Universidad de Guanajuato

División de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades

Departamento de Lenguas

Maestría en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés

Mexican EFL Teachers' Perceptions Concerning Teaching English Idioms

TESIS

Qué Para Obtener el Grado de Maestría en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés

PRESENTA

Jacqueline Soto Jurado

Guanajuato, Gto.

January, 2022

DIRECTOR DE TESIS

Dr. Edgar Emmanuell García Ponce

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratefulness to the people that were part of this process. The completion of this study could not be possible without the help of all the professors in the program, who guided and encouraged me during the development of my thesis. I especially thank my thesis director Dr. Emmanuell García Ponce for his support and constructive feedback during the last two years. I also acknowledge all my classmates for their empathy and encouragement along this journey. Especially to my best friend Armando Alvarez, who has been by my side through my professional preparation. Finally, I would like to thank CONACyT for supporting me with a scholarship to accomplish this personal goal.

Dedication

      I would like to dedicate this research project to all my family for their encouragement during these two years. Especially to my dear mother Evangelina, who has always helped and motivated me to accomplish my goals, I love you.

Resumen

El presente estudio explora las percepciones de cinco maestros de inglés como lengua extranjera sobre la enseñanza de expresiones idiomáticas. Esta investigación se realizó en la Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez en la cual se utilizó un paradigma cualitativo, aplicando la fenomenología como método de investigación. La recolección de datos fue a través de cuestionarios para obtener información académica de los participantes. De igual manera se aplicaron entrevistas semiestructuradas con el objetivo de hacer preguntas extras para clarificar las ideas de los docentes. Los resultados mostraron que los cinco maestros perciben la enseñanza de estas expresiones como un factor importante para el desarrollo de habilidades comunicativas de los estudiantes. Los resultados también revelaron que los docentes no incluyen modismos en su práctica profesional por los siguientes factores: tienen que cubrir el contenido del libro de texto, algunos maestros no tienen mucho conocimiento sobre lo que son los modismos al igual que como enseñarlos y falta de tiempo para realizar actividades extras. Esta evidencia indica que los profesores probablemente necesitan ser guiados sobre este tema para lograr incluir las expresiones en sus clases de inglés. De esta manera los docentes entenderán la importancia de los modismos y los beneficios que sus estudiantes podrían obtener.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study explores how five English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers from a Mexican university perceive idioms in the classroom. It also examines the reasons behind the teachers' decisions to teach or to avoid these expressions. This chapter offers information regarding the content of this research project, which starts with the intrinsic motivation that encouraged me to investigate the topic. Then, it presents the description of the problem, a brief description of the background, and the context of this investigation. I will continue with the research gaps I attempt to fill with this investigation. Finally, this chapter concludes the contribution of this examination to the English language teaching field and the organization of this thesis.

1.2 My Motivation

My motivation comes from my experiences as an EFL learner and teacher. I am from Ciudad Juarez, a border city with El Paso, Texas, where I commonly go shopping or visit my family. Every time I went to El Paso, practicing my second language was frustrating because I could not communicate. I started to learn English at the age of eleven, and as I grew up, I began to analyze more the teaching content from my English classes. I questioned why the teachers did not encourage me to develop my communication skills to use them in the real world. One day, while watching a movie, an idiom appeared: out of the blue (i.e., when something unexpected occurs). I knew every word, but they did not make sense together. Then, I investigated the connotation of the idiom because I felt confused, and it was the time when I discovered the existence of these expressions. At that moment, my interest in idioms started because they expanded my mind to understand more how the target language people communicate.

After being a student, I became an EFL teacher. The printed materials from the institution did not have a section for teaching idioms. Although I had to teach following the

textbook, I tried to incorporate them into my teaching practice. My pupils deserved to understand how the real world is. Once they are acquainted with idioms, they will identify that they might not understand something because of an idiomatic expression. Students will probably investigate the hidden meaning of the idiom, and it would be meaningful for them based on the story behind it. My experiences as a student and teacher are related to the purpose of this study. I wondered if instructors are acquainted with the benefits of including idioms to improve the students' communication skills. It is why I feel motivated to discover teachers' perceptions on the topic under study.

1.3 Research Description

Teaching English involves more than grammar structures; for example, sociocultural aspects (Cakir, 2011). Idioms help students to improve their communication skills (Chen & Lai, 2013). Unfortunately, these expressions seem to receive less attention in EFL classrooms (Khan & Can Daşkin, 2014; Liontas, 2017). Even though they are frequent expressions used by native speakers, many English books avoid them or include them just in the vocabulary section, without exercises to reinforce learning (Irujo, 1986). Therefore, if teachers decide to teach idioms, they need to plan extra material to practice them due to the absence of content in textbooks. This research analyzes how teachers perceive idioms in their teaching practice and the factors that influence the teachers' decisions to teach them when idioms are not in the textbook.

1.4 Research Context

Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, is a border city with El Paso, Texas, and its principal economic source comes from the manufacturing industry sector. Many citizens have industrial jobs, and they commonly use English to communicate with international companies. Many students also visit El Paso, Texas, for shopping, entertainment, or tourism. Because of this frequent interaction with native English speakers, students can encounter idioms while communicating with the target language community.

More specifically, this qualitative study took place in the Language Center of the University of Ciudad Juarez. It is a public institution with five campuses in the city, and the textbooks do not include an explicit lesson for teaching idioms, and the implicit content is scarce. I chose this context because I am from this city, and living in a border city allows having access to two different cultures, customs, and languages. Then, this context is of interest to researchers for the close contact students have with the target language. I am also part of the community of the Language Center, and I feel interested in analyzing my colleagues' perceptions on teaching these expressions.

1.5 Background to the Study

Idioms are part of everyday communication, and people tend to use them either in formal or informal settings. English contains many of them that represent the culture and history of the language behind their hidden connotations (Al-kadi, 2015). These expressions have received attention in the second language acquisition research for their common usage in discourse. Several studies have investigated this topic from different views, for example, concerning teaching idioms, some researchers explain the significance of including them in the classroom and suggest suitable strategies to teach them (Liontas, 2017; Mansoor, 2015; Nurul & Rochmawati, 2017). Second, the L2 idioms learning area is related to the students' processes for comprehension and why they need to study idioms (Roberto de Caro, 2009; Talib, 2015; Xie, 2017). Third, some researchers have investigated the strategies that students implement to understand the hidden meaning of idioms as guessing from the context, transferring to L1, among others (Manzoor & Kiran, 2015; Pimenova, 2011; Saleh & Zakaria, 2013; Samani & Hashemian, 2012; Szczepaniak & Lew, 2011). Fourth, some studies describe how EFL teachers perceive the inclusion of idioms in the classroom (Nabil, 2017; Najarzadegan & Ketabi, 2015). However, this area needs more exploration to comprehend how instructors perceive teaching these expressions in their classrooms.

1.6 Identification of the Gap

Based on the previous qualitative research of teaching idioms, I identified areas that may need more investigation. The possible research gaps are 1) research on teachers' perceptions, 2) the Mexican context, and 3) teachers' knowledge of idioms.

I have found few investigations of teachers' perceptions regarding the inclusion of idioms (Khan & Can Daşkin, 2014; Maisa & Karunakaran, 2013; Najarzadegan & Ketabi, 2015). However, more research is necessary to comprehend how instructors contemplate teaching idioms in their classrooms. This information could raise awareness of why some teachers might have considered or neglected idioms. This study contributes to the scarce investigations in the English teaching field for teaching idioms from teachers' views.

In addition, these expressions have been studied worldwide, for example, in the United States (Mansoor, 2015), Turkey (Khan & Can Daşkin, 2014), India (Maisa & Karunakaran, 2013), Saudi Arabia (Nabil, 2017), and Vietnam (Quynh, 2012). There is only one study carried out in Mexico in a border city (Soto-Jurado & Garcia-Ponce, 2021). Then, this present study will enrich the English language teaching field by creating more information and access to evidence that is possible to apply within the Mexican context.

Furthermore, some textbooks relegate idioms to the "vocabulary lists" (Irujo, 1986). In the city where this study took place, the printed materials have minimal explicit content concerning idioms. Therefore, students will not learn them unless the teacher provides extra material and exercises. Considering this context, even when these expressions are frequently in any discourse, some English teachers might not have a clear notion of how to include idioms into their professional practice (Najarzadegan & Ketabi, 2015). This study will fill this gap by explaining helpful techniques and activities for teaching these expressions in EFL classrooms.

1.7 Contribution of the Study

This study contributes to the English language teaching field by informing how EFL Mexican teachers view idioms and their inclusion in their professional practice. This type of information will increase awareness among teachers of the attainable benefits of teaching idioms. In addition to this, this investigation explores the factors perceived by the teachers that influence their decisions when incorporating idioms. With the understanding of those factors and their implications, this study suggests classroom activities that help teachers manage the possible challenges and guide students in their learning. The following section describes the objectives of this research.

1.8 Purpose of the Study

The main objectives of this research are the following: to discover how EFL teachers perceive the inclusion of idioms in the classroom and explore the possible factors behind teachers' decisions to teach or not to teach these expressions. Thus, the research questions that guided the study are the following:

RQ1: What are the EFL teachers' perceptions of teaching English idioms in a Mexican university?

RQ2: What are the factors that influence the EFL teachers' decisions to teach or not to teach idioms?

To answer these questions, qualitative research under a phenomenological design was implemented. The data collection techniques to obtain data were questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. This study investigated the perceptions of five EFL teachers through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

1.9 Organization of Thesis

This thesis contains five chapters. The first one describes the motivation, description, context, and background of the research; It also identifies the gaps in the literature and the potential contributions that may emerge from the results.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature behind the topic under study. Concepts are the definition and types of idioms, the connection between culture and language teaching, teachers' perceptions, benefits of teaching idioms, and pedagogical implications.

Chapter 3 offers an overview of the methodology implemented to carry out this study. It includes information on the research paradigm, research method, data collection techniques, context of the study, and participants.

Chapter 4 presents the data collected from the questionnaires and interviews. The six themes that emerged from the data analysis are the following: teachers' perspectives regarding teaching materials; the link between language teaching and culture; definition and understanding of idioms; the importance of teaching and learning idioms; teaching materials, strategies, and activities for teaching idioms; teachers' decisions concerning teaching idioms. It also presents an interpretation and analysis of each theme.

Finally, Chapter 5 summarizes the findings to respond to the research questions. It also addresses the pedagogical implications, the limitations during the process, and some suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant concepts to this research. It starts with an introduction to the definition and types of idioms. I also describe the connection of the language classroom with the cultural background of idioms. Then, Chapter 2 addresses some elements of teaching idioms, for example, teachers' decision-making and the challenges around idioms. Finally, I will present pedagogical implications such as deciding which idioms to include, the role of context, and teaching activities.

2.2 Wrap Your Head around Idioms

The main topic of this research is idioms, therefore, it is indispensable to explain what they entail. The following section is divided into two parts, offering details of idioms. The first one reviews some definitions and some characteristics as well. The second part is related to the types of idioms from several authors' views.

2.2.1 Definition of Idioms

Several authors refer to the concept of idioms as a *fixed multi-word phrase* (Vasiljevic, 2015), an *expression* (Cooper, 1999, Kiran, 2015), or *conventionalized expression* (Irujo, 1986). Moreover, the interpretation of idioms cannot be understood by their words due to their figurative connotation (Manzoor & Kiran, 2015; Vasiljevic, 2015; Zyzik, 2011). This description is similar to that of Talib (2015); he points out that idioms are a set of words with a unique denotation that is impossible to translate literally, particularly when they have a political, historical, or cultural background.

These expressions are "the patrimony of a culture and tradition; they represent centuries of life in a determined sociolinguistic context and geographical setting and are therefore the heart and soul of a linguistic community" (Pinnavaia, 2002, p. 2). In a similar vein, Cakir (2011) claims that idioms reflect the traditions, beliefs, values, and customs of

society; for example, the idiom *break the ice* (i.e., relieve tension or initiate friendship) began to be used in the 1580s, and it is related to the creation of passages for ships by carving the ice. During winter, the majority of ships got stuck in the ice, and people *break the ice* to make routes for trade ships (Michel, 2016). Some of these expressions maintain a historical or social story. For this research, I will refer to idioms using the following terminology: *fixed multi-word phrase* (Vasiljevic, 2015), *expression* (Cooper, 1999, Kiran, 2015), and/or *conventionalized expression* (Irujo, 1986). Following this, I will consider the definition of Talib (2015) because he developed a clear and concise explanation, i.e., a unique expression with cultural and historical background and whose meaning cannot be literally translated.

Grant (2007) considers these expressions not grammatically flexible because it is impossible to change their structure. The idiom *John kicked the bucket* is unfeasible to use in a passive voice since its meaning will be taken literally *the bucket was kicked by John* (Gibbs, 1986). In contrast, Abolfazli and Sadeghi (2017) note that it is possible to create minimal modifications in the order of words. The idioms *we rolled out the red carpet for the king*, and *the red carpet was rolled out for the king*, illustrate the syntactic flexibility that few idioms tend to have (Gibbs, 1986). Then, the authors (Abolfazli & Sadeghi, 2017; Grant, 2007) presented different perceptions regarding the syntactic modifications that these conventionalized expressions can have. In general, they are unique phrases that convey figurative meanings. In some cases, it is possible to modify their grammatical structure, but not in all of them.

There are idioms from several areas: science and technology (e.g., *hold the wire*), body parts (e.g., *break a leg*), colors (e.g., *out of the blue*), animals (e.g., *the elephant in the room*), history (e.g., *turn a blind ey*e) (Hümmer & Stathi, 2006) among others. The following section addresses the possible types of these fixed multi-word phrases.

2.2.2 Types of Idioms

There are several categories for idioms, Wingfield (1968) suggests the following four broad divisions: the first group is for the expressions that had been culture-bound at one time but are not anymore (e.g., short cut, meaning an alternative way to go to a place). Despite that, they are still part of the lexis of the language, and many phrasal verbs fall into this category. The second category is when the metaphor of the expression is not difficult to interpret (e.g., He lost his head completely). It refers to becoming angry and losing self-control because the person loses his head and cannot think clearly. The third division deals with the expressions from social and professional activities (e.g., He saw red). This example is originated from bullfighting because people used to wave a red cape to enrage the bull. The last group represents the culture-bound expressions (e.g., dirt-poor person). It corresponds to a person that is suffering from extreme poverty because, in the past, only rich people used to have wooden floors, while the poor community had a bare floor.

Furthermore, Makkai (1972) classifies these phrases into the following two groups: idioms of encoding and idioms of decoding. The former is when the connotation of the expression is expected, for example, lend a hand that refers to helping someone. The latter represents idioms that are difficult to deduct the meaning, for instance, white elephant (i.e., an expensive item that is useless). The idioms are organized based on their complexity in interpreting the denotation. Mäntylä (2004) groups them into three types according to their transparency. The first category is transparent, which indicates a stable relationship between the literal and figurative meaning (to see the light). The second one is semi-transparent, which refers to a possible connection between the literal and figurative connotation, but it is not transparent (break the ice). The last category is opaque that emphasizes the non-existence relation between the literal and figurative connotations (someone's cup of tea). The transparent grouping from Mäntylä (2004) and the encoding classification from Makkai (1972) are similar since both represent a clear connection between the literal and figurative

meanings. The opaque and decoding types are also related to their difficulty in discovering the hidden meaning.

