

## Spicing up the Language through Idioms!

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**Resumen:** El lenguaje es un sistema dinámico e interactivo que facilita a las personas la expresión de ideas y necesidades en una forma directa (Read 190). A través de los años debido al dinamismo y la característica siempre creciente del lenguaje, frases y palabras con un sentido figurativo han sido incorporadas. Una limitante evidente sería, de alguna forma, el malentender esos significados figurativos que son transmitidos en una conversación. Esto es una trampa eminente que expone al receptor del mensaje ante el riesgo de ser avergonzado o de hacer o entender una idea opuesta a lo que el hablante intenta decir o preguntar. Sin embargo, si los aprendientes son sensibilizados acerca de aspectos metafóricos de comunicación natural, entonces el aprendizaje de vocabulario figurativo será fortalecido y su conocimiento será retenido más tiempo en su memoria (Boers 212). Debido a esto, el análisis y práctica de frases y palabras con significados figurativos llamados “modismos” le permiten al aprendiente del inglés como lengua extranjera desarrollar la comunicación oral en una forma más detallada y significativa. A través del uso de algunas actividades sugeridas, el profesor puede incorporar este elemento del lenguaje y transformar la adquisición de un idioma extranjero en un proceso natural donde los aprendientes se conviertan en negociantes más eficientes del lenguaje.

**Palabras clave:** Significado figurativo, significado metafórico, modismo, adquisición, actividades pedagógicas, significado connotativo, negociante del significado.

**Abstract:** Language is a dynamic and interactive system that facilitates the expression of ideas and needs to humans in a direct fashion (Read 190). Through the years, due to language dynamism and its ever-growing feature, phrases and words with a figurative meaning have been incorporated. A potential constraint would be, in a way, the misunderstanding of metaphorical meanings that are conveyed in speech. This is an eminent pitfall that exposes the recipient of the message to the risk of being embarrassed and doing or understanding an opposed idea to what the speaker intends to say or ask for. However, “if learners are sensitized about the metaphorical aspects of normal communication, then figurative vocabulary learning will be enhanced and this knowledge will be retained longer in their memory” (Boers 212). Owing to this, the analysis and practice of phrases and words with figurative meanings called idioms allow the learner of English as a foreign language to tackle oral communication in a more detailed and meaningful way. Through the use of some suggested pedagogical

activities the teacher can incorporate this language element and make the acquisition of a foreign language unfold as a natural process where learners turn into more efficient language negotiators.

**Keywords:** Figurative meaning, metaphorical meaning, idiom, acquisition, pedagogical activities, connotative meaning, negotiation of meaning.

## **1 Introduction**

Idioms are regarded as key elements of naturally occurring speech. They have long played an important role in the teaching-learning process of the English language. In fact, the use of idioms is so widespread that an understanding of these expressions is essential to successful communication. Students may learn grammar and acquire adequate vocabulary, but without a working knowledge of idioms the best student's speech will remain awkward and ordinary. Since many idioms are culture-dependent and even culture-specific, they can only become part of students' natural speech after enough exposure to the kind of English used within the target culture. Sometimes the meaning of a specific idiom might not be clear, but just being able to recognize that it is an idiom and the context in which it is being used is the first important step to understanding. Undoubtedly, the mastery of idiomatic expressions is a hard task to achieve. Instructors exert great influence on their learners' effective language communication. On the basis of these premises the following research questions, hypothesis and objectives are drawn to set proper grounds for this work.

### **1.1 Research Questions**

1. Do teaching and learning idioms improve EFL students' capacity to communicate and negotiate meaning in the target language?
2. To what extent are idioms used in EFL classrooms?
3. What pedagogical activities can be suggested to encourage the use of idioms in the EFL classroom?
4. What materials can be recommended to EFL teachers and learners to teach and learn idioms efficiently?

### **1.2 Hypothesis**

Teaching and learning idioms improve EFL students' capacity to communicate and negotiate meaning in the target language

### **1.3 General objective**

To establish the advantages to teaching and learning idioms in the EFL classroom at Universidad Nacional, Brunca Extension in Pérez Zeledón.

