



LEARNING IDIOMS FOR ENGLISH MAJORS: VIETNAMESE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF DIFFICULTIES AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

Phuong-Bao-Tran Nguyen¹,
Nhu Hao Phan,
Tuong Vy Le,
Le Huyen Tran Tran,
Thi Thu Thao Pham
Can Tho University,
Vietnam

Abstract:

Learning idioms play an influential role in language generally and in English notably. Comprehending idioms assists language learners in integrating culture, enhancing skills, and ameliorating English levels. Numerous studies have analyzed the function of idioms in second language acquisition (Cieślicka, 2015). This study investigates the difficulties and strategies used in learning idioms by English-majored students at a regional public university (PU) in the south of Vietnam. This paper furnishes data showing learners' perceptions of facing complications and learning methods. The samples consisted of 150 undergraduate EFL students from English-medium instruction programs. The data was analyzed by utilizing descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings reveal that students struggle to understand idiomatic terms without specific, understandable contexts. Furthermore, the results indicate that the most frequently employed strategies are guessing the meaning of idioms, learning idioms through keywords, and learning from a range of sources, particularly via media. The findings also mentioned that low-proficiency and high-proficiency students encounter identical challenges, with no significant differences. The study's results revealed that the majority of students have difficulty acquiring, recognizing, and interpreting idioms. The findings indicated that guessing the implication of idioms is the most used strategy.

Keywords: students' perception, EFL learners, idioms, difficulties of learning idioms, strategies for learning idioms

¹ Correspondence: email npbtran@ctu.edu.vn, anita.baotran@gmail.com

1. Introduction

The importance of vocabulary in language studies, language learning, and language teaching has drawn much attention in the last twenty years. The foundation of language is vocabulary; hence, EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students should spend particular class time on vocabulary (Brown, 2000). There has been a shift in how language is taught in recent years. EFL learners used to be taught a list of vocabulary terms in the past, but now they are taught sections of the English language, such as collocations. The latter is more advantageous and effective for learning languages (Alhaysony, 2017). Thanks to recent developments, idioms hold the attention of language instructors and scholars. Liu (2008) showed that many L2 learners are anxious to acquire more idioms because they have been exposed to the target language, have come to respect idioms, and recognize their worth, including their richness and utility in communicative tasks.

Idioms are multiword units that must be understood as a whole and cannot be separated. The students will learn about many cultural practices. Several studies suggest that students learn idioms to interact with the target language. Idioms can be an essential issue in learning the English language, and EFL students need to be able to learn idiomatic phrases to be like native speakers (Schmitt, 2013).

As a result, students must exercise their communication and learning skills more. Linguists make excellent use of the concept of idioms in their studies. According to several similar types of research, language learners' ability to understand idioms is a measure of proficiency. The usage of idioms by students who major in English is preventing them from learning other languages. Idioms must be taught and learned since they make up a significant portion of figurative language and using them by EFL learners can help them develop their communicative competence (Khan & Can Daskin, 2014). Learners use idioms from various academic works of literature to convey their language proficiency as they become more socialized. Lundblom and Woods (2012) emphasized the importance of idiom knowledge. They argue that mistakenly adopting them may hinder students' abilities to write essays, interpret material, and utilize language because idioms are associated with the academic environment. Idioms are crucial for students seeking higher education in the study of language acquisition as a result. Idiomatic phrases can include idioms. However, not all idiomatic expressions are idioms. What is seen as an idiom's most crucial characteristic significantly impacts how an idiom is defined. Studying idioms and how they are learned should be approached from a slightly larger perspective because the world of idioms is quite complicated, starting with the mere definition of an idiom. However, university-level and English language centre classes pay less attention to idioms and figurative language. Since several studies demonstrate that most EFL instructors are underprepared for English idioms and are ignorant of their significance in everyday speech, there is no need to teach English idioms in English classes. According to Tran, H. Q. (2012) research, English idioms are typically avoided by both teachers and students. This finding militates against the use of idioms and their classification in the proper settings. The importance of learning English idioms

in contributing to the learning progress of EFL students, particularly among junior EFL students at PU, will be discussed in this study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definitions of Idioms

Idioms are one of the essential aspects of language. They are frequently used in various situations, including friendly conversations, more formal conversations, and written contexts. The literature combines various definitions of idioms from different sources. Zoltán Kövecses and Péter Szabó (1996) stated that "*idioms are linguistic expressions whose overall meaning cannot be predicted from the meanings of the constituent parts*". Langlotz (2006) declared that an idiom is a standardized construction of two or more lexical elements with the composite structure of a phrase or semi-clause.

According to Richards and Schmidt (2010), an idiom is a phrase or expression that functions as a whole and whose meaning cannot be deduced from its constituent parts. The idiom was considered by Ghazala (2004) as a fixed term whose form is permanent and whose meaning is always the same, nonflexible, metaphorical, and indirect. Baker (1992) stated that:

"...idioms and fixed expressions are at the extreme end of the scale from collocations in one or both of these areas: flexibility of patterning and transparency of meaning. They are frozen patterns of languages which allow little or no variation in form and, in the case of idioms, often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components" (p. 63).

Moreover, it is considered fixed and collocational constrained. Al-kadi (2015) defined that idioms are not comprehensible, as their meanings are unforeseeable from the conventional meaning of their constituent elements, particularly idioms of socio-cultural, historical, or political contexts. Crystal (2011) defined idioms as "*a term used in grammar and lexicology to refer to a sequence of words that is semantically and often syntactically restricted so that they function as a single unit.*" These definitions have the same viewpoint that the meaning of an idiom cannot be deduced from its constituent elements. In this study, an idiom is defined as an expression whose meaning cannot be figured out from its constituent parts. The above definitions show clearly that most idioms are unchangeable in the sense that they have fixed forms and meanings.

2.2 Roles of idiom in EFL learning

Idioms are one of the essential parts of any language in the world, as it represents the formed knowledge of one civilization. Rizq (2015) declared that idiomatic expressions contain indigenous users' history, tradition, culture, and customs. The same case was also added to English - one of the most globalized languages in the world. However, since idioms vary from one language to another, many language learners encounter several

obstacles while translating. In the growth of society today and the expansion of cross-national exchanges, people use idioms with high frequency in academic texts and everyday communication. Idioms are also believed to be equivalent to learners' language levels.

