English Idioms Errors Made by Jordanian EFL Undergraduate Students

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Abstract

This study investigated English idioms errors made by Jordanian EFL undergraduate students. The study also aimed to examine the areas of idioms where EFL learners scored the highest as well as the lowest and tackle their overall achievement in identifying meanings of idioms. The data of the study was collected through a test composed of (20) multiple choice items covering various areas of idiomatic expressions. The test was administered to a randomly selected sample consisting of (60) fourth-year EFL students (50 females, 10 males) in the Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts (FESA) in UNRWA University in Amman, Jordan. Results revealed that the EFL students got the highest scores in nouns related to key words with idiomatic uses, idioms with noun phrases, adjectives and nouns, idioms with keywords from special categories including food, and idioms with a comparison form. However, they got the lowest scores in idioms of pairs of nouns, adjectives and adverbs, and idioms with keywords from special categories including animals and body parts. Results also showed that that there are statistically significant differences in the EFL students' achievement on all the domains of the test. However, the EFL students were of a low achievement in figuring out meanings of idioms. Correct answers were (490) representing (40.7%) of the total number of the answers. In light of these results, the researcher proposes a number of pedagogical recommendations related to teaching idioms and future research.

Keywords: idioms, EFL, undergraduate, students, pedagogical, comparative form

1.1 Error Analysis

Errors, always, a central concern in language learning, has been a crucial issue in language teaching as well. Inevitably, all learners make mistakes and commit errors. In other words, errors have been the flawed sides of learners' speech or writing. However, this has been impeded through active adaption of "Error Analysis" hypothesis (EA), which still receives a great attention from distinguished researchers and is still considered an important factor in the English language learning-teaching process particularly if the English language is the learners' second language or foreign one.

Error Analysis (EA), a fundamental branch of applied linguistics, emerged in the sixties to address students' performance (Shrestha, 1979:1). More specifically, this approach is based on the hypothesis that the learners' errors do not only occur because of their mother tongue interference, a framework hypothesis of errors in second language acquisition adapted and addressed by Contrastive Analysis (CA), but they also happen due to some "universal strategies" (Khansir, 2012:1027). Error analysis (EA) was established to create a change in attitudes towards the errors. Until the sixties, the main focus of contrastive analysts was on the actual error, the 'product', committed by the learners due to their mother tongue interference in second language learning (Shrestha, 1979: 1). With error analysis (EA), the emphasis has been shifted from the 'product' to the 'process'. The fundamental task of (EA) is to describe how learning occurs by examining the learners' output including their correct and incorrect utterances (Khansir, 2012:1027). Richards (cited in ibid) considered (EA) a field that allocates the differences between the way people learning a language speak and the way adult native speakers of the language use it.

Such an analysis has yielded fruitful benefits for the learners and the teachers as well since the teachers have been able to figure out how much of the target language the learners know and how much is still not learnt (Shrestha, 1979:1).

According to Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics (2010: 201), (EA) has been manifested in order to (1) describe strategies used by the learners in language teaching, (2) spot causes of errors, and finally (3) gain information on common difficulties in language learning to develop materials and strategies to help the learners avoid their errors. Corder (cited in Hsu: 2013: 513) commented on the usefulness of (EA) stating that language teachers can use it to grab the attention of the second language learners to their errors, examine first language and second language system, and then examine their second language production; however, (EA) cannot thoroughly examine the reasons behind errors made by the second language learners while approaching their language proficiency. Corder (cited in Bagheri & Heydari , 2012: 1583) emphasized the importance of (EA) to the learners as well stating that that it is unquestionably significant to them because it functions as a device that the learners uses in order to develop their learning by avoiding committing the errors.

The field of (EA) is divided into two branches as it follows: (i) theoretical, and (ii) applied. The former clarified what and how the learners learn when they study a second language. The latter, however, served to enable the learners to learn more effectively by organizing remedial courses, recommending appropriate materials, and teaching strategies based on the findings of theoretical (EA) (Erdogan, 2005:262). Equivalently, the investigation of errors is either diagnostics or prognostic. It is diagnostic because it attempted to investigate what is going on in the minds of language learners at a given point during the learning process, and prognostic because it guided course organizers to modify language learning materials and courses based on the learners' existing problems (khan, 2011:105-106). In order to analyze the learners' errors, it is crucial to distinguish between a 'mistake' and an 'error'. The distinction is based on a self-correction criterion. A mistake is self-corrected while an error is not. Errors are systematic in which they occur repeatedly since the learners do not recognize them. Hence, only the teachers or researchers have been able to allocate them, yet not the learners (AbiSamra, 2003: 4). Corder (cited in Shrestha, 1979:1), however, distinguished between performance and competence errors. The first resembles 'mistakes' since they are made when the learners are tired or hurried. The latter are more serious because they depict inadequate learning (Khansir, 2012: 1028). Burt (cited in Fang & Xue-mei, 2007: 12) differentiated between "global" and "local" errors. The former hampers communication, leads to misunderstanding between speakers, and are usually left uncorrected. However, the latter only affects a minimal element of sentence, but they do not hinder communication since they are systematic in their occurrence, and thus they are preferred to be corrected.

When it comes to errors, it is inevitable to detect their sources. Brown (cited in Abu Shihab et al. 2011: 544) stated that the chief obstacle to the second language system is the interference of the first language on the performance of the target English language learners. Interlingual errors occur at different levels transferring phonological, morphological, grammatical, and lexical elements of the native language into the target language. Another reason is mainly attributed to the learners' attempts to derive rules from the data they are exposed to and probably come with hypotheses that match neither with the mother tongue nor with the target language. This is called intra-lingual transfer which includes different types as overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language. There are other causes of such errors as false analogy and misanalysis (Khan, 2011:106).

Many scholars have proposed that identifying errors is insufficient and missing unless they are followed by correction, i.e., there is a general belief of not leaving an erroneous utterance in oral as well as written forms but correct it. In fact, some scholars have highly believed that findings of error analysis (EA) is beneficial to language teaching if the teachers are aware enough of the suitable strategies of correcting them at an appropriate time to guarantee better results resulting in the learners' performance. In contrast, other scholars have denied the role of error correction by supporting the belief that students go through systematic stages in learning and they just acquire a structure when they are ready for it and it has been consistently argued that this practice has inflated the students' confidence and wasted their efforts on details which are useless to their overall ability to use a language. Thus, correction has been considered a way to break down the flow and smoothness of a conversation or a communication practice, especially when the teacher keeps interrupting the students while talking, and it also lessens the students' motivation and enthusiasm as only their failures and not their goals are highlighted. Excessive comments on errors can also prevent or slow down the learning process if everything is corrected; therefore, the students will risk saying anything unless they are sure it is correct. Additionally, it has been commonly noticed that some teachers ask their students not only to speak fluently but also accurately and that makes communication harder for the students.

