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Using Movie Clips to Understand Vivid-Phrasal Idioms' Meanings

by

Rasha Salem S. Alghamdi

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Technology in Education and Second Language Acquisition  
Department of Language, Literacy, Ed.D., Exceptional Education, and Physical Education  
College of Education  
University of South Florida

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Keywords: English as a Second Language, Idiom Learning and Acquisition, Movie Clips,  
Context-Clue Rich Environments, Computer Assisted Language Learning, Second Language  
Acquisition.

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## **DEDICATION**

To my husband, Darian, my sisters Rawiyah, Rania, Mashael, and my mother, for their unwavering love and support. My dreams would not have been possible without your belief in me. Thank you all for being my rock throughout my study abroad journey!

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## ABSTRACT

With increased use of educational technology in second language acquisition, idiomatic language instruction has seen an increase in the use of educational technology as an instructional method. Second/foreign language (L2) idioms teaching methods have extended their pedagogical approaches to employ Computer Assisted language Learning (CALL) and/or Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) educational technologies such as games, online platforms, images, videos, movies, social media, and augmented reality. Recent Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research has begun to focus on the effect(s) different types of videos (YouTube, advertisements, TV shows, full movies, and movie clips) can have on learning a second language, English as a second or foreign language, especially when focusing on teaching and learning L2 idioms.

Employing an exploratory descriptive design, this study examined the efficacy of idiom-infused movie clips on the achievement of English as Second Language (ESL) students. Ten movie clips infused with idioms from American movies were used to introduce ten idioms to five ESL doctoral-level students at a southern university in the United States. To explore the participants' English Vivid Phrasal (VP) idiom meaning-making processes when encountering such idioms, Liontas's (1999) Transactional Idiom Analysis (TIA) and Liontas's (2002) Idiom Diffusion Model were used as the two main theoretical frameworks.

First, a 20-item pre-study survey was given to the participants to collect demographic information and background information. Next, the participants were introduced to the selected idiom-infused movie clips via a Teams meeting. This Idiom Detection Task (IDT), Liontas first

coined in 1999, consisted of 10 movie clips, each of which will include one VP idiom.

Thereafter, the participants took part in a post-study survey to answer several questions related to their experience in detecting, interpreting, and understanding VP idioms via idiom-infused movie clips. These questions included questions inquiring about the participants' general impressions of learning English VP idioms via movie clips, what they liked most and least about this method of learning, their perceptions about the usefulness of movie clips in learning VP idioms, and the participants' recommendations regarding VP idiom learning via movie clips. Finally, the participants took part in a post study semi-structured interview that aimed at capturing the participants' experiences and perceptions of detecting, interpreting, and understanding VP idioms via idiom-infused movie clips.

The study findings revealed similarities in the detection and meaning-making strategies used by all five participants to identify and deduce the meaning of the VP idioms depicted in the movie clips. I found that the five doctoral-level non-native English-speaking participants used context clues, recollection, and guessing as the three main detection and meaning-making strategies. These strategies were used to various degrees of success depending on participants' evolving language proficiency and abilities. In the post-study interviews, I also discovered similar results regarding VP idiom identification and interpretation strategies as presented in the IDT and Post-Study Survey. All five participants relied on a combination of strategies to detect and interpret VP idioms. This study confirms and supports Lontas's (1999, 2002c) TIA and Lontas's (1999, 2002b) IDM of Second Languages, as well as the primary tenets involved in Mayer's (2009) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, Keller's (2010) ARCS Motivational Model, and Kress's (2000) Multimodality Theory.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Idioms are valuable to communication, yet they are not easy to acquire, especially for English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners (Liu, 2003; Liantas, 1999; Liantas 2018a; Liantas 2018b). One of the characteristics of idiom acquisition that makes learning them complicated is their strong cultural association. This is mainly because L2 idioms stem from cultural and historical origins requiring L2 learners to go beyond syntactic and semantic structures of a second language in order to understand the meaning of an idiom. What is more, idioms have literal and figurative meanings. Due to having dual meanings, several idioms are rather opaque in that L2 learners may not be able to decipher them based on their literal meanings alone. For instance, the idiom *pulling one's leg* in a literal manner means *someone is pulling someone else's leg*, while figuratively speaking, it means *someone is joking/kidding with someone*. Accordingly, L2 learners may face distinct challenges in deciphering an idioms' intended meaning.

Unsurprisingly, idioms are considered a difficult type of phrasing for L2 learners to understand as they heavily rely on their own linguacultural and historical competence (Liantas, 1999; Yağiz, & Izadpanah, 2013). As Katz (1973) writes, idioms “do not get their meanings from the meanings of their syntactic parts” (p. 358). Therefore, for language learners to understand the meaning and use of English idioms and to develop their idiomatic competence, language teachers and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers have been working on providing effective approaches to introducing and teaching English language idioms to both ESL

and EFL students. Liantas (2002) defines *idiomatic competence* as “the ability to understand and use idioms appropriately and accurately in a variety of sociocultural contexts, in a manner similar to that of native speakers, and with the least amount of mental effort.” (p. 300).

To date, a great deal of research introduced different methodologies and strategies for language teachers to overcome the challenges of teaching idioms (Grant, 2007; King & Reynolds, 1999; Liu, 2003; Liantas, 1999; Liantas 2018a; Liantas 2018b). Research has equally investigated the effects of different idiom teaching methods on language learners’ idiom-learning motivation and acquisition (Liantas, 2018a; Liantas, 2018b; Liantas, 2003; Grant, 2007). Much of that research employed Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) educational technologies in teaching L2 idioms and in measuring the students’ learning achievement, motivation, and satisfaction with the learning method used (Liantas, 2013; Chun, Smith, & Kern, 2016; Chen, Wu & Marek, 2017).

### **Statement of Problem**

The development of idiomatic competence is essential to a learner’s second language acquisition processes because idiomatic competence “includes both linguistic (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics) and pragmatic (nonlinguistic, paralinguistic, sociolinguistic/functional, discourse, personal/world, intra/intercultural) knowledge” (Liantas, 2015, p. 625). A great many CALL and MALL technologies have already been used to enhance ESL students’ idiom acquisition processes. Yet the extent of CALL/MALL contributing to learners’ L2 idiomatic development has remained a major obstacle in the teaching and learning of L2 idioms in the classroom and beyond (Liantas, 2006; Monica-Ariana & Anamaria-Mirabela,

2014). In fact, there is only scant research that focuses on how movie clips can enhance ESL students' Vivid Phrasal (VP) idiom acquisition.

As Liontas (2017) highlights, “understanding idiomaticity in CALL addresses this gap in an effort to foster a new kind of CALL knowledge concerning the reconstructive nature of idiomatic understanding and production in English” (p. 38). Today, many ESL teachers at the college level in the United States report that they are not technologically “savvy” and may even feel less confident when incorporating various technologies to their L2 classes. Most of these ESL teachers received little to no training to incorporate current educational technology trends in their L2 classrooms (Liontas, 2013; Liontas, 2017; Liontas, 2018a). Indeed, promoting L2 idiomatic competence via current educational technology trends is essential to ESL students' academic and language development. However, further research is needed to fully investigate the effectiveness of idiom-infused movie clips instruction in ESL idiom learning.

Movie-clips are chosen as an L2 idiom educational pedagogy in this study due to their richness of context clues. These context clues tend to guide the viewers cognitive processes and emotional involvement to reach the intended scene message. In addition, movie-clips aid in the L2 idiom learning process as these idiom-infused movie-clips contain audio-visual clues of real-life conversations involving real-life examples of idiom usage. What's more, movie clips help increase learners motivation, help ease the learners' cognitive load, and help build the learners' dynamic mental representation of the idiom depicted in the movie-clip (Askildson, 2005; Hoffler & Leutner, 2007; Izadpanah & Alavi, 2016; Schnotz, 2005, as cited in Mahdiloo & Izadpanah, 2017, p. 17). The use of movie-clips is expected to be a strong motivational simulation technique for L2 learners (Neissari et al., 2017; Mahmoodi-Shahrebabaki, 2014).

## **Purpose of Study**

Based on L2 idiom acquisition research, language instruction via movie clips tends to attract students' attention and motivations (Neissari et al., 2017; Mahmoodi-Shahrehabaki, 2014); hence, ESL students may find their use beneficial to developing their L2 literacy, idiom acquisition, and classroom participation via technologically enhanced learning environments (Liontas, 2002; Rohani, Ketabi, & Tavakoli, 2012; Saleh, & Zakaria, 2013; Rokni, & Atae, 2014). While many applications of CALL and MALL have already helped ESL students develop their L2 literacy and communicative skills (Grant, 2007; King & Reynolds, 1999; Liu, 2003; Liontas, 1999; Liontas 2018a; Liontas 2018b), however, teaching and learning VP idioms in authentic contexts remains a major challenge for ESL students and teachers alike.

To further explore how L2 learners detect and identify VP idioms, I applied Liontas's (1999) Transactional Idiom Analysis (TIA) and Liontas's (2002) Idiom Diffusion Model (IDM) to five ESL students viewing VP idioms in movie clips. Liontas's (1999) TIA is applied in this dissertation as it provides language teachers with an overview of all possible levels of English VP idioms: Lexical Level (LL), Semi-Lexical Level (SLL), Post-Lexical Level (PLL), and Meta Post-Lexical Level (MPLL). As for Liontas's (2002) IDM, it was used here to further understand L2 learners' attempts at understanding an idiom; in fact, these learners, as Liontas (2002a) has already shown, go through two phases of processing, comprehending, and interpreting, (1) the "prediction phase" and (2) the "confirmation or replacement, reconstructive phase" (p. 182).

This study addressed these concerns and presents findings to promote L2 idiomatic competence among ESL students. It then describes the methodology, data collection and instruments, as well as a detailed description of the Idiom Detection Task (IDT) in which students are expected to use a Thinking Aloud (TA) procedure to share their thoughts and mental

processes throughout their idiom learning process from the idiom-infused movie clips—a visual and auditory linguistic environment rich in context-clues. This study will then transition into discussing the post study interviews and interview protocol. From these semi-structured interviews, the students' perceptions of detecting and identifying VP idioms will be collected. Theoretical frameworks about second language acquisition and instructional technology in general will also be discussed in this study.

### **Research Questions**

In this study, I intended to identify participants' idiom detection and meaning making strategies as well as their perceptions about learning English VP via watching idiom-infused movie clips. My purpose in this study was to focus on how learners' cognitive processes are guided by the context clues, and how these context clues influenced their VP idiom detections, identifications, and comprehension. Understanding these aspects has helped me understand the idiom detection and meaning making strategies used by ESL learners whilst detecting, interpreting, and understanding VP idiom meaning via a Thinking Aloud procedure as they completed their Idiom Detection Tasks (IDT). Accordingly, I employed a descriptive and exploratory approach to explore the cognitive processes and perceptions of the study's participants. I aim to answer four research questions specifically:

1. In what ways are ESL students able to locate Vivid Phrasal (VP) idioms when watching movie clips containing them?
2. How do ESL students decode VP idioms once located in context?
3. What are the meaning-making constraints ESL students experience during VP idiom comprehension and interpretation?



4. What are ESL students' perceptions about learning VP idioms via idiom-infused movie clips?

### **Significance of Study**

This study has the potential to impact second language and idiom acquisition research and pedagogy, as well as technological innovation in three ways primarily.

First, some of the gaps in current second language and idiom acquisition research will be addressed as a result of conducting this study. This study employs an exploratory descriptive design to add depth to understanding ESL students' perceptions of detecting, interpreting, and understanding VP idioms via movie clips. Given the study's focus, data obtained have the potential to aid understanding of L2 idiom learning and acquisition via context-clues rich environments, an understanding that is currently lacking in the extant literature.

Second, this study presented some practical pedagogical implications. These will include information on the type of instruction employed, the focus of instruction, and the method of instruction. While it may be agreed that technology has a significant role to play in learning L2 VP idioms, the extent to which these technological tools can be and are utilized, and what the key attributes of those tools are that may still be in need of further clarification. This study will discuss these tools and will also show why and how these tools are considered effective.

Third, while there has been emphasis on the use of technological tools to offer solutions for educational issues generally, and for SLA issues specifically, there is still a need for studies to explore the outcomes of using digital tools in educational settings to inform future technological innovation. Toward this end, this study explores the use of movie clips—a “context-clue” rich environment—as an educational technological tool to teach L2 idioms.

Specifically, this study has two aims: 1) to explore the meaning-making strategies employed by the ESL students to detect, interpret, and understand VP idiom meanings, and 2) to explore the ESL students' perceptions about learning VP idioms via idiom-infused movie clips.

## **Theoretical Frameworks**

Second language idiom learning is one of the most challenging aspects of language to be learned by ESL students as it is closely related to culture (Liu, 2003; Liantas, 1999; Liantas 2018a; Liantas 2018b). Similarly, idiom teaching is a challenge for language teachers, and as a result, language teachers tend to avoid teaching idioms (Liu, 2003). In addition, many language books lack a focus on teaching relevant idiomatic/figurative expressions (Liantas, 1999). In fact, if any of these books include idioms, these idioms are either presented in a list or in a small section of the lesson combined with some static images. Consequently, ESL students find it challenging to use such idioms in their speech, and therefore, they struggle to make them part of their daily conversations. As a result, their comprehension suffers (Liu, 2003).

What is more, recent research has experimented with using different types of instruction when teaching idioms to ESL students (Liantas 2018a; Liantas 2018b; Ghaderi & Afshinfar, 2014; Khonbi & Sadeghi, 2017). These studies reported their findings about using one or more modes of idiom teaching. Most of the research findings indicate that the use of one or more educational technologies to aid idiom teaching results in positive learning outcomes (Ghaderia & Afshinfarb, 2014; Khonbi & Sadeghi, 2017; Vasiljevic, 2015). However, research has recently begun to expand its focus on the learning achievement and the opinions of students learning English idioms through idiom-infused movie clips (e.g., Mahmoodi-Shahrehabaki, 2014; Mahmoodi-Shahrehabaki, 2015; Mahdiloo, & Izadpanah, 2017). This study aims to address this

gap in research by reviewing representative studies from the fields of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Educational Technologies (ET).

## **Idiom Learning Frameworks**

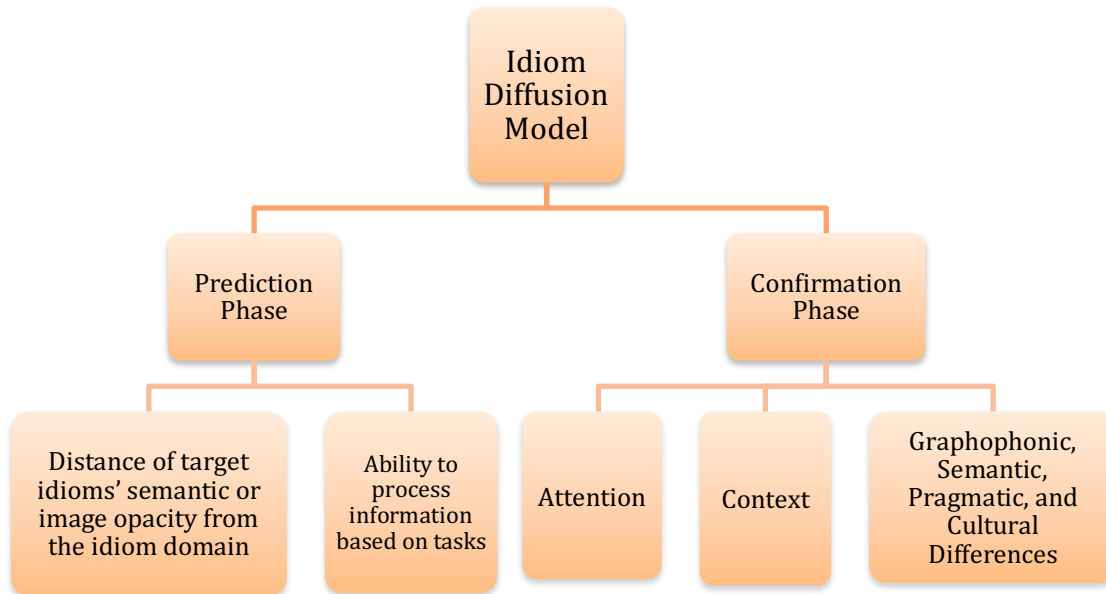
### ***A.1 Transactional Idiom Analysis (TIA) (Liontas, 1999, 2002a)***

In his research work, Liontas (1999, 2002a) proposed a comprehensive model that explains what strategies L2 learners use to comprehend VP idioms. This model stems from Goodman's *Transactional Socio-psycholinguistic* approaches to reading (Goodman, 1985, 1992). Goodman's model suggests that readers make meaning of the text through bringing their own language knowledge to the reading. In other words, the reading process involves the interaction of three main levels: grapho-phonetic, lexico-grammatical, and semantic levels (Goodman, 1985, 1992, as cited by Alshaikhi, 2018). Nonetheless, Liontas (1999, 2002a) claims that research has rarely explored how L2 readers make meaning of the idioms they read. Therefore, in his dissertation, Liontas (1999) proposed a new type of analysis he termed Transactional Idiom Analysis (TIA). Said analysis aims to identify the abilities readers employ purposefully in predicting idiom meaning in (authentic) passages. To achieve that, Liontas (1999) expanded Goodman's socio-psycholinguistic model in his TIA to include idiom-meaning transaction. Simply put, TIA claims that to explore the idiom reading process, there has to be an exploration of readers' prior knowledge and language inferencing along with readers' general meaning-making processes. Notably, Liontas's TIA is concerned with context per se as it plays, according to Liontas, the most important role in understanding idioms of all types and configurations (Liontas, 2002a). In his dissertation findings, Liontas (1999) indicated:

“1) SL readers are quite capable of detecting VP idioms in texts successfully using a variety of contextual cues and reading strategies, including, but not limited to, word and idiom recognition, lexical access and retrieval, contextual and pragmatic support, background and world knowledge, formal schemata, and strategy use; 2) matching idioms between L1 and L2 (Lexical-Level or LL Idioms) are processed and comprehended faster and with greater ease than partially-matching idioms (Semi-lexical Level or SLL Idioms) or non-matching idioms (Post-lexical Level or PLL Idioms) between L1 and L2 and, finally, 3) increased context and an individual's pragmatic knowledge exert a significant impact on the comprehension and interpretation of all VP idioms, especially on those of the PLL type” (p. 18).

### ***A.2 Idiom Diffusion Model of Second Languages IDM (Liontas, 2002)***

In his Idiom Diffusion Model (IDM), Liontas (2002b) states that when second language learners attempt to understand an idiom, they go through two phases, (1) the “prediction phase” and (2) the “confirmation or replacement, reconstructive phase” (Liontas, 2002b, p. 182). Figure 1 below depicts how these two phases form. The prediction phase involves examining *the distance of target idioms’ semantic or image opacity from the idiom domain and the ability to process information based on tasks*. As for the confirmation stage, this stage entails *attention, context, and graphophonic, semantic, pragmatic, and cultural differences*. The IDM provides language teachers with a comprehensive account of the diverse levels of English VP idioms: Lexical Level (LL), Semi-Lexical Level (SLL), Post-Lexical Level (PLL), and Meta Post-Lexical Level (MPLL). Liontas (2002) declared that IDM is not directly associated with L1 idiom processing, rather, IDM exclusively deals with L2 idiom processing and acquisition.



**Figure 1:** *Two Phases of the Idiom Diffusion Model of Second Languages*

Liontas (2002b) shared several key factors (L2 idioms familiarity with L1 idioms, L2 idioms connection with its L1 equivalent, and language learners’ prior knowledge) affecting the learners’ ability in deciphering the figurative meaning of an idiom. Noteworthy, in the field of language acquisition, Liontas’s (2002b) IDM is the first idiom processing and comprehension model that deals with L2 learners in general and L2 idiom understanding in particular.

## **Educational Technology Frameworks**

### ***B.1. Kress (2000) Multimodality***

Multimodality is a theory that looks at the many different modes that people use to communicate with each other and to express themselves. This theory is relevant as an increase in technology tools and associated access to multimedia composing software has led to people being able to easily use many modes in learning, art, writing, music, dance, and every-day interactions with each other. A mode is generally defined as a communication channel that a

culture recognizes (Kress, 2000). Examples of modes are writing, gesture, posture, gaze, font choice and color, images, video, and even the interactions between them. While many of these modes have always existed, they have not always been recognized as a legitimate or culturally accepted form of communication or expression (Kress, 2000). Learning theorists who advocate for multimodality emphasize that people communicate in a variety of ways, and that in order to completely understand someone, the modes they use to communicate must be observed and recognized. The theory of multimodality can be found in writings and discussions related to communication theory, linguistics, media literacy, visual literacy, anthropological studies, and design studies (Kress, 2000).

### ***B.2. Mayer's (2002) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning***

Mayer's (2002) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning presents the idea that the brain does not interpret a multimedia presentation of words, pictures, and auditory information in a mutually exclusive fashion; rather, these elements are selected and organized dynamically to produce logical mental constructs. Specifically, the principle known as the "multimedia principle" states that "people learn more deeply from words and pictures than from words alone" (Mayer, 2009, p. 47). However, simply adding words to pictures is not an effective way to achieve multimedia learning. The goal is to apply the media in the ways the human mind works. Mayer's (2002) cognitive theory of multimedia learning thus proposes three main assumptions: (1) There are two separate channels (auditory and visual) for processing information (often referred to as the Dual-Coding theory); (2) Each channel has a limited (finite) capacity to process cognitive load; and (3) Learning is an active process of filtering, selecting, organizing, and integrating information based upon prior knowledge.

Humans can only process a finite amount of information in a channel at a time, and they make sense of incoming information by actively creating mental representations. Mayer (2002) also discusses the role of three memory stores: sensory (which receives stimuli and stores it for a very short time), working (where we actively process information to create mental constructs or ‘schema’), and long-term (the repository of all things learned).

Mayer’s (2002) theory presents the idea that the brain does not interpret a multimedia presentation of words, pictures, and auditory information in a mutually exclusive fashion; rather, these elements are selected and organized dynamically to produce logical mental constructs. Mayer further underscores the importance of learning (based upon the testing of content and demonstrating the successful transfer of knowledge) when new information is integrated with prior knowledge. Nonetheless, Mayer’s design principles include providing coherent verbal, pictorial information, guiding the learners to select relevant words and images, and reducing the load for a single processing channel.

### **Educational Technology, L2 Acquisition, and L2 Motivation**

Before discussing the effects of motivation on learners generally, and ESL learners specifically, one must be introduced to motivation and motivation theories in relation to language learning and educational technologies. There are many researchers who defined motivation and many more who sought to examine motivation and its effects on learners’ learning process and learners’ achievement. In this section, the main two motivation theories discussed and used as a lens to understand motivation is Keller’s (2010) ARCS Model of Motivational Design and Dörnyei’s (1996, 2005, 2009) discussion of motivation.

Understanding L2 motivation is pivotal in the L2 instruction as language teachers are expected to consider what types of designs and approaches could maximize L2 learners' motivation, both intrinsically and extrinsically. However, the construct, L2 motivation, can be unclear since research has yet to agree on a unified definition. Motivation in learning is complex, especially for L2 learners who are from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. With diverse learner populations, motivation is equally diverse and complex. For instance, Gardner and Lambert (1972) stated that there are two types of motivation in L2 learning: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. In the former, "the aim in language study is to learn more about the language group, or to meet more and different people," while the latter is "where the reasons reflect the more utilitarian value of linguistic achievement" (p. 267). In other words, L2 learners with integrative motivation tend to have a desire to master their L2 like their native peers, whereas L2 learners with an instrumental motivation tend to improve their L2 to seek a career or academic advantage.

### ***Keller (2010) ARCS Model of Motivational Design***

Keller (2010) model aligns with this study as it pertains to motivation in technology infused learning environments. Keller (2010) defined motivation as "what people desire, what they choose to do, and what they commit to do" (p. 3). In his book, he further elaborated and explained how motivation is perceived. He stated that "motivation is generally defined as that which explains the direction and magnitude of behavior, or in other words, it explains what goals people choose to pursue and how actively or intensely they pursue them" (p. 4). Therefore, an understating of the concept of motivation is key to understanding how to improve it via using different methods. Keller also discussed the two aspects of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. As



Keller (2010) stated, “individuals with intrinsic motivation engage in tasks for the pleasure that comes from them. On the other hand, extrinsically motivated individuals engage in tasks for the rewards that follow from completing them, not for the pleasure coming from them” (p. 17). This distinction is helpful for educators as once they identify which motivation type guides a student, the educator can choose appropriate teaching methods and approaches to increase the motivation type at hand, and, therefore, enhance the learning experience of the student. To promote and sustain motivation in the learning process, Keller’s (2010) ARCS Model of Motivational Design Theories suggests four steps:

1. **Attention** can be gained in two ways: (1) Perceptual arousal – uses surprise or uncertainty to gain interest. It also uses novel, surprising, incongruous, and uncertain events; or (2) Inquiry arousal – stimulates curiosity by posing challenging questions or problems to be solved.
2. **Relevance** refers to establishing relevance in order to increase a learner’s motivation. To do this, educators need to use concrete language and examples with which the learners are familiar.
3. **Confidence** refers to helping students understand their likelihood for success. If they feel they cannot meet the objectives or that the cost (time or effort) is too high, their motivation will decrease.
4. **Satisfaction** refers to the idea that learning must be rewarding or satisfying in some way, whether it is from a sense of achievement, praise from a higher-up, or mere entertainment.

Along with providing the four aspects of his ARCS model (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction), Keller (2010) also provided strategies for promoting each one in

learners along with several real-world examples and ready-to-use worksheets. The methods he provided in each chapter are applied to both traditional and alternative settings, including gifted classes, K12, self-directed learning, and corporate training (Keller, 2010).

### ***Dörnyei (1996, 2005, 2009) Discussion of Motivation***

Despite the lack of a unified definition of motivation, Dörnyei (1996) shared that motivation theories aid language researchers and teachers in understanding humans' motivation to learn, learning choices, learner's identities, and learner's cognition abilities. To further explain motivation and its characteristics, Dörnyei (2005, 2009) developed the *L2 Motivational Self System* instrument. This instrument is comprised of three major components: The Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to L2 Self, and the L2 Learning Experience. The Ideal L2 Self refers to the L2 learner's desired self-image associated with the learner's ideal relationship with L2 in the future. In contrast, the Ought-to L2 Self refers to the L2 learner's actual L2 competence. The L2 Learning Experience is the third component, and it pertains to the "'executive' motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience (e.g., the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, the experience of success" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 47).

### ***Enhanced Language Learning via Technology***

Language students have varying intelligences (Gardner, 2012). In the field of SLA, many research studies examined the combination of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory with technology. For instance, McCoog (2007) stated that such a combination has "a great impact on student achievement" and "helps in the process of differentiating instruction" (p. 27).

Moreover, Liontas (2018b) examined the effectiveness of the use of Computer Assisted

Language Learning (CALL) technologies in figurative language learning, specifically idiom learning. Lontas discussed a plethora of CALL technologies in his chapter. Among them were technologies that ranged from Web 2.0 technologies (such as Google Docs, Google Hangouts, Skype, etc.) to smart phone applications (such as Pinterest, Twitter iMessage, FaceTime, Video Call, etc.) to computer software (such as Rosetta Stone, Audio-Tips, etc.). According to Lontas (2018b), “Idiomaticity training” is an online idiom teaching approach that considers the learners’ levels, interests, and online interaction. To exchange ideas and information on particular idiom-learning issue amongst students, Lontas suggested methods such as creating an electronic mailing list, using a synchronous voice chat application tool (i.e., Audio-Tips), using Yahoo Messenger for instant communication, and using Apple iMessage feature. In his chapter, Lontas also suggested that students can create a Google Doc to interact and collaborate on the same document. By doing so, the students can access the Google Doc, in class or from home, and publish idioms blurbs on a regular basis in their own newsletter on idiomaticity (Lontas, 2018b, p. 18).

Alongside the CALL suggestions for idiomatic training, Lontas (2018b) suggested many other software products that the students can use to improve their language skills. Amongst these software products, there were suggestions for products that aids in improving the students’ speaking skills (e.g., the dictation software named *Dragon Naturally Speaking*) and pronunciation skills (e.g., integrated learning systems such as *Rosetta Stone*); these suggestions also included *Skype*, *FaceTime*, and *Hangouts* as effective products that would allow the students to meet with native speakers globally (Lontas, 2018b, p. 47).