### **1.4 Specific objectives**

1. To determine the extent to which idioms are used in EFL classrooms
2. To suggest a set of pedagogical activities to encourage the use of idioms in the EFL classroom
3. To recommend EFL instructors and learners some material for the effective teaching and learning of idioms

## 2 Literature review

### 2.1 The Origin of Idioms

The word idiom comes from a Greek word meaning “proper” or “peculiar to oneself” (Brock 3 ). In the broad sense it refers to language or dialect, or the way in which a language is stated. That is, an accepted word or expression that almost always has a specific meaning different from its literal meaning. For that reason, idioms become a code, a language within a language designed to mystify outsiders and intensify the feelings of kinship among members of a community.

### 2.2 Classification of Idioms

Idioms defy classification unless the speaker is familiar with them: some make sense, some do not. Their original purpose was to give wit and intrigue to language, but in their practical use idioms do more than that. On the other hand, proverbs are special kinds of idioms though they refuse to remain within a single language. In the Bible, a proverb is a story or saying containing a profound truth in disguise. It is similar to a parable or an allegory. In ordinary usage, a proverb is simply a short saying that expresses a generally accepted truth or fact, usually in an allegorical style. Unlike idioms, proverbs are easy to put in their place. They might be divided in two categories: good advice and wise observation. They both may be sincere or cynical. Most of the time they aim at cynics, all those anonymous cranks, for their purpose is to rob us of our least appealing vices: pomposity and hypocrisy (Dixson Introduction). There are some idioms that both Spanish speakers as well as English speakers share as in the case of the sad and splendid phrase “what’s done is done” which is just as devastating as the Spanish “lo hecho hecho está.” Americans and Spanish speakers both “cry crocodile tears,” both “lead a dog’s life,” “take the bull by the horns,” “leave with the tail between the legs,” and both know that “all that glitters is not gold.” Besides, both share the notion of “a seventh heaven,” both “break the ice,” “swallow their pride.” On some occasions both share the concept as in the case of “as the devil carries off a soul,” compared to the Spanish equivalent “como alma que lleva el Diablo” (Makkai Introduction).

### 2.3 Relevance and Pertinence of Teaching and Learning Idioms

Why is English, and specially American English, so heavily idiomatic? The most likely reason is that as English native speakers develop new concepts, they need new expressions for those concepts, but instead of creating a brand new word, they use already existing words and put them together to make sense. This, to a certain extent, is true of all languages. There are, in fact, no known languages that lack these idiomatic expressions. Therefore, when learning a language a person may make incorrect guesses of the meaning of idioms.

Teachers of English have recognized that idiomatic expressions add grace and exactness to the language. Thus, the alert teacher has to make the study of idioms an integral part of the teaching-learning process

## 3 Idioms in EFL Classrooms

Idioms are always present in the language of most native speakers. They may probably be one of the most difficult linguistic elements to master by learners of a second or foreign

language because people use the language according to their needs and interests which, in turn, change as human needs are modified by the cultural and social context.

In this case, the data gathered through a set of instruments evidence the use of idioms in an EFL context specifically by instructors and learners of the English teaching major and the Associate's Program in English at Universidad Nacional, Brunca Extension in Pérez Zeledón.

### 3.1 Use of Idioms in EFL Classrooms

Students have to be able to cope with idiomatic expressions naturally without relying on their native language to understand and use idioms correctly. The previous statement delineates how urgent it is for EFL learners to manage these linguistic elements appropriately to become competent interlocutors.

After having shed light upon the importance of teaching and learning idioms, questions like the following may still arise: How could instructors encourage or optimize the process of learning idioms in their students? What do learners do to incorporate idioms to their speech so that they sound natural when communicating orally? The answers to these inquiries can be dealt with through the analysis of some of the items of the questionnaires administered.

### 3.2 Teacher's Perceptions

In this part some of the answers given by the teachers surveyed are graphically represented. This helps to have a quick idea of what some teachers think and do in their teaching situations.

Based on the information gathered, most of the teachers surveyed sometimes teach idioms in their classrooms (Figure 1). This means that they do not do it all the time so that their students are not constantly exposed to learning new idioms. Some of the teachers said that they never do it, which means that their students are not acquainted with new idiomatic expressions. However, some of them, though a low percentage, stated that they always do it. In this case those teachers are aware of the importance of teaching idioms to help their students communicate more creatively. It is remarkable to note that at least some of the teachers surveyed consider teaching idioms in their classes from time to time.