Based on this, it has been suggested that the best solution is that the teachers try to be more tolerant with their students' errors, let them guess the correct answers, enjoy the learning, and provide them with a feeling of security to use the language (Martinez, 2006: 2-3).

1. 1. Idioms: Definitions and Some Background Remarks

Idioms constitute a difficult area of foreign language learning and teaching which many scholars have tried to clarify. Despite the general definition given by Oxford English Dictionary (1993) as "a form of expression, grammatical construction, phrase, peculiar to language; a peculiarity of phraseology approved by the usage of a language, and often having a signification other than its grammatical or logical one", scholars such as Saeed took a further step and defined idioms as "expressions where the individual words have ceased to have independent meaning."He illustrated this point by stating that only some English speakers would be able to guess a meaning of *kith* in the idiom *kith and kin* or *span* in *spic and span* (1997:60). Fromkin et al. (2011: 581) depicted the same idea, explaining that idioms are expressions whose meanings are unrelated to the principle of compositionality, that is, may be not connected to the meaning of their parts. Hence, an idiomatic expression like *let the cat out of the bag* is composed of minimal semantic constituents (let/the/cat/out/of/the/bag) whose individual meaning does not seem to contribute to the meaning of the idiom as a whole which is *reveal a secret*. In other words, these semantic constituents are non-compositional because their figurative meaning is inactive to the meaning of their parts (Fotovatnia & khaki, 2012: 273). This is a typical traditional view of idioms and thus it is believed that learning the meaning of idioms requires that the speaker or learner forms an arbitrary link between idioms and their non-literal meaning for a full understanding since this relation as Palmer described it "opaque" (1981:79).

Opposing this traditional view of the non-compositionality of idioms, many linguists have focused on the decomposability and analysis of idioms, believing that the meaning of semantic constituents of idioms may contribute to their overall figurative meaning. Cruse (2004: 72) argued that idiomatic meanings are based on literal word meanings within a particular context. Fotovatnia & khaki (2012: 273) stressed on viewing idioms as decomposable structures since their meanings, either literal or figurative, contribute independently to their overall figurative interpretation of idioms. For instance, in the phrase *pop the question*, it is easy to detect that *question* refers to a *marriage proposal* when the verb *pop* is used to refer to the act of uttering it (ibid: 273).

From a syntactic point of view, Akmajian et al. (1987:258) defined idioms as "syntactically complex words whose meaning cannot be predicted, since their syntactic structure is doing no semantic work". This point has been illustrated by Crystal (cited in Jabboori &Jazza: 4) stating that there is no flexibility in their grammatical construction of words, seeming to be frozen in constrains. For example, *it is raining cats and dogs* is syntactically fixed in which it is not allowed to say *it is raining a cat or a dog* or *it is raining dogs and cats*. Yusifova (2013: 134) emphasized that idioms have their own internal syntactic features, suggesting that the elements of idioms cannot be regarded as lexical units. That is, idioms cannot be broken into parts in a sentence, neither can be changed nor new combinations of idioms can be established. Therefore, the whole idiom expresses the intended meaning, not give in separately-taken words and idioms as a whole are "syntactic units", containing a "lexical wholeness"

Idioms are also said to share cultural and historical information and to broaden peoples' understanding and manipulation of language. Therefore, idioms are also defined to be "a form of a language that is spoken in a particular area and that uses some of its own words, grammar, and pronunciations." (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 2008).Moreno (2011:21) elaborated this feature by declaring that idiomatic expressions give any language a particular flavor, variation, and color. Similarly, they help language learners have a good understanding of the culture they are used in, get into its customs and lifestyle, and facilitate a deeper insight into its history.

Idioms are a colorful and fascinating aspect of the English language in which they have embraced a number of types and themes. Strassler (1982:27) classified them into six different types of idiomatic expressions as follows: substitutes, proper names, abbreviations, English phrasal compounds, figures of speech as homonymy, synonymy and polysemy, and slang expressions. Seidl & McMordie (cited in Leah, 2014) divided idioms into the following eight categories: informal, formal, verbal, idiomatic pairs, identical pairs, idioms used in special fields, idioms related to special themes, idioms containing special keywords, and idioms with comparisons. In terms of themes,

Karunakaran & Maisa (2013: 112) reported that idioms are connected with animals, the sea, sports, parts of the body, food and drinks, colors, names of people and places , sight, hearing, touching , smelling, and other topics.

Despite the varied themes and types of idioms, there are certain features recommended in idioms. Cruse (1986: 37) called for two certain features. The first one is that idioms should contain more than one lexical item. The second is that idioms should form a single minimal semantic constituent. Wright (1999:7) highlighted other two features. The first one is about fixation and recognizability in which native speakers can address idioms, yet they cannot come up with new ones. The second feature pinpoints the metaphorical language used in idioms as in *break your hearts* to mean *very sad*. Palmer (1981: 80-81) listed 'semantic opaqueness' as a distinguishing feature of idioms. Other features listed have been related to their syntactic fixedness or restriction. That is, component words of idioms are fixed or 'frozen' in a way in which it is unacceptable to change them. For example, you say *kick the bucket* but you cannot say *the bucket was kicked*. Also, keywords within idioms cannot be changed or substituted. For Cruse (2004:71-72), it seems fruitless and destructive if you substitute the verb *pull* with *tug* and the noun *leg* with *limb* in the phrasal idiom *pull someone's leg.*

Based on the previous definitions and discussions of idioms, scholars have agreed that there are common characteristics shared among idioms as the following:

1) **Compositionality /Non-compositionality**: idioms have meanings expressed. Hence, if the meaning of idioms is elicited or deducted from the meanings of their semantic constituents, then they are decomposable as *play with fire* which means *to do something dangerous*. If the meaning of idioms cannot be understood on the literal definitions of the individual words, then they are non-decomposable as *hit the sack* which means *to go to bed* (Moreno, 2011:20).
2) **Frozenness of Forms:** semantic constituents are fixed and cannot be changed, i.e., restricted to lexical and grammatical conditions (ibid: 20).
3) **Metaphoricity**: many idioms are not 'dead' metaphors, but they in actual fact "retain a good deal of their metaphoricity". In other words, the relationship between the literal and figurative meaning can still be detected and captured (Gibbs cited in Majuri, 2014: 13).
4) **Institutionalization**: idioms constitute a set of expressions belonging to a certain language or culture (Karunakaran& Maisa, 2013:113).
5) **Multi-Word Expressions**: idioms consist of more than just one word (Moreno, 2011: 20).