### ***Teacher and Students’ Motivation Improvement***

Garrett (1991) suggests that teachers should combine technology with their teaching

methods and philosophies in order to assist and support their material delivery. Garrett also stated that the class learning outcomes is what dictates which technology is more appropriate and more effective in comparison to other educational technologies. In addition to those recommendations, Garrett has warned against letting technology dictate learning outcomes. Nonetheless, McClanahan (2014) states that “Free video sources such as YouTube, [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com), can provide visual support for authentic language input and can be used to explore various topics, which increases student engagement” (p. 25).

### **Why Teach Idioms?**

L2 researchers and language teachers have long been working to find an answer to why they should or should not teach idioms. In answering this overarching question—Why teach idioms—Liontas (2017) offers five answers. First, idioms should be taught because they help learners understand natural human language and to gain a deeper knowledge of human’s creative expressions of thought (p. 9). Second, idioms should be taught because they help learners go beyond the literal meaning of idioms and help them see the role context in the understanding of idiomatic expressions (p. 11). Third, idioms should be taught because learners will be required to understand and produce idioms in real-life conversation. By doing so, learning idioms will allow these students to enhance their idiom mastery idiom, which in return facilitates the idiom internalization (p. 14). Fourth, idioms should be taught because idioms provide L2 learners with the opportunity to examine their own mental images associated with idiomatic phrases and their figurative language meaning-making processes (p. 16). Finally, idioms should be taught because learning idioms in the classroom can help the SLA researchers and language teachers build a systematic program for the development of idiomatic competence in second language learners (p.

16).

Both individually and in combination, these five reasons can be used to explain why idiom instruction should be integrated into the L2 curriculum by SLA researchers and language professionals alike. Noteworthy, both L2 educators and language practitioners need to develop their L2 learners' idiomatic competence as doing so empowers their "learners to use language in socially responsive ways" (Liontas, 2017, p. 2).

### **Gaps in Current Research**

Research indicates that the challenges of teaching second language idioms still exist. Language teachers and SLA researchers have conducted experiments to test the effectiveness of different teaching and learning methods involving multiple intelligences and technologies. In fact, much recent research has introduced or tested the use of new technologies on second language acquisition and idiom acquisition. For instance, Liontas's (2021) article on "Teaching and Learning English in AR-Infused Worlds" presented the desire of educators and technology experts to merge the real world with a virtual world by introducing artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) into the classrooms. Liontas's article introduced and defined the four terms: Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), Mixed/Merged Reality (MR), and Cross Reality (XR). Along the discussion of these terms, Liontas (2021) provided a list of activities employing the above-mentioned technologies in a learning setting. In another study, Hu et al. (2016) used of virtual reality in teaching Chinese idioms. The researchers created and designed a virtual reality platform specifically to teach idioms to learners of Chinese as a foreign language. Notably, the construct of virtual reality and language learning is new, and there is still a need for experimental research studies employing these virtual reality types in language classrooms.

What is more, language teachers and SLA researchers have also conducted studies exploring the use of social media in language and idiom learning (Wong et al., 2010), the use of idiom applications and its influence on idiom learning (Amer, 2014; Liantas, 2018a; Liantas, 2018b), and studies exploring videos and their influence on idiom learning (Mahmoodi-Shahrebabaki, 2015; Mahdilo & Izadpanah, 2017). Other researchers suggest that a combination of teaching and learning methods involving multiple intelligences and technologies are more effective than other standard methods (Grgurović et al., 2013; Liantas, 2013).

Still, there are gaps in research as only a few studies today have examined the use of movie-clips and videos infused with idioms and language structures on learners' overall language and idioms achievement. To fill this gap, there is a need for studies to examine the effectiveness of using idiom-infused movie clips as an idiom learning method and the effect(s) it has on ESL students' experience of learning L2 idioms. In a nutshell, this study aimed to fill that gap by (1) exploring ESL students' perceptions of learning VP idioms via idiom-infused movie clips and (2) exploring the cognitive processes and the meaning-making strategies used by ESL students while detecting, interpreting, and understanding VP idioms within each idiom-infused movie clip.

### **Assumptions and Caveat**

Three assumptions are made with regard to the participants since the study is conducted remotely. First, the participants have Internet connection and have access or own a digital device (smartphone or laptop). Second, participants know how to access and use Zoom, a web-based video conferencing tool, on their digital device. Third, participants know the meaning of idioms and understand what idiom entails. Notably, there is one caveat in this study. The study focuses

on idioms used in the American English, and participants are international students, all of whom are located in the United States. However, it is recognized that these participants may have been exposed to non-US varieties of English (e.g., European, Asian, Indian, or Singaporean English), in which idioms may well be different. Therefore, there is a possibility that having learned different varieties of English may influence ESL students' ability to detect, identify, or understand the VP idioms this study is employing.

### **Axiological Stance**

I identify with the interpretivist and pragmatism perspective about research as I feel that multiple realities exist and that we each construct our own realities based on our life experiences and worldviews. I also acknowledge that our individual realities are subjective in nature because of our own changes in life and the circumstances surrounding such changes. I believe that our worldly experiences are created through inner introspection and social interactions with others. I empathize and understand the obstacles experienced by others who immigrated or who are currently living abroad to pursue education to better their futures. I understand their language and identity struggles as well as their feelings of being homesick and the desire to feel they belong to the new culture. In all of my interactions with others, I aim to provide a unique perspective as the first in my family successful female immigrant and doctoral candidate woman. I am a strong female who went against all odds, who chose to make a life in the U.S., and who has been able to assimilate into the American culture and society, whilst maintaining my Arabic cultural identity. I am multifaceted and multicultural, and I understand that most people are their own version of their background and culture. Because of all my experiences to date, because I

am a visual learners, and because of my fascination of English as a second language generally and English idioms specifically, I chose to explore the learning of English VP idioms.

### **Reflexivity and Positionality**

I recognize that my experiences shaped who I am, which in return influences my study, my world perception, my lived experiences, and my research. Reflexivity is key to reliable and well-designed research as it reveals the researcher's positionality and construction of meaning. Reflexivity refers to the researcher's ability to "self- consciously refer to him or herself in relation to the production of knowledge about research topics" (Roulston, 2010, p. 116).

*I am an English second language learner, teacher, and speaker.* My native language is Arabic, and I began self-teaching English when I was about 9 years old. I grew up thinking all humans spoke one tongue, and it was a shock to learn that other countries spoke differently. I came to this realization when my father was speaking on the phone with an English-speaking colleague. I walked into his office and asked him about why I hear him talk but I can not understand him. He responded, "because I am speaking English". I asked a few more curious questions about the language, who speaks it, and its alphabet. From that point on, I began realizing English all around me.

During late 90s, Saudi Arabic incorporated English as a second language everywhere. For instance, the streets names were in both Arabic and English, the grocery products had both language on the back, the TV had English cartoons, and the nurses spoke English to each other in all the hospitals. As I grew up, my curiosity grew with me. I began watching more movies and TV in English; due to such constant exposure to TV, movies, and Disney shows, I picked up the language fast. I was intentional with my learning and picked up phrases and words that sounded



interesting to me and I added them to the English Language box in my brain. The first English idiom I learned was “like a piece of cake”, and I vividly remember thinking “hmm sweet like a piece of cake?”, which did not make sense in an action movie scene where they were planning a robbery. After paying close attention to the context surrounding the idiom, I then realized that they meant the robbery job was as easily done as a piece of cake.

Such fascination with the language and the culture encouraged me to pursue a degree in an English-speaking university/college in Saudi Arabia. Yanbu University College was the golden door to my future. Everyone in the college spoke English. All of my professors were foreign internationals from Canada, USA, UK, Australia, Malaysia, India, and Pakistan, all of which spoke English proficiently along with speaking one or more other languages. I earned a bachelor’s degree in Applied Linguistics with honors in 2010, which granted me a seat in the 2013 scholarship cohort to study abroad in the U.S. to higher education degrees. Prior to coming to the U.S., I worked as an English as a Second Language educator for two years from 2011-2013. I had encouraged my college level students to expose themselves to as much English as they can outside of the classroom to be able to tell me about their lived experiences with the language during our speaking classes. I employed various technologies and teaching techniques to improve my students’ productive skills (speaking and writing), and I have inquired about their topics of interest as college students so that I tailor my reading and writing lessons accordingly. I was, and still am, a firm believer in the impact of motivation and sense of belonging on the students’ learning achievement and satisfaction.

*I am an Arab-American.* I identify myself as both an Arab and an American. I came to the U.S. as an international student with a good grasp of English as a speaker and an educator. The longer I lived in the U.S., the more I felt belonging to this country. When I met my husband

Darian in 2014, my sense of belonging only increased from that point on. And after a few years of waiting, I earned my American Citizenship in March of 2022. It was only after earning my certificate of naturalization that I began sincerely feeling as an Arab American. In fact, my husband and my friends usually comment that I am so Americanized that they forget that I am an Arab, to which I respond with a smile of happiness. I have loved and tremendously enjoyed immersing myself in the American culture through movies as a young girl all the way to my actual cultural assimilation as a young lady.

*I am multi-cultural.* As far as I can remember, I have always gravitated towards unique individuals and cultures, which has allowed me to become friends with many friends and their families from other cultures. My first best friend in primary school was a Pakistani girl who lived in Saudi Arabia as an alien resident with her family due to her father's work in my city. I have made the same strong friendship with a few other internationals during my K-12 education, undergrad, and graduate studies. Living in the United States for the past 9 years has allowed me to meet more people from various cultural backgrounds, which only expanded my cultural knowledge and love for learning more about them and their home countries.

*I am a wife to a southern-speaking American husband.* I have experienced the United States through my husband's southern accent, lifestyle, and values. Darian was born and raised in the Appalachian region of Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. I was aware of the countryside and their deeply rooted values, but I did not realize how his background is similar to mine until I visited his family and relatives in those states. Southern families have strong familial relationships and tend to live in a collectivist community where everyone knows everyone else, and where families meet multiple times a week as my family did growing up.

*I am a Higher Ed. educator and a learning developer.* During my doctoral studies, I worked at INTO USF and the USF Writing Studio as language tutor and writing consultant before I grew into the role of a coordinator. In these positions, not only was I tasked with tutoring and consulting English as a second language to international students from various backgrounds, but I was tasked with designing and delivering educational materials that suit my tutees' needs and educational levels observed in our sessions together. My past experiences as an international student pursuing a degree abroad and my experiences in self-teaching had armored me with a deep understanding of what my tutees feel and go through as they navigate their study abroad experiences.

These are the lenses I bring to my research and my interpretation of the data. I grow when I observe and learn from my surroundings. I have passion for languages and the various ways they are acquired, and I will forever be fascinated by how humans use a concise and unique grouping of words to deliver a message—idioms and proverbs. Throughout this study, I kept in mind that everyone has a story that influences them and their life path, as did mine. Hence, I was dedicated to being positive, open-minded, and accepting of everyone.

My language level of mastery and my language experiences were a result of many factors, which only furthered my interest in learning about others and their reactions to being taught via certain teaching methods in comparison to others. My interest in researching L2 idiomatics, and English VP idioms specifically, was piqued during Dr. Liontas's SLA classes in my first year as a PhD student in the Technology in Education and Second Language Acquisition program at the University of South Florida. His passion and dedication to the field of idiomatics, along with his numerous publications only furthered my interest in the topic of L2 idiomatics teaching, learning, and acquisition. I personally have always had a passion for proverbs and

idiomatic-figurative language in Arabic as it was so beautifully, rhythmically, and uniquely grouped to produce a phrase delivering a profound message. I come from the Alghamdi tribe, which is a southern tribe from the southern countryside and mountains with over a thousand years of history and stories. My tribe has its own Arabic accent and its own idiomatic and figurative language as they were mostly farmers and sheep herders. Their idioms and proverbs were heavily influenced by their cultural background and history. I am also influenced by my western hometown, Yanbu, which is a seaside city where most of its locals are fishermen and entrepreneurs. My Arabic idiomatic, figurative expressions, and proverbs are a result of my upbringing. As for my English idiomatic-figurative expressions and proverbs, they are a result of my language learning journey, my living abroad experience, my graduate level education, and my interactions with my husband and all of my American friends and family.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

Due to their pervasive nature in the research and central role in the presentation of this study, the following terms warrant definition prior to discussing the particulars of this study, other studies included.

**Idioms.** The term idiom has been defined in various ways in dictionaries and in literature, and researchers have yet to come to a unified definition. By simply looking at the dictionary definition of the term “idiom,” the various ways in which an idiom is defined is evident. For instance, Merriam Webster’s online dictionary defines it in three ways: “an expression that cannot be understood from the meanings of its separate words but that has a separate meaning of its own”; “a form of a language that is spoken in a particular area and that uses some of its own words, grammar, and pronunciations”; and “a style or form of expression that is characteristic of

a particular person, type of art, etc.” (Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, 2021, n.p.). Similarly, Oxford Online Dictionary provides three definitions of the term “idiom”: “[countable] a group of words whose meaning is different from the meanings of the individual words”; “[uncountable, countable] (*formal*) the kind of language and grammar used by particular people at a particular time or place”; and “[uncountable, countable] (*formal*) the style of writing, music, art, etc. that is typical of a particular person, group, period or place” (Oxford Online Dictionary, 2021, n.p.).

***Idiomatic Competence.*** The term idiomatic competence refers to the language learner’s ability to detect, comprehend, and use idioms and idiomatic expressions in a native-like manner in various contexts. This term as well has been defined in various ways. Idiomatic competence, as defined by Liantas (2002), is “the ability to understand and use idioms appropriately and accurately in a variety of sociocultural contexts, in a manner similar to that of native speakers, and with the least amount of mental effort” (p. 300). Idiomatic competence “includes both linguistic (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics) and pragmatic (nonlinguistic, paralinguistic, sociolinguistic/functional, discourse, personal/world, intra/intercultural) knowledge” (Liantas, 2015, p. 625).

***Vivid Phrasal Idioms.*** Liantas (2002) coined VP idioms as “an inseparable phrasal unit whose lexicalized, holistic meaning is not deducible from the individual meanings of its separate words” (p. 77). Additionally, Liantas (2003) defined VP idioms as a phrase or an expression that forms a distinct and striking mental image. VP idioms are usually a few words that stand together, evoke an image in mind, and have two meanings: literal and figurative (Liantas, 2003). For example, “beating on a dead horse” and “break the ice” are two VP idioms that provoke an image in the mind of the listener and have literal and figurative meanings.

**Movie clips.** The term movie clip, also called film clip, is defined as “a strip of motion-picture film” (Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, 2021, n.p.). As an instructional method, movie clips are employed as they offer opportunities of audio-visual learning activities for the learners. In this dissertation, movie-clips are deemed as learning environments rich with context-clues (see definition below).

**Context-clues.** Context clues, as the lexeme itself suggests, are “clues” or “hints” found within a text (spoken or written) that a reader/listener can use to understand the meanings of new or unfamiliar words or groups of words. Learning the meaning of a word through its use in context through context clues is one of the most practical ways to build vocabulary knowledge and recognition. Deciphering context clues to comprehend a text is a useful skill for language learners since dictionaries are not always available when a reader/listener encounters an unknown word, especially when these words are encountered in conversations.

**Second Language Acquisition.** The term refers to learning and acquiring a second language (Oxford Online Dictionary, 2021, n.p.). SLA also refers to the scientific discipline devoted to studying that process. SLA is also known as second language learning or simply L2 acquisition. The second language discussed in this dissertation is English.

**CALL and MALL Educational Technologies.** CALL stands for Computer Assisted Language Learning, while MALL stands for Mobile Assisted Language Learning. Both of these educational technologies have been used in the field of education and learning generally, and in the fields of second and foreign language learning as well.

**ESL and EFL.** ESL stands for English as a Second Language and often refers to an educational context in which English is the primary language such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Similarly, EFL stands for English as a

Foreign Language and often refers to an educational context in which English is not the primary language. This study will mainly focus on ESL and ESL learners because the participants are all located in the United States.

### **Organization of Dissertation**

In Chapter One, I offered an overview of the study background, statement of the problem, purpose, significance, along with a presentation of the two theoretical frameworks—IDM and TIA—that inform this study’s design. I have also presented the research questions guiding this study. In Chapter Two, I provided an overview of the idiom definition, vivid phrasal idioms, idiomatic challenges for L2 learners, and the use of CALL and MALL technology in teaching idioms. In Chapter Three, I presented the methodology and research design of the study, followed by a discussion of the study context, the participants, instruments, and the Idiom Detection Task (IDT) materials. The chapter then ends by discussing the data collection procedures, and the methods employed to analyze them. In Chapter 4, I presented the results of the data analysis and a detailed discussion of the findings. I present these in the same order as the participant tasks occurred. I then connect the findings in support of my theoretical framework and offer theoretical considerations for other theories supporting my study findings. Finally, in Chapter 5, I presented a summary of the results, pedagogical implications, and discoveries, followed by future recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

The challenge of teaching idioms still exists, and language teachers and SLA researchers have conducted experiments to test the effectiveness of different teaching and learning methods involving multiple intelligences and technologies. Recent research suggests that a combination of teaching and learning methods, involving multiple intelligences and technologies, are more effective than other standard methods (Grgurović et al., 2013; Liantas, 2013). Therefore, the focus of this literature review is in three folds: 1) to provide an overview of what idioms are, why teach idioms, and the different methodologies and modes of teaching used to teach second languages and L2 idioms; and 2) to discuss the findings of studies that examined L2 idioms teaching methods through Computer Assisted language Learning (CALL) and/or Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) educational technologies such as games, online platforms, images, videos, movies, social media, etc.

### What is an Idiom?

The word “idiom” has been frequently used in second and foreign language literature; however, there is not a unified definition yet. For example, Marlies (1995) defines idiom as “an expression whose overall figurative meaning cannot be derived from the meaning of its parts” (p. 283). Another definition is provided by Moon (2006) who defines idiom as a fixed set of words with a meaning that goes beyond the idiom’s constituent parts. Even though these two definitions show similarities, these definitions are not the same. The first definition focused on the idioms’



figurative meaning, while the second focused on idiom meaning that is derived from its fixed sequence of words. For the purposes of this dissertation, Liontas's (2002) idiom definition is the most accurate and aligns with the study focus. Liontas (2015) states "an idiom does not mean what it literally states" (p. 622). He defines an idiom as a phrase or a few words that stand together and have two meanings: literal and figurative (Liontas, 2002).

### **What is a Vivid Phrasal Idiom?**

Many English learners (ELs) find learning and producing idioms challenging because idioms happen in various contexts and are usually produced by native or native-like English speakers. As stated earlier, there are various definitions of idioms and research has yet to agree on a unified definition. In this study, Liontas's (1999, 2002) vivid phrasal (VP) idioms' definition provide the main definition this study here adopts. Specifically, Liontas (2002) defines idioms VP as "an inseparable phrasal unit whose lexicalized, holistic meaning is not deducible from the individual meanings of its separate words" (p. 77). Liontas lists the VP idioms distinct characteristics as follows:

1. It is not a monomorphemic or polymorphemic expression such as *a pad*, *a flop*, *to splurge*, *to freeload*, *to rely on*, *to object to*, just as it must not be an ungrammatical expression, connective prepositional phrase, an incorporating verb idiom, or a social formula expression.
2. It does *not* readily correlate with a given grammatical part of speech and more often than not requires a paraphrase longer than a word.

3. It is *not* decomposable; that is, its conventionalized figurative meaning cannot be readily derived from a linear compositional analysis of the familiar meanings of its separate words.
4. It is easily visualized in the mind of the learner by evoking a powerful mental image; due to its concrete, “picturesque” (i.e., pictorial) meaning, it is thus *vivid*.
5. It is a conventionalized complex multi-lexemic phrasal expression occurring above word level and usually of sentence length; hence it is *phrasal*.
6. It is polysemous and has both a common literal, referential meaning and an institutionalized figurative, metaphorical meaning, with the latter meaning usually not predictable nor logically deducible from the grammatical, syntactic, structural, and semantic character of its individual constituent elements. (p. 78).

Furthermore, Liontas (2002) defines VP idioms and states that such an idiom “combines powerful visual imagery (literal, referential semantic meaning) with a memorable, striking expression (non-literal, metaphoric utterance meaning)” (p. 78). Liontas also noted that to better understand VP idioms’ nature, we need to understand that each VP idiom can carry two interpretations: “a literal, concrete one and an abstract, figurative one” (p. 78). He noted that to attain a better comprehension of VP idioms in the field of SLA, one must also understand the three VP idiom sub-categories: Lexical Level (LL) idioms, Semi-Lexical Level (SLL) idioms, and Post-Lexical Level (PLL) idioms. These categories are derived from Liontas’s notion of Conceptual-Semantic Image (CSI) distance. According to Liontas (2002), the CSI distance delineates “how close or how distant a target-language idiom is from its equivalent native-

language idiom both conceptually (i.e., in terms of the picture it evokes) and semantically (i.e., in terms of the literal meanings of its words)” (p. 78).

The Lexical Image Continuum aids in explaining the three VP idiom categories. Firstly, Lexical-Level idioms are target-language idioms that exhibit a one-to-one lexical and pictorial match with corresponding native-language idioms (p. 78). For example, the idiom *two birds, one stone* can find its equivalent Arabic idiom in (عصفورين بحجر واحد). The English version equivalent is literally translated in Arabic.

Secondly, Semi-Lexical Level idioms fall somewhere in the middle of the Lexical-Image Continuum. These idioms do not usually have an exact one-to-one lexical and pictorial correspondence to the other language idioms. A good example of that is the idiom *when pigs fly*; the Arabic idiom for that is (لاحجت البقر على قرونها) which literally translates to *when cows walk upside-down on their horns to go to the holy mosque to perform pilgrimage*. Both idioms convey the idea of the impossibility of something happening, yet they portray the same idea differently, lexically and pictorially.

Thirdly, Post-Lexical Level idioms are target language idioms that do not match domain idioms either lexically or pictorially. In other words, English language idioms do not have equivalent matches in Arabic language idioms, and vice versa. A good example to illustrate PLL idioms is the Arabic idiom (الخبر اليوم بفلوس وبكرا ببلاش), which is literally translated to *the news today cost money, but tomorrow it will be free* (meaning everyone will know of the news tomorrow, and hence, no need to buy the newspaper today).

## **Idiomatic Challenges for L2 Learners**

As stated again and again in this study, idiom acquisition is challenging for L2 learners due to idioms' dual meaning (literal and figurative) and due to the idioms' cultural and historical connotations. Cooper (1999) shares that the idiom's figurative meaning is unpredictable which poses learning challenges for all language learners (p. 233). Even though idiom mastery is deemed challenging by both L2 learners and teachers, Cooper emphasizes that L2 learners ought to overcome such challenges as idioms occur frequently in L2 contexts (p. 233). In fact, idioms' frequency has been analyzed by Pollio et al. (1977) who analyzed various texts ranging from political debates, psychology, novels, and psychotherapy sessions to estimate the overall use of nonliteral language in English. The researchers shared that "most English speakers utter about 10 million novel metaphors per lifetime and 20 million idioms per lifetime. This works out to about 3,000 novel metaphors per week and 7,000 idioms per week" (p. 140). Due to such frequency in L2 contexts, L2 learners are very likely to meet idioms in all forms of L2 discourse written (newspapers, magazines, and books) or spoken (conversations, lectures, movies, television, radio broadcasts). It follows that L2 higher competence levels may depend in part on how well L2 learners comprehend and re-produce the idioms they encounter in everyday language.

Where do these challenges come from? Research into figurative language identifies familiarity, transparency, decomposability, and motivation as variables that play an important role in how native and non-native speakers learn, process, and understand figurative phrases (Carrol et al., 2018). However, these variables are not always "defined and operationalised in the same way, and are often treated as independent" (Carrol et al., 2018, p. 21). The authors provided a discussion of these factors due to their strong association to the judgments and mental processes that language users make while identifying figurative language. The authors have also

emphasized the association of these variables to the learner's ability to correctly infer the figurative language meaning (familiar idioms, unfamiliar idioms, and novel metaphors). Their findings indicate that familiarity has an effect on the learner's perceptions of transparency and decomposability. For less familiar idioms, both native and non-native speakers of English depend on their idiom decomposability skills to infer the meaning of the idiom at hand. Lastly, the authors shared that if an idiom is cross-cultural, then the non-native speakers are more able to relate that idiom to its equivalent in L1 and they are successful at guessing the idiom meaning (Carrol et al., 2018, p. 40), a finding often confirmed in Liontas's original research work (see, for example, Liontas, 1999; 2000; 2002a; 2003).

### **Use of CALL and MALL Technology in Teaching Idioms**

When it comes to the specific ways that can be used to enhance learners' idiomatic knowledge, CALL and MALL offer a plethora of applications that help educators teach and deliver idiomatic entries to L2 learners. Often the use of CALL or MALL to teach idioms intersects with teaching vocabulary in the same fashion, especially in EFL/ESL settings. This explains the influx of research in CALL/MALL idiomatic literacy after realizing the potential of CALL/MALL application in the classroom and online. While CALL/MALL implications have been covered in previous studies, the principal aim here is to shed light on new and emerging applications and applets that are believed to boost idiomatic knowledge, and thus idiomatic competence exponentially (Liontas, 2003, p. 299).

This section of the literature will discuss the findings of studies that examined L2 idioms teaching methods through Computer Assisted language Learning (CALL) and/or Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) educational technologies such as games, online platforms,

images, videos, movies, social media, etc. The section begins with a discussion of CALL and L2 idioms acquisition and then transitions into the discussion of MALL and L2 idioms acquisition.

### **A. Computer Assisted Language Learning in L2 Idioms Acquisition**

Computer Assisted Learning (CALL) has been used in language classrooms for many years. The field of CALL in Second Language Acquisition has presented us with many studies that explored the CALL uses in L2 classroom, CALL methodologies, and their effectiveness in increasing the students' learning and motivation (Grant, 2007; King & Reynolds, 1999; Liu, 2003; Lontas, 1999; 2018a; 2018b). Research has also shown that employing CALL in L2 classroom should be a thoughtful process. In light of that, language teachers need to consider proper use of CALL technologies and applications (Lontas, 2017), otherwise, the learning experience may fail to reach the lesson goals and/or objectives pursued due to students' inability to use the CALL technology or students' confusion of the steps performed during the execution of a particular task. Therefore, when employing educational technologies in the language classroom, language teachers should plan a flexible lesson that allows for pre-technology instruction and during-language-task help to ensure all students are involved and learning equally (Lontas, 2003). Thus, this section of the literature review aims at providing major research findings after using these different CALL technologies in teaching or learning a second language and in L2 idiom acquisition.

#### **A.1. Benefits of CALL in SLA**

The roles of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in the second language classroom have received considerable attention in the literature. CALL comes with a primary

goal that is to improve the learners 4 language skills: writing, reading, listening and speaking. A question of what tools are most effective in delivering the learning task remains under research investigations. To this point, the learning task needs the assistance of CALL technology in today's language classroom. Based on the notion of multiple task ability provided by Cohen (1994), the learning task should include specific learning elements such as the needs of various skills, the involvement of sound and pictures, increasing student's motivation, and utilizing multimedia. All these learning elements attempt to create instructions that can replace the traditional approach of teaching a second language. Hence, it is valid for L2 teachers, learners, and policy makers to ask if using CALL would improve L2 acquisition and performance of the second language in comparison to the traditional language teaching approaches. This section highlights the benefits of using CALL in teaching L2 based on reviewing several empirical studies. It is essential to note here that CALL research reveals that language content was delivered throughout various tools and applications. Based on meta-analysis conducted by Grgurović et al. (2013), CALL appears to have a variety of tools in the experimental studies as follows:

- (1) CALL program that originally designs to teach a second language;
- (2) Computer applications that not initially designed to teach the language such as Microsoft Words, PowerPoint, Prezi, and Google Map;
- (3) Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) that opens the gate for synchronous and asynchronous communications;
- (4) A web that allows using authentic materials in the form of WWW website;
- (5) A course management system that recognized as resources to communicate, and content in a learning environment such as FlipGrid, WebCT;

(6) The online course that provides language content throughout the internet (p. 12).

## **A.2. CALL Enhances Language Reading Comprehension**

From pedagogical perspectives, CALL provides the foundation of designing L2 computer-mediated learning by investigating the effectiveness of tasks modified to improve L2 reading comprehension and incidental vocabulary learning (Chun, 2016). By focusing on CALL tasks, and using computer-mediated glosses, learners will have a clear idea about specific text and culture (Lyman-Hager 2000). Several studies that utilized CALL helped us to recognize L2 comprehension from the authentic text by observing learner's performance using computer-mediated glosses (Blake, 2016; Chun & Plass, 1997; Fischer, 2007; Lomicka, 1998).

