

Idiom Errors Made by Iraqi EFL Learners at University Level

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ABSTRACT

The increased interest of research on errors made by learners of foreign languages has attracted the attention of linguists and educators in language teaching and learning. This research is an attempt to investigate the errors made by Iraqi EFL learners in idioms. It is also an attempt to offer some insight into the nature of idioms from a linguistic viewpoint. A test composed of (20) items of multiple choice covering various areas of idiomatic expressions has been administered to (60) of the fourth year students in the Department of English, College of Education, University of Tikrit to examine their achievement in idioms. The correct answers are (484) representing (40.33%) of the total number of answers. It has been shown by the low rate of answers that there is a shortage in the students' mastery of English lexicon. This unsatisfactory achievement of students can be attributed to their dependency on deducing the meanings of idioms by combining meanings of the constituent words, the very little attention paid to teaching idioms during the years of study at the college, lack of specialized dictionaries and books and the cultural differences between Arabic and English as well. Based on the conclusions, the study provides some recommendations related to teaching idioms.

1. Introduction

Idioms constitute an important part of natural languages. They are combinations of words whose whole meaning differs from the meaning of their separate parts. Foreign language learners of English are in need to expand their vocabulary and their knowledge of correct usage (Wright, 1999: 3).

According to Seidl (1982: iv), idiomatic expressions represent a highly important aspect of language that can be taught and tested. Wright (Ibid: 10) emphasizes the importance of idioms when he says:

Idiomatic language is as fundamental to English as tenses or prepositions. If you listen to people speaking, or if you read a novel or newspaper, you will meet idiomatic English in all these situations.

Knowing a language includes knowing the morphemes, simple words, compound words and their meanings. In addition, it means knowing fixed phrases consisting of more than one word, i.e. idioms with their meanings that cannot be deduced from the meanings of the individual words (Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams, 2003: 205). Idioms are generally regarded to be problematic to learners of foreign languages. The difficulty which is most frequently encountered in an idiom study arises from the fact that often there is a considerable difference between the literal meaning and the idiomatic meaning of the expression. As a result, Parker and Riley (2005:227) assert, nonnative speaker may prefer to use nonidiomatic equivalents in expressive talks because idioms are often incomprehensible for them. While EFL learners are studying

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it, they are probably experiencing some frustration with idiomatic language because it does not follow strict patterns (Gray, 1999: iii).

Davis (1951: 1 cited in Ayres, Worthen and Cherry (1986: xiv) states that the lack of an adequate vocabulary is the most important single factor contributing to failure in college. There has consequently been a recognition of the need for studying idiom errors ⁽¹⁾ made by students at the university level. This study is devoted primarily to the investigation of errors made by Iraqi learners of English as a foreign language in Tikrit University, College of Education, Department of English.

This research has grown out of the researcher's experience in teaching undergraduate students at Tikrit University. He has found that the students appear to have difficulty in understanding the exact meaning of idioms. Fourth year students are expected to be able to understand idiomatic expressions. If they encounter idioms such as 'Kick the bucket' or 'It is raining cats and dogs', they may not know that they mean 'to die' and 'It is raining very heavily' respectively. They may not recognize the exact meaning of idioms though they know the literal meanings of the words that constitute idioms but this does not seem help. This reflects a shortage in the students' repertoire.

Johnson and Johnson (1998: 110) define error analysis as:

An approach to understanding second language acquisition (SLA) which consists of compiling a corpus of L2 learner deviation from the target second language – the 'errors' the learners make- classifying these errors by type and hypothesizing possible sources for the errors.

There are good reasons for focusing on errors. First, they show why learners make errors in language learning. Second, it is useful for teachers to know the errors learners make. Third, making errors may help learners to learn when they self-correct the errors they make (Ellis, 1997: 15).

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no previous study has tackled this area. This fact has motivated the researcher to conduct such a study. To conduct this study, a test has been designed to be distributed on the students. As it is mentioned below by Wright (1999: 3) that idioms cannot be made by non-native speakers, only the recognition level will be included in the test. The idioms included in the test are taken from Seidl and McMordie (1992).

2. Idiom: Definition and Some Background Remarks

Seidl and McMordie (1992: 8) define an idiom⁽²⁾ as “a group of words which as a whole has a different meaning from the meaning of the words taken individually.” Crystal (2003a: 225-26) defines an idiom as " A term used in grammar and lexicology to refer to a sequence of words which is semantically restricted, so that they function as a single unit."