1.2. Linguistic Features of Idioms

Many linguists have been interested in studying structural, syntactical, morphological and semantical features of idiomatic expressions. Regarding their structure, Fromkin et al. (2011:151) depicted idioms to be structurally phrases yet their features of syntactic frozenness do not allow changes in word order. In other words, semantic constituents of idioms are not separable, and if that were to be true, there would be a lot of idiomatic meanings. For example, you can say *she pulled her brother's leg*, but you cannot do any modification of adding new words as in *she pulled her brother's left leg* or *she pulled her brother's leg with a sharp tug* (Cruse: 2004:71).

Syntactically, Palmer (1981:80) focused on the frozenness of syntactic structure of idioms, illustrating that idioms containing a verb and a noun, for example, may allow a change in the tense, yet not in the number of nouns. Therefore, you can say *spilled the beans* but not *spilled the bean*. Idioms also do not allow adjectives combine with nouns to be changed into a comparative form. Thus, we find *red herring* but not *redder herring*. However, Yusifova (2103: 137) proposed a contradictory idea, explaining that the changes to singular and plural forms are possible within most idioms as it can be said *smell a rat, kick the bucket,* and *chew the fat*. Furthermore, he commented that countable nouns can be uncountable in most idioms and vice-versa. For example, *wear the deck-wear the decks*, and *go into detail-go into details*. He concluded that such changes are a clear proof of complexity and flexibility of language. From a different perspective, Cowie et al. (1983: xi) stated that idiomatic expressions are categorized into two major syntactic forms. The first category is phrasal idioms that correlate with various grammatical parts of speech as the following: they can be verbs as 'break down', nouns as 'a crashing bore', adjectives as 'free with one's money', adverbs as 'as often as not', and prepositional as 'in the nick of time'. The second category is clause idioms composed of a verb and a complement as 'go berserk', a verb and a direct object as 'ease somebody's conscience/mind', a verb and a direct object and a complement as 'paint the town red', a verb and indirect object and a direct object as 'do somebody credit', and a verb and direct object and an adjunct as 'take something amiss'.

Idioms also have some semantic features. According to Cruse (2004:71), semantic constituents do not combine with other genuine semantic constituents. Hence, it is incorrect if it is said she *pulled and twisted her brother's leg.* Idioms are seemingly very systematic, yet they can break the rules of combining semantic properties as in *he ate his hat* where the object of the verb *eat* is an inedible thing. Therefore, this restriction is violated or disregarded (Fromkin et al, 2011: 151).

Morphologically speaking, Haspelmath (cited in Ali, 2001: 43) differentiated between two kinds of idioms as it follows: weak ones in which a language user or a speaker can make some predictions of meaning of idioms based on lexemes, and strong ones in which meanings of idioms cannot be predicted or guessed from the meaning of components.

In translating idioms, which do not have the equivalent or partly equivalent idiomatic expressions in the target language, the arising problem is not only about conveying their meaning using the lexemes of the target language, but it is also about the loss of the metaphoric or figurative meaning of the translation idiom in the target language (Suchanova, 2013: 157). If anyone has to translate idioms, he/she should be careful not to translate them word by word, taking into consideration the pragmatic side of them, i.e., message conveyed and communicated by people (Jabboori & Jazza, 2013: 12).

1.3. Importance of Idiomatic Expressions to Language Users

Idioms cover a wide range of various life aspects and form an integral part of daily language use. Every year many idioms enter into the English language from the world of sports and entertainment, such as *have a good innings* or *dice with death.* Some idioms are formed from rural life and transportation as *eat like a horse* or *put the cart before the horse*. Additionally, idioms come to include money, business, money, food and body such as *armed to teeth* meaning *heavily armed with killing weapons* (Karunakaran& Maisa, 2013:112).

Idioms are commonly used in all types of languages including informal and formal as well as spoken and written. They play a vital role in media, standard speech, business, and education (ibid: 112). According to Cowie et al. (1993: x), being familiar with a wide range of idioms and able to use them accurately and appropriately are among the distinguishing marks of a native command of the language and trust-worthy indicators of the proficiency of foreign learners. Based on this, many scholars have focused on the importance of learning idioms and mastering them particularly by the non-native speakers of English for the following reasons:

First of all, idioms are like lubricants that make language runs and flows smoothly. Idioms are termed 'figurative competence' referring to the ability to produce and comprehend idioms. Learners who have uploaded their skills with such a competency are able to produce and use idioms in different contexts of communication easily and effectively, leading to a better proficiency and a higher fluency in the second or foreign language learning and acquisition (Jabboori &Jazza, 2013: 9).

Second, idiomatic use is believed to have a great effect on listeners or readers since they constitute an essential part of vocabulary learning (Bagheri & Fazel, 2010: 46). In other words, nonnative speakers can gain more vocabulary through the use of idiomatic expressions, have a better understanding of the language, and become more proficient in order to sound native-like. Martin & Nippold (1989:59) also valued the importance of understanding idioms because they exist in written and spoken texts consistently. He also believed that understanding idioms may add extra benefits to knowledge about lexical growth and development. Conversely, any failure to comprehend their meaning may affect the learners' understanding of a language in social, academic and vocabulary contexts.

Third, idioms are significantly effective in the process of teachability and learnability, That is , idioms to mind and memory is a mental aerobic in which the learners become mentally more active and fresher when memorizing and recalling idioms (Mola, 1993: 18).

Finally, idioms with their metaphorical, poetic, and cultural insights help language learners understand other cultures and historical backgrounds get into their custom and lifestyle, and facilitate a deeper vision into history, resulting into broadening the learners' thinking and ability of drawing appropriate images about other cultures (Dong, 2004:30).

It goes without saying that mastering idioms goes beyond comprehension. That is, using or not using a given idiom must be associated with usage restrictions especially when it comes to taboo idioms and their use (Boers et al., 2007: 46).

The learners as well as the users of idioms also need to be familiar with the fact that some idioms are restricted to cultural stereotypes. Some of them function as keys to cultural knowledge associated with the meaning of restricted usage. Hence, any lack of acquiring cultural competence might be responsible for the learners' failure to get such culturally marked idioms (Huang, 2001: 268).

2. Review of Related Literature

Most of idioms processing articles in the literature have focused on the learners' receptive comprehension in the first language (L1). Experiments have mainly discussed the calculated speed of a subject's comprehension of idioms as a measurement to see if idioms' figurative or literal meaning has been taken first or not. A large number of studies, however, have shed lights on the importance of teaching idioms and best techniques recommended to be adopted by teachers in the foreign or the second language learners' classes. Few studies have aimed at tackling English idioms errors made by Arab learners studying English as a foreign language (EFL).