Second language learners are required to have a sufficient amount of vocabulary knowledge to comprehend new vocabulary produced by native speakers in authentic situations. Therefore, the lack of vocabulary knowledge would lead to less understanding of the authentic context. In this case, researchers in CALL concentrate on the advantage of providing easy and fast access throughout the online glossing (Chun, 2006; Poel & Swanepoel, 2003). Findings from a meta-analysis that investigates the benefits of using computer-mediated text glosses have shown a statistically significant increase in the overall L2 authentic text comprehension (Abraham, 2008). EFL learners who received a CALL instruction showed high performance in reading comprehension compared to other learners who received paper-based instruction (Rahmani, 2013). However, there are essential factors that we should keep in mind while thinking of utilizing CALL technologies in the reading instruction that are students' attitude, language proficiency, and level of instruction. For example, L2 learners in low language proficiency level may find CALL instruction challenging, especially if the task involved



structures that required high cognitive processing. In this case, it is the L2 teacher's responsibility to provide a CALL instruction that supports reading comprehension instead of instruction that challenges the students' reading skills.

### **A.3. CALL Improves Writing Skills**

L2 writing production reveals the quality of using a second language in terms of expressing ideas, thoughts, and demonstrating high thinking skills in the written forms. Integration of CALL technology in a language environment helps to transform learners from less to active participants (Bozdogan, 2012). For example, Microsoft Word (MS) offers an opportunity to practice and edit the writing texts. Moreover, (MS) allows for writing corporations as synchronous and asynchronous learning. In the MS writing format, learners have several chances to learn writing styles, recognize writing structure, and identify errors and mistakes in a low anxiety environment. CALL in writing works as against imaginary by providing active communicativeness by linking students writing to the social setting where authentic writing texts exist (Cunningham, 2000).

### **A.4. Teaching and Learning Idioms via CALL**

Liontas (2018b) provided an example list of effective Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) technologies in figurative language learning, specifically idiom learning. He suggests that it would be best for language teachers to “compile a working list of the technologies available for use” to avoid being consumed in the “*which* particular technology, electronic tool, or digital resource to use *when, where,* and for *what* purpose to enhance a specific language skill or facet of idiomaticity” (p. 39). Additionally, Liontas advised language

teacher and CALL practitioners to still consider using “aging technologies, hardware, or peripherals” stored in many classrooms to avoid missing out on taking advantage of these technologies and their benefits. He also advised language teacher and CALL practitioners to critically consider new technologies, their use, and their benefits for the classrooms. These technologies should not be considered because “they are widely available today”, or because “everyone else is using them”, or because it seems as “politically expedient to ‘go along’ with the latest trend just to ‘get along’ and ‘be cool’ with those that are already doing so” (Liontas, 2018b, p. 40).

In addition, Levy’s (2009) work aimed at describing the current technologies in use for second language learning, specifically in respect to the four major language skills and other areas such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and culture. Levy did not only provide the technologies used, but also provided examples that aimed at illustrating how educators have used these tools to provide a better learning environment for the language learner. In other words, Levy suggested that culture can be learned by engaging with the L2 culture more productively. More specifically, language teachers can use email, chat, discussion forums (e.g., Blackboard), wikis, video conferencing, and Web-based projects of various kinds to allow the students to interculturally exchange their thoughts (Levy, 2009, p. 776).

#### **A.5. Enhanced Idioms Learning via CALL**

Much of the research done in this area indicates that CALL educational technologies have a positive impact on the students’ second/foreign language idioms’ learning. Such research has investigated the effects of text-pictorial annotations or video clips combined with text on the students’ idioms learning achievement. For instance, Vasiljevic (2015) conducted a study that

examined the effects of text-picture idiom annotations. The author reported that etymology was found to promote the retention of idiom meaning, while pictorial support facilitated the recall of their linguistic form. As for combining video clips with idioms in text, Khonbi and Sadeghi's (2017) study reported that the use of role-plays, followed by movies or idiom sentence uses and definitions, positively impacted learners' idiomatic knowledge.

#### **A.6. Teaching and Learning Idioms via Web Games**

Müller et al. (2018) used a game called *Idiomatico*. This game was developed by Müller, the first author of this article. Müller and her design team created this game for learners of English with an intermediate or high English proficiency level. The game contains 521 idioms in 28 categories. The authors stated that the “idioms selected for the game involve names of body parts and, by extension, some extra health idioms” (p. 851). Their study's results indicated that using *Idiomatico* is an effective method in teaching idioms. Results also indicated that idiom knowledge improvement was influenced by the students' willingness to learn English. Factors such as satisfaction and self-perception of improvement, influenced the learning process were also noted.

#### **A.7. CALL Prompts L2 Idiomatic Competence**

Idiomatic competence is an essential indicator of students' language proficiency. Language instructors may find difficulty in terms of selecting proper methods that increase students' comprehension and production of the idioms. To develop the idiomatic competence in pragmatic communication where students comprehend and apply idioms appropriately and accurately, students should have the opportunity to engage in activities that consider various

factors such as age-appropriate, meeting students' needs, easiness to adapt, caring about contexts, and awareness of comfort level (Liontas, 2003; Liontas, 2018b). Therefore, L2 teachers should pay attention to select appropriate technologies that help students to learn and practice idioms in the authentic text. In addition, L2 teachers should combine the well-selected CALL tool with a well-planned lesson plan that aims at providing the students with a language learning environment encouraging idioms acquisition. Liontas (2018b) states that "any digital communication or application enablement platform should not be chosen just because it is available or easily accessible, but because it can promote and strengthen language development in content, form, and use like no other single advanced development technology, tool or resource can" (p. 12).

#### **A.8. CALL and Students' Motivation and Attitudes**

From psycholinguistic perspectives, the lack of motivation and attitude can lead to low proficiency in learning a second language. Several studies have focused on student's language motivations and attitude while receiving CALL instruction. For example, learners who learn through CALL technologies showed a positive attitude and high motivation in learning (Shenton, & Pagett, 2007). For instance, Nakata (2008) focused on exploring vocabulary learning and students' attitudes toward different teaching methods. Findings indicated that students who received computer-based training showed high satisfaction with the CALL method in comparison to other non-CALL students' groups.

## **B. Mobile Assisted Language Learning in L2 idioms Acquisition**

In today's digital age, technology has become a central part of our daily life. People use technology to share their thoughts through social media and they use mobile applications to socialize and stay in contact with other people. The influence of technology has expanded from socializing into a prominent learning tool in academia, research, and business. One of the technological advances of the modern age is mobile phones that has predominated most students' lives. Mobile devices are always in these students' hands or pockets and such accessibility allows for learning to happen anywhere and at any time (Prensky, 2005).

### **B.1. Benefits of MALL in Teaching and Learning Idioms**

Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is a new educational technology tool that has transported a new type of second and foreign language learning. Many language educators and researchers as well as second and foreign scholars have conducted research studies to explore the effect of MALL on language learning and acquisition, especially idioms learning and acquisition. In the next few paragraphs, this paper will showcase a few benefits of using MALL in learning Idioms. The listed benefits here may be of use for several language institutions as if they seek to improve their teaching of EFL or ESL by using language mobile applications inside and outside the classrooms. Similarly, language teachers and learners can benefit from the advancement and pedagogy of using Mobile applications to teach and learn English idioms. The research presented next confirms the effectiveness of using language mobile applications with L2 learners in the teaching and learning of idioms inside and outside the classroom. This research also shows improvements in students' learning and the increase in their language learning motivations.

One of the most used features of mobiles in language learning is short message services – SMS. According to Hayati et al. (2013), using Short Message Service (SMS) with English language learners to teach them English idioms resulted in a better idioms’ learning experience for the students. Using SMS as a “Student Motivating System” encouraged the students to be familiar with the target language, and their teacher and their peers. SMS learning environments encouraged the students to feel free and safe as their teacher had less control over their learning. Additionally, learning in such an environment relates to “Self- learning Mobile System”.

Liu and Chen (2015) stated that mobile-assisted photo-taking activities can encourage a form of mental elaboration that furthers or enriches the capability to perform word processing. Instructors may take advantage of that and ask the learner to post photos on a wiki page to serve as topics for classmate discussions. Additionally, using collaborative learning and photo-taking activity can increase learner learning interest with peers (Liu & Chen, 2015).

Similarly, Lontas (2018a, 2018b) provided examples of language games that were considered useful in teaching language and content. The studies discussed in his paper sought to implement an online English idiom game that would make the learning of English idioms exciting and effective. Their web-based game provided learners with chances to listen, read, and learn about beneficial English idioms. Idioms are an important constituent of advanced English communication and, as a type of formulaic language, faster processing of meaning is grown once the idiom is learned. Several countries are striving to improve their education systems by using technology applications such as mobile applications, games, and web applications to improve students’ motivation and learning experience (Müller et al., 2018).

### ***B.1.1. Benefits Related to Learner Motivation***

Student Motivating System is an effective approach that allows English Language Learners (ELL) to modify and personalize learning for individual learners based on their needs, learning styles, and interests by using Short Message Service (SMS) to learn English idioms. The goal of this system is to encourage students to keep in touch with the target language through interacting with their teacher and peers. This system allowed students to feel at ease as there is less content controlling from their teacher, which allowed them to become self-regulated learners through the “Self-learning Mobile System” (Hayati et al., 2013). According to Godwin-Jones (2011), mobile devices appropriate individualized informal learning because of their personal nature as students choose the apps to download to their device and control how, when, and where they use them. Students’ readiness to learn English, learning satisfaction and self-perception of improvement impact their learning of idiom knowledge (Müller et al., 2018).

## **B.2. Models of using MALL in Teaching and Learning Idioms**

Utilizing smartphones, mobile devices and games to convey educational materials in a form of entertainment is trending in the twenty-first century (Okan, 2003; Mehdipour & Zerehkafi, 2013). That is due to the heavy use of the digital natives to their devices for various reasons including education.

### ***B.2.1. MALL as an Edutainment***

Despite the old debate about whether using technology in education is useful to the extent that is promised by technology advocates (Okan, 2003), or harmful to the cognitive abilities to the users of “edutainment” in the long run, the benefits of using mobile devices in education is

overwhelming and compared to that on how technology might have a negative impact on the cognitive abilities of students (Kazanci & Okan 2009). With informed use of technology, MALL can be an effective tool to teach special topics as it provides an interactive and social setting for learning language (Chen et al., 2017). Similarly, Lontas (2013) suggested that instructors, who use CALL Media, should have a clear understanding of the pedagogy and the theory behind their use. It is essential to organize computer-assisted language learning with digital multimedia-based instructional learning materials (CALLMedia D-learning) to achieve effective and responsible use of them in teaching.

Social interactions that are mediated or assisted by computers are amongst the most effective language learning contexts in our days (Lontas, 2013). In the twenty-first century, it is hard to speak about language learning without highlighting the role of computer-assisted language learning CALL/MALL (Chun, 2016). Using MALL in teaching and learning idioms is proven to be fruitful for “digital natives,” especially if it is guided by instructors who select content and the knowledge load introduced to their students. Thus, this section claims that teaching students using electronic devices, such as smart-phones and iPads, to learn idioms is a promising approach to teaching idiomatic language to L2 learners. This section presents examples and models of using MALL in teaching idioms. These examples are randomly selected among many other examples; this is not to say they are the best, only to highlight the fact that MALL can be used in different language settings and different cultures with different types of language students.



### ***B.2.2. Virtual Reality***

Hu et al. (2016) presented an example of the use of virtual reality in teaching Chinese idioms in a virtual reality platform designed specifically to teach idioms to learners of Chinese as a foreign language. The game they have designed was able to put the learner in an environment where they can have two minutes conversation with an old man who is trying to move a mountain with his family. The idiom was embedded in that conversation and the environment was created to provide an etymology and cultural reference of the idiom. The player was given instruction to ask the old man about the reason why he was trying to move the mountain, and after that observe and cheer the family up to carry on their mission.

The Chinese virtual reality idioms game can increase the learner's engagement and motivation to learn the idiom (Hu et al., 2016). At the same time, it gives the learners a context and visual representation of the idiom and makes it easier to retain the idiom when needed. Liontas (2017) suggested that students must be encouraged to produce and use idioms in the same way as the native speakers in the right context and right words (i.e., students should be part of the exchange in order to gain a better understanding of the idiom, etymology and the right context). Taking a back seat might reduce the chances of retaining idioms after a short while from learning the idiom without context. This example can be adapted and implemented in different languages and different settings. Virtual reality devices are getting smarter and smaller, and nowadays we can even use smartphones to access virtual reality games, or other smartphone applications for similar learning experiences, such as Instagram.

### ***B.2.3. Instagram***

In a corpus-based investigation of the effectiveness of Instagram application on developing L2 vocabulary and idioms, Aloraini (2018) found out that Instagram application can be used as a tool to teach idioms and vocabulary if used for English language classroom purposes. She recommended teachers to use closed group accounts to guarantee interactivity and reciprocal flow of information. Instagram is an application that allows users to post and view pictures, short videos, and music with captions (text) located under the post. This multimodality and shortness allow for repetition and a quick overview of the content presented in the application.

A good example of MALL is an idiom teaching account on Instagram called “Idiom.land” (pseudonym). This account presented a definition of an idiom and etymology; hours later, the account presented a cartoon showing the idiom figurative and literal meaning, then an excerpt of a movie when the idiom was used in the right context; after that, the account presented a part of a song when the idiom was used properly in the lyrics. This multimodality in presenting the same idiomatic expression intended to help students retain the idioms as well as bring them closer to the context of the idiom.

### ***B.2.4. Flipped Classroom***

Chen Hsieh et al. (2017) conducted an experiment on 333 Japanese students who used their smartphones for email, social media, SMS and other purposes to see if flipped classroom would be effective for broad range educational activities such as teaching vocabulary and idioms via videos, animations, pictures, text and audio. Students received emails with vocabulary lists to encourage regular revisions and study at home. The researchers then created a website for idioms

and encouraged students to produce videos explaining figurative and literal meaning of idioms, and the students would then navigate the website with their smartphones to see each other's work. They reported that the students' feedback was positive, and their reviews suggested that the website was highly effective.

There are many other examples on how to use mobile devices. Many mobile applications can be utilized to teach language in the classroom, such as augmented reality applications, virtual reality applications, social media applications and other applications that help students internalize idioms at a mastery level. Lontas (2017) argued that students must learn idioms in an authentic and purposeful context in order to acquire a deep and accurate knowledge of idioms and use of L2 idioms. Additionally, Lontas justified teaching idioms to be crucial to understand human creativity and power of images they produce in word play. It is good for L2 learners to go beyond the literal meaning of the words and use context to make sense of the idiomatic expression, and for L2 learners to examine the mental images they associate with the idiomatic phrase and how it matches the context in which they used the expression and to enhance student's mastery of idioms and facilitate "bending and mapping process of idiom internalization".

## **CALL and MALL Applications in Idiom Learning**

### ***CALL Applications***

A study of teaching idioms through pictorial elucidation has shown a great potential as a viable candidate for idiomatic CALL application (Vasiljevic, 2012). In the study, participants were divided into two groups. One group was introduced to the idioms through images presented to them, while the other group was asked to draw the idiomatic entry on their own. The latter

used the process of associating language items and images via schematic drawings or pictures (Boers et al., 2008). Since verbal and non-verbal information are processed in separate channels in the mind, dual coding helps store and retrieve verbal and visual information easily (Paivio, 1971; Clark & Paivio, 1991). The study showed that 69.8% of students prefer ready-made images instead of drawing them. Conversely, 30.1% preferred to draw the images themselves. The latter showed a higher retention rate of idiomatic input. That revelation leads us to think that learners' input in idiomatic entries is a key component to reaching idiomatic competence. CALL can be used to enhance that by offering a slew of options when it comes to Vasiljevic's study: (1) learners may choose a drawing software where they can draw images related to the idiomatic entries (e.g., MS Paint, Adobe Photoshop, GIMP, etc.). This allows educators and learners alike to create a database where all idiomatic drawings are stored and recalled when needed. It also allows for a quick and easy way to exchange those drawings electronically among themselves and others, should they choose to do so; and (2) for younger L2 learners, the teacher may opt to choose an activity such as connecting the dots, where learners get instant audiovisual feedback when they connect the dots correctly or incorrectly.

### ***MALL Applications***

While CALL opened the doors for potential uses and applications to language and idiomatic teaching and learning, MALL seems a better option due to its accessibility and easiness of use. Teachers and learners are no longer bound within the confinement of the classroom or the language laboratory. They can take their education on-the-go and learn at their own pace. Multiplatform applications, such as Google Classroom, Google Docs, WhatsApp, WeChat, allowed educators and learners to break the shackles of rote learning and develop

autonomy and confidence among learners. For instance, in a flipped classroom, learners rely on the content provided by their teacher and meet in class for revision and clarification for anything else they may face during their study. Nonetheless, more Content Management Systems (CMS) are becoming mobile and allow learners to attend live classroom sessions from anywhere around the globe. Apps such as Blackboard allow learners to interact with teachers during live sessions with live audio, video, or text. While those are considered cutting-edge technologies, our focus is on WhatsApp, an app that has been popularized in recent years for its convenience, updates, and availability.

WhatsApp Messenger is a very ubiquitous app. It is a multiplatform app that is available on the most popular mobile operating systems (iOS, Android). As of April 2019, the app has been downloaded over a billion times on Android alone (WhatsApp, 2019a), and has reviewed over 4.5 million times on iOS Appstore as well (WhatsApp, 2019b). Using WhatsApp as a viable mobile learning platform that enables social interaction among learners as a byproduct of the learning process. This is supported by Vygotsky's (1978) "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD), where learning can occur beyond what is offered by the teacher. Since Short Message Service SMS has shown to benefit learners in learning a foreign language (Cohen-Miller, 2019), it was imperative to look for the next step and utilize apps such as WhatsApp for language and idioms learning.

A study conducted by Şahan et al. (2016) focused on the use of WhatsApp as a platform for teaching idioms to L2 learners. In the study, 33 participants took part in the study: 17 males and 16 females. They were all students at a Turkish middle school, whose level of English was B1 based on the Common European Framework (CEFR). A test of WhatsApp viability in education was given to participants where the highest possible score was 100. At the end of the

test, the mean score was 87.1, which indicates that students see a benefit in using WhatsApp in language learning. The researchers then created WhatsApp groups where students can interact with one another and with their teachers. According to the study, students had higher levels of motivation and felt safe and confident when using the platform. It allowed them to learn English idioms and vocabulary in ways they did not know they could. In some cases, students sought help from peers and relatives, who were engaged in the learning process. In the posttest that sought to test WhatsApp as a viable platform for teaching idioms, it showed that it was indeed an effective tool for teaching idioms ( $M = 87.08$  out of 100). These findings promote replicating the study with L2 students emerging mobile markets (e.g. The Middle East and North Africa) to gauge students' perceptions in learning idioms using WhatsApp as one of the many tools that fall under MALL.

### **Use of Movies in Second Language Learning**

Movie clips are used as an instruction method in second and foreign language learning classrooms for many reasons (Mahdiloo & Izadpanah, 2017; Khoshniyat & Dowlatabadi, 2014; Neissari, Ashraf, & Ghorbani, 2017). First, movies and movie clips offer audio-visual activities that aid the learners in their language learning process. Second, movies and movie clips contain acted conversations that resemble real life conversations, and these conversations are filled with native-like use of idiomatic and figurative expressions (Mahdiloo & Izadpanah, 2017; Khoshniyat & Dowlatabadi, 2014; Neissari, Ashraf, & Ghorbani, 2017). Second and foreign language educators and researchers encourage the use of idiom-infused movie clips rather than pictorial idioms for the following reasons:

“Movies are motivating, and they help ease the cognitive load whereby learners can form mental images of the presented materials more comfortably; they enable learners to perform parallel cognitive processing by providing additional information that cannot be displayed through static pictures; and they help learners build a dynamic mental representation by providing through external support for simulating the behavior of the system depicted. Iranian students and pupils from many other developing countries who study English as a foreign language do not have sufficient exposure to authentic materials in their schools” (Askildson, 2005; Hoffler & Leutner, 2007; Izadpanah & Alavi, 2016; Schnotz, 2005, as cited in Mahdiloo & Izadpanah, 2017, p. 17).

The use of humorous video clips to teach idioms to EFL learners has facilitated the students’ idioms achievement (Neissari, Ashraf, & Ghorbani, 2017). In fact, language learners exhibited a positive attitude towards the use of video/movie clips in the language classroom (Neissari, Ashraf, & Ghorbani, 2017; Mahmoodi-Shahreabaki, 2015). Similar to how other educational technologies are used in the classroom, the effective use of movie clips depends on the teacher’s ability to incorporate the movies appropriately in their lessons and in their classroom activities, which affects the learners’ ability to receive the movie clips’ message. Therefore, language teachers should craft lesson plans that are flexible and inclusive of educational technologies in pre, during, and after a language task to help to ensure all students are involved in the learning process equally (Liontas, 2003). By using proper technology in their instruction, language teachers will be able to provoke proper mental images in the learner’s mind when hearing, viewing, or reading the Vivid Phrasal Idioms. The use of movie-clips is expected to be a strong motivational simulation technique for L2 learners (Neissari et al., 2017; Mahmoodi-Shahreabaki, 2014).

## **General Idiom Instructional Insights**

Liontas (2017) argued that students must learn idioms in an authentic and purposeful context in order to acquire a deep and accurate knowledge of idioms and use of L2 idioms. Additionally, Liontas justified teaching idioms to be crucial to understand human creativity and power of images they produce in word play. It is good for L2 learners to go beyond the literal meaning of the words and use context to make sense of the idiomatic expression (Liontas, 2017). It is also good for L2 learners to examine the mental images they associate with the idiomatic phrase and how it matches the context in which they used the expression and to enhance student's mastery of idioms and facilitate "bending and mapping process of idiom internalization" (Liontas, 2017a, p. 10).

Therefore, the main insights gained from conducting this literature review entails insights in respect to current methods used in teaching and learning a second language idioms, appropriate educational technologies use, and appropriate incorporation of such technologies in the language classrooms and in L2 idiom teaching and learning. As for currently used methods in teaching and learning a second language idioms, these methods range from using one mode of teaching idioms such as idiom and picture annotation to a multimodal instruction that involve a combination of teaching modes such as idiom in text combined with an image, teaching idioms via video clips, or teaching idioms via web games or mobile applications (Liontas, 2018a; Müller et. al, 2018; Khonbi & Sadeghi, 2017). Moreover, research indicates that the use of the educational technologies in teaching a second language skills or idioms have positive learning outcomes; however, research highlighted that the use of such technologies has to be well-planned



and appropriately incorporated to ensure such positive learning outcomes (Liontas, 2017; Liontas, 2018b).

## **Chapter Summary**

Idiomatic expressions exist in many languages, and they are used everyday language speakers consciously and unconsciously. Idioms are an important part of language as they indicate the proficiency of their speakers alongside other language proficiency indicators (Khoshniyat & Dowlatabadi, 2014). This literature review provided a review of what an idiom is, VP idioms, and an overview on the use of CALL and MALL technologies in language classroom and idioms learning. Literature indicates that using teaching strategies involving multiple intelligences and educational technologies is more effective than using standard teaching strategies. There are many different ways to teach English as a second language and to teach L2 idioms. The literature reviewed here highlighted the many different strategies and methodologies that could be used to teach idioms to the second language learner in a learning environment involving educational technologies. A large portion of the research indicates that using multiple intelligences and technologies in the language classroom to teach idioms is a more effective teaching strategy than simply providing the second language learners with a list of most common English idioms. In the field of CALL and MALL, many researchers explored several different methodologies of today and primarily focused on exploring teaching methods that support the use of multiple intelligences and technologies that are based on language acquisition and learning theories when teaching English idioms.

In brief, Chapter Two, the literature review, has detailed major lines of research on both SLA and idiomaticity. It has also presented information on the relationship between SLA, idioms

teaching and learning, and CALL/MALL technologies, then transitioned into identifying the various ways of teaching English idioms. This chapter discussed how previous studies have integrated technology in language education. Overall, the research indicates positive motivational and retention outcomes when using teaching methods and strategies that implement multiple intelligences and educational technologies in teaching the English language and its idioms to ESL or EFL learners.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### Overview of Study

Regardless of the ESL students' level of English mastery, a mastery of English idioms requires an awareness of the idioms' cultural context. When ESL students hear or read unfamiliar idioms, these ESL students are likely to be confused by the new idioms, especially VP idioms, as these idioms have two meanings—literal and figurative. Unfamiliarity or inability to dissect the meaning of idioms at hand is a result of many idioms having word origins rooted in historical facts, which in return requires deep understanding of history and culture (Liontas, 2008; Liontas, 2015). Language learners who acquire awareness of the cultural context of a word or phrase are more likely to avoid such confusion, and therefore acquire what Liontas (2015, 2008, 2002) calls *idiomatic competence*, that is, the ability to use an idiom with relatively little effort and in an appropriate way. However, the challenges of teaching and learning idioms still exist, and language teachers and SLA researchers have conducted experiments to test the effectiveness of different teaching and learning methods involving multiple intelligences and technologies. Recent research suggests that a combination of teaching and learning methods involving multiple intelligences and technologies are more effective than other standard methods (Grgurović et al., 2013; Liontas, 2013).

In the first part of the study, I explored the ways in which movie clips aid ESL students to detect, interpret, and understand the meaning of a VP idiom. This was achieved through having the students participate in an online think-aloud idiom detection task (IDT). This task was delivered via Teams, a video conference software. In the IDT, I guided the students through the

Think-Aloud task instruction section, provided them with an example of what is expected of them during the task, and then had the participant proceed with the task alone as I took a step back to observe and take notes of their thinking aloud.

In the second part of the study, I conducted semi-structured interviews to explore the participants' perceptions of learning VP idioms via idiom-infused movie clips. This was also accomplished via Teams. In the interview, I asked the participants questions about their experience of learning VP idioms, their process of identifying idioms, and how context-clues helped them locate and understand the idioms. Further details on both parts of this study and the methods I adopted to answer the research questions will be discussed in the following sections.

### **Qualitative Method Design**

***Rationale.*** This study employs a descriptive exploratory study approach and relied on the qualitative approach to answer the research questions here posed. My choice of conducting a descriptive and exploratory study was intentional and deliberate as it allowed me to gain a comprehensive look at how second language learners process and understand English VP idioms through short American movie-clips. By employing a descriptive and exploratory study design, I hoped to explore the differences in my participants experiences and perceptions in the study as such insights would not be captured by doing a quantitative study.

***Paradigm.*** Pragmatism is a deconstructive paradigm that advocates the use of qualitative methods in research, “sidesteps the contentious issues of truth and reality” (Feilzer, 2010, p. 8), and “focuses instead on ‘what works’ as the truth regarding the research questions under investigation” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 342). Pragmatism rejects a position between the two opposing viewpoints and recognizes that there are many ways to interpret the world and

undertake research. It also recognizes that no single point of view can present the entire picture and reality of the issue at hand. Therefore, this study employs pragmatism as its overarching worldview due to its flexibility to incorporate both qualitative data and insights on various participants' experiences.

Pragmatism focuses on *what works* as the main source of answers to the research questions posed. To better understand the influence of technology, in this case idiom-infused movie clips, multiple perspectives, including the participants' perceptions, are pursued. The inclusion of participants' perceptions is necessary to gain insights on how these idiom-infused movie clips aided their idiom detection, identification, and comprehension processes. This study is an exploratory descriptive study. As such, this study aims to explore and inform the field of SLA of the effects of idiom-infused movie clips on ESL students VP idioms identification and comprehension, along with informing the field of SLA of these ESL students' perceptions of movie clips as an instructional environment and its context-clue rich feature. Due to the study's nature and the goal of gaining a deeper understating of how ESL participants deconstruct idiomatic and figurative expressions' meanings, pursuing qualitative data was necessary to reach the outcomes this study pursued. In fact, Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) have shared that pragmatism is commonly used in mixed methods research.

***Overall design.*** This study employs an exploratory descriptive study design, a design in which qualitative data informs the discoveries made in this study. Because the focus is qualitative in nature and because this dissertation aims to gather insights based on ESL students' perceptions of the use of idiom-infused movie clips to teach and learn VP idioms, participants were selected on account of their desire to participate in the study's four tasks.