According to Richards, Platt and Platt (1992: 172), an idiom is " an expression which functions as single unit and whose meaning cannot be worked out from its separate parts." Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2003: 584) think that an idiom is "an expression whose meaning does not conform the principle of compositionality."

The key idea that underlines definitions of the term 'idiom' is that they are centred round the point that its meaning cannot be

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inferred from the meaning of the constituent words. Cruse (1986:37) mentions two requirements of an idiom: first, that it should consist of more than one lexical item; second, that it should be a single minimal semantic constituent.

Wright (1999: 7) adds that an idiom is an expression that has the following features:

1. It is fixed and is recognized by native speakers. You cannot make your own.
2. It uses language in a non-literal metaphorical way. The following are examples:

Up to my eyes [meaning: very busy]

Over the moon [meaning: extremely happy]

Breaks your hearts [meaning: very sad]

Abu-Ssaydeh (1995: 13) demonstrates that idioms are fixed collocations which are subject to rigid restrictions in grammar, ordering and the applicability of transformations. Hudson (2000: 275) refers to the nature of idioms as phrases derived by metaphor and other types of semantic extension.

The importance of idioms lies in that they are very common and fun to learn and when anyone uses them, he will sound more natural (Wright, 1999: 9). Idiomaticity can be a clear indication to the native likeness. In this regard, James (1998: 152) emphasizes that "Adherence to the collocational conventions of a foreign language contributes greatly to one's idiomaticity and native likeness and not doing so announces one's foreignness."

A point which has attracted considerable discussion is the degrees of formality and informality of idioms. Regarding this

point, Wright (1999: 10) and Seidl and McMordie (1992: 9) assert that they are both formal and informal.

Idioms have special grammatical and semantic characteristics. Regarding their grammar, Gramely and Patzold (1992: 74) mention that though idioms, like single-word lexemes, have unitary meaning, they show characteristics of simple lexemes, phrase, and clauses. From a morphological point of view, Haspelmath (2002: 74) distinguishes two kinds of idiomaticity: weak idiomaticity when the meaning of the derived lexeme can be guessed from the meanings of the components and strong idiomaticity when the meaning of the derived lexeme cannot be guessed from the meanings of the components.

Idioms are similar in structure to phrases except that they tend to be frozen in form and do not allow the word order to change. For example, the idiomatic sense of the active sentence 'she put her foot in her mouth' will be different from that of its passive form 'Her foot was put in her mouth'. On the other hand, the words of some ideas can be moved without affecting the idiomatic meaning as in "The FBI kept tabs on radicals" which can be put in the passive form as in "Tabs were kept on radicals by the FBI" (Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams , 2003: 206)

Crystal (2003a: 226) adds that, from a syntactic point of view, idioms are ready-made as they do not permit any variety in their structure. Moreover, Wright (1999: 3) adds that the tense of the verb cannot be changed as in: "Two head are better than one", but very often the tense and the pronoun can be changed as in: I'm /she's/ We were all at sixes and sevens.

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Idioms have some semantic features. According to Hudson (2000:318-19), idioms are figures of speech, especially phrases, which have become common and even routine. A couple of examples are: '*stand up for*' meaning 'assert or insist on' as in '*stand up for your rights!*' (a case of metonymy)⁽³⁾, and 'necessity is the mother of invention' (a case of metaphor).

Many idioms become the customary way of expressing some meanings, and for this reason they have fully lost their sense of non-literality. For example *understand*, literally 'stand under'; metaphorically speaking, to become knowledgeable is to 'stand under' it.

According to Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2003: 207), idioms can break the rules of combining semantic properties as in 'He ate his hat' where the object of *eat* is not an 'edible' thing. So, this restriction is violated. From a semantic point of view, the meanings of the individual words cannot be summed to produce the whole meaning of the idiomatic expression. The expression is fixed both grammatically and lexically. Thus, 'put a sock in it' means 'stop talking', and it is not possible to replace any of the lexemes and retain the idiomatic meaning (Crystal, 2003b: 163).

A literal translation of idioms from the source language to the target language is difficult because this may lead to produce unusual target language collocations. In addition to that idiomatic language is culture specific since the metaphors will be different from one culture to another and these metaphors and images are meaningful only in the context of their culture (Nida, 1964: 219). If someone has to translate idioms, he should be very careful and never translate them word by word but as a whole expression (Wright, 1999: 10). As the pragmatic meaning of idioms is concerned in translation,

Ahmed and Ali (2007: 472) add that the pragmatic meaning of the idiom should also be considered in translating them.