Irujo (1986: 287-304) examined whether there was a transfer of native language training and /or interference in learning English idioms of (L2) Venezuelan students in an American university who were advanced learners of English as a second language. The researcher conducted a number of tests of recognition, comprehension, recall, and production involving fifteen equivalents and commonly used English and Spanish idioms. Statistical analysis of the results indicated the subjects were able to generalize from the idiom's meaning in Spanish to its meaning in English, even when the form was slightly different, and they could correctly produce many more identical idioms of other types. This was attributed to the use of positive transfer. Negative interference also occurred on the two production tests, more for similar than totally different idioms. These results and justifications supported the notion that advanced second language learners whose first language was closely related to the second could use knowledge and backgrounds of idioms in their first language to comprehend and produce idioms in the second language. It was concluded that similarities between languages may facilitate interference and that idioms are not always nontransferable.

Ali (2001:38-60) conducted a study to investigate errors made by Iraqi EFL learners in English idioms. More specifically, this study aimed at examining (60) fourth-year students in the Department of English, College of Education, University of Tikrit, by setting a test composed of (20) items of multiple choice covering various areas of idiomatic expressions. The result showed that there was an overall weakness in understanding idioms. Tested students had the lowest scores in comprehending idioms of pair of adjectives, pairs of nouns and identical pairs respectively. He attributed such failure to the inadequateness for successful learning of idiomatic expressions in classes during college year.

Alsakran (2001) examined the productive and receptive knowledge of lexical and grammatical collocations among advanced Arabic-speaking learners of English. Furthermore, it investigated whether the language environment (ESL) or (EFL) had an influence on the acquisition of collocations. It also explored whether there was a significant difference between participants' performance on three types of colocations: verb-noun, adjective-noun, and verb -preposition. Subjects of the study was comprised of (68) students Saudi students at the Institute of Public Administration in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and (30) Arab students in the Intensive English program at Colorado State university. The participants' productive collocation knowledge was measured by an appropriateness judgment test. The results revealed that the participants' learning environment had a strong effect on the acquisition of second language collocation in which the (ESL) learners had higher scores than (EFL) learners. Also, the participants' productive knowledge of collocation was lag far behind their perceptive one. The most important result was the Arabic-speaking learners of English demonstrated poor knowledge of collocations on the test.

Huang (2001:113-132) investigated (60) Taiwanese (EFL) college students' knowledge of English collocations and errors they made. They were tested by a self-designed Simple Completion of four types of lexical collocations: free combinations, restricted collocations, figurative idioms, and pure idioms. The results indicated that there was insufficient knowledge of English collocations especially of pure idioms. It was concluded that the Taiwanese (EFL) learners' errors in collocations could be attributed to negative first language transfer.

Zoughoul &Hussein (2001:1-19) detected learners' productive competence in collocations and idioms by means of their performance on two interdependent tasks. Two groups of (EFL) undergraduates and graduates from the English department at Jordan's Yarmouk university were asked to answer a multiple choice task of (16) randomly selected Arabic idioms and collocations and a translation task of the same idioms and collocations.

Data analysis indicated that the overall performance of the students in the target idiomatic expressions and collocations was far from satisfactory considering that they were high level English major.

Aldahesh (2008) aimed at tackling the difficulties posed to Arabic professional translators and Arabic translation students when translating idiomatic English phrasal verbs into Arabic. In order to achieve this, the researcher conducted translation tests to identify types of errors and transitional pitfalls. The results showed that there were a lot of difficulties and overtly and covertly erroneous errors in their translation. The overtly errors included literal translation, mistranslation, reducing idioms to sense and breaching of the Arabic language system, along with covertly errors, such as wrong Arabic collocation, shift of register, incorrect delivery of speech acts, usage of paraphrasing and usage of Arabic colloquial and regional dialects.

Bagheri & Fazel (2010: 45-55) sought to explore the effect of 'etymological elaboration' technique on learners' comprehension as well as retention of idioms. (50) Iranian advanced students studying English at Bahar Language Institute, Shiraz, were divided into two homogenous groups of experimental and control. The former group had a matching task pertaining to the origin of idioms and another table pertaining to their meaning. The latter group had multiple choices and a gap filling task. The results indicated that participants provided with etymological elaboration had better results than those who did not receive this treatment, indicating that the suggested technique lessened errors and enhanced comprehension and retention of idioms effectively.

Jabboori & Jazaa (2013:2-13) conducted a study to assess and analyze native and non-native speakers' competence and use of English idiomatic expressions. A test comprising idiomatic expressions in which subjects were asked to underlie, identify, and clarify idiomatic expressions. The sample of the test included (12) English native speakers in which (6) are (B.A) graduates and the others were secondary high graduates. The non-native speakers were also (12) in which (6) of them were (PhD) holders in the English language and the others were (M.A) holders in Linguistics and the English language. The results indicated that the native English speakers were relatively better at answering questions regarding idiomatic expressions. The researchers recommended more involvement of idioms in (EFL) teaching materials.

Concerning the importance of teaching idioms to EFL students, Adkins (1968: 148-152) had a review of the difficulties Spanish-Americans and Mexican-Americans encountered in learning English, caused by a lack of knowledge of common idioms and figures of speech in current usage. To tackle this, the researcher conducted an experiment of two pilot studies determining the frequency of occurrence of idiomatic and figurative constructions in the reading materials presented to the ninth graders in Texas and New Mexico. Another experiment involving a class of (15) students were tested for linguistic proficiency in English and taught idioms and figures of speech for six weeks through various pioneering approaches, is examined. The result of the former experiment revealed that basal readers and social studies materials contained an average of (3, 32) idioms and figures of speech per page; an average of textbook of four hundred pages contained a sufficient frequency of occurrence of these expressions to question the quality of comprehension. The results of the latter experiment indicated that idioms and figures of speech were not comprehended. The students were poor in their knowledge of such structures to the point of being handicapped in the ability to understand the contexts where such constructions appear. It was concluded that idioms formed an integral composer of language learning and much efforts much be paid to upgrade learners' levels in linguistic proficiency and taught idioms and figures of speech.

Mola (1993: 1-53) reviewed some of the teaching practices of (10) foreign language teachers in second language instruction in Washington D.C metropolitan area. Also, this study aimed at focusing on the way idioms taught in university German foreign language courses, which textbooks and reference materials available in the German and English fields that highlight idioms and whether the teachers are using or adapting theses textbooks or creating materials used to teach idioms. The results showed that there was a lack of systematic approaches to teaching idioms to German students and dearth of idioms treated in the current first and second language textbooks. It was concluded that the idioms were not important to the teachers in which they did not initiate to introduce them to their students during classes.