According to Nguyen, M. C. (2019), idioms contain the features of cultural and social lifestyle, etc., of an ethnicity, a community, or a country. The researcher also declared the importance of using idioms in regular communication and translation. Understanding idioms through context help foreign language learners to integrate culture, improve skills and ameliorate English levels. In addition, idioms that are developed from actual human experiences might be said to be generally culturally equal. It is simpler for non-native speakers to recognize and comprehend idioms based on human physical sensations, such as the association between rage and heat. Because essential bodily experiences like being ill or healthy, hot or cold, are so consistent across cultures, idioms developed from such pictures are frequently the same and relatively simple to comprehend (Boers, 2008). As a result, the more English learners are familiar with idioms and their meanings, the more they understand English culture, allowing them to integrate into the target language's culture successfully.

According to Shirazi and Talebinezhad (2013), a better understanding of idioms is a requirement for proficiency and accuracy in using English, and ignorance of idioms will lead to many misunderstandings. Saleh and Zakaria (2013), then Belousova (2015), revealed that the understanding and fluency of idioms can be seen as a sign of language proficiency because it can be an effective way to help students improve their communication skills in the context of real life. Lundblom and Woods (2012) also emphasized the importance of understanding idioms. They thought that idioms were intrinsic to the academic setting. Therefore, the limitation of idiomatic knowledge also affected student achievement, report papers, and English vocabulary comprehension. Hence, the higher the educational level of the students, the more idioms they have to encounter. Tran, H. Q. (2013) supposed that teachers and students often avoid expressions of English idioms. This prevented students from being exposed to English phrases. As a result, students cannot profoundly understand idioms in the proper context. Followed by the author in 2013, the assessment of good language use in Asia is using idioms in daily communication. Therefore, this creates an uprising trend of using idioms in everyday conversation. According to Vo, T. D. M. and Nguyen, V. L. (2020), learners have insufficient knowledge and understanding of standard English idioms based on the analysis results. Although most participants acknowledged the usefulness of idioms and learned idioms, they rarely employed them in speech (Vo & Nguyen, 2020).

To summarise, idioms represent various information, cultural, and civilizational traits. Additionally, it is a valid metric for determining how well a language learner can translate and communicate. Thus, the idiomatic knowledge gap also had an impact on student performance. Despite this, idiom learning is not a topic that is adequately studied in schools and colleges.

2.3 Studies on students' difficulties in learning idioms

Recent studies investigated EFL students' obstacles when translating and understanding English idioms. Mantyla (2004) considered EFL learners to face challenges recognizing unfamiliar idioms. Another barrier is the chance to access idioms frequently, which ranges from the omission of idioms in a speech addressed particularly to those learners so as not to confuse the omission of idiomatic expressions in the target language materials and syllabi (in addition to the shortage of exercises designed to teach idioms).

Saleh and Zakaria (2013) and Alhaysony (2017) discovered that EFL students are likely to encounter problems due to a lack of cultural background and little exposure to English idioms. In learning English idioms and figurative language, learners receive knowledge related to cultural beliefs, attitudes, or social norms of the English language and other languages. Idioms, in this case, and other types of figurative language, such as hyperbole, metaphor, and allusion, allow students to absorb the viewpoints, inner thoughts, and emotions expressed through the target language.

Vo (2020) considered that learning idioms supports learners in accumulating the language's culture. The key factor of learning these figurative languages could be challenged because the meanings of idioms are not usually inferred from the literal meanings of words.

Angel (Angel, 2016) researched how challenging it is to learn idioms. Data were gathered through questionnaires, and the findings revealed that many students believed that learning idioms was challenging because they reflected a cultural situation that could only be understood in the native country. Furthermore, learning idioms requires a more complex level of cognitive ability, and students must be fully aware of the context and situation in which those expressions are used.

According to Hussein, Khanji, and Makhzoomy (Hussein et al., 2000), learning idioms is challenging because they are arbitrary and nonliteral. Idioms are incomprehensible based on the meaning of their constituents because of their arbitrariness, and thus they cannot be taught systematically. This explanation was also discovered in the Buckingham study (2006).

Pimenova (2011) claims there are five main obstacles to learning idioms: (a) a lack of familiarity with vocabulary and idioms, (b) the absence of equivalent idioms in the L1, (c) cultural differences, (d) an absence of experience dealing with idioms, and (e) an absence of a broad context for a given idiom (Pimenova, 2011).

Cooper (1999) also indicated that learning idioms is challenging for students as figurative language can be unforeseeable. Therefore, it forces them to exceed word-by-word interpretation, and the figurative meaning will be proposed.

Knowles (2004) argued that the additional time required to study and master idioms is another difficulty for students (cited in Tran, 2017). The researcher, Elbushra Mousa (2017), continued to claim that students could not grasp English idioms and specific techniques for moving past the new ones encountered during the learning process. While the failure may be attributed to several common causes, the importance of admitting it is often overlooked. Idioms were not emphasized in the classroom;

therefore, students paid little attention to them. Without any contextual knowledge, students just translated idioms word by word.

In conclusion, students meet a high frequency of encountering failure when locating an appropriate counterpart. They are also likely to misunderstand the idiom's meaning, then eventually employ literal translation that does not convey the meaning or ignore the entire or some elements of the phrase and not compensate for it elsewhere. Besides those problems mentioned above, the findings show that the participants also lack background knowledge and access to target language idioms.

2.4 Strategies for learning and translating English idioms

Learning strategies, according to Selinker (1972), are one of the five psycholinguistic processes that shape the interlanguage system. These five psycholinguistic processes are as follows: native language transfer, overgeneralization of target language rules, training transfer, communication strategies, and learning strategies. Language learners employ learning methods as a means of simplifying the new cognitively challenging linguistic system (cited in Montañó-González, 2017). Various studies attempted to discover strategies for translating idioms for EFL learners in terms of learning strategies (Zainudin & Awal, 2012). Most studies acknowledge that guessing expressions through context is considered to help translate work. According to Akbari (2013), a translation strategy is the ideas of translators who take cognizance of some translation set of circumstances and have found a way to unriddle any problems that arise in a concrete situation. In addition, the researcher provided a clear definition of it as a possible conscious technique that translators find beneficial approaches to address the challenge of translating a text, or any section of it.