The qualitative design of this study is applied to discuss the discoveries the study's questions revealed. The design considerations are based on the study's purpose: to obtain in-depth information about participants' perceptions related to their experience learning VP idioms via idiom-infused movie clips. Qualitative data is obtained through four instruments: Pre-Study Survey, Idiom Detection Task, Post-Study Survey, and Semi-Structured Interviews. Coding of data undergirds thematic analysis. Thematic analysis allows for making sense of collected data and allows the participants to express their perceptions regarding VP idiom learning via idiom-infused movie clips. The IDT NVivo analysis were presented in a quantitative manner (i.e., tables with frequency of occurrence). The IDT NVivo analysis provided numerical data on the occurrence of certain themes which was presented in two tables in this study (see Table 3 on page 89, and Table 5 on page 115).

### **Sequence of Events**

The sequence of events in this study will go through several phases: gathering the idiom-infused movie clips, creating the IDT and its instructions, pilot testing the IDT, collecting informed consents, setting up a meeting time with the participants for IDT and interview, and thematic analysis (qualitative data), followed by the write up of the rest of the dissertation.

After the completion of the creation of the IDT, the pilot participant(s) completed the task to provide feedback. This feedback was used to revise the materials (aka the IDT containing the idiom-infused movie clips). Following the results of the pilot study, the next phase of the dissertation was conducting the study on the actual participants. All of the participants were in one treatment group as this dissertation will only focus on these participants' experiences and perceptions of viewing and identifying VP idioms via idiom-infused movie clips. Figure 4 above

shows the sequence of the participants' involvement in this dissertation, followed by an explanation of each step.



**Figure 2:** *Sequence of Participants Involvement in the Study*

**Step 1: Pre-study survey.** This survey adopted questions from Liontas's (1999) dissertation surveys. This adopted pre-study survey consisted of 20-items inquiring about the participants demographic and background information (age, gender, country of origin, first language, year in university, major, length of stay in the United States, self-reported English proficiency, and prior experience with idioms learning (see Appendix A). This survey also verified the participants' eligibility (i.e., their language proficiency level) to take part in the study along with providing information on the participants' language background that could be used in interpreting data results. This survey and the post-study survey were created via Qualtrics, and the surveys' links were shared with the participants via email.

**Step 2: Idiom detection task.** This task consisted of viewing ten selected idiom-infused movie clips, further described later in the *instructional materials* section of this paper. To participate in this detection task, participants received a *Calendly* link, an online scheduler website, to share their preferred date and time to participate in this study. Once the task date and time was scheduled, participants then received a Teams invitation email. In the idiom detection task, the participants were introduced to the task, its procedure, its selected idiom-infused movie

clips via Teams. This Teams meeting began by a guided reading through the task instructions, an explanation of the thinking-aloud method, and an example on how the task should be done before the participant is allowed to proceed in their task completion. As the participants continued with the idiom detection task, I took notes and guided them through the different sections of task.

**Step 3: Post-study survey.** Participants answered 30 questions about their experience identifying and learning VP idioms via idiom-infused movie clips (see Appendix C). These questions inquired about: 1) the participants general impressions of learning idioms via movie clips; 2) what they liked most and least about this instruction method; 3) their perceptions about the usefulness of movie clips in learning idioms; 4) the meaning-making strategies they used to detect, interpret, and understand idioms; and 5) the participants recommendations in regard to learning VP idioms via movie clips.

**Step 4: Post-study semi-structured interview.** The semi-structured interviews aimed at collecting information regarding the participants' experiences and perceptions of identifying and learning VP idioms via idiom-infused movie clips. Each semi-structured interview asked ten open-ended questions and were conducted and recorded via Teams. This interview sought a deeper understanding of how movie clips, a context-clue rich environment, affected the five participants idiom detection methods, and how these movies aided or hindered their idiom identification and why. These interviews are semi-structured in nature as they allowed the researcher to have some control on the flow of the interview while allowing the participants to freely express their thoughts, perceptions, and impressions of learning and detecting idioms via idiom-infused movie-clips. To better grasp the participants' perceptions in sufficient time, the semi-structured interviews were conducted within two weeks from the idiom detection task.



## **Study Context**

This descriptive exploratory study took place at a state university in the southeastern United States. This university is chosen as it has over 5000 international students studying at varying majors and levels of higher education. To be admitted to this university, students have two routes: conditional or full admission. Conditional (provisional) admission means that the student is admitted but has to meet some conditions or maintain a certain GPA in their first semester or year. Full admission means that the student is fully admitted and can enroll in classes.

This study included four tasks: Pre-Study Survey, Idiom Detection Task, Post-Study Survey, and a Post-Study Semi-Structured Interview. The students were given a pre-study and post-study survey that were created on Qualtrics. The participants accessed all the surveys via email after they accepted the invitation to participate in the study. As for the VP IDT, the task was delivered via a Teams, a video conference tool. This platform of delivery is chosen due to its convenience, user-friendly features, screen sharing, and screen/call recording features as well. Teams was also chosen as it is available to all students at no cost. In addition, Teams is also used in the study's semi-structured interviews.

The study's idiom-infused movie clips were mainly collected from a website named Idiom Land. In this study, I focused only on adopting movie clips. The idioms collected for this study are VP idioms embedded in short American movie clips. The process of choosing and selecting these VP idioms and their movie-clips is later discussed in this chapter.

## Study Participants

Five English as a Second Language (ESL) students from varying cultural backgrounds and varying language backgrounds participated in this study. All five participants were doctoral-level students. All these students will be placed in one participant group and will be asked to participate in the same IDT. All five participants were recruited using the Snow-ball sampling technique. In qualitative method research, sampling size is determined via several approaches to determine such as: rules of thumb, conceptual models, and saturation (Sim et al., 2018). This study employed the concept of saturation as a sample size guide. Saturation occurs in situations where adding more participants to the study does not result in additional perspectives or information, rather, it results in repetition of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, 2017; Morse, 1995; Creswell, 1998). Because qualitative research typically requires a smaller sample size than quantitative analyses, and because quantitative sample sizes should be large enough to obtain enough data to sufficiently describe the phenomenon of interest and address the research questions, this study aimed at recruiting five ESL students, and interview them all. This sample size fits the qualitative nature of the study, along with avoiding concerns of saturation.

***Determination of English proficiency.*** Because English proficiency level can be an influencing variable in L2 research, determination of its proficiency is an important component of this study. However, determining language proficiency is challenging. To identify proficiency level, I employed the following strategies. First, I recruited students who have completed their English as a Second Language program. Secondly, the students were asked to self-report their English placement level (level 1-6) or their English proficiency via their IELTS or TOFEL scores (standardized language proficiency tests).

The ESL students' English level was at least level 3 for recruitment in this study. At this level, students have an intermediate level of English and all of its skills. The students' English level was also determined by self-reporting their English institution placement level or their IELTS/TOEFL scores in the pre-course demographics survey. IELTS and TOEFL are standardized language proficiency tests. To be considered a level 3 ESL student, the student must score 5.0/9.0 in IELTS, and 61/120 in TOEFL.

As stated earlier, these participants were initially recruited through snow-ball sampling. I asked some international doctoral-level students to distribute the study's recruitment flyer via email or social media to their international peers currently pursuing a PhD degree in the United States. I aimed to recruit a sufficient number of participants via this method before I transition to a "Purposeful Sampling" method. In the snow-ball sampling method, I would ask possible and interested participants to share the recruitment email with others who may be interested and eligible to participate in this study.

### **Recruiting Procedures**

As already mentioned, I used "Snowball Sampling" to recruit participants and I will only transition to a "Purposeful Sampling" method to recruit more (Patton, 2015). As for Snow-ball sampling, it refers to a sampling technique that relies on referrals from an initial sample of respondents who nominate additional respondents. Snow-ball sampling is when a researcher needs to recruit participants and seeks the help of some of the candidates to nominate other possible candidates. This type is used in this study as I, the researcher, have access to a pool of participants with the help of friends and fellow PhD students. Additionally, I created a recruitment flyer that included a transcript of all the participants recruitment criteria and attached

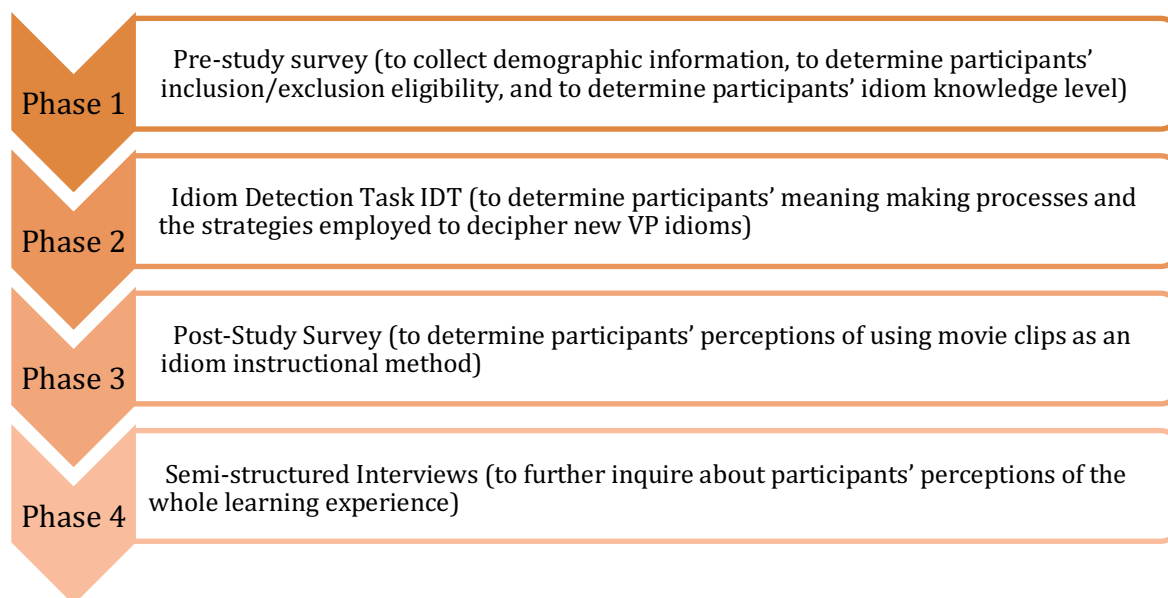
it to the research purpose and the main research question script. I also provided my personal contact information including my phone number and my email address in the recruitment email (see Appendix F).

I first contacted doctoral students I knew as peers or friends. I asked them to reach out to their peers to share the recruitment email and flyer with interested ESL doctoral-level students. These students' participation is completely voluntary. In the recruitment email, potential participants were informed that their participation is voluntary and would be kindly asked to share the recruitment email with other possible candidates if they do not wish to take part in this study. If new potential participants were able to take part in the study, I ensured she/he had received all the recruitment information, research scope, and fully understood the research and its goal.

My main two inclusion criteria, mentioned in the recruitment as well, were (1) the participant has completed a Level 3 student or higher and (2) the student is an English as a Second Language doctoral-level learner in the United States. To ensure they have completed at least Level 3 ESL in any language program in the U.S., these students were asked to self-report their current level of study, their IELTS/TOEFL scores (ESL level 3= 5.0/9.0 in IELTS, or 61/120 in TOEFL), along with reporting other demographic information in the pre-study survey. If they meet these two inclusion criteria, I emailed them the consent forms and, once signed, a *Calendly* link to choose a date and time for the IDT was shared with them. However, if they were not able to participate, I asked them to pass the recruitment information to other ESL doctoral-level students who might be potential candidates and who fit the inclusion criteria. Upon that, other ESL students that fit the criteria and were interested in the study were considered for recruitment and went through the steps discussed above.

## Study Instruments

The instruments used in this study were more qualitative in nature, with some questions asking for numerical answers such as how many years the participants had studied English, lived in the U.S., and their English proficiency level/IELTS or TOFEL scores. The answers to these numerical questions were presented in either writing or some graphs/tables. In the following paragraphs, I provide an overview of each of these instruments and their rationale. However, I begin my overview by presenting a 4-phase graph that showcases the instruments' order of use and the instruments' overall rationale (see Figure 5 below).



**Figure 3:** *Phases of Instrument Use and Overall Rationale*

***Pre- and post-study surveys.*** Pre and post study surveys adopted questions from Liontas's (1999) dissertation surveys. These surveys were adopted because this study employed Liontas's (1999) TIA model. This adopted pre-study survey consisted of 20-items inquiring about the participants demographic and background information (age, gender, country of origin, first language, year in university, major, length of stay in the United States, self-reported English proficiency, and prior experience with idioms learning (see Appendix A). This survey also

verified the participants' eligibility to take part in the study by inquiring about the students' English level. This study also provided information on the participants' language background that could be used in interpreting data results.

As for the post-study survey, the participants answered 30 questions relating to their experience identifying and learning VP idioms via idiom-infused movie clips (see Appendix C). These questions included questions inquiring about the participants general impressions of learning idioms via movie clips, what they liked most and least about this instruction method, their perceptions about the usefulness of movie clips in learning idioms, and the participants recommendations in regard to learning VP idioms via movie clips.

***Idioms Detection Task and its Recordings.*** This idiom detection task was delivered and conducted via Teams software. *Teams* is a web-based or application-based video conferencing tool with a local, desktop client and a mobile app that allows users to meet online, with or without video. Teams users can choose to record sessions, collaborate on projects, and share or annotate on one another's screens, all with one easy-to-use platform. Teams offers quality video, audio, and a wireless screen-sharing performance across Windows, Mac, Linux, iOS, Android, Blackberry, and Teams Rooms. Teams was chosen due to its availability to all participants at no cost, ease of use, recording and screen sharing features. Teams also allowed for contactless participation during the COVID19 pandemic. Hence, Teams ensured the safety of participants and me. In addition, this study design does not require the physical presence of the participants and the researcher in the same location and at the same time.

As for the task itself, it consisted of viewing ten selected idiom-infused movie clips, further described later in the instructional materials section of this paper. The participants were introduced to the selected idiom-infused movie clips via a Teams meeting. This Teams meeting

date and time was predetermined based on the participants availability and ability to participate in a 20-30 minutes idiom detection task. I began the IDT by a guided reading through the task instructions, an explanation of the thinking-aloud method, and an example on how the task should be done before the participant were allowed to proceed in their task completion. As the participants continued with the IDT, I took notes and guided them through the different sections of the task.

*Semi-structured Interviews.* The interviews were also conducted and recorded via Teams. These interviews were recorded as well. The semi-structured interviews aimed at collecting information regarding the participants' experiences and perceptions of identifying and learning VP idioms via idiom-infused movie clips. In the semi-structured interviews, I asked ten open-ended questions along with some follow-up questions based on the interview flow and clarity. In these interviews, I sought a deeper understanding of how movie clips, a context-clue rich environment, affected the participants' idiom detection strategies, and how these movies aided or hindered the participants' idiom identification and why. These interviews were semi-structured in nature as they allowed me to have some control on the flow of the interview while allowing the participants to freely express their thoughts, perceptions, and impressions of learning and detecting idioms via idiom-infused movie-clips. To better grasp the participants' perceptions in sufficient time, I conducted the semi-structured interviews within two weeks from the IDT.

### **Interview Protocol**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in this study in order to construct a deep investigation of the students' perceptions about learning VP idioms via idiom-infused movie

clips. Participation in interviews was voluntary. Interest in participation was shared by the participants at the bottom of their post-study survey. The survey asked about the participants' interest in taking part in the post study semi-structured interview. The survey included a brief text about the interview scope, length, and the fact that it was recorded and that it was voluntary based.

As for recruitment, I aimed to recruit all five participating ESL students for a semi-structured interview. Punch and Oancea (2014) stated that interviews are the most prominent way to collect data. Therefore, I conducted interviews with semi-formal and open-ended questions in order to ensure the likelihood of accurate responses and shared opinions. Semi-structured interviews were chosen for this study as this type of interview allowed the participants a degree of flexibility to provide interesting insights and allowed the interviewee to probe for more details and clarification.

The interviews did not last longer than 30 minutes and were conducted in a quiet and comfortable room chosen by the participants. In order to avoid natural limitations of recalling data and to permit repeated examinations of the participants' responses by the researcher, the interviews were recorded via Teams' video call recording feature. The participants were informed in a timely manner of the interview procedure and the fact that the interviews were to be recorded. If a participant shows no interest in being recorded, he/she had the right to opt out of being interviewed. However, if the participant opt-in, the interview began with some ice-breaking questions, followed by an introduction of the interview procedures and goals. When the interview began, I took notes during each interview to allow me to keep track of the interview flow and highlight any area in need of clarification. Each participant was interviewed once and was given a pseudonym identity.



## **Instructional Materials**

### ***Idiom Detection Task (IDT) Design and its Innovative Approach***

To explore the participants' idiom detection and meaning making strategies, and to explore their perceptions of learning ten VP idioms via idiom-infused movie clips, the Idiom Detection Task (IDT) was developed. This detection task innovative approach combined movie clips with the Thinking Aloud (TA) approach to introduce the task and explore the participants' ability to detect, interpret, and understand VP idioms from an environment rich with context-clues (movie clips). This idiom task included 10 idioms that are embedded in short movie clips gathered from IdiomLand YouTube channel and Instagram account. These movie clips duration range from 30 seconds to 3 minutes, with most falling in the 1-minute duration category.

Movie clips are chosen as the primary instruction method in this idiom task for many reasons. Firstly, as stated in Chapter 1, movie clips offer opportunities of audio-visual activities that aid in the learning progress of the learners. Secondly, movie clips and their conversations resemble real life conversations when compared to conversation from news, advertisements, or static pictures. Thirdly, idioms are used differently in advertisements vs. movies due to the extent of language play in each context. In advertisements, idioms tend to be altered and used to fill a communicative purpose (selling an item), while idioms in movies tend to be used as they appear in real-life communications. Movie clips range from a few seconds, typically 10 + seconds to 10 minutes in length, which gives ample context for the learner to understand the idioms. As for advertisements, they tend to last for less time, beginning with a minimum of a few seconds to a maximum of 1 minute, with the majority of advertisements ranging in the 30 seconds category. These advertisements typically provide context for advertisement and commercial purposes.

Noteworthy, this study employs only idiom-infused movie clips rather than pictorial idioms for the following reasons:

“Movies are motivating, and they help ease the cognitive load whereby learners can form mental images of the presented materials more comfortably; they enable learners to perform parallel cognitive processing by providing additional information that cannot be displayed through static pictures; and they help learners build a dynamic mental representation by providing through external support for simulating the behavior of the system depicted. Iranian students and pupils from many other developing countries who study English as a foreign language do not have sufficient exposure to authentic materials in their schools” (Askildson, 2005; Hoffler & Leutner, 2007; Izadpanah & Alavi, 2016; Schnotz, 2005, as cited in Mahdiloo & Izadpanah, 2017, p. 17).

This idiom detection task design was informed by design theory, interaction design, content design, and research in computer-mediated learning. According to Myer (2002), using a combination of words, pictures, auditory, and video information in an organized manner improves the learning experience at hand. To deliver such a combination, idiom-infused movie clips are chosen as they serve as a computer-based learning environment that allows for multimedia instruction. In this task, the idiom-infused movie clips served as CALL technology that allowed the student to use context clues when attempting to detect and decipher the idiom at hand.

***Idiom selection procedures.*** The ten idioms were chosen by cross-checking the idioms from Collis’s (2007) “101 American English Idioms” book with the idioms infused in movie clips shared on “IdiomLand” YouTube and Instagram accounts. Idiom Land is an account that shares pre-cut and collected idioms from various American movies. In comparison to available

sources of English idioms on the internet, this website was chosen as it provides pictures, explanations, and movie clips on the same idiom. In addition to the YouTube and Instagram accounts, IdiomLand has a mobile application named English Idioms Cards. This application mainly presents the idiom along with a picture and example of the idiom in use in text format.

**Table 1:** The Study’s Ten Idioms and Their Meanings

Vivid Phrasal Idioms	Idiom Meaning
His bark is worse than his bite	A person seems much more unpleasant or hostile than they really are.
Shake a leg	Make a start, rouse oneself.
Let the cat out of the bag	To reveal a secret carelessly or by mistake.
Money talks	Referring to the idea that money has a strong influence on people’s actions and decisions
Cat got your tongue?	Is used to describe when someone is at a loss of words or being unusually quiet.
Pay through the nose	Pay an excessive amount for something
Drive one up the wall	Make (someone) irritated, angry, or crazy
Hit the nail on the head	Do or say something that is exactly right
Open a can of worms	Create a complicated situation in which doing something to correct a problem leads to many more problems
Packed like sardines	Without enough room to move around

The final ten idioms selected, and their meanings, are shown in Table 1 above. To select these idioms, I wrote a list of the VP idioms infused in these movie clips and cross-check them with the VP idioms from Collis (2007) idioms book. I used Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) to double-check these VP idioms frequency of use in the American variety of English. The finalized ten idioms were VP idioms, with each already infused in a movie clip, and listed as commonly used in the U.S. To further ensure the appropriateness of these idioms for the language learners’ level, I asked two English as a second language educators to view the idioms list and share any insights they have on the selected idioms. Both educators agreed that the selected idioms were appropriate and provoked a mental image while having two meanings: literal and figurative.

## **Think-Aloud Protocols**

From the point of view of methodology, the IDT aims to explore ESL students' meaning-making strategies, their comprehension, and their ability to analyze VP idioms immediately after aural or visual perception. To investigate comprehension processes, the think-aloud (TA) protocols were used to gather data while the participants completed their IDT. In the course of the TA protocol, the participants are typically asked to verbalize their thoughts to the researcher while completing a cognitive task. The focus of the Thinking Aloud task, according to Olson et al. (1984), "should be to get subjects to report the content of their immediate awareness rather than to report explanations of their behavior. Further, subjects should be asked to report what they are thinking right now, not what they remember thinking some time ago" (p. 254). Olson et al. (1984) have also shared that data collected from Thinking Aloud tasks "should not be taken as direct reflections of thought processes but rather as data that are correlated with underlying thought processes" (p. 254).

Thinking Aloud methodology has been used periodically as an investigative instrument in L2 research (Liontas, 2007). Given that, during the listening and views process, not understanding idioms is probably one of the most troublesome barriers to comprehension. Therefore, Thinking Aloud methodology may prove to be a fruitful approach to investigating the ESL students' meaning making and comprehension processes. The collected TA data will provide evidence of what is happening in the participants mind during the task, thereby, allowing me, the researcher, access to the cognitive efforts involved when an ESL student encounters VP idioms in movies, conversations, or communication in general.

When conducting the IDT and collecting TA data, the session began with an example of thinking aloud to showcase the participants the types of things they could talk about and to help them understand how to verbalize their thoughts. Following that, the participants were instructed to view the movie clip, think-aloud, and make stops when appropriate to reveal his/her ongoing thinking aloud and meaning-making process of the VP idioms at hand. After each idiom is completed, I reiterated the thinking-aloud notes to the participants to ensure I captured their understanding of the viewed idiom. Specifically, each movie-clip was shown twice. After the first viewing, the participants were asked to think aloud to share the VP idiom location and how they detected it. Once an answer was given, the participants were shown the movie-clip for a second time to give them a chance to decipher the VP idiom meaning. After the second viewing, the participants were asked to think aloud to share what they thought the idiom meaning was and how they reach such a meaning.

For this study, I anticipated that the detection and recognition of VP idioms may be influenced by factors such as “the context of the idiom, the literal meaning of the idiom, the meaning of a particular word in the idiomatic phrase, the experiences and background knowledge of the participant, or an expression in the native language” (Cooper, 1999, p. 241 ). Thus, the participants were asked to keep these factors in mind as they communicate their thoughts on how they arrived at possible meanings of the 10 VP idioms.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

I collected data from five ESL students who are currently living in the U.S. and are pursuing a doctoral degree in the same southern university. The students have differing English and academic backgrounds. These students all met the minimum proficiency level based on their

completed English as a Second Language level, IELTS, or TOEFL test results. The minimum English studies level is Level 3, which is equivalent to 5.0/9.0 in IELTS and 61/120 in TOEFL test. The participants met this prerequisite before continuing in this study.

In this study, I employed an exploratory descriptive design. The study data were collected from pre- and post-study survey, idiom detection task and its recordings, and the post study semi-structured interviews and their recordings. I did not integrate the IDT into the format of a classroom/face-to-face due to three reasons: (1) COVID-19 pandemic was still happening as this study is conducted and conducting this task online via Zoom would ensure the participants and the researcher's safety, (2) virtual meetings' flexibility was hoped to allow ESL students residing in different areas in the research county to participate, and (3) the use of Teams did not only ensure participants safety, but it also allowed the IDT task and interviews to be recorded and delivered seamlessly. The participants were recruited in the IDT and interviews on a voluntary basis.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

This study employs an exploratory descriptive design due to the design's advantages such as its low cost and flexibility, and the fact that data gathered under this design gives researchers more insight into the problem under study and helps in laying the foundation for future research. The data was analyzed via Braun and Clarke (2006; 2012) six-phases Thematic Analysis method. This analysis was conducted in NVivo, a qualitative analysis program. The collected data and their analysis aimed to answer the study's four research questions.

The pre-study and post-study surveys were gathered through Qualtrics, "a web-based software that allows the user to create surveys and generate reports without having any previous

programming knowledge” (Qualtrics FAQs, 2021, n.p.). I used Qualtrics to create surveys and create reports on the numerical results gathered from surveys. Conversely, the purpose of the qualitative data is to answer all research questions, especially RQ4, by providing an analysis of the ESL students’ perceptions about learning VP idioms via movie clips. To analyze the qualitative data, I employed the thematic analysis method. According to Braun and Clarke (2012), “TA is a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set” (p. 57). To identify, organize, and offer data-driven insights, I followed Braun and Clarke (2006; 2012) six phases of Thematic Analysis:

- Phase 1: Familiarizing Yourself with the Data
- Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes
- Phase 3: Searching for Themes
- Phase 4: Reviewing Potential Themes
- Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes
- Phase 6: Producing the Report

This analysis began from an inductive to deductive approach (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2012). Inductive analysis aims at discovering patterns, themes, and categories in one’s data. In contrast, deductive analysis aims at analyzing the data according to an existing framework. Qualitative analysis begins with an inductive approach and once patterns, themes, and/or categories have been established, the analysis ends with a deductive approach (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2012).

Some researchers believe that data transcription is also a part of data analysis (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, in the first cycle of data coding, I transcribed the IDT and the interview

content as soon as I completed both with the ESL to avoid memory loss of some interview information or interpretation. I utilized the help of Otter, a phone/web application that transcribes real-time meetings. Hence, as I read the transcripts for the 1<sup>st</sup> time, I informally coded the data and categorized them into different groups (themes). These themes were inspired by Liantas's (2007) list of meaning-making strategies.

In my second coding cycle, I created textual descriptions of each individual's perceptions. This cycle helped me determine which codes in the data are the dominant vs. which data are not. Finally, I identified the students' most important perceptions and reported them accordingly. My final step of analysis entailed reaching final interpretation of all analysis collected from all sets of data. After finishing all sets of data, I interpreted my findings and linked them in the results section to form a comprehensive understanding of the research outcomes and the effects of using movie clips on the ESL students' meaning-making process when encountering VP idioms.

### ***Meaning-Making Strategies from Liantas's (2007) Idiom Detection Task***

This study adopted Liantas's (2007) meaning-making strategies when interpreting organizing the ESL students' idiom detection task IDT responses. Liantas (2007) listed 12 strategies employed by his participants in his IDT. He used those strategies to interpret the responses collected from the three groups of students (Spanish, French, and German). To be specific, Liantas (2007) listed the following strategies: *Translation, Literal Meaning Makes No Sense, Contextual Support, Similar to/ Reminds Me of, Process of Elimination, Prior Knowledge, Graphophonics/Arrangement, Sounds/Seems/Looks Like, Guessing, Comparison to Other Idioms, I Have No Idea/I Do Not Know, Placement in Text* (Liantas, 2007, p. 12).



## **Ethical Considerations**

I informed the participants about the objectives of this study in the recruitment flyer, email, and IRB consent form. To respect and ensure the participants' privacy, I assigned pseudonyms to the five participants. All data related to the study's participants were collected and placed in a safe box in my office. The online and electronic data were saved in the USF Box on my personal computer. After 5 years, the electronic data will be erased from the USF Box. Moreover, I ensured that the participants take part in this study voluntarily during our first encounter via email. The participants were informed that they will not be asked any harmful or irrelevant questions. And lastly, I also ensured that they are aware of the fact that they have the right to stop participating at any point of time and that they are not required to provide me with an explanation.