Sonomura (1997:3-14) conducted a study on Hawaiian Creole English speaking (HCE) writers at kapiolani Community College in Honolulu seeking a change to subscribers to the traditional view of language who had repeatedly attempted to improve scores of Hawaii's students by only focusing on the grammar and vocabulary of Hawaii Creole English despite the students' low scores in verbal skills compared to the nation's average in standardized tests.

The researcher held to the belief that the correct use of common collocations, formulas, and idioms were significant skills to make language fluent, natural, and comprehensible and avoiding teaching idioms may lead to many errors in spoken as well as written forms. To prove this, the participants of the study were asked to do some writing tasks in order to allocate the types of the commonest errors made. The result showed that most errors were of idiomatic types than of grammatical errors. More specifically, the participants' writing simply failed to obey the rules of idiomatic expressions as well as they were ungrammatical. It was concluded that the teachers who teach vocabulary and grammar should consider also the idioms in their teaching materials.

Tran (2012:76-86) investigated the situation of teaching and learning idioms at a university level in Vietnam in terms of a foreign language context. The study also aimed at evaluating the process of teaching idioms in three language classes over a 15-week period for pre-service teachers of English. The data was collected through questionnaire, interviews and e-mail guided effective writing. The analysis revealed the following results: (1) both teachers and students were moderate proficient in idioms. (2) there were significant effects of contexts in idioms teaching (3) the students demonstrated a moderate deal of idioms comprehension as well idioms production through showing a clear comprehension of idiomatic phrases.

3. Methodology and Procedures

3.1 Sample of the Study

The randomly selected (EFL) learners were (60) students (50 females and 10 males). The sample of the test consists of fourth year students in the Department of English Language and Literature in the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts (FESA)/UNRWA University for the academic year 2015-2016.

3.1 Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

Many researchers have tackled error analysis (EA) in many aspects of various languages in general and idiom errors in particular. However, no study, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, has examined English idioms errors made by Jordanian (EFL) learners at a university level. Accordingly, a research is needed to fill in this gap in the error analysis field. The study is designed to address the following questions:

1) What are the areas of idioms where (EFL) students at the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts (FESA) in UNRWA University scored the highest and what are the possible explanations for this?
2) What are the areas of idioms where (EFL) students at the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts (FESA) in UNRWA University scored the lowest and what are the possible explanations for this?
3) What is the overall achievement of (EFL) students at the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts (FESA) in UNRWA University in comprehending meanings of idioms in the test?

3.3 Data Collection and Research Instrument

The data of this study was collected by means of (20) multiple choice questions. Each item introduced an idiom contextualized in a sentence followed by four options. The test items represented (20) various areas of idioms which were taken from Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms (2003). The study was conducted over one semester (September-December 2014) at (FESA). The researcher met with the students to acquaint them with the aim of the study, to encourage them to respond truthfully to all items in the test, and to collect data. The researcher assured that the students' responses would be treated with strict confidentiality and that their identities would not be divulged under any circumstances.

3.4 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The validity of the test items was ensured by interviewing some (EFL) students about their perception of idioms and their importance in daily life and by asking a number of associate and assistant professors specialized in the English language and literature in the Department of English Language and Literature in (FESA) to review the entire test. The role of the reviewers was to determine whether each idiom in the test was precise, appropriately contextualized, and matching with their areas. Particularly, the reviewers were asked to evaluate the relevance of each idiom to its multiple meanings and the clarity of language used, suggest whether some idioms should be added or removed, and then provide any additional comments or corrections. Any suggested comments or recommendations were taken into account in designing the final version of the test as in appendix (2). Items which received a consent level of 80% from the reviewers were added, other items were deleted, and the rest was modified. To test the reliability of the test, the participants were directed to complete the test after giving them a brief note on the notion of idioms. They were asked to circle the option which they thought represented the correct answer.

3.5 Hypotheses of the Study

1) (EFL) students at (FEAS) are able to figure out the meaning of idioms with a comparison form of *as...as*, idioms with prepositions, and similar items of idiomatic pairs.
2) (EFL) students at (FEAS) are troubled to figure out the meaning of idioms with keywords from special categories, pair of adjectives, adverbs and nouns, and phrasal verbs and verbal idioms.
3) (EFL) students' knowledge of idioms is generally weak in the test of idioms.

3.6 Data Analysis

The students ' answers were marked out of (20) corresponding to the highest mark whereas the lowest mark is (0). The result obtained for each item was compared to a theoretical mean which is (10); the degree of pass. To say it differently, the theoretical mean was calculated in the following way:

The highest degree - the lowest degree

2

After scoring the papers answered by the students, the researcher ranked the results in descending order, i.e., from the highest score to the lowest. Moreover, the total number of correct answers in each item was calculated then divided on the number of students (60) in order to find the total number of correct items in the test. In order to find the percentage of all correct answers in the test, the number of item which was (20) multiplied by the number of students (60), so the result was (1200). The correct answers were (490) divided on (1200), a total true score of all items, representing (40.7%) of the total number of answers. This is shown in table (1) below in appendix (1). Deceptive statistics using the mean scores and standard deviations were utilized to answer the first and second question of the study, i.e., the (EFL) students' highest and lowest scores in the idioms test. To answer the third question of the study, the P-value test was used to determine the significance of the (EFL) students' achievement in the test.

3.6 Significance of the Study

Despite the plethora of error analysis research which has tackled different types of errors in many different languages, the significance of this present study has emerged from the assumption of the researcher that it is the first attempt to investigate English idioms errors made particularly by Jordanian (EFL) undergraduate students. Furthermore, this study differs from previous studies in that it gives readers a clear picture about Jordanian learners' proficiency and capacity in understanding and mastering idioms at this level of education, i.e., university level.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

Two limitations of the study need to be acknowledged. The first limitation concerns the nature of the instrument used to collect data. The test designed is not inclusive of all different areas or types of idioms. That is, only (20) areas of idioms were covered in the test. The second limitation has to do with the institution where the data was collected. The study sample was limited to one university (UNRWA University); the perceptions of students from other public and private universities were not surveyed. It is possible that data collected from other universities might yield different results. Therefore, one should exercise some caution and not generalize the findings of the study too broadly.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Results Pertaining to the First Question of the Research

The first research question concerns the areas of idioms where (EFL) students at (FESA) in UNRWA University have scored the highest and the possible interpretations for this. As shown in table (1), (EFL) students have got higher scores than the theoretical mean in five areas of the test. In other words, they have succeeded in nouns related to key words with idiomatic uses scoring (6.734%), idioms with noun phrases scoring (6.122%) and adjectives and nouns with (9.387%), idioms with keywords from special categories including food scoring (6.734%), and idioms with comparison using the word *like* scoring (6.530%). The percentages of the highest scores among the previous five areas are (9.387%, 6.734%, 6.734%, and 6.530%). These results invalidate the first hypothesis of the research.