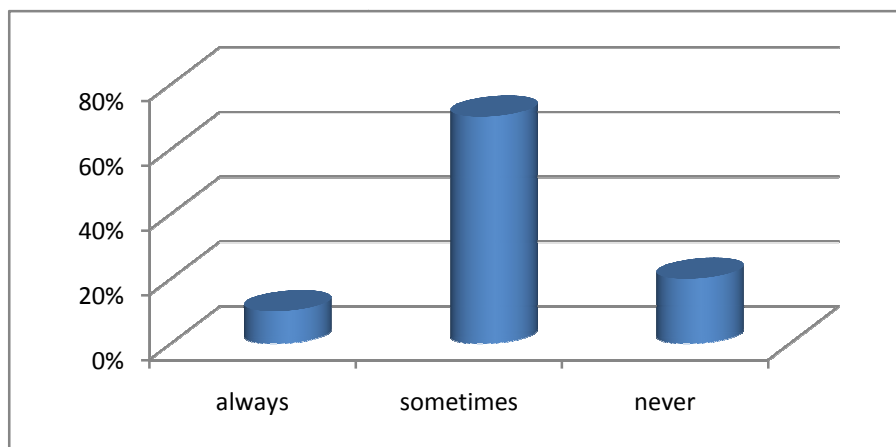
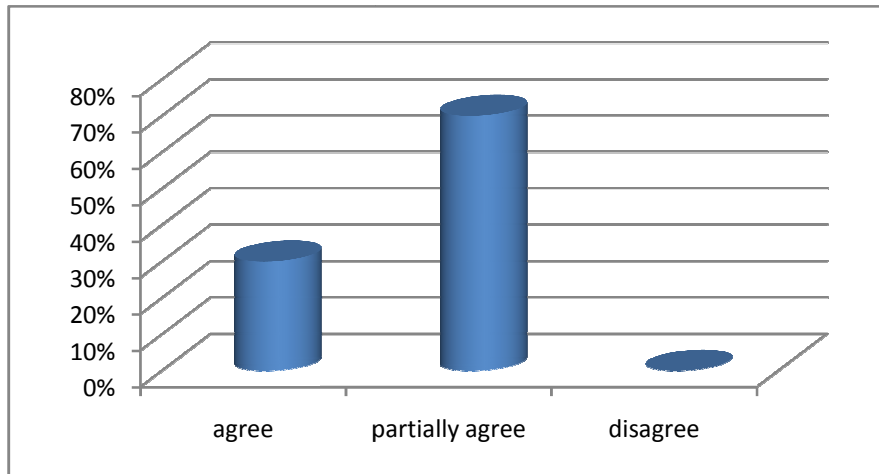


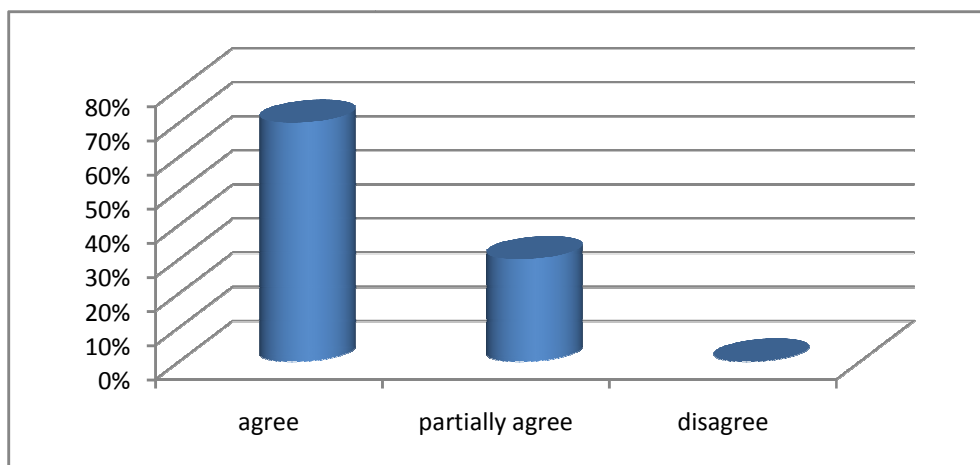
Figure 1. Frequency of the Teaching of Idioms in EFL classrooms . Source: questionnaire # 1, June 2011.

The information displayed below shows the teachers' opinions regarding how easy the teaching of idioms is (Figure 2). Most of them said that idioms are somehow easy to teach, which means that is the reason why they sometimes incorporate them. Some others mentioned that teaching idioms is easy so that they always do it. Finally, a very low percentage of the sampled teachers said they think teaching idioms is difficult, that is why they never do it in their classes.



