

Investigating Challenges that Students Face in Using and Learning Idiomatic Expressions: Case Study on Undergraduate Students at the Faculty of Education, University of Tripoli

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Abstract:

This study aims to investigate the challenges faced by undergraduate students in using and learning idiomatic expressions at the Faculty of Education, Janzour, Tripoli University. Addressing the primary research questions of identifying common difficulties, this research explores the struggles students encounter with using and learning idiomatic expressions. Employing a qualitative approach, the study utilized sociocultural theory to analyze data collected through writing sample test and open-ended questionnaire administered to 10 undergraduate students enrolled in the Faculty of Education.

The findings from both the test and questionnaire reveal that EFL students face multifaceted challenges in understanding and using English idioms. These challenges stem from a combination of cultural and educational factors, including limited exposure to idiomatic expressions, lack of instruction on their non-literal meanings and cultural contexts, as well as difficulties in applying them appropriately in different communicative situations. Addressing these gaps through improved curriculum and pedagogy could significantly enhance the students' proficiency in comprehending and employing idiomatic language. The significance of this research lies in its potential to guide educators in developing more effective teaching strategies and curricular improvements tailored to address these specific issues. By highlighting the gaps in cultural and educational exposure, this study provides valuable insights for enhancing classroom instruction and supporting students in mastering idiomatic expressions. Additionally, the research opens avenues for further studies to explore deeper educational strategies and interventions to better equip students with the skills needed to use idioms effectively in their language learning journey.

Keywords: idiomatic expressions, EFL, undergraduate students, university of Tripoli, faculty of Education

التحقيق في التحديات التي يواجهها الطلاب في استخدام وتعلم التعبيرات الاصطلاحية: دراسة حالة على طلاب المرحلة الجامعية في كلية التربية، جامعة طرابلس

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الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في التحديات التي يواجهها طلاب المرحلة الجامعية في استخدام وتعلم التعبيرات الاصطلاحية في كلية التربية بنزور، جامعة طرابلس. وللإجابة على الأسئلة البحثية الرئيسية المتعلقة بتحديد الصعوبات الشائعة، تستكشف هذه الدراسة الصعوبات التي يواجهها الطلاب في استخدام وتعلم التعبيرات الاصطلاحية. باستخدام منهجية نوعية، اعتمدت الدراسة على النظرية الاجتماعية الثقافية لتحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها من خلال اختبار عينة كتابية واستبيان مفتوح تم تطبيقه على 10 طلاب جامعيين مسجلين في كلية التربية. كشفت النتائج من كل من الاختبار والاستبيان أن الطلاب الذين يتعلمون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يواجهون تحديات متعددة الأبعاد في فهم واستخدام التعبيرات الاصطلاحية الإنجليزية. تنبع هذه التحديات من مجموعة من العوامل الثقافية والتعليمية، بما في ذلك التعرض المحدود للتعبيرات الاصطلاحية، نقص التعليم حول معانيها غير الحرفية وسياقاتها الثقافية، وكذلك الصعوبات في تطبيقها بشكل صحيح في مواقف تواصلية مختلفة. يمكن أن يؤدي معالجة هذه الفجوات من خلال تحسين المناهج الدراسية وطرق التدريس إلى تعزيز كبير في قدرة الطلاب على فهم واستخدام اللغة الاصطلاحية. تكمن أهمية هذا البحث في قدرته على توجيه المعلمين نحو تطوير استراتيجيات تدريسية أكثر فعالية وتحسينات في المناهج الدراسية المصممة لمعالجة هذه القضايا المحددة. من خلال تسليط الضوء على الفجوات في التعرض الثقافي والتعليم، توفر هذه الدراسة رؤى قيمة لتعزيز التعليم في الفصول الدراسية ودعم الطلاب في إتقان التعبيرات الاصطلاحية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يفتح البحث مجالات لمزيد من الدراسات لاستكشاف استراتيجيات تعليمية أعمق وتدخلات أفضل لتجهيز الطلاب بالمهارات اللازمة لاستخدام التعبيرات الاصطلاحية بفعالية في رحلتهم التعليمية للغة الكلمات المفتاحية: تحليل الأخطاء، الأخطاء النحوية، الأخطاء الأسلوبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعبيرات الاصطلاحية الإنجليزية، تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، الطلاب الجامعيون، جامعة طرابلس، كلية التربية.

