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DIVISIÓN ACADÉMICA DE EDUCACIÓN Y ARTES



**“EXPLORING SECOND LANGUAGE NOTIONS OF IDIOMATIC
EXPRESSIONS OF ENGLISH LEARNERS FROM DIVISIÓN
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AUTÓNOMA DE TABASCO”**

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BY:

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UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF

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AND

PROFESSOR. CARLOS LORENZO CUSTODIO CARRILLO

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Resumen

Investigación sobre expresiones idiomáticas literales y complejas en inglés llevada a cabo en la Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco. En el estudio participaron doce estudiantes mexicanos que se encontraban cursando la licenciatura en Idiomas en la División Académica de Educación y Artes. Las preguntas de investigación fueron a) ¿Los aprendices conocen las expresiones idiomáticas en inglés? Y b) ¿Qué tanto saben los aprendices sobre las expresiones idiomáticas en inglés?

Por otro lado, la hipótesis sostiene que los aprendices pueden entender e interpretar las expresiones idiomáticas que son idénticas en forma y significado al Español. En contraste, las expresiones idiomáticas complejas no serán fáciles de comprender y usar en el contexto correspondiente. Las suposiciones de este estudio están basadas en el análisis de la Teoría de la transferencia.

La investigación tiene un enfoque cuantitativo descriptivo. La recolección de datos fue mediante cuestionarios realizados específicamente para conocer las nociones de los aprendices respecto a las expresiones idiomáticas. Los resultados muestran que las expresiones idiomáticas literales son mucho más fáciles de reconocer el significado correcto. Por lo contrario, aunque los aprendices identificaron el significado de las expresiones idiomáticas complejas, admitieron no sentirse seguros de su uso en un discurso oral.

Abstract

A research of literal and non-literal idioms was conducted at Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco. It had as its participants 12 Mexican students who were majoring in B.A in languages in División Académica de Educación y Artes. Research questions were a) Do the learners know English Idioms? and b) How much do the learners know about English Idioms? On the other hand, the hypothesis was that learners would interpret and understand English Idioms that are identical in form and meaning in Spanish. In contrast, different Idioms will not be easy to comprehend and use in the appropriate context. The assumptions of this study are based on transfer analysis theory.

The current research has a quantitative approach with a descriptive design. Data collection was questionnaires, which were used to collect information about learners' notions of idiomatic expressions. Results showed that literal idioms are way more accessible for the participants to identify the right meaning. In contrast, participants had a good score regarding to the identification of non-literal Idioms but in the background questionnaire, most learners admitted they don't feel confident when they have to use English Idioms in speaking.

Key words: English idioms, learners, notions of idiomatic expressions, literal idioms, non-literal idioms

Chapter 1. Research Problem

Learning a language is not only about knowing the structures of the sentences but also about having the correct pronunciation, being good at writing, listening, and at speaking skills. These aspects enable learners to reach a good level of proficiency for communicating with others; however, these skills are deficient when English is presented through real-life situations, and knowing about how the language works is not enough. English includes knowledge of idiomatic expressions, slangs, idioms, etc., often used in daily life communication through informal situations by native speakers. Thus, recognizing idiomatic expressions addresses honest communication where the use of grammar and knowledge learned through lessons, songs, readings, or other approaches does not help to understand these expressions. Idioms, for instance, present a particular problem for native and second language learners. Nippold (1991, as cited in Tomei, 2018), states that "there seems to be no clear point in human development when you can say that humans have mastered idioms."

Since we frequently find idiomatic expressions in spoken and written discourse, they require special attention in language programs. The curriculum should not move idioms to a position of secondary importance. Typically, the expressions that have idiomaticity come from intercultural interaction. (Bannard and Matthews, 2008; Tremblay, Derwing, Libben and Westbury 2011, as cited in Carrol & Conklin, 2015) state that, idiomatic expressions show the phrase-level effects of frequency that are important to feel more at ease with the use of the language.

According to Irujo (1986), idiomatic expressions are often left until last or ignored in language classrooms. They are challenging to learn and master for all groups of students, including young native speakers, bilingual students, and foreign language learners. Idioms are the most challenging part of the vocabulary to teach. Students might face idiomatic expressions like phrasal verbs since the third and the fourth grade, such as *switch on the TV*, *wake up*, *turn on/off the light*, *hurry up*, *stand up*, *sit down*, *hands up (in the air)*, etc. They are often used to learning from the teachers' phrases like; *carry on*, *raise your voice*, *look at the blackboard*, etc. Even though these

expressions are not known as idioms, they comprise symbolic meanings, a verb, and a particle or an adverb.

Based on our experiences and our point of view as English learners, when taking courses at DAEA, a low knowledge of idioms prevails because teachers rarely focus on them.

In the study "Teaching English Idioms to L2 Learners: ESL Teachers' perspective" by Rizq (2015) concludes that the way ESL learners and teachers regard idioms affect the method of teaching them. With regard to their teaching methods, more than half of the participants combine the explicit and the implicit approaches in class depending on the nature of the idioms, context, and teachers' intuitions.

Hala (as cited in Rizq, 2015) believes that learning idioms is the learners' responsibility, she defended her attitude of avoiding using idioms in her classes:

"I don't use many idioms in my own teaching. As a matter of fact, I don't hear much use of idioms from my teachers and professors either. I guess I just naturally tend to avoid using them because I think my students might get confused. The core idea is that idioms can always be replaced by normal explanations. A piece of cake is my favorite idiom, could be the only one that I use in my classes and no one ever asked about its meaning".

Moreover, according to Irujo (1986), English textbooks do not have activities to teach and learn these expressions, perhaps because they focus on teaching and developing productive skills (i.e., speaking and writing) has been the priority in current communicative approaches which are popular in the EFL contexts. When idioms are included in textbooks, they often appear in the vocabulary section without enough exercises and practice to promote the students' understanding and use of these expressions.

In looking over the three textbooks we reviewed, examples of idioms in each are few (two to three per book), and explanations or cultural significance of idioms is limited. Unfortunately, most English learners in this faculty do not use idiomatic expressions

in their talks (at present, we have no statistics that prove that “all” English learners do not).

Idioms are usually found in written and spoken language, and it is not easy to infer their meaning when they are used. The avoidance of them is a prevalent pattern that becomes a significant matter when trying to understand a situation, even for a student who has an exceptional knowledge of grammar and a wide range of vocabulary. Idioms have a privileged status for native speakers (Wray, 2012).

1.1 Introduction

The use of English idioms has proven to be difficult and confusing when they are heard for the first time or when one wants to understand them. The result of this shows a deficient command of the use of idiomatic expressions because it is difficult for second language learners to deal with complex expressions and creative ways to express themselves in a better way.

“Exploring second language notions of Idiomatic expressions of English learners from División Académica de Educación y Artes (DAEA) at Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco” is a research project that provides outcomes about how familiar English learners are with the use of English Idioms.

The study reported in this research investigates the knowledge of English learners who were taking Intermediate and Advanced English subjects in DAEA, applying data collection instruments that test the recognition of identical and complex idioms in various real-life situations. The purpose is to investigate participants’ notions of idioms and whether they recognize identical and complex idioms. The current research consists of four chapters; the first chapter called ‘Method’, bases its content on the problems addressed, the definitions of the current research about English Idioms, the relevant trends that support the study and the background frame. The second chapter called ‘*Does previous knowledge affect the learning of Idiomatic expressions?*’ provides information about the assumptions and the variables of the study. Meanwhile, the third chapter called ‘Methodological aspects’ contains the methodology section that helped to collect data and derive significant findings. Finally, the fourth chapter

called 'Results and discussion' shows objectively the answers to the research questions and the interpretation of the findings.

The study conducted indicates that if English Idioms are more alike to those of the Spanish language, they show positive transfer-they are easy to infer and understand. However; If English Idioms have no similar patterns or coherence when translating, they show negative transfer-it is not straightforward to grasp their meaning.

1.2 Idioms literature (Background)

There is a wide range of literature related to the term idiom. An idiom is the most common term used in research, but some authors interpret the word differently. For example, Academic V.V. Vinogradov introduced the phraseological unit (Frómeta Y., López M.E., Milán M. E., 2017), while Carter (1998, as cited in Frómeta Y., López M.E., Milán M. E., 2017) uses the term fixed expressions. Moon (as cited in Frómeta Y., López M.E., Milán M. E., 2017) initiates the word multi-word items prompted, while Howarth (1998, as cited in Frómeta Y., López M.E., Milán M. E., 2017) picks up the term phraseology. In contrast, the traditional term idiom is used by McCarthy 1998; Gläser 1984, as cited in Frómeta Y., López M.E., Milán M. E., 2017 that adopted the term phraseological unit. The term could have different terminologies from various authors, but the term idiom was more pleasant to be chosen as the principle of non-compositionality. Dixon (1994) defines idioms as "a combination of words that have different meanings for each of their parts. In other words, idiomatic expressions are expressions where there is a considerable difference between what is said (literal interpretation) and what is meant (idiomatic interpretation)". Idioms don't have a literal meaning. This changes in various cases where the use of significance is immersed in the culture.

Cooper quoted in Almashikhi (2018) establishes that idioms" are included in the category of non-literal or figurative language that also involves metaphors, similes, and proverbs. These forms of speech are not easy to understand and teach because the meaning changes dramatically." (p.1).

(Nippold and Fey ,1983, as cited in Cooper, 1998) explain that a metaphor is "a non-literal usage of words in which one element, the topic, is compared to another, the vehicle, based on one or more shared features".

Another category of idioms is the proverb, which Cooper (1998) argues that: "uses words figuratively, but the comparison is less obvious than in metaphors and similes" (p. 255).

Books, group work, drama, illustrations, music, and sounds can all be used to teach idioms, which can vary on the tasks and activities that hook different students (Frómeta Y., López M.E., Milán M. E., 2017). It's noticed that problem-solving exercises can help learners discover the metaphors in idiomatic expressions (Lennon, 1998; Cooper, 1998, as cited in Frómeta Y., López M.E., Milán M. E., 2017). A problem-solving nature would show them the use of idioms in the context, differing which meaning would suit the problem activating learners' innate cognitive to understand something complicated or unusual in their environment.

On the other hand, Schweigert (1986) approaches using the terms familiar and less familiar, explaining that "idioms and familiarity of an idiom may influence how it is processed. The idiomatic meaning may be harder to retrieve for less familiar idioms than for familiar idioms". In other words, a familiar idiom is typically recognized because of its exact equivalence of meaning or literal meaning. In contrast, it is not easy to identify a less familiar idiom and infer its meaning.

The idioms' meanings can vary depending on how they are written, the context where they are used, and how the main verbs are conjugated. Similarly, the differences in spelling (hyphenation), morphology (singulars and plurals), inflection (particularly verb tenses), and idioms often vary in their lexical form. When learners become familiar with an idiomatic expression, they also need to be aware of the combinations the idiomatic phrase takes (Simpson and Mendis, 2003, as cited in Frómeta Y., López M.E., Milán M. E., 2017).