According to Badger (n.d.), it is possible to categorize idioms into different types (as cited in Nurul & Rochmawati, 2017). First, the simile idioms compare two objects or actions (e.g., like, as). The phrase busy as a bee, which refers to someone who has a considerable amount of work, is an example of this category. Second, the phrasal verbs idioms are the expressions that have a combination of a verb + a participle or preposition, and when they are in a sentence appear as a single verb. For example, she will get away with stealing that car that represents the avoidance of punishment. The metaphorical idioms are the third category and also compare two objects and actions, but these do not use like or as to differentiate two ideas (e.g., carrot and stick). It denotes the combination of reward and punishment to persuade the desired behavior. Fourth, aphorisms are phrases that communicate morals, and they are popularly known as sayings. A famous one is from Benjamin Franklin, which is life's tragedy is that we get old too soon and wise too late. Finally, the cultural and historical idioms represent events, for instance, honest Abe, which indicates the legendary honesty of the 16th president of the United States (Abraham Lincoln). Based on the purpose of this research, it was essential to describe the different categorizations of these phrases. The following section addresses the connection of culture in language teaching.

2.3 Building Bridges between Culture and Language Teaching

Since idioms are expressions that "have rich cultural connotations" (Ping, 2018, p. 295), it is necessary to understand the connection between culture and language teaching. Brown (1994) points out that culture and language cannot be separated because they complement each other. Jiang (2000) supports this idea with her study, which explored the cultural context of some words. Her participants were twenty-eight native Chinese and twenty-eight native English speakers, and she used a word associations survey in Chinese

and another one in English. In her results, she confirms that language and culture are interrelated. For instance, the word 'food' native Chinese speakers linked it with rice, noodles, and meat, while the native English speakers connected it with hamburgers, ice cream, and pizza. People transmit their culture, ways of living, and thinking while using their native language. In her study, Jiang (2000) developed the following metaphor to interpret this connection:

> If we compare society to a swimming pool, language is a swimming skill and culture is the water. When both are present, people swim well (communicate successfully). They swim confidently and rapidly when they are familiar with the water (i.e., within their native culture), but cautiously and slowly when it is unfamiliar to them (within a foreign culture). (p. 332)

This metaphor illustrates how each element is necessary for achieving successful communication. In contrast to Brown (1994) and Jiang (2000), Alptekin (2002) identifies this connection as an element that foreign language students need to succeed in the community of the target language if they are in that community. He claims that students need to know the linguistic units and culture as well "to convey appropriate, coherent and strategically-effective meanings for the native speaker" (p. 58). In the same way, several authors (Doganay & Maksut, 2013; Scarino, 2010; Yağiz & Izadpanah, 2013) agree that if learners learn a language without knowing the cultural background, they might misemploy the language due to the influence that culture has on people's thinking and communication.

Doganay and Maksut (2013) explored students' attitudes towards the inclusion of culturally based activities at the Language School at Süleyman Derimel University. The activities were discussions, role-plays, and dialogues related to culture. Their study also aimed to analyze the effect of these activities on the eighty-two students' communicative and linguistic competence. The researchers applied questionnaires to discover the participants'

attitudes towards culture-based tasks. They also used a pre-test and a post-test two and a half months later to evaluate the possible improvement of the students. The findings suggested that most of the participants had positive attitudes towards these cultural activities. Based on the test results, the students showed an improvement in their communicative and linguistic competence. Researchers note that the role of culture in language teaching is essential due to its benefits. However, it is something that needs to be planned and designed.

The previous information shows a possible connection between culture and language. It also demonstrates that it is unreasonable to learn a language without knowing the cultural language that native speakers tend to use while speaking. This connection will help learners develop communication skills; Since idioms are part of the culture, the following section informs why it is fundamental to teach idioms in an English classroom.

2.4 Digging around Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Idioms

The way teachers perceive their work, materials, or anything related to their teaching practice impacts their professional development (Woon & Goh, 2016). The following studies are part of the scarce research related to teachers' perceptions concerning English idioms. Although they are different in socio-cultural, educational, and geographical contexts, they illustrate how these fixed multi-word phrases influence their professional practice.

Quynh (2012) investigated the conditions of teaching idioms in a foreign context at a Vietnamese university. He concentrated on how teachers select these conventionalized expressions and teaching methodologies as well. There were nine English teachers and fifty-six pre-service teachers as participants. All were part of the Faculty of English Education and had from five to seventeen years of experience. The researcher decided to use questionnaires with open and close-items, interviews, and email-guided reflective writing. The findings revealed that 89% of the teachers believe that students are motivated and enjoy learning these fixed multi-word phrases. The majority of the participants select adequate expressions based

on students' English level and integrate them into skill-based activities. It emphasizes that teachers should teach them at beginner levels because learners will have the opportunity to improve idiomatic competence as they pass through the different levels.

Maisa and Karunakaran (2013) conducted an inquiry to explore the importance of English idioms to ESL students based on teachers' beliefs. The participants were five English teachers from Undergraduate Colleges in Hyderabad. The main instrument for this study was a questionnaire with twenty-five closed-opened items and some with a Likert scale. The findings indicated that the usage of the correct teaching strategies helps learners to improve speaking fluency. Most of the teachers agreed that idioms are crucial in language teaching, and the feasible way to teach them is within context.

Mansoor (2015) carried out a study to discover English teachers' views of teaching and learning these expressions. This investigation considered the following three main aspects: first, the difficulties around idioms; second, the connection between idioms and culture; third, methods for teaching idioms. For this study, the researcher created a survey with eight open-ended items. Ten native and non-native English speakers from the Intensive English Center at St. Cloud State University were the participants. The results showed that all the members believed that idioms are significant in the English language teaching field for their frequency in any discourse. For example, 70% of the participants considered these fixed multi-word phrases as difficult for learners, while 30% believed the opposite. All the teachers agreed that there was a powerful connection between idioms and culture. Finally, the participants decided that the combination of explicit and implicit teaching content is the most appropriate teaching technique.

Additionally, Nabil (2017) explored the perspectives of seventy-five Arabic teachers of formulaic language. They were twenty-five males and fifty females with different teaching experiences. This study aimed to analyze the impact of these conventionalized expressions

on students' language proficiency and the importance of idioms in language teaching. She developed mixed-method research using questionnaires, observations, and interviews. The results demonstrated that 72% of the participants agreed that formulaic language and idioms are fundamental aspects of teaching, and 70% of the teachers believed that these cultural phrases impact the language proficiency of students. It concluded that 90% of the sample considered that these expressions are part of the language culture and must be included in the classroom.

The previous information is part of the limited number of studies related to teachers' perceptions regarding idioms. The findings demonstrate that English teachers consider as necessary the inclusion of idioms in the language classroom. Even though they are complex linguistic features for students to comprehend, they are helpful to develop communication skills. Due to the frequency of these conventionalized expressions, some teachers tend to contemplate it crucial to teach them; However, some of them might prefer to avoid them. In the next section, I will address the benefits of including these idioms in the language classroom.

2.4.1 Benefits of Teaching Idioms

Idioms are frequent expressions used by native speakers, and it is impossible not to hear one of them in everyday conversations (Cakir, 2011). Students will encounter them either in formal or informal speech or in daily activities such as watching movies, reading books, and poetry (Brenner, 2003; Manzoor & Kiran, 2015; Nurul & Rochmawati 2017; O'Dell & Mc Cathy, 2010). Pollio et al. (1977) developed a study to analyze around 200,000 linguistic items by students and adults from psychological therapies, political debates, and written compositions. They counted the times the participants used idioms and concluded that most English speakers use 4.08 of these expressions per minute. Based on this study, Copper (1998) determines that "the use of idioms would be 6,860 per week and 356,720 per

year. Over a lifetime of 60 years, a person would use about 20 million idioms" (p. 255). In addition, Brenner (2003) calculates that the English language has over 10,000 idioms. As a consequence of the frequent use of these fixed multi-word phrases in oral discourse, they represent the spirit of the language (Elkilic, 2008). Because students find idioms in any speech, they should receive attention in EFL language programs to improve students' communication skills (Al-Houti & Aldaihani, 2018; Chen & Lai, 2013; Roberto de Caro, 2009). Even though the frequency of idioms in daily communication is significant, there are more beneficial aspects.

One benefit is that helping students to be aware of the existence of these expressions during their language course, therefore, allows them to see different views of life and realities by understanding how the speakers of the target language convey feelings or ideas (Cakir, 2011; Liontas, 2017; Samani & Hashemian, 2012). The main reason of teaching idioms is to help students to improve their productive skills. Even though these phrases seem not necessary to achieve communication, they are evidence of a proficient speaker. Cowie et al. (1975) point out that "the accurate and appropriate use of English expressions which are in the broadest sense idiomatic is one distinguishing mark of a native command of the language and a reliable measure of the proficiency of foreign learners" (p. 4). Similar to these authors, Beloussova (2015), Strutz (1996), and Wray (2000) emphasize that the usage and understanding of these conventionalized expressions represent communicative proficiency in the language. It is supported by a study conducted by Roberto De Caro (2009), where he examined the effect of teaching idioms using dialogues and readings on improving the students' oral skills. The sample was eleven Electronic Engineering students from the University Santo Tomas, located in Colombia. The researcher designed three workshops to assist students in using idioms, improving their conversational skills, and increasing their vocabulary. The findings revealed that learners improved their communicative skills by learning and using these expressions.

In addition, Boers et al. (2006) state that if students learn idioms in chunks, they will avoid conversation hesitation. This will improve their fluency, and they might achieve native-like performance. Cooper (1999) also explains that avoiding the "use of idioms gives the language a bookish, stilted, unimaginative tone. Learning to use idioms is therefore extremely important for achieving command of authentic language" (p. 258). Teaching these fixed multi-word phrases will help students to develop communication skills to participate in different formal or informal contexts (Dixon, 1994; Hinkel, 2017). Lundblom and Woods (2012) note that idioms appear in academic contexts as written texts, readings, and vocabulary. Even though there are several motives to teach idioms, there might be some teachers who prefer to avoid them in language classrooms. In the following section, I will address the reasons why teachers do not include these conventionalized expressions in their teaching practice.

2.4.2 Teachers' Reasons Not to Teach Idioms

Even though teaching idioms has benefits, some English professors prefer not to include them. Some teachers avoid them because they consider that students learn those fixed multi-word phrases outside the classroom by interacting with native speakers. Therefore, there is no need to spend time on something they possibly acquire in an authentic context (Cakir, 2011; Liontas, 2017). Another reason is that EFL teachers either purposely or accidentally avoid teaching idioms for the extra time and effort required (Cakir, 2011). Doganay and Maksut (2013) also state that it is necessary to consider the preparation of lessons plan, materials for teaching these expressions, and evaluation of students' improvement or outcomes.

Furthermore, some teachers maintain that they prefer not to concentrate on these conventionalized expressions for the lack of material. Several authors agree that idioms have been ignored as a topic in printed materials (Khan & Can Daşkin, 2014; Al-Khawaldeh et al., 2016; Wray, 2000). Consequently, teachers who follow the content of the textbook seem not

to incorporate idioms. Similarly, Irujo (1986) argues the following regarding the lack of material in the instructional books:

> Many second-language teaching materials either ignore idioms entirely or relegate them to the "other expressions" section of vocabulary lists, without providing exercises or other aids to learning. Typically, an idiom will appear in the introductory reading or dialogue, a definition, translation or example will be provided in the margin or notes, and the idiom will then appear again in the vocabulary list. These are obviously not sufficient aids to learning, unless the teacher provides additional exercises and practice. (p. 237)

Thus, the principal reason teachers do not include these expressions in their language classrooms is the absence of idioms in the textbooks. However, when these fixed multi-word expressions are explicitly in the materials, they are in sections as 'vocabulary lists' that are not enough for students to comprehend their usage or meaning. It appears to be significant to improve in some curricular aspects (i.e., how to include these phrases in the language program), materials development, and idioms assessment (Liontas, 2017). More research is needed to raise awareness of the advantages of including idioms in their teaching practice. Another reason for instructors not to consider these conventionalized expressions is related to the difficulties of teaching them. The upcoming section offers some of the challenges around teaching and learning them.

2.4.2.1 Challenges of Teaching and Learning Idioms in an EFL Context

Teaching and learning idioms in the language classroom is one of the most complicated tasks because some teachers consider that these expressions are complex to teach, instead of helping students, they create more problems by confusing them (Liontas, 2017; Tompkins, 2001; Zarei & Pour, 2013). According to Cooper (1998), some language instructors avoid these cultural expressions because students have difficulties interpreting the meaning or understanding the correct use of idioms. However, one day students will see or

hear one fixed multi-word expression, and they will ask the teacher for the connotation; therefore, it is impossible to ignore these phrases.

In addition, Irujo (1986) emphasizes three reasons as to why these conventionalized expressions are difficult to teach. First, idioms are non-literal expressions and complex items for students because it is impossible to comprehend the real meaning considering each of their linguistic units (Chuang, 2013; Mansoor, 2015). The most uncomplicated idioms to instruct are the ones that are similar to pupils' native language because students tend to comprehend the connotation faster than with the expressions that are different from their first language (Cakir, 2011). An example is the idiom *break the ice* that is similar to the one in Spanish *romper el hielo*. Second, exposure is fundamental for students to develop the ability to understand and know how to use idioms. In EFL contexts, some students do not have the opportunity to interact with people, and the contact they have with idioms is watching movies, videos, or reading. This absence of exposure affects the learning process. Third, students tend to have complications when learning the correct use of idioms due to their complexity. Teachers need to make students aware of the appropriateness and grammatical constraints of idioms. An example of this is that "you can tell your friends that you did not sleep a wink last night, but you cannot tell them that you slept a wink" (Irujo, 1986, p. 237). It is crucial to demonstrate to students the precise usage of these fixed multi-word phrases to avoid misunderstandings.

Najarzadegan and Ketabi (2015) analyzed the difficulties when teaching idioms based on sixty Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions from the English faculty of the Iranian Azad university. The researchers applied questionnaires with nine Likert scale items and ten yes-no questions to obtain data. The results demonstrated that the participants perceived teaching idioms as complicated for the absence of the topic in the syllabi and materials. The most relevant finding was that none of the teachers were familiar with the literature on how to teach them. The researchers point out that it is necessary to inform teachers on the instruction of these expressions to improve idiomatic competence in the language.

18

Similar to this research, Khan and Can Daşkin (2014) explored EFL teacher-trainees' perceptions. They focused on attitudes in idiom instruction and on the teachers' idiom knowledge. The participants were sixty-eight teachers taking the course materials evaluation and development in ELT at the state university in Turkey. For this, the researchers evaluated the idiom teaching materials designed by the EFL teachers. They also applied questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The findings demonstrated that the designed materials by teachers were not suitable to improve the students' idiomatic competence, and it could be related to the lack of teachers' experience in teaching idioms. However, the majority of the participants showed positive attitudes towards teaching these expressions. These two inquiries show that the teachers' lack of knowledge of these conventionalized expressions is one of the principal difficulties.

Some studies investigated the difficulties when learning idioms. Elkiliç (2008) examined the understanding of opaque and transparent expressions by seventy-five Turkish students from the Department of English Language and Literature at Kafkas University. Thirty-five were from the intermediate level, and thirty-six were from advanced. The researcher developed a test with forty English idioms and forty Turkish idioms. According to the findings, the students comprehended more easily the transparent phrases than the opaque ones. These results demonstrated that the struggles for students depend on the complexity of noticing the connotation. The researcher noted that English teachers should not avoid idioms in the language classroom, but they need to receive more attention. In a similar vein, Pimenova (2011) developed research in which she mentions five challenges that students tend to face while learning these conventionalized expressions: "A) unknown vocabulary and unfamiliar idioms; B) no analog idioms in L1; C) cultural differences; D) lack of experience dealing with idioms; E) lack of the broad context of a given idiom" (p. 119). Some teachers may not know how to include these expressions in the language classroom; it raises a significant problem for instructors (Najarzadegan and Ketabi (2015).

