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## **The Importance of Idiomatic Expressions In Improving Communicative Competence of FEL Learners using Fourth year students of Educational College as a Model**

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### **Abstract**

The study aims to show the importance of idiomatic expressions since they are regarded as significant linguistic units for learners of English as a foreign language (LEF). Idiomatic expressions are expressions each of which consists of two or more words whose meaning differ from the literal meaning of the individual word .These expressions are really a problem for the student majoring in English that they do not understand them .The study also aims at exploring the rule of idiomatic expressions in improving communicative competence and whether these expressions have effective role in improving the student's performance in language. The Study follows the descriptive analytical methods. The tools used for collecting the data are the interview and two tests. The interviews are conducted with university lectures who teach English language .A pre-test and post-test are conducted for the student majoring in English who are students from the department of English . statistical social sciences (SPSS) programme is used for data analysis . The most important result are there is a significant difference between the student's performance in the pre-test and their performance in the post-test. There is a consensus about the necessity of the inclusion of idiomatic expressions in university syllabuses (95.2% of the lecturers).The study recommends that idiomatic expressions should be focused on and included within the syllabuses of universities in Iraq, besides adopting effective methods and techniques in teaching such linguistic elements .

**Keywords:** idiomatic expression, interview, performance model, test, vocabulary.

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دور العبارات الاصطلاحية في تحسين أداء الكفاءات التواصلية للغة الإنكليزية (المرحلة  
الرابعة / كلية التربية كنموذج للدراسة)

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كلية الطب جامعة تكريت

**الملخص:** تناولت الدراسة الحالية العبارات الاصطلاحية الانجليزية ودورها في تحسين اداء الكفاءة التواصلية لدارسي اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغة اجنبية. العبارات الاصطلاحية هي عبارات تتكون كل عبارة منها من كلمتين او اكثر حيث ان معنى كل كلمة من الكلمات المكونة للعبارة اذ اخذت على حدة فانها لا تعطي معنى العبارة. هذه العبارات تمثل احدى المشكلات لطلبة اللغة الانجليزية حيث يواجهون صعوبات جمة في فهمها. هدف الدراسة هو اكتشاف دور هذه العبارات في تحسين كفاءة الطلاب التواصلية كما وركزت الدراسة على العبارات الاصطلاحية باعتبارها. وحدات اساسية في اللغة. استخدمت الدراسة الطرق الوصفية والتحليلية. كما ان الادوات التي استخدمت البيانات هي المقابلات بالاضافة لاختبارين عقلي وبعدي المقابلات اجريت مع اساتذة مختصون بتدريسية اللغة الانجليزية في عدد من الجامعات طبق برنامج الحزم الاحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية (spss) لتحليل البيانات. توصلت الدراسة لعدة نتائج. اهمية العبارات الاصطلاحية كوحدات لغوية مهمة. لطلاب اللغة الانجليزية. هنالك فرق كبير بين اداء الطلاب في الاختبار القبلي واختبار البعدي. وهذا يعني على ان فهم الطلاب للعبارات الاصطلاحية له دور كبير في تحسين الدعم في اللغة. بنسبة 95,2% من الاداء وتؤكد الدراسة على تضمين العبارات الاصطلاحية ضمن المناهج المقررة للجامعات ان التدريس الفعال يستنتج عنه تحسين مهارات الطلاب التواصلية. كما اوصت الدراسة بادراج العبارات الاصطلاحية ضمن المنهاج المقررة للتدريسين في الجامعات اضافة لتبني الطرق الفعالة والتقنيات. تدريس ان هذه العناصر اللغوية.

**الكلمات الدالة:** التعابير الاصطلاحية ، مقابلة، أداء نموذج ، اختبار ، مفردات

## Introduction

### 1.1 problem of the study

Iraqi students as non-native speakers of English who study English as a foreign language (EFL) do not use

English idioms in their speech or writing ,or rather, They rarely use them. This is due their negligence of idiomatic expressions. The knowledge of idioms gives invaluable assistance to the students to improve their performance in language. practising and using idioms make them feel confident that they are able to possess such vocabulary. It is certain that idioms are new in such widespread use, the problem of ignoring them or using them make non-native speakers of English produce unnatural Speech and respond inappropriately . This causes the researcher to highlight Such area in case some suggestions and recommendations, for practical solutions may arise.