Ample evidence exists regarding the Levels-of-processing theory and the Dual Coding theory. (Kecskes, 2007, as cited in, Ortaçtepe, D., 2013). has also evidenced theoretical premises, emphasizing that: "bilinguals in their L2 when participating in lingua franca communication prefer the use of semantical transparent language to formulaic language, to make sure that they will be understood by all".

There is not a specific English level when idioms should be taught, however; Liontas (2002) and Cooper (1998) suggest that idioms should be introduced to learners as early as possible along with other aspects of semantics, pragmatics, linguistics, culture, and conventions of discourse and, therefore, should be integrated into the language curriculum right from the start.

Materials designed specifically to teach idioms provide exercises to help learners master them. However, a survey of five ESL idiom books (Reeves 1975, Feare 1980, Goldman 1981, Dixon 1983, Adams and Kuder 1984) revealed that many of the exercises are inadequate (Irujo, 1986, p.2).

However, idioms should be taught first to learners with an intermediate level of English instead of beginners. Learning idioms require that learners are capable of being familiar with lexical knowledge to understand the language that is used to convey something different from the literal dictionary definition of the word (Boers, 2004; Cooper, T. C. 1998, as cited in Frómata Y., López M.E., Milán M. E., 2017).

Context is another category that has been researched. That is why we learn words better when they are acquired in a meaningful context. The comprehension of idiomatic expressions is facilitated by contextual support (Cacciari and Levorato, 1989, Nippold and Martin, 1989, as cited in Cain et al., 2009). Therefore, idioms must be used in a wide range of contexts that help students differentiate the meaning by connecting it to the previous knowledge.

Context helps students to make meaningful connections to their previous knowledge and have considerable skill to acquire those words and use them in upcoming situations.

1.3 Rationale

English courses aim to use the language to make students able to speak fluently in English, training their listening and writing skills either through talks or through listening to the teacher to be familiar with the sounds of English. Teachers focus on training students to use the language formally but not to use it as native speakers do. In fact, a lack of understanding of idioms in oral tasks or reading comprehension activities has frequently been apparent. When an idiomatic expression is introduced to the class, very few students know the idiom's meaning, which normally relate to those that have a literal meaning in Spanish. In English courses at UJAT, it is common that learners have problems inferring the meaning of idiomatic expressions and using them correctly in various contexts.

The findings of this research also have the purpose of raising interest in teachers to consider including English idioms in classes, thus participants can benefit from a plan of instruction incorporating a wide range of activities that appeal to using idiomatic expressions to have a greater chance of learning idioms than with an instructional program restricted to only linguistic exercises.

Language students must gain ease in using idioms in their oral and written discourse since success in this language area will generate confidence in the student and respect in those with whom they come in contact (Cooper, 1984). The use of idiomatic expressions makes students sound like native speakers and develop self-confidence when keeping an informal conversation with native speakers.

In that token, Cooper (1999) points out research conducted by Irujo (1986a), whose purpose was to determine whether advanced learners of English used their knowledge of their native language, Spanish, to understand and produce L2 expressions. The results of this study showed that English idioms identical to their Spanish equivalents were the easiest to comprehend and create. Participants were more familiar with

idiomatic expressions similar in the two languages, but in the production tests, interference from Spanish was prevalent. The idioms that were not similar in the two languages—for example, *to have a free hand* is rendered in Spanish by *tener carta blanca* (to have carte blanche)—were the hardest for the participants to understand and create.

English Idioms are part of the English language; however, they are sometimes avoided and not teachable because they are hard to learn and associate the words to infer their real meaning instead of being taught by contexts. English Idioms do improve the communication and senses of second language learners so it would be considered that English teachers should teach idiomatic expressions and make students aware of the importance of using idioms to have more human talks -not to be meant to think of literal meanings when it comes to express ideas.

1.4 Research questions

The following questions are addressed to the problem of the current research: to investigate how familiar second language learners are with the use of English Idioms. The first question aims to reveal through questionnaires the experience that learners had had with English Idioms. The second question's purpose is to show how able participants are to recognize meanings of English Idioms in academic controlled contexts.

1. Do the learners know English Idioms?
2. How much do the learners know about English Idioms?

1.5 Purpose of the research

To identify the notions of idioms of chosen groups of English learners from DAEA, applying data collection instruments that evaluate the recognition of identical and complex idioms in various real-life situations.

Chapter 2. Theoretical framework:

Does previous knowledge affect the learning of idiomatic expressions?

According to Spencer, 2000, as cited in Amin, A. A. (2017) basically, the term transfer means that an influence of an existing experience is exerted directly and clearly on acquiring a new knowledge. When people try to learn new things, they tend to use existing mental sets which are determined by previous cultural experience. People with several cultural backgrounds can be influenced by such sets.

Richards & Schmidt (2013) stated that “Positive transfer is learning in one situation which helps or facilitates learning in another later situation. Negative transfer is learning in one situation which interferes with learning in another later situation.”

When the relevant transferred structure of two languages is identical, linguistic transfer may result in correct language performance called positive transfer: here, the “correct” meaning is equivalent with most native speakers’ notions of acceptability.

Language transfer can lead to negative pragmatic transfer, which occurs when learners are unaware of the pragmatic knowledge of the target language or lack such linguistic knowledge. This can result in misunderstandings or miscommunications due to the differences in pragmatic norms and knowledge between the two languages. Teachers can lead learners to identify and use similarities such as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation to facilitate their acquisition of the target language.

When learners try to use idiomatic expressions, they should always verify the meanings and usage of an idiom or structure in the target language. It’s crucial that teachers and learners might be conscious to avoid assuming that positive transfer is occurring because this could lead to errors.

Amin (2017) points out that, the principle of transfer refers to the hypothesis that first language will affect target language. The phenomenon of transfer happens when acquiring a new language is influenced by pronunciation, grammar or any other aspects of a learner’s first language. By many theoreticians and teachers it is accepted that when learners attempt at communicating in foreign or second language, they often transfer some elements of their mother tongue onto patterns of the target language in both speaking and writing.

2.1 Key concepts of the current research about idioms

In this section, the definitions of keywords used in the current research are presented. Most concepts were created after analyzing the referents found by other authors. As for the most significant keyword of this research, McPherron and Randolph (2014, as cited Kovács, 2016) stated that most linguists, writers, poets, language teachers, and language learners admit that “idioms” may help to give vivid descriptions and prove to be more effective and powerful than literal, non-idiomatic language

Table 1. Idioms notions is the evidence of the results found of the definition "idiom." Firstly, the word idiom appears in Webster's Dictionary (2023) as a peculiar expression, while McMordie and Seidl , (1988, as cited in Kovács, 2016) state that an idiom is a group of words whose meaning is different when this is taken together. On the other hand, Brenner (2013, as cited in Khonbi and Sadeghi, 2017) pointed out that an idiom can be a set of two or more words with a special meaning.

Table 1.

Idioms notions

Definition	Author	Year
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 or in its grammatically atypical use of words.	Webster Dictionary	2023
... “an idiom can be defined as a number of words which, when taken together, have a different meaning from the individual meanings of each word”...	Kovács McMordie Seidl.	G, 2016 and
... “two or more words together that, as a unit, have a special meaning that is different from the literal meaning of the words separately” ...	Brenner	2011

Made by the authors.

Table 2.

Non-literal idioms (Complex idioms)

Definition	Author	Year
...is a brilliant fellow is a humorous way of expressing what could be literally expressed...	Carston	2012
...the descriptive taxonomy provided by the classical rhetoricians...	Grice qtd in Carston	2012
...they may be either invariable or may have little variation. In addition, these idioms are considered to be opaque...	Kovács	2016
...They are considered to be transparent because they can be interpreted based on their parts...	Strakšiene qtd in Shojaei	2012
...no relations between the idiom's constituents and the idiom's meaning can be discerned...	Cacciari and Glucksber qtd in Kovács	2016
...there is no connection between the meaning of individual constituents and the meaning of the whole idiom...	Fernando qtd in Kovács	2016

Made by the authors.

Non-literal idioms have various perspectives from several authors. Carston (2012), on the one hand, stated that non-literal idioms as a humorous way of expressing. On the other hand, Grice quoted in Kovács (2012) claimed that this term is related to a descriptive taxonomy, while Kovács (2016) pointed out that non-literal idioms are opaque. Shojaei quoted in Strakšiene (2012) said that non-literal idioms are transparent, and Cacciari and Glucksber quoted in Kovács (2016) explained that the meaning of non-literal idioms could be discerned. Finally, non-literal idioms have no connection to the meaning of lexemes (Fernando qtd. in Kovács, 2016).

Based on the analysis conducted in this study, non-literal idioms are expressions whose meaning is hard to infer, and whose words make no sense as to easily guess their meaning. Non-literal idioms mean thus, something different to what its literal translation may result.

Table 3.

Literal idioms

Definition	Author	Year
... <i>Literal idioms</i> are either invariable or allow little variation. They are considered to be transparent because they can be interpreted based on their parts...	Strakšiene Shojaei	qtd 2012
...the constituents map directly onto their idiomatic referents...	Glucksberg Kovács	qtd in 2016
... “there are one-to-one semantic relations between the idiom’s constituents and components of the idiom’s meaning...	Kovács	2016
...are figurative idioms, phraseological unities with a certain connection between the meaning of individual words and the meaning as a whole...	Fernando Kvekto	qtd in 2016

Made by the authors

2.2 Trends

This section analyzes current trends in the research of second language learners’ notions of idiomaticity linked to the area of languages, specifically teaching, to acquire information on the investigated trends, which are theoretical, methodological, and instrumental. First, research papers related to the present topic were searched in different databases, such as Redalyc, EBSCO, Conricyt, and Cambridge. Journals were also consulted, such as Nature El Sevier, Mextesol, Indian Journal of Applied

Linguistics, Journal of Child Language, TESOL Journal, Journal of psycholinguistics Research and International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling.

Secondly, summary sheets were made, which were used to collect essential data from the analyzed documents. The study problem, the research questions, the objectives, the methodology emphasizing the study context, the approach, the data, and the collection tools found in the trends led us to the results, and the conclusion of this research.

2.2.1 Theoretical trends

The analysis of the studies of the 10 papers about the theoretical approaches indicated that what stands out most are the investigations with unified theories ($n=2$) (Laufer B, 2000; Eyckmans, J., and Lindstromberg, S., 2017). Very little research has been done with The Levels-of-processing theory and the Dual Coding theory ($n=1$) (Boers, F., Eyckmans, J., and Stengers, H., 2007). A similar analysis indicates that few studies have analyzed the dual-route theory of familiar/novel language processing outlined ($n=1$) (Carrol, G., and Conklin, K., 2015) and the transfer analysis theory ($n=1$) (Suzanne I., 1986).