Saleh and Zakaria (2013) explored the difficulties that forty Libyan students encounter while trying to understand idioms. The researchers implemented a questionnaire to examine the strategies used by students to overcome some possible complications. The findings indicated that 55% of the students consider opaque expressions the main challenge due to their cultural or historical hidden meaning. In addition, for the participants, the most effective strategy was guessing from context. The second most effective technique was discussing and analyzing the idiom. Likewise, Al-Khwaldeh et al. (2016) developed a study to examine students' perceptions on the importance of learning these fixed multi-word phrases, the difficulties they encounter when learning them, and the strategies they use to understand these expressions. The sample consisted of a hundred fifty students from the BA in the English language at the Hashemite University in Jordan. The researchers implemented a test to evaluate students' idiomatic competence and a questionnaire to discover the difficulties and strategies they used. The test results showed that even when the participants were part of the BA in English teaching, they had a low idiomatic competency in comprehending and producing idioms. In the strategies, 69% of the students confirmed that deducing from context is the most suitable technique.

The previous information confirms that idioms are complex fixed multi-word phrases to teach and learn for proficient and non-proficient speakers. However, there are certain aspects that the teachers consider challenging in the language classroom when teaching these expressions. In the following section, I will suggest some elements that English teachers can contemplate when including idioms.

2.5 A Free Bit of Advice on Pedagogical Implications

According to Brenner (2003), there are approximately 10,000 idioms in the English language, and it would be impossible to teach all those expressions to students. In the previous studies, it is noticeable that idioms are challenging expressions to comprehend for their hidden connotation. Some teachers might not know how to incorporate these fixed multi-word phrases in their professional practice (Khan & Can Daşkin, 2014; Najarzadegan

& Ketabi (2015). Because of this, the following ideas inform on some tasks that instructors can use to help students discover the meaning of these expressions and overcome the possible difficulties. This is supported by the fact the way teachers develop and construct tasks guides students in the language classroom to succeed in the learning and production of idioms (Roberto de Caro, 2009).

Irujo (1986) suggests the following aspects to consider when selecting which conventionalized expressions to include in the classroom. First, instructors need to choose the idioms frequently used in conversation. For this, teachers will research academic websites or articles to identify the most common ones. The second option is that the more transparent the phrase is, the easier it will be for students to comprehend the meaning. Then the appropriateness of idioms is essential, and it refers to the ones that will be useful for students, depending on the contexts where they commonly interact. The following aspect is to consider idioms that contain simple vocabulary forms because they will be simpler for students to understand. For example, *a needle in a haystack* is more complex for its un-common linguistic items than a *piece of cake*. Finally, it is necessary to consider similar expressions to the students' native language idioms, e.g., *break the ice* and *romper el hielo* in Spanish. Likewise, Cooper (1998) shares the same criteria as Irujo (1986) when selecting these conventionalized expressions to teach: frequent cultural phrases that will be useful for students, avoid grammatical and lexical difficulties, and consider transparency and similarity to students' first language. Apart from choosing idioms, it is also essential to consider teaching them within the context and appropriate activities to improve students' idiomatic competence, which I will present in the following sections.

2.5.1 Importance of Teaching Idioms within Context

When teaching idioms, context plays a crucial role (Cakir, 2011). According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (n.d.), context represents the "parts of a discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning." Then, it refers to any piece of information that will help students interpret the connotation of the fixed multi-word phrase

(Thornbury, 2005). Several studies identified guessing from context as the most used strategy by students. Liontas (2003) investigated the effect of this tactic in idiom understanding on twenty-eight English native speakers of a Spanish course from a southwestern University in the United States. The researcher created two different experimental tasks for the participants: one with no context and the other within it. The results showed that the absence of context has a negative impact on the interpretation of these expressions. Therefore, the teaching role of idioms is fundamental to interpret their connotation and help learners achieve comprehension. The researcher concluded that more research is needed to understand the benefits of learning these fixed multi-word phrases. Then, teachers need to include them with the appropriate instruction tools to help students achieve comprehension.

Rohani et al. (2012) analyzed the effect of context on the techniques that EFL students implement to understand idioms. There were seventy intermediate English students from the Shahid Bahomar University of Kerman, Iran. For the objective of this research, the participants were divided into the following groups: first, an animated cartoon with twenty-three fixed multi-word phrases was presented to five students; the second group with five participants was exposed to the same material but in a written form. Both groups implemented think-aloud protocols (TAP) while figuring out the connotation of the idioms. The data from these two groups showed eight main strategies that students used (translation, focusing on keywords, paraphrasing, reference to literal meaning, reference to context, reference to the background knowledge, visualization, combined strategies). Therefore, the researchers used these data to develop a questionnaire where sixty participants responded to it. There were thirty of them watching the cartoon and the other half while reading the script. The results confirmed the strong effect that context had on strategies used by students while processing idioms. The researchers argue that contextualizing these expressions has a notable influence on the way students process the information. The construction of an appropriate context benefits the learning process, specifically the understanding of idioms.

Asl (2013) explored sixty Iranian EFL intermediate students. The objectives were to discover the effect of context when learning idioms and the students' retention when learning these expressions. The researchers divided the students into three different groups, with twenty students in each one. Group 1 was experimental, and the idioms were taught within an extended context using short stories. Group 2 was also experimental, but the phrases were introduced with a limited context. Group 3 was a control group, and the idioms were taught without context. The participants answered a test after the sessions to evaluate the effect of this technique and a post-test two weeks later to examine students' retention. The results demonstrated that group 1 obtained higher scores on both tests than groups 2 and 3. The findings revealed that the role of this technique in teaching these conventionalized expressions is fundamental when students intend to find the connotation of the idioms.

These studies highlight the value of teaching idioms within a context because the connotation of these fixed multi-word phrases is easier to find when they are introduced within texts or dialogues. The lack of context creates problems in understanding them (Adkins, 1968; Liontas, 2003); therefore, it helps students comprehend the hidden meaning and avoid misunderstandings. In the following section, I will approach some appropriate activities for teaching idioms.

2.5.2 Activities for Teaching Idioms

This section contains information on some suitable activities when teaching idioms. They are not just for advanced levels, but teachers should also include them at beginner levels. Irujo (1986) points out the following recommendations based on students' proficiency:

- Basic level: Integrate idioms with familiar vocabulary for students.

- Intermediate level: Encourage learners to find fixed multi-word phrases in discourse.

- Advanced level: Motivate students to interact using these expressions.

In addition, teachers need to engage learners in purposeful projects, real-life activities instead of filling in the blank exercises or completing boring lists that interfere in communication development (Liontas, 2015). The instructors need to select different interactions that encourage learners to use idioms (Boers et al., 2007; Boers et al., 2009; Szczepaniak & Lew, 2011). The following sections present some relevant tasks that teachers can implement in the EFL classroom.

2.5.2.1 Role Plays

Role-plays are suitable activities that offer learners the opportunity to use these expressions in real conversations and receive feedback on their correct use (Cooper, 1998; Irujo, 1986; Liontas, 2015). This idea of role plays is supported by a study by Abolfazli and Sadeghi (2017). They explored the impact of four different teaching modes (short movie clip, sentence-use, definition, and free role-play) in teaching idioms in forty-seven English language students from an EFL context. The researchers applied a pre-test to establish the students' knowledge of these fixed multi-word phrases. After one month of instruction, the pupils answered the post-test to see their possible improvement. The tests were the same and contained forty-five multiple-choice questions. The results showed that the technique of free role-playing was the most beneficial for students because they were required to interact and work cooperatively with one another. It proves that it is crucial to encourage learners to practice and produce idioms in authentic conversations.

2.5.2.2 Charades

Another helpful task is proposed by Vasiljevic (2015), who recommends that dramatizing idioms is a suitable activity because it helps students to practice the expressions that the teacher has taught. For this, the learners are divided into teams of four or five depending on how many they are; then, the teacher facilitates five idioms to each group and needs to consider conventionalized expressions that seem to be dramatized easily. Teachers need to select idioms that learners are familiar with to help them feel confident and not lost

while doing the activity. After this, the pupils take turns to communicate the phrases by using body language or gestures, and the other team has to guess which idiom is. This activity encourages students to use cognitive skills by retrieving previous knowledge and identifying what their classmates are trying to convey. This activity also motivates them by having an interactive time while learning.

2.5.2.3 Sharing Experiences

This activity is suggested by Trusler (2015), where the pupils share personal experiences. For the objectives of this task, students are divided into groups; the number of members will vary depending on the size of the classroom. The learners receive a list of idioms given by the teacher, and they select only one expression. After this, they have some time to think about a story where the conventionalized expression appears to be applied. If they do not recall an anecdote, they can invent it. Sharing this type of experience helps students keep the material in their minds because it is meaningful. Talking with their classmates is a way to apply the learned content in real situations.

2.5.2.4 Posters

This assignment has the objective to hang posters of idioms around the walls of the classroom. Trusler (2015) claims that being able to visualize something daily is beneficial for retention because students will become familiar with them. For this activity, the teachers can create the posters by themselves or assign the task to learners. Figure 1 represents an example of how students would develop this task:
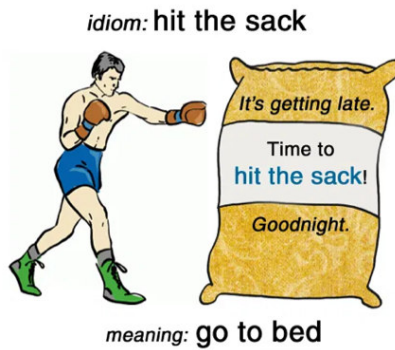
Figure 1: Poster of the idiom hit the sack.
(https://images.app.goo.gl/UnUyFaTn4T1kFWLW7)

This poster contains the idiom, an example within context, the connotation, and a literal drawing. However, teachers and students have the freedom to modify it if it is necessary, for example, the theme can be related to colors, seasons, or holidays depending on the class' topic or pupils' interests. This assignment is successful if teachers change the posters two or three times during the semester. This can shed light on students' minds by encouraging them to be surrounded by different idioms.

2.5.2.5 All in the Family Idioms

This task is recommended by Liontas (2015), where students will receive a listing of four conventionalized expressions and a list of variants. The teachers need to guide learners before this activity by including idioms within context to help them comprehend the meaning and the correct use of these expressions. Figure 2 shows an example of this assignment.

Idioms	Variants
1. to kick the bucket	A. to hit the ceiling (4)
2. to let the cat out of the bag	B. to bite the dust (1)
3. to feed someone a line	C. to spill the beans (2)
4. to drive someone up a wall	D. to pull someone's leg (3)

Figure 2: All in the family idioms (Liontas, 2015, p. 644).

This activity increases students' knowledge of specific idioms and the different options to express one idea and can also be carried out by asking pupils to connect the opposite meanings. The teachers can modify the task based on their learners' needs and proficiency levels.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter contained the literature of significant concepts to this research. The objective of this section was to guide the reader through the principal studies and theories around teaching English idioms. In the beginning, I described the definition of these expressions, the types, and the connection they have with culture within the classroom. I also presented the reasons teachers teach or do not teach these phrases. Then, I recommended some aspects to consider when including idioms, such as the context and students' language level. Finally, I concluded with some recommendations by some authors regarding techniques and activities to teach idioms.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The research methodology "guides the researcher in deciding what type of data is required for a study and which data collection tools will be most appropriate for the purpose of his/her study" (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016, p. 52). This chapter aims to describe the methodology implemented to carry out this study. This section firstly presents the objectives of this investigation and the research questions. Secondly, it offers a justification of the research paradigm and methodology. Thirdly, I will describe the questionnaire and interview that were applied to gather the data. Then, this chapter continues with an explanation of how the data were managed to be analyzed. I will finally include some information on the context, participants, research ethics, positionality, and a general conclusion.

3.2 Research Questions

The research questions that guide the present study are the following:

RQ1: What are the EFL teachers' perceptions of teaching English idioms in a Mexican university?

RQ2: What are the factors that influence the EFL teachers' decisions to teach or not to teach idioms?

The previous research questions explore the following aspects: how teachers perceive these fixed multi-word phrases in the language classroom; teachers' knowledge of idioms; if they teach them; why they do or do not include them in their teaching practice; identify the difficulties when teaching these expressions; and the possible teaching strategies they have used or think could work. For answering these research questions, the study followed a qualitative paradigm based on a phenomenology method. The data were obtained from five participants through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

3.3 Qualitative Paradigm

A paradigm is defined as a pattern that guides the interpretation or meaning of research data (Kivunja & Bawa, 2017). This selection process has "important implications for every decision made in the research process" (Kivunja & Bawa, 2017, p. 26) because it represents the beliefs of the researchers which directs the investigation (Soraya, 2019). Therefore, the type of model offers a structure to the research and direction to accomplish its objectives.

This research was based on a qualitative view because it "is concerned with subjective opinions, experiences, and feelings of individuals, and thus the explicit goal of the research is to explore the participants' views of the situation being studied" (Dornyei, 2007, p. 38). That definition suggests that this paradigm is related to perceptions because it describes how people see their world from their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I decided to follow a qualitative design to understand and analyze the perceptions, experiences, and beliefs of the participants concerning teaching English idioms.

The main strength of this paradigm is that it allows researchers to obtain information and descriptions of people's values, experiences, and views (Mack et al., 2005). In this type of paradigm, researchers tend to use data collection techniques with open-ended questions, which present the opportunity for participants to answer with freedom in their own words, rather than using closed-ended items (Mack et al., 2005). The analysis process of the qualitative data "takes many forms, but it is fundamentally a nonmathematical analytical procedure that involves examining the meaning of people's words and actions" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 121). Researchers must analyze and interpret the data through techniques that raise voices, experiences, and opinions. I selected a qualitative design because it will guide me to accomplish the objectives of this study by answering the research questions. I will analyze the views and perspectives of the sample to understand and comprehend their experiences on the phenomenon under study. Next, I will present the research method that guided this investigation.

3.4 Phenomenology

This study was based on phenomenology because it is implemented to define "the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (Creswell & Poth, 2007, p. 121). Likewise, it investigates experiences to understand the way people perceive the world (Neubauer et al., 2019). The aim of this type of method is "to penetrate to the essential meaning of human experience, to focus on the phenomenon or "thing" in order to generate understanding from within" (Richards, 2003, p. 18). This method explores human perspectives based on their experiences.

Creswell and Poth (2007) report the following main characteristics of phenomenology which are related to this study. First, it is necessary to concentrate only on one idea and I focused on one main phenomenon, that is, the teaching of idioms. However, I studied more elements to accomplish the stated objectives of this research (e.g., the link between language teaching and culture, teaching materials, and strategies, among others). Second, this type of method explores the situation with a group of people who have shared the same experience, and the number of participants can be from three to fifteen. In this research, I explored five English teachers' perceptions that were from the same public university. Therefore, they have lived the same experience of not having enough material for teaching idioms. Third, according to Creswell and Poth (2007) in a phenomenological method, interviews are the principal source of data. Fourth, the data analysis is through the creation of themes or units of meaning. For this study, I coded the information to understand how and what participants have experienced.

