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**Investigating the Role of Learning English Idioms in Enhancing  
EFL Learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence**

**The Case Study of Master One Students at Abbas Laghrou**

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Master Degree in Language and Culture

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## DEDICATION

*In the name of Allah, the Almighty*

*I dedicate this work*

*To all my family: my parents, my sisters and my brother for their  
care, love, trust, passion, and support.*

*To all my teachers for their efforts throughout the academic  
years, and to all my classmates for their support and blessings.*

*Chaimae*

## DEDICATION

*I dedicate this work*

*To my dear lovely family, without them I would not achieve  
what I achieved today.*

*To all my teachers who love to teach, for their support, and trust  
always along the way.*

*To my friends.*

*Yousef*

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study explores the area of idiomatic expressions as important linguistic units for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). The current study is an attempt to investigate the role of learning English idioms on EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence. The study followed an Explanatory mixed method design. The tools used for collecting the data were a questionnaire and an interview. So, it is hypothesized that learning English idioms helps develop intercultural communicative competence. In order to test this hypothesis, a questionnaire was distributed at Abbas Laghrour University-Khenchela to a sample of 36 out of 178 Master One Students of English and aimed to measure students' understanding and awareness of *English idioms*, and culture. As well, for the same purpose, an interview was conducted with six participants out of 28 EFL teachers in order to explore teachers' views about the reality of idioms' usage throughout the courses. The findings show that *English idioms* play a major role in improving students' intercultural communicative competence.

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## **List of Abbreviations and Symbols**

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence

DMIS: Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

N: Number

$\Sigma$ : Total

T: Teacher

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# **General Introduction**

## 1. Background of the Study

There is no doubt that language is closely linked to culture. From a dynamic point of view, language and culture interact and shape each other. So, people can simply dig out cultural features from language in order to explain language phenomena. In fact, idioms contain in themselves a large amount of cultural information, as follows: history, geography, religion, nationality, psychology, and so on. Idioms are grammatically correct words, expressions, and word choices with specific meanings. Much of their lexicon consists of groups of words that have a strong tendency to occur together in discourse. Furthermore, they have an impact on EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence, which refers to the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in various cultural contexts. So, idiomatic expressions may help improve EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence. Many studies have been carried out on idioms and have documented their findings in various sources. The sources include textbooks, newspapers, journals, websites, and research papers.

Relevant previous studies regarding idiom comprehension among second language learners are explained in the following. In Levorato, Nesi, and Cacciari's (2004) research, as cited in Amos & Abas (2021) they investigated the relationship between text comprehension and idiomatic comprehension. The subjects were 101 second-graders and 98 fourth-graders from an Italian elementary school. The results of both experiments showed that the children's understanding of a text occurred when the idioms were in context. For verification and possible improvements in children's comprehension skills that might produce an increase in figurative language understanding, experiment *three* is carried out. A group of poor comprehenders who participated in experiments *one* and *two* are tested eight months later. The results of experiment *three* showed that children's general comprehension skills improved their performance on an idiom comprehension test.

In addition, Kurnia (2016) as cited in Amos & Abas (2021) conducted an investigation about English idiomatic expressions in speaking skills. The results of this study were confirmed by applying a percentage formula. They were evaluated using observation as well as a multiple-choice questionnaire. The results of this research exposed that students with the best idiomatic mastery and best speaking skill are 13.89% of the total, the second ones, which are considered good, are 77.78% of the total, and the third ones, which are considered less than good, are 8.33% of the total. The conclusion that was reached is that students who master more idiomatic expressions speak natural English better than those who do not.

The present study will investigate the English language idioms' influence on EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence; in other words, it will investigate the role of idioms in the learning process and whether they improve the learners' ICC or have no influence on it.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Communication, whether oral or written, is the primary goal of language learning. In order for the learner to be communicatively competent, he or she should take into consideration the social and cultural elements of the language. For that purpose, the culture has been integrated into the language learning. Hence, idioms or idiomatic expressions as part of the language merge language and culture together to simplify the communication process among EFL learners. It has been discovered that learners who have communication difficulties are unconcerned about the culture of the target language, and they do not anticipate figurative expressions, particularly idioms, in their speech. As a result, the learners will be unable to communicate successfully. It could be said that using idioms makes them feel confident, and respond appropriately. Subsequently, the main point in this study is to

uncover to what extent English idiomatic expressions enhance EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence.

### **3. The Aim of the Study**

Idioms in English are extremely important; they are regarded as a communication barrier between different cultures, which most EFL learners are unaware of and must learn about. The aim of this research is to shed light on the role of learning idioms and their role in enhancing learners' intercultural communicative competence at the English department of Khenchela University.

### **4. The Significance of the Study**

This study's findings will further reveal how English idioms affect on EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence. The findings would be of major importance in developing EFL learners' ICC. In fact, the development of idioms would help learners in learning the English language. Also, it would help in discovering others' traditions, the way they live, the way they behave etc. As a result, idioms are considered as an important part of the English culture since they develop the communicative competence of learners.

### **5. Research Questions**

- Do idioms help EFL learners in developing their intercultural communicative competence?

A group of important related sub-questions come into view as follows:

- Can EFL learners acquire the culture of the target language through the idioms that facilitate their way of communication?
- Are EFL learners familiar with idioms that make communication ease on them?

- Do EFL learners know that being aware of the target culture make them communicatively competent non-native speakers?

## **6. Assumptions**

- Idioms help EFL learners in developing their intercultural communicative competence.
- EFL learners can acquire the culture of the target language through the idioms that facilitate their way of communication.
- Learners are familiar with idioms and they use them within their communication.
- Learners are highly aware of the target culture, which makes them competent non-native speakers.

## **7. Objectives of the Study**

The major focus of this research is to enhance EFL learners' communicative competence, trying to improve the following:

- Improving intercultural communicative competence among EFL learners through idiomatic expressions.
- Acquiring the culture of the target language through idioms that ease communication and interaction.
- Turning learners out to be familiar with idioms to facilitate the communication.
- Raising EFL learners' awareness of the target language's culture is necessary in order to effectively communicate.

## **8. Research Methodology**

To carry out this investigation, the selected method is the descriptive design, because the necessary information is going to be collected to test the above-mentioned hypotheses. Then, it is the most reliable method for our research topic. In fact, the present study opts for an

Explanatory sequential mixed-method approach. The research tools are a quantitative questionnaire and a qualitative interview for data collection and analysis. In a nutshell, this method is well known for generating ideas that can later be theorized.

## **9. Sample of the Study**

Our research population is EFL Master I students at Khenchela University. Accordingly, the questionnaire will be distributed to 36 students out of the total of 178, which constitutes the sample of this research. Also, selecting students systematically is very important. For that, Master One Students are supposed to have considerable linguistic competences in the language in general and especially in using idioms and proverbs. In addition to that, an interview will be directed to six out of twenty-eight teachers, all of whom are PHD and Magister teachers at the department of English at Khenchela University. Those teachers will be intentionally selected according to their decent years of experience in different modules and teaching different levels. Therefore, teachers are inquired about in order to get clearer insights into their students' awareness of idioms' usage that they have experienced in their teaching process and teach the students about the importance of idioms in upgrading their knowledge proficiency in general and their cultural competence in particular.

## **10. Data Gathering Tools**

For the purpose of gathering information to test the hypotheses of the presented research, two research tools are adopted. The first one is a questionnaire for EFL Master I students at Khenchela University, and the second one is an interview for teachers. The questionnaire was given to 36 students. It contains a total of 15 questions divided into three sections. The second research tool is the interview. It is directed to English teachers at Khenchela University and is divided into three sections; the total number of the questions is eight. Both of these means are

used to gather the data. After collecting the data required for this study, it is analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

## **11. Structure of the Study**

The present study is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter is the theoretical part. It contains two sections; the first one is about the idioms. It introduces the definitions of figurative language and metaphoricity, the English idioms, their characteristics, and their categories. Then, the importance and approaches for teaching idioms; while the second one is composed of the definition of culture, its importance, and its relationship with language, it also provides intercultural communicative competence's definition, its models, and its importance, followed by the intercultural approach and its implementation. The second chapter is the practical part. It deals with methodology, data analysis, and interpretation. It contains sampling and population data, as well as data collection procedures. As well, it has two main sections: the first carries a description, analysis, and a discussion of the questionnaire's results. While, the second section also contains a description, analysis, and a discussion of the interview's results. At the end, the work delivers the gained findings, limitations of the study, along with recommendations.

# **Chapter I**

## **Literature Review**

## **Chapter I: English Idiomatic Expressions and Intercultural Communicative**

### **Competence**

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, there are two sections. The first section is concerned with intercultural communicative competence, which introduces the definition of culture, its importance, and its relationship with language. Also, the definition of ICC, its models, and its importance conclude with the intercultural approach and its implementation. While, the second section is concerned with English idiomatic expressions, which introduces the figurative language and English idioms' definitions, characteristics, and categories, concluding with the importance and approaches for teaching idioms.

#### **Section 1: Intercultural Communicative Competence**

##### **I.1.1. Definition of Culture**

Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts (Importance of Culture Essay in English Essay on | Culture | by Essay Home, 2021). Members of a society always have a common culture, which is not genetically inherited and cannot exist on its own (Hall, 1976). Hence, Hofstede (1980), as cited in Belshek (n, d), defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group from another” (p. 2). In other words, each society has a certain way of life that distinguishes it from other societies.

##### **I.1.2. Language and Culture**

Language is a tool for communication; people use it to express their thoughts, feelings, and so on in order to be understood by others. It is created by human beings and considered part of the culture; it cannot be ignored all the time. Also, language reflects the characteristics

of the human material world. As a kind of social phenomenon, language has the function of recording culture, which means that people record their understanding of human life and natural phenomena through the use of language. Hence, culture influences language through people's perceptions of the world, which means that if they select a language without knowing the cultural implications, they may miscommunicate. As a result, language is seen as a window into culture. In other words, it is impossible to separate language from culture (Sun, 2013).