3. Learning and Teaching Idioms

Learning a foreign language is a long and complex undertaking. Everybody who tries to learn a foreign language will realize how different languages are not only with respect to grammar and pronunciation but also with respect to their vocabulary and how it is organized .

Foreign language learners often try to learn the idiomatic use of language and learn phrases that can be appropriate for different contexts. Thus, students should be helped to learn the exact meaning of the whole idioms rather than the meaning of the words included in these idioms. Non-native speakers usually have not been exposed to languages sufficiently. This will affect their ability to understand idiom well and, as a result, leads to a low level of proficiency in language.

Emphasizing the importance of acquiring language in chunks, Wong-Fillmore (1976: 614 cited in Kennedy, 1998: 110) concludes that "the strategy of acquiring formulaic speech is central to the learning of language." Thus, idioms should be stored in mind in chunks rather than in individual words.

It is important for the learners to know the literal meaning that this meaning creates a picture in his mind which makes other meanings easier to understand (Wright, 1999: 9). So the acquisition of the literal meaning should be prior to the idiomatic one. Wright (Ibid) adds that as idiomatic language is more colourful and interesting, there is more chance to remember it.

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Informal idioms should be used with care while slang and taboo idioms are probably best avoided by students of English (Seidl and McMordie, 1992: 9). Idioms must be entered into the mental dictionary as single items with their meaning specified, and students must learn the instructions on their use (Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams, 2003: 207)

Fourth year university students are supposed to have an acceptable stock of English. Yet, they still have some problems because they build the meaning of idioms as the sum of their parts. Teaching vocabulary to university students, in composition and comprehension and essay writing classes, should be made horizontally and vertically. To achieve this, students should be helped to acquire them associated with their non compositional meaning and to increase students sense of language as a way to improve their lexicon in general.

4. Quantification and Analysis

To achieve the aim of this paper, a test is used as a means to analyse Iraqi EFL learners' (at university level) errors in idioms. The sample of the test consists of fourth year students in the Department of English, College of Education, University of Tikrit for the academic year 2010-2011.

The sample size is (60) students (males and females) randomly selected. The tests consists of (20) items of multiple choice questions. Each item comprises four options. The test items represent twenty areas of idioms.

The test tries to explore the students' achievement in idioms. The idioms included in the test are taken from Seidl and McMordies' Oxford Pocket English Idioms (1992). To achieve the

validity of the test, it is exposed to a number of professors and instructors specialized in English in the Department of English , at College of Education, Tikrit University.

The students are given a brief note on the notion of idiom. They are asked to circle the option which they think best represents the correct answer.

The students' answers are marked out of (20) which corresponds the highest mark whereas the lowest mark is (0). The result of each item will be compared to a theoretical mean which is (10) (the degree of success). For this reason the theoretical mean is:

$$\frac{\text{The higher degree} - \text{the lower degree}}{2}$$

$$\frac{20}{2}$$

After scoring the papers, the researcher ranked them in a descending order i.e. from the highest to the lowest scores in table (1) below:

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Table (1) Students' Scores in the Areas of the Test

Number	Key words with Idiomatic Uses				Idioms with Nouns and Adjectives		Idiomatic Pairs					Idioms with Prepositions		Phrasal Verbs		Verbal Idioms		Keywords from special Categories					Idms with Comparis ons		Total			
	and	Nouns	Miscel	Idioms	Phras	Adj+N	of	of	of	Pairs	of Vbs	cal	Idioms with Prepositions		Phrasal Verbs		Verbal Idioms		Anim	Colou	Numb	of the	Time	With		as...as	With	like
1.	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	14
2.	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	14
3.	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	13
4.	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	13
5.	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	12
6.	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	12
7.	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	12
8.	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	12
9.	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	12
10.	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	12
11.	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	11
12.	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	11
13.	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	11
14.	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	11
15.	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	11
16.	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	11
17.	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	10
18.	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	10
19.	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	10
20.	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	10
21.	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	10
22.	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	9
23.	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	9

24.	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	9
25.	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	8
26.	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	8
27.	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	8
28.	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
29.	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	8
30.	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	8
31.	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	8
32.	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	7
33.	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	7
34.	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	7
35.	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	7
36.	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	7
37.	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	7
38.	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	6
39.	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	6
40.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	6
41.	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	6
42.	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	6
43.	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	6
44.	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	6
45.	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
46.	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
47.	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
48.	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	5
49.	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	5
50.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	5
51.	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
52.	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	5
53.	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
54.	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	5	5
55.	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
56.	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
57.	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	4
58.	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
59.	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4

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The total number of items in the test is (20) multiplied by the number of students (60), so the result is (1200). The correct answers are (448) representing (40.33%) of the total number of answers.