The above information shows that this study contains some of the main characteristics of phenomenology. Because of the nature of this research, following this method permits me to comprehend how English idioms are perceived by Mexican EFL teachers. Following this, I will have the opportunity to analyze teachers' experiences to understand their positionality on the inclusion of these conventionalized expressions in their teaching practice. Then, I will

obtain valuable information to define the phenomenon under study. In the following section, I address the data collection techniques that were used.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques

Questionnaires and interviews were implemented to collect the data to answer the research questions of this study. In the following sections, each technique will be explained and justified.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a written technique with items in which respondents react by selecting one answer from several options or having the freedom to write their response (Brown, 2001). Gay and Airasian (2000) define it as a set of questions associated with an investigation topic. Questionnaires tend to include the following two types of questions: closed-ended items that request the participant to decide between two or more options (e.g., multiple-choice items, true-false items), and opened-ended that asks the participants to respond based on their opinion (e.g., fill in the blank, explain an anecdote) (Griffee, 2012). Moreover, questionnaires can produce data regarding the participants' age, gender, occupation, habits, attitudes, interests, and beliefs (Dornyei, 2007).

I created a questionnaire with opened-ended questions because they tend to produce more information than just true or false (Griffee, 2012). I developed seven questions to gather information on the participants' age, level of education, English proficiency level, and teaching experience (see Appendix 1). The participants received the questionnaire via email, and they had one week to respond and send it back. The English teachers were free to send me an email for any possible doubt they could have while answering it. The implementation of this technique in the present study intended to know the academic information of the participants. I used the data from the questionnaires to describe the participants' backgrounds.

3.5.2 Interview

The second technique was an interview, which "has structure, purpose, and form, and can be defined (usually) as a person-to-person structures conversation for the purpose of finding and/or creating meaningful data which has to be collected, analyzed, and validated" (Griffee, 2012, p. 159). Kvale (1983) defines that the objective of interviews is to obtain information on how the interviewee perceives and interprets the phenomenon. More specifically, I decided to apply semi-structured interviews with predetermined open-ended questions to have the freedom to ask for clarification or to obtain more information on the phenomenon under study (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995).

The interview contained twelve open-ended questions to guide the topics for developing a natural conversation with the participants. The questions were divided into three categories: language teaching and culture, idioms in the classroom, and teaching strategies (see Appendix 2). The first category had the objective to identify if teachers perceived a connection between language and culture. It also discovers how the participants include culture in the language classroom. The purpose of this section was to identify if the teachers pointed out something related to these fixed multi-word phrases spontaneously without influence from the researcher. The second part was to explore the teachers' apprehension on idioms and their opinion on the integration of these expressions in the EFL classroom. The last section was to identify the possible difficulties the participants have faced when instructing idioms with the teaching materials or strategies they have used.

The interview was piloted to identify the possible limitations or errors and modify them before it is implemented (Kvale, 1996). This idea is supported by Turner (2010), who states that "a pilot test should be conducted with participants that have similar interests as those that will participate in the implemented study. The pilot test will also assist the researchers with the refinement of research questions" (p. 757). Therefore, I contacted an EFL teacher from the same language center to conduct the pilot interview. He provided feedback concerning the clarity of the questions and the language used. Then, I made some

changes in items that were repetitive, leading, or that were not clear. His observations facilitated the process for the development of an appropriate data collection technique.

Regarding the data collection process, interviews were conducted through video conference due to the pandemic of COVID-19. On the one hand, an advantage of this type of interview is that it offers the opportunity for real-time communication with audio and video (Mann & Stewart, 2000). On the other hand, a disadvantage is that online interviews are technologically dependent. It means that it is possible if both people have high-speed internet connections, camera quality, and microphones (Nehls et al., 2015). The interviews were audio-recorded to have the opportunity to catch and identify the necessary details for the data analysis (Dornyei, 2007). The interviews were in English and lasted from seven to twenty minutes. The time difference was for the differences in the participants' personalities. An example is that some of the teachers described with more detail their experiences than the others. The data obtained from this technique made it possible to include the participants' perspectives and experiences in this study, which were the core elements to answer the research questions (see Appendix 3). In the next section, I illustrate the context where this study took place.

3.6 Context

As previously stated, this research was conducted at the Language Center at the UACJ, Chihuahua, Mexico. It is a public university, which has four institutes (engineering and technology., architecture, design, and art., biomedical sciences., and social sciences and administration). In total, the university has five campuses around the city, one for each discipline that was mentioned and a multidisciplinary campus. According to the *Dirección General de Planeación y Desarrollo Institucional*, in 2019, the university had 30,597 students.

Ciudad Juarez is in the north of Mexico, it is a border city with El Paso, Texas (see Figure 1), and its principal economic source comes from industry. According to the

Desarrollo Económico de Ciudad Juarez, in April 2020, in Juarez existed 2,530 industries that offered 445,885 industrial jobs. Therefore, many people work in the industrial area, and they frequently communicate with international companies in English, but students also go to El Paso, Texas, for fun, shopping, or entertainment. Due to this common practice of having contact with native English speakers, students may encounter different idioms while communicating with them.

Figure 1. Context of the study: Ciudad Juarez.
(https://images.app.goo.gl/XFM1fFGThW9KutJk9)

In this research context, English courses are based on three levels: basic, intermediate, and advanced, and there are two modalities for the English classes. One is six-monthly, which consists of having classes two hours a day from Monday to Thursday. Then, the students finish the three levels in one and a half years. The second modality is yearly, and the pupils have four hours of classes only one day a week on Friday or Saturday, and it is possible to conclude the three levels in three years. In addition to English, the Language Center offers more languages such as German, French, Portuguese, Chinese, and Japanese. English teachers are required to adopt a communicative approach to teaching. They also need to include mechanical, meaningful, and communicative activities, as well as practice, to develop the four skills (listening, reading, speaking, writing).

I was a teacher at the Language Center, and I have taught the three English levels (basic, intermediate, advanced). For this, I was familiar with the textbooks and acknowledged an absence of idioms. In this institution, the teachers have the freedom to plan and design extra material if they consider it is necessary. Then, if teachers believe that these conventionalized expressions are essential to teaching, they can include them without having problems with the administration. The following section contains information on the five English teachers that were part of this research.

3.7 Participants

Five EFL teachers from the Language Center were the participants of this study. In the selection process, I sent ten messages to some teachers that were my classmates in the BA in English Language Teaching (ELT). Only five of them accepted to participate in the research. Table 1 summarizes the most relevant information of them, such as their age, gender, BA degree, teaching experience, and English proficiency. This information illustrates an insight into who the participants were.

Table 1.

Participants' Backgrounds.

Participant	Age	Gender	BA Degree	Teaching Experience	English Proficiency
Teacher 1	24	Male	English Language Teaching from the UACJ	3 years	Certificado Nacional de Nivel del Idioma (CENNI) C1
Teacher 2	30	Male	English Language Teaching from the UACJ	8 years	Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), Institutional Testing Program (ITP) 568 points
Teacher 3	28	Female	Currently studying English Language	1.5 years	Cambridge English: Advanced (CAE) Listening C1, Reading C1, Speaking B2, Writing B2

			Teaching at the UACJ		
Teacher 4	25	Male	English Language Teaching from the UACJ	4 years	Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), Internet-Based Test (IBT) 96 points
Teacher 5	23	Female	English Language Teaching from the UACJ	1.5 years	Duolingo English test 77 points

The participants' age ranged from 23 to 30 years, and all of them had a BA degree in ELT. The five English teachers were Spanish native speakers, and they all had an English proficiency certificates from different national and international organizations. According to the parameters of the Common European Framework (CEFR), their competence levels vary from the B1 to the C2.

3.8 Data Processing and Analysis

In this section, I explain the management of the data. For the information of the bio-data questionnaires, I created a chart (see Table 1) on a word document to organize all the participants' information (age, gender, BA degree, years of experience, English proficiency). It helped me develop a visual instrument to describe the background of the participants.

For the data I obtained from the interviews, I followed Miles and Huberman's (1994) suggestions for data analysis: transcribe, familiarize with data, code, and summary the data. First, all the interviews were audio-recorded with a cellphone and then transcribed on a Word document. Second, I read the data several times to get familiar with it and identified some patterns. Then, I used a software for meaning categorization called MaxQDA, which analyses qualitative and quantitative data. I decided to use the meaning categorization process because it is a suitable tool to identify themes, patterns, and meaning (Berg, 2009). The meaning categorization process involved recognizing and classifying the data extracts in which the

participants expressed their perceptions and experiences concerning teaching idioms in the EFL classroom (Soto-Jurado & Garcia-Ponce, 2021). Having read the data several times, I coded the data with the following themes:

1) Teachers' perspectives on teaching materials
2) The link between language teaching and culture
3) Definition and understanding of idioms
4) Importance of teaching and learning idioms
5) Teaching materials, strategies, and activities for teaching idioms
6) Teacher's Decision-Making Concerning the Teaching of Idioms

These themes represent the participants' perceptions regarding teaching these cultural phrases which will be addressed in Chapter 4.

3.9 Positionality

In this section, I will point out my position within this research. By doing so, I will clarify that I was not biased when interpreting the data. Positionality "reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study" (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013 p. 71) because it would have an impact on the decisions of how the research is applied and the analysis/interpretations of the data. Constructing positionality requires that the researcher adopts a reflexive approach to identify and define their position. Holmes (2020) states that:

A reflexive approach suggests that, rather than trying to eliminate their effect, researchers should acknowledge and disclose their selves in their work, aiming to understand their influence on and in the research process. It is important for new researchers to note here that their positionality not only shapes their work but influences their interpretation, understanding. (p. 3)

Researchers need to be aware of the influence that their beliefs can have on the data analysis. In this way, they will recognize when their interpretation is biased due to their

positionality. Therefore, I started to reflect on my practice within this research project. To do so, I considered Holmes' (2020) suggestions to identify my position in three areas. Firstly, it is essential to contemplate the subject under investigation. In this study, I decided to examine teachers' perceptions on the inclusion of English idioms in an EFL context because it is a topic that is of interest to me.

I started to attend English classes in a private school at the age of 11 in Ciudad Juarez. I lived the experience of feeling frustrated for not understanding conversations because people tend to use idioms. I felt confused because I did not know about those fixed multi-word phrases. In my English classes, my professors did not teach me idioms. In addition to my experiences as an English learner, I consider that these expressions are necessary to know the culture of the target language, but also to be able to comprehend and participate in different socio-cultural contexts by developing idiomatic competence. Therefore, my position regarding the subject under investigation is that idioms should be taught in the EFL classroom.

Secondly, I identified my position with the research participants. In this study, the sample was five English teachers. I knew all of them before because they were my classmates in the BA of English Language Teaching at the University of Juarez, and after the BA, we became co-workers in the Language Center. Since then, we have had a relationship as classmates and co-workers. Following this, bracketing is an element in the analysis of data; so that the researchers' opinions or experiences do not influence the interpretation. Tufford and Newman (2010) note that:

> Given the sometimes-close relationship between the researcher and the research topic that may both precede and develop during the process of qualitative research, bracketing is also a method to protect the researcher from the cumulative effects of examining what may be emotionally challenging material. (p. 81)

Within my research, I maintained a professional position by separating my beliefs and past experiences. This process was crucial to obtain the essence of the data.

Thirdly, I needed to consider my positionality in the research context and the process. This study took place in the Language Center of the Autonomous University of Ciudad Juarez. I am familiar with the context because I was born in Ciudad Juarez. I also studied for my BA in English Language Teaching at the Autonomous University of Ciudad Juarez for four years, and I worked in the Language Center for three years. Therefore, I could be considered an insider. According to Merton (1972), "insiders are the members of specified groups and collectives or occupants of specified social statuses: Outsiders are non-members" (p. 6). I was part of the Language Center before I entered the MA in Applied Linguistics in English Language Teaching. Even though I will probably be considered an insider, it did not influence the research process. I accomplished this by separating my beliefs when interpreting the data.

Having stated my positions on the subject under investigation, the research participants, and the research context and process, I conclude that even though I feel interested in idioms, I was careful with the obtained information from the research process. I was not biased on the analysis and interpretation of the data because my beliefs did not interfere in the process.

3.10 Ethics

Research ethics refers to explaining to the research participants the nature of the investigation. The usage of contracts is a convenient instrument (Blaxter et al., 2001). An informative letter explaining and describing all the objectives and details of the study was sent to the Language Center Coordinator of the UACJ (see Appendix 5). The coordinator of the MA in Applied Linguistics of ELT from the University of Guanajuato (UG) signed this letter to validate my enrollment in the MA program from the UG. The coordinator of the

Language Center of the UACJ conceded permission to conduct the study. I also created a consent letter for the participants (see Appendix 6), which contained details of the study.

The participants had two days to read and process the information of the consent letter. Jacob and Furgerson (2012) state that "the participant should have plenty of time to read through the form and ask as many questions about consent as she or he needs to ask" (p. 7). I also used it to request permission to use their data and record the interview. The data I obtained were only for research purposes and I used pseudonyms to anonymize the names/identities of the participants. When the participants signed the consent letter, all of them expressed their desire to participate in the study under no obligation

3.11 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter described the methodology that guided this research project. It first presented the objectives, research question, and the data collection techniques I used to obtain data. Then, I explained the data management, the context, participants, research ethics, and positionality. This information led the present study to collect data and respond to the research questions. The following chapter offers information on the data analysis and findings.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the five participants. This section addresses the following themes:

1) Teachers' perspectives on teaching materials
2) The link between language teaching and culture
3) Definition and understanding of idioms
4) Importance of teaching and learning idioms
5) Teaching materials, strategies, and activities for teaching idioms
6) Teacher's Decision-Making Concerning the Teaching of Idioms

All the teams have some sub-themes from the coding process using the MAXQDA software.

4.2 Teachers' Perspectives on Teaching Materials

In this section, the teachers commented on the activities and materials they include in their teaching practice apart from grammar. The purpose of this interview's section was to find if they spontaneously said something related to idioms. I will describe the two areas that the teachers identified as essential to teaching: 1) speaking activities are crucial, and 2) authentic language in the EFL classroom.

4.2.1 Speaking Activities Are Crucial

Teaching a language is not only grammar features; it involves many aspects such as speaking skills. The development of oral competence enhances communication with the target language community (Cakir, 2011). In the following data excerpts, the teachers expressed their reasons for considering speaking activities as an essential element in the classroom. Even though they mentioned the importance of speaking activities, they did not relate those activities with the inclusion of idioms. Therefore, this is evidence that the

teachers may not consider these conventionalized expressions as part of their teaching practice. For instance, Teacher 01 noted the following:

> A very important aspect to include in the class must be a speaking section where students can use the knowledge from the lesson in their daily life or their daily activities. So, they [students] can speak with their classmates and use all the grammar structures and all the new vocabulary.

Extract 1. Teacher 01

He related the speaking activities with the usage of grammar structures and vocabulary that students have seen in a lesson from the textbook. He also stated that he includes a speaking section because students will have the opportunity to use the learned knowledge in their daily life. Therefore, he evaluates speaking practice as a successful element in the target language. However, his response regarding the knowledge from the lesson might reveal that he does not include extra material. Similar to Teacher 01, Teachers 02 and 04 explained the following:

> Speaking activities in which they [students] practice popular expressions that people use either at the US or UK depending on what English you are teaching.

Extract 2. Teacher 02

> Speaking activities are important in which students can use common words that people use, expressions, chunks, collocations, and phrasal verbs.

Extract 3. Teacher 04

These two teachers perceived the development of speaking activities as essential components in the EFL classroom. These tasks help students to know how to use chunks, phrasal verbs, or popular expressions. Even though they commented on those language features, they did not express anything related to idioms. However, they did not comment explicitly regarding these fixed multi-word phrases; the teachers might consider them popular expressions. In the following extract, Teacher 03 revealed her beliefs concerning the elaboration of speaking activities:

Besides grammar, I think that we should include for example communicative activities. We should ask them [students] to create their own dialogues depending on what you are focusing on. Additionally, I think we should include pronunciation exercises.