An example of this theoretical trend was the study by Boers, F., Eyckmans, J., and Stengers, H. (2007) in the research paper called "Presenting figurative idioms with a touch of etymology: more than mere mnemonics? The study's assumptions were based on The Levels-of-processing theory and the Dual Coding theory. Research questions were a) whether knowledge of the origin of unfamiliar idioms could offer learners (i) cues for comprehension and (ii) cues for usage restrictions concerning register b) etymology as a guide for comprehension. c) Etymology as a guide for usage restrictions?

The study was intended to explore potential benefits beyond vocabulary retention. A quantitative approach was used, and the data collection instruments used were the Nation and Laufer 3000–5000 word-level test Mann-Whitney U-test. Participants were Dutch-speaking students (aged 19 to 21) of modern languages (majoring in English)

from Erasmus College of Brussels. So, the experiment consisted of three trials, each time targeting a different series of idioms tackled along with the diverse types of exercises in one teaching period (under supervision). The results showed that knowledge of the origin of idioms could effectively help learners comprehend their figurative meaning.

2.2.2 Methodological trends

Nine of ten analyzed articles had a quantitative approach (Boers, F., Eyckmans, J., & Stengers, H., 2007; Carroll, G., & Conklin, K., 2015; Eyckmans, J., & Lindstromberg, S., 2017; Kecskes, I., 2015; Laufer, B., 2000; Lontas, J. 2002; Karimi. L., Pam P., 2016; Suzanne I., 1986; Schweigert, W. A., 1986;) On the contrary, only one article had a qualitative approach (Gibbs, R. W., 1987). Laufer, B. published an article called Avoidance of idioms in a second language: The effect of L1-L2 degree of Similarities, where a quantitative study was conducted (Laufer, B., 2000). Research questions from this study were: a) Do advanced EFL learners avoid using idioms and prefer their literal equivalents? b) Do some idiom types elicit more idioms than other types? c) Are some idiom types more susceptible to avoidance than others? d) Does language proficiency affect the use/avoidance of idioms? Participants were 56 students majoring in English Language and Literature from the University of Haifa, Israel. Regarding the data collection instruments, SAS software was used. Besides, the data analysis consisted of Repeated Measures, the Duncan test for multiple comparisons, t-tests, and paired t-tests. The results showed that idioms as a category were not avoided; L2 proficiency was a factor in idiom avoidance. That avoidance of specific idiom types was related to L1-L2 degrees of similarity. Finally, experts concluded that different degrees of L1-L2 similarity might affect avoidance and other phenomena in foreign language learning.

2.2.3 Instrumental trends

The following data collection was found in the ten articles: Tests (n=3). (Boers, F., Eyckmans, J., and Stengers, H., 2007; Karimi. L., Pam P., 2016; Schweigert, W. A., 1986), questionnaires (n=2) (Lontas, J., 2002; Suzanne I., 1986) SAS software

(n=1) (Laufer, B.,2000) , conversations (n=2) (Gibbs, R. W. ,1987; Kecskes, I. ,2015) , Eyelink eye-tracker (n=1) (Carrol, G., and Conklin, K. ,2015)., list of 195 idioms (n=1) (Schweigert, W. A. ,1986) and English idioms drawn from learners dictionary (n=1) (Eyckmans, J., and Lindstromberg, S. ,2017). It is noteworthy that tests and questionnaires were the most commonly used research instrument, therefore, this research chose them as well.

One of the articles analyzed used 26 L2 English idioms drawn from two learners' dictionaries as data collection. The data collection was found in the article "The power of sound in L2 idiom learning" by Eyckmans, J., and Lindstromberg, S. (2017). The research questions were a)with respect to the recollection ability from semantic memory, do previously unfamiliar sound-repeating idioms have an inherent advantage over previously unfamiliar non-sound-repeating control idioms which comes to the fore even in the absence of pedagogical intervention (i.e., awareness-raising and attention direction)?, b) If not, does an experimental treatment including brief awareness-raising about patterns of sound-repetition in idioms and a simple attention direction task lead to higher recall rates of the forms of sound-repeating idioms than when participants are not made aware of the sound patterns in the target idioms? Participants of this study were 50 Dutch-speaking students majoring in English and an additional foreign language. The study had a quantitative approach. Data collection was 26 L2 English idioms drawn from two learners' dictionaries.

The variables analyzed were the presence (or absence) of sound repetition and, second, the presence (or absence) of awareness-raising and attention direction. Participants were asked to complete the 26 target idioms along with four fillers. Thus, the results showed that advanced-level EFL learners learned significantly more phonologically similar, or 'sound-repeating,' idioms than phonologically different control idioms after a treatment designed to raise awareness of phonological similarity and to direct learners' attention toward occurrences of it. Learners in a comparison group (n = 24), who experienced no awareness-raising or attention direction, recalled more non-sound-repeating control idioms than sound-repeating ones. Researchers concluded that the presence of sound repetition in idioms makes the forms of those

idioms relatively easy to recall, but only when learners experience appropriate awareness-raising and attention direction.

The following table 4, called "*Trends*," summarizes the following trends found during the reading of ten research papers: thematic, theoretical, methodological, and instrumental. In T. thematic column the different topics involved in the analysis of ten articles that were of immense value for current research appear. In T. theoretical appear all the theories that supported the studies of papers that were interesting for this research. In the same way, in the T. methodological column the total of the approaches used appear, which were referents to choose the best method for the current research. Finally, the T. instrumental contains the data collection instrument from the analyzed set of searches and has been explained during all these lines.

Table 4. Trends

T. Theoretical	T. methodological	T. instrumental
Existence literature (2)	Quantitative (9)	Questionnaires (2)
Levels-of-processing theory as well as the Dual Coding theory (1)	Qualitative (1)	Tests (3)
		Conversations (2)
		SAS software (1)
The transfer analysis theory (1)		Eyelink eye-tracker (1)
The dual-route theory of familiar/novel language processing outlined (1)		List of idioms of 195 idioms (1)
		26 English idioms drawn from learners' dictionary (1)

Made by the authors.

2.2.4 Emerging lines

Idioms have become vital linguistic aspects and researchers have shown great interest in them. Thus, the following gaps were found during the analysis of ten articles:

whether the use of first and second language strategies in producing idioms varies according to the student's proficiency level (Suzanne I., 1986, p.296). There is scant evidence related to how bilinguals could cope with the requirements of the idiom principle in L2 and if the principle operates to the full extent as in L1 (Kecskes, I., 2015, p. 44). Little is understood about the effect of congruence in formulaic language and provides evidence of cross-linguistic interaction at the multiword level (Carrol, G., and Conklin, K., 201, p. 18). In the article called "Is the Idiom Principle Blocked in Bilingual L2 Production?" by Kecskes, I. (2015) one of the gaps was found. The research question was a) how much can bilingual speakers stick to the original game rules in intercultural interactions when using their L2? B) How salient is the "idiom principle" in the L2 language production of bilinguals? Participants were thirteen adult individuals from the University at Albany, State University of New York. Conversations were used as the data collection to answer the research question. Conversations were recorded and then transcribed, which resulted in a 13,726-word database. Data analysis focused on the types of formulaic units. The results showed that the idiom principle does not seem to depend on how many languages an individual can speak and on what level. Researchers concluded that the idiom principle affects language production; it results in less formulaic language use in L2 than in L1 bilinguals.

2.3 Transfer analysis theory

In the article "Do not Put Your Leg in Your Mouth" by Irujo in 1986, the study aimed to examine if English idioms that are very similar to their equivalents in the L2 would cause more interference than idioms that are different. The hypothesis formulated in this research were: a) Identical idioms would show evidence of positive transfer; they would be easiest to comprehend and to produced correctly; b) Similar idioms would show evidence of negative transfer; while comprehension might be almost as high as for identical idioms, production of these idioms would reflect interference from the first language; c) For different idioms, there would be no evidence of either positive or negative transfer; subjects would comprehend and produce fewer different idioms than idioms of the other two types. The theoretical approach of these hypotheses was focused on Jorden and Kellerman's ideas, while the transfer analysis theory was used to support the hypothesis. Adopting the same hypothesis Irujo (1986) based her ideas

on transfer analysis theory, a study will be carried out to verify these hypotheses' effectiveness.

The current research is interested in knowing if the learners from DAEA know idioms and how much they know about them. The hypothesis is that learners would interpret and understand idioms identical in form and meaning in Spanish. In contrast, different Idioms will not be that easy to comprehend. The participants in this study were English learners who were majoring in B.A. in Languages in DAEA during the February-August 2022 course, they were evaluated to find out how familiarized they were at that moment with the use of idiomatic expressions.

As mentioned before, this research's assumptions are focused on the transfer analysis theory. The term transfer has been defined in diverse ways. For instance, Whitney 1881, as cited in, El-Dali, H. M. (2012) pointed out the term transfer to refer to cross-linguistic influences, which have been used by many linguists ever since. Odlin 1989, as cited in, Houssos, V. (2020) offered his working definition of transfer: "Transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other knowledge that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired (p.27)".

Chapter 3. Methodology:

Methodological aspects of the research

The methodology section determines how familiar English learners from DAEA, UJAT are with the recognition, use, and understanding of idiomatic expressions. Data collection was analyzed to achieve the purpose of the research. The study was applied to the English learners majoring the B.A. in Languages during the February-August 2022 course in the DAEA at the UJAT.

Nine of ten articles analyzed (Boers, F., Eyckmans, J., & Stengers, H.,2007; Carrol, g., & Conklin, K.,2015; Eyckmans, J., & Lindstromberg, S., 2017; Kecskes, I.,2015;

Laufer, B. ,2000; Lontas, J. 2002; mi. L., Pam P., 2016; Suzanne I.,1986; Schweigert, W. A., 1986;) had a quantitative approach so it was decided to follow the same approach. On the contrary, only one article had a qualitative approach (Gibbs, R. W.,1987)

3.1 Type of study

The research had a descriptive and quantitative approach (Sampieri, R. H. et al, 2014) and the scope of the research will be transactional. A quantitative approach was used in this research because the method is generally used for understanding views and perceptions. The quantitative approach offers visions for different problems and helps develop concepts or theories for potential quantitative research (Sampieri, R.H. et al, 2014). This approach was helpful to reach the research objective: to investigate the participants' notions about idioms. With the use of thoughtful analysis of the problems, the approach helped to discover the participants' thoughts and personal views. This research does not attempt to create any situation, but to observe existing ones. The participants in this research already belonged to a specific group or level of the independent variable by self-selection. This study only tried to collect information at a specific moment, at a single time. Given that Nine of the ten articles analyzed had a quantitative approach, this study follows the same approach. Only one article had a qualitative approach.

The descriptive design fits into the research because this approach “pretends to collect and measure information independently about the variables revealed in the research, but not to explain how the concepts are related” (Sampieri, Collado and Lucio, 2014, p. 92).

