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Saudi EFL Learners' Detection and Comprehension of English Vivid Phrasal Idioms: A Conceptual Replication Study

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Saudi EFL Learners' Detection and Comprehension of English Vivid Phrasal Idioms:

A Conceptual Replication Study

by

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of the requirements for the degree of
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DEDICATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

This study was a mixed method research. The quantitative part investigated Saudi English learners' English vivid phrasal (VP) idiom detection differences by lexical level, semi-lexical level, and post-lexical level, as well as comprehension and interpretation by zero-context and full-context conditions. It also researched the extent to which Saudi English learners differed in their scores on the measure of participants' perceptions on the need for including VP idioms in classrooms. The qualitative part of this study investigated the challenges Saudi English learners faced while completing the detection and comprehension tasks and the strategies they used to detect and comprehend the VP idioms.

The participants in this experimental study included 166 Saudi undergraduate advance English language proficiency level students from a midwestern university randomly assigned to the zero context or full context group. Data collection was fully online using Qualtrics® to administer the five instruments: a Demographic Questionnaire, two idiomatic performance tasks (the Idiom Detection Task, the Zero Context vs. the Full Context Tasks), a Self-reflection Report, and an Idiom Needs Survey. Data analysis for this study involved within-between ANOVA and qualitative analyses of the learners' challenges and strategies while completing the tasks.

The results indicated a clear interaction between group and lexical level supporting the Idiom Diffusion Model (Liontas, 1999). There was a difference found in detection between types of VP idioms. Qualitative analysis of responses show that Saudi learners of English reported that

comprehending VP idioms was challenging. The most reported strategy used to detect and comprehend a VP idiom was context. The important implication of this research is that Saudi learners of English would benefit from instruction in strategies that help facilitate their expression of what they understood the VP idioms to mean. Targeted instruction in articulation strategies when describing observations and thought processes may indeed help increase students' awareness of VP idiom metacognition.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

English idiomatics is an area that is increasingly being researched and is inherently present in every language (Hinkel, 2019; Nation & Webb, 2011; Liontas, 2019). Idiomatics is an umbrella term that encompasses the pragmatical way a native speaker uses language (Liontas, 2021). To elaborate, idiomatics covers everything a native speaker says and does with a language, and conforming to culturally accepted behaviors and attitudes, including but not limited to, study habits and skills (Liontas, 2021). Vahid Dastjerdi and A'lipour (2010) elaborated that an expression can be considered idiomatic if native speakers of a language deem it to be natural and accepted. Idiomatics indicates second language (L2) learners' language competence or level of proficiency in a language (Hinkel, 2019; Kathpalia & Carmel, 2011; Nation & Webb, 2011), and teaching idiomatics should progress as proficiency level progresses (Liontas, 2019). Even so, it has been an area that is overlooked in language teaching, although it is part of native speakers' way of expression (Hinkel, 2019; Nation & Webb, 2011; Vahid Dastjerdi & A'lipour, 2010).

Communication is a large part of why learners learn another language and is a way individuals' express themselves and become part of a community. However, it might be challenging for some to learn English due to the idiomatics involved. Kathpalia and Carmel (2011) expressed that L2 learner's ability to interpret metaphors depend on their language proficiency (p. 274).

There are a multitude of different factors that go into learning a second or foreign language. English idiomatics is just one pragmatic part and parcel of in learning a language and learning how to appropriately use the language based on culturally accepted norms in each language community. Berbeco (2016) stated that models such as ones proposed by Krashen like the *comprehensible input* have gained 'traction' and explained that increased comprehensible input might lead to positive language acquisition results. This researcher further explained that L2 learners' language proficiency might increases with an increased exposure to that language (Berbeco, 2016).

In recent years, the number of students learning English as a second language (L2) in Saudi Arabia has increased due to the educational system starting to include teaching English at the Elementary school level (Moskovsky, 2019, p. 4). Moreover, many Saudi learners are coming to the United States to continue their higher education due to government and job-related scholarships (Alrahaili, 2019). This increase in university level student numbers is reason enough to investigate these students' perceptions about learning English, particularly English idiomatic language.

Statement of the Problem

Idiomatic language encompasses language learning and use (Nation & Webb, 2011). Second language learners that do not use idiomatic language tend to lack native-like communication such as fluency and accuracy (Nation & Webb, 2011; Vahid Dastjerdi & A'lipour, 2010). Idiomatic language learning needs to be explicitly taught and the lack thereof would make learning a language very difficult (Hinkel, 2019; Prodromou (2003). English idiomatics includes a variety of concepts that challenge most L2 learners' and remains an omnipresent feature of language production (Hinkel, 2019; Liontas, 2019; Prodromou, 2003).