### 1.2 objectives of the study

objectives of the study aim to

1.know to what extent idioms are effective in developing the students Communicative Competence.

2. orientate Iraqi students majoring in English with English idioms.

3. Explore the indispensable role of the knowledge of English idioms.
4. Investing at the area of idioms in the syllabuses of university in order to approximately know their weight in English Language .

### **1.3 Questions of the study**

- 1- Are Iraqi university students majoring in English aware of idiomatic expression?
2. Are non - native speaker teachers of English familiar with idiomatic expression.
3. Do teachers who teach English have ample knowledge of English idioms ?
4. Are Culture - Specific expressions important elements for teaching (EFL) learners?

### **1.4 hypotheses of the study**

1. university students majoring in English are to a great extent unaware of idiomatic expressions.
2. Many of the teachers who are non-native speakers are not familiar with idiomatic expressions
3. Some experienced teachers are knowledgeable of Culture - bound expressions.
4. A Considerable number of teachers of English have poor knowledge of idiomatic expressions.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

Linguists and language Specialists have agreed unanimously that oral and written communication are the prime goal of teaching and learning a language. Idiomatic expressions are present in both; the spoken and written English language abundantly. Due to this fact and the fact that the students of (EFL) have gaps of the knowledge of idioms. The researcher sees the area of English idioms as an important idea which deserves to be considered. The study is expected to help(EFL) students to develop both Spoken and written communicative competence which is compatible with achieving the goal of the language. The study provides information for syllabus designers and the development of language teaching programmes with focus on effectiveness of the incorporation of idioms with the syllabus of( EFL).

### **1.6 Methodology of the study**

The researcher Chooses the experimental analytical method for the study. The tools used for collecting data are two tests: a pre-test and post-test as well as interviews. The experiment is carried out on a sample of university students in order to obtain information as regards students performance before and after teaching them a course designed for them including idioms. The interviews is intended for university teachers in order to obtain information in regards to idioms at university level. University teachers are chosen for their experience and competence in English language; beside their direct contact with the sample of the study; university students.

### **1.7 Analysis of the study**

The researcher uses the statistical programme for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analyzing the data obtained. The results are exhaustively discussed based on tables.

### **1.8 limits of the study**

The sample of the students is chosen from the university of Tikrit. University teachers are selected from different parts of the country, karkuk university, sulaimaneya university and Jehan university.

## **2.0 Different views on Defining Idioms**

Many linguists view idioms differently, thus the matter remains debatable.

Hoz (1990: 15) defines an idiom as follows: the idiom belongs to a different order of abstraction . It is a particular cumulative association immutable in the sense that its parts are unproductive in relation to the whole in terms of the normal operational processes of substitution, transposition, expansion, etc. McCarther,(1992:404) says that an idiom is an expression unique to a language, especially one whose sense is not predictable from the meanings and arrangements of its elements, such as to kick the bucket" which has nothing obviously to do with kicking or buckets. The meaning of the Idiom kick the bucket is to die. In linguistics the term idiomaticity refers to nature of idioms and the degree to which a usage can be regarded as idiomatic. Some expressions are more holophrastic and unanalysable than others, for example " to take is literal and non-Idiomatic in the baby" took his first step". It also could be figurative grammatically open and semi-Idiomatic in the "they took some steps to put the matter right" the and phrase is fully idiomatic and grammatically closed in " she took steps to see that was done". These examples demonstrate a continuum of meaning and use that is true for many usages. No such continuum exist; however, between "He kicked the bucket out of the way", and "He kicked the bucket, died, such idioms are particularly rigid, and not passivized. Thomas (1996:83) defines idioms in terms of non-equivalence in other language, so that "kick the bucket" , 'red herring, and the like are idioms because they cannot be directly transferred into French or German. Macarthy (2008:84) asserts that certain vocabulary such as idiomatic expressions are very important in organizing discourses. But he believes that leaners of English find such vocabulary difficult, boring and demotivating. They are the texts that are hardest to unpack. Many researchers have complained that such vocabulary produces a "lexical bar", a serious obstache to progress in education, even for children learning their first language. So, difficulties faced by Second language learners should not be underestimated , particularly those who do not come from a Romance or language background. Ellis (1997:22)Germanic. defines an idiom" as words collected in a form that became affixed to each other until metamorphosing into a fossilized term. This collection of words is commonly used in a group. The He redefines each component word in the word-group and becomes an idiomatic expression. The word develops a specialized meaning as an entity, as an idiom.