3.2 Variables

Table 5. Operationalization

Category	Description	Sub-categories	Indicators
----------	-------------	----------------	------------

Level of proficiency	Advancement in knowledge or skill (Merriam Webster Dictionary).	• Lexical knowledge
Meaning of idioms in context	The comprehension of idiomatic expression is facilitated by contextual support (Frómeta Álvarez and Milán, 2017 ; Cacciari and Levorato, 1989; Nippold and Martin, 1989 as cited in Cain et al., 2009).	• Use of idioms involved in texts. • Familiar idioms • Unfamiliar idioms

Made by the authors.

These categories will be helpful to determine if the learners know idioms and if they know when to use the most appropriate of them, depending on the context. The categories involved in the current research follow characteristics suitable for the analysis: participants need to be English learners taking Intermediate and Advanced English subjects to closely use idioms that will appear in the data collection that will evaluate how close learners are with the use of idioms. In the same token, participants must have lexical knowledge to recognize familiar and unfamiliar idioms from the tests.

3.2.1 Level of proficiency

Conversely, Idioms should be taught first to learners with an intermediate level of English instead of beginners. Learning idioms requires that learners possess lexical knowledge sufficient to understand the language used to convey something different from the literal dictionary definition of the word (Frómeta Y., López M.E., Milán M. E., 2017).

Atai, M. R., and Akbarian, I. (2003) investigated the probable effect of different contexts on learning idioms, as well as the interaction between learning idioms in

different contexts and English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) learners' language proficiency.

The findings of this study revealed that different contexts and proficiency levels had significant effects on EFL learners' acquisition of idioms; the interaction between context and subjects' proficiency level was not significant.

3.2.2 Meaning of idioms in context

Context is another category that has been researched. Learners might learn words better when they are acquired in a meaningful context. These figurative expressions should be taught in English foreign language contexts to enhance fluency and naturalness of students' language (Yunus & Hmaidan, 2021).

Liontas, J. (2015) stated that idioms communication in specific contexts heightens cultural consciousness and ensures social relevance through realistic, meaningful use. Thus, prolonged intentional exposure to idioms, combined with structured context for meaningful interactions and outputs, supports language learning and idiom learning respectively.

The comprehension of idiomatic expressions is facilitated by contextual support (Cacciari and Levorato, 1989; Nippold and Martin, 1989 as cited in Cain et al., 2009)). Therefore, idioms must be used in a range of contexts wide enough for students to learn to infer their meaning through making connections, as well as through affiliating newly learned definitions with previous knowledge for developing skill considerable enough to acquire those same words and use them in upcoming situations.

Intermediate and advanced English variables were considered in this study, however; for the analysis of this research, it did not become interpretable in relation to the learner's interlingual knowledge to recognize English Idioms.

3.3 Hypothesis

In the hypothesis section, tentative statements show suppositions that were based on solid evidence. The hypothesis bases its content on the variables that concern the current study.

The current research hypothesizes English learners who are taking Intermediate and Advanced English subjects from DAEA would interpret and understand English Idioms that are identical in form and meaning in Spanish. In contrast, different Idioms will not be easy to comprehend and use in the appropriate context—this hypothesis's assumption is based on Irujo. (Irujo, 1986).

We based these assumptions on the transfer analysis theory. When the idiomatic expressions are identical and the learner uses the expression in their first language to produce the same idiom in their second language, positive transfer occurs. The result is a correct second language form or pattern. When they are different, using those of the native language to produce the equivalent form or pattern in the second language causes negative transfer. The errors that result are called interference errors (Irujo, 1986).

3.4 Participants

A quantitative approach was used to collect information about the participants, such as age, sex, English level course, and prior experience with idioms. Bhandari, P. (2023) defines a questionnaire as a list of questions or items used to gather data from respondents about their attitudes, experiences, or opinions. Questionnaires can be used to collect quantitative and/or qualitative information.

Participants in this study were two groups of students, one from Intermediate and one from Advanced level, aged 22 to 28 years old, who were majoring in B.A. in Languages during the February-August 2022 course in DAEA at UJAT.

3.4.1 Context

This study was applied at the Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco, a public higher education institute that aims at strengthening the transformation of the society and the development of the country. It is focused on a solid and integral training of professionals capable of acquiring, generating, disseminating, and implementing

scientific, technological, and humanistic knowledge, with ethics and responsibility to become better individuals and citizens.

The Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco (Juarez Autonomous Tabasco State University) is an innovative institution that participates in the academic training of the society and is present in the international scene. It is academically consolidated with high-quality and relevant education programs that train competent graduates with entrepreneurial and humanistic views.

The División Académica de Educación y Artes (The Faculty of Education and Arts) aims to contribute to the comprehensive training of professionals with full respect for cultural diversity and environmental sustainability. It seeks to ethically cover the social needs through the generation and application of the knowledge and the competencies in language, education, communication, and cultural and artistic development, to help strengthen the state.

The DAEA's vision is to be an internationally recognized faculty for its quality, with re-accredited educational programs. These programs are taught by postgraduates' teachers, committed to substantial teaching functions, research, linking, and extension, that participate in the integral formation of interdisciplinary professionals in the areas of education, language, communication, cultural and artistic development of the state with transparency, respect for the differences and the environment.

Figure 1.
División Académica de Educación y Artes



Pérez, K., De la Cruz, A. (2022) División Académica de Educación y Artes. UJAT, Villahermosa, Tabasco.

3.5 Instruments

The data collection instruments used in this study were three questionnaires.

Every questionnaire had its own purpose to confirm the hypothesis that the learners would interpret and understand English Idioms that are identical in form and meaning in Spanish while different Idioms will not be easy to comprehend and use in the appropriate context.

In this section the three questionnaires are presented, each one of them has its validation, description, and implementation.

3.5.1 Instrument A. Background questionnaire

Background questionnaire was applied to better know the population. A background questionnaire is essential in this research, so the one that was used for this study was taken from Liontas, J.'s article called "Exploring second language learners' notions of idiomaticity," published in 2002 (p. 308-309). We must highlight that we made a series of modifications to the original instrument by eliminating questions that were considered not directly related to our research topic.

The original questionnaire called Instrument A. Background questionnaire can be found in the appendix section on page 47-48.

The following section shows Liontas' instrument validation and implementation by the author of the article.

Liontas instrument's validity and implementation

Before submitting the background questionnaire to participants, volunteers were sought from among the 64 candidates in the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Second Language Acquisition and Teaching at the University of Arizona to pilot the questionnaires. Given the target audience and "survey" language used in these questionnaires, assistance also was sought from some of the researcher's students. A total of 10 volunteers (five language instructors and five language learners)

answered and commented on the background questionnaire to clarify it, make it more relevant, and determine the length and the best format it could be before its administration. Following the rewording of certain items for clarity, the background questionnaire was administered to sixty student volunteers. The following section shows the description of this research instrument.

Liontas instrument's description

The questionnaire aims to gather information on demographics, prior instruction or knowledge of the foreign language, and prior experience with idioms. First, the instrument's structure contains some instructions that must be followed to answer it. Secondly, demographic characteristics were found, and eight questions about students' backgrounds were incorporated. Then, the section on foreign language experience, which follows questions 9-13, aims to ask about instruction or knowledge of the foreign language. Finally, the third category related to experience with idioms, which contains questions 14-25, consists of asking about the familiarity and level of confidence with understanding and interpreting foreign language texts containing idioms.

Validation of the modified instrument

A professor from DAEA did the validation of the instrument. She has a PhD in Educational Sciences, 20 years of experience in the field of research, principal of CVAIC (Comunidad Virtual de Aprendizaje de la investigación cualitativa) and who is also an instructor of qualitative research and use of ATLAS.ti software.

She realized and mentioned that some questions were unnecessary for the current research and suggested we should eliminate the irrelevant information. The corrections were done and after the validation she pointed out that Instrument A. *Background questionnaire* was well done and did not make any relevant comments. (See the appendix section on page 62-63).

Instrument A. *Background questionnaire* was applied as a pilot test to detect possible failures or problems in the current research. The pilot test was done by two volunteers with the same profile as the research's participants using the google forms platform.

Description

The questionnaire aims to gather demographic information, knowledge and prior instruction. The instrument had ten questions related to personal information as age, English level, name, gender, and experience with idioms.

Implementation

The instrument was applied to two groups of six students, one from intermediate and one from advanced level. A total of twelve participants aged from 22 to 28 years during the implementation of the instrument were majoring in B.A. in Languages during the February-August 2022 course in DAEA at UJAT. The questionnaire used the Google Forms platform.

3.5.2 Instrument 1. Literal idioms

The complete questionnaire called Instrument 1. *Literal Idioms* can be found in the appendix section on page 50.

Bhandari, P. (2023) "designing a questionnaire means creating valid and reliable questions that address your research objectives, placing them in a useful order, and selecting an appropriate method for administration".

We chose to create and apply a questionnaire to investigate the notions of idioms in Intermediate and Advanced English learners from DAEA. Instrument 1. *Literal Idioms* was applied as a pilot test to detect possible failures or problems in the current research. The pilot test was done by the same two volunteers of instrument A.

Validity

The instruments that accomplished the purpose of the study needed to be validated by researchers. We created a "Content validity and Construction validity" table to assess the items that assure successful research (Table 3. in the appendix section on page 51-52). Before instrument 1. *Literal Idioms* was given to the researchers, two volunteers with the same profile of the participants of the current study answered it. The instructions were presented, and the volunteers were asked to read each

sentence carefully. Then, the volunteers felt free to respond, and it took them 20 minutes to answer the questions. The test was applied online using the Google Forms platform, which allows us to easily create and publish forms enabling us to see the results graphically.

We contacted a male expert thanks to the university management. The researcher agreed to evaluate the instruments. Besides researching, the expert currently teaches the following subjects: French, English, and Linguistics at the DAEA. He kindly said he would expect to receive the instrument by e-mail. Five days later, the investigator submitted the "Content validity and Construction validity" table with the corrections and comments. He pointed out that Instrument 1. *Literal Idioms* was well done and did not make any relevant comments. (Table 3.1 in the appendix section on page 53-54)

We counted on the support of a second expert who also checked the instruments used in this study. This specialist is Ph.D. in Education Sciences from the Universidad Autónoma Del Estado de Hidalgo, México. She holds a master's in teaching and a B.A. in Education Sciences from the Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco. Her area of development is Languages, in which she teaches subjects in the methodological field. She was given the instrument by e-mail, and it took her three days to assess it. The specialist submitted the "Content validity and Construction validity" table with the corrections and comments. She pointed out that Instrument 1. *Literal idioms* was under the modality "Applicable." (Table 3.2 in the appendix section on page 55-56).

Description

The first part of instrument one contains the following:

- The research name
- A study summary with the purpose of the study and for whom it is designed
- Some gaps that need to be filled, such as name and English level.
- Instrument's name
- Instructions

The body of the instrument has ten Literal idioms. Participants must choose the correct translation of the English idiom to its equivalent in Spanish.