<div align="right">Extract 4. Teacher 03</div>

This teacher linked speaking activities to the development of communicative activities as well as pronunciation exercises. She also noted that it is beneficial for students to have the freedom to create a dialogue by themselves to become autonomous by creating their conversations.

The above extracts suggest that the teachers considered speaking activities an element that must be included in the language classroom. Even though they reflect on the same idea, their views differ regarding the focus of the activities. Some teachers related these tasks to grammar usage, pronunciation exercises, or communicative activities. The teachers may contemplate speaking activities as crucial for improving students speaking skills. One reason for this could be that even when they are in a border city, some pupils have limited opportunities to practice the language outside the classroom because they are in an English EFL context. Thus, the environment where students interact is an influential factor, but their access to the language as well. The responses seem to be influenced by the communicative approach they must use in their work context. The teachers emphasized the importance of including speaking activities in the classroom to improve students' communication. However, they did not consider idioms as part of the speaking activities, and it may be because they do not have the teaching habit to those conventionalized expressions in their classrooms. They also perceive authentic material as an essential element which will be present in the following section.

4.2.2 Authentic Language in the EFL Classroom

The usage of the English language has been growing worldwide due to the position that English has obtained. Teachers have more access to a wide range of authentic materials

such as magazines, news, videos, movies, audio, among others. In the interviews, the teachers acknowledged the significance of these materials to teach with and for students to learn the language in the classroom. However, they did not relate these resources with the use of idioms. Teacher 01 expressed the following:

> Probably we should include some expressions that people might use at the time of speaking. The expressions could be formal or informal that most of the people use because many lessons focused only on the grammar structures, but not on the different expressions that people might use in the different situations.

<div align="right">Extract 5. Teacher 01</div>

He perceived authentic language as the inclusion of formal or informal expressions that people use. He emphasized that it is essential to include this type of material because the textbook focuses more on grammar structures than colloquial expressions. Although he mentioned this, he did not relate those expressions with idioms. Based on his response, this teacher may have a positive attitude towards the inclusion of idioms in the language classroom. The following two extracts represented the beliefs of Teachers 02 and 03:

> I include everything that is connected to real situations to help students to be in contact with the culture.

<div align="right">Extract 6. Teacher 02</div>

> I include extra material like articles, news, or authentic material to explain them [students] better the topic. I think that we can use any material that is made by native speakers of the language.

<div align="right">Extract 7. Teacher 03</div>

Teachers 02 and 03 believed that the usage of authentic material help students to be acquainted with the language culture. The participants seem to include contents of real-life situations or that are made by native speakers. Then, this information leads to the idea that there are more opportunities for students to encounter idioms when the teachers present authentic material. Although the teachers did not relate anything of their responses to these

idioms, they might use them, but they could not be aware of how and when they use them. Similar to these two teachers, Teacher 05 expressed the following:

> I will go with authentic material because it is not the same to teach grammar without the real examples **[…]** real life situations so they [students] can learn it [grammar] better.

<div align="right">Extract 8. Teacher 05</div>

In general, it seems that the teachers considered authentic material as necessary in the classroom. The English teachers stated the benefits of including this material (contact with the culture and improved comprehension). A possible explanation of their answers (extracts 5, 6, 7, and 8) is that due to their EFL context, they try to include any authentic material, such as articles, news, and videos, to enrich students' experiences regarding the usage of language in a representation of real contexts. When teachers include real-life content in their classroom, they might encounter some idioms. However, they may not be aware of the instruction of these expressions. It could be because they do not often incorporate them in their teaching practice. Then, the teachers responded regarding the material that should be included in a language classroom. I asked them about their perceptions concerning the connection between language and culture. In the following theme, their explanations will be analyzed.

4.3 The Link between Language Teaching and Culture

The connection among language teaching and culture helps students with the opportunity to convey complex ideas by using conventionalized expressions, such as idioms (Cieślicka, 2015; Liontas, 2017). Due to this relation, it was necessary to ask the teachers' perceptions concerning the link between language teaching and culture. I questioned the teachers regarding the role culture plays in their classrooms, intending to find information related to these fixed multi-word phrases. Teachers 01 and 02 expressed the following:

> They [language and culture] are super interrelated; they go along. People communicate according to their culture and beliefs. People from a city or something

might speak differently than people from southern cities. So, yeah, language is totally related to culture.

<div align="right">Extract 9. Teacher 01</div>

They [language and culture] go hand in hand because you can't just learn a language without knowing the context or the culture. Language tends to change a lot depending on where you are.

<div align="right">Extract 10. Teacher 02</div>

Both teachers perceived that depending on the region or city, people tend to speak differently. That is why they contemplated that language and culture are interrelated and should not be separated. Similar to these two teachers, Teachers 03 and 05 explained their beliefs:

I think we cannot teach a language if you are not talking about culture because you have to teach also certain aspects like manners, what is proper, what is not proper in a certain culture.

<div align="right">Extract 11. Teacher 03</div>

I think they [language and culture] are really interrelated because […] language is shaped by culture. That is why we have different constraints regarding either culture or language. For example, one thing in English cannot be the same in Spanish. I think that is very important that we can understand the language and some of the target culture.

<div align="right">Extract 12. Teacher 05</div>

Teacher 03 perceived that it is necessary to teach language along with culture because it is essential to understand what is polite and what is not. Similar to her, Teacher 05 stated that students need to comprehend the different language restrictions to participate in different sociocultural contexts. According to these data, the teachers believed in the strong connection between language teaching and culture. The teachers' responses reveal that teaching a language implicates introducing culture. If the teachers believe that culture develops a role in their classrooms, they might consider implementing idioms in their professional practice.

Then, the teachers need to acquaint the position of these fixed multi-word phrases within the target language community. It can be accomplished by some training on what idioms are and their role within the community. If they are also familiar with the benefits of including these expressions, they probably teach them. Then it is a matter of raising awareness on what this connection implies because it is more than the different ways people spoke and what is proper and what is not.

4.4 Definition and Understanding of Idioms

An idiom is defined as an expression that has a unique meaning that is not possible to translate literally (Manzoor & Kiran, 2015; Vasiljevic, 2015). The more complex idioms are the ones that have cultural, political, or historical backgrounds (Talib, 2015). During the interviews, the teachers had the opportunity to define the concept of *idiom* in their own words. Their responses were the following:

> An idiom […] does not have like a literal meaning; it might have a meaning according to the different environments or the contexts in which people are.
>
> Extract 13. Teacher 01

> It [an idiom] is like an expression that people use. The meaning is not literal; it is figurative.
>
> Extract 14. Teacher 04

> An idiom is like a different compound of words that mean something totally different regarding the grammar that they [idioms] have […]. They [idioms] mean something really different from what is written.
>
> Extract 15. Teacher 05

The findings reported here suggest that for the teachers, an idiom is an expression whose meaning depends on the "different environments or the contexts" (Teacher 01), they have "figurative" connotations (Teacher 04), and the meaning is "different from what is written" (Teacher 05). These data informed that the teachers are somehow familiar with these

47

fixed multi-word phrases. Even though they said a definition, two could not mention an accurate example, as shown below:

> For example, to offer coffee or tea, instead of just saying: "Would you want a coffee or tea?" you can just say "Coffee or tea?". That could be an idiom that most people use […]. Is OMG an idiom?

<div align="right">Extract 16. Teacher 01</div>

> I do not know, like "what's up"?

<div align="right">Extract 17. Teacher 02</div>

These extracts show that the two teachers were not able to explain correct examples. They expressed colloquial expressions such as *coffee or tea?, OMG* (Teacher 01), and *what's up* (teacher 02) and these expressions are not considered idioms. Their responses raise the possibility that the teachers have a vague idea of idioms. Even though the teachers hold a BA degree in English language teaching, some of them did not identify some representations for idioms. A possible explanation for these results appears to be the lack of usage of these conventionalized phrases. That suggests that although teachers stated a strong link between language and culture, they do not contemplate idioms as part of their teaching practice. After their responses, I explained to them the definition of idioms and showed them some examples to clarify the principal concept of this study.

4.5 Importance of Teaching and Learning Idioms

The teaching and learning of cultural phrases seem to contribute to more effective interaction. There are some cases in which an idiom can substitute a 10-word complete expression (Abolfazli & Sadeghi, 2017; Wray, 2000). In the interviews, the teachers commented on their beliefs regarding the importance of teaching and learning these conventionalized phrases. Teacher 01 claimed the following:

> A lot of people use idioms all the time. It [idiom] is almost like slang. If people do not understand slang, they will get lost in a conversation with friends. So, yeah, it [teaching idioms] is important.

Teacher 01 expressed that idioms are necessary because speakers of the language tend to use them all the time. If students do not understand their meaning, they may have a difficult time to understand different conversations. Therefore, by teaching them, students will have the opportunity to comprehend different discourses. In the same manner as Teacher 01, Teacher 02 agrees on the potential role that idioms have in the EFL classroom.

> They [idioms] are important because they are colloquial expressions. A lot of people use them [idioms], and sometimes if we do not know them, we do not know what they [people] are talking about […] It is very important to teach them [idioms].

Extract 19. Teacher 02

Teacher 02 also considered idioms fundamental in language teaching due to their frequent use. He described that; they are colloquial expressions that people tend to use in everyday speech. Therefore, if students do not know those expressions, they will not know how to participate in different conversations. Teacher 04 also expressed something similar:

> Yeah, idioms are definitely important because students probably might listen to those expressions, and they would take it literally and they [students] would say like "wait raining cats and dogs? that is not possible". So, they [students] would not get the meaning or essence of the expression.

Extract 20. Teacher 04

Teacher 04 reported that these conventionalized phrases are essential in language teaching to offer students the opportunity to increase their understanding of the target language. He also said that if students do not comprehend them, they will feel confused because they will not understand the meaning of the expression. The teachers considered teaching idioms relevant for their high frequency in oral interactions (Teachers 01 and 02) and practical to guide students on the possible meaning of the different fixed multi-word phrases (Teacher 04). Therefore, the teachers believed that if idioms are familiar to students,

they will enhance their communication skills. For example, students will comprehend conversations they could have (Teachers 01 and 02) and "get the meaning or essence of the expression" (Teacher 04). It seems that the teachers perceived idioms as crucial because they help students to participate in different socio-cultural contexts by understanding and producing conventionalized expressions. These teachers' perceptions are equal to Mansoor's (2015) findings. In his study, the teachers believe that these fixed multi-word phrases are essential due to their frequency in spoken discourse. Likewise, the teachers supported this idea stating some benefits of knowing and using idioms. I will present them in the next theme.

4.5.1 Benefits of Teaching and Learning Idioms

Idioms do not only increase the opportunity to improve communication skills but also to understand the culture of the target language (Al-Houti & Aldaihani, 2018; Nurul & Rochmawati, 2017; Samani & Hashemian, 2012). This section presents the benefits that the teachers perceived of teaching them in the classroom. Teacher 01 claimed the following:

> If you teach idioms, that will give them [students] more competence to know how to communicate in different contexts. They [students] will know how to communicate with their friends, and they can also know how to communicate with their boss at work. They will also know when and how to communicate with different idioms. So, I think it [teaching idioms] does have a lot of benefits.

> Extract 21. Teacher 01

Teacher 01 noted that if teaching idioms, students will develop idiomatic competence. Therefore, students will be able to communicate effectively in different contexts, for instance, with friends, authorities such, a boss. He linked the benefits of idioms with the improvement of oral proficiency that is a benefit several authors mentioned (Cowie et al., 1975; Strutz, 1996; Wray 2000). Teachers 02 and 04 also agreed on the benefits of teaching these fixed multi-word phrases:

> I think there are benefits because you tend to sound more natural in terms of speaking. You do not sound like a robot. You don't sound like a book. It's more natural the way you speak.

50

I think it [teaching idioms] helps them [students] in their competence and fluency.

Teachers 02 and 04 connected the benefits of teaching idioms with fluency. For example, Teacher 02 perceived that these expressions offer the opportunity to sound more natural at the moment of speaking. If students comprehend and produce idioms, their communicative competence will increase. Teacher 05 also shared her perception regarding the benefits of teaching them:

> Language competence is being able to communicate effectively. So, if students do not understand idioms, they won't be able to communicate and express their ideas or understand what is being spoken.

Based on the understanding of this teacher, she defined language competence as the ability to communicate effectively. The previous extracts show that the teachers noticed several benefits when students comprehend and know how to use idioms while speaking; for instance, some participants suggest that students will communicate effectively in different contexts (Teachers 01 and 05). These conventionalized expressions enhance the way students express their thoughts because they sound natural, and their fluency improves (Teacher 02 and 04). On the contrary, if pupils do not comprehend and know how to idioms, they could fail in communicating their ideas effectively (Teacher 05). Their responses revealed that all the teachers consider these fixed multi-word phrases necessary for teaching content to develop idiomatic competence to increase communicative proficiency in the target language. They contemplate communication and comprehension skills as the principal elements to improve for students. The following section presents the teachers' ideas of introducing idioms in the EFL classroom.

4.6 Teaching Strategies, Materials, and Activities for Teaching Idioms

Teaching idioms is not an easy task (Cakir, 2011). Students should not just comprehend the meaning of these conventionalized expressions, but they need to be proficient enough to use them appropriately in different contexts. The teachers commented on the teaching materials and strategies they considered to be suitable to teach them. The following sections will present the teachers' beliefs: 1) teaching idioms within context, 2) the usage of visual aids in teaching idioms, and 3) activities to teach idioms.

4.6.1 Teaching Idioms within Context as a Strategy

In the interview, all the teachers mentioned that context plays a crucial role in teaching idioms. They commented the following point on this teaching strategy:

> Context is important because it is how students are going to know where and when they can use those expressions [idioms]. For example, to let them [students] know that some expressions are not correct in certain contexts. Like "piece of cake" cannot be used in a formal situation.

<div align="right">Extract 25. Teacher 01</div>

As proposed by Teacher 01, context is an element needed to be considered when teaching these fixed multi-word phrases. He reported that by using this teaching strategy students will understand the appropriate use of these expressions. Therefore, he believed that it is not possible to teach idioms in isolation. Likewise, teacher 02 agreed on the role that context plays in the language classroom:

> Context is fundamental because you can't use idioms in any context. You have to be careful with, when, and where to use them. You need to know how to use them in the correct place.

<div align="right">Extract 26. Teacher 02</div>

Teacher 02 pointed out that teaching idioms within context have the purpose to explain to students the correct use of these expressions. He also described that students need

to be cautious when using idioms because they can incorrectly implement them. Teacher 05 also commented on the benefits regarding the usage of context:

> I think it is really essential to teach [idioms] within a context because you need to provide them [students] when they can use some of the idioms. So yeah, I think a context is really important because if you do not include it, they [students] can use them in a wrong way or when is not necessary. Also, some of them [idioms] could be informal, well not really informal but in some situations is better not to use them and to use formal language.

<div align="right">Extract 27. Teacher 05</div>

She perceived that teaching within context is a strategy that could help students to comprehend these expressions. The context prevents students from committing errors by using them in the correct situations. The teachers stated the following advantage of using context: students tend to understand how and where they can use idioms and their level of formality (Teachers 01, 02, and 05). The arguments of the teachers are linked to what Al-khawaldeh et al. (2016) mention of the context that it "plays a crucial role in understanding idioms. Idioms have a relation with context, and their meanings are found to be easier to figure out when used in context" (p. 8). Therefore, these teachers have a clear idea of what the function of context is when teaching these fixed multi-word phrases. In the next section, teachers commented on the usage of visual aids.