The percentages at the bottom of table (1) above show the percentage of the correct answers in each area of the test compared with the total number of correct answers. The students get marks more than the theoretical mean i.e. they succeed in six areas of the text which represents: adjectives and adverbs, adjectives and nouns, phrasal verbs and idioms with key words from special categories: animals, colours, and parts of the body. The percentages of the highest scores are (7.644%, 7.644%, 6.818%). They represent those idioms of adjectives and adverbs, phrasal verbs and idioms with key words from special categories respectively. The highest scores in these areas may be attributed to the fact that students have been fairly exposed to them throughout their study that this will facilitate grasping the meaning of idioms.

The percentages of the lowest scores are (2.892%, 3.305%, 3.305%). They represent those idioms of pairs of adjectives, pairs of nouns and identical pairs respectively. The lowest scores may be attributed to the students dependence on analogy of the compositional meaning of idioms. In addition, these structures are not common in Arabic. In this regard, George (1972:152) emphasizes that unwanted forms are certain to arise from the use of analogy. From table (1) stated above, it seems that the students level of achievement is (40.33%). This reflects their overall weakness in this particular area of language. From Table (1) above, the students'

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level of achievement in idioms reflects their overall weakness in this area of language.

The Mean, Standard Mean, T-Test Value, P value and Significance are shown in Table (2) below:

Table (2): The Mean, Standard error mean, T-Test Value, P value and Significance

Answers	Mean	SE	T. Test Value	Significance	P	No. of Students
Correct answers	8.07	0.37	-7.44	Significant	0.01	60
Incorrect answers	11.93					

Table (2) indicates that the calculated T-test value is (-7.44). This reveals that the students achievement among the various areas of the test is highly significant. The table also shows that the mean of the correct answers is (40.33 ± 0.37) whereas the erroneous answers mean is (59.7 ± 0.37) . The value of P is ≤ 0.01 .

The reliability of the test is calculated by using T-test method which is found to be (-7.44). Person formula of correlation coefficient is applied in order to find the reliability value of the test.

Table (2) indicates that there are significant differences in the students' achievement among the various areas of the test.

The students' overall weakness can be attributed to some reasons. First, the courses of study are inadequate for successful learning of idiomatic language in teaching various subjects during the college years of study especially in composition and comprehension in the first and second years and in Essay and letter in writing in the third year. Thus, particular attention should be paid to the areas of idioms including long chunks of language and to help

the students to understand idioms and to produce them later on properly. This can be achieved by teaching students idioms in a contextualized situation to be able to use them in a stereotype way. Secondly, the lack of idioms dictionaries is another reason that leads to a gap in the students repertoire. To bridge such a gap, teachers can encourage their students learn idioms either in class work or in using self-study books of idiomatic expressions. Thirdly, the difference of culture may be another reason that affects the students achievement in this area. This problem can be solved by making the students be acquainted with culture specific idioms.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

On the basis of what has been presented and discussed in the previous sections, the study arrived at the following conclusions:

1. It has been shown that Iraqi EFL learners of English at University Level demonstrate a weak performance in idioms. The results show that (484) out of the (1200) answers are correct with a percentage of (4.33%) . The percentages of the correct answers are covering the different areas of the test as shown in Table (1). The students' weak performance might be attributed to cultural differences, and basically to a flaw in the teaching process, including teachers, materials and syllabi. In other words, there is a lack of concentration on teaching the area of vocabulary in different subjects especially composition and comprehension and essay and letter writing, the unavailability of specialized dictionaries and books, the students deduction of idioms meaning by combining the

meanings of the constituent words and the cultural differences between English and Arabic.

2. Idioms are generally regarded to be problematic area of language. The difficulty encountered by EFL learners arises from the considerable difference between the literal meaning and the idiomatic meaning of expression.

3. Idioms can be identified by two central features. Their meaning cannot be deduced from the meanings of the constituent words, and the expression is fixed grammatically and lexically and is recognized only by the native speaker. Non-native speakers cannot make their own.