Introduction

Idioms are expressions with meanings that are not directly understood from their individual words. They often carry cultural connotations and figurative meanings that can be challenging for non-native speakers of English including undergraduate students majoring in English. In general, mastering idiomatic expressions is generally difficult, making them hard to learn, use, and understand. These expressions are often used in English-speaking contexts, but because they are not meant to be taken literally, translating them directly from students' native languages can cause mistakes or confusion (Liu, 2008)

Learning idioms is a challenging process and learners including Libyan students often find it confusing and challenging to learn and use idioms when studying English as a foreign language. This difficulty arises because they rarely use English outside the classroom and do not feel confident using idiomatic expressions to express their thoughts. Additionally, their exposure to English is limited to academic purposes within the classroom setting, leaving little time to learn idioms unless it is a specific topic of study. Consequently, when students attempt to use idioms, they are often unsure if they are using them correctly. Learning idioms in a new language is a challenging process and a main problem is that students often do not know if they should take idioms literally or figure out their figurative meaning. This is a serious issue since idioms can be formal or informal and they might have literal meanings too (Irujo, 1986).

For Libyan students and all Arab EFL students in general, learning idioms might be even more challenging since there are no direct translations for many English idioms in Arabic (AlKadi, 2015). Idioms with no equivalents in a student's native language are especially tough because their meanings cannot be guessed

from the meaning of the individual words (McPartland, 2000) . Another major issue is that idioms' meanings are often unpredictable, making them hard to learn (Saleh and Zakaria, 2013). These challenges reveals that EFL students need to understand the context and nuances to use idiomatic expressions correctly in language learning.

This research paper highlights the challenges students face in using and learning idiomatic expressions. It examines the specific difficulties encountered by Libyan students at the Faculty of Education, Janzour, Tripoli University, in understanding and correctly applying idioms. By identifying these issues, the ultimate goal is to enhance students' proficiency and confidence in using idiomatic expressions, thereby improving their overall language skills.

Statement of the Problem

Undergraduate students at the Department of English Language in the Faculty of Education Janzour at University of Tripoli, might face various challenges in learning idiomatic expressions that may undermine their successful use. These challenges include the lack of exposure to idiomatic expressions, difficulty in interpretation, and other related obstacles. Despite the importance of idiomatic expressions in achieving fluency and proficiency in English, many Libyan undergraduate students struggle with using these expressions.

Research Questions

The primary research questions guiding this study are:

- Q1. What sort of challenges do undergraduate students at the faculty of Education, Janzour encounter when using and learning idiomatic expressions?
- Q2. How do cultural factors influence students' understanding and usage of idiomatic expressions?
- Q3. What educational factors impact students' proficiency in using idiomatic expressions effectively?

These challenges will be explored through a test and an open-ended questionnaire administered to the students.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to investigate the common challenges in using and learning idiomatic expressions encountered by undergraduate students at the Department of English, Faculty of Education, Janzour, Tripoli University.

Significance of the Study

This impactful study promises to yield significant benefits related to learning and teaching idioms and idiomatic expressions that will empower students to improve their language skills, guide teachers in tailored instruction, and advance scholarly understanding of language acquisition. Future studies can refine teaching methods integrating and facilitating teaching and learning English idioms.

Literature Review

Definition of idiomatic expressions

Idioms are a special type of fixed phrases stored in our minds as complete units and not as individual words. They have set forms and meanings that cannot be easily guessed from the meanings of the individual words (Liu, 2008).

The Oxford Learner's Dictionary states that an idiom is a group of words that has a specific meaning which is different from the meanings of the individual words literally.

Idioms as expressions made up of multiple words that need to be learned as a complete unit, along with the associated rules for how to use them correctly in different social, cultural, and conversational contexts. (Alexander ,1987).

Types of challenges students might face in using and learning idiomatic expressions

1- Cultural challenges

The cultural challenges in using and learning idioms conveys the difficulties non-native language learners face due to the deep cultural embedding and native-level nuances associated with idiomatic expressions (Alhaysony, 2017). Idioms may cause linguistic, cultural, and technical issues for non-native speakers affecting communication negatively. This suggests that idioms are deeply rooted in the cultural context of the language, making them difficult for those not fully immersed in the culture to understand and use them appropriately.