4.6.2 The Usage of Visual Aids in Teaching Idioms

The teachers showed positive attitudes towards the use of visual aids when teaching idioms. In the following extract, Teacher 01 stated the role of this material in teaching these expressions.

> We can use visual aids like a video maybe depending on the idiom. Let say that we are going to teach "easy peasy". How can we teach that expression with an image [?] I think it depends on the idiom. Also, piece of cake. You can show them a picture, but how are you going to teach the real meaning with an image. Maybe show them situations with YouTube videos where people use them.

This teacher expressed that visual aids such as videos or images are helpful to guide learners, but not every idiom can be presented with this material due to their meaning. He also claimed that YouTube is a teaching tool to find videos where people use these expressions. In this way, students will understand the connotation of these fixed multi-word phrases. He showed an optimistic attitude on the usage of visual aids. Teacher 04 also commented on the implementation of this material:

> Yeah, they [visual aids] are important because they [students] get the meaning faster. You can show pictures like the literal so they [students] can relate what those words mean and then give the image of the real meaning with a picture.

<div align="right">Extract 29. Teacher 04</div>

Teacher 04 believed that the usage of visual aids is beneficial for students because it provides a faster learning process. He noted that a teaching strategy could be to show students two images, one with the figurative meaning and the other one with the literal connotation. This teacher seems to have a positive attitude towards the usage of this teaching material. Related to Teacher 04, Teacher 05 agreed on the benefits of this teaching material:

> Yes, I use them [idioms] a lot because I think they really help to get a better understanding of what we are watching […]. I think they [visual aids] do not only help you to give examples, but also to engage them [students] in the classroom because sometimes they get lost, but if they [students] see something they really like they are going to be interested in the class.

<div align="right">Extract 30. Teacher 05</div>

Teacher 05 considered that visual aids are not only for helping students to achieve understanding but also to engage them in classroom activities. It may be convenient to use this type of material to create a didactic or interactive class. These data suggest that the teachers perceived visual aids, such as images or videos, as necessary when teaching idioms. All of them showed a positive attitude towards the usage of this teaching material. However,

the teachers need to be careful when selecting these expressions because it may not be possible to illustrate some of their meanings using images or videos. There are some interactive YouTube videos that students will enjoy when learning these phrases, for example, guessing the idioms by the emojis (English Test Blog, 2019), idioms from TV series and movies (English in General, 2021), and the literal and figurative meaning of these expressions (Domics, 2019). The following section presents more activities proposed by the teachers.

4.6.3 Activities to Teach Idioms

The English teachers commented on the activities they considered to be useful when including these fixed multi-word phrases in their classrooms. Teacher 01 said the following:

> I do not know, maybe to make students discuss about the possible meaning of idioms. Then explain them the literal and real meaning.
>
> <div align="right">Extract 31. Teacher 01</div>

This teacher considered that creating discussion groups encourage students to work with other classmates and find the connotation of idioms collaboratively. He also believed that showing students the literal and figurative meaning of these conventionalized expressions could reduce misunderstandings. In this way, students will understand idioms. Teacher 02 suggested a different teaching activity:

> Maybe role-plays because people tend to practice a lot and they [people] might feel more comfortable using those expressions in real situations.
>
> <div align="right">Extract 32. Teacher 02</div>

Teacher 02 identified role-plays as an activity in which students can practice these expressions in real-life situations. This teacher considers that pupils need to practice the usage of idioms to understand and know how to use them in different contexts. Teacher 04 also commented on this topic:

I do not know this one is kind of difficult […]. Let me think […]. Probably like project or paste some images on the board about different meanings. […]. So, students can match the meaning with the idea. Like connecting images with the definition of the idioms.

<div align="right">Extract 33. Teacher 04</div>

Teacher 04 proposed a dynamic activity that consists of matching the meaning with the definition. This teacher had a difficult time responding to this question and might be due to the lack of usage in his language classroom. Teacher 05 also illustrate some examples of teaching activities:

We could use role-plays or I do not remember the name of those activities, but you give them [students] like small cards and you give them situations like "you are in this situation, and something happen to this guy what idiom could you use?" […]. I like those ones because they [students] go around the classroom and they ask each other.

<div align="right">Extract 34. Teacher 05</div>

Similarly to Teacher 01, this teacher considered role-plays; she explained that providing students with a hypothetical situation and deciding which idioms to use is an appropriate activity for teaching these expressions. Likewise, she believed that providing students with real contexts helps students to practice and achieve understanding and knowledge of how to use these fixed multi-word phrases.

Furthermore, from the teachers' comments, I identified that some of them had a challenging time answering this question. A part of them doubted their answers; For example, Teacher 04 said, "I do not know this one is kind of difficult". Likewise, Teachers 01 and 02 started their arguments using the words "I do not know and maybe". Their responses indicated that they seem not to have clear ideas of what activities they could use to teach idioms. These might be a result of the lack of conventionalized expressions in their teaching practice. This finding is related to the results of a study conducted by Najarzadegan and Ketabi (2015). In their study, none of the participants were familiar with how to teach idioms,

and it is a situation that needs special attention. All teachers appear to have positive attitudes towards teaching these fixed multi-word phrases in an EFL context to improve students' oral competence. Although the teachers agreed on the importance and the several benefits of teaching them, only one of them teaches idioms. The following section will explain the teacher's decisions concerning teaching these conventionalized expressions.

4.7 Teacher's Decision-Making Concerning the Teaching of Idioms

The participants expressed their reasons for including or excluding idioms in their classrooms. The next sections will present the following: 1) one teacher's decision to teach idioms, 2) teachers' decisions not to teach idioms, and 3) students' proficiency as a challenge for teaching idioms, and 4) one teacher's reflection.

4.7.1 Teachers' Decisions to Teach Idioms

Although the teachers commented on the benefits of teaching idioms, only one of the teachers these conventionalized expressions. In the following extract, she explains the reasons behind her decision to teach idioms:

> This semester, I think it is the second time that I teach idioms. I did it because I think the [text]books are missing a lot of content and sometimes the lessons are boring. For example, with intermediate students there are some things they already saw in basic, so I tried to teach them something new, something that maybe they did not know and that is why I included idioms […] So, yes, I plan it [teaching idioms] because I think they need to learn [them] and the content of the [text]book is not so good, in my opinion.
>
> Extract 35. Teacher 05

Based on the above extract, she decided to teach idioms for the lack of relevant content in the textbook that she has to follow. She stated that for "intermediate students, there are some things they already saw in basic". Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the content of the textbooks from the Language Center may be repetitive. She claimed that she plans and adapts different materials or activities to include these conventionalized

expressions and other topics that she considers her students need to learn. Although teachers have the freedom to incorporate extra material if they consider it necessary, they might not do it due to different reasons (e.g., time constraints). A week later of the interview, Teacher 03 sent me the following message:

> Thank you. I have not thought about teaching idioms as a topic. I noticed that they are very important. I am planning to teach them [idioms] next semester.

<div align="right">Extract 43. Teacher 03</div>

This message raises the possibility that the teachers need some training to refresh their minds regarding this topic. It would be helpful to show them the teaching tools and activities to include them in the classroom. Teaching idioms is a topic that teachers might not consider for lack of information. In the following section, I will explain the decisions of the participants not to teach idioms.

4.7.2 Teachers' Decisions Not to Teach Idioms

All the teachers have considered that including these fixed multi-word phrases is favorable for improving students' communicative skills. Though, they expressed some contextual factors that induce them not to teach idioms in the classroom. They stated the following:

> Because they are not in the [text]book. The [text]book has many lessons that we need to cover, and the semester is short. So, it is hard to include extra topics. Also, there are many lessons that focus only on grammar structures, but not on expressions that people can use in different situations.

<div align="right">Extract 36. Teacher 01</div>

> I do not include them [idioms] as a topic because we do not have them in the [text]book.

<div align="right">Extract 37. Teacher 02</div>

> I do not plan a lesson about idioms because I do not have time to cover and create extra content.

<div align="right">58</div>

These interview extracts showed relevant insights into the contextual needs and constraints that force them not to teach idioms in the classroom. These data imply that the lack of content in the textbook and time constraints were the main factors for them not to include these conventionalized expressions. These extracts (36-38) assume that the teachers' reasons not to teach idioms in the classroom were mainly influenced by the following two local factors: the need to cover the textbook and teachers' beliefs regarding the creation of extra material as time-consuming. Then, teachers might need to receive some training on different sources to obtain extra material without spending much time. In support of this argument, the consecutive section presents another factor that tends to influence the teachers' decisions not to teach them in the EFL classroom.

4.7.3 Student Proficiency as a Challenge to Teaching Idioms

In the interview, the teachers commented that idioms are complex expressions to teach for their hidden cultural, historical, or political meaning. To investigate this in greater depth, I asked the teachers to state what challenges or difficulties they have faced when teaching or using these fixed multi-word phrases in the classroom. Their assertions were the following:

> I think that the difficulties [problems when teaching idioms] happen more often with basic students because they are just learning basic English. So, they [students] are not used to use idioms or different expressions in English. So, it is totally new to them.

> Extract 39. Teacher 01

> I have faced some difficulties. The first one is related students. When I first try to use one idiom, for example, piece of cake, my basic students just looked at me and were like: "but why a cake?", "are you bringing cake to the classroom?". I said no, and I had to explain to them what the idiom meant.

59

These two teachers mentioned that teaching idioms to beginner students is more challenging for their lack of knowledge of the complexities of the language. This finding is align with Cooper's (1998) idea that some language instructors avoid idioms in their teaching practice because they are difficult expressions to understand and students have complications interpreting the meaning or understanding the correct use of idioms. Teacher 03 also shared a learning experience when she tried to use an idiom in her classroom. This experience is evidence that it is necessary to help students be aware of the existence of these cultural expressions even at lower levels. In this way, they will start to be acquainted with the culture of the language and comprehend that they might not understand something because it could be an idiom. Therefore, within time, they will also become familiar with the expressions and might use them. It will help them to improve their communication skills and sound more natural and fluent. Equally to Teachers 01 and 03, Teachers 04 and 05 shared their perspectives on the challenges around idioms:

> Students do not understand that some of them [idioms] have different meanings. They struggle a lot to understand that they [idioms] do not carry a literal meaning. They are like: "No, I do not understand why this means something different".

Extract 41. Teacher 04

> Some idioms are pretty obvious because the idiom is telling you what it means, but sometimes things are not connected at all, and students get confused or have more problems trying to figure out the meaning.

Extract 42. Teacher 05

These teachers suggested opaque idioms (i.e., the literal and figurative meanings are dissimilar) (Xie, 2017) as more complex expressions for students to understand than transparent ones (i.e., the literal and figurative meanings are related) (Xie, 2017). Students

60

might encounter difficulties trying to understand the connotation of these conventionalized expressions.

Their responses demonstrated that students' low proficiency is one of the main challenges when teaching or learning these fixed multi-word phrases. Another challenge is students' confusion due to the different meanings that idioms have. Students need to receive an explanation and guidance of the importance and usage of these expressions. Teachers can implement several activities (see Section 2.5.2) to help learners in their understanding process. Once students comprehend this information, and they are ready to identify that they have a hidden meaning. Then, their arguments implied that teaching them could be suitable only for intermediate and advanced students for the intricacies of these conventionalized expressions.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented the six themes that were obtained from the semi-structured interviews. In summary, it has been shown that the teachers considered the inclusion of speaking activities and authentic material as appropriate for teaching content. The teachers also demonstrated positive attitudes toward teaching these expressions because they stated that idioms are beneficial for the improvement of students' communication skills. Although all the teachers claimed to accept the benefits of teaching idioms, they do not teach them for some reasons (i.e., lack of content in the textbook and time constraints). Likewise, their decision not to teach them seems to be influenced by their belief that beginner students have difficulties understanding the meaning of these expressions. However, one of the teachers stated that she teaches idioms to avoid the repetitive content of the textbooks. Even though the teachers suggested some teaching strategies, they appeared to struggle when mentioning suitable activities. Therefore, it may be the case that these teachers need to be assisted in developing teaching strategies that offer them the opportunity to teach these fixed multi-word phrases to students more effectively.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will introduce the conclusions of the research project based on the results obtained from the data. It starts with a review of the research questions and objectives. I will continue with a summary of the findings and some pedagogical implications. Next, it presents some ideas for future research. Finally, this chapter will conclude with an explanation of the limitations of this study and a conclusion.

5.2 Revising the Research Questions and Objectives

The objectives of this research project were the following: to discover how EFL teachers perceive the inclusion of idioms in the classroom and to explore the possible factors behind teachers' decisions to teach or not to teach these conventionalized expressions. I formulated the following questions:

RQ1: What are the EFL teachers' perceptions of teaching English idioms in a Mexican university?

RQ2: What are the factors that influence the EFL teachers' decisions to teach or not to teach idioms?

In the next section, I will present the questions along with a summary of the findings related to each of them.

5.3 Summary of Findings

RQ1: What are the EFL teachers' perceptions of teaching English idioms in a Mexican university?

Regarding this question, all the participants agreed that it is not appropriate to teach a language without including cultural content. More specifically, in the inclusion of idioms in EFL classrooms. In the beginning, two of the participants had problems recognizing what

idioms were because they were confusing these fixed multi-word phrases with acronyms and colloquial language. Once I clarified their ideas regarding the definition of idioms, they perceived them as necessary expressions to include due to their high frequency in spoken discourse. The teachers claimed that these conventionalized expressions are crucial for the following learning benefits: first, idioms enrich comprehension between speakers. If students can understand idioms, the conversation will be more fluent because there will not be pauses for explaining the hidden connotation of these fixed multi-word phrases. Second, idioms encourage students to improve communication skills because if they know how to use them, learners can participate in different sociocultural contexts. One teacher commented that idioms help students to develop fluency because they sound more natural, and they will not sound as a book or as a robot. Finally, idioms enhance the clarity of students' ideas around communication. If students understand and know how to use idioms, they will express their ideas and understand what is being spoken.

The teachers mentioned some teaching strategies and materials for the inclusion of these expressions. First, teaching idioms within a context is indispensable because students will comprehend the hidden connotation of the fixed multi-word phrase and will understand the level of formality as well. Second, the usage of visual aids engages students and helps them identify the meaning of the expressions, but it is not possible to present all the idioms through images because it depends on their literal and figurative reference. Finally, three of the participants commented that role-plays and matching the meaning with the idiom are appropriate activities for teaching these expressions. Some of the teachers also were confused regarding the possible activities for including these conventionalized expressions. Two of them were unsure because they employ words such as maybe and I do not know before answering. Their uncertain responses demonstrated that they have not considered the addition of idioms in their classroom. Consequently, due to the lack of practice, the teachers could have difficulties understanding and teaching these expressions.

RQ2: What are the factors that influence the EFL teachers' decisions to teach or not to teach idioms?

Concerning this question, the teachers' lack of knowledge of idioms could be an influential factor because I identified that not all the teachers knew these conventionalized expressions. Some participants had an idea of what these fixed multi-word phrases are; however, two teachers were not able to provide a specific example. They associated them with other colloquial expressions, such as OMG or What's Up. It is worth mentioning that the five teachers have a BA degree in English Teaching from the same university. Even though they received the same EFL training, the evidence of this study suggests that the understanding of idioms could differ among in-service EFL teachers. It may potentially influence the way teachers approach the way they comprehend and teach these expressions in this context. This finding reveals that the teachers' knowledge of idioms will impact their pedagogical principles and decisions to teach these conventionalized expressions in the language classroom. The erroneous idea of what idioms are will affect students' understanding and might face difficulties encountering them in the real world. At the same time, both teachers and students will have insufficient idiomatic competence. This evidence in turn highlights the need to assist these teachers in providing them with opportunities to understand idioms, their benefits, and how to address the potential challenges that they face in their teaching and learning context.