## **Chapter Summary**

Chapter Three presented the methodology pursued in this study. The design aims to explore the ESL students' VP idioms cognitive and meaning-making processes of VP idioms depicted in idiom-infused movie clips, as well as to explore their perceptions on learning idioms via movie-clips. The four research questions were crafted and stated in Chapter One of this study. To answer the research questions, I applied primarily a qualitative research design—an exploratory descriptive design. To explore the ESL students' meaning-making processes of VP idioms in idiom-infused movie clips, I used Liontas's (1999) Idiom Detection Task (IDT). This task included ten VP idioms and employed a Thinking Aloud approach to gain deep insights into the participants cognitive process while making meaning of the VP idioms at hand. Following

the IDT session, participants took part in the post-study survey. And finally, to gain deeper insights into the participants' experiences and perceptions of idiom-infused movie clips as a second language instructional method, I conducted one semi-structured interview with each participant.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### Introduction

In this study, I identified the participants' meaning-making processes and perceptions about idiom learning while watching movie clips containing VP idioms. My purpose in this study was to focus on both the cognitive processes and the perceptions ESL learners have about detecting, interpreting, and understanding English VP idiom meaning via a Thinking Aloud procedure while completing Liontas's Idiom Detection Task (IDT). To that end, I employed a qualitative inquiry method to explore participants' cognitive processes and perceptions. In this study, I aimed to answer four research questions:

1. In what ways are ESL students able to locate Vivid Phrasal (VP) idioms when watching movie clips containing them?
2. How do ESL students decode VP idioms once located in context?
3. What are the meaning-making constraints ESL students experience during VP idiom comprehension and interpretation?
4. What are ESL students' perceptions about learning VP idioms via idiom-infused movie clips?

In this exploratory descriptive study, the five participants completed four tasks: the Pre-study Survey, the Idiom Detection Task, the Post-Study Survey, and the Post-Study Semi-Structured Interview. In this chapter, I present the data in the same order the tasks were completed by the participants. Noteworthy, all participant excerpts are given in original (unedited) form.

I begin with presenting participants' demographic information, English language experience and level, and knowledge of and exposure to idiomatic expressions and VP idioms. This is followed by the IDT results and discussion. Next, I triangulate my data by utilizing the results of the Post-Study Questionnaire and the Post-Study Semi-Structured Interviews. This triangulation of my data allowed me to discover further insights involving L2 learners' understanding of meaning-making processes and their comprehension of VP idioms depicted in short movie clips.

### **Analysis of Pre-Study Survey**

*Participants' demographic information.* Five English as a second language learners participated in this study. All participants were adults, and all were doctoral level students. Four female participants and one male participant volunteered to be in this study. Three participants indicated that their first language was Arabic, while one student spoke Chinese, and one student spoke Portuguese as their first languages. All five have lived in the United States for more than two years, and all are currently pursuing a doctoral degree in the same southern university in the United States.

*Participants' English language experience and level.* Four participants have stated that they have been in an English language classroom for 4 semesters or more, while one student stated that he/she has been in an English language classroom for 1-4 semesters. All participants scored at least 5.0/9.0 in IELTS, or 61/120 in TOEFL language tests. When asked about how many times they watched American movies per week, two participants reported that they watched a movie "once a week," one participant reported "around 2-4 times a week," and two participants reported "more than 4 times a week."

*Participants' knowledge of and exposure to idiomatic expressions and Vivid Phrasal*

*Idioms.* When asked “In your own words, define an idiomatic expression?”, all participants were able to give a definition. Consider here their answers:

“To use words to provide a meaning that is deducible and which differs from the original words”

“Phrases that have unrelated meaning to individual words”

“To use traditional English language to describe one thing”

“Specific expressions from a particular idiom - connected to culture (pop culture), history, communities”

“Using phrases or a group of words to give a different meaning”

These definitions indicate that the participants were aware of English idiomatic expressions, and they understood how idioms are formed vs. what they actually mean. After being asked to provide their definition of *idiomatic expressions*, the participants were asked “have you ever been exposed to idiomatic expressions before?”, all the participants answered with “Yes.” Following that, the participants were asked to define VP idioms in their own words. Their answers were as follows:

“ It is a phrase that is figurative, rather than having a literal meaning that matches the words”

“Non-compositional and figurative phrases”

“Using live picture or live movie or video to learn idioms”

“Specific phrases of an idiom? Sometimes if I translate to my specific language, it may not make sense. In reality, I don't know what the term vivid phrasal idioms means”

“Figurative phrases”

Their responses indicate that there is variation in their understanding of VP idioms. Hence, the correct definition of vivid phrasal idioms, first coined by Liontas (2002; 2003), was provided to all participants during the introduction of the IDT. The next question pertained to if they have been exposed to VP idioms before, and the participants' responses varied. Two participants reposted "Yes," two reported "Maybe," and one reported "No."

When asked about their interest in learning about idiomatic expressions or VP idioms as part of their English language study, the participants' responses varied with 3 participants showing interest, while two participants disclosed no interest. Due to the variations in the participants' understanding of VP idioms, the participants' answers to the question "In your opinion, are idiomatic expressions different from vivid phrasal idioms?" also varied. Two participants reported "Yes," two participants reported "No," and one participant reported "Maybe." As a follow up question, the participants were asked to provide an explanation to their answer. Only three participants commented as follows:

"The vivid phrasal idioms are phrases with a verb and preposition, and indicate actions, whereas expressive idioms are expressions that have a meaning that is different from exact of the words in the idiom."

"Vivid phrasal idioms is to adopt live video or pictures to describe a behavior or scenario, whereas idiomatic expression is to use words to prescript a behavior, scenario or emotion."

"I am not sure if they are different. For a language learner, those terms are complicated."

These comments reveal that some of the participants, although having responded that there was a difference between idiomatic expressions and VP idioms, could not accurately

describe the difference. Their comments are partially true as they do not encompass the entirety of the differences between the two.

As for question 15 regarding the participants' confidence in their ability to interpret and understand an idiom in isolation of context (i.e., an idiom that is standing alone with no image or text around it), one participant shared that he/she is confident about "half of the time," two shared "sometimes," and one shared "never." The participants' confidence in their language ability varied as well when asked "How confident are you in your ability to detect, interpret, and understand the meaning of an idiomatic expression and/or Vivid Phrasal idioms shown in movies?". One participant stated that he/she is "very confident," one participant shared "confident," and another participant shared "not confident," while two participants shared that they are "somewhat" confident. This provides insights into the participants' perceived performance compared to the participants' actual performance as revealed on the IDT. I will not elaborate on the participants' performance in this section, but I will discuss it further in the analysis section of IDT.

In question 18, the participants were asked about their satisfaction with their present knowledge of idioms in the English language, only one participant reported that he/she is "very satisfied," while one participant reported "extremely dissatisfied." Another participant reported "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied," while the last two participants reported "somewhat dissatisfied." Following this question, the participants were asked whether they thought it is important to learn about idiomatic and/or vivid phrasal idioms, two participants thought it was important, while three participants answered with "Maybe." Lastly, the participants' answers to question 19 regarding their interest in learning about idiomatic and/or vivid phrasal idioms through the use of short movie clips indicate a strong desire as all participants answered "Yes."

In summary, the analysis of the Pre-Study survey revealed some insights into the participants' demographic information, English language experience and level, and knowledge of and exposure to idiomatic expressions and VP idioms. These insights emerged from the participant responses to questions 6-19. These questions pertained to the participants' English language experiences and levels, as well as their knowledge of and exposure to idiomatic expressions and vivid phrasal idioms. All of their responses to the pre-study survey 19 questions provided useful information on the teaching and learning of English as a second language idiomatics expressions generally, and vivid phrasal idioms learning specifically.

### **Analysis of Idiom Detection Task (IDT)**

Five doctoral-level non-native English-speaking students completed the Idiom Detection Task (IDT). This task presented the participants with 10 short movie clips. Each movie contained one vivid phrasal idiom only, totaling in 10 vivid phrasal idioms. I list the vivid phrasal idioms in the same order they were presented to the participants in the Idiom Detection Task. These 10 idioms are: *His bark is worse than his bite*, *shake a leg*, *let the cat out of the bag*, *money talks*, *cat got your tongue?*, *pay through the nose*, *drive one up the wall*, *hit the nail on the head*, *open a can of worms*, *packed like sardines*. These idioms were depicted and used in the movies based on the movie scenario and script. For instance, the idiom, *open a can of worms*, was embedded in the scene as “Now, I am not about to open a new can of worms”.

### ***IDT Thematic Analysis Process***

I conducted thematic analysis on the participants' think-aloud descriptions which were provided during the IDT. I used the themes to answer questions one, two, and three:



1. In what ways are ESL students able to locate Vivid Phrasal idioms when watching movie clips containing them?
2. How do ESL students decode VP idioms once located in context?
3. What are the meaning-making constraints ESL students experience during VP idioms comprehension and interpretation?

According to Braun and Clarke (2012), “TA is a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set” (p. 57). To identify, organize, and offer data-driven insights, I followed Clarke and Braun (2006; 2012) six phases of Thematic Analysis:

- Phase 1: Familiarizing Yourself with the Data
- Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes
- Phase 3: Searching for Themes
- Phase 4: Reviewing Potential Themes
- Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes
- Phase 6: Producing the Report

**Phase 1: Familiarizing Yourself with the Data.** To familiarize myself with the data, I began with transcribing the Thinking Aloud data gathered during the IDT. I had conducted and recorded all the IDT sessions via the Teams’ video recording feature. Following that, I converted these videos to audio and then uploaded the IDT session audio to Otter, a phone/web application that transcribes real-time meetings. Otter transcripts are “shareable, searchable, accessible, and secure” (Otter, 2022, n.p.). After the five transcriptions were complete, I read all the transcripts and made corrections where necessary as Otter transcriptions were 95% accurate, with a few discrepancies in matching the audio (speech) to the correct speaker. This process of reading the

transcripts for the first time allowed me to become familiar with the data and witness the patterns as they formed over the 5 IDT sessions. Next, I uploaded all of the transcripts to NVivo, a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) program. NVivo helped in facilitating and organizing the coding process. I chose NVivo after having familiarized myself with its features and capabilities such as its ability to import different types of file formats (e.g., text, audio, or video), create folders and subfolders to organize different data sources (e.g., IDT think-aloud, semi-structured interviews), and color coding each code. Its biggest feature is the ease in accessing all data files and opening multiple screens of data at once within the application itself which allowed for maximization of coding. As I identified themes, I named them and chose a coding color as well.

**Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes.** To generate initial codes in NVivo, I have employed an approach combining a deductive and an inductive approach. The deductive approach allowed me to identify the emergence of themes and patterns in the data set. But I also allowed myself to recognize unexpected patterns and employed an inductive approach to analyze and organize these patterns. According to Braun and Clarke (2012), an inductive approach to data coding and analysis is “a bottom-up approach and is driven by what is in the data,” while a deductive approach to data coding and analysis is “a top-down approach, where the researcher brings to the data a series of concepts, ideas, or topics that they use to code and interpret the data” (p. 58).

I started the coding process with these possible themes in mind: Context Clues, Recollection, Referring to L1, and Guessing. To develop codes, I thoroughly re-read every data set, and I coded each data set in its entirety before I proceeded to coding another set. In other words, whenever I identified a phrase/a sentence/or group of sentences that are potentially relevant to the research questions, I coded it. I highlighted the text and associated a code to it. As

I continued reading, I continued linking patterns to the codes I have, or I started a new code for the new pattern at hand. At this stage, I created 9 initial codes, and 4 sub-codes (see Table 2 below).

**Table 2** *Initial 14 Codes and their Descriptions*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Files</b>	<b>References</b>
Two or more idioms or unsure	This code includes phrases/sentences/blurbs of data pertaining to the participants finding two idioms or being unsure of the idiom they located.	5	15
Body Language	This code includes phrases/sentences/blurbs of data pertaining to the participants body language.	2	2
Captions	This code includes phrases/sentences/blurbs of data pertaining to the participants use of the movie clips captions.	1	3
Context Clue Codes	This code includes phrases/sentences/blurbs of data pertaining to the participants use of context clues.	4	32
● Emotion Clues	This code includes phrases/sentences/blurbs of data pertaining to the participants use of emotion context clues.	2	2
● Text Clues	This code includes phrases/sentences/blurbs of data pertaining to the participants use of textual context clues.	3	10
● Visual Audio Clues	This code includes phrases/sentences/blurbs of data pertaining to the participants use of visual or audio context clues.	4	16
Guessing	This code includes phrases/sentences/blurbs of data pertaining to the participants use of guessing to located or find the meaning of the idiom at hand.	4	9
IDT Enjoyment Statements	This code includes phrases/sentences/blurbs of data pertaining to the participants enjoyment during IDT.	1	2
IDT Insights	This code includes phrases/sentences/blurbs of data pertaining to the participants shared insights throughout the IDT session.	4	7
No Idiom Detection (location or meaning)	This code includes phrases/sentences/blurbs of data pertaining to the participants inability to locate the idiom or its meaning.	5	11
Recollection	This code includes phrases/sentences/blurbs of data pertaining to the participants ability to recall the idiom.	3	5
● No recollection	This code includes phrases/sentences/blurbs of data pertaining to the participants inability to recall the idiom.	1	1

**Phase 3: Searching for Themes.** Following that step, I began the search for emerging themes. I started this process with the same themes (i.e., Context Clues, Recollection, Referring to L1, and Guessing) I deduced from my initial familiarity with the IDT transcripts and data sets. To locate more themes, I re-read my codes and worked on organizing them either under the current 4 themes or worked on generating a new theme. The process of developing these themes was conducted by combining an inductive and deductive Thematic Analysis approach; the inductive approach was that I mainly coded from the data by analyzing the themes emerging from the participants' experiences (meaning our analytic lens does not completely override their stories). As for the deductive approach, I drew on theoretical constructs from second language learning and acquisition theories, specifically TIA and IDM (Liontas, 1999; Liontas, 2002a; 2002b). I used the TIA and the IDM theories to render the idiom detection and meaning-making strategies that participants did not explicitly articulate. This means that the data analysis and the identified themes are broadly interpreted within the TIA and IDM theoretical frameworks.

**Phase 4: Reviewing Potential Themes.** By the end of Phase 3, I was able to deduce more themes in addition to the original four: Context Clues, Recollection, Referring to L1, and Guessing. The total number of codes was 14, which I consolidated into categories (themes), thereby allowing me to further arrange them into a smaller number of central concepts or themes. Some examples of codes include the following: Two or More Idioms or Unsure, Using Captions as Clues, Context Clue Codes, Guessing, No Idiom Detection (Location or Meaning), and Recollection (Or No Recollection). I then created and organized these codes into broad categories such as Context Clues (emotion clues, visual clues, and text clues), Recollection, Guessing, Uncertainty of Idiom Location or Meaning, No Detection of Idiom Location or Meaning, and Collection of Random Insights.

**Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes.** In Phase 4, I was able to generate six broad categories that I was able to use to organize all the codes and patterns found in the Idiom Detection Tasks transcripts. These six categories then became the main themes in this study, as they were comprehensive and inclusive of all the discoveries and patterns in the data sets.

**Phase 6: Producing the Report.** From these themes, I thought of the concepts they represented and how those concepts related to my research questions on the strategies employed by the participants to detect and define VP idioms depicted in movie clips.

### ***Thematic Analysis Report***

I now present the data according to the six themes in this study: Context Clues (emotion clues, visual/audio clues, and text/speech/captions clues), Recollection (no recollection), Guessing, Uncertainty of Idiom Location or Meaning, No Detection of Idiom Location or Meaning, and Collection of Random Insights.

**Theme1: Context Clues.** This theme includes three sub-themes: emotion clues, visual clues, and text/caption/speech clues. All five participants utilized context clues within the IDT as a strategy to identify and attempt to decipher the meaning of the VP idioms. For the most part, this strategy helped participants either locate the idiom and its meaning or just locate the idiom without deducing the meaning.

***Emotion Clues.*** Consider the following from many of the participants who were presented with the idiom “ Shake a leg” and asked about what it means:

“I think he means give it too quickly or make it too quickly.”

“The shake leg like get up rush to go to do the coffee.”

“Probably something means wake up or good luck, something like that.”

“They are wanting everything gets done quick.”

This idiom in particular was depicted in a movie where the man shouted “Dina, shake a leg woman! Make Greg a cappuccino!”. This movie clip contained many context clues, especially emotion and audio clues. For instance, the man’s shouting and the sense of urgency in his voice is what aided the participants to deduce the meaning of the idiom even though many of them never heard the idiom before. When I asked one of the participants about what helped her find the meaning of this idiom, she responded with “That’s the feeling she was trying to deliver.” Another participant stated that his voice tone helped her find the meaning when she shared the following statement: “Yes. Yes, the tone helped. You know. When he was talking to her to make the cappuccino, when he was like hurry up.”

**Visual/Audio Clues.** Visual clues include all the visual clues the participants are able to view in the movies. For example, when the participants viewed idiom 1, “His bark worse than his bite”, participant 2 relied on the visual clues and the woman’s facial expressions as she used the idiom in context. Specifically, participant 2 shared the following: “Okay, when I saw the video. I will be honest. the women’s actions with the children. with how she looks. I mean, and how she talks. I understand there is something is bad there.” Once again, participants readily identified the idiom based on the context visual clues. It is clear that the visual clues (facial expression, body movements/gestures, etc.) in the movie clips assisted in evoking or triggering a guess of the meaning of the VP idiom at hand.

**Text/Speech/Caption Clues.** Similarly, for the idiom “Cat got your tongue?”, the context clues were helpful and the participant responses included:

“That’s mean. You didn’t or you can not tell.”

“Yeah, this is one I heard before. Like I.. are you mute --Why are not you speaking?”

Speak up or speak. if why you were taking too long too long to speak.”

“Cat got your tongue. Anything that you want to say? I am not sure if correct or no, but I think that it is... Or do you want to say something. like that?”

When I asked them about what helped them deduce the meaning of the idiom “cat got your tongue?”, participant 4 shared she relied on text and speech clues by stating the following: “I think so the sentence itself. like tongue. and also, and also, the scenario.”

Using textual and speech clues was also a helpful strategy for participant 3 when he attempted to deduce the meaning of the idiom “open a can of worms.” He shared the following statement as an answer to what has helped him find the meaning of the idiom: “all the conversation. She tried to tell her kids like she’s wealthy. She mentioned money like more than, like two times, I think.”

As stated earlier, the strategy of using context clues was not always helpful in identifying or deducing the meaning of all of the VP idioms. For several participants, looking at the movie clips context clues created confusion and uncertainty on either the identified idiom or its meaning. Consider the following from one of the participants who was presented with the idiom “pay through the nose for it”:

Participant 5: “ahh. Rasha. It’s really difficult to find the idiom here. I didn’t know but maybe because I... I don’t know what they express. I know they talking about the world and but their action it’s not... and his tone. It’s... it’s a little bit unclear for me this video.”

This indicates that even though the participant understood that the main idea of the conversation revolves around the topic of “the world,” the minimal textual/speech context clues combined with the lack of visual clues hindered the participant from discerning the meaning of

the presented VP idiom.

Another participant experienced the same feelings of confusion and uncertainty when presented with the idiom “Packed like Sardines.” This participant located the idiom but could not deduce the meaning. Consider the following statements:

Participant 3: I didn’t get it. I don’t get the meaning...

Researcher: Okay, and that is why?

Participant 3: Because they speak like fast. Yeah. Also, that is like there is no enough explanation during the conversation and they weren’t stopping. Yeah, they didn’t like get... like give more details so I cannot understand the meaning.

Researcher: Okay.

Participant 3: Yeah, I don’t... I don’t... I didn’t understand what they’re talking about, like the whole idea. The context was not enough.

This shows that even though the participant was able to identify the idiom using the vague textual/speech context clues, these context clues alone were not helpful in discerning the meaning of the VP idiom depicted in the movie clip. In a nutshell, the inadequate presence of context clues (emotion, text/speech, or visual/audio clues) served as an obstacle and a source of confusion or uncertainty. This suggests that if an entry of that VP idiom did not already exist in the participants’ mind, or if the context clues were minimal or vague, the movie clips context clues were not beneficial (Liontas, 1999).

**Theme 2: Recollection.** This theme includes one sub-theme: no recollection. All five participants utilized recall strategies within the IDT as a strategy to locate and discern the meaning of the vivid phrasal idioms. Several participants stated “I think I know it from before,” “Yeah, this is one I heard before,” or “well I know this idiom from before.” One participant was



able to combine two strategies (recollection and context clues) to elaborate on his understanding of the idiom “Money Talks.” Consider here his response: “In the clip, well I know this idiom from before, but in the clip, in this context, I think the tune and the way they are talking helped me too.” This suggests that recall strategies were effective if an entry of that idiom already existed in the participant’s mind. This further supports Liontas’s (1999) notion that prior familiarity with the idiomatic expression, combined with a sufficient amount of context clues, influenced this participants’ ability to recall the idiom and its meaning.

**No recollection.** Even though using the “recollection” strategy allowed the participants to recall idioms they have heard before, one participant shared that she could not decipher the meaning of the idiom “shake a leg” as she never heard the idiom before. Consider the following response from participant 2: “Yeah. Even though I never heard it before. I never heard this ‘shake a leg’ like when talking to friends and everything but watch the movie. That’s how I felt like that’s the meaning, but I never heard it or people saying that to me or close to me.” This indicates that she does not recall hearing this idiom or anything similar to it before. This also confirms Liontas (1999) claim that if an entry of an idiomatic expression does not already exist in the participants’ mind, the context clues alone may not be beneficial in locating and/or understanding an idiom.

**Theme 3: Guessing.** Four out of the five participants used guessing strategies as a last resort when all the other meaning-making strategies did not work. In some cases, guessing was fruitful in identifying and/or deducing the meaning of the VP idiom depicted in the movie clips. For instance, when asked about what she thinks the idiom “Money Talks” mean, one participant stated, “Maybe... Maybe. We can talk. If you pay.” In this scenario, the presence of visual clues, that is, the actor’s hand gesture of asking for payment in return for information, combined with

the participant's ability to combine all clues thus far to reach an educated guess allowed her to guess the idiom meaning correctly.

When presented with the idiom "let the cat out of the bag," one participant stated, "Oh, yeah, let the cat out of the bag. Probably. I just guess because.. because they're fast. I guess let the cat out of the bag. Probably, to encourage someone to jump out. Like to give up their stereotypes. To jump out the certain circle and to find something new. I just a guess from the sentence." This suggests that guessing was not a fruitful strategy when utilized alone. If the participant was unable to utilize other meaning-making strategies such as recalling on the idiom or similar idioms, or understanding the context clues, guessing was not beneficial at all.

This led one participant to feel uncertain as she stated: "Yeah, I will guess... we will be in the clear forever. That mean... um, maybe that will be clear for them. Not sure. not sure." Not previously knowing or understanding the idiom being used in speech (real life or movie conversations) may lead to feelings of uncertainty or even embarrassment. This could have lasting effects on a person's self-esteem and confidence in his/her language ability, which could result in negative impact on his/her second language learning and acquisition. Notably, guessing as a strategy was determined through participants' actual use of the word "I guess" or "maybe it means." during their IDT think-aloud session. Hence, it was difficult to identify all instances of guessing in the five IDT transcripts as not all participants outwardly shared that they were indeed guessing the meaning or the idiom.

**Theme 4: Uncertainty of Idiom Location or Meaning.** Three out of the five participants were not able to locate or decipher the idiom "his bark is worse than his bite." There seems to be some uncertainty and confusion when it comes to this idiom and its movie clip. For instance, one participant was unsure of which phrase is the idiom and shared the following

statement: “Is it... is it *his bark is worse than his bite* or *the 3000 bucks*.” Another participant shared a similar comment to the same idiom: “I think about two things. I think that the 3rd sentence about *his bark is worse than his bite* or the last sentence which is *300 bucks*.” Both participants were not able to locate the correct idiom and its meaning.

The same level of uncertainty was also evident in another participant’s attempt to locate the idiom “not to open a can of worms,” and instead, the participant stated the following: “I think. I think I’m not sure *I have more money than God?*” One other participant was also unsure about which idiom is the correct one to locate. She expressed the following: “I would like to say it is the *let the cat out of the bag* one. This one or the second part I can not remember though. This was where he said *we’ll be in the clear forever* -- yes... the last part when he said we are in the clear.” When asked about why she was uncertain/unsure of her choice, she shared: “This one I would have to watch one more time because I was paying attention to the captions instead of just trying to make sense. So, I think at least for me, one time, only two times will be not enough. I’ll have to watch it one more time.”

Taken together, these data quotes suggest that uncertainty results for various reasons. Based on data observations, the presence of other idiomatic expressions, such as *we’ll be in the clear forever*, in the same movie clip is one reason behind some of the uncertainty witnessed in some participants’ comments. Another reason is that a few participants needed to watch the movie clips more than two times to be able to make a final idiom choice.

**Theme 5: No Detection of Idiom Location or Meaning.** Some participants were not able to locate the idiom and shared comments such as “Alright, I can not find it” or “ahh. Rasha. It’s really difficult to find the idiom here.” Other participants were unsure if they located the correct idiom and outwardly shared that they do not know what the idiom means. Many of these

participants commented, “Well, I don’t know the meaning” or “I didn’t get it... I don’t get the meaning.” One of the participants tried to guess but her attempt was not successful. Consider the following snippet from her IDT transcript:

Participant 1: I think it is the last sentence. I’m not... I’m not about to open... not sure but maybe open a new can of worms.

Researcher: Okay. And what do you think the meaning is?

Participant 1: \*whispering the idiom to herself\* I do not know... I’m not sure about this.

Some participants were able to find the correct idiom but were not able to offer a meaning or a guess. These participants stated, “Oh, packed like sardine. And, I have no idea what it is. What does this mean?”, or “Well, I do not know the meaning.” When asked about why they were unable to locate the idioms, the participants shared: “It was fast. I cannot get the video. It was super fast,” “I do not I do not, I didn't understand what they're talking about, like the whole idea,” “because they speak like fast. Yeah... Also, that is like there is no enough explanation during the conversation and they were not stopping. Yeah, they did not like get... like give more details so I cannot understand the meaning,” or by simply saying “I just don't get it.”

**Theme 6: Collection of Random Insights.** Throughout the IDT, participants voluntarily shared insights or comments on either pertaining to their enjoyment of the task or experienced hardships during the task. A couple of the participants shared that they were enjoyed the task by stating “I am enjoying that. That is cool” and “That is fun to watch.” A few of the other participants expressed that they are experiencing some challenges or confusions during the IDT session. One participant shared “It’s hard for me” while another participant expressed feeling confused by saying “Yeah, this one was more confusing.”

Interestingly, two participants correlated the fact that they are international students with their ability to understand the movie clip context and speech as well as their ability to locate/decipher the idiom. Consider the following two participants' comments:

“I think when we see the idiom... like I will... as an English language learner... first I will have to see the word and see the thing, the idiom... and if I can not look at the captions, but if it is just a movie, without the captions, I will have a hard time... maybe just listening is not enough to see sometimes. So that is how kind of I feel right now—I feel like I did not get the meaning because I would have to see it one more time.”

“Um, I think it is the last sentence. But I told you what I think... not know... I might answer because all the words it is. I understand it with their action. I mean, for example, when he say *get your feet from the table*... it is... it is in his eye. It is something direct people understand it what see mean, and but I think the last sentence because he is say something... he makes some words together. It is, for example, me as an international... maybe it is difficult to put these words together.”

### ***Participants Perceived Vs. Actual Performance***

When asked “how confident are you in your ability to detect, interpret, and understand the meaning of an idiomatic expression and/or VP idioms shown in movies?”, four out of the five participants reported that they are confident in their ability to find and comprehend the 10 VP idioms, while only one participant reported “not confident.” One participant reported “very confident,” one participant reported “confident,” and two participants reported “somewhat confident.” I then compared their reported confidence as answer to question 16 in the pre-study

survey with their actual ability to locate and decipher all 10 VP idioms in the IDT. Table 3 below reveals the participants reported confidence and their actual performance.