Types of cultural challenges

a. Literal interpretation in using idiomatic expressions

Literal interpretation of idiomatic expressions refers to the practice of interpreting the individual components of an idiom in a literal, denotative manner, rather than understanding the culturally-embedded, figurative meaning of the idiom as a whole. This tendency can pose significant challenges for non-native language learners e.g., "*let the cat out of the bag*", which means to reveal a secret or piece of information that was previously concealed. A literal interpretation of this idiom might involve picturing someone physically letting a cat out of a bag, which does not convey the actual meaning of the expression. (Alhaysony, 2017)

b. Cultural exposure in learning idiomatic expressions

Cultural exposure refers to the extent to which an individual has been exposed to and interacted with different cultures, customs, and ways of life. the greater cultural exposure helps learners develop a deeper understanding of the cultural context and norms that underlie idiomatic expressions, which is crucial for successful intercultural communication. In cases of cultural inconsistency, even with correct lexical and grammatical aspects of speech, communication may be disrupted (Desyatova & Malakhova, 2018; Malyuga et al., 2018; Malyuga & Orlova, 2018; Savitsky, 2019).

2. Educational challenges

In the educational context, students can encounter a range of challenges when it comes to using and learning idioms. One significant challenge is the complexity of idioms themselves, as they are figurative expressions that do not align with the literal meanings of the component words. Students may face challenges related to the curriculum and instructional design. Additionally, teachers may struggle to identify the most essential idioms to prioritize for instruction given the vast number of idiomatic expressions in the language (Cooper, 1998).

Types of educational challenges

a. Contextual dependence in using idiomatic expressions

Contextual dependence is the challenge that the meaning and correct application of idiomatic expressions is highly reliant on the specific context or situation, which can be difficult for students to recognize and navigate properly. For students, they may use an idiom in a situation where it does not fit, or interpret it differently than

the speaker intended; this is because the meaning and proper usage of the idiom is so dependent on the surrounding context (cooper,1998)

b. Inadequate exposure in learning idiomatic expressions

Inadequate exposure due to the lack of sufficient practice, examples, and real-world usage of idioms that students are exposed to. If students are not given enough opportunities to encounter idioms in different contexts, hear them used naturally in conversations, and practice applying them appropriately, they will struggle to truly understand the nuanced meanings and proper usage of these expressions (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012)

Overview of previous studies

Many studies were conducted regarding the challenges in using and learning idiomatic expressions by EFL students. In a research paper that was carried out by Saleh & Zakaria under the title Investigating the Difficulties Faced in Understanding, and Strategies Used in Processing, English Idioms by the Libyan Students (2013), the aim of the study was to investigate the main difficulties faced by Libyan ESL students studying in Malaysia, idiomatic expressions in English. The study also sheds light on the strategies employed by the students to overcome the difficulties they face in understanding and using idioms. The study involved 40 Libyan students and utilized a qualitative approach to explore the problems encountered and the processing strategies used by the participants. The findings revealed that Libyan students faced various challenges in comprehending English idioms, such as the inability to derive the figurative meaning from the literal meaning of the components, as well as difficulties in recognizing and recalling idiomatic expressions. The students used several strategies to facilitate their understanding, including using contextual clues, relying on their first language, and seeking help from dictionaries or teachers.

Based on the study "Difficulties Faced by EFL Students in Translating Idiomatic Expressions from English into Arabic at University of Zawia" by (Alkelani, 2020), the researcher investigates the difficulties Libyan EFL students face when translating idiomatic expressions from English to Arabic and vice versa. The research aims to assess the students' English language skills, particularly those who will become EFL teachers and translators, and to identify the strategies they use to translate and overcome challenges with idiomatic expressions. The methodology involved giving 14 EFL students from the Department of English two English texts containing idiomatic expressions and asking them to translate the texts into Arabic. The students' translations were then collected and analyzed. The findings reveal that the students' level of English language proficiency is weak in comprehending idiomatic expressions, due to the cultural elements involved. The study was able to identify some of the strategies used by students to translate the idiomatic expressions. Based on the results, the research provides recommendations to help students improve their comprehension of English idiomatic expressions and enhance their overall translation skills and competencies. The study aims to offer insights into the challenges Libyan EFL students face in translating idiomatic expressions and propose ways to help them develop their translation abilities