Although all the teachers recognized the advantages of these expressions, only Teacher 05 stated including them in her teaching practice. She believed that the content of the textbook is repetitive, and she tries to incorporate new topics that will benefit students in their learning process. Teacher 03 commented that she has not thought about teaching idioms and, the interview helped her realize the benefits of including these expressions. She explained that she planned to teach these fixed multi-word phrases for the next semester. Her argument raises the possibility that training is necessary to raise awareness among teachers of the existence of these expressions.

The teachers expressed that the main reason for not teaching them is because they are not in the textbooks. This finding shows that these teachers follow the textbook. Although they have the freedom to include extra content, they prefer not to. Another factor based on the data is related to time constraints. The teachers commented that they did not have the opportunity to cover extra material because the course was not long enough. Planning additional material is also time-consuming, and they did not have the chance to prepare it.

Finally, the teachers' decisions not to teach idioms seem to be reinforced by their belief that these expressions are complex to instruct due to their hidden connotations. Students will encounter difficulties trying to comprehend the meaning of idioms or they might not know what these expressions are. The teachers commented that opaque ones are more complex for students to understand than transparent ones because the low proficiency level of students might be a barrier. This factor demonstrated that these teachers need to be guided through the instruction of idioms depending on students' English level. The following section describes a workshop that would be appropriate for teachers' development on teaching idioms.

5.4 Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study suggest that the teachers recognized the importance of these expressions. However, for several reasons, they do not teach them. The teachers' beliefs on the difficulty of teaching these fixed multi-word phrases seem to be for their lack of knowledge. There are several strategies, materials, and techniques that are suitable for this topic. As a result, the principal pedagogical implication of this research would be to raise pre-service and in-service teachers' awareness of idioms and the benefits of teaching them. It can be accomplished through workshops and several aspects would be necessary to include such as: 1) the definition of idioms; 2) the types of these expressions; 3) the importance; 4) the possible challenges and how to overcome them; 5) techniques/strategies to teach them. If teachers recognize how these expressions help students to develop communication skills, they might include them. A person that is interested and competent in the topic can guide

65

teachers through this learning process. In this way, if teachers are acquainted with idioms they can raise students' awareness of this content. Then, they will also comprehend the benefits of learning these conventionalized expressions.

5.5 Limitations

There are some limitations that I encountered during the research process. One regarding the participants because the reader should bear in mind that this study was based on the answers and perceptions of five English teachers. Therefore, the findings might not represent the perceptions of all Mexican English teachers. This can be prevented by increasing the number of participants, and thus, collecting more perspectives regarding the perceptions of idioms. The second constraint is concerning the data collection instruments. For this research, I only applied a questionnaire and an interview, and the usage of more instruments such as classroom observations would provide an opportunity to develop an extensive analysis by linking the data from the different data sources. The last limitation is at a theoretical level because there is a scarce number of studies on teachers' perceptions, and I could not find much research concerning the topic under investigation.

5.6 Further Research

There are some proposals to carry out for future investigation. First, I suggest having more participants because it would enrich the results by having several perspectives from EFL teachers. In this way, the findings would be more generalizable. Moreover, researching students' perceptions of idioms is a suggested investigation because it will guide instructors on the possible challenges that students encounter while learning idioms. Then, with this information, teachers can create teaching material to help students overcome those difficulties.

Second, regarding the data collection instruments, I recommend incorporating classroom observations. It would allow researchers to examine the connection between teachers' perceptions concerning teaching idioms, and their teaching behavior in the

classroom. It would also permit researchers to understand the influential factors that probably inhibit teachers from teaching these expressions for their pedagogical beliefs. Applying a test to examine teachers' knowledge of these fixed multi-word phrases could be also a suitable tool. There would be more evidence on teachers' awareness of the usage of these expressions, and it might support teachers' decisions on the inclusion of idioms in the classroom.

Third, due to the lack of research on this topic in Mexico, it is essential to investigate more in this area. It is a country with cultural diversity, and this would allow researchers to understand the possible similarities and differences within Mexico regarding teaching idioms. It would also be exceptional to investigate the perceptions of qualified and unqualified participants. They may have contrasting teachers' beliefs depending on their education, and it will inform teachers of the possible similarities or differences between them.

The fourth recommendation is to research more teachers' perceptions. The majority of studies concerning idioms are focused on students' views. Researchers seem not to have investigated teachers in this area and it is significant to understand both sides from teachers and students. Researching more on how teachers perceive the inclusion of these phrases in the classroom will contribute to a broader view on this topic.

5.7 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I presented the conclusions based on the data analysis of chapter four. I achieved this process by providing information on the following aspects: restating the research questions and objective; a summary of the findings; pedagogical implications; suggestions for future research; limitations of this study; conclusion.

This research shed light on how Mexican EFL teachers perceive the inclusion of idioms in the classroom and that a BA degree in ELT does not ensure knowledge of common expressions as idioms. The results demonstrated the following influential factors in teachers' decisions not to include these expressions: 1) the lack of content in the textbook; 2) time

constraints; 3) teachers' lack of knowledge; and 4) the difficulty of idioms for their hidden meaning.

The findings of this study revealed that it is necessary to research more on this topic because it has not received enough emphasis even when they are common expressions in oral communication. Furthermore, it raises teachers' awareness of the benefits of including these conventionalized expressions in the classroom. It also encourages them to teach these fixed multi-word phrases to improve students' communication skills. English teachers need to provide the necessary tools to students to succeed once they encounter the real world.

References

Abolfazli, K, Z., & Sadeghi, K. (2017). Improving English language learners' idiomatic competence: Does mode of teaching play a role? *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research, 5*(3), 61-79. http://ijltr.urmia.ac.ir/article_20305.html

Adkins, P. (1968). Teaching idioms and figures of speech to non-native speakers of English. *The Modern Language Journal, 52*(3), 148-152. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1968.tb01884.x

Al-Houti, S. K., & Aldaihani, S. M. (2018). Letting the cat out of the bag: EFL college students' attitudes towards learning English idioms. *International Journal of Higher Education, 7*(1), 140-150. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v7n1p140

Al-kadi, A. M. T. (2015). Towards idiomatic competence of Yemeni EFL undergraduates. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 6*(3), 513-523. http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0603.06

Al-Khawaldeh, N., Jaradat, A., Al-momani, H., & Bani-Khair, B. (2016). Figurative idiomatic language: Strategies and difficulties of understanding English idioms. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature, 5*(6), 119-133. http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.5n.6p.119

Alptekin, C. (2002). Towards intercultural communicative competence in ELT. *ELT Journal, 56*(1), 57-64. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/56.1.57

Asl, F. M. (2013). The impact of context on learning idioms in EFL classes. *TESOL Journal, 37*(1), 1-12. https://www.mextesol.net/journal/index.php?page=journal&id_article=194

Badger, S. (n.d.). *Kinds of idiomatic expressions*. http://www.ehow.com/info_8665126_kinds-idiomatic-expression.html.

Beloussova, V. (2015). *Idiom learning materials for Estonian secondary school students*. [Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Tartu]. DS Space.

Berg, B. L. (2009). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (7th ed.). Pearson

Education.

Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., & Tight, M. (2001). *How to research* (2nd ed.). Open University
Press.

Boers, F., Eyckmans, J., Kappel, J., Stengers, H., & Demecheleer, M. (2006). Formulaic
expressions and perceived oral proficiency: Putting a lexical approach to the test.
Language Teaching Research, 10(3)*,* 245-261.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1362168806lr195oa

Boers, F., Eyckmans, J., & Stengers, H. (2007). Presenting figurative idioms with a touch
of etymology: More than mere mnemonics? *Language Teaching Research, 11*(1),
43–62. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168806072460

Boers, F., Piquer, P. A. M., Stengers, H., & Eyckmans, J. (2009). Does pictorial elucidation
foster recollection of idioms? *Language Teaching Research, 13*(4), 367–382.
https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168809341505

Brenner, G. (2003). *Webster's new world American idioms handbook*. Webster's New
World.

Brown, H. D. (1994). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (3rd ed.). Prentice Hall
Regents.

Brown, J. D. (2001). *Using surveys in language program*. Cambridge University Press.

Cain, K., Oakhill, J., & Lemmon, K. (2005). The relation between children's reading
comprehension level and their comprehension of idioms. *Journal of Experimental
Child Psychology, 90*(1), 65-87. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2004.09.003

Cakir, I. (2011). How do learners perceive idioms in EFL classes? *Ekev Akademi Dergisi
Yıl*, *15*(47), 371-381. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335892947

Chen, Y., & Lai, H. (2013). Teaching English idioms as metaphors through cognitive-
oriented methods: A case in an EFL writing class. *English Language Teaching,
6*(6), 13-20. http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n6p13

Chuang, Y. (2013). A study of the relationship between college EFL learners' vocabulary

size and idiomatic reading comprehension. *NCUE Journal of Humanities, 7*, 59-76.

https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/33185234.pdf

Cieślicka, A. B. (2015). Idiom acquisition and processing by second/ foreign language

learners. In R. R. Heredia & A. B. Cieślicka (Eds.), *Bilingual figurative language*

processing (pp. 208–244). Cambridge University

Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139342100.012

Cooper, T. (1998). Teaching idioms. *Foreign Language Annals, 31*(2), 255-266.

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.1998.tb00572.x

Cooper, T. (1999). Processing of Idioms by L2 Learners of English. *TESOL*

Quarterly, 33(2), 233-262. https://doi.org/10.2307/3587719

Cowie, A. P. & Mackin, R. (1975). *Oxford dictionary of current idiomatic English, Vol. I:*

Verbs with prepositions and particles. Oxford University Press.

Creswell, J, W., & Poth, C, N. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing*

among five approaches. SAGE.

Desarrollo Económico de Ciudad Juárez. (2020, June). Juarez Outlook.

https://www.desarrolloeconomico.org/pdf/Juárez%20Outlook/Juarez%20outlook_J

unio2

Dirección general de planeación y desarrollo institucional. (2020, June 16). Agenda

estadística 2018-2019.

http://www3.uacj.mx/DGPDI/SPCOA/Documents/estadisticas/ESTADISTICAS-

2018-

Dixon, R. (1994). *Essential idioms in English*. Prentice Hall Regents.

Doganay, Y., & Maksut, A. (2013). The impact of cultural based activities in foreign

language teaching at intermediate (B1) level. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral*

Sciences, 89(2), 734-740. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.08.924

Domics. (2019, August 31). *Idioms* [Video]. YouTube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvsopmnMfg8

Dornyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies.* Oxford University Press.

Elkilic, G. (2008). Turkish students' understanding of transparent and opaque idioms in English in reading as well as speaking. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 4*(2), 27-41. https://www.jlls.org/index.php/jlls/article/view/63/63

English in General. (2021, January 30). *Learn English idioms with TV series & movies-10 most common idioms- Part 1* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJS77wXttpI

English Test Blog. (2019, May 25). *Can you guess the idiom by the emoji? Emoji challenge* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3AMkElu47sM

Gay, L. R., & Airasian, P. (2000). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and application* (6th ed.). Merill Prentice.

Gibbs, R. W. (1986). Skating on thin ice: Literal meaning and understanding idioms in conversation. *Discourse Processes, 9*(1), 17-30. https://doi.org/10.1080/01638538609544629

Google. (n.d.). [Map of Mexico]. Retrieved September 21, 2020, from https://images.app.goo.gl/XFM1fFGThW9KutJk9

Google. (n.d.). [Idiom hit the sack]. Retrieved May 19, 2021, from https://images.app.goo.gl/UnUyFaTn4T1kFWLW7

Grant, L. E. (2007). In a manner of speaking: Assessing frequent spoken figurative idioms to assist ESL/EFL teachers. *System*, *35*(2)*,* 169-181. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2006.05.004

Griffee, D. T. (2012). *An introduction to second language research methods: Design and data.* TESL-EJ.

Hinkel, E. (2017). Teaching idiomatic expressions and phrases: Insights and techniques*. Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research, 5*(3), 45-59. http://ijltr.urmia.ac.ir/article_20304.html

Hitchcock, G., & Hughes, D. (1995). *Research and the teacher: A qualitative introduction to school-based research.* Routledge.

Holmes, A. G. D. (2020). Research positionality: A consideration of its influence and place in qualitative research. A new researcher guide. *Shanlax International Journal of Education, 8*(4). 1-10. https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v8i4.3232

Hümmer, C., & Stathi, K. (2006). Polysemy and vagueness in idioms: A corpus-based analysis of meaning. *International Journal of Lexicography*, *19*(4), 361-377. https://doi.org/10.1093/ijl/ecl023

Irujo, S. (1986). A piece of cake: Learning and teaching idioms. *ELT journal, 40*(3), 236-242. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/40.3.236

Jacob, S. A., & Furgerson, S. P. (2012). Writing interview protocols and conducting interviews: Tips for students new to the field of qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report, 17*(42), 1-10. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol17/iss42/3

Jiang, W. (2000). The relationship between culture and language. *ELT Journal, 54*(4), 328-334. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/54.4.328

Khan, O., & Can Daşkin, N. (2014). 'You reap what you sow' Idioms in materials designed by EFL teacher-trainees. *Research on Youth and Language, 8*(2), 97-118. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1167288.pdf

Kivunja, C., & Bawa, K. A. (2017). Understanding and applying research paradigms in educational contexts. *International Journal of Higher Education, 6*(5), 26-41. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v6n5p26

Kvale, S. (1983). The qualitative research interview: A phenomenological and a hermeneutical mode of understanding. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, *14*, 171-196. https://doi.org/10.1163/156916283X00090

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing.* SAGE.

Liontas, J. I. (2003). Killing two birds with one stone: Understanding Spanish VP idioms in and out of context. *Hispania, 86*(2), 289-301. https://doi.org/10.2307/20062862

Liontas, J. I. (2015). Developing idiomatic competence in the ESOL classroom: A
      pragmatic account. *TESOL Journal, 6*(4), 621-658. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.230

Liontas, J. I. (2017). Why teach idioms? A challenge to the profession. *Iranian Journal of
      Language Teaching Research, 5*(3), 5-25. http://ijltr.urmia.ac.ir

Lundblom, E., & Woods, J. (2012). Working in classroom: Improving idiom
      comprehension through class wide peer tutoring. *Communication Disorders
      Quarterly, 33*(4), 202-219. https://doi.org/10.1177/1525740111404927

Mack, N., Woodsong, C., MacQueen, K., Guest, G., & Namey, E. (2005). *Qualitative
      research methods: A data collector's field guide*. Family Health International.

Maisa, R., & Karunakaran, T. (2013). Idioms and importance of teaching idioms to ESL
      students: A study on teacher beliefs. *Asian Journal of Humanities and Social
      Sciences, 1*(1), 1-13. https://ajhss.org/archives/Vol1Issue1.htm

Makkai, A. (1972). *Idiom structure in English*. Cambridge University Press.

Mann, C., & Stewart, F. (2000). *Internet communication and qualitative research: A
      handbook for researching online forum.* SAGE.

Mansoor, R. W. (2015). *Teaching English idioms to l2 learners: ESL teachers' perspective*
      [Master's thesis, *St. Cloud State University*]. Reporsitory St. Cloud State.

Mäntylä, K. (2004). *Idioms and language users: the effect of the characteristics of idioms
      on their recognition and interpretation by native and non-native speakers of
      English*. [Master's thesis, University of Jyväskylä]. Jyväskylän yliopisto.