The highest scores in these areas of the test may be attributed to the belief that (EFL) testees might be familiar with such idioms and their meanings and exposed to them throughout their study. More clearly, there are some university courses in the English Department as translation courses that grasp some notions about the idioms where(EFL) students are asked to translate some idioms from English into Arabic and vice versa. Hence, familiarity with usage and meanings of idioms has facilitated grasping the meaning of these idioms. This view is supported by Jabboori & Jazza (2013:21) who stated that familiarity of idioms has had a great influence on non-native as well as native speakers' of English realizations and understanding of meanings of idioms. They elaborated that spoken familiar idioms are more recognizable than unfamiliar ones by both native and the non-native speakers of English.

Another possible interpretation might be related to the notion adopted by Contrastive advocators who have assumed that similarities between two languages are of a great opportunity for positive transfer and easy learning-teaching process, and thus cause few problems to the foreign or the second language learners. However, when differences between the two languages exist, there is a negative transfer, and therefore cause most errors or problems (Shamaileh, 1982:17-18). Based on this approach, it can be assumed that the (EFL) students are able to generalize from the meaning of idioms in Arabic to their meaning in English, even when the form of the idiom is slightly or mostly different, taking into considerations that the cultural background of Arab testees has influenced their responses to the meanings of idiomatic expressions. For example, most (EFL) testees have referred to the meaning of the idiom *a tall order* to mean *difficult* affected by an equivalent Arabic culture of the same sentence, where *a tall order* is intended to express annoyance or complains about particular topic in a particular context. Another example is the idiom *the man at the top* which means *a head of an administrative, or of a financial, industrial or trading concern*. A number of (EFL) testees are able to figure out this meaning since there is an Arabic similar title held by employers of high positions in any work institution. Culturally speaking, Jordanian people have highly used such a title to address others of a high target business position. As can be seen, culture has had positive influences on subjects' ability to recognize the appropriate meanings of idiomatic expressions especially if such expressions have existed in their first language and they are related - in a way or another- to the second or foreign language. Such learners are assumed to use knowledge and backgrounds of their idioms in their first language to comprehend and produce idioms in the second or foreign language, resulting with few errors or problems when doing so. This is emphasized by Irujo (1986: 287) who reported that "language similarities may encourage interference, and that idioms are not always considered nontransferable".

An additional third interpretation for idiom meaning identification might be accounted for the (EFL) testees' ability to depend on the pragmatic aspects of theses idioms more than their ability to recognize meaning depending on their syntactic aspects. In other words, meaning in context, a basic notion of pragmatics, has been of great aid since it influences the interpretation of the meaning of utterances (Roberts et al. 1992: 58). Leech (1983: 13-15) referred to the notion of "context" as "speech situation" identifying seven elements comprising it: "addresser and addressee, the context of an utterance, the goal(s) of an utterance, illocutionary act, an utterance, the time of an utterance and the place of an utterance." It has been reported that such parameters of a "speech situation" help learners to grasp the meaning of new structures of language. Based on this, the (EFL) testees have attempted to figure out the meaning of idioms from the rest of the sentence and have suggested a relevant interpretation that explains the meaning of the rest of the sentence. So, when the subject has attempted to explain the meaning of the idiomatic expression *babes in the wood* in the sentence *looking at them now, who can imagine that they were a couple of babes in the wood in school!* , he/ she has assumed relevance of contextual parameters and has expected that the previous idiom would mean *innocent and inexperience people* (See appendix (2)). This is also true about the idiom *apple-pie order* which means *neat and tidy* in the sentence *her house is always in apple-pie order and is quite unlike mine.* (See appendix (2)).However, one cannot depend mainly on syntactic aspects of idioms because as Yusifova (2013: 133) stated "knowledge of grammar is not good enough to know a language as a whole because language contain lots of idiomatic constructions which require both theoretical and practical knowledge". Additionally, syntactic structures are not of aids to realize or indicate speakers' intentions as much as pragmatic aspects are. That is, "speaker/ listener intentions" compose a basic rule of pragmatics (Roberts et al. 1992: 58). However, Grice (1975: 45-46) proposed certain maxims for a conversation as it follows:

1) Quantity: "make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange). Do not make your contribution more informative than is required."

2) Quality: "try to make your contribution one that is true…Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence."

3) Relation: "be relevant."

4) Manner: "avoid obscurity of expression; avoid ambiguity; be brief and be orderly."

Therefore, according to the maxims of conversation especially the maxim of relations, the subjects have expected that the idioms with sentences used are intended to be relevant to the main idea of the sentences and even the speakers who use such idioms have attempted to communicate with relevant topics related to idioms intended meaning. Thus, by relying on context, intended meanings of speakers, and maxim of relevance, the testees are more capable of retrieving and figuring out the meaning of idioms from the relevant parameters of contexts more than idioms which are used out of context. Based on this, it can be reported that the testees who are able to figure out the meaning of the idiom *a tall order* used in the sentence *I felt that it was a tall order to expect Nina to go home alone at twelve in the night* rely on some relevant phrases in the context as *to go to home alone* and *at twelve in the night* to figure out that the meaning of the idiom is *difficult.* Similarly, the testees are able to best arrive at the accurate meaning of the idiom *babes in the wood* by analyzing and decoding the sentences into parts as *look at them now* and *in school* which are relevant parameters of the sentence as a whole. Thus, although idioms are of non-compositional, one can still try to guess their figurative meaning of idioms based on their context, maxim of relation, and other backgrounds.

A further explanation of the (EFL) students' high scores in the previous idiomatic expressions can be based on the fact that we line in an era of globalization, at the age of increasing communication and relation between people of different countries. Globalization as any other processes involves rapid development of information technologies and mass media facilitators as emails. Hence, it is believed that the (EFL) students who have regularly exchanged emails with their Keypals on other foreign countries have attempted to use various styles of writing including idioms usages. To put it differently, students nowadays use various means of communication including chatting, emails, and messages with other people in English speaking countries and that may impose them to use different styles of language involving idioms or at least try to comprehend them. Such exchanges of communicative styles have enhanced the (EFL) students' ability to comprehend and produce idioms. This idea was supported by Mahfouz (2010: 403) who stated that most university students in FESA /UNRWA university who have frequently and systematically used emails with native speakers of English "were able to produce longer and more complex sentences, use idiomatic expressions appropriately, reduce grammatical errors, use more accurate and varied vocabulary, develop a more elaborate writing styles, and improve their language proficiency and pragmatic competence."