Another prior study was conducted by Nadeem & Almowalad (2022) in their article Challenges and Strategies of Acquiring English Idioms for EFL Undergraduate Saudi Students. The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges facing EFL Saudi students in learning English idioms and the effective strategies they can utilize to understand idiomatic expressions. The researchers surveyed 50 male and female Saudi EFL students enrolled in the first semester at King Abdulaziz University's Rabigh branch. They used a questionnaire to identify the strategies employed by students to facilitate learning idioms and to explore the difficulties they faced during their learning. The study findings showed that the participants had great difficulty in acquiring and understanding idioms. The most commonly used strategies were guessing the meaning of idiomatic expressions from the context, learning idioms outside the classroom, breaking them into parts to guess their meaning, and translating them into the first language. The researchers concluded that there needs

to be more research in this area to improve the understanding of the problems facing Saudi EFL learners in acquiring idioms

Another study that was held by Anjarini and Hatmanto (2021) on investigating the challenges that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students face in understanding English idioms, as well as the strategies they implement to overcome these challenges. The researchers used a descriptive qualitative method, to explore the participants' experiences in depth. Eight students from the English Language Education Department at an Islamic private university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia were selected as research participants. The researchers used interviews as the instrument to collect the data. The study found four main challenges faced by EFL students in understanding English idioms: 1) difficulty in understanding the different meaning of an expression from the meaning of each individual word; 2) difficulty caused by the lack of discussion of idioms in classrooms; and 3) difficulty in distinguishing between idioms and ordinary English phrases, and 4) Difficulty caused by the scarcity of students finding and using English idioms. The researchers also identified some strategies implemented by EFL students to understand English idioms including: understanding idioms through context, searching for the meaning of idioms using the internet, connecting the meanings with their native language namely Bahasa Indonesia, and asking others about the meaning of idioms. The findings suggest that the primary difficulty for students is the difference between the meaning of idioms and the literal meaning of the individual words, which is aroused by the lack of exposure to and discussion of idioms in the classroom.

Previous studies have separately explored various challenges in using and learning idiomatic expressions involving comprehension difficulties, translation issues, cultural influences, contextual usage, and effective learning strategies. These studies have examined a range of student levels, including undergraduate and graduate students. However, the research gap exists in specifically investigating these issues among students at the Faculty of Education, Janzour, Tripoli University. Unlike the study by Saleh and Zakaria, which focused on Libyan ESL students studying in Malaysia, this research will examine the challenges of Libyan EFL learners within the Libyan educational context. Rather than looking at general comprehension and translation difficulties that was studied by the Libyan study done by Alkelani (2020) about Difficulties Faced by EFL Students in Translating Idiomatic Expressions from English into Arabic. This study aims to gain deeper insights into the cultural and educational factors that influence Libyan EFL students' understanding and use of idiomatic expressions. By focusing on this specific student population and educational setting, the research aims to provide more contextually relevant findings and recommendations to address the unique challenges faced by Libyan EFL learners in mastering idiomatic language.

Theoretical framework

This study employs Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory to support the analysis. Vygotsky's sociocultural framework supports pedagogical and research methods that respect human diversity and focus on the impact of social and historical contexts on teaching and learning. This theory was chosen to found the theoretical framework of the current study, for its emphasis on the impact of social interaction, cultural context, and collaborative learning in understanding the challenges students face in using and learning idiomatic expressions.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a qualitative approach, incorporating sociocultural techniques, to thoroughly investigate the challenges students encounter in using and learning idiomatic expressions. This approach was selected to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies involved in the usage and learning of idiomatic expressions.

Participants

The primary data source consisted of 10 undergraduate students in their 5th semester at the Faculty of Education, Janzour, Tripoli University, majoring in the Department of English Language, who participated as informants in the study.

Data collection / Instruments

The data for this study were collected through a written test and an open-ended questionnaire administered to the students. In the written test, students were instructed to provide the meaning of four idiomatic expressions and construct a sentence for each. The other instrument used to collect data for the current study is a questionnaire which included seven questions about the challenges students encounter in learning and using English idioms. These research instruments were chosen to elicit descriptive and comprehensive responses from the students about their knowledge and experiences in using and learning English idioms.

Data analysis

The written test responses were tabulated, collected, carefully read, and manually coded to identify possible categories. The participants' answers were analyzed to assess their knowledge of idioms and to uncover challenges they face in interpreting and using them. This analysis helped reveal the difficulties students encounter, which in turn informed the construction of the questionnaire questions. The insights gained from the test responses provided valuable support for the questionnaire findings.

The sociocultural approach enabled the researchers to identify, code, categorize, and explore themes related to the various challenges analyzed from the participants' test and questionnaire responses. These challenges were carefully investigated and classified into distinct categories, then analyzed to uncover recurring patterns and themes, which offered comprehensive answers into the research questions.