2

Yet, the teaching of them remains as elusive as ever (Liontas, 2002a, 2015, 2018a, 2018b, 2019). Prodromou (2003) expressed that idiomatic language is paradoxical and might hinder L2 learners' acquisition of that language feature. The concept of avoidance of L2 idioms or idiomatic language depended on the similarity between the L1 and L2, and avoidance is another aspect that needs to be considered when teaching idiomatic expressions or figurative language (Liontas, 2018a). Given the difficulty idiomatics presents in learning a new language, there needs to be a concerted effort to place idiomatics at the center of the English language curriculum (Liontas, 2019).

Previous research had indicated that Saudi learners of English expressed their need for explicit teaching of learning strategies and idiomatic language. Second language learners found it challenging to understand idiomatic language expressions such as idioms (Al-Houti & Aldaihani, 2020), slang (Young & Snead, 2017), metaphors (Aleshtar & Dowlatabadi, 2014; Ilinska et al., 2016) – during lectures and conversations with native speakers, which hindered the communication. Previous research also shows that Saudi learners of English have expressed their frustration and difficulty in comprehending English idiomatics and would benefit from explicit instruction (Aleshtar & Dowlatabadi, 2014; Al-Houti & Aldaihani, 2020; Alshaikhi, 2018; Alsofyani, 2019; Ilinska et al., 2016; Liontas, 1999; Liontas, 2017; Young & Snead, 2017).

However, one of the factors that is affecting research in this area is a lack of consensus about the terms used to identify these language features due to varying categories, classifications, definitions, and generally accepted criteria (Hinkel, 2017; Kavka, & Zybert, 2004; Liontas, 2019; Nation & Webb, 2011). This confusion contributes to the difficulty in identifying which language feature is being researched (Liontas, 2019; Nation & Webb, 2011).

Since idiomatic language is an area of difficulty for most L2 learners and is one way to

estimate students' language competence and proficiency (Hinkel, 2019; Kathpalia & Carmel, 2011; Nation & Webb, 2011; Liontas, 2019), it is necessary to continue researching and analyzing idiomatic language in hopes it supports L2 curriculum development to address learners' needs. Accordingly, investigating strategies L2 learners could use to overcome these challenges is one way to understand what educators need to incorporate in their classrooms to aid students' learning. Hence, the need to explore, understand, and describe the challenges learners face is imperative to facilitate their learning a L2.

Purpose of the Study

The current research is a conceptual replication of Liontas (1999) study, which means some aspects in the current research are identical to the initial research while other aspects were modified to fit the current research population, setting, and cultural and language background (Polio, 2012). A search of the current research indicates no previous investigation of vivid phrasal (VP) idioms with Saudi learners of English, nor VP idioms with the lexical analysis of idiomatic relationship between the L1 and L2 with Saudi learners of English. Thus, the current research will fill an important gap in the literature.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and examine Saudi English learners' detection and comprehension of English VP idiom with and without context, explore learners scores in the idiomatic performance tasks in the three lexical level types of VP idioms, and explore learners' perceptions about idiomatic language and their challenges and metacognitive strategies.

Research Questions

The current research aims to answer the following questions, where the first three questions are quantitative in nature while the fourth question is qualitative:

1. What are the differences between Saudi EFL learners' idiom detection task scores in the lexical level, the semi-lexical level, and the post-lexical level of English vivid phrasal idioms?

2. What are the differences between Saudi EFL learners' idiom comprehension task scores in the lexical level, the semi-lexical level, and the post-lexical level of English vivid phrasal idioms between the zero-context condition and the full-context condition?

3. What are Saudi EFL learners' perceptions on the need for learning idioms in second and foreign languages?

4. In what ways do Saudi EFL learners detect and comprehend English vivid phrasal idioms?

Research Hypotheses

The current study tests three hypotheses, which reflect the quantitative nature of the first three questions:

1. Saudi EFL learner's lexical level (LL) idiom detection task scores will be statistically significantly higher than semi-lexical level (SLL) idiom detection task scores which will, in turn, be statistically significantly higher than the post-lexical level (PLL) idiom detection task scores.