**Figure 2. Idioms Are Easy to Teach . Source: questionnaire # 1, June 2011.**

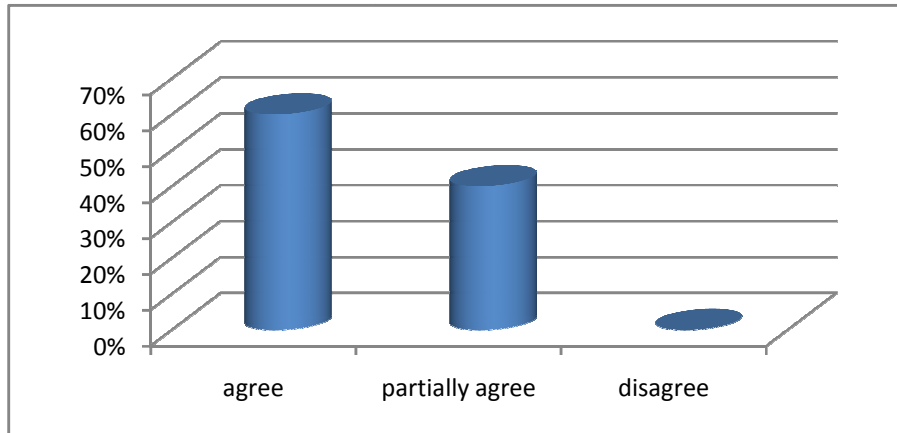
The data gathered reveal that most of the teachers agreed on the fact that their students are motivated to learn idioms in their classes (Figure 3). If they sometimes do it, they get their students into the habit of learning idiomatic phrases. Some other teachers said that they partially agreed on the assumption that idioms are easy to teach, which relates to the fact that they sometimes do it. In this case what is interesting to note is that none of the teachers said that their students are not motivated to learn; on the contrary; all of them share a certain level of motivation to learn idioms.



**Figure 3. Students Are Motivated to Learn Idioms. Source: questionnaire # 1, June 2011.**

The information gathered shows how necessary idioms are to achieve communicative competence (Figure 4). In fact, a very high percentage of teachers

answered that idioms are really necessary to achieve communicative competence, which explains the fact that they sometimes use it in their classes. However, some of them partially agreed on the idea because they think idioms are not easy to teach. Fortunately, nobody said idioms are not necessary for communicative competence. This is a very positive remark which supports the importance of idioms in English classes.



**Figure 4. Idioms Are Necessary to Achieve Communicative Competence. Source: questionnaire # 1, June 2011.**

One of the questions answered by the teachers in the questionnaire was related to the activities that they develop in their classes to teach idioms (Table 1). As it can be seen, most of the activities that teachers do are role-playing, listening to songs and playing games. These three activities are very entertaining and easy to develop. Also, the teachers recommend watching shows such as sitcoms and documentaries; these TV programs usually contain idiomatic expressions. Cultural capsules, writing poems, letters and ads are not very common because they demand more time and are not easy to develop.

Activities Recommended to Teach Idioms	Use	
	N	Percent
Cultural capsules	2	6%
Watching TV shows	5	17%
Writing poems, letters and ads	2	6%
Games	6	20%
Songs	6	20%
Role-plays	6	20%
Recorded conversations	3	10%
Total	30	100%

**Table 1. Activities Recommended to Teach Idioms by EFL teachers at UNA, BE. Data gathered from questionnaire # 1, June 2011.**

### 3.3 Learner's Perceptions

In this section learners' perceptions are analyzed. Most of the students surveyed said that they sometimes use idioms to communicate with their classmates and with native

speakers of English if possible (Figure 5). It means that most of these students know how important idioms are in their daily speech. Nevertheless, an important part of the population sampled held that they never use idioms in their conversations. This answer relates to the fact that some teachers do not teach these idiomatic phrases due to the reasons previously stated. Notwithstanding, it is worth stressing that most of the students surveyed know some idioms and use them not very often.