Cooper (1999), together with Bulut and Yazici (2004), showed that L2 learners tended to rely on guessing idioms from the given context after figuring out their literal meaning. Another finding from Cooper (1999) was that L2 learners also chose to discuss and analyze the idiom when translating. According to the two studies, these were the most commonly used strategies among the participants.

Ingo (cited in Helleklev, 2006, p.27), suggested four approaches to dealing with idioms. Unlike many scholars, he proposed a word-for-word rendering of idioms: (1) translating an idiom with an equivalent idiom, (2) word for word, (3) with an explanatory everyday expression and (4) translating an everyday expression by using an idiom.

According to McGhee Nelson (1992), EFL approaches the symbolic meaning of idioms straightforwardly, whereas Lontos (2002) stated that language learners absorb idiomatic statements primarily by processing them literally before receiving the metaphorical interpretation. This means idioms can be interpreted metaphorically after being processed into literal meanings.

Khau and Vo (2020) envisioned practical problem-solving strategies, such as using more general words, translating associated with cultural replacement, using common words (less expensive words), paraphrasing related or unrelated words, using loan words, and explaining and omitting some non-important words.

In terms of translation methodologies, Baker (1992, pp. 72–77) offered four tactics for translating idioms:

a. Using an idiom of similar meaning and form

To be more specific, he clarified that this strategy entails using an idiom in the target language with approximately the same meaning as the source language idiom and containing coequal lexical items. This strategy is only used in rare circumstances.

b. Using an idiom of similar meaning but with a different form

In the target language, it is common to encounter an idiom or fixed expression that has a corresponding meaning to the source idiom or expression but is made up of different lexical items. Consider the English expression “*one good turn deserves another*”, as the French say. Baker (1992) says that the phrase “*a good game deserves a good return*” uses a number of different words to say basically the same thing.

c. Translating by paraphrase

It is the most common method of translating idioms when a direct equivalent cannot be found in the target language or when doing so would be unsuitable owing to differences in the writing styles of the two languages.

d. Translating by omission

It is possible to remove an idiom from the target text as though it were a single word. There might not be an exact match in the target language, or it might not be able to sum up the meaning correctly, or there might be cultural differences.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research aims and research questions

Idioms are widely used by native English speakers, although EFL teaching materials disregard them. Vietnamese universities and language institutes pay little emphasis to teaching idioms. It may be owing to idioms' complexity. Studies have examined EFL students' views on acquiring English idioms abroad. Little research has examined Vietnamese EFL learners' perceptions regarding learning and translating idioms, their sources of difficulty in acquiring them, and their techniques for learning and understanding them.

Thus, the present study addresses the following research questions regarding university Vietnamese students' sources of difficulties in learning English idioms and the strategies used to learn and interpret them.

- 1) What difficulties do Vietnamese university students in EMI programs frequently encounter when acquiring idioms?
- 2) What strategies do Vietnamese university students in EMI programs regularly employ to learn English idioms?

- 3) Are there differences in the idiom learning strategy implemented by gifted- and non-gifted Vietnamese university students?

3.2 Research design and aims

Regarding the study objectives, a mixed methodology integrating qualitative and quantitative techniques was utilized. Qualitative research may be utilized to address a research question in which the variables are not required but must be studied (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The goal of the quantitative study is to examine the topic from the perspective of numerical data. This study was classified as descriptive research since it focused on the difficulties students have when learning and interpreting idioms and the techniques, they employ to overcome those difficulties. A descriptive and exploratory research study investigates the current state of a phenomenon. This type of study belongs under the genre of primary studies.

Despite the abundance of literature in the topic of translation, idiomaticity requires more research. The translation of idiomatic terms from English/Vietnamese/English into an acceptable and relevant language is, in reality, a critical issue that has to be addressed. Therefore, an attempt is made to identify the challenges faced by EFL learners and the most effective means of overcoming them. Thus, students' translation abilities must be enhanced.

3.3 Participants

The participants of this study were 150 undergraduates majoring in English Studies of EMI Program at a regional public university in the Mekong Delta of Viet Nam. They were divided into two groups: gifted and non-gifted English students according to their high-school learning history. The survey participants had studied and experienced the general translation course; thus, they can understand, and have been exposed to idioms many times.

To obtain high dependability in survey results and qualitative data collection, participants are expected to supply basic information about themselves, such as full names, classes, cohorts and academic background. Dependability will support the research study's conclusions as being consistent and reproducible, which is crucial to trustworthiness. Therefore, it is supported for the present study's conclusions the original data acquired.

3.4 Data collection instrument

3.4.1 The online survey – The questionnaire

A comprehensive review of the literature (Ababneh, 2016; Al-Khawaldeh et al., 2016; Alhaysony, 2017) was undertaken before developing the questionnaire. The items in the questionnaire were also adapted from the appropriate questionnaire from recent studies (Liontas, 2002; Liu, 2008; Pimenova, 2011; Pucelj, 2018).

The first section of the questionnaire requested demographic information from participants. i.e., full name, class, and course. The second part consisted of eight

statements and one question related to the difficulty of learning idioms. The participants were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statements on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly agree). The third part comprised 22 statements focusing on strategies to be used in learning idioms. The participants will select multiple strategies they frequently use when learning idioms. The research group took responsibility for distributing the questionnaires to the students. Details of the questionnaire items can be found in the appendix 1. Research professionals assessed the validity of the instruments, and the Cronbach Alpha method was used to test the reliability of the questionnaire. The questionnaire online survey yielded Cronbach Alpha values of 0.72. The surveys were trustworthy since, in accordance with Newman et al (Newman et al., 2013), a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.7 is regarded as a threshold for acceptable and unacceptably unreliable dependability.