2. For Saudi EFL learners, a main effect of groups will show Group 1 having a statistically significantly lower comprehension task mean score than Group 2 and a main effect of lexical level will show LL as having a statistically significant higher comprehension task mean score than the SLL comprehension task mean score which will, in turn, be statistically significantly higher than the PLL idiom comprehension task mean score.

3. The mean rating of Saudi EFL learners on the Idiom Needs Survey will be higher for those in the zero-context condition group than those in the full context condition group.

Significance of the Study

This study has the potential to aid educators and students in (a) understanding Saudi EFL learners' challenges of detecting and comprehending English idioms; (b) becoming aware of the learning strategies that Saudi EFL learners use to detect and comprehend English idioms; and (c) providing pedagogical implications which incorporates learners' perspectives concerning English idiomatic language, which is likely to benefit educators and students alike. Thus, it would add a missing piece to teaching English idiomatics to L2 learners and may help reduce learners' anxiety when socializing with native English speakers by lowering their affective filter and facilitating their idiomatic knowledge comprehension.

Design of the Study

The current research is an mixed method research, which means qualitative and quantitative analysis were used to investigate Saudi learners detection and comprehension of English vivid phrasal (VP) idioms, the effects of context on the learners scores, the effects of three idiomatic lexical level types, the learners' perceptions on the need of incorporating idioms in a second and foreign language curriculum, and the metacognitive strategies the learners' use to detect and comprehend vivid phrasal idioms. The current research is a conceptual replication of Liontas's (1999) initial research. However, it is not an approximate replication due to the population being different, which entails *adapting* the research instruments, materials, data collection and analysis method, and research design to fit the intended populations' cultural and language background, which entailed a professional panel to select materials and check the appropriateness of instruments. The population of the current study includes students enrolled at a midwestern university in Saudi Arabia. The participants' proficiency level is advanced English

language proficiency level based on the English language institutes (ELI) placement test.

Definition of Terms

In the current research, for ease of presentation and discussion, this section includes multiple terms with their definitions. This section also provides necessary explanations of how these terms are used in the study.

*Ad**a**pted* means that the instruments were changed or adjusted to fit the current research population.

*Ad**o**pted* means that the instrument was used as is, or that minor changes such as the target language being investigated is changed to fit the current research population.

Assessment is "the process of planning, gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data for decision making" (Gottlieb, 2016).

Benchmark Assessments is "a measure generally used to predict performance on an annual high-stakes test" (Gottlieb, 2016).

Classroom Assessment is the "collection of data as part of the instructional routine (may also be considered instructional assessment)" (Gottlieb, 2016).

Cognitive Strategies "involves learners interacting and manipulating what is to be learned" (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; as cited in Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013).

Common Assessment is "a measure that is crafted based on mutually agreed-upon decisions by educators for uniform use across multiple classrooms" (Gottlieb, 2016).

Context is the background story or additional information that is provided in a paragraph that explains the situation and provides the meaning of the idiom within the context.

Criterion-Referenced Assessment is "a measure whose results are reported in reference to established criteria, such as standards, rather than by ranking student performance" (Gottlieb, 2016).

Diagnostic Assessment is "a measure whose results pinpoint the extent of mastery of specific skills" (Gottlieb, 2016).

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is used to identify learners who are learning English in a country where English is not the main and first language used, so students who are learning English in a foreign country, which means outside of the United States of America (USA), Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Therefore, they are surrounded by the native language being used in the foreign country where they live or study English, and they can use English only in class (Moreb, 2016).

English as a Second Language (ESL) is used to identify learners who are learning English in a country where the English language is the main and first language used, so students who are learning English in the USA, Canada, Australia, and in the United Kingdom. Therefore, they are surrounded by English and will need to use it outside of class (Moreb, 2016).

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is for students who are intensively learning English in order to study or do research in an academic setting (Moreb, 2016).

English Language Learners (ELLs) is another term used by some researchers and educator in the field of second or foreign language to represent learners of the English language, which is also referred to as *ELs*.

English Learners (ELs) are individuals who are learning the English language at various stages of proficiency regardless of their educational setting (ESL/EFL), usually K-12 settings (Moreb, 2016).

Full Context Task (FCT) aims to explore L2 learners' ability to comprehend idioms from within context. This task contains 15 idiomatic expressions presented bolded within context – the same idioms that were used in the ZCT, and the 15 idioms were categorized into three lexical level types of VP idioms (the lexical level, the semi-lexical level, and the post-lexical level) (Liontas, 1999), which is Task 2 in Group 2.