Implementation

The instrument was applied to two groups of six students, one group from intermediate level and the other from advanced level. A total of twelve participants aged from 22 to 28 years majoring in B.A. in Languages when the instrument took place during the February-August 2022 course in DAEA at UJAT. The questionnaire was conducted online using the Google Forms platform.

3.5.3 Instrument 2. Complex idioms

The complete questionnaire, called Instrument 2. *Complex Idioms* is available in the appendix section on page 57-58.

As previously appointed, we created and applied a questionnaire to investigate the notions of idioms in Intermediate and Advanced English learners from DAEA. Instrument 2. *Complex Idioms* was applied as a pilot test to detect possible failures or problems in the current research. The pilot test was done by the same two volunteers of instrument A and instrument 1.

Validity

This time, the male researcher disagreed with the structure of the items in Instrument 2. *Complex idioms* because the examples were too complicated to guess. He also commented that students could feel unease looking for all the samples provided in another section. He also pointed out that this questionnaire prevented students from losing motivation in answering from many such options. However, the instrument was approved under the option "Applicable basis on comments." (*Table 3.3 in the appendix section on page 59-60*)

The second expert who checked the instruments used in this study was given the instrument by e-mail, and it took her three days to assess it. The "Content validity and Construct validity" table was also given to this expert for her to analyze the items and make any possible corrections to achieve the purposes of the current research.

Fortunately, the specialist approved Instrument 2. *Complex idioms* under the modality "Applicable" and made relevant comments about it; she said the instructions would need to be clearer to obtain what it is intended. (Table 3.4 in the appendix section on page 61-62).

Description

The first part of instrument two contains the following:

- The research name
- A study summary with the purpose of the study and for whom it is designed
- Some gaps that need to be filled, such as name and English level
- Instrument's name
- Instructions

The body of the instrument has three parts. The first part has seven exercises of multiple choice, the second part has six exercises where the participants must choose the right definition of the idiomatic expression and the third part contained four short paragraphs that needed to be filled with the right idioms.

Implementation

The instrument was applied to two groups of six students, one from intermediate and one from advanced level. A total of twelve participants spanned ages from 22 to 28 years and when the implementation of the instrument took place they were majoring in B.A. in Languages during the February-August 2022 course in DAEA at UJAT. The questionnaire was online using the Google Forms platform.

3.6 Procedure and considerations

The methodology section will determine how familiar participants from DAEA are with the recognition, use, and understanding of idiomatic expressions. The study was applied to English learners majoring in B.A. in Languages during the February-August 2022 course. Three instruments were applied to the investigation for the purpose of data collection.

Firstly, the application of *Instrument A. Background questionnaire* aimed to get personal information of the participants, such as their age, sex, and the English level they were taking when the instruments were applied. It was also considered to ask how familiar they were with idiomatic expressions, how important the topic was for them, and how confident they were with identifying, using, and producing idioms.

After analyzing the background information, *Instrument 1. Literal idioms* was applied conformed with ten identical idioms, where the participants chose the correct translation of the idiom to their equivalent in Spanish. The hypothesis confirmed that participants would interpret and understand English idioms identically in form and meaning in Spanish.

Finally, the *Instrument 2. Complex idioms* was applied. The first part of the questionnaire was confirmed by 7 questions where the participants had to read a definition and chose, between 2 options, which was the idiom that corresponded to that definition. The second part of the questionnaire asked the participants what the provided idiom meant, and they had to choose the correct answer among 3 options. The third part provides a short paragraph; according to its context, the participants had to choose the correct order of the idioms inside the paragraph.

Chapter 4. Results

It is important to mention that some graphics from instruments 1 and 2 are included in this section, we chose the most significant and with a major impact on the scope of the purpose. (See the appendix section to see all the graphics obtained from the three instruments applied).

In this study, a background instrument was applied to gather personal information and prior experience with English idioms.

Data collection showed that there were six participants aged 24 years, three 22 years, one 23, one 25, and one 28. 41.7% of the participants were female, 58.3% were male, 33.3% had an intermediate knowledge of English, and 66.7% had advanced

knowledge of English. These participants were majoring in B.A. in Languages during the February-June 2022 course in DAEA at UJAT.

91.7% of the participants mentioned that idioms were taught by their respective teachers in class, while 8.3% said they had no prior knowledge of the topic. The participants were asked to mention the importance of learning the use of idioms in the classroom; 91.7% considered it of great importance. In comparison, 8.3% thought it unimportant, yet 100% of the participants mentioned being very interested in learning idioms.

Of the participants, 8.3% mentioned that they could not use any idiom correctly in a conversation, 41.7% said they were able to use between 1 and 5 English idioms, 16.7% mastered 6 to 9 idiomatic expressions, 8.3% could use 10 to 19, and 25% used more than 20 idioms when practicing the English language orally.

Participants were also asked about the frequency with which they used dictionaries to look up the meaning of an English idiom. A total of 66.7% of the participants mentioned that they sometimes used this study material, 16.7% said they never used it, and the other 16.7% mentioned that they always used a dictionary to find out the meaning of an English idiom.

Regarding confidence in identifying and pointing out English idioms in texts, 50% of the participants mentioned having little faith. In comparison, 33.3% mentioned feeling confident; however, 16.7% of the participants said they were not sure they could successfully identify English idioms.

On the assumption that the participants read a paragraph with idioms included, 25% of them said they were not sure of being able to clearly communicate the correct meaning of idioms that might occur in the text. While 33.3% considered that they could be slightly sure of the definition, 41.7% claimed to be able to explain the idiom satisfactorily.

The questionnaires were the instruments chosen because they helped to determine if there was a significant difference between the notions of literal and non-literal idioms in the learners of English from DAEA, UJAT.

Instrument 1. Literal idioms

This questionnaire had ten literal idioms. Participants had to read each English idiom and choose its equivalent in Spanish. Every question had two possible answers, but just one of them was the correct one.

Question 1 said, "To be in charge," and the correct Spanish translation was "Estar a cargo" 100% of the participants answered correctly.

Question 2 said, "The black sheep of the family," and its equivalent in Spanish was "La oveja negra de la familia" 100% of the participants answered correctly.

Question 3 said, "To put your cards on the table," and the equivalent translation in Spanish was "Poner las cartas sobre la mesa" this question was also answered satisfactorily by 100% of the participants.

Question 4 said, "To open his eyes," and the correct answer was "Abrir sus ojos" 100% of the participants identified the right answer.

Question 5 said, "Add fuel to the fire," and the equivalent translation in Spanish was "Agregar leña al fuego" 100% of the participants answered correctly.

Question 6 said, "To kill two birds with one stone," and the translation in Spanish was "Matar dos pájaros de un tiro" all participants answered correctly.

Question 7 said, "To cross your finger," and the correct answer was "Hacer changuitos" 100% of the participants chose the correct answer.

Question 8 said, "To lend a hand," and the equivalent in Spanish was "Echar una mano" 100% of the participants answered correctly.

Question 9 said, "On the same page," and the correct translation was "Estar en la misma página/sintonía" all participants answered correctly.

Question 10 said, "You can't judge a book by its cover," and the answer was, "No juzgues un libro por su portada" 100% of the participants chose the correct answer.

Instrument 2. Complex idioms

Part 1

The first part of the questionnaire had seven questions where the participants had to read a definition and choose between 2 options, the complex idiom that corresponded to the provided definition.

Question 1 had the definition "To fail to take an opportunity because you didn't act quickly enough," which corresponded to the idiom "Miss the boat"; 91.7% of the participants identified the correct answer, and 8.3% chose the wrong answer.

The definition given in question 1.2 was "What people do is more important, or a better indication of their true feelings than what they say," which belongs to the idiom "Actions speak louder than words"; 83.3% of the participants identified the correct answer and 16.7% chose the wrong answer.

In question 1.3, the definition was "If something bad is being said about someone, or if something seems bad, there is probably a good reason for it," which corresponded to the idiom "No smoke without fire"; 66.7% of the participants chose the correct answer, and 33.3% chose the wrong answer.

Question 1.4 had the definition “To avoid taking responsibility by saying that someone else is responsible,” which corresponded to the idiom “Pass the buck”; 75% of the participants identified the correct answer, and 25% couldn’t recognize it.

The definition in question 1.5 was “Something is not going to continue for much longer (e.g., a person is going to lose their job soon, or a product is going to stop being produced soon)” that belongs to the idiom “(His/Her/Its) days are numbered.”

In this question, 66.7% chose the correct answer, and 33.3% chose the wrong answer.

In question 1.6, the definition said, “An activity of situation (especially a job or career) in which there is a lot of competition and people are too busy to relax or enjoy themselves” the correct idiom was “Rat race”; 83.3% of the participants identified the correct answer and 16.7% couldn’t recognize it.

Question 1.7 was the last one of part 1 and had the definition “Don’t expect or wait for something (usually something good) to happen, because it probably won’t happen” that corresponded to the idiom “Don’t hold your breath”; 41.7% of the participants chose the correct answer, and 58.3% chose the wrong answer.

Part 2

This part of the questionnaire asked the participants what the provided complex idiom meant, and they had to choose the correct answer between 3 options.

Question 2.1 said, “What is a hat trick?” Which correct definition was “Three successes, one straight after the other (e.g., for a politician to win three consecutive elections, or a footballer to score three goals in one game)” in this question, 58.3% of the participants chose the wrong answer, and 41.7% could identify the correct answer.

Question 2.2 asked, “What does it mean to ‘keep someone posted’?” Which correct definition was “You give them up-to-date information about what is happening” in this question, 25% of the participants chose the wrong answer. In comparison, 75% of them identified the correct answer.

Question 2.3 said, “What does it mean if someone has ‘guts’ (or has ‘the guts to do something)?” Which correct definition was “They are courageous” in this question, 91.7% of the participants chose the correct answer, and 8.3% chose the wrong answer.

Question 2.4 said, “What does ‘sell your soul’ mean?” The correct definition was “To do something against your beliefs (e.g., for financial reward).” This time 75% of the participants chose the right answer, while 25% chose the wrong answer.

Question 2.5 said, “What does it mean if something is ‘like watching paint dry?’” The correct definition was “It is very boring”; in this case, the correct answer was chosen by 83.3% of the participants chose the right answer, and 16.7% couldn’t identify it.

Question 2.6 said, “What does it mean if something is ‘set in stone?’” The correct definition was “It cannot be changed or altered”; this was the only question answered correctly by all the participants.

Part 3

The last part of the questionnaire provided a short paragraph where participants had to choose the correct order of the idioms inside the text according to its context.

In question 3.1, the correct order of the idioms inside the paragraph was:

3.1.1 Sell your soul

3.1.2 Rat race

3.1.3 Actions speak louder than words

In this question, 100% of the participants chose the correct answer is option 3.1.1; in option 3.1.2, 83.3% of the participants chose the correct answer, and in option 3.1.3 also, 83.3% of the participants chose the right answer.