### **I.1.3. The Importance of Culture**

Teaching culture along side language has several benefits, according to some authors. Among these is Stainer (1971), who believes that studying culture gives students motivation to study the target language and makes the study of L2 interesting. From the learners' perspective, learning the target culture will help them create a clear image of real-life situations. In addition, providing access to cultural aspects of language helps the learners link the abstract system of language to reality (Chastain, 1971). Another important issue is that teaching about culture gives the learners the capacity to differentiate between their own culture and the target culture (as cited in Haddad, 2013).

### **I.1.4. Intercultural Communicative Competence**

The term "intercultural" is used to convey the idea that EFL learners need to obtain understanding of both their own culture and that of the target culture (Kramsch, 1993, as cited in Ho, 2009). Intercultural communicative competence refers to the "ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and [the] ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality" (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002). In brief, intercultural communicative competence is the ability to understand and interact with people of different social identities. The goal of intercultural

language learning is that the learners should follow the norms of an “intercultural speaker” (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993; Risager, 1998). According to House (2007) an intercultural speaker is “a person who has managed to settle for the In-between, who knows and can perform in both his and her native culture and in another one acquired at some later date” (p. 19).

### **I.1.5. The Importance of ICC**

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is an essential skill for learning a foreign language. It entails being aware of the differences between oneself and people from different backgrounds or cultures. As well, it helps in facilitating the understanding of students about customs and beliefs that foster tolerance and respect. Together with promoting cultural awareness and linguistic proficiency, ICC also promotes the value of one's own culture and the ability to recognize and appreciate others' culture (Santana & Cely Betancourt, 2021).

### **I.1.6. Models of Intercultural Communicative Competence**

Here are two models of ICC the first one is Bennett's model, and the second one is Kramsch's model.

#### **I.1.6.1. Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity**

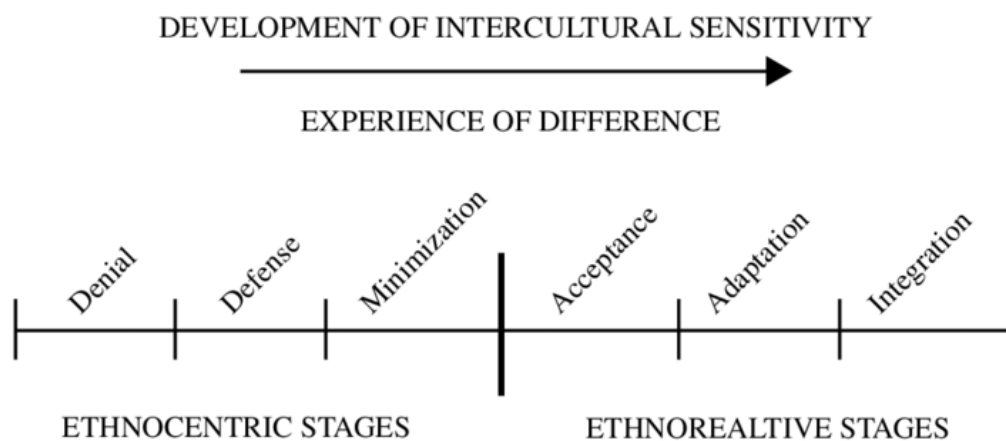
The developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS) describes the experience of people in intercultural situations (M. Bennett, 1993). It includes *ethnocentric stages* which are *denial*, *defense*, and *minimization*. Besides that, there are *ethnorelative stages* which are *acceptance*, *adaptation*, and *integration*.

In this part, there are three DMIS, which means that culture is experienced as central to reality. In *denial* stage, one's culture is seen as the only real one, he or she avoids consideration of other cultures. In the second stage which is *defense*, one's cultural difference

is seen as the only good one. In the last stage which is *minimization*, one's cultural worldviews are universal, despite differences with other cultures.

On the other part, there are other three *ethnorelative* stages of DMIS, which means that culture is experienced in the context of other cultures. In *acceptance* stage, other cultures are considered as equally deep but distinct and different from each other. In the second stage which is called *adaptation*, one is able to shift perspective from culture to another keeping his or her own culture. In the last stage which is *integration*, one's awareness of oneself grows to comprehend other cultural ideas and beliefs.

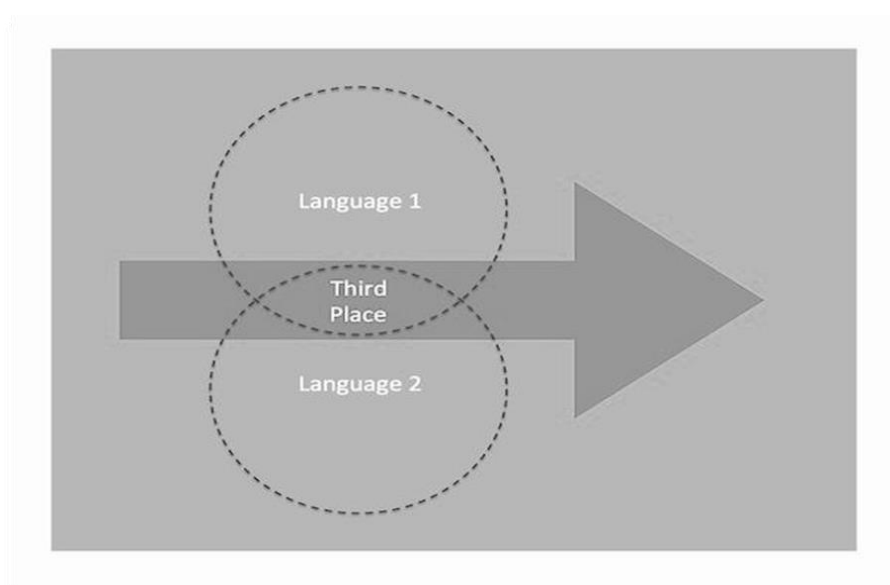
To sum up, on the one hand, the ethnocentric stages seek to avoid cultural opposition by denying its existence, raising defenses, and minimizing its importance. On the other hand, the ethnorelative stages seek cultural difference by accepting the importance of the concept, adapting to it, or integrating it into a definition of identity (as cited in Bennett, J. & Bennett, M. 2001).



**Figure 1: The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Source: Bennett and Bennett, 2004, p. 153).**

### **I.1.6.2. Kramersch's Model of the Third Place**

Kramersch (1993) introduced the term “third place” to refer to a way of teaching/learning based on the construction of an intercultural sphere, where culture is considered as an object to be understood, but as an “interpersonal process to understand otherness”. Also, for her, this third place is considered as a hybrid one that links between the target culture and the social characteristics of the environment of the learner (as cited in Gil, 2016). For that, she proposed four lines of thought to teach language and culture as social practice as it follows; first, establishing a “sphere of interculturality” between native and target culture. Second, teaching culture involves social interaction between learners and teachers to create meaning and understand each other. Also, teach culture as a difference, recognizing its multiculturalism that exists within the cultures. At last, merging boundaries between disciplines. Kramersch's proposition helps the students to get a clear image of understanding, where they keep maintaining their own culture and show respect and tolerance for others' culture. So, this model emphasizes comparing cultures and establishing the third place to gain a better understanding of the native and target cultures (as cited in Aouragh, 2021).



**Figure 2: The Third Place (Source: Allais, 2012).**

### **I.1.7. The Intercultural Approach**

EFL learners must gain knowledge of the target culture and develop the ability to compare their native culture to other cultures to become successful intercultural communicators. However, intensive intercultural education can help spread tolerance with the other and acceptance of the other. It also helps to understand the target culture and learn to respect and appreciate it (Chlopek, 2008). In other words, gaining knowledge about the target culture is essential for learners to get clear image of understanding about the target language. Moreover, as learners come to a deeper understanding of how the target language is used to achieve the explicit and implicit cultural goals of the foreign language community, they should be prompted to reflect on the ways in which their own language and community functions. The intercultural learner ultimately serves as a mediator between different social groups that use different languages and language varieties. Intercultural communicative competence includes the ability to understand the language and behaviour of the target community, and explain it to members of the “home” community – and vice versa. In other words, an intercultural approach trains learners to be ‘diplomats’, able to view different cultures from a perspective of informed understanding (Corbett, 2003).

### **I.1.8. Implementing the Intercultural Approach**

If teachers want to use the intercultural approach in their EFL classes, they must think about potential issues and solutions. First, in order to meet the students language needs and objectives, a good foreign language teacher is needed to make the course interesting for them and to take into consideration their knowledge level. In addition to that, the teacher must convince them that intercultural training is a necessary component of modern education. Hence, the teacher may use stories of real life in which a lack of intercultural understanding happened in humorous, embarrassing, or even dangerous situations. Therefore, students

should participate, make choices, and take decisions. As a result, for motivating students the foreign teacher must make the course interesting and take into account students' knowledge level, besides focusing on intercultural training (Chlopek, 2008).

Second, the students make an attempt to know and understand other cultures and the teacher has to take it seriously even if they do not agree with some aspects of the target culture. Both of them have to understand that for achieving successful communication they need to gain intercultural knowledge. In addition to that, stereotyped views and prejudices will stop students from being interculturally competent. So, the teacher must help students understand and realize that there are other behaviors, beliefs, and value systems, and that we only represent the one in which we were born. Hence, the role of EFL teacher is to help students in understanding various cultures since this comprehension is essential for effective cross-cultural communication.

Finally, the intercultural approach is useful for adult learners and they will be motivated to take more steps in it. For children will be too easy to comprehend. Hence, teaching these younger groups is considered to be a big challenge for an EFL teacher because the intercultural classes should be made to be exciting, entertaining and meet the students language needs. As a result, they must be successful with all students (Chlopek, 2008).