5.2 Recommendations

In the light of the conclusions, the researcher recommends the following:

1. There is a need for reconsidering the courses of English. Departments of English in Iraq are recommended to include idioms on the list of compulsory courses for the undergraduate level in the subjects of composition and comprehension and Essay and letter writing.
2. The literal meaning of idioms should be known first by the learner because it will make the metaphorical meaning easier to be acquired later.
3. Informal idioms should be used with care with students.
4. Slang and taboo idioms are probably best avoided by students of English in the first levels of study.
5. As the rules of the idiomatic expressions are unclear and do not follow any pattern, students are probably experiencing

some frustration with them. Thus, students should have the opportunity to learn and practice about idiomatic language.

6. As far as the learning of idioms is concerned, idioms must be entered in the mental dictionary as single items where they are associated with their non-compositional meanings.

NOTES

- (1) Errors of a second language learner must be carefully distinguished from mistakes. According to Brown (2007: 258), Mistakes are “what researchers have referred to as performance errors (the learners know the system but fails to use it).” While errors are “the result of one’s systematic competence (the learners’ system is incorrect.” James (1998: 83) adds that if the deviation is pointed out to the speaker, an error cannot be self corrected while mistakes can be corrected.
- (2) Sometimes the word 'idiom' is used for customary extension of single words. (Hudson, 2000: 260)
- (3) Metonymy is (GK ‘name change’) is defined by Cuddon (1998: 510) as “a figure of speech in which the name of an attribute or a thing is substituted for the thing itself. Common examples are ‘The stage’ for the theatrical profession; ‘The Crown’ for ‘The monarchy; ‘The bench’ for the judiciary.”

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Appendix

Put a circle around the option that represents the meaning of the underlined words in the following sentences:

1. Throughout the entire crisis, there was a hot line between the two presidents of state.
a: mobile telephone b: wireless telephone c: direct telephone
d: public telephone
2. He tried to convince his father that he was telling the truth, but it was all to no end. He did not believe him.
a: fruitful b: in vain c: problematic d: uncertain
3. Several small oil companies are having to ride out until oil prices increases again:
a. endure b. continue c. decrease d. cease.
4. Congratulations on your success! How does it feel to be the man of the hour?
a: admirable b: very popular c: decision-maker d: leader
5. I cannot stay any more. I have an appointment, so this is just a flying visit.
a: long b: very short c: sudden d: unplanned
6. Our holiday arrangements are all cut and dried. We are going to Mosul for the last two weeks in August.
a. not enough b. settled c. postponed d. cancelled
7. No ifs and buts, just do the work and tell me when it is finished.
a. excuses b. objections c. flattery d. explanations

8. 'Do you still go to the theatre every week?' 'Only **now and again**, not as regularly as we used to'
a: occasionally b: frequently c: customarily d: often
9. 'How is Adil doing with the new computer?' 'Well, at the moment it is a question of **hit and miss**. 'I am afraid. He does not know all the commands yet.'
a: random b: purposeful c: odd d: unconsidered
10. Do not try to write the essay at one go. Do it **bit by bit**.
a: carefully b: randomly c: gradually d: skillfully
11. Mr. Khalid is a good teacher. The students like him and he knows his subject **from A to Z**.
a: thoroughly b: partially c: superficially d: well.
12. I was just **nodding off** when the telephone rang.
a: falling asleep b: leaving early c: working hard d: writing a letter
13. Stop **beating about the bush** and tell me how much you want to borrow.
a: talking indirectly b: speaking forthrightly c: talking deceitfully d: speaking nicely
14. Layla is a real **busy bee** today. She has been rushing around all morning.
a: lazy b: indifferent c: active d: tired
15. It is not only the **blue-collar workers** who have been hit by employment. There are no office jobs either.
a: clerks b: factory workers c: employees d: gardeners
16. Ahmed says he is still **in two minds** about going to the party.
a. undecided b. confused c. embarrassed d. unwilling

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17. If the government decide to **pull the rug from under our feet**, we cannot possibly continue our research project.
a: stop giving support b: reduce support c: postpone any help
d: duplicate support
18. Saleem wears those same old trousers **day in day out**. It is time he bought some new ones.
a. invariably b. occasionally c. incidentally d: seldom
19. Oh! Well, that is all **as clear as mud**.
a: easy to understand b: not clear c: simple d: confusing
20. What is wrong with Suhad? Has she had a shock? She is **shaking like a leaf**.
a. trembling b. rattling c. gabbling d. gibbering