Manzoor, S., & Kiran, S. (2015). Impact of strategies in handling the difficulties of idioms.
      International Journal of Sciences: Basic and Applied Research, 21(2), 224-234.
      https://www.gssrr.org/index.php/JournalOfBasicAndApplied/article/view/3686/2235

Maykut, P., & Morehouse, R. (1994). *Beginning qualitative research: A philosophy and
      practical guide*. Routledge Falmer.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and
      implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Context. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved March

      10, 2021, from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/context

Merton, R. (1972). Insiders and outsiders: A chapter in the sociology of knowledge. *American*

      Journal of Sociology, 78(1), 9-47. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2776569

Michel. (2016, January 7). *30 Incredible stories behind English idioms and phrases you use*

      every day. The intrepid guide. https://www.theintrepidguide.com/english-idioms-

      and-their-origins/#.YBii5y1h2Rs

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis* (2nd ed.). SAGE.

Nabil, A. A. S. (2017). *Teachers' perceptions on formulaic language*. [Master's thesis, The

      American University in Cairo]. AUC Knowledge Fountain.

Najarzadegan, S., & Ketabi, S. (2015). Teachers' beliefs about teaching idiomatic

      expressions: The case of Iranian EFL learners. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and*

      Language Research, 2(3), 120-132.

      https://www.jallr.com/index.php/JALLR/article/view/47

Nehls, K., Smith, B. D., & Schneider. H. A. (2015). Video-conferencing interviews as a

      data collection method. In Hai-Jew, S. (Ed.), *Enhancing qualitative and mixed*

      methods research with technology (pp.140-157). IGI-Global Publishing.

Neubauer, B. E., Witkop, C. T., & Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us

      learn from the experiences of others. *Perspect Med Educ 8*, 90–97.

      https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2

Nurul, A. A., & Rochmawati, D. (2017). Innovative teaching of English idiomatic

      expressions for EFL learners. *Journal of English Teaching Adi Buana, 2*(1),

      47-58. https://doi.org/10.36456/jet.v2.n01.2017.714

O'Dell, F., & Mc Carthy, M. (2010). *English idioms in use (Advanced).* Cambridge

      University Press.

Pimenova, N. (2011). *Idioms comprehension strategies used by English and Russian*

      language learners in a think-aloud study. [Doctoral dissertation, Purdue

University]. Purdue e-Pubs.

Ping, W. (2018). Cultural characteristics of idiomatic expressions and their approaches of translation. *Journal of Literature and Art Studies, 8*(2), 295-300. http://www.davidpublisher.com/index.php/Home/Article/index?id=34426.html

Pinnavaia, L. (2002). The grammaticalization of English idioms: A hypothesis for teaching purposes. *Mots Palabras Words, 1*, 53-60. https://www.ledonline.it/mpw/allegati/mpw0102pinnavaia.pdf

Pollio, H. R., Barlow, J. M., Fine, H. K., & Pollio, M. R. (1977). *Psychology and the poetics of growth*. John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Quynh, T. H. (2012). An explorative study of idiom teaching for pre-service teachers of English. *English Language Teaching, 5*(12), 76-86. http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/elt/article/view/21450

Rehman, A. A., & Alharthi, K. (2016). An introduction to research paradigms. *International Journal of Educational Investigations, 3*(8), 51-59. http://www.ijeionline.com/index.php/57-2016-8

Richards, K. (2003). *Qualitative inquiry in TESOL*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Roberto de Caro, E. E. (2009). The advantages and importance of learning and using idioms in English. *Cuadernos de Lingüistica Hispanica*, (14), 121-136. https://revistas.uptc.edu.co/index.php/linguistica_hispanica/article/view/383

Rohani, G., Ketabi, S., & Tavakoli, M. (2012). The effect of context on the EFL learners' idiom processing strategies. *English Language Teaching, 5*(9), 104-114. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n9p104

Saleh, N., & Zakaria, N. (2013). Investigating the difficulties faced in understanding, and strategies used in processing English idiom by the Libyan students. *International Journal of English Language and Translation Studies, 1*(2), 69-90. https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.404.141&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Samani, E. R., & Hashemian, M. (2012). The effect of conceptual metaphors on learning

    idioms by l2 learners. *International Journal of English Linguistics, 2*(1), 249.

    http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ijel/article/view/14689

Savin-Baden, M., & Major, C. H. (2013). *Qualitative research. The essential guide to*

    theory and practice. Routledge.

Scarino, A. (2010). Assessing intercultural capability in learning languages: A renewed

    understanding of language, culture, learning, and the nature of assessment. *Modern*

    Language Journal, 94(2), 324- 329.

    https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2010.01026.x

Soraya, L. B. A. K. S. (2019). Research paradigm and the philosophical foundations of a

    qualitative study. *International Journal of Social Sciences, 4*(3), 1386-1394.

    https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2019.43.13861394

Soto-Jurado, J., & Garcia-Ponce, E. (2021). If idioms are important, then why do you not

    teach them? A case study in a Mexican university. *MEXTESOL Journal, 45*(4), 1-

    10. https://www.mextesol.net/journal/index.php?page=journal&id_article=25316

Strutz, H. (1996). *German idioms*. Barron's Educational Series.

Szczepaniak, R., & Lew, R. (2011). The role of imagery in dictionaries of idioms. *Applied*

    Linguistics, 32(3), 323–347. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amr001

Talib, A, A, M. (2015). Towards idiomatic competence of Yemeni EFL undergraduates.

    Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 6(3), 513-523.

    http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0603.06

Thornbury, S. G. (2005). *Beyond the sentence: Introducing discourse analysis*. Oxford

    University Press

Tompkins, G. E. (2001). *Literacy for the 21st century* (2nd ed.). Prentice Hall.

Trusler, T. (2015, March 12). *8 ways to practice idioms in class*. ESL Library.

    https://blog.esllibrary.com/2015/03/12/8-ways-to-practice-idioms-in-class/

Tufford. L., & Newman, P. (2010). Bracketing in Qualitative Research. *SAGE Journals,*

11(1), 80-96. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325010368316

Turner, D. W. (2010). Qualitative interview design: A practical guide for novice investigators. *The Qualitative Report, 15*(3), 754-760. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol15/iss3/19/

Vasiljevic, Z. (2015). Teaching and learning idioms in L2: From theory to practice. *MEXTESOL Journal, 39*(4), 1-24. https://www.mextesol.net/journal/index.php?page=journal&id_article=1148

Wingfield. R. J. (1968). English idiom in a second language teaching situation. *ELT Journal, 22*(3), 231-234. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/elt/XXII.3.231

Woon, C. L., & Goh, C. C. M. (2016). Teachers' perceptions, experiences and learning. *Asian Pacific Journal of Education, 36*(1), 1-4. https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2016.1141464

Wray, A. (2000). Formulaic sequences in second language teaching: Principle and practice. *Applied Linguistics, 21*(3), 463-489. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/applin/21.4.463

Xie, H. (2017). Investigating Chinese EFL learners' comprehension of English idioms. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 8*(2), 329-336. http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0802.15

Yağiz, O., & Izadpanah, S. (2013). Language, culture, idioms, and their relationship with the foreign language. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 4*(5), 953-957. https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.4.5.953-957

Zarei, A., & Pour, V. (2013). Language learning strategies as predictors of L2 idioms comprehension. International. *Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World, 4*(2), 330-313. http://www.ikiu.ac.ir/public-files/profiles/items/090ad_1381642921.pdf

Zyzik, E. (2011). Second language idiom learning: The effects of lexical knowledge and pedagogical sequencing. *Language Teaching Research*, *15*(4)*,* 413-433. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1362168811412025

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

The objective of this questionnaire is to gather personal information concerning your academic and linguistic background. All your information will be treated confidentially and used for research purposes only. Please read the questions carefully, and feel free to ask questions if you have doubts. Thank you for your collaboration.

1. How old are you?

2. Where were you born?

3. Do you speak another language besides English and Spanish?

4. Can you describe the process of how you learned English?

5. In which area do you hold a bachelor's degree?

6. How many years have you been teaching English? Which levels?

7. Do you have a language proficiency certificate? Which one?

Appendix 2: Semi-Structured Interview

Link between language and culture

1. What teaching contents do you think that should be included in a classroom?
2. It is believed that language and culture are interrelated, what is your opinion about it?
3. Which topics would you use to teach culture or promote cultural knowledge to your students?

Idioms in the classroom

4. Can you please define in your own words what an idiom is?
5. Should idioms be taught in the language classroom? Why?
6. Do you include idioms? why?
7. In your opinion, do you think there are benefits of teaching and learning idioms for students' English competence?
8. Have you faced any difficulties when teaching idioms? (from teachers or students)
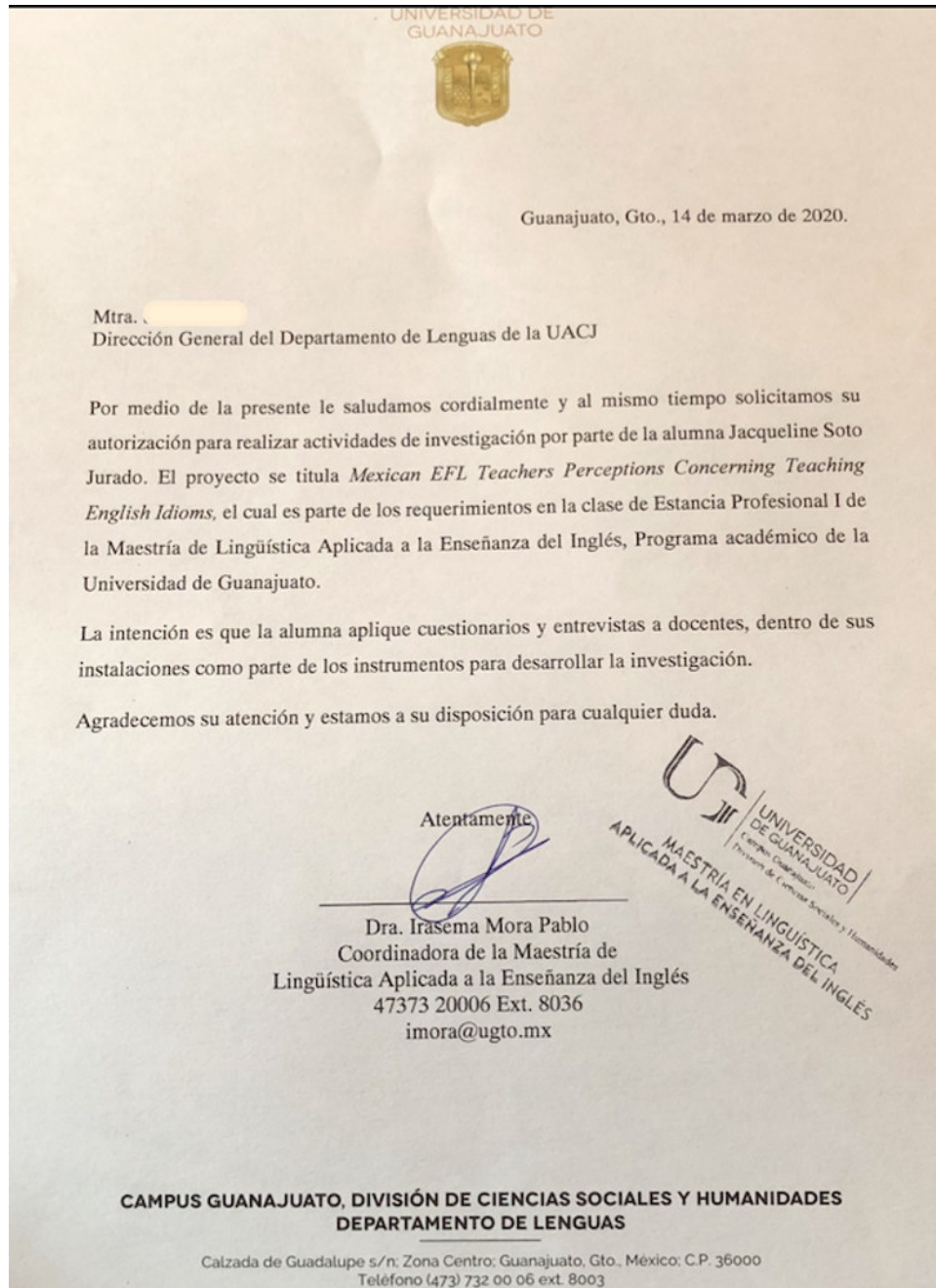
Strategies to teach idioms

9. Let us suppose that we are in your class. (Select an idiom) How would you teach the idiom you selected? Can you explain to me the process?
10. What is the role of context in teaching idioms?
11. Do you think it is important to include visual aids when teaching idioms? Why?
12. What other activities would be good to teach idioms?

Appendix 3: Excerpts from the Interviews

Code	Beginning	End	Weight score	Segment
Speaking activities are important	2	2	0	A very important aspect to include in the class must be a speaking section where students can use the knowledge from the lesson in their daily life or their daily activities. So, they can speak with their classmates and use all the grammar structures and all the new vocabulary.
Authentic language use	2	2	0	Probably we should include some expressions that people might use at the time of speaking. It could be formal or informal expressions that most of the people use because many lessons focused only on the grammar structures, but not on the different expressions that people might use in the different situations.
Lack of content in the book	2	2	0	many lessons focused only on the grammar structures, but not on the different expressions that people might use in the different situations.
Understanding of the connection between language and culture	2	2	0	Yes, they are super interrelated they go along. People communicate according to their culture, according to their beliefs so yeah it is very related. Some people from another area I don't know in a city or

Appendix 4: Informative Letter for the Coordinator of the Language Center of the UACJ

UNIVERSIDAD DE GUANAJUATO

Guanajuato, Gto., 14 de marzo de 2020.

Mtra.
Dirección General del Departamento de Lenguas de la UACJ

Por medio de la presente le saludamos cordialmente y al mismo tiempo solicitamos su autorización para realizar actividades de investigación por parte de la alumna Jacqueline Soto Jurado. El proyecto se titula *Mexican EFL Teachers Perceptions Concerning Teaching English Idioms,* el cual es parte de los requerimientos en la clase de Estancia Profesional I de la Maestría de Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés, Programa académico de la Universidad de Guanajuato.

La intención es que la alumna aplique cuestionarios y entrevistas a docentes, dentro de sus instalaciones como parte de los instrumentos para desarrollar la investigación.

Agradecemos su atención y estamos a su disposición para cualquier duda.

Atentamente

Dra. Irasema Mora Pablo
Coordinadora de la Maestría de
Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés
47373 20006 Ext. 8036
imora@ugto.mx

**CAMPUS GUANAJUATO, DIVISIÓN DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES Y HUMANIDADES
DEPARTAMENTO DE LENGUAS**

Calzada de Guadalupe s/n; Zona Centro; Guanajuato, Gto., México; C.P. 36000
Teléfono (473) 732 00 06 ext. 8003

Appendix 5: Consent Letter

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Lic. Jacqueline Soto Jurado of the Master's in Applied Linguistics in English Teaching at the University of Guanajuato. The purpose of the study is to analyze English teachers' perspectives regarding the inclusion of extra content in the classroom besides grammar structures. Please read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding to participate.

- This participation is voluntary. You have the freedom to refuse to answer any question in any of the instruments (questionnaire and interview).
- The information provided will be confidential and anonymous.
- I would like to record this interview to use it as a reference to continue with the study.

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Signature of the participant_____ Date_____

Signature of the researcher_____ Date_____

For any questions or concerns please send an email to jakisotoo18@gmail.com