## **2.1 The Birth of Idioms**

Hockett (1968:304) asserts that a speaker may say Something that has never said, and never heard before to listeners to whom the utterance is usually novel , and yet be understood. This is a daily occurrence, and the way in which it came about is basically simple; the new utterance is nonce-form, built from a familiar material by familiar patterns. The more occurrence of nonce - form for the first time does not in itself constitute the creation of a new idiom. Hockett gives two examples to explain something in this respect: (1) A little boy asked his parents "what is a poy"? This utterance is unusual in its form . The members of the family who over hear him are to remember the event and tell the story to others. They may even use to remember the new form "poy" in family Jargon. Just What the form does mean,it depends on the circumstance in which the boy used it, perhaps it will not denote anything but it will certainly have connotations. Even if the form is not destined to survive for a long time

to spread very widely, it is nonetheless a new idiom. probably, this particular coinage has occurred many times, quite independently, in different family circles in the English speaking world and (2) The second example is an image of a rather different circumstance ; Mrs.X comes home, with a new blouse, one of those indeterminate blue-green shades, for which many women have a special fancy name, but which they definitely class or a shade of green , not of blue. Mrs.X compliments her by" saying that is a nice shade of blue". For days thereafter, Mrs.X teases her husband by pointing to any obviously green object and saying "that's a nice shade of blue; isn't it? Here, there is nothing usually about the form of the utterance, only about original attendant circumstance yet the utterance has taken, at least temporarily, idiomatic value. The total context, linguistic and nonlinguistic, in which a nonce - form takes on the status of an idiom is thus the defining context of the idiom . In the two examples given about the defining contexts are informal. But formal contexts of various sorts may equally Serve well. (Hockett, 1968:306).

## **2.2 Collocations**

Oxford Collocations Dictionary for students of English (2010:7) defines collocations as " the way words combine in a language to produce natural sounding speech and writing", for example; strong wind but 'heavy rain'. Collin Cobuild English Dictionary (2006: 88) defines Collections as "the way that some words occur regularly whenever another word is used.

## **2.3 The importance of Idiomatic Expressions**

Weinreich (1969: 221) says that idioms are an important part of any language and may be said to be an indicator of one's fluency in that language. Therefore, idioms play a considerable role in both languages, the mother tongue and the foreign language. The foreign learner does not only learn the grammatical structure and the vocabulary of the language, but he also learns the idioms to help him integrate into the culture of the foreign language. Katz and postal (1963: 254) argue.that "as English language is rich in idioms, learning the idioms in English language forms the soul of the language. Yet the plethora of human situation makes it imperative to reduce them to manageable proportion". Students learning English inevitably confront difficulties in understanding idioms and will not be accepted as proficient without the knowledge of idiomatic expressions sufficiently . Lexical idioms mean any concatenation of two or more morphemes whose compound meaning is not compositionally derived from the meanings of the concatenated morphemes. Phrase idioms are morphemes whose syntactic structure is such that no sig Level Syntactic category dominates theme.