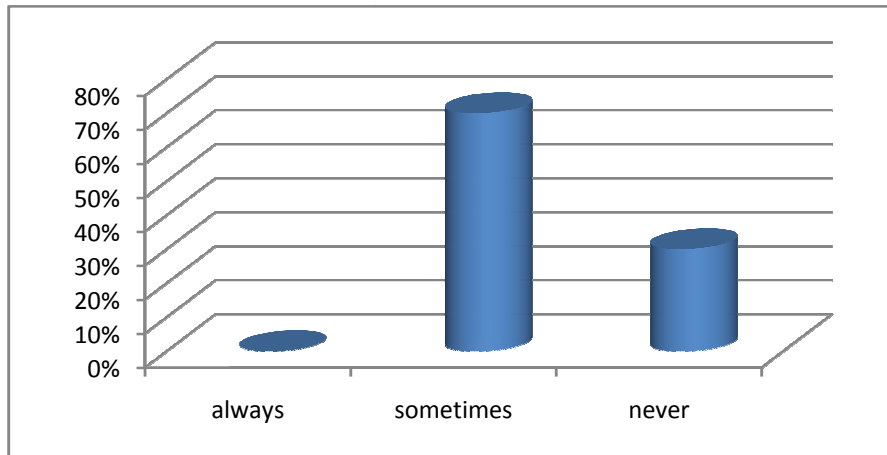


Figure 5. Frequency of Use of Idioms. Source: questionnaire # 2, June 2011.

The data gathered evidence the main activities that the students surveyed would do in and out of their classes to learn and put idioms into practice (Table 2). Once again, songs are very important and attractive for students to learn idioms. Then, they put the idioms into practice in conversations and role-plays. Besides, pictures, pieces of paper with idioms, books and online sources are usually useful tools to learn idiomatic phrases according to learners.

Activities Selected to Learn Idioms	Use	
	N	Percent
Role-plays	4	17%
Conversations	5	21%
Use of pictures	2	8%
Sticking pieces of paper with idioms	2	8%
Reading books	3	12%
Songs	6	25%
Contacts online	2	8%
Total	24	100%

Table2. Activities Used to Learn Idioms by EFL students at UNA, BE. Data gathered from questionnaire # 2, June 2011.

### 3.4 Pedagogical Activities to Encourage the Use of Idioms in EFL Classrooms

Idiomatic expressions are not easy for students learning English as a second or foreign language to handle. Attempts to translate literally from the student's native tongue usually lead to roundabout meaning and often to confusion. Dana Watkins suggests some tips in order to teach idioms appropriately in an English class:

- a. Practice the idioms and their use in listening and reading comprehension exercises so that students can later on use them in real- life situations; specially in speaking natural and spontaneously in and out of class.
- b. Recognize idioms within a natural context. As native speakers employ idioms in natural contexts and use them in authentic materials, students learn how to use them in their proper grammatical and semantic context.
- c. Discuss the cultural elements portrayed in the idioms and discuss them to make the language-culture connection clear. In this part of the process students become aware of the target culture and learn the cultural context of idioms as well.
- d. Identify and also discuss examples of different tones such as irony, sarcasm, candidor among others.
- e. Acquire and expand vocabulary by using words with different meanings.
- f. Figure out the literal and figurative meaning of the idioms.
- g. Keep practicing the idioms all the time in different classroom activities so that they can be retained ( Watkins Introduction).

Based on the previous suggestions, some activities can also be devised for the purpose of boosting the use of idioms in EFL classrooms.

#### 3.4.1 Picking up the Appropriate Idioms to Teach<sup>1</sup>

##### *3.4.1.1 Description:*

One of the most common setbacks of learning a language to communicate naturally is the falling into a routine and the accumulation of the same language forms. EFL learners are very identified with their instructors' everyday speech. If instructors do not modify and expand their vocabulary, learners will definitely end up replicating their teachers' exact use of words and phrases.

##### *3.4.1.2 Instructions:*

One way to broaden learners' knowledge of words and phrases is by presenting new words and idiomatic phrases to the students at the very beginning of the course and keeping on using them throughout the lesson activities. The words and phrases should be very much related to the course being taught so that in a university period students deal with an array of new words and idiomatic phrases.

#### 3.4.2 Learning Idioms through Music<sup>2</sup>

##### *3.4.2.1 Description:*

Songs are reliable sources to expose students to authentic target language forms. Unlimited idiomatic phrases and expressions are displayed in most songs. Fortunately, students seem to be enchanted by the influence of music, and they report this one to be

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 2



one of their favorite ways to learn the target language and culture. Most English courses taught at UNA lend themselves to the application of songs.