**Table 3** *Participants Perceived Vs. Actual Performance in IDT*

Participant	Reported Confidence	Idiom Detection Task Results
Participant 1	Somewhat confident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- P1 was able to locate and comprehend 4/10 VP idioms.</li> <li>- P1 was able to locate 3 idioms but was not able to decipher them.</li> <li>- P1 was not able to locate or comprehend 3 idioms.</li> </ul>
Participant 2	Very confident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- P2 was able to locate and comprehend 8/10 VP idioms.</li> <li>- P2 was able to locate 1 idiom but was not able to provide a meaning.</li> <li>- P2 was not able to locate or decipher 1 idiom.</li> </ul>
Participant 3	Confident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- P3 was able to locate and comprehend 5/10 VP idioms.</li> <li>- P3 was able to find 2 idioms without being able to offer a meaning/guess.</li> <li>- P3 was not able to locate or decipher 3 idioms.</li> </ul>
Participant 4	Not confident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- P4 was able to locate and decipher 6/10 VP idioms.</li> <li>- P4 was able to locate 3 idioms without being able to offer a meaning.</li> <li>- P4 was not able to locate only 1 idiom.</li> </ul>
Participant 5	Somewhat confident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- P4 was able to locate and decipher 6/10 VP idioms</li> <li>- P4 was able to locate 2 idioms without being able to offer a meaning.</li> <li>- P4 was not able to locate 2 idioms.</li> </ul>

The results of the IDT revealed that there are some discrepancies in three of the five participants' perceived ability and confidence versus their actual performance. In other words, participant 1 reported that she was "somewhat confident" in her ability to detect, interpret, and understand the meaning of VP idioms shown in movies clips, while she was only able to locate and decipher 4/10 idioms correctly, and was only able to locate another 3 idioms without being able to guess or provide a meaning. In the same manner, participant 3 reported that he was

“confident” in his ability while he was only able to locate and decipher 5/10 idioms correctly and was only able to locate another 2 idioms without being able to guess or provide a meaning.

Interestingly, participant 4 expressed that she had no confidence in her ability to find or decipher the idioms in this study. Based on her IDT results, she was able to identify and decipher 6/10 idioms correctly; she was also able to locate 3 more idioms without being able to provide a meaning and she was not able to locate or understand only 1 idiom. This provides important information on the teaching of idiomatics generally, and VP idioms specifically. The IDT results shed further insights into how participants’ perceptions do not always align with their actual performance.

### ***Participants’ Body Language***

Three out of the five participants agreed to keep their video cameras on during the IDT. The two participants who opted out of keeping their cameras on were both females from a Middle Eastern background. Noteworthy, video recordings were not a requirement in this study. All participants were informed of that fact and that I merely need to record the IDT session’s audio to be able to listen to their answers again on a later time/date. Hence, two participants opted out of keeping their cameras on during the video recording.

Based on the observations conducted on the three video recordings, only two participants used their body language to help deliver their understanding of the idiom meaning. For instance, participant 2 snapped her fingers indicating that someone is rushing someone else when they say “shake a leg.” As for participant 4, she imitated the hand gesture for requesting payment in return to sharing news/sharing valuable and inaccessible information.

In summary, the analysis of the IDT revealed insights into the participants' abilities to use meaning-making strategies to locate and comprehend the 10 VP idioms depicted in the short movie clips. Six themes emerged from this study's IDT results: *Context Clues (emotion clues, visual clues, and text clues)*, *Recollection (no recollection)*, *Guessing*, *Uncertainty of Idiom Location or Meaning*, *No Detection of Idiom Location or Meaning*, and *Collection of Random Insights*. In a nutshell, the participants relied heavily on the movies' context clues (emotion clues, visual/audio clues, and text/speech/captions clues), followed by relying on recollection strategies, and then resorting to using guessing strategies if all else failed. All five participants were uncertain about locating at least one idiom and all of them were also unable to provide or guess a meaning for one or more idioms. Interestingly, only 2/10 idioms were accurately located and interpreted by the five participants, while only one idiom was neither located nor understood by every participant. These two idioms are "shake a leg" and "money talks," and the most misunderstood idiom of them all is "Drive one up the wall."

### **Analysis of Post-Study Survey**

The purpose of the Post-Study Survey was to (1) obtain further information on the strategies/techniques used by the participants to detect, interpret, and understand the meaning of the VP idioms depicted in the movie clips, (2) inquire about the challenges encountered, and (3) gauge their overall feelings and perception about the study. Specifically, in the survey, I inquired about the participants' Idiomatic Detection Strategies and Challenges, Feelings and Thoughts About the Study, and then asked them to rate 18 statements using a 5-Likert Scale ranging from "strongly agree to strongly disagree."



In this section, I present the findings of the Post-Study Survey to answer the four research questions this study posed. Concerning the organization of my findings, I organize them based on participants' responses to the survey's three sections: Idiom Detection Strategies, Feelings and Thoughts About the Study, and the 18 opinion statements pertaining to participants' opinions on idiom teaching and learning. The Post-Study Survey is found in Appendix C.

### ***Idiom Detection Strategies and Challenges***

This section of the post-study survey included two parts. Part 1 pertains to the participants' ability to detect VP idioms depicted in movie clips, while Part 2 pertains to the strategies used by the participants to detect VP idioms in the movie clips.

Part 1 contained 4 questions. The first question asked if participants faced any challenges during their detection of VP idioms depicted in the movies. While one participant answered "No," the other four participants answered with "Yes," and shared the following challenges:

"Yes, and I asked to play most videos more than once. The reasons are the accents are different and they speak fast in some clips."

"Even though I can interpret those idioms through their conversation or emotions, the interpretation is sometimes inaccurate."

"It was not challenging, but because I watched with the captions. Maybe if it was only the audio, maybe it was going to be harder."

"Some VP were hard to find or to understand."

As for the second question, it asked if the conversation in the movie clip helped participants *detect* the idiom. Similar to the previous question, one participant stated "No," while the other four answered with "Yes," and shared the following:

“The conversation in the movie clip helped me to understand, and I was better able to understand the idiom by looking to visual and audio cues, such as the tone of the people’s voices, their gestures, and their other actions.”

“Yes, it did. The conversation helped me to detect the idiom AND the tune and the body language helped me, too.”

“Yes, because the idiom used to adopt simple words to express their feeling.”

“Yes. It helped a lot, but I really understood the meaning watching in the second time.”

The third question asked if the conversation in the movie clip helped participants *figure out* the idiom meaning, and all answers were affirmative. Four of the participants shared the following comments:

“The conversation helped me to understand, as I figured out the idiom meaning by looking at people's eyes and facial expressions, feeling the emotion in the sound of their voices, and watching their body language. Also, through the words that were spoken, I could see a picture in my mind that helped me to interpret the meaning of the idiom.”

“Yes, it did. It helped me to figure out the idiom meaning: the sentences before and after the idiom were the key to figure out the idiom meaning.”

“Even the interpretation is inaccurate, it do help to estimate or guess a general meaning of the sentence, which will not bother me to capture the main information of the conversation.”

“Yes. I was able to understand the meaning watching for the second time.”

“I understood some of them from the context.”

The fourth and last question asked, “Do you feel that learning these idioms in context and in the movie-clip has helped you understand and interpret the idiom meaning?” All participants answered affirmatively and four of them shared these comments:

“The context was especially helpful to my understanding of the idiom because it provided a framework and background to make the meaning clear.”

“I believe learning these idioms in context i.e., the movie-clip or written stories are the effective ways to understand idioms meaning. I found the movie-clips approach is very interesting approach to understand idioms.”

“the conversation content and the movie scenario helped a lot.”

“Yes. I loved this pedagogical style. Very effective to learn and fun. Through moves you can reach students who has different ways of learning. I wonder if I was going to be able to understand the idiom watching it without the captions.”

Part 2 contained two questions. Both questions pertained to the strategies used by the participants to detect and interpret VP idioms in the movie clips. The first question asked if the participants used a specific strategy to *detect* the idioms. All of them responded having used a specific strategy. Here are some representative comments:

“My strategy was write note and focused in unusual content that was difficult to understand in the video.”

“The tune is different when people use idioms. When the speaker start change his/her tune I expect an idiom.”

“Honestly, it based on my feeling, initially. I allowed identified VP idiom based on the content they said. For the phrase that I know the words in that phrase, but not make sense for the full phrase that phrase might be the VP phrase.”

“Yes. Reading the captions, or at least try to read. Sometimes it was fast. Sometimes I wanted to find without reading, but it was hard since I was able to watch only 2 times.”

“Try to find compound words that give a different meaning.”

The second question asked if the participants used a specific strategy to *figure out* the idiom meaning. All of them responded having used a specific meaning-making strategy:

“My strategy was listen to the video, but when I noticed anything unusual that I did not understand, I made a note of it. Then, when I watched the video a second time, I focused on the context, the tone of voice, the actions, the emotions and the gestures, and I was able to understand the meaning.”

“Yes, the body language and the sentences before the idiom usually helped me to get the meaning, I was focusing on the body language.”

“ Depends on the conversation or scenario.”

“Watching the second time. Not paying attention to the words, but to the entire context.

The first time I was focused more on the captions trying to find it.”

“I try to connect it with the conversation.”

### ***Feelings and Thoughts About the Study***

This section of the post-study survey included four questions that focused on participants’ feelings and thoughts of this study and the idiom instruction method (learning idioms via movie clips). The first question inquired about whether or not they enjoyed participating in the study.

All participants reported enjoyment along with sharing why. Consider here these comments:

“I learn some new idioms that I did not know before, and I discovered a great strategy for discovering the meaning of the idioms.”

“I love movies, they are part of my day and of course I consider my time watching movies as a fun and learning time.”

“Very useful in English learning and adapting American culture.”

“I loved it. It was fun and I didn’t feel I was being part of a research. As someone that learns much more watching videos, TED talks, and podcasts. This was my way of leaning language and new meanings.”

“Next time I watch any movie, I will be curious to know each idiom via movie clips.”

Interestingly, when asked about if they experienced any feelings of frustration during any part of the study, only one participant said “Yes,” and shared the following: “I felt frustrated with myself on the video that I was not able to watch again and try to find the meaning. As a perfectionist, I wished to watch again and try to find the meaning.”

When asked “Did you learn anything new from this study? If yes, please tell us about the new thing you learned,” all five participants agreed and were able to share some insights on what they learned. Consider here the following statements:

“I learned to detect idioms and to focus on the entire context in order to interpret them.”

“I learned new idioms, but I am not sure if my interpretation is correct or not.”

“I learned 8 new idioms; however, participating in this study made me thinking learn more about some strategies (i.e., the tune the face expressions) I might need in the future to figure out meaning of idioms or even new vocabulary.”

“Pay more attention on the idiom phrasing. Not be so dependent on the captions. Try to think faster while watching a movie or during a test.”

“I have learned how to extract the idioms from the context.”

The last question in this section asked the participants if they think it is important to teach and learn English idioms, along with asking them to share their answers' rationale. All participants were in agreement with the importance of teaching and learning English idioms.

Here are the explanations they shared :

“I think it is important to understand everyday language and help me to connect with other people, understand everything that is being said, and to avoid misunderstandings.”

“Most of friends and my siblings love movies, they watch a lot of movies. I believe they will love to learn by watching clips from movies. It makes learning more fun.”

“Learning idioms is a good way to comprehend American culture. It is important for international students to learn idioms. In some way, they can better gain insights of American culture.”

“Yes definitely. I think through English idioms you can also understand the culture of the country and the community. I think after showing the video, maybe ask the students to research the cultural background of this idiom. Or maybe the teacher can share it with the students after the activity. We need to learn it because it is part of the culture, and in some environments, natives only speak this way. So we should learn at school, especially as a beginner. After being fluent, it is easier to get the meaning even if we never heard it before.”

“Yes, because they use idioms a lot, and it is hard to understand them if English is not your first language or your major.”

### ***Opinions on Idiom Teaching and Learning***

This section contained 18 opinion statements (numbered 12-30) pertaining to participants' opinions on idiom teaching and learning. These opinion statements asked participants to rate the 18 statements using a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Specifically, these statements asked participants to state their opinion on idiom teaching and learning, idiom learning relevancy, utilizing illustrations and graphics in idiom curricula, authentic idiom learning, organization of idiom learning content, and L2 learning strategies. The discussion of these 18 statements were divided into 3 parts, each part having 6 opinion statements. To ease the presentation of results, these statements will be discussed in the same order they were presented in the Post-Study Survey.

**Part 1: Statements 12-17.** Statement 12 required participants to share their opinion on if “Idioms should be included in the foreign language curriculum.” All five agreed that idioms should be included, with three participants “strongly agree.” As for statement 13, *idioms should be current, interesting, and useful in real-life situations*, all five indicated “strongly agreed.” Regarding statement 14, three of the five participants agreed that idioms should be used for classroom practice and testing, one participant reported “neither agree nor disagree,” and one participant chose “somewhat disagree.”

Statement 15 asked if they would like to study idioms on a regular basis, with the majority of them reporting various levels of agreement and only one participant reporting “somewhat disagree.” When asked about if they would like to learn idioms along with the texts and contexts that support their use, all participants were in agreement. Similarly, all the participants agreed that verbal (textual or audio) and visual (graphic, photographic, or video-graphic) information would help activate their knowledge of idioms.

**Part 2: Statements 18-23.** Concerning statements 18, 19, and 20, all participants were in agreement with the notion that “illustrations and graphics support the study of idioms,” “incorporation of idiom graphics and illustrations should be a main part of instructional activities,” and “idioms should be presented in a way that supports my learning styles.” As for statement 21, four participants agreed that “idioms should be presented in a manner that mirrors real-life language use,” while one participant neither agreed nor disagreed. Next, all participants strongly agreed that “idioms should be taught via movie clips that show the idiom in context and in use.” When asked if “authentic audio/video recordings and real texts should accompany the study of idioms,” four expressed strong agreement and one neither agreed nor disagreed.

**Part 3: Statements 24-30.** The majority of participants agreed with statements 24, 25, 27, and 29, with only one or two participants reporting “neither agree or disagree.” These four statements are as follows: “When I am learning idioms, my main goal is to make sense of what I read or hear in context,” “When learning idioms, one should start with the most useful ones,” “I think idioms are useful in everyday communication,” and “I use many different strategies when learning idioms.” Conversely, two participants disagreed, and one strongly disagreed with the statement “I like to work things out on my own when learning idioms,” while the remaining two participants reported “somewhat agree.” As for statement 28, all five participants reported varied agreement with the notion that it is useful to me to predict the meaning of idioms. Lastly, statement 30, *I would like to know what other strategies I can use to make better sense of idioms*, had received a strong agreement from all participants.



## **Analysis of Post-Study Semi-Structured Interview**

The semi-structured interviews were the fourth source of data in my study. All five participants (4 females and one male) agreed to participate in the semi-structured interview. I asked them to choose a day/time to meet with me via Teams. They were provided with a *Calendly* event link at the bottom of the Post-Study Survey. All of the interviews took place within two weeks of the IDT. The average duration of the semi-structured interview was 16 minutes. According to Lichtman (2013), “all data are gathered in order to answer your research questions.” (p. 248). Hence, I utilized the results of the Post-Study Semi-Structured Interviews to answer my study’s research questions.

Similar to the process I employed in analyzing the IDT, I followed Clarke and Braun (2006) six phases of Thematic Analysis: *Phase 1: Familiarizing Yourself With the Data*; *Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes*; *Phase 3: Searching for Themes*; *Phase 4: Reviewing Potential Themes*; *Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes*; and *Phase 6: Producing the Report*. I began with familiarizing myself with the semi-structured interview transcripts. This step allowed me to also ensure the accuracy of the transcripts and that all speech blurbs are associated with the correct speaker. After completing the familiarization process, I read the transcripts again to code the data in NVivo. Once I completed coding, I began the process of identifying themes. I began with 11 codes. Some of the codes included detection or meaning-making strategies, finding meaning depends on context, text sentences captions clues, visual speech audio clues, suggestions, interview insights, enjoyment statements, and some clarifications on their answers to some of the post-study survey.

**Table 4** *Semi-Structured Interviews Initial Codes*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Files</b>	<b>References</b>
Detection and Meaning Making Difficulties	This code included instances of experienced difficulties reported by the participants even though they were not asked to report any.	1	2
Detection Strategies	This code included instances on the detection strategies employed by the participants during the IDT to detect the 10 VP idioms.	5	13
Enjoyment Statements	This code included statements of enjoyment shared by the participant during the semi-structured interview.	5	7
Finding meaning depends on context	This code included instances when the participants stated that finding the idiom meaning depended on context or context clues.	2	2
Interview Insights	This code included various insights shared by the participants, some of which can be categorized under some of the other themes.	5	10
Meaning Making Strategies	This code included instances on the meaning-making strategies employed by the participants during the IDT to understand what the 10 VP idioms mean.	5	14
Movie Clips to Teach Idioms Insights	This code included instances where the participants expressed that movie clips should be used to teach idioms	1	1
Post Study Survey Questions' Clarifications	This code included the participants shared clarification on some of their post-study survey answers.	2	3
Suggestions	This code includes all the suggestions provided by the participants as an answer to the interview question "If you are to give 2-3 suggestions on helping students detect idioms based on the Idiom Detection Task, what would you suggest?"	5	15
Text Sentences Captions Clues	This code included instances where the participants used text/sentences/captions clues to detect or understand an idiom.	5	7
Visual Speech Audio Clues	This code included instances where the participants used visual/speech/audio clues to detect or understand an idiom.	5	11

Table 4 above presents these 11 codes and the frequency of their occurrence in the data. I consolidated and organized those initial 11 codes into six categories: Detection and Meaning Making Difficulties, Idiom Detection Strategies, Idiom Meaning-Making Strategies, Use of Context Clues (Text Sentences Captions Clues and Visual Speech Audio Clues), IDT Future Use Suggestions, and Shared Insights (enjoyment statements, overall study perceptions, and survey answers' clarifications). Then, after carefully reading and rereading, I consolidated these six categories into two principal themes: 1) *Idiom Detection and Meaning Making Strategies/Difficulties*, and 2) *Future Recommendations and Insights*. I now begin the analysis of the semi-structured interviews data under these two principal themes.

### ***Idiom Detection and Meaning Making Strategies/Difficulties***

This principal theme includes the following three sub themes: Idiom Detection Strategies/Difficulties, Idiom Meaning-Making Strategies/Difficulties, and Use of Context Clues (Text/Sentences/Captions Clues and Visual/Speech/Audio Clues).

**Idiom Detection Strategies/Difficulties.** To detect idioms, most of the participants relied on context clues such as visual and auditory cues. In some cases, they depended on speech or on reading the captions to locate the idiom. For instance, one participant relied on the context around the idiom to help her locate it. She shared the following statement: "As I mentioned, from the context and from their conversation, so I tried to find the idioms, I understand that." Another participant relied on text/speech clues to locate the idiom. When asked to elaborate on how she uses that strategies, she stated:

"I found the very tricky things. Is, so in. So in, idiom. So they use they use simple words. That is just my interpretation. So... So, for American idiom, they use simple words to

express their feeling or, or their emotion. So I think for in the sentence, why when I identify and like simple words, or the words that did not fit this sentence, or or did not fit the content, there are mentionable so I guess, okay... okay, probably this phrase is the idiom!”

As I thanked her for her astute elaboration, she continued sharing and said this: “And also and also for the phrase or for these few words, for the phrase maybe to two or three words that constitute a phrase, I can understand. I know each words, but I do not know. I do not know what does this phrase mean... So, probably this is the idiom.”

In a similar manner, another participant used textual clues to locate the idioms. He shared the following in the interview: “They use the words used with the idioms doesn't make sense the word themselves so when this word comes between like two or three sentences, like before or after? Yeah, I can not find like, because it is different, you know?”. This indicates that even though captions were distracting to some of the other participants, most of the participants benefited from being able to read the captions and listen to the movie clip conversation and the actors/actress’s tonal changes.”

One participant shared that movie clips were “very helpful” in finding the idioms. When asked to further explain, she was able to elaborate on how auditory and visual context clues helped her find the idioms. She elaborated on her strategy: “Especially when... when you are watching a video, you gonna see like the face expressions. The tune goes up and down. So, this helped me to figure out the meaning and to find out the place of the idioms in the clips.” Another participant was able to employ the same strategy as he reported: “Well, as I told you, the tone was important. Also, the body language... and the body language include the basic expressions, of course, yeah, that is helped me find the idioms.”

It is apparent that when participants employ more than one type of context clues, they are able to detect the idiom during the first viewing of the movie clip. On a more general note, the majority of the participants were able to detect the idioms, however, a few of them faced some difficulties while trying to detect an idiom's location in the clip. This occurs when the movie clip context is particularly short, vague, or fast. For instance, three participants expressed difficulties in detecting the idioms due to the movie clip's speech speed or due to the length of the clip's scenario. Some of the clips speech/content and scenario were slightly longer than some other movie clips, that is, VP idiom use depicted in movie clips with smaller amounts of speech/conversation and visual clues were harder to detect. One unanticipated finding was that one participant reported that her unfamiliarity with American movies, meaning she does not watch many of them, hindered her from being able to locate all the idioms this study employed.

**Idiom Meaning-Making Strategies/Difficulties.** After having located the VP idiom, participants were shown the same movie clip for a second time to be able to interpret the idiom. When asked about what strategies they employed to interpret the VP idiom in question, participants used phrases such as “the context and from their conversation,” “conversation and content,” “their conversation, the actors or the actress emotion, their face expressions or the content during their conversation,” “the movies scenario,” and, finally, “face expressions when the tune goes up and down.”

Surprisingly, one participant shared that she relied on taking notes and jotting them during the IDT, especially during the first viewing of the movie clip. She further explained her method and rationale by saying: “I mean, if I face two words I never see together before, immediately I write it in my note, and the second time (meaning viewing the movie clip for 2nd time), I will be sure what is something I can pick it up to tell me to figure out these things.”

What is even more surprising is that one participant expressed that his motivation helped him focus on locating and deciphering the meanings of these VP idioms. Consider the following text from our interview:

Researcher: Was there any other aspects of the movie that helped you figure out the meaning besides expressions, conversation, tone, and context?

Participant 3: Well, I think the motivation... like I love movies, so when, when you told me you are gonna play clips, I was very excited. So I was very focused. I was very motivated to focus. You know, I enjoyed it. You know... it's fun for me.

Noteworthy, one participant was able to provide a description on how she used three strategies “unconsciously” when detecting and deciphering the idioms. She stated that in the first viewing of the movie clip, she started using her listening and reading skills to locate the idiom. This was followed by using her vision to gather visual information (clues) during the second viewing of the movie clip. After that, she took time to “combine in this... the vision (meaning all she saw), like, see the images and then connect everything together” before providing an idiom interpretation.

When participants were asked about difficulties they may have encountered while interpreting VP idioms, three participants stated that they wished for more than two viewings of the movie clips to be able to come up with an interpretation or confirm the interpretation they have. Other reported difficulties were in regard to the speech speed and vague content/conversation. The participants felt that some movie clips had fast conversations, and therefore, they were not able to “catch” the idiom. Other participants expressed that some movie clips lacked an extensive content and/or conversation between the characters, which further

limited the amount of context clues available, and in return, hindered their ability to provide an apt idiom meaning interpretation.

**Use of Context Clues.** In this theme, I discuss how the participants used the various movie clips' context clues such as text/sentences/captions clues and/or visual/speech/audio clues. Based on the comments the participants provided during the semi-structured interview, it bears repeating that participants relied on more than one type of context clues (visual and/or auditory). For instance, when finding and attempting to understand an idiom, one participant shared that he combined auditory clues and (voice tones) and visual clues (body language and facial expressions) with the words that do not make sense in the movie clip conversation (referring to the idiom). When attempting to find and understand the meaning of the idiom “cat got your tongue?”, one participant revealed that she found the idiom because it was a “weird phrase” and because it had nothing to do with the rest of conversation. When she viewed the movie clip for the second time, she started “looking at the movie itself.” She highlighted that she noticed that “the guy was sitting down, he was quiet, he was not talking” when the other actor asked him “cat got your tongue?”. By combing those clues with the “weird phrase,” referring to the idiom, she was able to understand that when someone says “cat got your tongue,” this person is wondering about why the other person “is not talking or why they have nothing to say.”

However, the same participant shared that the lack of visual clues hinders her ability to fully understand the idiom meaning. She expressed that when she was trying to figure out the meaning of the idiom “pay through the nose for it.” In this movie clip, there was only one actor talking, and he was looking away and pointing at a world map and discussing how expensive his technology was. His acting included some auditory clues such as tonal changes. When she first watched the movie clip, she wrote down the idiom, and during the second viewing, she planned

to rely on context clues but there were not enough visual clues. During the interview, she shared this with me: “It’s difficult for me because their action not too clear for me... one of them, give me his back... I can not see his face, or his eyes. Or how he look or how he is feeling.” This finding indicates that auditory and text clues help in finding the idiom, and in some cases, these two clues combined can help craft a viable interpretation; however, the idiomatic interpretation confirmation only occurs when participants are able to see and feel the clips’ scenario through the actor/actress visual clues. All these comments confirm the prime role context clues played in assisting participants with the accurate identification and resulting construction of the meaning the VP idioms represented in authentic scenarios.

### ***Future Recommendations and Insights***

This principal theme includes two sub-themes: IDT Future Use Suggestions, and Shared Insights (enjoyment statements, overall perception of the study, and survey answers’ clarifications).

**IDT Future Use Suggestions.** During the interview, participants were asked to share any suggestions or comments in regard to the IDT. The participants suggestions varied based on their learning styles, personal preferences, language learning experiences, and educational backgrounds. One participant felt that it was necessary to introduce future language students to some idiom detection strategies before showing them idiom-infused movie clips. She also suggested giving language students more practice time for the same idioms but in different contexts to show them how these idioms can be used in different ways.

Another participant thought it would be more beneficial to provide language learners with immediate feedback. She specifically felt that students’ language learning would benefit from discussion filled with feedback on their answers. She thought that knowing if she had found the



correct idiom alongside an accurate interpretation, that alone would improve her learning and would further solidify the new knowledge associated with the VP idiom in question. She also suggested the inclusion of writing in the IDT, specifically, writing the idiom down by hand upon detection. She believes that having the idiom visually available during the interpretation process would further instill the learning of that idiom. When asked about the rationale behind her suggestion, she shared that it is due to her music education background, and further illustrated this by making the following comment: “Because in my major in my in the music major, so we are think if we combined, visually... visual and aural, so is... is a really good way to teach.” She also highlighted that future movie-clips should remain within the same length and complexity as the ones used in this study “because it is short, but simple. And easy to identify.”

One of the participants noted that he watches movies regularly. He informed me that he regularly plays his favorite movies as background noise at home. He suggested that the IDT include more than movie clip for one idiom. He also suggested that language teachers ought to ask their students about their favorite movies/tv shows and use the idioms depicted in them in the language classroom. He specifically suggested that teachers use accessible TV shows that are popular among language learners such as *Friends* and *How I Met Your Mother*.

Another participant suggested using different modes of delivering and conducting the IDT. She also suggested the use of group/pair work. This participant had prior experience with teaching, hence the group-work suggestion. She believed that language learners would benefit from conducting the IDT as a group because working together allows learners to collaborate with each other, and this, in turn, reduces embarrassment, shyness, and even nervousness.

The last participant shared a number of IDT suggestions that adapt to the learners’ learning styles and sense of ownership. She suggested that learners have ownership of how many

times they can watch the movie clip and that limiting it to two or three times is not inclusive for learners who need more time to interact with the learning materials. She also highlighted that some learners do not do well under stress (referring to the stress from only viewing a clip twice), henceforth, these learners should not feel pressured to detect and decipher a new idiom by watching a clip only two or three times. She clearly appreciated the use of technology to teach idioms but thought that the IDT could be improved either by allowing learners to use available technology to search for the idiom's etymology or by providing learners with the idiom's etymology following an idiom's detection and interpretation. Another suggestion she offered was to provide language learners with varying practice opportunities like role playing, group work, and using the idioms in different contexts. Lastly, she expressed that boredom and lack of motivation may negatively influence advanced language learners. She suggested that these learners watch movie clips from different genres and without subtitles and/or captions to challenge them after they had a chance to improve their idiom detection skills.

**Shared Insights.** This theme includes statements of study enjoyment, overall perception of study, and further clarification regarding some survey answers. As concerns study enjoyment, "Did you enjoy the Idiom Detection Task where you located those idioms and their meanings?" the participants shared short comments such as "Yes! So so much!", "Yes, of course," and "That was fun. I really enjoy it." One participant shared her feelings of enjoying the IDT when she stated: "Actually, I was like, oh, what is the next one? I was excited." Another participant also shared his/her enjoyment by saying: "I think multimedia. I mean using technology and using videos or using podcasts. using this kind of technology, at least with me, has helped me a lot. I love it. I love it. I will learn way faster."