## **2.4 The History of idiomatic Expressions**

Cacciari (1993:43) considers the history of idioms as relatively short, viewing the studies of idiomaticity issues as important, though sometimes they are regarded as ungrammatical and illogic. But in fact idioms as described by a group of writers as "mental monument's of history and source of language change. The concerned with analogous terms; in other words ,is the history of which is to the hist of similar to the history of idiomatology, or idiomaticity, or idiomatic or perhaps phraseology?. All these terms may be other labels which have been used to refer to one. The example and evidences given by Havrila (2009:38) deals with phraseology and argues that teachers as practitioners may feel fairly satisfied with their pupils keeping by hearts lists of useful phrases. They may not realize the fact that idiomatic expressions are based on semantics rather than lexical grounds, or that the very term phraseology is derived from the base -term "phrase" which, for modern linguists, has connotations or reference primarily to grammatical structures. The recent history of idioms shows that

there was no true interest in idioms before the (20th) century and then, structuralism, ruling in its various forms over the linguistic world. Could hardly handle phenomena which appeared odd, exceptional, not fitting the patterns of grammar.

### **2.5 paramount Characteristics of Idioms**

Cowie (1981:51) says that idioms originate in phrase with a literal meaning which have settled firmly into the lexicon through repeated use. Many literal phrases remain in constant circulation over considerable period, unchanged in form and meaning. For example, (spread the butter, peel the potatoes). It is arguable that many of these sets, rather than being made up a fresh on each occasion of use, are simply stored and recalled as whole. These phrases pass on into the next stage of development. They are figuratively extended, in terms of the whole expression, but may or may not also preserve their original literal sense.

phrases that originated in the development of railway network for example, which are not now idiomatic, are among those which will still be understood in both a literal and figurative sense by native speakers. The following examples show such phrases from that period: Go off the rails, Run off the rails, Reach the end of the line, and Rain into the buffers / hit the buffers. Idioms are described as fixed forms. That's why individual words in an idiom cannot be replaced by synonyms. In most non-idiomatic discourse, a speaker uses synonymy to produce a new sentence with the same semantic meaning.

### **2.6 Types of Idioms**

Mearthy ( 2010 , : 115) mentions four types of idioms :

- a. Non-Compositional (for example: by and large ) which by definition are idioms which are not transparent.
- b. Compositional opaque (for example: kick the bucket).
- c. Compositional transparent (for example: spill the beans).
- d. Quasi-metaphorical (for example : skating on thin ice).

There are also two types of idioms ; transparent idioms and opaque idioms. Meryem (2010 : 112) points out that two types of idioms are mentioned: transparent idioms and opaque idioms. Transparent idioms are figurative expressions whose meaning can easily be understood.

#### **2.6.1 Transparent idioms**

Mearthy (2010:18) introduces a further demonstration of transparency, idioms can show variability from a frozen form through modification, which idioms can accept to various degrees. The following example presents a direct adverbial modification. He certainly kicked the bucket. The idiom comprises a complete verb phrase, and the adverb certainly simply modifies the whole idiom. Any way of modifying an idiom to serve transparency is through modifying individual words within the idiom. The following example illustrates this type of modification. "They shot huge holes in my argument". The modification is certainly not a standard part of these well-known fixed expressions, yet it is so easy to get a sense of what the modified Constructions mean.

#### **2.6.2 Opaque idioms**

Geofery (1981:72) refers to another form of opacity , he uses the term unmotivated idioms referring to opaque idioms , Opaque or unmotivated idioms are expressions which have a more arbitrary relationship with its meaning, for example "to go cold turkey" which means to quit a habit or activity suddenly and completely. Cowie ( 1981:25) describes opaque idioms as the ones whose words do not contribute to the understanding of the idioms meaning. The sense of opaque idioms like "wet behind

the ears can not be inferred from the individual words in the phrase or actions they describe.

### **2.7 Idioms and Arbitrariness**

Makkai (1972:171) states that the learning of idioms should be grounded the first step which is to familiarize the students with idioms, then the second step is to recognize them and the final

Phase is the comprehension of idioms which leads to mastery and automaticity.

But learners use to struggle with the first two phrases: familiarization and recognition, which may result in neglecting or avoiding them. Ammer (1992:67) ascertains that there are three factors in idiom comprehension; familiarity, transparency and context. They state idioms that are presented in context are easier to understand than presenting them in isolation, maintaining that context facilitates the interpretation of figurative language based on semantic information . Moon (1997:82 ) asserts that idioms are presented as non- arbitrary features of language, students find them much easier to understand and remember.