## **Section 2: English Idiomatic Expressions**

### **I.2.1. Figurative Language and Metaphoricity**

Generally, the term “figurative language” refers to communication in which speakers imply something different from what they actually say. According to Gibbs and Colston (2012) stated that “[f]igurative language generally refers to speech where speakers mean something other than what they literally say”. Figurative language, also known as figure of speech, can be found in literary works such as songs, novels, or even plays. As Grindon (1879) said in his book entitled “Figurative language, its Origin and Constitution” that “[f]igures of speech, in short, are not simply beautiful and ingenious but still arbitrary and fanciful devices of the rhetorician and the poet, as some consider them, but the spontaneous utterance of the universal human mind, and are inevitable to it”. This means that, figures of speech are the spontaneous words of the universal human mind.

Dancygier and Sweetser (2014), as cited in Alkhamash (2022) emphasized that figurative language is a key element of everyday communication and is widely defined as any language in which a speaker means something different from what is presented literally. In other words, figurative language is the use of words outside of their literal or actual meaning. Within the same line, Azmi et al. (2023) denote that “figurative words are the use of words in a way that deviates from meaning to explain or convey complex meanings so that they are easy to imagine. Often, this figure of speech uses comparisons so that the meaning or description of something can be adequately conveyed” (p. 32). In this research, the terms of figurativeness and metaphoricity are used as synonyms. Metaphoricity is a common feature of idioms. As said by Mantyla (2004) “Metaphoricity is one of the most frequently mentioned features of idioms”.

The roots of metaphoricity often lie in some real situation or act (e.g., hang up one's boots), or an image created by the similarity between the idiom and its meaning (e.g., the fat is in the fire). In fact, the comprehension of idioms became more challenging, because usually an expression carries its literal meaning instead of the figurative one depending on its context (Cacciari, 1993; Moore, 1982; Needham, 1992).

### **I.2.2. Definition of English Idioms**

Idioms are phrases or proverbs whose meanings may not be directly understood by the listener or the reader. Simpson and Mendis (2003), for instance, define idioms as “a group of words that occur in a more or less fixed phrase whose overall meaning cannot be predicted by analyzing the meaning of its constituent parts” (p. 423). For example, *a bucket* is “a pail” and *to kick* means “to move with the foot”. Yet *to kick the bucket* probably does not mean “to move a pail with one's foot”, it is likely to be understood as “to die”. The meaning of the whole, then, is not the sum of the meaning of the parts, but is something apparently quite unconnected to them. As Flavell (1992) said in his book entitled “Dictionary of Idioms and their Origins” that “Idioms are mostly phrases that can have a literal meaning in one context but a totally different sense in another”; this indicates that the idiom's meaning differ according to the context.

Besides that, Flavell stated that “...the idiom is a new linguistic entity with a sense attached to it that may be quite remote from the senses of the individual words that form it. Although it is in form a phrase, it has many of the characteristics of a single word”; this means that, the idiom is a distinctive linguistic structure that may have a sense different from the senses of the individual words that make it up. Despite being a phrase, it possesses several characteristics of a single word. According to Sinclair (1997), as cited in Sridhar and Karunakaran (2013) believes that an idiom is a combination of two or more words that are

used together in speech or writing to achieve a particular meaning or effect. Swinney and Cutler (1979) offer a similar definition in that an idiom is “a string of two or more words for which meaning is not derived from the meanings of the individual words comprising that string” (p. 523). To put it in another way, an idiom is an expression that has a literal meaning known only through common use.

### **I.2.3. Characteristics of English Idioms**

According to Mäntylä (2004) there are four main characteristics as follows:

#### **I.2.3.1. Analysability**

Lakoff (1987) believes that an idiom's meaning cannot be determined solely by the meanings of the words that make it up. Therefore, Pulman (1993) identifies idioms as analysable if they can be divided in such a way that each word can be said to represent a part of the metaphorical meaning of the whole. Gibbs (1993) emphasized that analysability is crucial for both comprehension and idiom learning. If a language user or learner can comprehend the meaning behind an expression's shape, it will be much easier to comprehend and possibly also to memorize it. In other words, the meaning of the idiom may not be known from the literal meaning only, but it is also understood from the meaning which is behind the expression in itself.

#### **I.2.3.2. Fixedness of Form**

Frozensness is another characteristic of an idiom. Gläser (1988) implies that we should talk about the semantic and syntactic stability that distinguishes idioms rather than frozensness. Although some idioms, like “kick the bucket” are entirely fixed in their form, meaning, and context; however, the syntax, vocabulary, and context of several others can change (Pulman, 1993; McGlone et al., 1994). Moreover, Swinney and Cutler (1979) propose that the more

frozen an idiom is, the more it is recognized as one word and not as a sentence-like expression containing separate words and meanings.

### **I.2.3.3. Level of Formality**

Idioms are often claimed to be related to informal, spoken language, but studies have shown that they are also part of written language, even in formal texts (Fernando, 1996; Moon, 1998). Interestingly, Strässler (1982) also discovered that idioms are rarely employed when the speaker is referring to himself or herself or to the hearer and are most often utilized when talking about a third person or an object, limiting their use in speech. In addition, the intimate connection between idioms and context or register is related to formality level. So, the tone and context of idioms should always be taken into consideration while using them (Fernando, 1996). In other words, idioms are part of written language, and they are used a lot when it comes to talking about a third person or an object within a specific tone and context.

### **I.2.3.4. Multi-Word Expressions**

An idiom is made up of many words. This characteristic is necessary for an idiom, although it also has some consequences (Moon, 1998). When defining idioms, the presence of a combination of these features rather than the degree to which any one aspect is present is what matters most. Multiwordiness, figurativeness, fixedness of form, and degree of analysability are not sufficient on their own (Pulman, 1993). In other words, idioms cannot rely on one single feature, but they need a set of features to give the intended meaning.

## **I.2.4. Categories of English Idioms**

According to Memišević (2015), in Cacciari and Glucksberg's classification of idiomatic expressions, idioms have been grouped into three categories: opaque, transparent, and quasi-metaphorical. First, *opaque idioms* are difficult because the meaning of the idiom's main

components cannot be used to determine its true meaning. For instance: *To burn one's boats*, meaning: commit oneself to irreversible course. Second, in *transparent idioms*, the literal meaning of the terms and the idiomatic meaning are extremely similar. For instance, the phrase “play your cards right” actually derives from card games and refers to doing the right thing in order to get the desired result. Finally, *metaphors* which convey clear meaning through allusional content. As an example, Glucksberg (2001) provides these phrases: *My lawyer was a shark*, and *my job is a jail*. The terms ‘shark’ and ‘jail’ are used to describe the ideal cases, which are restrictive circumstances. To sum up, opaque idioms are hard to determine their true meaning, while transparent idioms similar literal and idiomatic meaning. Then, when it comes to metaphors they convey clear meaning through allusional content.

### **1.2.5. The Importance of English Idioms**

Thawabteh (2011), as cited in Alhaysony (2022), demonstrated that idioms are a feature shared by all languages and are regarded as an essential component of human communication. Unfortunately, they greatly frustrate beginning learners. As a result, non-native speakers may experience language, cultural, and technical issues, which could severely impact communication. Hence, the use of idioms is not only to bring back the old language but also to make the learner sound more competent, like a native speaker. To give an example, “a blessing in disguise” means something that seems bad initially, but that ends up having a positive outcome. (e. g., He was very upset about not getting the job, but it ended up being a blessing in disguise as he got a better one later on). Another typical case, “a ray of sunshine” stands for someone who is always cheerful and makes other people feel more positive. (e.g., Audrey is a ray of sunshine. She is always so cheerful that she inevitably cheers me up as well) (Mastery, 2019). The more learners use them in their communication, the more they can understand idioms when used by native English speakers. In fact, idioms enhance learners’

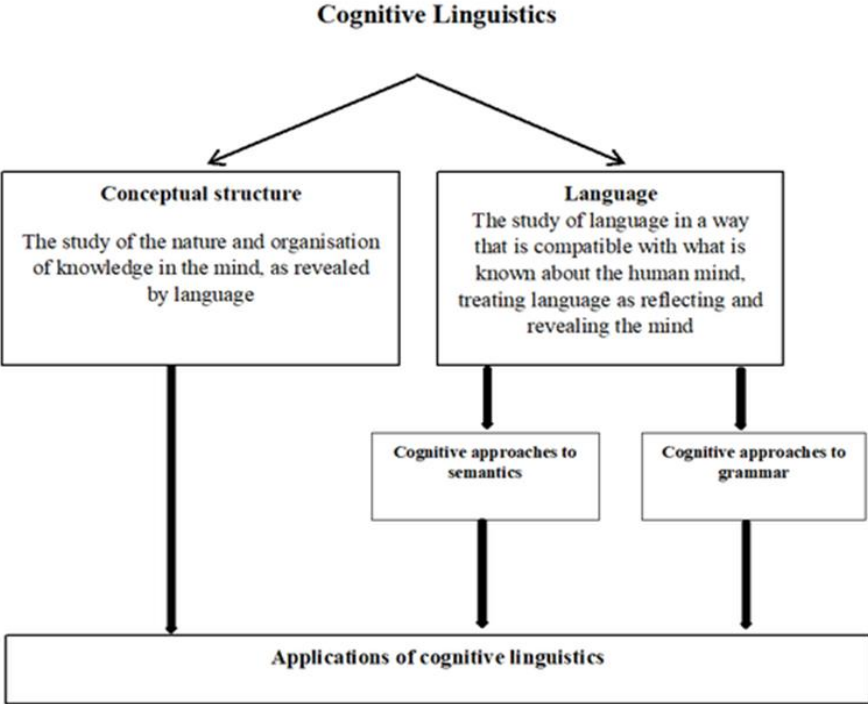
communication skills, and the more they know about them, the more they speak fluently (Suhodolli, 2022).