In question 3.2, the correct order of the idioms inside the paragraph was:

3.2.1 Days are numbered

3.2.2 Hold your breath

This time 91.6% of the participants chose the right option in the whole text.

In question 3.3, the correct order of the idioms inside the paragraph was:

3.3.1 Watching paint dry

3.3.2 Hat trick

This question was answered correctly by 100% of the participants.

In question 3.4, the correct order of the idioms inside the paragraph was:

3.4.1 Miss the boat

3.4.2 Set in stone

3.4.3 Keep someone posted

In option 3.4.1, the correct answer was chosen by 91.6% of the participants; in option 3.4.2, all participants chose the correct answer; in option 3.4.3, the right answer was also selected by 91.6%.

Discussion

The first research question we based on to do this study was “Do the learners know about English Idioms?” Instrument A. *Background questionnaire* helped us to find out if the learners know idioms and how they feel about them.

We identified that 91.7% of the participants knew English Idioms because their respective teachers taught them the topic during their classes. Likewise, all the participants mentioned being interested in learning English Idioms. It is important to emphasize that only 91.7% of the participants consider learning English idioms of great importance, while 8.3% said it's unnecessary. According to Rizq (2015), learners should be aware of idioms for two reasons. First, idioms sometimes communicate context that cannot be expressed literally. Second, idioms allow learners to follow casual conversation. Cakir (as cited in Rizq, 2015) explained that people sometimes prefer to express their opinions with these culturally specific expressions. Cakir advised focusing on the sociocultural aspects of the Target Language.

16.7% of the participants use a dictionary to find the meaning of some English idioms, 66.7% have used it once, and the remaining 16.7% have never used the dictionary. Context, a story, or movie, helps remembering the meaning and usage of vocabulary, in general, which easily applies on idioms (Asl's,2013).

Regarding confidence in identifying and pointing out English idioms in texts, 50% of the participants mentioned having little faith. In comparison, 33.3% mentioned feeling confident; however, 16.7% of the participants said they were not sure they could successfully identify English idioms.

Of the participants, 8.3% mentioned that they could not use any idiom correctly in a conversation, 41.7% said they were able to use between 1 and 5 idiomatic expressions, 16.7% mastered 6 to 9, 8.3% could use 10 to 19, and 25% used more than 20 idioms when practicing the English language orally.

On the assumption that the participants read a paragraph with idioms included, 25% of them said they were not sure they could communicate the correct meaning of idioms that might occur in the text. While 33.3% considered that they could be slightly sure of the definition, 41.7% claimed to be able to explain the idiom satisfactorily.

Instrument 1. *Literal idioms* and Instrument 2. *Complex Idioms* helped us to understand how well and how much the participants have mastered idioms.

Instrument 1 had ten literal idioms that the participants needed to translate into their equivalent in Spanish. This questionnaire had fewer questions than *instrument 2*, and the examples were some of the most common Spanish idioms. All the participants answered the whole questionnaire correctly. These results suggest that Literal idioms are way more accessible for the participants to identify the meaning of these idiomatic expressions.

In *Instrument 2*, 17 questions were divided into two different types of exercises. The first type of exercise involved reading definitions of an English idiom and choosing the suitable English idiom (questions 1 to 1.7). Similarly, questions 2.1 to 2.6 were about identifying the correct definition, but in this case, an English idiom was given, and

participants had to choose the appropriate definition. It was noticed that from the first two exercises of *instrument 2* -composed of 13 questions- 74.75% of participants answered all the questions correctly, meaning participants could identify some definitions of English idioms. However, the fact that most participants had a good score in the first part of *instrument 2* does not mean they will know or understand all the complex idioms they read.

The last part of *instrument 2* had four short paragraphs, in which the participants had to put in the correct order the idioms depending on the context. This part was answered satisfactorily by 93.5%, meaning it is easier for the participants to infer the meaning of idioms when they have the context to apply them.

In this study, we did not delve into the level the participants have according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) because we believe it may be a topic of interest for future research.

Conclusion

This study set out to determine if English learners from División Académica de Educación y Artes can identify literal and complex English idioms and use them in various real-life contexts. The study aims to investigate the notions of idioms in Intermediate and Advanced English learners from DAEA, applying data collection instruments that evaluate the recognition of identical and complex idioms in various real-life situations.

We have been capable of extracting a series of conclusions from the results obtained with Instrument A, Instrument 1, and Instrument 2 applied to the participants. We have clarified if participants know English idioms and how much they know about them. We fulfilled the study purpose and discovered that participants identify both literal and complex idioms in academic controlled contexts. It is crucial to mention that nonliteral English Idioms were a bit harder to guess their meaning, however, learners got their meaning because of the context. On the other hand, literal English Idioms were successfully identified because their meaning was similar to learners' native language.

Still, if a complex idiom without context is provided, participants may be unable to infer their meaning. The same thing happens with Literal idioms; this study used the ones that Spanish speakers are usually familiar with. After analyzing all the instruments, we are sure that the participants who hear a literal idiom that they had never heard before, find it harder to infer the meaning of the idiomatic expression.

Although 91.7% of the learners have had contact with idioms at some point in their degree, they need to deepen more to recognize and interpret them since 66.7% of the participants mentioned having little faith in identifying and pointing to English idioms. Only 33.3% said they felt confident about it.

The current study has only examined the notion that the participants have since it is necessary to consider a series of significant limitations of this study. The methodological limitation is related to the level of the students because it is tentative

since a test was not carried out to determine the level of proficiency of the participants according to the common European framework of reference. In practical terms, there is no certainty if the teachers who may have instructed the students on English Idioms are the same and the study and personal interests may vary in each participant.

A series of questions arise from this study that would be interesting to resolve if we want to delve into the topic and propose ideas to the DAEA, so that the teachers teach the subject in a way that is fruitful for students and can improve their learning and knowledge of English Idioms.

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APPENDIX 1: Liontas' background questionnaire

Purpose: This questionnaire is designed to gather information on demographics, prior instruction or knowledge of the foreign language, and prior experience with idioms.

DIRECTIONS

Follow the directions below. Please,

- Use only a black lead pencil (No. 2 is ideal).
- Make heavy black marks that fill the oval.
- Erase clearly any answer you wish to change.
- Make no stray markings of any kind.

EXAMPLE: Will marks be made with a No. 2 pencil?

☒ Yes ☐ No

I. Demographic Characteristics

Questions 1-8 ask about your background.

1. Name: _____
2. Your nickname in this study: _____
3. Last four digits of your student ID number: _____
4. Your age: _____ (Enter No.)
5. Your sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female
6. Based only on economic status, what type of family would you say you grew up in? (Mark one)
 - ☐ Upper middle class
 - ☐ Middle class
 - ☐ Lower middle class
7. Current university standing? (Mark one)
 - ☐ Freshman ☐ Senior
 - ☐ Sophomore ☐ Graduate
 - ☐ Junior
8. Racial/Ethnic group? (Mark all that apply)
 - ☐ White/Caucasian
 - ☐ African American/Black
 - ☐ American Indian
 - ☐ Asian American/Asian
 - ☐ Mexican American/Chicano
 - ☐ Puerto Rican American
 - ☐ Other Latino
 - ☐ Other

II. Foreign Language Experience

Questions 9-13 ask about your prior instruction or knowledge of the foreign language.

9. How many years of experience have you had with: (Mark all that apply)
 - ☐ German? _____ Yrs (Enter No.)
 - ☐ French? _____ Yrs (Enter No.)
 - ☐ Spanish? _____ Yrs (Enter No.)

10. How many college years of classroom experience have you had in the foreign language?

Yrs of college: _____ (Enter No.)

11. How much time have you spent in a foreign country? (Mark one)

☐ More than 3 years ☐ Less than 1 year
☐ 1 to 3 years ☐ No time

12. How fluent are you in the foreign language? (Mark one)

☐ Native Fluency ☐ Average Fluency
☐ Near-native Fluency ☐ Some Fluency
☐ High Fluency ☐ No Fluency

13. How easy is it for you to understand and interpret foreign language texts? (Mark one)

☐ Very Easy
☐ Easy
☐ Marginally Easy
☐ Not Easy

III. Experience with Idioms

Questions 14-25 ask about your familiarity and level of confidence with understanding and interpreting foreign language texts containing idioms.

14. Has your language instructor taught you any idioms? (Mark one)

☐ Yes ☐ No

15. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the least important and 5 the most important), how would you rate the importance of students learning idioms in the foreign language classroom? Please explain your rating.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 because _____

16. Are you interested in learning idioms as part of your foreign language study? (Mark one)

☐ Yes, very much so
☐ Not sure
☐ No, not at all

17. How many idioms can you use correctly when you speak? (Mark one)

☐ More than 20
☐ 10 to 19
☐ 6 to 9
☐ 1 to 5
☐ None

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Original Instrument A. Background questionnaire

18. How often do you use your language dictionary to look up the meaning of an idiom? (Mark one)

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Very Often
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Never

19. How useful is your language dictionary in looking for idioms? (Mark one)

- ☐ Very Useful
- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Marginally Useful
- ☐ Not Useful

20. How often do you read specialized idiom dictionaries? (Mark one)

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Very Often
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Never

21. If you were to read a foreign language text and point out the idiom, how confident would you be in doing so successfully? (Mark one)

- ☐ Very Confident
- ☐ Confident
- ☐ Marginally Confident
- ☐ Not Confident

22. If you were to read an idiom in isolation, how confident would you be in telling what it meant? (Mark one)

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Very Often
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Never

23. If you were to read an idiom in a paragraph, how confident would you be in telling what it meant? (Mark one)

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Very Often
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Never

24. Using the scale range of 1-5 below, how often do you: (Mark one for each item)

- | |
|----------------|
| 1 = Never |
| 2 = Sometimes |
| 3 = Often |
| 4 = Very Often |
| 5 = Always |

25. Overall, how satisfied are you with your present knowledge of idioms in the foreign language? (Mark one)

- ☐ Very Satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Marginally Satisfied
- ☐ Not Satisfied

Please return the completed questionnaire to your instructor.

J.I. Liontas/System 30 (2002) 289-313

Original Instrument A. Background questionnaire

APPENDIX 2: Content validity and construct validity table

The table below was used in this study to validate the data collection instruments.

Table 6. Content validity and construct validity

Indicate with a tick (✓) the “yes” box if you agree. Use a cross (X) in the “no” box if you disagree. There is a box for comments, where the researcher is expected to explain the reasons for the responses.