3.4.2 The interview

The interview results were further explored based on the same question items from the questionnaire. This procedure is a helpful first step in getting students to provide factual information regarding their difficulties learning idioms and comprehending idiom language. The conversation between the interviewer and the subject might yield further information. The supplementary questions in this qualitative study followed the same format as the questionnaire and asked respondents for further details regarding learning and understanding idioms (see appendix 2). The responses to the open-ended questions were recorded for later transcription. The questions had a significant impact on the interview guide we made. Six interview questions were combined to get information. The students were required to give a basic description of their class and course. To achieve a thorough analysis of students' problems, the study also applied extra information on their difficulties and approaches. This interview was based on the theory of (Nunan & Trimble, 1992), in which the interviewee is free to negotiate the topics covered, but the researcher has some control over the interview's direction.

3.5 Data-collection procedure

An anonymous online survey using Google forms was created to collect data from May and June 2022. Before students received emails attached the anonymous link of the questionnaire of the study, invitation emails and permission letters were sent to all of students majoring in EMI programs at PU. Volunteering participants were asked to complete their personal information, including their name and student numbers, before answering the questionnaire. They were also made sure of the confidentiality of their responses. To ensure validity and comprehension of the questionnaire, the instructions were provided for each section of the questionnaire, and the participants were also provided the aims of the study so that the question items can measure what they are intended to.

3.6 Data analysis

To find the answers to the proposed research questions, the study's plans for analysing and interpreting the collected data were divided into two phases.

The researchers analyzed interview answers then the questionnaire data, which comprised data reduction, data presentation, and the formation of a conclusion. More precisely, the numeric data acquired from the questionnaire was statistically analyzed using SPSS statistic software, while the qualitative data gathered through interviews was thematically examined. Quantitative data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Statistical measures such as percentages and averages were used to summarize the data. T-tests of independence and one-way ANOVA were used to assess hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

The qualitative data were utilized to validate the acquired quantitative data. Similar themes were categorized into the concerns identified by the study questions. The categories were determined by sorting and categorizing the data (Ezzy, 2013). Finally, the data were streamlined, sorted into distinct concepts and themes, and analyzed accordingly. Transcriptions of interviews and fieldnotes were used to analyze the qualitative data. The data was coded, and then themes, classifications, and interpretation were established and applied as needed.

4. Results

4.1 Qualitative results

The difficulties and strategies were analyzed according to the outcomes of seven interviewees. Students were asked about the crucial roles of learning idioms, their EFL proficiency, understanding and knowledge of strategies for learning English idioms, and the methods they employed to learn them.

The findings from the interview were exploited more deeply based on the same questions in the questionnaire. All of the participants had positive attitudes toward the value of learning idioms.

"I think idioms will help us improve our English communication skills and have a good conversation like a native speaker. This is especially necessary for those who are learning English to communicate. Also, idioms in English will help us improve our scores significantly on IELTS, TOEFL speaking tests, etc." (Student 6)

"I think learning idioms are important because when I use idioms well in writing, speaking that helps my communication skill is more professional and more attractive." (Student 7)

Regarding students' self-evaluation of their knowledge and comprehension of English idioms and reasons, they evaluated idiom understanding mainly at the low to medium level. From their self-report, their English idiom knowledge was somewhat

above standard, yet they did not particularly stand out in this area. They can learn English idioms by themselves but doubt that they can enhance their translation style.

"I believe maybe three at most because I'm just an English learner, and I am not a professor or teacher or someone with a degree, a linguistic degree. I believe my knowledge of idioms is somewhat above the average but not very distinctive or excel at it. However, I can, you know, I can learn one, I can know some, I can learn some and I can remember some, but I do not think that I can know them." (Student 5)

"In my opinion, I am in the second level of learning idioms because several reasons. The knowledge of idioms is vast. Sometimes, I translate it word by word. I always use a combination of a lot of words with suitable meanings. I have not mastered application to the context yet." (Student 6)

Concerning students' learning difficulties and strategies, they reported several issues primarily related to vocabulary, semantics, knowledge background, and cultural features of idioms. Most of the reason is that their idiomatic knowledge still had memory limitations. Moreover, they also considered that they did not apply idioms frequently and did not know how to apply them in appropriate contexts.

"In my opinion, I have a lot of difficulties in learning idioms. Firstly, there are too many idioms, but I don't know where to start learning. And there are many long and hard-to-remember idioms. And you know that some idioms are not widely used, so they are not too familiar. About my friends, I think they have the same difficulty as me and have other obstacles like cultural features." (Student 1)

"My main problem is lack of vocabulary and not actively learning much about idioms, which leads to my feeble ability to use idioms. As for my friends, I'm not sure, but I think they are much better than me in this area because sometimes I hear them use idioms in group work, but some of them still misunderstand the meaning of idioms and misuse them in actual cases." (Student 3)

They complained that they had learned idioms from social networking platforms, particularly Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram. They also used conventional methods to learn idiomatic expressions, such as learning about topics and reading bilingual books. They also learned by writing idioms and practising listening and reading to interact with them. Likewise, the students mentioned that they attempted to acquire idioms by recognizing their structures.

"I learned those strategies on social media platforms Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram. I follow websites about learning English idioms, which have shared many useful tips to improve my learning." (Student 2)

"To improve my learning of idioms, I often read bilingual books about idioms and learn more about vocabulary and the meaning of words." (Student 7)

4.2 Quantitative results

4.2.1 What difficulties do Vietnamese university students in EMI programs frequently encounter when acquiring idioms?

Table 1 describes findings of descriptive statistic tests of students' perceptions regarding their difficulties in learning and translating idioms. The results show that the students knew how hard it was for them to learn idioms. Overall, more than 53% of the students who took the survey agreed or strongly agreed with eight statements explaining why it is hard for EFL students to keep learning and understanding idioms. Clearly, students have the most difficulty translating when they did not know idiom's contexts. Lack of cultural knowledge and experience with idioms, limited opportunities for EFL students to practice using idioms, difficulty finding parallels for English idioms in the mother tongue, and unfamiliar context and terminology in idiomatic expressions all contribute to these problems.