### **2.8 Sociolinguistic, pragmatic and psycholinguistics Views**

Grace (1985: 173) Confirms that sociolinguistic and pragmatic aspect of language use need to be considered. He is the first to use the term idiomatology, it shows principal features of a sentence, Kavka and Zybert (2001:201) describe Grace's idiomatology as synonymous, to a certain extent with the generally accepted sense of idiomatically. Wray and Perkins (2000:18) remark that idioms are related strongly to Sociolinguistics, pragmatics and psycholinguistics where Idioms play an important role in both language and society. The relation between idioms and pragmatics is to focus on the hidden meaning. Idioms are also connected with psycholinguistics in the notion of cognition and the latter itself is related to with Semantics and other issues of language.

### **2.9 Idioms and Communication**

Cook.(2006:173) affirms that idiomatic expressions are common in all kinds of English, formal or informal, spoken and written. He postulates that idiomatic expressions can help to grasp the meaning of life in a more refined communicative manner.

Havrila (2009:8) suggests that idiomatic expressions create a significant portion of every day communication. Even at present time people use expressions, whose original sense lies far away from their present communicative function, people express the idea of revealing a secret using the idiom "spill the beans" and use the idiom "kicked the bucket" when they mean die. Gibbs (2007:122) asserts that besides conveying meaning, idiomatic expressions convey certain evaluative aspect towards the relevant phenomenon. expressing ideas through idioms communicates an evaluation of the situation that the speaker refers to Wray. (2002) states that idiomatic expressions convey a sort of aphoristic truth about the referred issue. The Speaker's expressive commitment to the discussed matter through a figurative approximation with an emotional evaluative aspect aspect of the phenomenon is more than more a stating about the matter of fact. Idiomatic expressions build fluent speech and help understanding message, i.e., a hearer is more likely to understand a message if it is in a form that he has heard before that he processes without recourse to full analytic decoding.

### **2.10 Methodology**

This item is assigned to highlight the methodology of the study, it is an explanation of what tools and methods are employed to obtain the data needed for the study.

**2.10 .1 Tools and methods used**

The researcher uses qualitative and quantitative methods. The tools used are an interview and two tests: a pre-test and a post-test which are conducted before and after teaching a syllabus which is based on idiomatic expressions · The Syllabus includes different types of idioms. The course material is composed of the main types of idioms.

**2.10 .2 The Pre-Test**

one of the tools intended to collect data is a pre-test. The aim of the pre-test is to measure the student's performance.

**2.10.3 The pre- Test Reliability**

A pilot test is conducted with a group of fifteen students at the university of Tikrit who study English as a foreign language .The two tests are marked and the reliability of the differences between the ranking of the students’ scores in the test that is administrated twice is shown below:

The formula of Spear Mari difference method is:  $R = \frac{1-6\sum D^2}{N(N^2-1)}$

Where D = the square difference between pairs of ranks.

Where N= the number of individuals. Co. efficient of Correlation Vary from Zero (absence of relationship) to a high of (1.00) which indicates perfect relationship which is very rare. Correlation between (0.7 -0.9) is (0.7)which is not available to make accurate prediction. The following table shows the reliability of the test.

*Table (1): The Reliability of the test*

N	X	Y	D	D2
1	12	11	1	1
2	11	12	2	4
3	10	10	0	0
4	10	10	0	0
5	9	10	1	1
6	8	7	1	1
7	8	9	1	1
8	8	8	0	0

N	X	Y	D	D2
9	11	12	1	1
10	7	7	0	0
11	6	5	1	1
12	6	5	1	1
13	5	5	0	0
14	4	4	0	0
15	4	4	0	0

$$R = \frac{1-6\sum D^2}{N(N^2-1)} = \frac{1-6(11^2)}{15(15^2-1)} = 1 \frac{1-6.2}{15.224} = \frac{1726}{33660} \quad 0.78$$



Thus, the test is considered reliable according to the result shown.

### **2.10.3. 1 The post test**

The post test is one of the tools intended for collecting data. It aims mainly to measure the influence of the knowledge of idiomatic expressions as regards their communicative competence after having the course material taught for them. The post test is composed of various types of questions.