4.2 Results Pertaining to the Second Question of the Research

The second research question is about the areas of idioms in which the (EFL) students in (FESA) in UNRWA University have scored the lowest and the possible interpretations for this. Referring to table (1) in appendix (1), it can be seen that the percentages of the lowest scores are (2.448%, 3.061%, 3.061%, and 3.061%). Respectively, they have represented those idioms of pairs of nouns, adjectives and adverbs, and idioms with keywords from special categories including animals and body parts. These results invalidate the second hypothesis of the research.

A possible interpretation for such low scores might be due to the non-compositionality or opaqueness of some constituents of idioms where non-compositionality denotes that the meaning of an expression is not derived transparently from the meaning of its individual elements (Majuri, 2014:12). Such opaque or non-compositional idioms have hindered the testees from figuring out the meaning from the composed elements of idioms as in *hobby-horse* in which it is hard to guess that it means *habit* based on its individual semantic elements (*hobby / horse*). In fact, the students who have wrongly attempted to guess the meaning of such opaque-figurative idioms based on the meaning of their semantic constituents have committed errors, guessing the wrong meaning. A similar example is the idiom *on its last legs.* As can be seen, it is misleading to heavily depend on the meaning of its semantic constituent to guess that it means *about to collapse,* noticing that the words (*last/ legs*) are totally irrelevant to its meaning. This has been illustrated by Majuri (2014: 68-69) who believed that non-compositional idioms cannot normally be understood from the literal meaning of the words which make them up, and thus hinders the process of teaching-learning of idioms.

A second interpretation may be related to the fact that teaching figurative language is mostly neglected in the (EFL) classrooms. Teachers and materials alike tend to present idiomatic expressions in isolation, as if they were odds, as a quirk of language. For the teachers, it has been argued that the idioms seem to be a complex part for the foreign language users since their meanings are irrelevant to their constituents as well as the teachers need updated methodologies to be implemented in the classes. This intentional neglect has affected the (EFL) who come to think of English idioms as "anomalous creations of a whimsical people" (Moreno, 2011: 22). Adkins (1968: 149) stated that the teachers make no attempts to reinforce teaching idioms meaning, interpret systematically all idioms encountered in curriculum, or give students general concepts or backgrounds of what idioms are. Other teachers have believed that teaching idioms is not of an importance since it makes no difference in the understanding of students. This interpretation has been supported by Mola (1993: 3) who reported that "idioms are not taught because teachers do not feel they know which ones to teach or how to categorize them; and they do not realize the importance of such fixed expressions." As can be seen, the lack of awareness of the importance of idioms to be taught in classes might be a reason behind the (EFL) students' low score in some areas of idioms.

A final interpretation might go to the belief that most (EFL) students have attempted to rely on their first language, trying to find out the meaning of unfamiliar idioms by looking for similar expressions in their first language, leading to a great number of errors in comprehending their intended meaning. This has corresponded with Adkins (1968:149) who pointed out that the (EFL) students have found the meaning of idioms "confusing and elusive" as they cannot be translated directly from their first language to other languages.

4.2 Results Pertaining to the Third Question of the Research

The third question is about the (EFL) students' overall achievement in the idiom test. From table (1) in appendix (1), it has been indicated that the (EFL) students' level of achievement at (FESA) is (40.7%), an indicator of weakness in this particular area of language, i.e., idioms. This validates the third hypothesis of the test. More results are illustrated in table (2) below.

Table (2): The Mean, Standard Error Mean (SE), T-Test, P-value and Significance

Answers	Mean	SE	T. Test Value	Significance	P- Value	Number of Students
Correct Answers	490	0.28	-9.12	**Significant**	0.01	60
Incorrect Answers	710					

Table (2) has indicated the calculated T-Test value is (-9.12) and the mean of Standard Error is (40.7% ± 0.28) whereas the erroneous answer mean is (59.3 ± 0.28). The value of P is ≤ 0.01. The reliability of the test is calculated by using T. Test method which is found to be (-9.12). Person formula of correlation coefficient is applied in order to find the reliability value of the test. Table (2) has also indicated that there are significant differences in the (EFL) students' achievement among the various areas of the test. To say it differently, the (EFL) students have showed low mastery as well as a clear failure in idioms meaning identification in different areas of idioms.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 General Conclusions

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous section, the following conclusions can be drawn:

First, the overall weakness in identifying meaning identification might be directly related to the teachers' negligence of teaching idioms in their classes. In other words, the perplexity of teachers of what idioms to teach and what methodologies should be used to teach them effectively has made the teachers decide to skip teaching idioms in their classes. What is worth mentioning here is that the teachers also do not ask their students to use idioms neither in spoken nor in written contexts, leading to a clear skip to idioms in the learning-teaching process. This has been reflected on the (EFL) students who have imposed that the idioms constitute a difficult as well as an elusive part of learning; therefor, they have overlooked learning them.

Second, there has been a clear unavailability of university courses, books, or dictionaries that have focus on teaching idioms and that may lead the (EFL) students to believe that they are not important to be used, learnt or memorized.

Third, idioms, being an important part of language use and existing in spoken and written forms of languages, have been considered a hindrance to the (EFL) students since they do not usually mean what they literally state.

Fourth, the (EFL) students have demonstrated poor background and low level of knowledge concerning variable definitions of idioms and their features, types, usages, and importance.

Fifth, the (EFL) students have showed a poor tendency to change their beliefs about the importance of idioms in their daily life usage. That is, the (EFL) students consistently skip learning idioms or using them in spoken or written contexts.

5.2 Recommendations

The findings of this study invite those interested to further validate and verify them. However, the following recommendations can be drawn for further research:

First, since idiomatic expressions have been used on a daily basis by native speakers in different life styles, it is recommended that more of idiomatic expressions ought to be included in the (EFL) teaching materials and ought not to be neglected.

Second, since the (EFL) students at (FESA) in UNRWA University have shown a considerable weakness in the idioms test, it is recommended that (EFL) students ought to be exposed to more idioms through intensive communication with native English speakers.

Third, since most teachers avoid teaching idioms due to various reasons, it is recommended that the teachers should be involved in training workshops and courses that aim at presenting update methodologies and techniques of teaching idioms to the (EFL) students.

Fourth, since the (EFL) students have not been familiar with types, features, and usages of idioms in the English language, it is recommended that there should be a list of compulsory courses for the undergraduate level in the subjects of idioms and their functions in spoken and written contexts.