Table 1: Frequency and descriptive statistic's results of Vietnamese students' perceptions of their difficulties in learning and translating idioms

Difficulties	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Total	Std. Deviation
Different cultural context	44.7	25.7	70,4	.805
Absence of prior exposure	38.8	27.0	65,8	.871
Not covered in courses	36.8	21.1	57,9	.998
Not covered in school	36.8	23.0	59,8	.965
Ineffective cultural classes	32.2	21.1	53,3	1.032
Uncommon terminology	41.4	23.7	65,1	.857
No Vietnamese equivalent	42.1	23.7	65,8	.905
Lacking relevant contexts	42.8	32.2	75	.826

4.2.2 What strategies do Vietnamese university students in EMI programs regularly employ to learn English idioms?

According to Table 2, participants tend to utilize diverse learning methods to learn English idioms-the highest proportion was 61,2%, and the lowest was 20,4%. The quantitative data results proved that different learners might employ various idiom-learning procedures. Most students used strategies for guessing the implication of idioms based on no clues, while guessing idioms through contexts was not applied by most of the students. The findings also indicate that the roles of guessing meaning from the contexts are critical in interpreting idioms and university students had a positive attitude regarding idioms, despite having difficulty acquiring them.

Table 2: Frequency and descriptive statistic's results
 of Vietnamese students' strategies of to learn English idioms

Strategies	Agree (%)	S.D
S1. Guessing the implication of idioms	61.2	.487
S2. Employing the verbal data for idiomatic knowledge	41.4	.495
S3. Focusing on animated or visualization	37.5	.487
S4. Making animated drawings	26.3	.444
S5. Memorising idioms	55.3	.498
S6. Using keywords to learn	49.3	.502
S7. Deducing idioms by own tongue	25.7	.440
S8. Convert the literal definition into their native language	38.2	.489
S9. Participating in group conversations	32.9	.473
S10. Retelling elaboration and paraphrasing	32.9	.473
S11. Picking up clear literal meaning	38.8	.490
S12. Using pictures	30.9	.465
S13. Disregarding the challenging of learning idioms	20.4	.406
S14. Just learning the familiar idioms	32.9	.473
S15. Incorporating idioms into sentences	32.2	.471
S16. Learning by multiple word combinations	40.8	.494
S17. Learning from various media	45.4	.500
S18. Conversing in English outside classroom	34.2	.478
S19. Reading from various sources	44.7	.499
S20. Looking up unfamiliar idioms in a dictionary	44.7	.499
S21. Inferring idiomatic meanings from context	30.3	.463
S22. Employing a variety of approaches	48.0	.502

4.2.3 Are there any differences in the idiom learning strategy implemented by gifted- and non-gifted students?

Table 3: ANOVA Test's results of difficulties that gifted and non-gifted students confront in translating idioms

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
D1. Different cultural context	Between Groups	.287	1	.287	.441	.508
	Within Groups	96.173	148	.650		
	Total	96.460	149			
D2. Absence of prior exposure	Between Groups	1.399	1	1.399	1.854	.175
	Within Groups	111.675	148	.755		
	Total	113.073	149			
D3. Not covered in courses	Between Groups	.203	1	.203	.203	.653
	Within Groups	148.070	148	1.000		
	Total	148.273	149			
D4. Not covered in school	Between Groups	1.027	1	1.027	1.104	.295
	Within Groups	137.646	148	.930		
	Total	138.673	149			
D5. Ineffective cultural classes	Between Groups	.605	1	.605	.566	.453
	Within Groups	158.228	148	1.069		
	Total	158.833	149			

D6. Uncommon terminology	Between Groups	2.398	1	2.398	3.315	.071
	Within Groups	107.075	148	.723		
	Total	109.473	149			
D7. No Vietnamese equivalent	Between Groups	1.718	1	1.718	2.112	.148
	Within Groups	120.422	148	.814		
	Total	122.140	149			
D8. Lacking of context	Between Groups	.419	1	.419	.613	.435
	Within Groups	101.154	148	.683		
	Total	101.573	149			

Table 3 illustrates the results of a comparison between gifted and non-gifted students based on their difficulties in learning and understanding English idioms. As seen in table 3, the ANOVA test results reveal no statistically significant difference in the learning problems faced by those with low and high proficiency.

5. Discussion

The present study was designed to determine and to understand undergraduates' difficulties in learning and translating English idioms in EMI courses at a public university and the methods employed to acquire and comprehend English idioms. Additionally, it determines whether or not students' replies would be significantly affected by their levels of EFL proficiency. The survey also revealed that Vietnamese university students knew the challenges associated with English idiom study and comprehension. Learning and interpreting English idioms seems to be rather challenging for them. These challenges were caused mainly by a lack of cultural understanding and an absence of idiomatic contexts.

Furthermore, English idioms were not taught in their EFL classes. In other words, they were seldom introduced to English idioms and had little opportunity to practice utilizing them in EMI courses at the surveyed university. Additionally, the results indicated that Vietnamese undergraduates had troubles selecting and comprehending idioms that did not have analogues in their native language -Vietnamese. These findings are consistent with research conducted by Pimenova (2011), which found that EFL students found it more challenging to acquire and comprehend English idioms without analogues in their native tongue than idioms with analogues. Additionally, the research by Al-Kadi (2015) and Saleh and Zakaria (2013) came to a similar conclusion about the problems that EFL learners had when acquiring idioms, concluding that issues like unfamiliarity with idiom terms and a lack of context for them were to blame.