### **2.10.4 The interview**

The interview his regarded as the second source for data collection. The interview is composed of several questions. Face validity of the interviews are checked by two expert university lecturers.

### **2.11 The Sample**

The data needed for the study is collected by two tools: an interview and two tests; a pre-test and a post-test. Consequently, two Samples participate in the study: university lecturers and students.

#### **2.11.1 The lecturers and students**

Six lectures are chosen to participate in providing data. The study Subjects are chosen randomly · Fifteen students are selected for this task. They ere nearly of the same age and have nearly the same linguistic back ground. luckily, they all have positive attitude towards the course.

### **2.12 Analysis of the study**

The data obtained by the means of the interview are analyzed manually and by the use of the computer programme (Spss). In addition, the data obtained through the two tests are analyzed based on programme - Statistical package for Social Sciences (Spss).

### **3. The Results of the Pre-test**

Table No. (2) below shows that results of the Pre-test that the student took before the teaching of the course material designed for them. The students who are the sample of the study attend the classes happily and enthusiastically.

Test scores	Frequency	Percent %	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
1	10	21.3	21.3	21.3
2	2	4.3	4.3	25.6
3	12	25.5	25.5	51.1
4	4	8.5	8.5	59.6
5	10	21.3	21.3	80.9
6	2	4.3	4.3	85.1
7	4	8.5	8.5	93.6
8	1	2	2	95
9	1	2.1	2.1	95.7

11	1	2.1	2.1	97.9
13	1	2.1	2.1	100.0
Total	47	100.0	100	

*Table (2): The Results of the Pre- test*

It is clear from the results of the Pre-test that students ignore the area of idiomatic expressions which supports hypothesis No. (1).

The results of the pre-test confirm two hypotheses: university students majoring in English have poor knowledge of English idioms besides the knowledge of culture according to Cook (2003:43) states that learning a language requires the knowledge of the culture of the people who speak it, question No.(3) which includes transparent idioms, the answers of the students are still poor as well as the answers to the question No. (2) Table No. (3) is expressive.

Table (3): Results of Question No. (2)

Test scores	Frequency	Percent %	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
0	47	100.0	100	100.0

There is a slight difference between the answers of the students as regards question No. (2) which was opaque and their answers concerning Question No. (3) which was transparent. Table (4) illustrates the results of question No. (3).

*Table (4): Results of Question No. (3)*

Test scores	Frequency	Percent %	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
0	28	59.6	59.6	59.6
1	1	2.1	2.1	61.7
2	11	23.4	23.4	85.1
4	6	12.8	12.8	97.9
6	1	2.1	2.1	100.0
Total	47	100.0	100.0	

with regard to the first question; the students are asked about the meaning of the word vocabulary and they show the ignorance of what vocabulary includes. so, students Were unaware of idiomatic expressions as a genuine Category of Vocabulary.

#### **4. The Results of the post-test**

The post-test is administrated after completing the teaching of the course that was designed for the students. Table. No. (5) clearly displays the scores of the students.

Table (5): The Results of the Post- test

Test scores	Frequency	Percent %	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
1	1	2.1	2.1	2.1
2	2	4.3	4.3	6.4
3	3	6.4	6.4	12.8
4	2	4.3	4.3	17.0
5	3	6.4	6.4	23.4
7	1	2.1	2.1	29.3
8	3	6.4	6.4	36.2
9	1	2.1	2.1	38.3
Total	47	100.0	100.0	

### **5.A comparison The pre-test with the post-test**

Reviewing table No. (5), it is seen that only one student scored one-mark while ten students scored the same mark. Three students scored three marks with a percentage of six point four (6.4%), while the same grade (3) was obtained by four students. The number is fifteen students. Thus, the scores that fifteen Students got are different. This indicates the effectiveness of Teaching idiomatic expressions is very important for foreign language learners. Table No. (6) is expressive:

*Table (6): The Results of the Pre- test and the Post- test*

Test	Mean	No. of students	Std. deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre- test	4.02	15	2.633	0.384
Post- test	12.28	15	7.649	1.116

This result appears to indicate the student's considerable improvement in performing the post-test. This is attributed to the experimental teaching of the experiment - Syllabus prepared for them.