### **I.2.6. Approaches for Teaching Idioms**

Idioms need to be taught in an EFL classroom using both traditional and cognitive approaches (Rizq, 2015, as cited in Jermoškin, 2017). First, in the traditional approach idioms are typically taught to students through memorization and rote learning, which involves giving them a list of words to memorize through continual repetition (Chen and Lai, 2013, as cited in Jermoškin, 2017). Some teachers who took part in Rizq's (2015) study even though that by including some aspects of the cognitive linguistic approach into the process, the traditional method of teaching might be enhanced and become effective. In other words, idioms learning may be improved through combining cognitive linguistic approach within traditional approach in teaching process. One researcher has stated: “vocabulary items must not only be known, they must be known well so that they can be fluently accessed. Repetition thus adds to the quality of knowledge and also to the quantity or strength of this knowledge” (Nation, 2001). In other words, in order to be able to use vocabulary words fluently, words must not only be known, but also well known. Hence, practice improves both the amount and the quality of knowledge.

While, in the cognitive approach the study of language, the mind, and sociocultural experience is studied using an interdisciplinary method known as cognitive linguistics, which first appeared in the 1970s. In the study of language, cognitive linguistics is dedicated to the idea that meaning and form cannot be separated (Oxford Bibliography, 2011). Evans and Green (2006) divide cognitive linguistics into two segments; to grammar and cognitive semantics. In addition to that, Boers (2011) believes that figurative language can be

understood and remembered more easily when it is taught in a cognitive linguistic approach. In other words, language and sociocultural context cannot be separated.



**Figure 3: The Main Foci of Cognitive Linguistics (Source: Evans, 2019).**

**Conclusion**

This chapter has reviewed the main concepts related to the study. It introduces definitions of the figurative language and English idioms, its characteristics and its categories, the importance and the approaches for teaching idioms. Besides, it provides the definition of culture and its importance, with the relationship between language and culture. Therefore, it provides intercultural communicative competence’s definition with its models and its importance, followed by the intercultural approach and its implementation.

# **Chapter II**

**Methodology, Data**

**Analysis, and**

**Interpretation**

## **Chapter II: Methodology, Data Analysis, and Interpretation**

### **Introduction**

This chapter represents the practical part. Specifically, research methodology, the analysis and interpretation of the gathered data from both research tools. It contains two sections; the first deals with the analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire. In addition to, the discussion of its results. While, the second represents the analysis and interpretation of the interview as well, the discussion of the results.

### **II.1. Research Methodology**

The present study opts for an Explanatory sequential mixed-method approach. The tools used for collecting data are a questionnaire and an interview, in order to test the above-mentioned hypotheses. In order to gather the data, a questionnaire will be directed to EFL Master One students. While, an interview will be distributed to Master One English teachers, because of their long experience in education field.

### **II.2. Sampling and Population**

The sample for this study is Master One students at Khenchela University. Accordingly, the questionnaire will be distributed to 36 students because they are supposed to have considerable linguistic competence in the language in general and especially in using idioms and proverbs. In addition to that, an interview will be directed to six out of thirty teachers, all of whom are PHD and Magister teachers at the department of English at Khenchela University. Those teachers will be intentionally selected.

### **II.3. Data Collection Procedures**

The questionnaire was administered on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, to 36 Master One EFL students at Abbas Laghrour University, Khenchela. Half of the students preferred to answer online via written form, while the other half of them were given some time to answer, and then they handed them to the researcher on the spot. While, the interview has been implemented from April 12<sup>th</sup> to April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, in the teachers' room at the department of English at Abbas Laghrour University-Khenchela. Some of the teachers preferred to answer via written form, whereas the rest of them took an average of eight minutes to record the answer.

### **Section 1: Analysis and Interpretation of the Students' Questionnaires**

#### **II.1.1. Description of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire which is a quantitative tool of research used to collect data about this current study. The questions are of two types which are closed-ended and open-ended questions. They are divided into three sections. The first contains general information to get an idea about the proficiency of students' level in English and their interest in culture. While, the second one composed of six questions about idiomatic expressions, to know their familiarity and knowledge about idioms. Also, check their opinions and views when it comes to the influence on idioms in developing their proficiency and language skills. The last section has seven questions about students' knowledge and their views in terms of the English culture and its integration in the learning process, in order to evolve their intercultural communicative competence.

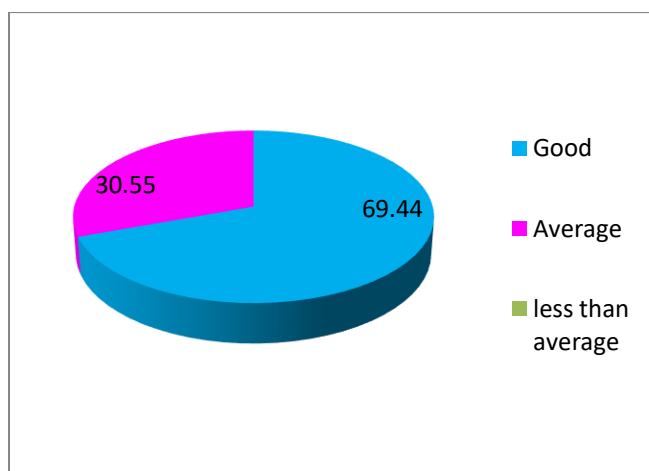
## II.1.2. Analysis of the Questionnaires

### Section One: General Information

#### Item 1: How would you evaluate your English language?

**Table 1: Evaluation of Students' English Level**

Options	N	%
Good	25	69.44
Average	11	30.55
Less than Average	0	0
$\Sigma$	36	100



**Figure 4: Evaluation of Students' English Level**

### Presenting the Results

The very first question deals with the evaluation of students' English level. It aims at discovering students' English level. Table 1 denotes that the majority of the participants 69.44% described their level as 'good'; this means that they classify themselves as advanced

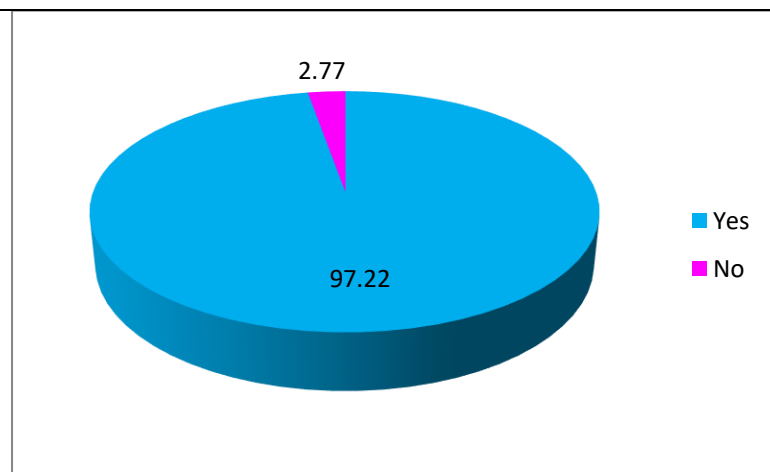
students. The rest of them 30.55% described their level as ‘average’; this denotes that they have problems in their four skills which make their learning process a bit hard for them.

**Result 1:** Students’ English level can be enhanced through improving the four skills.

**Item 2: Do you know what the ‘English Idioms’ are?**

**Table 2: Students’ Knowledge of English Idioms’ Meaning**

Option	N	%
Yes	35	97.22
No	1	2.77
$\Sigma$	36	100



**Figure 5: Students’ Knowledge of English Idioms’ Meaning**

### Presenting the Results

The second question deals with students’ knowledge of English idioms’ meaning. It seeks to find out whether students are aware of the idioms or not. The results of table 2 show that the majority of the participants 97.22% are aware of the English idioms; however, the rest of them 2.77% are not aware of them, this means that they do not employ idioms while speaking or writing. In addition, they are very likely that they do not know what the idioms are.

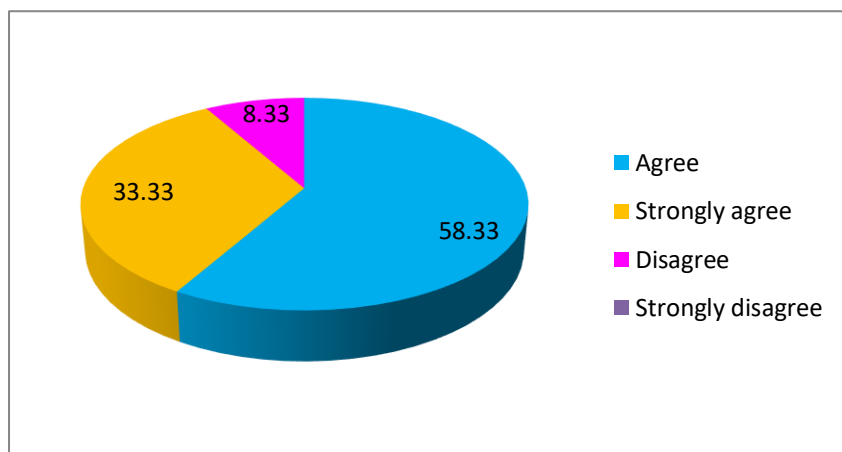
**Result 2:** Idioms' use while speaking or writing makes the learner capable of understanding the intended meaning effortlessly.