Items	CRITERIA TO BE ASSESSED										Comments (whether the item should be modified or deleted)		
	Clarity in drafting internal		Coherence		Induction to response (bias)		Appropriate language with level		Measure what it is intend				
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			
1													
2													
3													
4													
5													
6													
7													
8													
9													
10													
General aspects										Yes	No	Comments	
The instrument contains clear and precise instructions for responding to the questionnaire													
The items allow the achievement of the research objective													

Items are distributed logically and sequentially				
The number of items is sufficient to collect the information. If the answer is negative, suggest the items to add, please.				

If the instrument has been approved, indicate it with a tick next to the box for Applicable. In case it is the contrary, put a cross next to the box for Not applicable. In case the instrument could be applied following recommendations, indicate it with a tick next to the box for Applicable on the basis of comments.

Validity			
Applicable		Not applicable	
Applicable on the basis of comments			
Approved by:			Date:
Signature:	Telephone number:		e-mail:

Content validity and construct validity table

Pérez, K. Díaz, E. (2022)

APPENDIX 3: Instrument A. Background questionnaire



**“EXPLORING SECOND LANGUAGE NOTIONS OF IDIOMATIC
EXPRESSIONS OF INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED
ENGLISH LEARNERS FROM DIVISIÓN ACADÉMICA DE
EDUCACIÓN Y ARTES AT UNIVERSIDAD JUÁREZ
AUTÓNOMA DE TABASCO.”**



Instrument A. Background questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to gather personal information and prior experience with idioms.

I. Demographic characteristics

1. Name: _____
2. Age: _____
3. Sex: _____
- English level: _____

II. Experience with idioms

4. Has your language instructor taught you any English idioms?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
5. On a scale of 1 to 3 (with 1 being the least important and 3 the most important), how would you rate the importance of students learning English idioms in the foreign language classroom?
 - ☐ 1
 - ☐ 2
 - ☐ 3
6. Are you interested in learning English idioms as part of your foreign language study?
 - ☐ Yes, very much so
 - ☐ Not sure
 - ☐ No, not at all
7. How many English idioms can you use correctly when you speak? (Mark one)

- ☐ More than 20
 - ☐ 10 to 19
 - ☐ 6 to 9
 - ☐ 1 to 5
 - ☐ None
8. How often do you use your language dictionary to look up the meaning of an English idiom? (Mark one)
- ☐ Always
 - ☐ Sometimes
 - ☐ Never
9. If you were to read a foreign language text and point out the English idiom, how confident would you be in doing so successfully? (Mark one)
- ☐ Confident
 - ☐ Slightly confident
 - ☐ Not confident
10. If you were to read an English idiom in a paragraph, how confident would you be in telling what it meant? (Mark one)
- ☐ Confident
 - ☐ Slightly confident
 - ☐ Not confident

Thank you so much for your help!

Instrument A. Background questionnaire

Pérez, K. Díaz, E. (2022)

APPENDIX 4: Instrument A. Content validity and construct validity table

The table below shows the validation of Instrument A. Background questionnaire.

Table 7. Instrument A. Background questionnaire content validity and construct validity

Indicate with a tick (✓) the “yes” box if you agree. Use a cross (X) in the “no” box if you disagree. There is a box for comments, where the researcher is expected to explain the reasons for the responses.

Items	CRITERIA TO BE ASSESSED BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE										
	Clarity in drafting internal		Coherence		Induction to response (bias)		Appropriate language with level		Measure what it is intend		Comments (whether the item should be modified or deleted)
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
1	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
2	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
3	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
4	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
5	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
6	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
7	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
8	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
9	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
10	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
General aspects									Yes	No	Comments
The instrument contains clear and precise instructions for responding to the questionnaire									✓		
									✓		

The items allow the achievement of the research objective				
Items are distributed logically and sequentially		✓		
		Yes	No	Comments
The number of items is sufficient to collect the information. If the answer is negative, suggest the items to add, please.		✓		

If the instruments have been approved, indicate it with a tick next to the box for Applicable. In case it is the contrary, put a cross next to the Not applicable box. In case the instrument could be applied following recommendations, indicate it with a tick next to the box for Applicable on the basis of comments.

Validity			
Applicable	✓	Not applicable	
Applicable on the basis of comments			
Approved by: Veronika de la Cruz Villegas			Date:
Signature:	Telephone number:		e-mail:

Table 7. Instrument A. Veronika de la Cruz Villegas's validation

APPENDIX 5: Instrument 1. Literal idioms



**“EXPLORING SECOND LANGUAGE NOTIONS OF
IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS OF INTERMEDIATE AND
ADVANCED ENGLISH LEARNERS FROM DIVISIÓN
ACADÉMICA DE EDUCACIÓN Y ARTES AT
UNIVERSIDAD JUÁREZ AUTÓNOMA DE TABASCO.”**



Instrument 1. Literal idioms

Name _____ English level _____

Choose the correct translation of the following idioms to their equivalent in Spanish.

1. **To be in charge**
A) Estar a cargo
B) Autocargarse
2. **The black sheep of the family**
A) El héroe de la familia
B) La oveja negra de la familia
3. **To put your cards on the table.**
A) Poner las cartas sobre la mesa
B) Jugar cartas en la mesa
4. **To open his eyes**
A) Abrir sus ojos
B) Cubrir sus mentiras
5. **Add fuel to the fire**
A) Lavarse las manos del fuego
B) Agregar leña al fuego
6. **To kill two birds with one stone**
A) Matar dos pájaros de un tiro
B) Golpear una piedra con dos pájaros
7. **To cross your finger**

A) Hacer changuitos

B) Cortar un dedo

8. To lend a hand

A) Echar una mano

B) Añadirse un brazo

9. On the same page

A) Leer la misma hoja

B) Estar en la misma página/sintonía

10. You can't judge a book by its cover

A) No juzgues un libro por su portada

B) Odiar las portadas de los libros

APPENDIX 6: Instrument 1. Content validity and construct validity

The table below shows the validation of Instrument 1. Literal idioms.

Table 8. Instrument 1. Literal Idioms content validity and construct validity

Indicate with a tick (✓) the “yes” box if you agree. Use a cross (X) in the “no” box if you disagree. There is a box for comments, where the researcher is expected to explain the reasons for the responses.

Items	CRITERIA TO BE ASSESSED INSTRUMENT 1										
	Clarity in drafting internal		Coherence		Induction to response (bias)		Appropriate language with level		Measure what it is intend		Comments (whether the item should be modified or deleted)
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
1	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
2	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
3	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
4	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
5	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
6	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
7	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
8	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
9	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
10	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
General aspects									Yes	No	Comments
The instrument contains clear and precise instructions for responding to the questionnaire									✓		
The items allow the achievement of the research objective									✓		
Items are distributed logically and sequentially									✓		

		Yes	No	Comments
The number of items is sufficient to collect the information. If the answer is negative, suggest the items to add, please.		✓		

If the instruments have been approved, indicate it with a tick next to the box for Applicable. In case it is the contrary, put a cross next to the Not applicable. box In case the instrument could be applied following recommendations, indicate it with a tick next to the box for Applicable on the basis of comments.

Validity			
Applicable	✓	Not applicable	
Applicable on the basis of comments			
Approved by: Carlos Lorenzo Custodio Carrillo			Date:
Signature:	Telephone number:		e-mail:

Table 8. Instrument 1 Carlos Lorenzo Custodio Carrillo's validity

Table 9. Instrument 1. Literal Idioms content validity and construct validity

Indicate with a tick (✓) the “yes” box if you agree. Use a cross (X) in the “no” box if you disagree. There is a box for comments, where the researcher is expected to explain the reasons for the responses.

Items	CRITERIA TO BE ASSESSED INSTRUMENT 1										Comments (whether the item should be modified or deleted)	
	Clarity in drafting internal		Coherence		Induction to response (bias)		Appropriate language with level		Measure what it is intend			
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No		
1	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓			
2	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓			
3	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓			
4	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓			
5	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓			
6	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓			
7	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓			
8	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓			
9	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓			
10	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓			
General aspects										Yes	No	Comments
The instrument contains clear and precise instructions for responding to the questionnaire									✓			
The items allow the achievement of the research objective									✓			
Items are distributed logically and sequentially									✓			
									Yes	No	Comments	
The number of items is sufficient to collect the information. If the answer is negative, suggest the items to add, please.									✓			

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If the instruments have been approved, indicate it with a tick next to the box for Applicable. In case it is the contrary, put a cross next to the Not applicable box. In case the instrument could be applied following recommendations, indicate it with a tick next to the box for Applicable on the basis of comments.

Validity			
Applicable	✓	Not applicable	
Applicable on the basis of comments			
Approved by: Veronika de la Cruz Villegas			Date:
Signature:	Telephone number:		e-mail:

Table 9. Instrument 1 Verónica de la Cruz Villegas's validity

Appendix 7: Instrument 2. Complex idioms

**EXPLORING SECOND LANGUAGE NOTIONS OF IDIOMATIC
EXPRESSIONS OF INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED ENGLISH
LEARNERS FROM DIVISIÓN ACADÉMICA DE
EDUCACIÓN Y ARTES AT UNIVERSIDAD JUÁREZ
AUTÓNOMA DE TABASCO.”**



Instrument 2. Complex idioms

Name _____ English level _____

- I. Read the definitions (1-7) of some idioms below. For each definition, one of the expressions have been invented and the other one is the correct idiom. Can you identify it?

1. To fail to take an opportunity because you didn't act quickly enough.

- a) Wake up at the end of the film
- b) Miss the boat

1.2 What people do is more important or a better indication of their true feelings than what they say.

- a) Doing is above talking
- b) Actions speak louder than words

1.3 If something bad is being said about someone, or if something seems bad, there is probably a good reason for it.

- a) No smoke without fire
- b) No mouth without teeth

1.4 To avoid taking responsibility by saying that someone else is responsible.

- a) Pass the chocolate
- b) Pass the buck

1.5 Something is not going to continue for much longer (e.g. a person is going to lose their job soon, or a product is going to stop being produced soon).

- a) (His/her/its, etc) days are numbered
- b) (His/her/its, etc) bottle is almost empty

1.6 An activity or situation (especially a job or career) in which there is a lot of competition and people are too busy to relax or enjoy themselves.

- a) Rat hole
- b) Rat race

1.7 Don't expect or wait for something (usually something good) to happen, because it probably won't happen.

- a) Don't stand with your mouth open
- b) Don't hold your breath

II. Now choose the correct answer, a, b or c for each of the questions below.

2.1 What is a 'hat trick'?

- a) Three successes, one straight after the other (e.g., for a politician to win three consecutive elections, or a footballer to score three goals in one game).
- b) Something that looks impressive but is just an illusion.
- c) Something that makes your face or head look very different.

2.2 What does it mean if you 'keep someone posted'?

- a) You make sure they can't come near you (or at least not often).
- b) You give them up-to-date information about what is happening.
- c) You make sure they have enough to eat and drink.

2.3 What does it mean if someone has 'guts' (or has 'the guts' to do something)?

- a) They are courageous.
- b) They are angry.
- c) They are intelligent.