The outcomes also showed that EFL students used a range of idiom learning and comprehension strategies. The most popular strategy was figuring out what an idiom meant by its implication. This might be due to variety meanings of words and predictions made by EFL students in their native tongue. Vietnamese learners are frequently advised in EMI courses to learn English vocabulary by utilizing them in sentences, mostly in writing. The second most popular method for learning the meaning of idioms was

memorization, whilst learning idiomatic phrases using keywords was the third most popular strategy. The results showed that participants' past knowledge from learning English in gifted schools did not significantly affect the challenges they encountered while acquiring and interpreting idioms or the methods they employed to do so. A possible explanation might be that students should select the best appropriate strategy to learn idioms based on given contexts. It also backs up previous academics' conclusions concerning the necessity of incorporating context when teaching and learning idioms in general (Maisa & Karunakaran, 2013; Mohamadi, 2013; Rohani et al., 2012; Saleh & Zakaria, 2013). Our finding arises from the fact that students also learn idioms through keywords. The similarities in findings suggest that students typically concentrate on essential terms to understand the meaning of idiomatic idioms. This is consistent with the findings of Al-Kadi (2015), and Al-Khawaldeh et al. (2016)

Other strategies described by students include learning idioms by reading different sorts of texts and engaging with various types of media. The findings indicated that students devote their time to reading various books and engaging with media to learn English idioms. An implication of this is that, idiomatic expressions are best learned in communication regularly, and media language frequently incorporates idioms and contextual signals that can quickly assist learners in retaining the meaning of idioms (Al-Khawaldeh et al., 2016). Vietnamese university students prefer to translate their literal meaning into L1 to grasp the meanings of idioms, which suggests that students rely substantially on their first language to understand English idioms. It could be due to the limitation of their vocabulary. This outcome is consistent with the findings of Saleh and Zakaria (2013) and Al-Kadi (2015). In addition, EFL students used various techniques to overcome their challenges in learning idioms, such as practising through dialogues outside of the classroom and focusing on animated or visuals of idioms, but not in large numbers. Vietnamese undergraduates tended to depend less frequently on the continuing strategies, such as learning idioms by inserting them into sentences, retelling, utilizing visuals, or simply ignoring the issue of learning idioms.

6. Conclusions and teaching implications

The current study examined the challenges that EFL students at PU encounter when applying and learning English idioms, as well as the solutions they employ to identify the meaning of such expressions. The study's findings revealed that the majority of students have difficulty acquiring and recognizing idioms. EFL students face different difficulties including the lack of cultural background, the contexts of using idioms, their insufficient knowledge from translation learning courses at the university, the opportunity for real practice, etc. Furthermore, the outcomes also show that there is no significant difference between low and high proficiency in facing these problems. The results also indicated that guessing the implication of idioms is the most used strategy in learning idioms for Vietnamese students at the university. The strategy highlights the importance of context in guessing the meaning of idiomatic phrases. Context can

successfully increase the comprehension and learning of idiomatic phrases, the researcher's findings are consistent with those of Liontas (2003).

Vietnamese university students in EMI courses consider idioms are vital for efficient English communication and learning English-Vietnamese translations. Using idioms is a sign of English competency, and not knowing them might hurt students' grades. It is also implied that using and comprehending idioms is also important to improve their EFL proficiency. The study suggests that Vietnamese EFL lecturers should expose their students to English idioms and provide them plenty of meaningful contexts authentic and opportunity to use them within and outside the classroom. Vietnamese EFL lecturers and instructors at universities should understand why their students have trouble acquiring and translating English idioms to aid them. They should educate, provide and train their students idiom-learning tools.

Because of the small sample size and question-by-question variation in the survey, the study's overall findings may be still imprecise. It is suggested that they increase the size of their sample and conduct additional experimental studies to enhance the reliability of the findings in future studies. In addition, it would be interesting to do a second study on the difficulty of idioms and learning strategies using a broader sample of individuals from various cultures and educational institutions. Furthermore, it would be fascinating to contrast the literal and metaphorical meanings of common idioms.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by research funding for undergraduates' dissertation from Can Tho University (CTU) in Vietnam. We thank our lecturers and students from CTU who provided insight and expertise that greatly assisted the research, although they may not agree with all of the interpretations and conclusions of this paper.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

About the Author(s)

Phuong Bao Tran Nguyen is a PhD student at Department of Linguistics, KU Leuven. Before that, she was a junior lecturer of English at Can Tho University's School of Foreign Languages. She holds an M.A. in Teaching Principles and Methods in English Language from Can Tho University in Vietnam where she has taught English as a foreign language for nine years. Her research interests lie in the areas of English-medium instruction (EMI), English for Specific (ESP) and Academic Purposes (EAP), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Language Blended Learning (LBL). Email: anita.nguyen@kuleuven.be or npbtran@ctu.edu.vn

Nhu Hao Phan is currently a student in School of Foreign languages at Can Tho University in Vietnam. Her research fields are English Language and Culture. She is the main author of this research. She contributed to analyzing the data by using the sources of joint authors in the research group. Email: haob1909345@student.ctu.edu.vn

Tuong Vy Le is currently a student in School of Foreign languages at Can Tho University in Vietnam. Her research fields are English Language and Culture. She is the joint author of this research. She contributed to collecting all the data and completing the format of the article by using the sources of joint authors in the research group. Email: vy1909492@student.ctu.edu.vn

Le Huyen Tran Tran is currently a student in School of Foreign languages at Can Tho University in Vietnam. Her research fields are mainly in English Language and Culture. She is the joint author and is responsible for constructing the quantitative data in this research. Email: tranb1911038@student.ctu.edu.vn

Thi Thu Thao Pham is currently a student in School of Foreign languages at Can Tho University in Vietnam. Her research fields are mainly in English Language and Culture. She is the joint author and is responsible for constructing the qualitative data in this research. Email: thaob1909479@student.ctu.edu.vn

References

- Ababneh, S. (2016). Attitudes of Jordanian EFL Students towards Learning English Idioms. *International Journal of English Language Education*, 4(1), 172. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijele.v4i1.9171>
- Al-Kadi, A. M. T. (2015). Towards idiomatic competence of yemeni efl undergraduates. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 6(3), 513–523. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0603.06>
- Al-Khawaldeh, N., Jaradat, A., Al-Momani, H., & Bani-Khair, B. (2016). Figurative idiomatic language: Strategies and difficulties of understanding english Idioms. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 5(6), 119–133. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.5n.6p.119>
- Alhaysony, M. H. (2017). Strategies and Difficulties of Understanding English Idioms: A Case Study of Saudi University EFL Students. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 7(3), 70. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v7n3p70>
- Angel, R. D. (2016). Learners' Beliefs about the Notion of Idiom. *English Linguistics Research*, 5(3), 62–71. <https://doi.org/10.5430/elr.v5n3p62>
- Baker, M. (1992). A coursebook on translation. *London and New York: Routledge.*
- Belousova, V. (2015). *Idiom Learning Materials For Estonian Secondary School Students* MA thesis.
- Boers, F. (2008). *Language Awareness: Understanding Idioms* at www.macmillandictionaries.com.
- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (Vol. 4). Longman New York.
- Bulut, T., & Yazici, I. C. (2004). Idiom Processing in L2: Through Rose-Colored Glasses. *The Reading Matrix*, 4(2), 105–116. http://www.readingmatrix.com/articles/bulut_yazici/article.pdf