## Section Two: English Idioms

**Item 3: Do you consider that idioms and foreign culture are interrelated?**

**Table 3: Students' Awareness of the Relationship Between Idioms and Culture**

Option	N	%
Agree	21	58.33
Strongly agree	12	33.33
Disagree	3	8.33
Strongly disagree	0	0
$\Sigma$	36	100



**Figure 6: Students' Awareness of the Relationship Between Idioms and Culture**

### Presenting the Results

The third question deals with students' awareness towards the relationship between idioms and culture. It attempts to know students' awareness of the relationship between the

English idioms and culture. The above table 3 shows that the majority of the participants 58.33% '*agree*' that there is a relationship between idioms and culture. Besides that, there are also 33.33% of the participants who '*strongly agree*' with the same idea. This is, in general, a clear indication that the students are aware of the role of idioms in learning the target language. Whereas, the rest of the participants 8.33%, who do not agree to the existence of a relationship between them. It seems that this group does not know about the concept of idioms.

**Result 3:** The use of idioms leads the learners to be able in developing their target language's proficiency.

**Item 4: Please, clarify how?**

Most of the students gave their clarifications and opinions regarding the existence of the relationship between idioms and culture as follows:

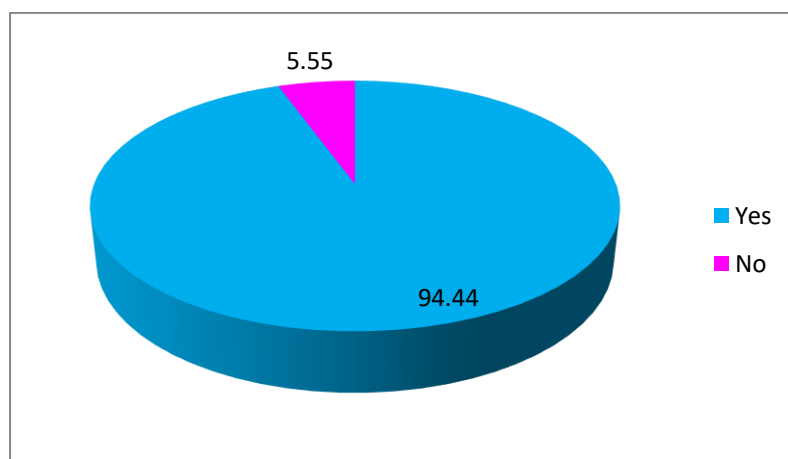
- The idioms represent the beliefs of the culture.
- One cannot guess the meaning of idioms without prior knowledge of the culture that came up with it.
- Idioms show people's culture and their way of seeing and receiving things.
- One can only understand the meaning in its cultural frame.

So, most of the students seem aware of the notion of culture and its role in enhancing one's language proficiency. Also, they know the differences that make their culture differ from the others' culture. As a result, this will affect positively in their language competency.

### Item 5: Are you familiar with some English idioms?

**Table 4: Students' Familiarity with English Idioms**

Option	N	%
Yes	34	94.44
No	2	5.55
$\Sigma$	36	100



**Figure 7: Students' Familiarity with English Idioms**

### Presenting the Results

The fifth question deals with students' familiarity with English idioms. It aims at recognizing whether the students are familiar with the use of idioms in their speech or not. As it is shown in table 5 the majority of students who represent 94.44% have selected 'Yes' which means that they are familiar with some English idioms, and they may use them in their classroom usages. Whereas, 5.55% are not concerned to use them, may be because they do not have enough books or other instruments to read about English idioms.

**Result 5:** Learning English idiomatic expressions evolve students' language skills.

**Item 6: Please, mention some of them**

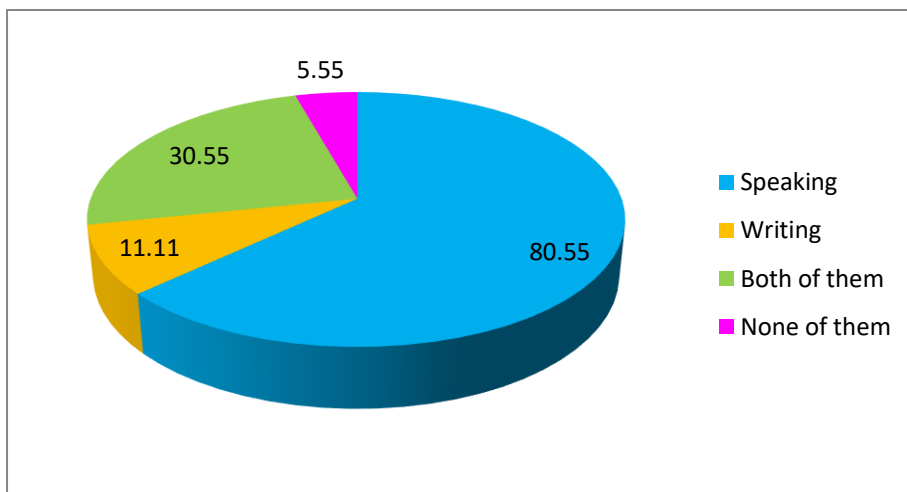
The students who are familiar with the English idioms offered different examples, as mentioned:

- Time is money.
- Costs an arm and a leg.
- On cloud nine.
- Rains cats and dogs.
- Not my cup of tea.

Apparently, most of them use English idioms in their learning process and this indicates that they care about the English culture that leads to widen their perspective about the English language and they are not yet afraid of using the language and they speak it confidently and fluently.

**Item 7: Do you use them in:****Table 5: The Use of Idioms in the Productive Skills**

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Speaking</b>	29	80.55
<b>Writing</b>	4	11.11
<b>Both of them</b>	11	30.55
<b>None of them</b>	2	5.55
<b>Σ</b>	36	100



**Figure 8: The Use of Idioms in the Productive Skills**

### **Presenting the Results**

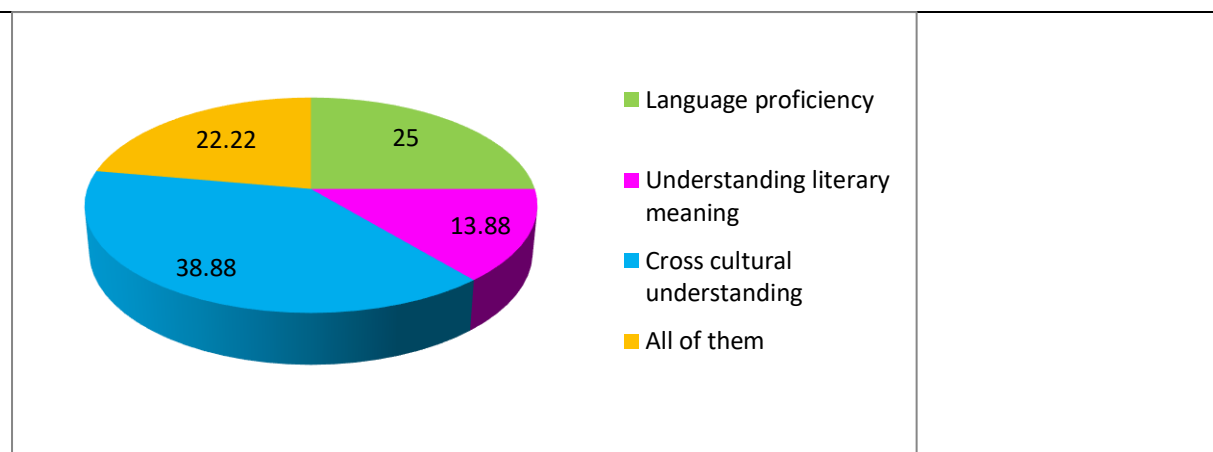
The seventh question deals with the use of idioms in the productive skills. It aims to reveal which skill that makes students use idioms. From table 7 it is noticed that the views of students in using idioms are different. Concerning the 80.55% state that they use them in speaking which is the highest percent. While, 30.55% prefer to use them in both skills, and 11.11% which is the lowest percent prefer to use them in writing. Also, there is 5.55% which do not use idioms at all in any skill. This negligence of idioms makes students linguistically and culturally weak.

**Result 7:** The use of idioms in the learning process makes the students capable of improving their productive skills.

**Item 8: As an EFL student, knowing about English idioms helps you to develop your:**

**Table 6: Students' Views About English Idioms' Use in Developing Aspects of Language**

Option	N	%
Language Proficiency	9	25
Understanding Literary Meaning	5	13.88
Cross Cultural Understanding	14	38.88
All of Them	8	22.22
$\Sigma$	36	100



**Figure 9: Students' Views About English Idioms' Use in Developing Aspects of Language**

### Presenting the Results

This question deals with students' views about English idioms' usage in developing aspects of language. It aims to detect the role of idioms in enhancing different aspects of language. Table 8 illustrates that 38.88% respond that knowing about English idioms help them to develop their cross cultural understanding, whereas, 25% respond that idioms help

them to develop their language proficiency. While, 22.22% respond that idioms help them in developing their all aspects of language, this means that the idioms have a big role in improving different aspects of the language. The smallest percentage of students is 13.88%, they respond that the idioms help them understanding literary meaning.

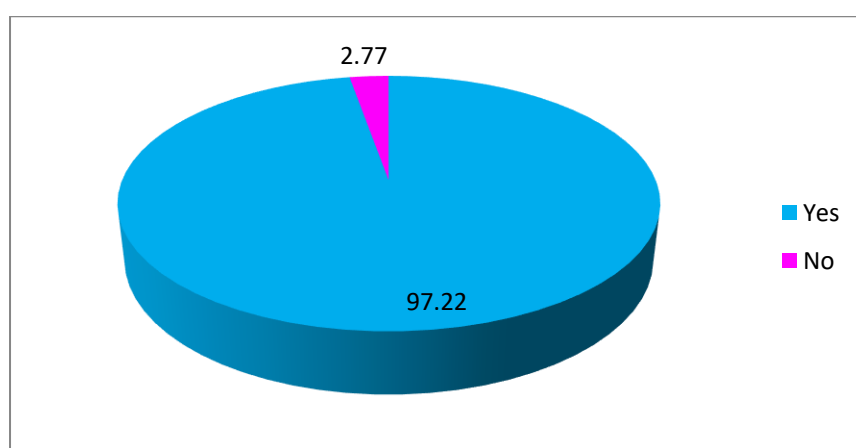
**Result 8:** English idioms' usage aids the learners in evolving the different aspects of language.

