help you in understanding the English culture?

Yes No

• **Justify your answer**

.....
.....
.....

8. Do you think that learning English idioms would improve your communicative skills?

Yes No

• **Justify your answer**

.....
.....
.....

9. From the following idioms, try to explain the meaning?

a) Break a leg!

.....
.....

b) Piece of cake!

.....
.....

c) Costs an arm and a leg!

.....
.....

d) Once in a blue moon.

.....
.....

e) Beat a dead horse.

.....
.....

f) Turn a blind eye.

.....
.....

Section three

10. According to you, which statement defines the most intercultural awareness?

A/ Intercultural awareness requires only knowing about your own culture.

B/ Intercultural awareness requires only knowing about the TL culture.

C/ It requires knowing about both your culture and the TL culture.

D/ According to Byram's (1997) ICC model the development of “*intercultural awareness refers to the ability to reflect critically and evaluate documents and events from an ethnorelative perspective.*”

11. To be communicatively competent, means you need to develop:

1) Linguistic competence

2) Sociolinguistics competence

3) Discourse competence

4) All of the above

• **Justify your answer**

.....
.....
.....