G1 stands for Group 1.

G1&2 stands for the total sample which includes Group 1 and Group 2.

G2 stands for Group 2.

Idiom Comprehension was one of the questions in both idiomatic tasks where participants were required to provide a meaning for the idioms in the tasks.

Idiom Detection Task (IDT) aims to explore L2 learners' ability to detect idioms from within context. This task contains 15 idiomatic expressions embedded in context, and the 15 idioms were categorized into three lexical level types of VP idioms (the lexical level, the semi-lexical level, and the post-lexical level) (Liontas, 1999), which is Task 1.

Idiom Detection was the objective of the first idiomatic task where participants were required to find the idiom that was embedded within the context.

Idiomatic Competence 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. It includes knowledge the speaker-hearer has of what constitutes appropriate and accurate idiomatic language behavior in relation to particular communicative goals as well as linguistic (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics) and pragmatic (non-linguistic, paralinguistic, sociolinguistic/ functional, discourse, personal/world, intra/intercultural) knowledge" (Liontas, 2015, p. 623 & 625).

Idiomatic Performance "consists of the actual use of these two types of knowledge in understanding and producing appropriate and accurate idiomatic conduct in diverse social contexts" (Liontas, 2015, p. 625).

Idiomatic Usage "makes evident the extent to which language users demonstrate their knowledge of idiomaticity" and this "can be studied by focusing attention on the extent to which learners have mastered the formal properties of the linguistic systems of idioms" (Liontas, 2015, p. 625-626).

Idiomatic Use "makes evident the extent to which language users demonstrate their ability to use their knowledge of idiomaticity for effective communication in actual social situations" and this "can be studied by examining the ways in which learners employ these properties to interpret and produce culturally appropriate meanings during the production of idiomatic phrases" (Liontas, 2015, p. 626).

Idiomatics is "the scientific study of idiomatic language and figurative language. Idiomatic language is the natural mode of expression and phrasing of a language, that is, language that uses, contains, or denotes peculiar or characteristic expressions, words, or phrases native speakers would routinely use and consider natural and correct. Figurative language is the extraordinary creative use of language that deviates from the conventional work order and plain meaning to suggest meaning rather than directly giving meaning, that is, any figure of speech that plays imaginatively with the meaning of words in order to build and furnish layers of meaning beyond the purely literal for particular descriptive effect" (Liontas, 2021).

Idioms are "expressions whose meanings are only known through common use and whose meanings are not predictable from the usual meanings of the actual words in them" (Liontas, 2018c)

10

Idioms' Lexical Level, there are three types of idioms in this research: the lexical level, the semi-lexical level, and the post-lexical level (Liontas, 1999).

Learners' first language (L1) is the learners' native language (Moreb, 2016).

Learners' second language (L2) is the learners' second language, regardless of which language they are learning at the time, which could be their third, fourth, or even fifth language (Moreb, 2016).

Learning is defined as "acquiring knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience, or instruction" (Brown, 2014, p. 375).

Lexical Level (LL) refers to the idiomatic phrase that has literally the same wording in the L1 and L2 and creates the same image in the mind of learners (Liontas, 1999), which is Level 1.

Metacognitive Strategies are "strategies that are used to plan, monitor, and evaluate a learning task" (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; as cited in Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013).

Native Speakers of a Language (NSs) refers to an individual's first language which is his or her native language (Moreb, 2016).

Non-Native Speakers of a Language (NNSs) refers to an individual who is learning a new language other than his or her native language (Moreb, 2016).

Post-Lexical Level (PLL) refers to the idiomatic phrase that has words or images that come to mind that are totally different from those evoked in the L1 (Liontas, 1999), which is Level 3.

Saudi EFL Learners are Saudi Arabian students learning English as a second language (L2) in a foreign language (FL) setting.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) refers to the process of learning a second language other than your first language. (Saville-Troike, 2012).

Semi-Lexical Level (SLL) refers to the idiomatic phrase with most words similar between the L1 and L2, but some words or images that come to mind may be slightly different from those evoked in the L1 (Liontas, 1999), which is Level 2.

Social/Affective Strategies are those strategies "where learners interact with other persons or 'use affective control to assist learning'" (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; as cited in Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013).

Teaching is defined as "showing or helping someone to learn, giving instructions; guiding; providing with knowledge; causing to know or understand" (Brown, 2014, p. 382).