When asked about their overall perception of the study and the use of movie clips as an idiom teaching approach, the participants shared comments such as “I think was a very cool pedagogical approach,” “very effective,” “really got my attention,” and “very helpful.” In fact, one participant expressed that she had some concerns about the effectiveness of using movie clips as a language teaching method, let alone an idiom teaching method. She thought that other teaching methods could be more effective. However, after having participated in this study, she now sees how movie clips’ various context clues can help in the learning process of new idioms. She even expressed how movie-clips are helpful in allowing students to rely on their skills to interpret various sources of information to reach an educated guess on the new idiom’s meaning.

Yet another shared insight was obtained in the post study interview when I asked two participants to clarify some of their survey responses. Before conducting the semi-structure interview, I read each participants’ post-study survey. I chose to do in order to still have a chance to ask them about their answers, should I have any further questions or need for clarifications. After having read their survey answers, I needed to ask a few clarification questions about two participants’ responses. Specifically, participant 3 was the only participant who reported “neither agree or disagree” as an answer to statement 23: *Authentic audio/video recordings and real texts should accompany the study of idioms*. When asked to provide the rationale behind her choice, she stated that she did not fully understand what the statement meant; she specifically did not know what authentic language materials meant. Therefore, I explained what the statement and authentic language materials mean. Upon fully understanding the statement, she shared that she strongly agrees with using authentic language materials, and that teachers should consider using audio and radio in their classrooms, in addition to using movie-clips as an L2 idiom teaching method.

As for participant 3, he reported “somewhat disagree” to statement 14: *idioms should be used for classroom practice and testing*. When asked to elaborate on why he disagrees with statement 14, he shared that he is in favor of using idioms for classroom practice, but he opposes the use of tests when attempting to measure the students’ idiomatic competency. He advocates for assessments are “less intimidating, scaring, stressful. You want something that is less formal.” I then asked him about examples of such assessment methods, and he suggested using a combination of a conversation and an interview method, either individually with the teacher or during a group/pair work with their peers. As for statement 26, *I like to work things out on my own when learning idioms*, he also responded with “somewhat disagree.” He explained his survey response as he felt that he does not like to do any of his school work alone. He prefers to collaborate with teachers and classmates. He also highlighted that not all language learners prefer to work alone, and, further, that language teachers should consider their learners’ learning styles and studying preferences, especially when it comes to idiom learning.

## **Discussion of Findings**

In this section, I discuss the study’s results by combining the findings of the four tasks—the Pre-Study Survey, the Idiom Detection Task, the Post-Study Survey, and the Post-Study Semi-Structured Interview—with Liantas’s (1999) Transactional Idiom Analysis (TIA) and Liantas’s (2002) Idiom Diffusion Model of Second Languages (IDM), the two theoretical frameworks that guided this exploration. I employed a descriptive and explanatory approach to present the results of the participants’ detection, interpretation, and understanding of VP idioms depicted in movie clips. In addition, I presented all the strategies and techniques utilized by participants during their detection, interpretation, and understanding of the 10 VP idioms this

study strategically employed. Of the four research questions, questions one, two, and three pertained to the types of detection and meaning-making strategies as well as any constraints experienced by the study’s participants. The fourth question aimed to capture participants’ perceptions about learning VP idioms via idiom-infused movie clips. The Table 5 below presents the four research questions and the data sources used to answer each question.

The pre-study survey was used to gauge participants’ prior knowledge of English idioms and VP idioms, their English level, satisfaction with idiom learning in second language classrooms, and interest in learning about idiomatic expression and/or VP idioms through the use of movie clips. Based on survey answers provided, all five participants had prior exposure to idiomatic and/or figurative expressions. Similarly, all five participants were able to provide a definition of idiomatic expressions and VP idioms in their own words.

**Table 5** *Data Sources Used to Answer the Four Research Questions*

Research Questions	Data Sources
RQ1: In what ways are ESL students able to locate Vivid Phrasal idioms when watching movie clips containing them?	IDT Post-Study Survey Post-Stud Semi-Structured Interview
RQ2: How do ESL students decode VP idioms once located in context?	IDT Post-Study Survey Post-Stud Semi-Structured Interview
RQ3: What are the meaning-making constraints ESL students experience during VP idioms comprehension and interpretation?	IDT Post-Study Survey Post-Stud Semi-Structured Interview
RQ4: What are ESL students’ perceptions about learning Vivid Phrasal idioms via idiom-infused movie clips?	Pre-study Survey IDT (voluntarily shared perceptions) Post-Study Survey Post-Stud Semi-Structured Interview

However, there were some variations in their interpretation of VP idioms, and at least half of the participants were not able to distinguish the difference between idiomatic expressions and VP idioms. Most participants were either somewhat confident, moderately confident, or very confident in their ability to identify and interpret the meaning of the VP idioms depicted in the movie clips. Even though there was some variation in the participants' perceived importance to learn about idiomatic expressions and/or VP idioms, all participants reported interest in learning about idiomatic and/or VP idioms through the use of movie clips.

The IDT revealed compelling insights into the detection and meaning-making strategies participants used to identify and understand the meaning of 10 VP idioms depicted in 10 short American movie-clips. In varying degrees, all participants utilized context clues, recollection, guessing as last-resort strategies to help them identify and understand the meaning of VP idioms. Every participant was uncertain of at least one idiom's location or meaning, which resulted, unsurprisingly, in no detection or meaning apprehension. Noteworthy, all five participants, at some point, combined more than one strategy to detect and decipher idioms, especially with new and unfamiliar idioms or idioms perceived as having only limited context clues. This suggests that non-native English-speaking students at the doctoral level studying in the United States use similar detection and meaning-making strategies when identifying and interpreting the meaning of VP idioms depicted in movie clips. The *universal modus operandi* first expressed in Liontas's (1999) seminal dissertation work finds much credence here, and in the studies heretofore cited that sought to confirm, refute, or replicate his findings.

The Post-Study Survey uncovered compelling insights into the participants' feelings and perceptions about the study. The majority of participants felt using movie clips to introduce and teach VP idioms was most helpful as the content in these movie clips significantly assisted

participants in identifying and understanding the 10 VP idioms depicted therein. Context clues, such as auditory and textual clues were most helpful in detecting the 10 VP idioms, while visual and auditory clues were most helpful in understanding the VP idioms' meanings. Many participants felt that reading the captions while listening to the movie clip scenario for the first time were slightly more helpful with VP idiom identification. In deducing the meaning of these 10 VP idioms, the helpfulness of visual clues, such as the characters' facial and body expressions, ranked higher than auditory and textual clues.

The Post-Study Semi-Structured Interview provided in-depth and valuable insights into the participants' process of identifying and understanding VP idioms depicted in short American movie-clips. The interview findings revealed two principal themes: 1) *Idiom Detection and Meaning Making Strategies/Difficulties*, and 2) *Future Recommendations and Insights*. In addition to the idiom detection and meaning-making strategies shared during the IDT and Post-Study Survey, participants were able to share valuable insights on other strategies they employed or thought about employing during their participation in this study. Again, many participants utilized the movie clip captions as a secondary source to the movie clip audio/speech when attempting to locate the idioms. One participant utilized writing (taking notes) of unfamiliar words/phrases to locate and interpret VP idioms. Here, too, the semi-structured interview results are similar to the results first presented in the IDT, which provide further support for these strategies in general, and which offer further data triangulation in this study.

### **In Support of Liontas's (1999) TIA and Liontas's (2002) IDM**

The findings of this study conform to Liontas's (1999, 2002a) Transactional Idiom Analysis (TIA) and support Liontas's (1999, 2002b) Idiom Diffusion Model of Second

Languages. In analyzing the data, I found that Liantas's (1999, 2002a) TIA already included various concepts which my findings here clearly support. According to Liantas (2002a),

TIA is concerned both with what learners know about idioms in general and with what they know about how they are used in communication. It is especially concerned with identifying the factors that impede or enhance idiom comprehension and interpretation. The only way to obtain good data on these factors, however, is through the systematic observation of learners: TIA provides an approach of analyzing such observations in a manner that can reveal the linguistic systems that learners use to process idioms. TIA analyses are very promising because they seem to afford a window through which to view how learners comprehend and interpret idioms in second language contexts (p. 10).

Furthermore, TIA framework surrounds the four meaning-carrying and cueing systems: the graphophonic, the lexico-grammatical, the semantic, and the pragmatic (Liantas, 2002a, p. 8). TIA was used in this study to analyze participants' idiom learning and comprehension. This study provided fresh new insights into how L2 learners process English VP idioms depicted in short American movie clips. Through questioning, think-aloud protocol, and observations, I was able to obtain valuable data on the processing, comprehension, and interpretation process of VP idiom understanding by five international doctoral-level students in the U.S. These participants were able to find and comprehend at least 5/10 VP idioms utilized in this study. Even though the participants experienced successful idiom identification and interpretation for many idioms, each participant has experienced instances of inability to identify or interpret one or more idioms for reasons already discussed. Despite rich explanations, one of the main reasons behind the difficulty experienced in identifying and deducing the meaning of the VP idioms surrounded participants' inability to utilize the movie-clips context clues to decipher the idioms. At times,



the insufficient or vague visual (i.e., facial or body expressions) and auditory (i.e., tonal and intonation) context clues hindered participants' ability to make sense of the VP idiom after having identified the idiom based on textual (i.e., captions) and/or speech (i.e., the acting speech/script/scenario) context clues. If participants already had an existing entry in their minds for that particular VP idiom, then the insufficient or vague context clues prompted additional confusion, at times even frustration.

The IDM is a model that examines L2 idiom processing and the different stages through which second/foreign language learners progress through to construct the meaning of L2 idioms. In his IDM, Liontas (2002b) revealed that as L2 learners attempt to understand an idiom, the learners progress through two phases, (1) the "prediction phase" and (2) the "confirmation or replacement, reconstructive phase" (Liontas, 2002a, p. 182). In this study, participants revealed that if an entry for the VP idiom in question did not already exist in their minds, in such situations, the participants were unable to retrieve or interpret said VP idioms. In all such cases, participants referred to their guessing skills as a strategy to help them both identify and deduce the meaning of the VP idiom at hand. However, if they could recall encountering this idiom before or if the context clues were of direct help, it was easier for them to identify and deduce the meaning of the VP idiom. These results align with Liontas's (1999) VP idiom categorization and the manner through which L2 learners come to fully understand idioms. In more ways than one, the results of this study indicated that the context clues present in the movie clips helped participants' recollection and/or guessing skills, the combination of which assisted in participants' ability to assign or guess an idioms' meaning. In addition, many participants felt the idiom-infused short movie clips were helpful in identifying and deducing the meaning of the ten VP idioms.

In his discussion of *Conceptual-Semantic Image (CSI) distance*, Liantas (2002) plotted VP idioms on a *Lexical-Image Continuum* that includes three VP idiom sub-categories: Lexical Level (LL) idioms, Semi-Lexical Level (SLL) idioms, and Post-Lexical Level (PLL) idioms. Liantas (2002b) suggested “the CSI distance between target-language and native-language idioms determines into which class of VP idioms a particular target-language idiom will be classified” (p. 82). Based on the IDT task results, and on the participants’ first languages, the ten VP idioms included in this study belong to the third category, the Post-Lexical Level (PLL) idioms. According to Liantas (2002a),

Post-Lexical Level (PLL) Hypothesis. If an L2 expression does not exist in the learner's LI language, or if it exists, but is embedded in lexical items that evoke a totally different thought or mental image, then the learner, after having accessed, found, and understood one or more of the lexical entries that make up the L2 idiom, will come to rely primarily on semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic contextual cues and will draw upon his or her own native idiomatic knowledge and previous language and sociocultural experiences before assigning a definite meaning to the L2 idiomatic expression (p. 83).

Based on the observed results during the participants’ think-aloud of IDT, all participants were able to locate the VP idioms depicted in the movie clips due to each idioms’ unique lexical formation and inherent conceptual-semantic depiction of potential meaning before proceeding to rely on “semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic contextual cues” to assign an actual meaning or guess a meaning for the VP idiom in question. Noteworthy here is the finding that all participants were able to identify successfully one or more VP idioms they were unable to assign a definitive meaning interpretation or guess a plausible meaning, especially when presented with limited contextual cues.

## **Other Theoretical Considerations**

The results of this study also align well with Mayer's (2009) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning. Specifically, the study results align with five out of his 12 principles of multimedia learning. Mayer's temporal contiguity principle, segmenting principle, multimedia principle, personalization principle, and voice principle support the implementation of idiom-infused movie-clips in the teaching of L2 idiomatic expressions and English VP idioms.

Mayer's temporal contiguity principle suggests that humans learn best when words and pictures are simultaneously presented together as opposed to being presented consecutively. Hence, presenting idiomatic expressions and/or VP idioms depicted in movie clips, which combine visuals, audio, and text (captions) together, align with Mayer's temporal contiguity principle. The study's ten short movie clips segmented content and presented the selected VP idioms in a minute or less. Segmenting content around the idiom to present it in "small chunks" has contributed to participants' ability to locate said VP idiom within the given context.

Similarly, the use of idiom-infused movie clips is supported by Mayer's multimedia principle of multimedia learning. In this particular principle, Myer claims that humans learn best through combing words and pictures as opposed to learning from words or pictures alone. When L2 learners are presented with VP idioms in movie clips (a multimedia combining pictures and words together), their VP idiom identification and comprehension was maximized by the use of both written (captions) and visual (pictures and spoken words) contexts.

Moreover, Mayer's personalization principle and voice principle go hand in hand during the utilization of idiom-infused movie clips as a learning tool. The personalization principle posits that learning occurs better in informal conversational style rather than formal

conversational style. These movie clips showcase actors and actresses using VP idioms in natural settings where their speech is fluid resembling real-life conversations; this makes movie-clips an ideal authentic language learning material as they can be used in various settings to spearhead the learning of idiomatic expressions in general and English VP idioms in particular. Since movie clips include human voice, movie clips as an L2 idiom teaching and learning tool is further supported by Myer's voice principle.

The use of idiom-infused movie clips in this study aligns with Keller's (2010) ARCS Motivational Model. This model is a motivational design process that includes a synthesis of motivational concepts and theories that are clustered into four categories: attention (A), relevance (R), confidence (C), and satisfaction (S). The use of movie-clips in the IDT included these four motivational concepts. The tasks' design and use of movie clips clearly grasped learners' attention. The task's selected idioms are relevant to the learners' language level and their interest in learning L2 idioms. The IDT design and overall experience has thus shed new light on participants' developing language and idiom confidence, which, in turn, increased their satisfaction with this media learning experience. This is all evident in the participants' responses to the post-study semi-structured interview discussed earlier in this chapter.

Lastly, the utilization of idiom-infused movie clips as a viable learning and teaching multimedia "mode" is supported by Kress (2000) Multimodality theory, which looks at the many different modes that people use to communicate with each other to express themselves. Kress (2000) shared a few examples of modes such as writing, gesture, posture, gaze, images, video, and even the interactions between them. Most of these modes existed within the selected ten movie clips in this study. The movie clips thus served as learning and teaching multimedia "mode" that provided ample context clues and the interactions between them, all of which was

key to the successful identification and understanding of many of the VP idioms the study's five participants were able to achieve.

## **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I adopted a descriptive and exploratory approach to present the results of the four participant tasks—the Pre-Study Survey, the Idiom Detection Task, the Post-Study Survey, and the Post-Study Semi-Structured Interview. First, I presented the results of the participants' pre-study survey which included demographic information, English language experience, and knowledge of and exposure to idiomatic/figurative expressions generally, and VP idioms specifically. This was followed by the results of the IDT, indicating that the participants relied on various types of context clues, some of which was combined to aid in identifying and deducing the meaning of the 10 VP idioms depicted in the short American movie-clips.

Then, I conducted thematic analysis on the participant think-aloud from the IDT. I discovered similarities in the detection and meaning-making strategies used by all five participants to identify and deduce the meaning of the VP idioms depicted in the movie clips. I found that the five doctoral-level non-native English-speaking participants used context clues, recollection, and guessing as the three main detection and meaning-making strategies. These strategies were used to various degrees of success depending on participants' evolving language proficiency and abilities.

Following that, I presented the results of the Post-Study Survey and the Post-Study Semi-Structured Interviews. The Post-Study Survey revealed important insights and confirmed the types of strategies participants used in identifying and figuring out the meaning of the ten VP

idioms, as well as their overall feelings and perceptions about the study. I discovered that these strategies were similar to the strategies they employed during the participants' think-aloud from the IDT.

Finally, the results of the Post-Study Semi-Structured Interviews revealed insightful and in-depth findings on the strategies utilized by the five participants when attempting to identify and deduce the meanings of ten VP idioms depicted in the short movie clips. I conducted the same process of thematic analysis I used in the think-aloud for the IDT and the Post-Study Survey in the analysis of the results of the Semi-Structured Interviews. Here, too, I discovered similar results regarding VP idiom identification and interpretation strategies as presented in the IDT and Post-Study Survey. All five participants relied on a combination of strategies to detect and interpret VP idioms. This study confirms and supports Lontas's (1999, 2002c) TIA and , Lontas's (1999, 2002b) IDM of Second Languages, and, furthermore, the primary tenets involved in Mayer's (2009) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, Keller's (2010) ARCS Motivational Model, and Kress's (2000) Multimodality Theory.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

### **Introduction**

In this study, I followed a descriptive-exploratory approach to explore and examine participants' identification and meaning-making processes when encountering English VP idioms in movie clips. Additionally, I provided an analysis of the strategies employed by the five participants to identify and deduce the meaning of ten VP idioms depicted in ten short movie clips. In this final chapter, I present a summary of the results, pedagogical implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

### **Summary of Results**

It is evident in the results of the study that L2 learners utilize various detection and meaning-making strategies when attempting to identify and deduce the meaning of English VP idioms depicted in movie clips. What is more, L2 learners still face challenges during the IDT in this study. This proposes a need for developing an L2 idiom curriculum that addresses those challenges. By taking a closer look at the strategies employed by the five international students, who are currently pursuing doctoral degrees in the U.S., in an effort to identify and deduce the meaning of VP idioms embedded in American movie clips, I uncovered three distinct insights surrounding English VP idioms' learning and comprehension.

First, there is a need to teach L2 idiomatics generally, and vivid phrasal idioms specifically. This is evidenced by the variation between participants' perceived performance and actual performance during the study's IDT. This also evidenced by participants' responses to the

pre-study survey questions. Second, the strategies used by these five participants were quite similar in nature, albeit with some degree of variation in usage. This indicates that the processing of idiomatics and VP idioms among these five participants are more similar than they are actually different. Finally, second/foreign language teachers can implement the strategies gleaned from this study such as utilizing context clues, recollection, and guessing in the teaching of idiomatics and VP idioms in the L2 classroom.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The results of this study may prove useful to second/foreign language teachers, educators, policy makers, curriculum designers, and researchers in the field of SLA and ET. This study's pedagogical implications surround the following five concepts: (1) the need to teach L2 idiomatics, (2) teaching L2 learners' strategies to identify and deduce the meaning of idiomatic expressions and/or VP idioms, (3) teaching of idiomatic expressions and VP idioms through authentic material, (4) incorporating movie clips and other educational technologies as modes in L2 idiom teaching and learning, and, finally, (5) considering learners' learning styles, needs, and interests.

*Why Teach L2 idioms?* The need to teach L2 idioms and improving L2 learners' idiomatic competency has been a topic of research for many years. L2 researchers and educators have worked on why idioms should be taught. As discussed in Chapter 1, Liantas (2017) provided five reasons why L2 idioms should be taught. He had also anticipated that learning and acquiring idioms will empower the "learners to use language in socially responsive ways" (p. 2). But why should idioms be taught based on the results of this study? The findings highlighted the need to teach L2 idiomatics. This was clearly evident in participant's responses given in the pre-



study survey questions and as opinions shared during the post-study survey and semi-structured interview. The need to *intentionally* and *explicitly* teach and learn L2 idiomatics was evident in the participants' IDT think-aloud. All five participants have been in the United States for at least two years, and all have taken at least 4 semesters of English as a second language. And still, all participants faced challenges locating all VP idioms, and in some cases, they were able to locate the VP idiom in question but were unable to guess or assign meaning to it. In other words, of the ten idioms utilized in the IDT, only two idioms were located and understood by the five participants, while one idiom was found by four participants, none of whom were able to guess or provide its meaning accurately. The two idioms that were successfully identified and comprehended were “Shake a leg” and “Cat got your tongue?”, while the least successfully comprehended idiom was “Drive one up the wall.”

The idiom “drive one up the wall” was depicted in the movie scenario by a male actor who was talking to a quiet and unresponsive female actress as he said: “The gypsy said when you speak, right? So, maybe it has something to do with sound. I mean, after all, you scratch a blackboard, it drives you up the wall. Maybe there is a sound that you know, drives you up another wall. You do not believe me?” While only one participant could not locate the idiom, and another participant located it but was unable to offer or guess its meaning, the remaining three participants attempted to assign/guess the meaning as follows:

“So to take you another... another way or take you another thing.”

“I'm not sure for this one probably. Problem I think this means that they provide them... it provide this girl several ideas.”

“I think do not do that. Because you will go to another area and not this what you will look... look to look like and this is not good for you.”

This idiom was challenging to identify and comprehend due to a few reasons. First, the actor's speech combined with the whole act did not serve enough context clues. The actor seemed to wish to convince the actress while she was quiet and uncooperative. Second, the movie clips speech and visual context clues did not imply the idiom's actual meaning, which further contributed to the participants' confusion and apparent misunderstanding. Third, participants did not recall hearing this idiom or other similar idioms in either their first language or English. In order for these participants to fully understand what this idiom actually means, participants may benefit from intentional and explicit instruction given that the idiom's figurative meaning can not be understood from understanding its literal meaning. This example aligns with and is supported by Liantas's (2017) five claims to why idioms should be taught; specifically, Liantas stated that idioms should be taught to L2 learners as such idioms provide learners with targeted opportunities to examine the mental images they commonly associate when encountering idiomatic phrases during on-line figurative language meaning-making processes (p. 16).

*Teach Meaning-Making Strategies.* Teaching L2 learners' strategies to identify and deduce the meaning of idiomatic expressions and/or VP idioms does not only reduce learning frustration, but it also helps to equip L2 learners with the necessary tools to correctly identify and deduce the meaning of idioms in various contexts. Based on the results of this study, it can be affirmed now that the five doctoral-level non-native English speakers can indeed locate VP idioms in authentic resources, as such idioms do tend to "stand out" and sound as "weird words" to the L2 learners' ears. However, relying on context clues, recollection, and guessing as meaning-making strategies was not always fruitful as evident in the idiom "drive one up the wall" and a few other idioms from the IDT. The participants relied on the meaning-making

strategies they have accessible in their language toolbox. It is through consistent and continuous exposure to idiomatic and figurative language that L2 learners can become experienced in detecting and deciphering new idiomatic language, and, hopefully, improve their idiomatic competence over time. L2 idiom activities entailing experience with meaning-making strategies should allow learners to first become aware of the idiom location, then notice all clues surrounding it, and, finally, attempting to internalize the available clues to produce or guess the idiom's meaning. This requires frequent exposure and practice with various types of idiomatics both inside and outside the classroom environment. Teachers may also want to consider delivering such L2 idiom activities in pair or group work to allow L2 students to learn idioms with peers interactively.

*Incorporate Authentic Materials.* Teaching and learning idiomatic expressions and VP idioms through the implementation of authentic materials—materials produced by native speakers for native speakers—such as idiom-infused movie clips in the L2 classroom should be considered. The incorporation of idiom-infused movie clips as authentic materials is not only fun and motivating, it also emphasizes proficiency-oriented language teaching and learning approaches that prepares L2 learners for real-world interactions and settings.

These short movie clips can provide L2 learners with authentic material that is attractive, intriguing, and relevant to their L2 acquisition journey. Simply put, movie clips present language in its natural use and context. Many idiom-infused movies and movie clips are accessible online on various streaming websites (i.e., YouTube, Netflix, etc.) and smart phone applications (i.e., Instagram, Language Learning Apps, etc.), making their implementation practical, cost effective, and accessible. Noteworthy, idiomatic-figurative expressions can be introduced via movie clips depending on L2 learners' level of proficiency; however, many L2 learners would greatly benefit

from combining visual and textual introduction to the same idioms as doing so would also allow them to encounter them in various real-life encounters.

*Adopt Multimedia.* Incorporating movie clips as multimedia in L2 idiom teaching and learning is one of many ways to introduce idioms to language learners. As stated earlier, full movies are accessible on online streaming websites such as Netflix, Hulu, and YouTube. As for idiom-infused movie clips, the teacher can create their own by cutting/pausing movies or by utilizing pre-existing cut and ready movie-clips available at YouTube channels such as English ByClips and IdiomLand. Another way to introduce idioms is by adopting some of these channels' social media accounts and smart phone applications. For instance, IdiomLand has a YouTube channel that shows a collage of movie clips infused with the same idiom, while their Instagram account shows an image, a text (idiom etymology), and a movie clip of the idiom. In addition, IdiomLand has its own English idiom app, namely Idiom Cards.

Showing movie clips of idioms along with their etymology affords several teaching opportunities. As done in the IDT, L2 learners can be asked to identify the idiomatic expressions used in the movie clip conversations in the first viewing. In the second viewing of the same clip, the L2 learners can attempt to comprehend the meaning of the idiomatic expressions based on all the available contextual clues (visual, audio, and textual). Notably, some idiomatic expressions are more challenging to identify and comprehend than others; in such situations, L2 learners may benefit from a third or a fourth viewing to better absorb all contextual clues. Some L2 learners may even benefit from writing down the idiomatic phrase as they continue to study the movie clip. After L2 learners have identified and attempted to comprehend the idiomatic expression, the teacher can further solidify their idiomatic learning session by sharing and discussing the idiom's etymology. Many, if not all, English idiomatic and figurative expressions have a historical and

cultural association to them. Such etymological information can easily become part of the learning process as learners attempt to store the idioms' respective meaning in their minds. By doing so, L2 learners are not only improving their idiomatic competence, they are also improving their social and cultural competence. In a nutshell, then, providing L2 learners with authentic examples—idiom-infused movie clips showing social interactions and dialogues— along with considering their learning needs and providing them with idiomatic etymologies are key components to idiomatics learning, comprehension, recall, and retention.

*Consider Learning Styles, Needs, and Interests.* Language is a skill much like many other skills humans acquire—it needs to be acquired through exposure, immersion, and reflective practice. Hence, language educators should not only focus their attention on offering excellent language learning environments, but rather, they should focus their attention on creating flexible and adaptive learning environments that acknowledge L2 learners' learning styles and needs, and thereby the expected influence such interventions can have on the dynamic flow of language learning.

The IDT findings revealed that participants used context clues, recollection, and guessing techniques to varying degrees in order to detect and decipher the ten idioms. Based on the observation noted in the IDT, each participant relied on his/her learning style, along with their language and study skills, to complete the task. For instance, one participant employed note taking during the IDT to write the potential idiomatic phrases in each movie clip to use later to make a decision as to which phrase is the actual VP idiom. The same notes were used again during the second viewing of the clip to help her assign or guess a potential meaning to the idiom selected. Another participant relied on reading the movie clips captions in both viewings, while still another participant relied solely on visual and social cues to complete the IDT. Interestingly,

one participant shared that viewing the movie clip two times was not sufficient for all idioms, and that she had hoped for more learning autonomy; that is, she wanted to view the movie clip as many times as she felt necessary to help her complete the IDT successfully.

There is a lot to consider here as language teachers begin to create L2 idiomatic lessons and activities that acknowledge learners' learning styles and needs. Coupled with students' interests and preferences, and based on the study's results, there are several strategies that can be used to teach L2 idiomatics and figurative expressions through authentic movie clips. These suggestions encompass a few ways through which L2 teachers can at least try to address differences in their learners' learning styles and needs, respectively. First, presenting L2 idioms through audiovisual contexts, such as movie-clips, popular movies, or television series, allows visual learners to witness and learn L2 idioms in real-world contexts. This method is effective with many learning styles as the learners are immersed in the language learning process while being entertained by a distinct multisensory medium. To maximize the benefits of such an approach, teachers could include movie clips with subtitles to facilitate linguacultural learning in general and specific oral/aural language skills in particular. As for kinesthetic language learners, they learn best from actively participating in learning through hands-on activities. One possible activity for such learners is to allow them to take notes during the IDT when combined with an online search for the idiom's etymology. Such scaffolding could be followed by a hands-on group activity in which learners summarize their etymological findings to be presented to the rest of the class. Doing so allows learners to feel empowered as they learn autonomously. Another way to increase learner autonomy here is by offering learners liberal replay use of the movie clip containing VP idioms. This can be accomplished rather easily by assembling the selected idioms in a single location accessible to all learners such as an LMS or a Google page.