### Section Three: Intercultural Communicative Competence

**Item 9: Do you appreciate learning English culture?**

**Table 7: Students' Attitudes About Learning English Culture**

Option	N	%
Yes	35	97.22
No	1	2.77
$\Sigma$	36	100



**Figure 10: Students' Attitudes About Learning English culture**

## Presenting the Results

This question deals with students' attitudes about learning English culture. It aims to figure out whether students are interested in English culture or not. From the table 9 mentioned above, the majority of the participants 97.22% are interested in learning culture, this means that culture helps the learner to be culturally competent. While a few of them 2.77% do not appreciate learning English culture.

**Result 9:** English culture enhances the students' communication with the users of English language.

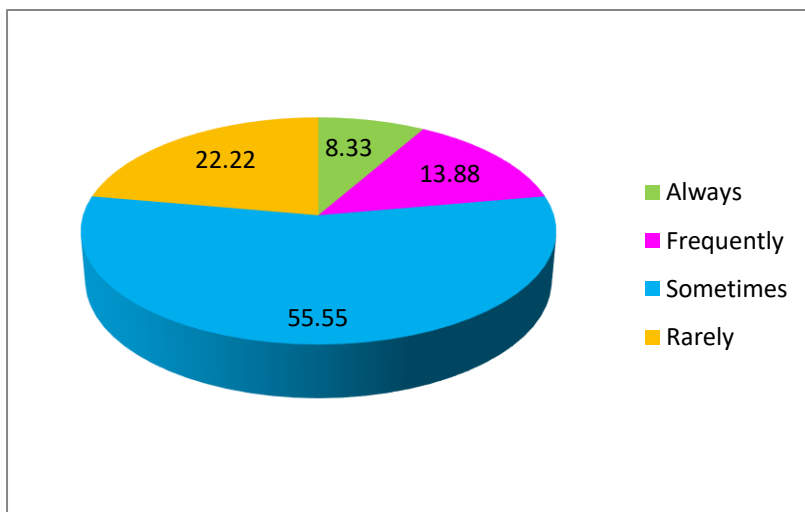
### Item 10: Please, why?

According to the majority of them language and culture cannot be detached from each other, because one cannot learn the target language and use it properly without having enough knowledge about its culture. Also, it allows to understand more different things about the natives themselves, these different things rise students' awareness which makes the students linguistically and culturally competent.

### Item 11: Do you confront some difficulties in learning English culture?

**Table 8: The Difficulties of English Culture Among Students**

Option	N	%
Always	3	8.33
Frequently	5	13.88
Sometimes	20	55.55
Rarely	8	22.22
$\Sigma$	36	100



**Figure 11: The Difficulties of English Culture Among Students**

### Presenting the Results

Question number eleven deals with the difficulties of English culture among students. It aims to determine the most important difficulties faced by learners. Table 11 shows that almost half of participant students 55.55% face difficulties ‘*sometimes*’. Besides 22.22% of students who face difficulties ‘*rarely*’. Also, the minority of students 13.88% facing problems ‘*frequently*’ and few of them 8.33% ‘*always*’ have problems in learning English culture. Having difficulty in learning the culture means that they may have unclear way to learn about English culture which makes them unable to develop their productive skills, and this leads them to be linguistically weak.

**Result 11:** Learning English culture helps the learners to achieve progress in their target language’s level.

**Item 12: Please, mention some of them**

Some of the difficulties that the students have, they mentioned:

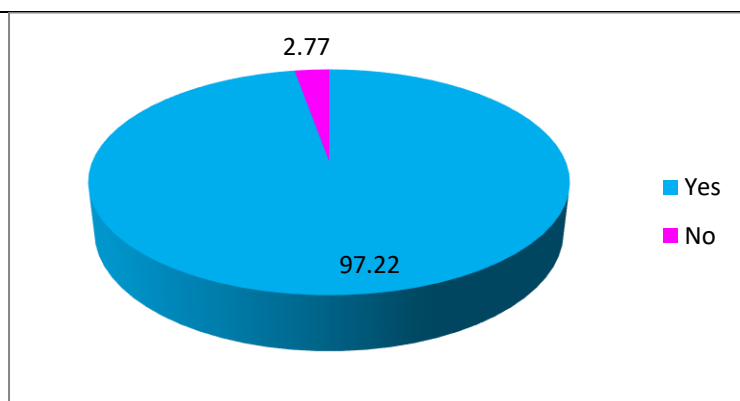
- Cannot get the exact meaning behind the text.
- The cultural gap and variety can be the reason, plus the multicultural and sub-cultures make confusion sometimes.
- Lack of cultural knowledge leads to misunderstanding of the native speakers.

As a result, the students misunderstanding of the natives is back to the few amount of knowledge they have about this foreign culture. Also, the similarity between cultures caused them kind of confusion, they find it somehow difficult to differentiate between the cultures.

**Item 13: Do you think that integrating culture in teaching-learning process gives access to a better acquiring of the English language?**

**Table 9: Students' Attitudes About Integrating Culture in Teaching-Learning Process**

Option	N	%
Yes	35	97.22
No	1	2.77
$\Sigma$	36	100



**Figure 12: Students' Attitudes About Integrating Culture in Teaching-Learning Process**

## **Presenting the Results**

Question number thirteen deals with students' attitudes about integrating culture in teaching-learning process. It aims to find out whether the integration of culture in the learning process has an effective role for the learners or not. Concerning table 13 the majority of students 97.22% are with the integrating of the culture in teaching-learning process. Whereas, few of them 2.77% are not with this integration; maybe they are not interested in enhancing themselves, but the others who are interested, they want to be competent at the English language.

**Result 13:** The integration of the culture in the teaching-learning process makes the students competent communicators.

### **Item 14: Please, explain how?**

According to the latter, the integration of culture in the learning process makes the learner interested about learning the language and acquiring new concepts. Also, it leads to a better understanding of the native speakers, since the culture includes many aspects of language which helps them to speak adequately.

### **Item 15: You are welcome to add any comment:**

Actually, only 8 students added comments and suggestions. They range between the following statements as follows:

- 'Good subject to tackle! Wishing you all the best!'
- 'I love the topic about the difficulties in language learning; it makes the mind remember for a long term what's been learned through the hard way.'
- 'Wish you best luck in your project.'
- 'Good luck in your dissertation, you're doing great job already!'

- ‘ Good luck.’
- ‘Well done, you must feel proud, and be confident of what you are doing to present in the day of graduation.’
- ‘I think learning the English culture helps the students in learning the language.’
- ‘So far so good! Best of luck may Allah help you.’

### **II.1.3. Discussion of Questionnaire’s Results**

The objective of doing this research is that improving EFL students’ intercultural communicative competence through the use of English idioms during the learning process. As a hypothesis, the idioms aid the students to achieve progress in their communication with the native speaker. As a result, section one shows that the majority of the students are aware of the effect role that idioms role in enhancing their English learning process. Also, section two illustrates that most of students agree about the existence of a relationship between idioms and foreign culture which make them linguistically and culturally competent non-native speakers. Hence, section three indicates that, students like to learn about the culture, but sometimes they face some difficulties and this may goes back to the way of teaching during class. Those difficulties may disappear if the teacher lends them a hand, and that will be helpful.

## **Section 2: Analysis and Interpretation of the Teachers' Interviews**

### **II.2.1. Description of the Interview**

The interview is another qualitative research instrument that aims at discovering teachers' opinions towards the role of idioms in developing EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence. It has three sections; the first consists of three questions, in which the interviewees were asked about the years they have been teaching English at university and their opinions about motivating their students to use English idioms during the class; in addition, we requested a clarification for that. While the second section contains two questions, which were about the way teachers can raise their students' awareness of interpreting and understanding idiomatic expressions so as to enable them to be communicatively competent, and about the clarification of the deep meaning of idioms that they suddenly confronted during the discussion. The last section has five questions that carry out three subjects as follows: the objectives of teaching ICC, students' interactions with teachers when learning about English culture, and the methods that allow students to understand and experience new cultures.

### **II.2.2. Analysis of the Interview**

#### **Theme 1: Teachers' Experience in Teaching at University**

The teachers who interviewed were six. Their experience ranged between 5 to 18 years. There are 5 teachers who have a considerable experience which ranged between 5 to 10 years of teaching. There is one lecturer who has valuable experience of teaching English at university, which ranged around 18 years of teaching. Their declaration as it follows:

*"Well...I have been teaching for... five years now"* (T 1)

*"Actually... 10 years"* (T 2)

*“Emm... 18 years” (T 5)*

Almost all of the teachers have good experience in teaching English at the university. This shows that they are experienced in the teaching process and that they know how to make the students understand the concept of idioms for improving their communication with English speakers and increasing their language competency.