Fifthly, Since the (EFL) students are still in need to more exposure to idioms, it is recommended that they should be taught about the culture of English speakers and cultural differences also it is recommended that the differences in culturally-bound knowledge ought to be given notice in the English language classrooms.

Finally, since the study has only focused on the (EFL) students' errors in idioms in a written form, it is recommended that the (EFL) students' errors in a spoken form be investigated as well as detected due to the possibility of the emergence of such errors.

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Appendix (1)

Table (1): Students' Scores and Percentages in Areas of idioms in the Test

Number	Key Words with Idiomatic Uses			Idioms with Nouns and Adjectives		Idiomatic Pairs					Idioms with Prepositions	Phrasal Verbs	Verbal Idioms	Idioms with Keywords from Special Categories					Idioms with Comparisons		Total
	Adjs & Advs	Nouns	Miscellaneous	Noun Phrases	Adj + Nouns	Pairs of Adjs	Pairs of Noun	Pairs of verbs	Pairs of Advs	Similar Items				Animals	Parts of the body	Color	Food	Number	With as...as	With ...like	
1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	13
2	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	13
3	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	12
4	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	12
5	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	12
6	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	11
7	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	11
8	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	11
9	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	10
10	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	10
11	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	10
12	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	10
13	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	10
14	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	10
15	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	10
16	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	10
17	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	9
18	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
19	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	9

Number	Key words with Idiomatic Uses			Idioms with Nouns and Adjectives		Idiomatic Pairs					Idioms with prepositions	Phrasal Verbs	Verbal Idioms	Idioms with Keywords from Special Categories					Idioms with Comparisons		Total
	Adjs & Advs	Nouns	Miscellaneous	Noun Phrases	Adj + Nouns	Pairs of Adjs	Pairs of Noun	Pairs of verbs	Pairs of Advs	Similar Items				Animals	Parts of the body	Color	Food	Number	With as...as	With ...like	
20	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	9
21	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	9
22	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	9
23	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	9
24	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	9
25	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	9
26	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	9
27	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	8
28	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	8
29	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	8
30	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	8
31	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	8
32	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	8
33	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	8
34	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	8
35	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	8
36	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	8
37	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	8
38	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7
39	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	7
40	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	7
41	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	7
42	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	7
43	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	7
44	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	7
45	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	7
46	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	7
47	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
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49	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	6
50	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	6
51	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	6
52	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	6
53	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
54	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
55	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	5
56	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	5
57	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4
58	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4
59	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
60	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4
Number of Correct Answers	15	33	29	30	46	20	12	18	27	28	19	21	21	15	15	21	33	29	26	32	490
Percentage of Correct Answers	3.061%	6.734%	5.918%	6.122%	9.387%	4.081%	2.448%	3.673%	5.510%	5.714%	3.877%	4.285%	4.285%	3.061%	3.061%	4.285%	6.734%	5.918%	5.306%	6.530%	40.7%

Appendix (2)

An Evaluation Test of English Idioms to Jordanian EFL Learners at the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts (FESA) /Jordan

After careful reading of the following sentences, circle the option that represents the correct meaning of the italicized English idioms. Fill your answers in the table below.

(1) The women in particular; they were mainly the sorts who are too *well- heeled* and too idle to take up any sort of work on reaching adult years.

(a) lazy and non-hardworking
(b) beautiful and intelligent
(c) superior and highly ranked
(d) prosperous and wealthy

(2) Looking at them now, who can imagine that they were *a couple of babes in the wood* in school!

(a) clever children   (c) immature and naive
(b) idiot and stupid children   (d) innocent and inexperienced people

 (3) The two men seem to *hit off*, and Stone is obviously impressed with Castro's quick, wit and ready answers.

(a) have a good and friendly relationship   (c) intermingle
(b) start to do something   (d) be successful

(4) In the case of unusual complaints, it is the best to try to go straight to *the man at the top*.

(a) decision- maker
(b) Very popular
(c) head of an administrative, or of a financial, industrial or trading concern
(d) leader

 (5) I felt that it was *a tall order* to expect Nina to go home alone at twelve in the night.

(a) difficult   (c) customary
(b) too much   (d) simple

(6) In hard times recording companies cannot take a chance on something new, different and possibly good-they must go for *tried and true trash*.

(a) many times tested and reliable   (c) agreed upon
(b) used and nearly-new   (d) right and legal

 (7) I want no *ifs and buts* - just get on and tidy your room now.

(a) comments   (c) arguments
(b) excuses   (d) objections

(8)All night I have been *tossing and turning*, racking my brains to think of what could have possessed that poor young man to kill himself.

(a) rambling   (c) deciding by chance
(b) moving restlessly   (d) moving head suddenly upwards

(9) The dog was restless too, *ever and anon* rising to lay his head on his master's knee.

(a) occasionally   (c) commonly
(b) constantly   (d) rarely

10) *By and by* she has won three promotions.

(a) randomly   (c) gradually
(b) skillfully   (d) shortly

11) The police had now, *by dint of* persistent enquiry over several weeks, obtained enough evidence to convict.

(a) by the use of   (c) with the help of
(b) as a result of   (d) despite the lack of

12) The incident was *blown up* and people were made to believe that there was large scale violence

(a) enlarged   (c) revealed
(b) exaggerated   (d) distorted

13) I knew that she had finally *burnt her boats behind* her when she arrived with her suitcase and declared that she had come to stay.

(a) was stranded   (c) set everything on fire
(b) had no hope of returning   (d) took an irrevocable step

14) Exhorting his staff to be punctual was the manger's favorite *hobby-horse*.

(a) practice   (c) subject
(b) habit   (d) advice

15) Some people feel that apartheid is on *its last legs* now and the blacks will soon have a say in the   government.

(a) about to revive   (c) about to fail
(b) about to collapse   (d) about to disappear

16) I didn't feel particularly tired, or sleepy, after my *white night*.

(a) sleepless   (c) active
(b) happy   (d) hard

17) Her house is always in *apple-pie order* and is quite unlike mine.

(a) messy and chaotic   (c) cozy and warm
(b) neat and tidy   (d) uncomfortable and shabby

18) It was surprising to see that she looked quite pretty *at close quarters*.

(a) from a distance   (c) close examination
(b) close confinement   (d) very near

19) It is better to have one friend who is *as true as steel* than to have fifty acquaintances who refuse to recognize you in your hour of need.

(a) strong   (c) truthful
(b) grateful   (d) loyal and dependable

20) My wife behaved *like a fishwife* when we disagreed.

(a) was nerve-racking   (c) pretended to be oppressed
(b) shouted loudly or abusively   (d) was quarrelsome

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20