2.4 What does 'sell your soul' mean?

- a) To sell something important to you but not to anyone else.
- b) To mix your personal life with your working life.

c) To do something that is against your beliefs (e.g., for financial reward).

2.5 What does it mean if something is 'like watching paint dry'?

- a) It is very difficult.
- b) It is very easy.
- c) It is very boring.

2.6 What does it mean if something is 'set in stone'?

- a) It is extremely old.
- b) It cannot be changed or altered.
- c) It is dirty.

Complete the sentences with the appropriate idioms. The correct answers are given below the paragraph, you just have to put them in the correct order. You may need to change the verb forms.

2.7 "I don't know how much longer I can do this job. Sure, the money's good, but the company does so many unethical things. I feel like I've _____. What I'd like to do is leave the _____ and just go and live on a beach somewhere, but then how would I pay the bills?" "Yeah, right, you've been saying that for at least five years. Maybe you like the job more than you say. After all, _____".

rat race, sell your soul, actions speak louder than words

11.8. "I heard that John Baker's _____ as head of marketing and that he might be gone by the end of the month. Do you think I'll be asked to replace him?" "Well, I wouldn't _____. I think they'll probably recruit someone from outside instead."

hold your breath, days are numbered

II.9. "What was the Chelsea match like?" "The first half was awful -it was like _____. But then the second half was brilliant. Lampard got two goals, Drogba got one, then Lampard got a _____ in the last minute -four-nill".

hat trick, watching paint dry

II.10. "I really wanted to do that Spanish course but I _____. I didn't call the college until yesterday and then they told me there were no more places. What about your Spanish class? I guess it's full as well, isn't it?" "Well, yeah, there are only supposed to be fifteen students, but that's not _____. There's a chance they might decide to let a couple more in. I'll _____ ok?"

set in stone, keep someone posted, miss the boat

APPENDIX 8: Instrument 2. Complex idioms content validity and construct validity

The table below shows the validation of Instrument 2. Complex idioms.

Table 10. Instrument 2. Complex Idioms content validity and construct validity

Indicate with a tick (✓) the “yes” box if you agree. Use a cross (X) in the “no” box if you disagree. There is a box for comments, where the researcher is expected to explain the reasons for the responses.

Items	CRITERIA TO BE ASSESSED INSTRUMENT 2										
	Clarity in drafting internal		Coherence		Induction to response (bias)		Appropriate language with level		Measure what it is intend		Comments (whether the item should be modified or deleted)
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
1			✓				✓		✓		Too complicated to guess answer
1.2			✓				✓		✓		
1.3			✓				✓		✓		
1.4			✓				✓		✓		
1.5			✓				✓		✓		
1.6			✓				✓		✓		
1.7			✓				✓		✓		
2.1			✓				✓		✓		
2.2			✓				✓		✓		
2.3			✓				✓		✓		
2.4			✓				✓		✓		
2.5			✓				✓		✓		
2.6			✓				✓		✓		
2.7			✓				✓		✓		
2.8			✓				✓		✓		
2.9			✓				✓		✓		
2.10			✓				✓		✓		
General aspects									Yes	No	Comments

The instrument contains clear and precise instructions for responding to the questionnaire				
The items allow the achievement of the research objective				
Items are distributed logically and sequentially		✓		students could feel unease looking for all the samples provided in another section
The number of items is sufficient to collect the information. If the answer is negative, suggest the items to add, please.		✓		
				questionnaire prevent students from losing motivation in answering from many options

If the instruments have been approved, indicate it with a tick next to the “Applicable” box. In case it is the contrary, put a cross next to the “Not applicable” box. In case the instrument could be applied following recommendations, indicate it with a tick next to the “Applicable on the basis of comments” box.

Validity			
Applicable		Not applicable	
Applicable on the basis of comments			✓
Approved by: Carlos Lorenzo Custodio Carrillo			Date:
Signature:	Telephone number:		e-mail:

Table 10. Instrument 2 Carlos Lorenzo Custodio Carrillo's validity

Table 11. Instrument 2. Complex Idioms content validity and construct validity

Indicate with a tick (✓) the “yes” box if you agree. Use a cross (X) in the “no” box if you disagree. There is a box for comments, where the researcher is expected to explain the reasons for the responses.

Items	CRITERIA TO BE ASSESSED INSTRUMENT 2										
	Clarity in drafting internal		Coherence		Induction to response (bias)		Appropriate language with level		Measure what it is intend		Comments (whether the item should be modified or deleted)
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
1	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
1.2	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
1.3	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
1.4	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
1.5	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
1.6	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
1.7	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
2.1	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
2.2	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
2.3	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
2.4	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
2.5	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
2.6	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
2.7	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
2.8	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
2.9	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
2.10	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		

General aspects		Yes	No	Comments
The instrument contains clear and precise instructions for responding to the questionnaire				Instructions need to be clearer
The items allow the achievement of the research objective		✓		
Items are distributed logically and sequentially		✓		
The number of items is sufficient to collect the information. If the answer is negative, suggest the items to add, please.		✓		

If the instruments have been approved, indicate it with a tick next to the “Applicable” box. In case it is the contrary, put a cross next to the “Not applicable” box. In case the instrument could be applied following recommendations, indicate it with a tick next to the “Applicable on the basis of comments” box.

Validity			
Applicable	✓	Not applicable	
Applicable on the basis of comments			
Approved by: Veronika de la Cruz Villegas			Date:
Signature:	Telephone number:		e-mail:

Table 11. Instrument 2 Verónica de la Cruz Villegas's validity

APPENDIX 09: Cronogram

Activity	2021											
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Protocol theoretical approach												
	2022											
Methodologic development Instrument development												
Piloting												
Application												
Extract data												
Corrections												
	2023											
Corrections												
	2024											
Corrections												
Printing and binding												

APPENDIX 07: Alojamiento de la Tesis en el Repositorio Institucional

Alojamiento de la tesis en el repositorio institucional	
Título de Tesis:	Exploring second language notions of idiomatic expressions of English learners from División Académica de Educación y Artes at Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco.
Autoras de la Tesis:	Katherin Andrea Pérez Rodríguez, Ana Eslit Díaz de la Cruz
ORCID:	https://orcid.org/0009-0003-5866-9540
Resumen de la Tesis:	Investigación sobre expresiones idiomáticas literales y complejas en inglés llevada a cabo en la Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco. En el estudio participaron doce estudiantes mexicanos que se encontraban cursando la licenciatura en Idiomas en la División Académica de Educación y Artes. Las preguntas de investigación fueron a) ¿Los aprendices conocen las expresiones idiomáticas en inglés? Y b) ¿Qué tanto saben los aprendices sobre las expresiones idiomáticas en inglés? Por otro lado, la hipótesis sostiene que los aprendices pueden entender e interpretar las expresiones idiomáticas que son idénticas en forma y significado al Español. En contraste, las expresiones idiomáticas complejas no serán fáciles de comprender y usar en el contexto correspondiente. Las suposiciones de este estudio están basadas en el análisis de la Teoría de la transferencia. La investigación tiene un enfoque cuantitativo descriptivo. La recolección de datos fue mediante cuestionarios realizados específicamente para conocer las nociones de los aprendices respecto a las expresiones idiomáticas. Los resultados muestran que las expresiones idiomáticas literales son mucho más fáciles de reconocer el significado correcto. Por lo contrario, aunque los aprendices identificaron el significado de las expresiones idiomáticas complejas, admitieron no sentirse seguros de su uso en un discurso oral. Abstract: A research of literal and non-literal idioms was conducted at Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco. It had as its participants 12 Mexican students who were majoring in B.A in languages in División Académica de Educación y Artes. Research questions were a) Do the learners know English Idioms? and b) How much do the learners know about English Idioms? On the other hand, the hypothesis was that learners would interpret and understand English Idioms that are identical in form and meaning in Spanish. In contrast, different Idioms will not be easy to comprehend and use in the appropriate context. The assumptions of this study are based on transfer analysis theory. The current research has a quantitative approach with a descriptive design. Data collection was questionnaires, which were used to collect information about learners' notions of idiomatic expressions. Results showed that literal idioms are way more accessible for the participants to identify the right meaning. In contrast, participants had a good score regarding to the identification of non-literal Idioms but in the background questionnaire, most learners admitted they don't feel confident when they have to use English Idioms in speaking.
Palabras clave de la Tesis:	English idioms, learners, notions of idiomatic expressions, literal idioms, non-literal idioms.

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Alojamiento de la tesis en el repositorio institucional	
Título de Tesis:	Exploring second language notions of idiomatic expressions of English learners from División Académica de Educación y Artes at Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco.
Autoras de la Tesis:	Katherin Andrea Pérez Rodríguez, Ana Eslit Díaz de la Cruz
ORCID:	https://orcid.org/0009-0001-8179-9146
Resumen de la Tesis:	Investigación sobre expresiones idiomáticas literales y complejas en inglés llevada a cabo en la Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco. En el estudio participaron doce estudiantes mexicanos que se encontraban cursando la licenciatura en Idiomas en la División Académica de Educación y Artes. Las preguntas de investigación fueron a) ¿Los aprendices conocen las expresiones idiomáticas en inglés? Y b) ¿Qué tanto saben los aprendices sobre las expresiones idiomáticas en inglés? Por otro lado, la hipótesis sostiene que los aprendices pueden entender e interpretar las expresiones idiomáticas que son idénticas en forma y significado al Español. En contraste, las expresiones idiomáticas complejas no serán fáciles de comprender y usar en el contexto correspondiente. Las suposiciones de este estudio están basadas en el análisis de la Teoría de la transferencia. La investigación tiene un enfoque cuantitativo descriptivo. La recolección de datos fue mediante cuestionarios realizados específicamente para conocer las nociones de los aprendices respecto a las expresiones idiomáticas. Los resultados muestran que las expresiones idiomáticas literales son mucho más fáciles de reconocer el significado correcto. Por lo contrario, aunque los aprendices identificaron el significado de las expresiones idiomáticas complejas, admitieron no sentirse seguros de su uso en un discurso oral. Abstract: A research of literal and non-literal idioms was conducted at Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco. It had as its participants 12 Mexican students who were majoring in B.A in languages in División Académica de Educación y Artes. Research questions were a) Do the learners know English Idioms? and b) How much do the learners know about English Idioms? On the other hand, the hypothesis was that learners would interpret and understand English Idioms that are identical in form and meaning in Spanish. In contrast, different Idioms will not be easy to comprehend and use in the appropriate context. The assumptions of this study are based on transfer analysis theory. The current research has a quantitative approach with a descriptive design. Data collection was questionnaires, which were used to collect information about learners' notions of idiomatic expressions. Results showed that literal idioms are way more accessible for the participants to identify the right meaning. In contrast, participants had a good score regarding to the identification of non-literal Idioms but in the background questionnaire, most learners admitted they don't feel confident when they have to use English Idioms in speaking.
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