### **6. The Results of interviews**

The interviews are the second tool used in this study. They are conducted with some experienced lecturers. The lecturers who were interviewed provide the study with invaluable data. On the basis of the data collected and the means of the computer using (Spss) (statistical package for Social) programme, the following results are obtained:

**6.1 Question (1):** For how long have you been teaching at the university. The main purpose behind asking this question is to know whether there is true relationship between teachers experience and their knowledge of idiomatic expressions. The following table shows the results:

*Table (7): Experience*

Years of experience	Frequency	Percent %	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
4-10	6	28.6	28.6	28.6
11-18	7	57.1	57.1	85.7
18-21	3	14.3	14.3	100.0
Total	21	100.0	100.0	

The interpretation of table No. (7) shows that there seems to be low Correlation between teacher's long experience and the knowledge of idiomatic expressions.

**6.2** Do you think teachers of English who are non- native speakers are familiar with idiomatic expressions? the following table displays the answer.

*Table No.(8): familiarity with Idiomatic expressions*

Frequency	Years of experience	Response
<b>1</b>	23	No
<b>2</b>	20	Yes
<b>3</b>	07	To some extent
<b>4</b>	07	To some extent
<b>5</b>	23	No
<b>6</b>	18	No
<b>7</b>	18	To some extent
<b>8</b>	15	No
<b>9</b>	09	No
<b>10</b>	18	To some extent
<b>11</b>	10	No
<b>12</b>	12	No
<b>13</b>	15	No
<b>14</b>	13	To some extent
<b>15</b>	04	To some extent

The results support hypothesis (2) that hypothesizes: Many of the English teachers who are non-native speakers are not familiar with idiomatic expressions.

**6.3** what are some of the key principles which promote effective and enjoyable learning idioms? as regards the lecturers? the following table is illustrative:

*Table (9): key principles to promote learning as regards lecturers.*

No.	key principles for promote learning
1	varying techniques – encountering students
2	Awareness of language – patience – culture
3	Teaching literature – Spoken language
4	Discussions – practices
5	Modern techniques – typical classes
6	Balancing the four skills
7	Communicative approach - Students Participations
8	Motivation – cooperation
9	Culture –friendly atmosphere
10	varying methods and technique – good Syllabus

**6.4** QuestionNo. (4): Do you think that idiomatic expressions exist within the syllabuses of universities in Iraq? the answer to the above question is shown in the table No. (9).

*Table (9): Existence of Idioms*

**6.5 Question No. (5):** Are idiomatic expressions taught at Iraqi universities. The responses of the lecturers from different universities in Iraq are shown in the

Response	Frequency	Percent %	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Yes	6	28.6	28.6	28.6
To some extent	8	38.1	38.1	66.7
No	7	33.3	33.3	100.0
Total	21	100.0	100.0	

following Table:

*Table (10): Responses of the lecturers to question No. (5).*

Response	Frequency	Percent %	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
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Yes	2	9.5	9.5	9.5
To some extent	4	19.0	19.0	28.5
Phrasal verbs	3	14.3	14.3	42.8
unintentionally	3	14.3	14.3	57.1
No	9	42.9	42.9	100.0
Total	21	100.0	100.0	

A quick survey of table No. (10) shows that a considerable number of the lecturers respond "No" to the teaching of idioms. Six (6) teachers out of fifteen state that idioms are not taught (42.9%). Only two (2) lecturers answered positively for the teaching of idioms, with a percentage of (9.5%). Four (4) of the teachers (19%) appeared to hesitate before responding "to some extent". Three (3) lecturers (14,3%) suggest that idioms are unintentionally taught.

**6.6 Question No. (6):** Do you think teaching idiomatic expressions will promote the student's communication skills?

The researcher asked the above question so as to show the impact of teaching idiomatic expressions on improving student's communicative skills. According to the expert lecturers who were interviewed, Table (12) and figure No.(1) clearly show the results.