- Cieślicka, A. B. (2015). Idiom Acquisition and Processing by Second/Foreign Language Learners. In A. B. Cieślicka & R. R. Heredia (Eds.), *Bilingual Figurative Language Processing* (pp. 208–244). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/DOI:10.1017/CBO9781139342100.012>
- Cooper, T. C. (1999). Processing of idioms by L2 learners of English. *TESOL Quarterly*, 33(2), 233–262.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). Choosing a mixed methods design. *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 2, 53–106.
- Crystal, D. (2011). *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Elbushra Mousa, E. A. (2017). Investigating difficulties that Sudanese students face in understanding English idiomatic expressions. *International Journal of Science and Research*, 6(6), 105–108.
- Ezzy, D. (2013). *Qualitative analysis*. Routledge.
- Ghazalah, H. (2004). *Essays in translation and stylistics*. Dar El-Ilm Lilmalayin.
- Helleklev, C. (2006). *Metaphors and Terminology in Social Science: A translation and an analysis*.
- Hussein, R. F., Khanji, R., & Makhzoomy, K. (2000). The Acquisition of Idioms: Transfer or What? *Lang. & Transl*, 12, 23–34.
- Khan, Ö., & Can Daskin, N. (2014). “You Reap What You Sow” Idioms in Materials Designed by EFL Teacher-Trainees. *Novitas-ROYAL (Research on Youth and Language)*, 8(2), 97–118.
- Khau, H. A., & Vo, T. H. Y. (2020). *Strategies for Translating English Idioms Into Vietnamese: an Analytical Approach*. July, 383–397.
- Kövecses, Z., & Szabó, P. (1996). Idioms: A view from cognitive semantics. *Applied Linguistics*, 17(3), 324–354. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/17.3.326>
- Langlotz, A. (2006). *Idiomatic Creativity: A cognitive-linguistic model of idiom-representation and idiom-variation in English*. John Benjamins. <https://www.jbe-platform.com/content/books/9789027293763>
- Liontas, J. I. (2002). Exploring second language learners’ notions of idiomaticity. *System*, 30(3), 289–313.
- Liu, D. (2008). *Idioms. Description, Comprehension, Acquisition, and Pedagogy*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Lundblom, E. E. G., & Woods, J. J. (2012). Working in the classroom: Improving idiom comprehension through classwide peer tutoring. *Communication Disorders Quarterly*, 33(4), 202–219.
- Maisa, S., & Karunakaran, D. T. (2013). Idioms and importance of teaching idioms to ESL students: a study on teacher beliefs. *Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (AJHSS)*, 1(1), 110–122.
- Mantyla, K. (2004). Idioms and Language Users: The Effect of the Characteristics of Idioms on Their Recognition and Interpretation by Native and Nonnative Speakers of English. In *Dissertation Abstracts International*, C: Worldwide. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/85637231?accountid=8330%5Cnhttp://library>

- .anu.edu.au:4550/resserv?genre=dissertations+&+theses&issn=&title=Idioms+and
+Language+Users:+The+Effect+of+the+Characteristics+of+Idioms+on+Their+Reco
gnition+and+Interpretation+by
- McGhee Nelson, E. M. (1992). Memory for metaphor by non-fluent bilinguals. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 21(2), 111–125.
- Mohamadi, F. A. (2013). The impact of context on learning idioms in EFL classes. *MEXTESOL Journal*, 37(1), 1–12.
[http://www.bth.se/fou/cuppsats.nsf/all/b15c544d6cb1aa95c1257c0f005570f3/\\$file/BTH2013Javed.pdf](http://www.bth.se/fou/cuppsats.nsf/all/b15c544d6cb1aa95c1257c0f005570f3/$file/BTH2013Javed.pdf)
- Montaño-González, J. X. (2017). Learning strategies in second language acquisition. *US-China Foreign Language*, 15(8), 479–492.
- Newman, I., Lim, J., & Pineda, F. (2013). Content validity using a mixed methods approach: Its application and development through the use of a table of specifications methodology. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 7(3), 243–260.
- Nguyen, M. C. (2019). Một số khó khăn khi dịch thành ngữ Anh-Việt. *Kỷ Yếu Hội Thảo Quốc Tế Việt Nam Học Lần Thứ 4*.
- Nunan, D., & Trimble, L. (1992). *Research Methods in Language Learning English for Science and Technology-A discourse approach*.
- Pimenova, N. (2011). Idiom comprehension strategies used by English and Russian language learners in a Think-Aloud study. *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*, 9, 224.
http://login.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/idiom-comprehension-strategies-used-english/docview/909994754/se-2?accountid=4485%0Ahttps://arizona-asu-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/openurl/01ASU/01ASU_SP?genre=dis
- Pucelj, M. (2018). *Attitudes towards idioms and idiom learning strategies*.
- Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. (2010). Dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics. In *Proceedings of the 21st Asian Pacific Weed Science Society (APWSS) Conference, 2-6 October 2007, Colombo, Sri Lanka*.
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lah&AN=20163298076&site=ehost-live%0Ahttp://www.cabi.org/cabdirect/showpdf.aspx?PAN=http://www.cabi.org/cabdirect/showpdf.aspx?PAN=20163298076%0Aemail:javaidleghari@hotmail.com>
- Rizq, W. M. (2015). *Teaching English Idioms to L2 Learners: ESL Teachers ' Perspective*. 2–57.
- Rohani, G., Ketabi, S., & Tavakoli, M. (2012). The effect of context on the EFL Learners' idiom processing strategies. *English Language Teaching*, 5(9), 104–114.
<https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n9p104>
- Saleh, N., & Zakaria, N. (2013). Investigating the difficulties faced in understanding, and strategies used in processing, English idioms by the Libyan students. *International Journal of English Language and Translation Studies*, 1(2), 69–90.
- Schmitt, N. (2013). *An introduction to applied linguistics*. Routledge.