Table 1- Questionnaire results.

Category	Type of Challenge	Percentage	Description	Example Quotes
Challenges in Using Idiomatic Expressions	Cultural Challenges	70%	Students have difficulties interpreting idioms figuratively and understanding their non-literal meanings.	"The main challenge is how to know the meaning of idioms." "Yes, because idioms often don't make sense literally and require familiarity with their figurative meanings."
	Educational Challenges	60%	Students struggle with using idioms correctly within sentence structures and applying them appropriately in various contexts.	"Using them appropriately in different contexts and ensuring the audience understands them." "Putting it in sentences."
Challenges in Learning Idiomatic Expressions	Cultural Challenges	90%	Students face significant cultural challenges due to lack of exposure, understanding the cultural context of idioms is crucial for their effective use.	"Yes, cultural context often provides the necessary background to understand and use idioms correctly." "Yes, because most idioms have their own stories and background, so it is important to understand the culture first."
	Educational Challenges	70%	Students report insufficient lessons on idioms in their coursework, contributing to difficulties in mastering idiomatic expressions.	"No, idioms are briefly covered in language and literature classes but not in depth." "Actually, no I don't receive enough classes to learn idioms."

Table 2- Test results

Idiom/meaning	Challenge Type	Example	Comment
"Cold Feet" (feel nervous or hesitant about something, especially before an important event).	Literal Interpretation of Meaning	"Cold feet, feeling cold"	Reflects a misunderstanding of the idiom's figurative meaning, which refers to being nervous or apprehensive about something, not physically feeling cold.
	Contextual Misuse	"Do not take my things cold feet"	Misuses the idiom, as "cold feet" is unrelated to the context of taking belongings. The correct usage should convey a sense of hesitation or reluctance.
"Like a Fish Out of Water" (To feel uncomfortable or out of place in a particular situation).	Literal Interpretation of Meaning	"So sad or dead"	Misinterprets the idiom, which actually means feeling uncomfortable or out of place, not sadness or death.
	Contextual Misuse	"He got away with it like a fish out of water"	Misuses the idiom, as it should describe someone feeling out of place rather than successfully avoiding consequences. The correct use would involve a situation where someone feels out of their element.
"Let the Cat Out of the Bag" (To reveal a secret or disclose something that was intended to be kept confidential).	Literal Interpretation of Meaning	"Let the cat out of the bag"	This is a literal interpretation that misses the idiom's figurative meaning of revealing a secret or disclosing something prematurely.
	Contextual Misuse	"Force your children to follow the rules, please, let the cat out of the bag"	Misapplies the idiom, as it is unrelated to enforcing rules. The idiom should be used in contexts where information is unintentionally revealed.
"Not My Cup of Tea" (To not like or not be interested in something).	Literal Interpretation of Meaning	"I do not like tea"	Shows a misunderstanding of the idiom's figurative meaning, which means not liking or being interested in something, not just tea.
	Contextual Misuse	"I do not drink tea"	This misuse reflects a literal interpretation related to tea consumption rather than conveying the idiomatic meaning of something not being suited to someone's tastes or interests.

Results

Questionnaire results

The results of the questionnaire indicate that students encounter various challenges in both using and learning idiomatic expressions including cultural context, literal interpretation, contextual dependence, and inadequate exposure to idioms. These challenges impact the students' ability to effectively understand and produce idioms in their speaking and writing.

1- Challenges in Using Idiomatic Expressions

a. Cultural Challenges in using idioms

The responses of students revealed that 70% of them have difficulties interpreting idioms figuratively. They reported that idioms often do not make sense literally and require an understanding of their non-literal meanings. The main challenge some students had is understanding the meaning of the idioms. Moreover, students find it hard to guess the meaning of idioms when they hear them for the first time, since idioms often do not make sense literally to them and they require familiarity with their figurative meanings.

b. Educational Challenges in using idioms

Analyzing the responses of the participants revealed that they struggle with using idioms correctly within the spoken and written context; they commonly have difficulties in guessing the meaning of idioms in specific contexts.