#### 3.4.2.2 *Instructions:*

Teachers, no matter the course they teach, should carefully select songs appropriate to the topic under study and highlight the idioms or slang used. The idioms may be reinforced by performing any other follow-up activity.

#### 3.4.3 Video Clip Idiom Exploration<sup>3</sup>

##### 3.4.3.1 *Description:*

Movies and videos in general are powerful sources to learn idiomatic expressions. This is one of the most appealing tools for EFL learners to grasp the language. Instructors should be aware of the usefulness of this resource.

##### 3.4.3.2 *Instructions:*

- a. The idea is to bring movie trailers to the class and expose students to real language. There is one webpage which helps learners practice the language and get new vocabulary and expressions on a daily basis very easily. Students can access [www.englishcentral.com](http://www.englishcentral.com) to enhance their learning process.
- b. Instructors can also select one video clip related to idioms and work on the implementation of different pedagogical activities based on the content of the video.

#### 3.4.4 Life-like Conversations on the Spot<sup>4</sup>

##### 3.4.4.1 *Description:*

One suitable way to contextualize the use of idioms is by using real and live conversations. These ones can be recorded in contexts that foreigners usually visit like parks, restaurants, shopping centers, tourist centers, and so forth, of course, this should be done with the prior consent of the interlocutors. Another way that seems to be very practical is to transcribe episodes of movies or series. On this account, teachers should work on this task to have the script of the conversations ready before planning the activity.

##### 3.4.4.2 *Instructions:*

Once the conversation is transcribed, teachers spot the words and idiomatic phrases used. These phrases are dropped. Then, teachers make up a similar conversation employing the connotative meanings of the idiomatic phrases that were deleted instead. The task is completed when students are able to relate the original idiomatic phrases to the meanings in the second conversation.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 3

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 4

### 3.4.5 Tailoring Language through Idiom Dominoes<sup>5</sup>

#### 3.4.5.1 Description:

Not only do games awake students' receptivity in class but also their ability to grasp the linguistic purpose behind the game. A domino game aiming at accelerating the learning of idioms is a creative activity recommended for beginning levels. Its objective is to enrich the students' vocabulary. This game helps to activate student's capacity to relate pictures to their corresponding idiom.

#### 3.4.5.2 Instructions:

Teachers should be able to collect drawings and pictures resembling the meaning of common idioms. Then, a format for a domino game should be used to elaborate the domino pieces. Students play the game in pairs and follow the same rules for the conventional domino game.

A degree of complexity can be added by having students use the appointed idiom in a context at the time they need it to carry on with the game.

### 3.5 The Cultural Contribution to the Teaching and Learning of Idioms

People born and raised in a specific society learn not only the language spoken in the area but also the culture that is practiced by all the members of their social group. Cultural practices go hand in hand with language attitudes and levels of formality and informality that speakers adopt to fit into different contexts or situations. In this sense, "meaningful context often is provided by the culture" (Seelye 3).

When analyzing idioms, first it is important to take the words used in the expression to determine whether the words are used with the literal or common meaning that almost everybody knows. Once the lexical units are analyzed, the speaker needs to follow the sequence in which the words are arranged or put together. Sometimes it is possible to find words whose meanings change because of the accompanying words or the collocations that they take. If this happens, then not only linguistic aspects play a role in the process but also the cultural referents the words allude to. As an illustration, colors may change the meaning when they are associated with moods and feelings. The phrase in English "*I'm blue*" indicates there is a problem with the person who says it because here the word *blue* does not make any reference to the common meaning, the color, but to a critical state of mind or a down mood. If this word is culturally compared to other societies which use it in their idiomatic expressions, other meanings or connotations might be conveyed. In Brazil the word *azul*, which means *blue*, has a completely different meaning when it is used in the phrase "*Tudo azul*," which means that everything is all right. In Spanish, *azul* (blue) does not make any reference to moods or states of mind but it could eventually be used in other expressions to indicate a different meaning rather than just the color. Then, what is behind these differences in meaning? A perception of the world and the reality surrounding each society actually account for the differences (Seelye 2).