- Shirazi, M. G., & Talebinezhad, M. R. (2013). Developing intermediate EFL learners' metaphorical competence through exposure. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3(1), 135–141. <https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.3.1.135-141>
- Tran, H. Q. (2012). An explorative study of idiom teaching for pre-service teachers of english. *English Language Teaching*, 5(12), 76–86. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n12p76>
- Tran, H. Q. (2013). Figurative Idiomatic Competence: An Analysis of EFL Learners in Vietnam. *Language Education in Asia*, 4(1), 23–38. <https://doi.org/10.5746/leia/13/v4/i1/a3/tran>
- Tran, H. Q. (2017). Figurative idiomatic competence: An analysis of EFL learners in Vietnam. *Asian-Focused ELT Research and Practice: Voices from the Far Edge*, 66–86.
- Vo, T. D. M. (2020). An Investigation of Vietnamese EFL Teenage Learners' knowledge of Common English Idioms: Implications for Idiom Instruction. *European Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 5(1).
- Vo, T. D. M., & Nguyen, V. L. (2020). an Investigation of Vietnamese EFL Teenage Learners' Knowledge of Common English Idioms: Implications for Idiom Instruction. *European Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 5(1), 48–67. <https://doi.org/10.46827/ejfl.v5i1.3178>
- Zainudin, I. S., & Awal, N. M. (2012). Translation Techniques: Problems and Solutions. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 59, 328–334. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.09.282>

Appendix 1: Questionnaires

Thank you for your willingness to participate in our investigation!

This questionnaire inquires into your difficulties and strategies of studying English idioms in English-medium instruction courses at your university. We hope to receive your answers can support our lecturers and university curriculum-designers in later developing subjects' syllabus. Your answers will help the university determine what support students need and how this type of teaching can best be approached.

This questionnaire is anonymous and confidential. The obtained information will be used only for research purposes. Your responses will NOT be passed on to your instructors.

Thank you very much for your collaboration.

Section one: Your Background Information and English Proficiency

1. Full names:

2. Major - class - cohort:

3. How long have you studied idiom?

- Before going to university
- Since starting university
- Since learning subjects related to idioms.
- Other

4. Which level do you evaluate your English proficiency in? (According to CEFR standard)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Beginner (A1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Proficiency English (C2)

5. Have you ever studied English as a gifted student?

- Yes
- No

6. Which certificates below have you achieved?

- IELTS
- TOEIC
- TOEFL
- VSTEP
- I have no certificate.
- Other

7. What external resources do you often use when learning idioms?

- Dictionary of idioms
- Applications for translating (Google translate; Dictionary.com, Cambridge Dictionary, Ozdic.com,..)
- References from others
- I do not use extra materials
- Other

Section two: Your perceptions of difficulties in learning idioms

1. Idioms are difficult to understand because of the lack of cultural background behind the idioms.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

2. Idioms are difficult to understand because of the lack of experience dealing with idioms.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

3. Idioms are difficult because they are not part of the courses' syllabi.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

4. Idioms are difficult because they are not taught well in class.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

5. Idioms are difficult because the cultural courses I studied were not efficient.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

6. Idioms are difficult because they have unfamiliar words.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

7. Idioms are difficult because they have no analog in Vietnamese.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

8. Idioms are difficult when they have no context.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

Section three: Your strategies of learning idioms

Which strategies do you frequently employ while learning idioms?

- 1. I guess what the idioms imply.
- 2. I employ verbal (textual or auditory) data to support in the activation of my idiomatic knowledge.
- 3. I focus on animated pictures/visualization when learning idioms.
- 4. I study idioms by making animated drawings.
- 5. I learn idioms by memorizing them.
- 6. I use keywords to learn idioms.
- 7. I can deduce an idiom from its analog in my own tongue.
- 8. To comprehend idioms, I convert the literal definition into my L1 (first language).
- 9. I learn idioms through participating in group conversations.
- 10. I learn idioms through retelling, elaboration, and paraphrasing.
- 11. I pick up on idioms that have a clear literal meaning.
- 12. I learn idioms by using pictures.
- 13. I disregard learning challenging idioms when facing them.
- 14. I only learn idioms and terminology that I am already familiar with.
- 15. I learn idioms by incorporating them into sentences.
- 16. I study idioms with multiple word combinations.
- 17. I'm learning idioms from various media.
- 18. I learn idioms by conversing in English outside of the classroom.
- 19. I learn idioms by reading from various sources.
- 20. I look up unfamiliar idioms in a dictionary.
- 21. I infer idiomatic meanings from context.
- 22. When it comes to learning idioms, I employ a variety of approaches.

Do you have any other strategies that you want to have/ or may use/ or have already used?

.....

Appendix 2: Interview

We are a group of English Studies undergraduates from the 45th English Language high-quality program. Our crew is working on a scientific study called "Difficulties and Strategies in Learning Idioms." The findings of this study will contribute significantly to additional in-depth studies on finding strategies to overcome challenges in learning idioms for School of Foreign Languages students. The research team agrees to keep the personal information collected in this interview secret and to use it solely for research purposes.

Thank you very much for your contributions!

First, tell me a little bit about yourself:

- Which year are you in?
- Have you ever learned idioms in advance?

Topic questions:

1. What do you think about the statement that learning idioms are important?
2. On a scale from one to five, how would you rate your knowledge of learning idioms and explain the reason?
3. What difficulties do you face when learning idioms and do you think your friends encounter the same problems as you?
4. Which strategies do you usually use to learn idioms? Please give specific explanations for each strategy.
5. Where did you learn those strategies?
6. How would you evaluate your curriculum in supporting your knowledge of learning idioms? (information about the learners' personal point of view)

Creative Commons licensing terms

Author(s) will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Education Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflicts of interest, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated into the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).