To summarize, multimodal learning has the potential to benefit all types of L2 learners as it has the capacity to deliver educational language materials in a manner that is appealing to visual, auditory, reading and writing, and kinesthetic learners. By empowering L2 learners to lead their own learning, they become active and accountable participants. Undoubtedly, learning L2 idiomatic and figurative expressions in learning environments that adheres to all learners' learning styles and needs makes learning relevant, real, and effective.

### **Discoveries**

Delimitations are the boundaries of a study, and this study was not exempt of delimitations. This study's delimitations pertain to the research questions, theoretical objectives, study sample size and population pool, study setting, and hermeneutic considerations.

This study involved ESL students from different cultural and language backgrounds. It is difficult to ensure that all ESL students reported the truth or reported their real thoughts when answering the interview questions about their experience in the IDT and their VP idiom learning via movie clips. Additionally, the participants may lack the ability to articulate their perceptions and opinions accurately due to language barriers or fluency issues. Participants may also have had concerns about their privacy. Nevertheless, hermeneutic considerations were an anticipated limitation from the outset of this study. Hermeneutic considerations refer to the idea that other researchers might interpret the same data differently than I do based on their personal worldviews, epistemological backgrounds, and experiences. And lastly, my biases as the researcher may interfere with the interpretations here offered.

In addition, the conclusions or discoveries derived from this study are influenced by the population being studied; that is, the five international non-native English-speaking students

currently pursuing a doctoral degree in the United States and who voluntarily participated in the study. Thus, these findings may not apply to other international doctoral students studying inside or outside of the United States.

Moreover, the potential influence of the participants' cultural background and their first languages were not considered in this study as it relates to idiomatics learning and teaching. Their cultural backgrounds were not taken into consideration here as idiomatics is characteristically different from one culture to another; in fact, culturally derived idiomatics does not always transfer from one culture to other cultures. In other words, there is no known and uniform manner in which idiomatic-figurative expressions and vivid phrasal idioms can be interpreted and understood across differing cultures. Moreover, the participants' cultural lens influences their learning and comprehension of L2 idiomatics and VP idioms. Similarly, the participants' first languages were not taken into consideration as they vary in origin, structure, and the way one perceives and experiences other cultures and languages. These participants come from language backgrounds other than romance languages; therefore, the study of participants speaking romance languages, for example, may bring different insights and findings.

What's more, my own hermeneutics interpretation and considerations need to be taken into account due to the impact these may have on the analysis and interpretation of the study data and findings. According to Lontas (2022), the use of the *hermeneutic circle* to hermeneutically understand a text refers to a person's understanding of the entirety of the text that is dynamically established by understanding the text's individual parts, and vice versa. Said differently, the manner in which I interpreted the study data and findings, as a holistic whole and as individual parts, is influenced by my understanding of them together and apart. In using the hermeneutic circle, I planned, acted, observed, reflected, and revised the study's data set. I also recognize that



my logos (logic), pathos (passion), and ethos (ethics) played a role in my data interpretation and analysis process, a dynamic triangulation process that figures prominently in Liantas's hermeneutic circle of rhetorical analysis. In addition, my understanding and interpretation of the data and the study findings are also influenced by my past experiences, background and upbringing, language learning and teaching experiences, beliefs system, epistemological (axiological) stances, and my ways of thinking and perceiving the world around me—my own positionality. I am also aware and recognize that these data sets and findings could be interpreted and understood differently by another researcher based on their background, experiences, and the way they view the world around them.

Lastly, this study was influenced by the number of participants who participated, the collection of VP idioms selected, and the purposeful utilization of specific movie clips encompassing those ten VP idioms. Only five doctoral-level second language learners participated in this study and I utilized ten VP idioms, each one of which was depicted in a short movie clip. All assertions and/or claims made in this dissertation are solely based on the results I collected from those doctoral participants and the idiom-infused movie clips I used.

### **Future Recommendations**

After conducting this study, I identified a few areas for further examination and exploration. These areas pertain to conducting the study in an in-person setting, conducting the same topic using mixed-methods research approach, and exploring the impact of learning styles on idiomatic learning and comprehension.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic and its influence on people's comfort in meeting others and sitting in closed quarters (i.e., a small research room), this study was conducted individually and

virtually via Teams. Future research could benefit from conducting this research in an in-person setting, as such mode of conducting interviews and IDT allow for a higher level of engagement between researcher and participants. This setting also allows for better reading of each other's body language, which, in turn, allows for a better reading of someone's interpersonal skills and emotions. This is not to say that visual meetings were not beneficial to the purposes of this study, but rather to say that there were some limitations, especially when two participants felt uncomfortable with the use of cameras and, as a result, opted to turn them off.

Another area of exploration could pertain to merging learning styles with the IDT. Going into this study, I was unaware of the fact that L2 learners would rely on their study skills and learning styles along with relying on various detection and interpretation skills. For instance, one participant relied on her note taking skills to aid her in detecting and interpreting the located VP idioms, while another participant relied on her inquisitive listening skills to locate the VP idioms as they sounded as "weird words" and out of context. Hence, future studies may want to examine how learning styles and needs influence their L2 idiomatic and figurative expressions learning and acquisition.

This study only explored the data from a qualitative standpoint, and future studies may want to incorporate a mixed-methods research as doing so would perhaps allow for a deeper look at the learning and comprehension of L2 VP idioms in short movie clips. A mixed-methods approach could inform the field on whether there is a significant difference in L2 idiomatics learning and comprehension when employing short movie clips to a larger population with a different profile. In addition, future research could consider other learning conditions such as: 1) L2 idiomatics in news, newspapers, or broadcasts, 2) idiomatics in songs, radio, or television shows, 3) idiomatics in novels, written or spoken advertisements, and 4) idiomatics in popular

social media. In the light of exploration areas here articulated, here are some potential research questions to guide future research:

- In what ways do IDT and Post IDT practice activities facilitate the learning of L2 idiomatics?
- What specific features of combining IDT and idiom etymology help learners understand L2 idiomatics?
- In what ways does the Conceptual-Semantic Distance between the learners' native language and second/foreign language affect learners' comprehension of L2 idiomatics in languages other than the ones studied to date?
- What role does learner autonomy play in L2 idiomatics comprehension and/or production?
- How do post IDT hands-on activities improve L2 learners' production of idiomatics?

So, why teach English VP idioms via movie-clips? The use of idiom-infused movie clips was not only motivational and “fun,” it also facilitated participants' learning of VP idioms. The 10 movie-clips context clues (audio and visual) combined with captions have contributed to these five participants' ability to detect and decipher the VP idioms selected in varying degrees based on their overall language and meaning-making skills. In fact, these five participants utilized a range of detection and meaning-making strategies when attempting to identify and deduce the meaning of the English VP idioms depicted in the movie clips. And yet, these participants faced challenges during the Idiom Detection Task in this study. Most seemed to rely on other skills such as note-taking, reading captions, reading facial, and analyzing tonal intonations, which aided in the guessing of meanings for the more challenging VP idioms. The strategies used by these participants were quite similar in nature, albeit with some degree of variation in actual

usage. This clearly indicates that the processing of idiomatics and English VP idioms among participants is far more similar than it is different.

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## APPENDIX A: PRE-STUDY SURVEY

### Instructions:

The purpose of this survey is to obtain information on your demographics, English language experience, and your knowledge and exposure to idiomatic expressions and Vivid Phrasal Idioms. Please answer the following 19 questions. You should expect to spend 20-30 minutes completing the survey. Please try to answer all the questions accurately.

Note: You are responding to this survey because you gave your consent to take part in this study. Please understand that by proceeding with this survey, **you are agreeing to take part in research, you are confirming that you are 18 years of age or older, and you are an International PhD student from USF.** Your information will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only.

### Part 1: Demographic Information

Questions 1-5 refer to your personal and educational background.

1. Please type your full name:
2. Please type your USF Email address
3. What is your first language? (please type your language name here)
4. How long have you lived in the United States?
  - This is my first semester in the United States (I have been in the US for less than three months)
  - From 3 months - to a year
  - From a year to two years
  - More than two years
5. What is your overall TOEFL or IELTS score? (enter the name of the test and your test score below)

### Part 2: English Language Experience and Level

Questions 9 and 10 refer to your experience with the English language.

9. How many semesters of English language classroom learning experience do you have?
  - I have been in an English language classrooms between 1- 4 semesters
  - I have been in an English language classrooms for 4 semesters or more
10. How often do you watch an American movie (either in cinema, TV, or online)?
  - Hardly ever
  - Once a week
  - Around 2-4 times a week
  - More than 4 times a week

### **Part 3: Knowledge of and Exposure to Idiomatic Expressions and Vivid Phrasal Idioms**

Questions 8-19 refer to your experience with idiomatic expressions and/or Vivid Phrasal Idioms.

8. In your own words, define an idiomatic expression?

9. Have you ever been exposed to idiomatic expressions before?

- Yes
- No

10. In your own words, define Vivid Phrasal Idioms?

11. Have you ever been exposed to vivid phrasal idioms before?

- Yes
- No

12. Would you be interested in learning about idiomatic expressions or Vivid Phrasal idioms as part of your English language study?

- Yes
- No

13. In your opinion, are idiomatic expressions different from vivid phrasal idioms?

- Yes
- No

14. If yes, can you tell me, in your own words, how they are different?

15. If you were to read an idiom in isolation (an idiom that is standing alone with no image or text around it), how confident would you be in interpreting and understanding what it means?

(Choose one answer)

- Always
- Very Often
- About half the time
- Sometimes
- Never

16. How confident are you in your ability to detect, interpret, and understand the meaning of an idiomatic expression and/or Vivid Phrasal idioms shown in movies?

- Very confident
- Confident
- Moderately confident
- Not confident
- Other (please specify)

17. Overall, how satisfied are you with your present knowledge of idioms in the foreign language? (choose one answer)

1. Extremely Satisfied
2. Somewhat Satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. Somewhat dissatisfied
5. Extremely dissatisfied

18. Do you think it is important to learn about idiomatic expression and/or Vivid Phrasal idioms?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- I am not sure

19. Would you be interested in learning about idiomatic expression and/or Vivid Phrasal idioms through the use of movie clips?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- I am not sure

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this pre-study survey. Please use this link to choose a time to meet with me for an online Idiom Detection Task (Activity) via Teams. In this task, we will watch some movie-clips that has idioms in them, and I will want you to tell me what the idiom means (in your own words). Calendly Link: <https://calendly.com/rasha1/testing>

## APPENDIX B: IDIOM DETECTION TASK AND INSTRUCTIONS

**Instructions:** *In this activity, I am going to share my screen with you to present to you the instructions, and the idioms shown in the movie clips. Before we begin, I wanted to ask if you are ok with being recorded?*

### What is a Vivid Phrasal Idiom?

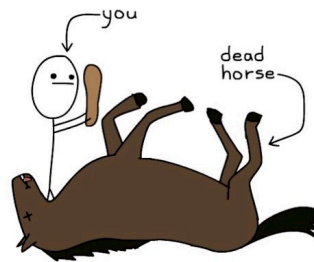
VP idioms are idioms that have literal and figurative meanings, and it provokes a mental image when heard/read.

**For example:** He is *beating a dead horse*.

#### Meanings:

Literal: someone is beating a dead horse

Figurative: someone is wasting energy on a lost cause or a situation that cannot be changed.



---

### Instructions

- You will be shown 10 Vivid Phrasal (VP) idioms. Each idiom will be shown in its own movie clip. Each VP idiom and its movie clip will be shown separately from the others. You are asked to detect, interpret, and show your understanding of each of VP idioms.
  - In this task, I will show you the movie twice. The first time is for you to focus on locating the idiom, and the second time is for you to focus on interpreting and showing your understanding while thinking out loud.
-

## Instructions continued...

- The IDT task is expected to take up to 15-20 minutes. Each VP idiom and its movie clip will last no longer than a minute. During this task, you are asked to Think Aloud during the second time you view the idiom.

--- Thinking Aloud is telling out-loud your thinking as you are participating in an activity or answering a question. Simply, as you watch the movie clip, I need you to think-aloud and to say out-loud what you are thinking (including difficulties or problem-solving strategies or techniques) as you try to detect, interpret, and show your understanding of each of VP idioms.

---

## Instructions continued...

- As you see/hear VP idioms, please express your thoughts in as much details as possible. Feel free to point out anything that helped you detect, interpret, or show your understanding of each of VP idioms shown in the movie clips.
  - Once you locate/detect the VP idiom, please say it out loud. If you know the meaning, please say it out loud too. Please also tell of what helped you find it and understand its meaning.
-

## Instructions continued...

- If you cannot locate/detect the VP idiom, or its meaning please feel free to say so. You can still try to guess and offer what you think, if you wish to of course.
  - Once you are done with an idiom, I will be here to start the next movie clip.
  - I have included two example idioms here to show you how the Idiom Detection Task and Thinking-Aloud is done.
- 

## What is next?

### Two steps:

1. Post-study survey (to be completed within three days after the IDT).
2. Choose a time to meet for the post-study semi-structured interview (to be completed within two weeks of the IDT).

Both links will be sent to you via email asap.

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## APPENDIX C: POST-STUDY SURVEY

**Purpose:** The purpose of this survey is to obtain information on strategies/techniques you used to identify (find) the idiom and to deduce (understand) the meaning of the VP idioms depicted (shown/used) in the movie clips you have been shown. This survey will also obtain information about your feelings and thoughts of this study and this idiom instruction method (learning idioms via movie clips).

This survey includes 4 sections and 30 questions in total. You should expect to spend 30-40 minutes to complete the survey. Please answer all questions to your best ability.

**Instructions:** This survey includes different types of questions. It includes multiple choice, written answers, and a Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Some questions will ask you to provide additional feedback/explanations. Your feedback/explanation will be very much appreciated.

### Part 1: Idiomatic Detection Strategies

Questions 1-5 will ask about your ability to detect Vivid Phrasal (VP) idioms depicted in movie clips.

1. What is your name?
2. Did you find it challenging to detect VP idioms shown in the movie clips? If yes, please explain.
3. Did the conversation in the movie clip help you detect the idiom? If yes, please explain.
4. Did the conversation in the movie clip help you figure out the idiom meaning? If yes, please explain.
5. Do you feel that learning these idioms in context and in the movie-clip has helped you understand and interpret the idiom meaning? If yes, please explain.

### Part 2: Idiom Detection Strategies

Questions 6 and 7 will ask about the strategies you used to detect VP idioms in the movie clips.

6. Did you use a specific strategy or method to detect the VP idiom in the movie clips? If yes, please explain.
7. Did you use a specific strategy or method to figure out the VP idiom meaning in the movie clips? If yes, please explain.

### Part 3: Feelings and Thoughts About the Study

Questions 8-11 will ask about your feelings and thoughts of this study and this idiom instruction method (learning idioms via movie clips).

8. Did you enjoy participating in this study? Why or why not?
9. Did you feel frustrated during any part of this study? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If yes, please explain.

10. Did you learn anything new from this study? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If yes, please explain.

11. After having participated in this study, do you think it is important to teach and learn idioms? Why or why not?

**Part 4: Please rate the following statements from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree**

Questions 12-30 ask about your opinion of the following statements. This section uses a 5-choices scale. After you read each statement carefully, please use the scale to indicate the degree in which you agree or disagree to the following statement.

12. Idioms should be included in the foreign language curriculum.
13. Idioms should be current, interesting, and useful in real-life situations.
14. Idioms should be used for classroom practice and testing.
15. I would like to study idioms on a regular basis.
16. I would like to learn idioms along with the texts and contexts that support their use.
17. Verbal (textual or audio) and visual (graphic, photographic, or video-graphic) information help activate my knowledge of idioms.
18. Illustrations and graphics support the study of idioms.
19. Incorporation of idiom graphics and illustrations should be a main part of instructional activities.
20. Idioms should be presented in a way that support my learning styles.
21. Idioms should be presented in a manner that mirrors real-life language use.
22. Idioms should be taught via movie clips that show the idiom in context and in use
23. Authentic audio/video recordings and real texts should accompany the study of idioms.
24. When I am learning idioms, my main goal is to make sense of what I read or hear in context.
25. When learning idioms, one should start with the most useful ones.
26. I like to work things out on my own when learning idioms.
27. I think idioms are useful in everyday communication.
28. It is useful to me to predict the meaning of idioms.
29. I use many different strategies when learning idioms.
30. I would like to know what other strategies I can use to make better sense of idioms.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this post-study survey. Please use this link to choose a time to meet with me for an online interview via Teams. I would like to ask you a few more questions about your survey answers, your experience in this study, and your experience with idioms and movies in general. Link: <https://calendly.com/rasha1/idiom-detection-task-for-rasha-s-dissertation-clone>

## APPENDIX D: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Interview Instructions

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me. In this interview, I aim to collect further information/insights from you about your experience in this study and to collect further insights about your experience with learning Vivid Phrasal idioms via movie clips. I have prepared a few questions for us and this interview should not be longer than 45 minutes.

1. Were the movie clips you watched helpful in detecting VP idioms?
  - What aspects of these movies have helped you detect the idiom?
2. Were these movie clips helpful in understanding these VP idioms meanings?
  - What aspects of these movies have helped you figure out the meaning of idioms after you found them?
3. What kind of strategies did you use to detect idioms depicted in the movie clips?
4. If you had been presented with these idioms outside the movie clip and its context, would you have been able to find and understand the idioms the same way?
7. Did you enjoy locating these idioms?
8. If you are to give 2-3 suggestions on helping students detect idioms based on the Idiom Detection Task, what would you suggest?
9. Do you think using movie clips in teaching and learning idioms is an effective way? Why or why not?
10. Do you have any other comments, suggestions, or anything to add in regard to this Study?

## APPENDIX E: IRB FORMS



### EXEMPT DETERMINATION

October 25, 2021

Rasha Alghamdi  
6527 Jamesville Dr  
building 11  
Tampa, FL 33617

Dear Rasha Alghamdi:

On 10/25/2021, the IRB reviewed and approved the following protocol:

Application Type:	Initial Study
IRB ID:	STUDY003324
Review Type:	Exempt 2, 3
Title:	Using Movie-clips in Understanding Vivid-Phrasal Idiom Meanings
Protocol:	• Alghamdi, Rasha-HRP-503a - Social-Behavioral Protocol;

The IRB determined that this protocol meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review.

In conducting this protocol, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Please note, as per USF policy, once the exempt determination is made, the application is closed in BullsIRB. This does not limit your ability to conduct the research. Any proposed or anticipated change to the study design that was previously declared exempt from IRB oversight must be submitted to the IRB as a new study prior to initiation of the change. However, administrative changes, including changes in research personnel, do not warrant a modification or new application.

Ongoing IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities impact the exempt determination, please submit a new request to the IRB for a determination.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Walker  
IRB Research Compliance Administrator

---

#### Institutional Review Boards / Research Integrity & Compliance

FWA No. 00001669  
University of South Florida / 3702 Spectrum Blvd., Suite 165 / Tampa, FL 33612 / 813-974-5638

Page 1 of 1

Completion Certificate of Humanities Responsible Conduct of Research Course



Completion Date 01-Apr-2021  
Expiration Date 31-Mar-2024  
Record ID 25303334

This is to certify that:

**Rasha Alghamdi**

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

**Human Research**  
(Curriculum Group)  
**Social / Behavioral Investigators and Key Personnel**  
(Course Learner Group)  
**1 - Basic Course**  
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

**University of South Florida**

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.



Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at [www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w7f025fc1-70ea-4e5c-9520-8129252c3c82-25303334](http://www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w7f025fc1-70ea-4e5c-9520-8129252c3c82-25303334)

Completion Certificate of USF IRB Student Researcher Workshop



## **Informed Consent to Participate in Research**

Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study

**Title:** Using Movie-clips in Understanding Vivid-Phrasal Idiom Meanings

**Study #** STUDY003324

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**Overview:** You are being asked to take part in a research study. The information in this document should help you to decide if you would like to participate. The sections in this Overview provide the basic information about the study. More detailed information is provided in the remainder of the document.

Study Staff: This study is being led by *Rasha Alghamdi*, who is a PhD student at the University of South Florida. This person is called the Principal Investigator. She is being guided in this research by Dr. John I. Liontas, faculty in the Technology in Education and Second Language Acquisition doctoral program. Other approved research staff may act on behalf of the Principal Investigator.

Study Details: This study is being conducted at INTO USF and is supported by Dr. John I. Liontas, a faculty in the College of Education at University of South Florida. The purpose of the study is to collect and analyze data on the perceptions of international students, who are enrolled in Academic English levels 3-6, regarding the use of movie-clips as a tool to learn vivid phrasal idioms. Participants will participate in 4 Tasks, totaling up to 2-2.5 hours.

First, the participants will receive a digital link to a 20-item background information survey. By the end of the background information survey, there will be a link for the participants to use to choose a time/day meet for the Idiom Detection Task IDT (i.e., a task in which students view movie clips and detect the used idiom) is followed by Thinking Aloud (TA) approach to allow participants to share their thoughts as they detect, comprehend, and interpret idioms at hand.

Once the IDT is completed, there will be a 30-items post-study survey, followed by 10-items semi-structured interviews; both of which is completed within two weeks of the IDT completion.

This study will be done completely online via Teams, as no face-to-face contact is required.

Participants: You are being asked to take part because you are an international student in an Academic English course (Levels 3-6). We want to understand how you detect, comprehend, and interpret Vivid Phrasal idioms embedded in movie-clips.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to participate and may stop your participation at any time. There will be no penalties or loss of benefits or opportunities if you do not participate or decide to stop once you start. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your studies, job status, employment record, employee evaluations, or advancement opportunities. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your student status, course grade, recommendations, or access to future courses or training opportunities

Benefits, Compensation, and Risk: We do not know if you will receive any benefit from your participation. There is no cost to participate. You will not be compensated for your participation. This research is considered minimal risk. Minimal risk means that study risks are the same as the risks you face in daily life.

Confidentiality: Even if we publish the findings from this study, we will keep your study information private and confidential. Anyone with the authority to look at your records must keep them confidential.

---

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### **Why are you being asked to take part?**

You are being asked to take part in this study to share your perceptions on detecting, comprehending, and interpreting Vivid Phrasal idioms embedded in movie-clips.

### **Study Procedures**

If you take part in this study, you will be asked to complete 4 tasks (read below), and the total time allotted for participation is between two to two and half hours.

1. Task 1: a 20-item background information pre-study survey (expected time 20-25 minutes).
2. Task 2: Idiom Detection Task IDT (i.e., a task in which students view movie clips and detect the used idiom) is followed by Thinking Aloud (TA) approach to allow participants to share their thoughts as they detect, comprehend, and interpret idioms. This task will last between 30-45 minutes. This task will be audio/video recorded.
3. Task 3: a 30-items post-study survey. The post study survey is used to determine participants' perceptions of using movie clips as an idiom instructional method. This survey can take up to 30 minutes to complete.
4. Task 4: 10-items semi-structured interviews. As for the interview, it will be used to further inquire about participants' perceptions of the whole learning experience. The interview is also expected to last 30-45 minutes. This task will be audio/video recorded.

### **Alternatives / Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal**

You do not have to participate in this research study. You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study. Decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your student status (course grade) or job status.



**Benefits and Risks**

We are unsure if you will receive any benefits by taking part in this research study. This research is considered to be minimal risk.

**Compensation**

You will receive no payment or other compensation for taking part in this study.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**

We will do our best to keep your records private and confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Certain people may need to see your study records. The only people who will be allowed to see these records are:

- The research team, including the Principal Investigator and study coordinator.
- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study. For example, individuals who provide oversight on this study may need to look at your records. This is done to make sure that we are doing the study in the right way. They also need to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety.
- Any agency of the federal, state, or local government that regulates this research. This includes the Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP).
- The University of South Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB) and its related staff who have oversight responsibilities for this study, and staff in USF Research Integrity and Compliance.

Your information or samples collected as part of the research, even if identifiers are removed, will NOT be used or distributed for future research studies.

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not include your name. We will not publish anything that would let people know who you are.

It is possible, although unlikely, that unauthorized individuals could gain access to your responses because you are responding online. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. No guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet. However, your participation in this online survey involves risks similar to a person's everyday use of the Internet. If you complete and submit an anonymous survey and later request your data be withdrawn, this may or may not be possible as the researcher may be unable to extract anonymous data from the database.

### **Contact Information**

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, call Rasha Alghamdi at (470)307-8234. If you have questions about your rights, complaints, or issues as a person taking part in this study, call the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638 or contact the IRB by email at [RSCH-IRB@usf.edu](mailto:RSCH-IRB@usf.edu).

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not let anyone know your name. We will not publish anything else that would let people know who you are. You can print a copy of this consent form for your records.

I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by proceeding with this survey, I am agreeing to take part in research, being recorded during Task 2 and Task 4 as listed above on the second page, and that I am 18 years of age or older.

Pre-Study Survey Link: [https://usf.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_dd5cZxSLrfKiHjw](https://usf.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dd5cZxSLrfKiHjw)

## APPENDIX F: RECRUITMENT EMAIL AND FLYER

Dear International Doctoral Students,

I would like to ask you to partake in a research study titled, *Using Movie-clips in Understanding Vivid-Phrasal Idiom Meanings*. My name is Rasha Alghamdi and I am the Principal Investigator in charge of this research study.

The purpose of this study is to explore second language learners' (specifically those at the doctoral level) understanding of idiomatic expressions employed in American movie clips in order to inform the teaching and learning of idiomatics in second language acquisition. I am interested in knowing if you can detect, comprehend, and interpret VP idioms infused in American movie clips.

Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and may withdraw from this study at any time and for any reason. You do not need to provide an explanation.

You will be asked to complete four tasks:

- 1) a 20 questions pre-study survey (takes 20 minutes),
- 2) a 10 Idiom Detection Task (takes 30 minutes),
- 3) a 30 questions post-study survey (takes 20-30 minutes),
- 4) a one-time semi-structured interview with 10-questions (takes 30 minutes)

This study will be done completely online, no face-to-face contact is required. And all four steps can be completed in about 2 hours. All participants will use the Qualtrics survey link located at the end of the Consent Form to complete the pre-study survey. The Idiom Detection Task and the post-study semi-structured interview will be conducted via Teams at a mutually agreed upon time, which will be video recorded.

International Doctoral students from USF are eligible to participate in this study. You will not be compensated. However, potential benefits for participating in this research study include learning about idiomatics, and your ability to detect, comprehend, and interpret VP idioms embedded in American movie clips.

**If you are interested in participating in the four tasks, please read the attached informed consent form. Once you have read the informed consent form and agree to participate in all the tasks, please click on the link (at the end of the Informed Consent) to complete the Pre-Study Questionnaire.**

**After completing the Pre-Study Questionnaire, please follow the Calendly link below (and also available at the bottom of the Pre-study Survey) to sign up for the Idiom Detection Task. If you have any questions/concerns about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me.**

**Calendly Link:** <https://calendly.com/rasha1/testing>



## Piece of cake

Something easy to do.

### INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS NEEDED

to participate in a research study  
on English Idioms

*Are At least 18 years old?*

*Is your native language NOT English?*

*Have you scored at least 5.0/9.0 in IELTS and 61/120 in TOEFL?*

*Are you an international Ph.D. student currently studying at USF?*

*And are you interested in learning idioms?*

If you answered yes to all the above questions, then I would appreciate your participation in my study on "Using Movie-clips in Understanding Vivid-Phrasal Idiom Meanings"

#### About the study

The purpose of this research study is to understand the influence of movie clips on English as a Second Language (ESL) students' detection, comprehension, and interpretation of Vivid-Phrasal (VP) idioms. This is important because knowing about the influence of using movie clips on learning English idioms may help English language teachers and learners use new idioms learning methods.

#### How much time will it take?

It will take approximately 2 hours of your time. It will be completed in 4 stages, and everything is done online via Teams. The four stages are:

- 1) a 20 questions before-study survey (takes 20 minutes),
- 2) a 10 Idiom Detection Task (takes 30 minutes),
- 3) a 30 questions after-study survey (takes 20-30 minutes),
- 4) a one-time interview with 10-questions (takes 30 minutes)

#### NAME OF THE STUDY:

"Using Movie-clips in Understanding Vivid-Phrasal Idiom Meanings" (USF IRB # STUDY003324)

**Want to find out more about the research study?**

**Contact Rasha at: [rasha1@usf.edu](mailto:rasha1@usf.edu)**