## **Theme 2: Teachers’ Attitudes Toward Motivating Students to Use Idioms**

Apparently all of the lecturers motivate their learners to use idioms in their communication. As they commented:

*“As they are part of culture they are learning, I believe it is highly important for EFL learners to use idioms. And thus, I do encourage to use them especially during oral expression sessions” (T 1)*

*“Yeah for sure. As you know idiomatic expressions are essential in language and they are part of formulaic language, as well as ummmm they are fixed in terms of structure and meaning. Also ummm they are often used by native speakers and therefore, if the learner is not competent in idioms he would fail to communicate successfully” (T 2)*

*“Yes I do. Because using idiomatic expressions reflects students’ fluency and mastery of the Anglo-American culture” (T 3)*

*“Yes of course, you try always to push them to use idiomatic expressions, because they help them to address emmm the idea in small amount of time” (T 4)*

*“Yes I do. Using idiomatic expressions is an important aspect of language proficiency in English as a foreign language. It can help students better understand the culture and context of the language. Since idiomatic expressions are typically tied to cultural references,*

*understanding and using them can help students gain a deeper appreciation for the English language and the people who use it. As a result, students can not only enhance their communication skills but also sound more fluent and natural when speaking or writing” (T 5)*

From the answers above, it seems that the teachers are aware of the function of idioms in improving students' communication skills. Since, they are part of the native speaker's culture and reflect students' language fluency. So, idioms help them to appear more natural when communicating with natives and avoid misunderstanding that might be occurs in different real life situations.

### **Theme 3: Raising the Students' Awareness of Interpreting Idioms**

For increasing the students' awareness of understanding idioms, teachers have proposed the most important tools for that. As they stated:

*“Learning the idioms and their meaning as well as their proper use help in learning more about the language as well as the culture. Therefore, teachers should always refer to the importance of such expressions and their use to achieve intercultural communication competence, and explaining how idioms appear in all languages and speakers use them to communicate ideas clearly and effectively. Using and decoding idiomatic expressions help non-native speakers sound more fluent and helps them in understanding others more efficiently” (T 1)*

*“The best thing is to explain idioms, and their nature in EFL context, emm they can use authentic materials such as Youtube videos or films and expose them to the English culture intensively” (T 2)*

*“Teachers can take several steps to do that. Firstly, teachers can introduce idiomatic expressions by explaining the meaning of the expressions and providing real-life examples.*

*This can help students understand the context in which these expressions are used. Also, now that distance learning is possible, teachers can use multimedia tools such as videos, audio recordings, and images to illustrate how idiomatic expressions are used in context. This can help students better understand the meaning of the expressions. Secondly, encouraging students to use idiomatic expressions in everyday conversations or in written assignments can help them become more familiar and comfortable with these expressions. Hence, teachers can provide feedback on how idiomatic expressions are used in conversation or writing assignments. Providing feedback can help students understand how they can use idiomatic expressions appropriately and effectively. Thirdly, creatively designing activities that use idiomatic expressions can help students practice using them in context. For example, a teacher can create a matching activity where students match the idiomatic expression with its corresponding meaning or create a role-play activity where students use idiomatic expressions in a conversation. Finally, by incorporating these steps, teachers can raise students' awareness of interpreting and understanding idiomatic expressions, and help them become more communicatively competent in the English language. This ultimately leads to more successful language acquisition and a deeper understanding of English culture and context” (T 5)*

*“They can raise students’ awareness of idiomatic expressions through using them by the teacher himself or herself” (T 6)*

From the teachers’ perspectives, they have different opinions about the used methods to increase students’ awareness of interpreting idioms. According to (T 1), teachers should determine the importance of idioms and their use to achieve intercultural communication competence, and aid learners to be fluent non-native speakers. In similar context, (T 2) claimed that the best way to understand idioms is to rely on authentic materials as Youtube’ videos or films to get their intended meaning in their suitable context. While, (T5) stated

several steps for that, explaining that teachers can help students understand idiomatic expressions by giving them examples, as well as they can use multimedia tools to assist them understand idioms and so on. So, this means that for increasing students' awareness of interpreting idioms, the learner needs to incorporate all these points for achieving a successful communication.

#### **Theme 4: Teachers' Need for Clarifying the Deep Meaning**

Sometimes the students confront idiomatic expressions, in which the teacher finds himself or herself in need for clarification about this expression. In this case the aim is to figure out if the teacher is in need to explain the deep meaning. Therefore, they offered the following answers:

*"Mostly yes" (T1)*

*"Yes and this can be done by illustrating with examples. (E.g: Aymen popped the question and Sara says yes. So, they will marry next year). Here the teacher explains that (to pop the question) means asking someone to marry you" (T 3)*

*"Yes, teachers should clarify the deep meaning of idiomatic expressions that students may be suddenly confronted with during discussion. This is important to ensure that all students in the classroom understand the meaning of idioms and can use them appropriately in their communication..." (T 5)*

*"Personally, I explain the deep meaning of idioms once we encounter them in the various activities we have in class and generally, I tend to use examples to clarify the meaning for my students and automatically, they will understand its meaning and provide me with examples" (T 6)*

All the teachers are with the idea that they need to clarify the intended meaning of idioms that are suddenly confronted by during the discussion. As (T 5) reveals that teachers should ensure that students understand the deep meaning of idioms and use them appropriately in their communication, as well as the lecturer should ask his/her learner to explain the meaning of an idiom when it is used in context. When the teacher explains the deep meaning, he or she can ensure that all learners get the right idea of the expression. So, understanding idioms' deep meanings would help them to employ those expressions in their daily communication.

### **Theme 5: Objectives of Improving ICC**

Teaching English culture and improving intercultural communicative competence has its objectives. The aim in this case is to find out the teachers' objectives of enhancing ICC. Different objectives will be shown below:

*“As a teacher of English I believe that the prominent purpose of intercultural communication is to increase understanding of culturally mediated communication phenomena. For, it helps learners to achieve the awareness of their selves and others based on an understanding of how members of a community live in their own world” (T 1)*

*“Umm knowing the language is not enough for a successful communication, like we might have the linguistic items, but if we do not know which ones to choose in a given context and how to use them we fail” (T 2)*

*“Better understand the culture of the westerner and be tolerant. Also being aware that although we are tolerant and have positive attitudes regarding Anglophones, they perhaps do not care about us at all, and deal with us from an exotc perspective, i.e. strangely and from a hegemonic standpoint (backward,muslims, underdeveloped...etc)” (T 3)*

*“The objectives are many in fact. First, it is indispensable when communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds because of the misunderstanding that learners may encounter when he/she is not familiar with the idiom used by the speakers. Second, it improves students’ linguistic competence as well because the learner can express himself in a variety of ways. Idioms develop all the four skills; writing, reading, speaking and listening ”*

**(T 6)**

All the answers above of the teachers about the objectives of improving the ICC can enhance students’ communication. According (T 1) and (T 3), understanding others aids students in comprehending their own world and becoming conscious of their own value also help them to be tolerant people. As (T 6) stated that, from the objectives of improving ICC are; communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds as well, it improves students’ linguistic competence and it all the four skills; writing, reading, speaking and listening. So, enhancing intercultural communicative competence leads for a successful communication and make the students competent non-native speakers.

#### **Theme 6: The Interaction of Students-Teachers in Culture’s Learning Process**

Teachers were asked whether students interact with their teachers when learning about English culture or not. The aim of this question is to inspect if the learners participate during English culture class or they do not care. Here are some teachers’ answers:

*“Definitely they do; most of these learners are too motivated to learn about the language and the culture they are exposed, and thus they tend to exhibit positive attitude toward the learning process by shared acceptance, understanding, affection, intimacy, trust, respect, care and cooperation”(T 1)*

*“Personally, they like when discussing cultures” (T 2)*

*“Yes they do and there is a kind of cultural shock when you analyze sensitive topics from our conservative Muslim perspective. So one has simply to be pedagogical and explain the topic effectively and tell the students this is not our culture it is theirs” (T 3)*

*“They ignore the culture...they do not know. To learn about aspects of a culture you have to emmm communicate with native speaker, umm to learn about their culture you have to make emmm a communication maybe through the net, or travel to the country to learn...communicate with them” (T 4)*

*“Of course they do. When learning about English culture, students can interact with teachers in a variety of ways...[t]hrough these interactions, students can gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of English culture. It also helps them to become more confident and competent in communicating with native English speakers, which is crucial for success in today's globalized world” (T 5)*

From teachers' responses above there is one teacher who expresses her answer negatively while the rest of them said that students interact and participate with their teachers when learning about English culture. According (T 1) answer, learners exhibit positive attitudes towards learning through shared acceptance, understanding, trust, respect, care, and cooperation. Whereas (T 4) stated that her students ignore and do not interact when learning about English culture, because they do not know about that.

### **Theme 7: Other Methods to Learn New Culture**

This question aims at discovering other methods to learn a new culture, the teachers offer almost all the methods they know, some of their answers mentioned below:

*“Learning the language or simply the culture is not always enough; students can simply engage in other activities that would facilitate their integration mainly make research about*

*the targeted culture, seek support from other international students and ask questions...”*

**(T 1)**

*“Well I guess accessing culture now is becoming easier and more available thanks to ICTs and social media, you can know everything about the British or umm Americans just through a click on your phone”* **(T 2)**

*“Again by being pedagogical, using simple words, using dictionary, exchanging with them and giving them the opportunity to express their thoughts”* **(T 3)**

*“There are several methods within the classroom setting that teachers can use to help students understand and experience a new culture...[t]hese methods can be effective in the classroom setting to promote cultural learning and understanding. Additionally, teachers can tailor their approach to their students' needs and interests, making learning about a new culture an engaging and fun experience”***(T 5)**

Teachers' answers declared that there are many methods can help the learner to experience and understand new culture. As reported by (T 1), to facilitate integration with other culture students have to keep communication with the target language, and be open to change and difference. Also (T 2) told that, thanks to technology the person could know everything about the world and just through the phone. All of these techniques allow learners to improve and acquire a new culture that enables them to understand deeply the language.