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 5

When it comes to the teaching and learning of languages, idioms may be tricky to the proficient non-native speaker learning the second language. The learner may know the grammar rules, the sounds of the language and handle lots of vocabulary words, but ignorance of the cultural connotations of words might easily lead to linguistic misunderstanding. In consequence, learning idiomatic expressions becomes a kind of survival tool for those who need to speak a second language and especially for teachers who have to deal with students with different proficiency levels and purposes for learning the language. A common area of inquiry by learners of English as a second language is actually idioms due to the great number of expressions that native speakers use in their daily interactions and in the media. However, it is impossible to get to know all of the idiomatic phrases in the second language because of the cultural constraints previously explained and the transitory nature of such expressions. Idioms are usually in fashion for ten years, which proves the changing nature of human languages. This feature of human languages makes the teaching-learning process a challenging experience for teachers who want to add another peculiar ingredient to their teaching situations.

#### **4 Conclusions**

People have to communicate with each other and it is very important for them to understand foreigners and be understood. There is an urgent need to understand what is written or said beyond words. Unfortunately, language teachers do not devote enough time to teaching these figurative meanings to learners. This shows, particularly, clear evidence on how neglected this area of the English lexicon has been. Learning the native speakers' language cannot happen without knowledge of idioms, but in our schoolbooks idioms are not a priority though idioms come to be a very numerous part of colloquial speech. They are also ever-evolving, and terms can grow outdated. So, the constant search for current idioms has to be a priority for non-natives of the language.

Definitely, idioms are challenging for foreign students to learn. Foreign language students must learn them just as they would learn vocabulary words, basically in sentences. Attempts to translate literally from the student's native tongue usually lead to roundabout meaning and often to confusion. That is why it is really important to be aware of the need to teach idioms appropriately to English learners through some pedagogical activities. Generally speaking, the use of songs, videos and conversations in the classroom to teach idioms accelerate the natural process of second language acquisition.

Due to the need teachers have to develop more appealing techniques more frequently in order to teach idioms in the language classroom, the pedagogical activities suggested through this workshop will enable the learners to use the language outside the classroom more efficiently and confidently.

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Appendix 1

Picking up the Appropriate Idioms to Teach

# Oral Expression: Society and Humanism

<b>Personality and Emotions</b>		<b>Lifestyles</b>
to be blue		city slicker
to be down		go native
run down		have it made
to be red		against the grain
eager beaver		swim against the current
stubborn as a mule		social death
to be green with envy		rediscover fire
to feel like a million bucks		come out
crack a joke		
<b>Family matters</b>		<b>Pregnancy</b>
a chip off the old block		kill the rabbit
like father, like son		the rabbit died
to be grounded		to get knocked up
the black sheep		
like one of the family		<b>Religion</b>
run in the family		family that prays together stays together
a family man		in vain
		kick with the other foot
<b>Drug addiction/Alcoholism</b>		God forbids!
to be high		
to be stoned		<b>Television</b>
Hangover		Tune in
kick the habit		Tone down
		Sign on
<b>Famous people</b>		Mike up
Claim to fame		Shoot'em up
Fifteen minutes of fame		Come in
Lucky break		
To make a name for oneself		

## Appendix 2

## Learning Idioms through Music

Song	Singer	Idiom
Black eyes, blue tears	Shania Twain	Out of whack Rolling with the punches
You're still the one	Shania Twain	Beat the odds
When	Shania Twain	Money grows on trees
From this moment on	Shania Twain	For better, for worse As long as
Come on over	Shania Twain	Get a grip Be down
You've got a way	Shania Twain	You got a way with me
Whatever you do! don't!	Shania Twain	Go jello Stop someone in the tracks
Honey, I'm home	Shania Twain	PMS By the way

## Appendix 3

## Video Clip Idiom Exploration

- Learners watch the video selected by the teacher



Recommended sources for video clips:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJNeQ70f4B8&feature=related>

<http://www.englishcentral.com/>

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SH1l\\_4taG0M&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SH1l_4taG0M&feature=related)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EO\\_pAfICWc&feature=relmfu](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EO_pAfICWc&feature=relmfu)

Activity recommended:

- Learners listen to and watch the video and take notes about the idioms and slang they hear.
- Later on, they imitate what happened in the video by using the phrases chosen.
- They are asked to add humor to their performance.
- Learners prepare with costumes to perform on stage.

## Appendix 4

## Life-like Conversations on the Spot

**Spicing up the language through idioms!**

Work in pairs and practice the conversation below. Then, look for an idiomatic phrase in the box that matches any of the phrases in bold. Make the corresponding changes and practice the new conversation. Did you notice how different it is to use idioms in context?

A: You want to know why I've got **a problem on my mind**?

B: Yes, tell me about it. I'm **listening carefully**.