2- Challenges in learning idiomatic expressions

a. Cultural Challenges in learning idioms

The results showed the students lack of cultural exposure since they study English as a foreign language in Libya in isolation from the cultural context of the language itself, which represents a significant cultural challenge for them to learn any idioms. It is found out that about 90% of students have limited knowledge in learning idioms, some students assess themselves as not proficient in learning idiomatic expressions and adverbs. They believe that understanding the cultural context of idioms is crucial for acquiring the meaning of these idioms and without a deeper cultural understanding, idioms remain challenging to grasp and learn effectively.

b. Educational Challenges in learning idioms

Many students reported that their coursework barely offer any lessons on idioms, which is considered as an educational challenge. About 70% of the students indicated that they do not receive enough classes about the meaning and translation of idioms. Moreover, the lack of comprehensive instructions from the teachers' side in the classroom worsen the problem of learning idiomatic expressions.

Test results

The results from the test indicate that most students have difficulty understanding the meanings of idioms, often interpreting them literally and using them inappropriately in sentences, leading to incorrect usage and inadequate context. These findings are supported by the questionnaire responses, where students discussed their struggles in learning and using idioms effectively. The analysis showed that 70% of students interpreted idioms literally, failing to grasp their figurative meanings. Furthermore, 60% of the students misused idioms contextually due to insufficient knowledge and exposure to these expressions. This indicates that the majority of students lack the necessary cultural and educational background to understand and use idioms correctly.

Discussion

The study's analysis of questionnaire responses and test results reveals that Libyan undergraduate students face challenges in learning and using idiomatic expressions. The majority of students tend to interpret idioms literally, failing to grasp their figurative meanings, while over half misuse idioms contextually due to inadequate exposure and knowledge. This highlights substantial gaps in cultural understanding and educational instruction that hinder students' ability to effectively comprehend and apply idiomatic expressions. The vast majority of

students assess themselves as not proficient in using idioms, attributing this to a lack of systematic cultural exposure, and insufficient classroom instruction of idioms. The results suggest that the curriculum and course materials do not adequately cover idiomatic expressions, which further contributing to the challenges in using and learning idiomatic expressions effectively.

The findings of this study resonate with those of previous research. Similar to the work by Saleh & Zakaria (2013), this study also found that Libyan students struggle with interpreting idioms figuratively rather than literally. Additionally, both this study and Alkelani's (2020) research identified the inability to comprehend idioms and translate them accurately due to cultural elements as a common issue.

Parallel to the findings of Nadeem & Almolalad (2022), this study also reports that students have great difficulty in acquiring and understanding idioms, often resorting to strategies such as guessing meanings from context and translating to their first language. Furthermore, the findings of this study also agree with those of the research done by Anjarini and Hatmanto (2021) that students face challenges in understanding idiomatic expressions due to their figurative nature and the lack of classroom discussion and exposure to idioms.

However, this study uniquely highlights the contextual issues specific to Libyan undergraduate students, including inadequate exposure and insufficient classroom instruction, which were not as prominently discussed in the other studies. Unlike the research by Saleh & Zakaria, which focused on Libyan ESL students in Malaysia, this study examines Libyan EFL learners within Libya, providing more contextually relevant insights. Overall, this study provides a deep and contextually relevant understanding of the challenges faced by Libyan EFL learners in mastering idiomatic expressions.

Conclusion

The study concludes that undergraduate students at the Faculty of Education, Janzour, face significant challenges in both using and learning idiomatic expressions due to cultural and educational gaps. The findings highlight that a majority of students struggle with literal interpretation, and misuse idioms contextually, reflecting inadequate exposure and understanding of idiomatic expressions. This underscores the need for more comprehensive cultural and contextual education in idioms to enhance students' proficiency.

Implications

The results suggest that curriculum improvements and more focused instruction are crucial to help students learn and use idioms effectively in the classroom. This research is significant for educators and future studies. The findings underscore the necessity of integrating more focused idiom instruction and cultural context into the curriculum to address the gaps in students' understanding. This will enable students to better grasp and apply idiomatic expressions in their language learning. Additionally, the results provide a foundation for further research into effective teaching strategies and interventions aimed at improving idiom comprehension and usage among EFL learners.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Enhance Idiom Instruction by Integrating lessons on idiomatic expressions into the curriculum to improve students' understanding and usage.
- Cultural Exposure by increasing students' exposure to the cultural context of idioms through authentic activities and materials that highlight the figurative meanings of idioms.

- Contextual Practice through providing more opportunities for students to practice idioms in various contexts to ensure correct usage and deeper comprehension besides getting synchronous feedback.
- Further Research: Investigate additional challenges and error patterns in idiom learning and usage to develop more effective teaching strategies and materials..

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