### **Theme 8: Further Comments or Suggestion**

At last, the interviewees were asked to feel free to add further comments or suggestions. Thus, only three teachers added their views as follows:

*“No problem and good luck”* **(T 3)**

*“Never mind” (T 4)*

*“I think students need to learn more about the culture...they need to make effort to communicate with English society to learn about the culture aspects in its exact context”*

**(T 6)**

### **II.2.3. Discussion of the Interview’s Results**

According to the lecturers’ responses and from analysing their results, which were about improving students’ intercultural communicative competence through the use of idioms, it seems that the teachers are aware of the role of idioms in enhancing EFL learners’ ICC. Teachers proposed some tools and through them the students’ ICC will increase and become more competent communicators, such as multimedia tools (videos, audio recordings, images). Also, through language exchange using social media, this can promote cross-cultural communication and develop language skills. All this is to explain how idioms are used in context. All in all, understanding idiomatic expressions helps learners become more competent communicators in the English language. As a result, EFL teachers support their learners to learn about English idioms, because this will widen their views about the world in general and about their culture in particular. As well, teachers teach their learners to have respect and be tolerant with others’ culture, besides that, they have to maintain their own culture and do not imitate the target culture, because this leads to erase the self-identity.

### **Summary**

Nowadays, intercultural communication has become a must and educated people have to master several foreign languages, including English. This research in your hands is an attempt to draw the attention of English language students to the role of idiomatic expressions in raising the level of intercultural communication competence among students, and this in turn requires knowledge of the foreign culture of the target language. Our aim in this research is to

investigate the role of learning English idiomatic expressions in improving the intercultural communicative competence of first-year master students. Therefore, we hypothesized that learning English idioms helps develop intercultural communicative competence. In order to test this hypothesis, two research tools were used. First, a questionnaire was given to thirty-six master students of English at Abbas Laghrour University-Khenchela. Secondly, the interview, which was given to six teachers of the first year of the master's degree in English. The results of this research obtained from data collection showed that English idioms have an effective role in enhancing the intercultural communicative competence of students.

#### **II.2.4. Findings of the Study**

The findings of this research are based on the results of the data analysis that are collected through the use of the research tools, which are the questionnaire and the interview. The former is randomly distributed to Master One Students, while the latter is equally distributed to teachers at the department of English at Khenchela University.

The following points represent the most important findings of the study:

- When the learner relies on using idioms while speaking or writing, it improves their understanding level and leads them to communicate effectively. Besides, students' English level will be enhanced.
- Learning English idiomatic expressions develops students' language skills, which are: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Hence, English idioms' usage aids the learners in evolving different aspects of language.
- Learning culture improves students' communication and helps them achieve progress in their target language's level.
- The integration of culture into the teaching-learning process makes the learners competent speakers.

To sum up, learning English idioms influences EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence because idioms are integrated in the communication process, which means that idioms are considered to be a part of English culture. Therefore, the faster they learn idioms, the more they will be at communicating with English-users efficiently.

#### **II.2.5. Limitations of the Study**

Our research is based on a case study of Master One EFL learners. In this section, a number of learners' answers are chosen to be analyzed because the sample type is purposive sampling. This case study is not meant to cover all the learners at EFL master's degree universities. Our work is limited to Master One EFL learners at Khenchela University, as we are restricted by the time allowed. Therefore, the case study was chosen as a sample for this research mainly because these learners possess adequate linguistic competence in the English language and some knowledge of the English culture. For the interview, some teachers agreed to answer the questions orally on the spot, while others chose to respond via written form since they had no time for an interview and were tied up by teaching time.

#### **II.2.6. Recommendations**

The result of this study recommend for some points to take into consideration. First, the University's library should offer books and dictionaries about English idiomatic expressions, and the teachers of English have to employ idioms during learning process. Second, cultural exchanges should be prepared and organized by EFL teachers to help their students communicate with other learners of different University. Also, they should guide their learners in class during the session and explain the ambiguities to ensure that they understand the course, in order to improve their learning level. Therefore, teachers should make the students aware that being culturally and linguistically competent means to respect others' culture and maintain our own identity.

## **Conclusion**

It is clear from what is provided above that both EFL teachers and learners acknowledge the fact that English idioms play a vital role in teaching and learning the language. More specifically, English idioms become essential during learning process, because they help in getting the meaning of the intended message deeply. In addition to that, learning the target culture makes communication between two different cultures as a piece of cake. It helps the learner even to make friends which have different cultural background from his/ her cultural background. Also, learning about different culture make the learner value other cultures as he/she value his/her culture. In brief, when the learner knows about English idioms his/her intercultural communicative competence will be developed for the better.

# **General Conclusion**

## **General Conclusion**

It is undeniably that English idioms have a very influential role in developing and mastering intercultural communicative competence. Therefore, this study aims at investigating the influence of learning English idioms on EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence. The current study put the forward hypothesis that learning English idioms helps developing intercultural communicative competence. For the sake of testing the hypothesis mentioned above, two research tools have been used for gathering data: a questionnaire and an interview. Questionnaires were administered to 36 first-year master's students of English at Abbas Laghrour University of Khenchela. Besides, an interview that is directed to six Master One English teachers. According to the findings, one can state that learning English idioms helps in developing EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence. Moreover, the answers showed that the students really care about the idiomatic expressions and use some of them in their communication, as well as they showed interest to the English culture, since it is an important part in the language. It is worth reminding that developing EFL University learners' ICC through learning English idioms has proven to be useful in communicating with the users of the target language. Also, learning idioms could improve language proficiency, cultural understanding, and communication skills. As well, they put in the student much confidence, as it provides him/her much more vocabulary which could be an obstacle in the communication process. As a result, improving intercultural communicative competence enables learners to communicate across cultural boundaries. As well, it encourages openness, tolerance, and respect. Besides that, it is essential for building meaningful relationships between people from different countries, or between the countries themselves for their issues, and so on.

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# Appendices

## Appendix One

### Students' Questionnaire

Dear student,

This 'Questionnaire' is a part of my research. The main focus is to investigate the influence of English idioms on EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence. Please, tick (✓) and provide the appropriate answer where necessary. Your help is much appreciated.

✚ **Idioms:** are phrases whose meanings are found behind the literal meaning known only through the common use.

✚ **Intercultural communicative competence:** means that the ability to understand the target culture including your own, this comprehension of the foreign culture helps the learner to be communicatively competent.

#### Section One: General Information

##### Item 1. How would you evaluate your English?

- Good
- Averagee
- Less than average

##### Item 2. Do you know exactly what 'English idioms' are?

- Yes
- No

**Section Two: Idiomatic Expressions**

**Item 3. Do you consider that idioms and foreign culture are interrelated?**

- Agree
- Strongly agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Item 4. Please clarify how?**

.....

.....

**Item 5. Are you familiar with some English idioms?**

- Yes
- No

**Item 6. Please, mention some of them:**

.....

.....

**Item 7. Do you use them in:**

- Speaking
- Writing
- Both of them
- None of them

**Item 8. As a student knowing about English idioms helps you to develop your?**

- Language proficiency
- Understanding literary meaning
- Cross cultural understanding
- All of them

**Section three: Intercultural Communicative Competence**

**Item 9. Do you appreciate learning English culture?**

Yes

No

**Item 10. Please, why?**

.....

.....

**Item 11. Do you confront some difficulties in learning English culture?**

- Always
- Frequently
- Sometimes
- Rarely

**Item 12. Please, mention some of them**

.....

.....

**Item 13. Do you think that integrating culture in teaching-learning process gives access to a better acquiring of the English language?**

➤ Yes

➤ No

**Item 14. Please, explain how ?**

.....

.....

.

**Item 15. You are welcome to add any comment:**

.....

Thank you for your cooperation!

## Appendix Two

### Teachers' Interview

Dear teacher,

This interview aims at gathering information about the influence of English idioms on EFL intercultural communicative competence. You are kindly invited to answer the following questions.

**English idiom:** means an expression, its meaning is found behind its literal sense.

**Intercultural communicative competence:** means that the ability to understand the target culture including your own, this comprehension of the foreign culture helps the learner to be communicatively competent.

**Item 1. How long have you been teaching English at University?**

.....

**Item 2. Do you motivate your students to use idiomatic expressions in their communication?**

**Please, can you say why?**

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

**Item 3. How can teachers raise students' awareness of interpreting and understanding idiomatic expressions, so as to enable them to be communicatively competent?**

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

**Item 4. Do teachers need to clarify the deep meaning of idiomatic expressions that they are suddenly confronted with during the discussion?**

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

**Item 5. As a teacher of English, what are the objectives of improving intercultural communicative competence?**

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

**Item 6. Do you think that students interact with teachers when learning about English culture?**

**Please, can you clarify more?**

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

**Item 7. Are there other methods that allow students to understand and experience a new culture?**

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

**Item 8. Do you want to add further comment or suggestion?**

.....  
.....

Thank you for your collaboration!

## ملخص

تستكشف الدراسة مجال التعبيرات الإصطلاحية كوحدات لغوية مهمة لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. الدراسة الحالية هي محاولة للتحقيق في دور تعلم العبارة الإصطلاحية الإنجليزية على كفاءة التواصل بين الثقافات لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية. إتبعنا الدراسة المنهج التفسيري المتتابع. فالأدوات المستخدمة في جمع البيانات عبارة عن إستبيان و مقابلة. لذلك، يفترض أن تعلم العبارات الإصطلاحية يساعد في تطوير كفاءة التواصل. ولأجل إختبار صحة هذه الفرضية، تم توزيع إستبيان في جامعة عباس لغرور-خنشلة- على عينة مكونة من 36 طالباً من أصل 178 طالباً في اللغة الإنجليزية. وللغرض نفسه تم إجراء كذلك مقابلة مع 6 أساتذة مشاركين من أصل 28 أستاذاً للغة الإنجليزية لإستكشاف آرائهم حول واقع استخدام العبارات الإصطلاحية خلال الحصص. تظهر النتائج أن العبارات الإصطلاحية الإنجليزية تلعب دوراً رئيسياً في تحسين كفاءة الطلبة في التواصل اللغوي و الثقافي.