A: You remember I told you about that car that cost me **a huge amount of money**?

B: The one you bought from the man you called **the man with the important job**?

A: Well, he's not that at all. He's **a fool**.

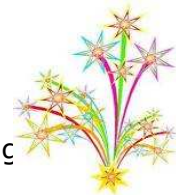
B: You mean he's a **dishonest person**?

A: Yes, exactly because the car is rubbish and I went round to his car **knocking everything over** in the show room.

B: And when I reached his office I saw he was not really awake because he'd been having **a short sleep**.

A: And really the only reason you were there was because you **wanted to have an argument with him**?

B: Yes, that's right. I got my money back and as a result I **exposed a lot of serious problems** because other people got their money back, too.

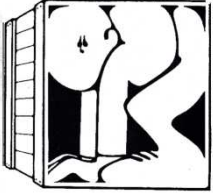
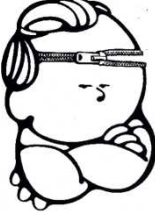


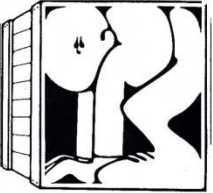







**a cat nap**  
**you had a bone to pick with him**  
**a bee in my bonnet**  
**the big cheese**  
**bird brain**  
**a bad egg**  
**all ears**  
**like a bull in a china shop**  
**an arm and a leg**  
**opened up a new whole can of worms**



### Appendix 5

#### Tailoring the Language through Idiom Dominoes

	Keep an open mind		All boxed in
	To have an ace up one's		To lay a bomb
	To have an ace up one's		All boxed in
	Keep an open mind		Brainsto rm
	Eager beaver		Eager beaver



## Appendix 6

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL  
SEDE REGIONAL BRUNCA  
Research: The Use of Idioms in an EFL Context  
Researchers: M.A. Cinthya Olivares Garita  
M.A. Jorge Altamirano Alvarado

**Instrument N°1****Questionnaire for EFL Teachers**

The following questionnaire is part of a study being conducted by two members of the English Department at Universidad Nacional. It is aimed at analyzing, evaluating and collecting information and suggestions on the impact of using and teaching idioms in an EFL context. Considering this, we would like to ask you to complete the following questionnaire with relevant information. Thank you for your cooperation.

**Part I: Personal information**

1. Gender:        Male-----                       Female -----   
3. Degree : \_\_\_\_\_  
4. Field of Expertise \_\_\_\_\_  
5. Teaching experience: \_\_\_\_\_ years / \_\_\_\_\_ months

**Part II: Questions:**

1. What do you understand by idioms?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How often do you teach idioms in your courses?  
always                      sometimes                      never
3. How important do you think teaching idioms is?  
Very important                      Important                      Not very important
4. What activities have you ever suggested or practiced to encourage the use of idioms in the classroom?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What materials have you ever suggested or used to teach idioms in the classroom?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Part III.** For each of the statements below, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by placing a tick on the appropriate number.

1. Idioms are easy to teach.  
Strongly disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7 Strongly agree
2. Students are motivated to learn idioms.  
Strongly disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7 Strongly agree
3. Idioms are necessary to achieve communicative competence.  
Strongly disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7 Strongly agree
4. Idioms should be taught in context.  
Strongly disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7 Strongly agree

**Appendix 7**

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL

SEDE REGIONAL BRUNCA

Research: The Use of Idioms in an EFL Context

Researchers: M.A. Cinthya Olivares Garita

M.A. Jorge Altamirano Alvarado

**Instrument N°2****Questionnaire for the Students**

The following questionnaire is part of a study being conducted by two members of the English Department at Universidad Nacional. It is aimed at analyzing, evaluating and collecting information and suggestions on the impact of using and teaching idioms in an EFL context. Considering this, we would like to ask you to complete the following questionnaire with relevant information. Thank you for your cooperation.

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**Part I: Personal information**

1. Gender:      Male----- 1       Female ----- 2
2. Years of English instruction: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part II: Answer the following questions**

1. What do you understand by idioms?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. How often do you use idioms to communicate in the language?  
always                      sometimes                      never
3. How often have you been taught idioms in the courses you take or have taken?  
always                      sometimes                      never
4. How important do you think learning idioms is to communicate appropriately?  
Very important                       Important                      Not very important
5. Please describe a strategy or activity you have ever done to learn idioms effectively.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_