*Table (12) The importance of idioms in student's performance*

Response	Frequency	Percent %	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Yes	20	95.2	95.2	95.2
No	1	4.8	4.8	100.0
Total	21	100.0	100.0	



Figure (1) Role of idioms in student's performance

**Salient Views on The Study**

Geoffrey (1981: 112) states that idioms are regarded as parts of language that is judged intuitively by the native speakers of that language. one reasons of the reasons

for idiomatic expressions to prove somewhat is to focus on the various Categories they include; collocations, phrasal verbs, dictums, cliches and proverbs.

Aziz (1986: 22) says that Arabic has a large number of idioms and no person or teacher knows all the idioms, yet they are as formed from their language. An idiom might be familiar and known in one area in Iraq, but in a remote region it might seem entirely unknown.

Ammer (1992: 24) describes idioms as defying the rules of logic; using familiar words in obscure ways posing great difficulty for non-native speakers

Thomas (1996:102) points out that idioms are culture - bound, that is not easy to understand their meaning even they if they are transparent, stating that the knowledge of idiomaticity is not based on linguistic analysis, but it is a matter of Cultural awareness.

Meryem (2010:81) states that idiomatic expressions as a "Course of perplexity to those who acquire a second language". Moreover, structuralists consider idioms as old, exceptional, and not fitting the patterns of grammar.

## **7. Conclusion**

Most English speakers, as stated by Pollio, (1977:140) use, idiomatic expressions which are referred to as formulaic Competence heavily. they utter about ten millions novel metaphor per life time. This works out to about 3,000 novel metaphors per and 7,000 idioms per week. formulaic competence is a counter balance to linguistic competence, it refers to those fixed and prefabricated chunks of language that speakers use heavily in every day interactions. An idiomatic expression is an example type. Formulaic competence is very important, since it is now acknowledged that fluent Speakers of a language draw on formulaic knowledge of the target language as often as they use systematic language knowledge .Carter (2012:42).

Wray (2002:12) asserts that the effectiveness of formulaic sequences is an important element in improving second language learners academic writing skills because those chunks of language function as frame to which language second Learners report when approaching a writing task to compose an academic piece of writing.

### **7.1 Findings**

1. The results of the pre-test and the post-test show that there is a considerable difference as regards the performance of the students.
2. The student's marks in the pre- test were low. After teaching idiomatic expressions, students took the post-test and gained better scores.
3. Culture is regarded as a corner stone with regard to enjoyable and effective factors of learning as viewed by the interviewees (33.8%).
4. There is an entire precedented consensus about the inclusion of idiomatic expressions within university Syllabuses. This high ratio (95.3%) is given by (14) lecturers out the total number which was fifteen (15).
5. Idiomatic expressions actually comprise part of university syllabus, but it is ignored, that is to say not taught.
6. An appreciable proportion of the teachers who teach English, according to the interviewees stated that.
7. The results show that effective teaching of idiomatic expression will result in improving the student's communicative competence .It is known among scholars that the absence of formulaic language may be what marks out competent language as nonnatives. Jurafsky and Martin (2008: 12) consider idioms as key -

element of fluent language production whose role in vocabulary learning is considerable.

### **7.2 Recommendations**

1. language instructors may be able to upgrade second language learners every day communicative competence by introducing different idiomatic expressions that serve various functions, and by raising 'Second language learner's awareness of the importance of this Language phenomenon.
2. Syllabus designers and material developers could compile a basic list for idiomatic expressions to serve as a basis for teaching and learning these expressions as far as their important role for (FEL) learner which is consistent with the majority of the linguists.
3. Teachers of English should be encouraged to include such item of language as part of the teaching-learning process.
4. learners should be familiarized with idioms, despite the complexity that associated with them.
5. Syllabus should include a considerable portion of formulaic language
6. It is quite beneficial to use effective methods when teaching idiomatic expressions such as; using stories, teaching idioms in context, using rich illustrations such as pictures and diagrams.

### **7.3 Suggestions for further studies**

The following topics are suggested for further studies:

1. A study of diverse points in idiomatic expressions in Arabic with reference to English.
2. A pragmatic study of idiomatic Expressions in English using kulusi's dictionary as a model.
3. A Contrastive study of idiomatic Expressions and phrasal verbs in English as a foreign language.

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