The Associative Stage is the "controlled idiomatic knowledge or partial control" (Liontas, 2015, p. 626).

The Autonomous Stage is the "automatic idiomatic knowledge or full control" (Liontas, 2015, p. 626).

The Declarative Stage is the "declarative idiomatic knowledge or receptive control" (Liontas, 2015, p. 626).

The Idiom Diffusion Model (IDM) of Second Language proposed by Liontas (2002d, p. 182) is an outgrowth from *The Second Language Comprehension and interpretation Model of Vivid Phrasal idioms* that was developed by Liontas (1999). The IDM is used to describe the process of learners' construction of English VP idioms meaning, with or without context. The IDM has two learning phases: a prediction phase, and a confirmation, replacement, or reconstructive phase.

The LL idioms are unmarked items "(i.e., exact lexical items are present in both target and domain idiom evoking the same mental image)" (Liontas, 1999, p. 119).

The SLL and PLL idioms "are semi-marked and marked respectively (i.e., some or all of the

lexical items are specific to a particular language and evoke different mental images)" (Liontas, 1999, p. 119).

Transactional Idiom Analysis (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 concerned with identifying the factors that impede or enhance idiom comprehension and interpretation" (Liontas, 1999, p. 106).

Vivid Phrasal Idioms are idiomatic phrases that creates a vivid image in a person's mind when they encounter the phrase (e.g.: I've got your back, I feel like cloud 9, etc.), which has a figurative meaning that is not understood from its individual words (Liontas, 1999).

Zero Context Task (ZCT) aims to explore L2 learners' ability to detect idioms without context. This task contains 15 idiomatic expressions presented in isolation, and the 15 idioms were categorized into three lexical level types of VP idioms (the lexical level, the semi-lexical level, and the post-lexical level) (Liontas, 1999), which is Task 2 in Group 1.

Note: The instruments were the same between the initial research and the current research, but the sequence that was presented to the participants, the materials used in the instruments, and the scoring were different. Specifically, in Liontas's (1999) study, the sequence of the instruments was administered as follows: Pre-Questionnaire, Task 1 – Idiom Detection Task (IDT), Task 2 – the Zero Context Task (ZCT), and Task 3 – the Full Context Task (FCT), Post Summative Analysis, and Post-Questionnaire. The three tasks were given to all participants in the same order.

In the current research, however, the idiomatic performance tasks were divided between two groups: Group 1 and Group 2. The sequence of the instruments in the current study was

administered as follows: Demographic Questionnaire, Task 1 – Idiom Detection Task (IDT),

Task 2 – Idiom Comprehension Task (ICT): [Task 2 in Group 1 presented the idioms in isolation

(ZCT), and Task 2 in Group 2 presented the idioms bolded within context (FCT)], Self-reflection

Report, and Idiom Needs Survey.

Table 1

Liontas's (1999) Instruments vs. Current Study Instruments

	Liontas (1999) Initial Research			Current Research	
	CMI Group	**CMIV Group**		**Group 1**	**Group 2**
1	Pre-Questionnaire		1	Demographic Questionnaire	
2	Task 1 - Idiom Detection Task (IDT)		2	Task 1 – Idiom Detection Task (IDT)	
3	Task 2 - Zero Context Task (ZCT)		3	Task 2 – Idiom Comprehension Task (ICT)	
				Idioms in isolation (ZCT)	Idioms **bolded** in context (FCT)
4	Task 3 - Full Context Task (FCT)				
5	Post-task Summative Evaluation		4	Self-reflection Report	
6	Post-Questionnaire		5	Idiom Needs Survey	

Organization of the Study

This study is organized in five chapters. Chapter one includes the background of the

study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, hypotheses,

significance of the study, design of the study, and definition of terms. Chapter Two provides the

theoretical framework of the current study, including a literature review of English idiomatics,

SLA learning strategies, SLA assessment. Additionally, chapter two briefly discusses pertinent

SLA replication research and current gaps in research. Chapter Three describes the methodology

used in the current research including replication description, as well as data collection

procedures and analyses. Chapter Four discusses the current research results and analyzes

participants' responses. Chapter Five summarize the most important findings of the results and

provide pedagogical implications regarding the teaching of English idiomatics, which, in turn,

may guide future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The current research explores L2 learner's idiomatic comprehension with and without context, reading and L2 pragmatic learning strategies, and the need for explicit teaching of idiomatics in L2 curriculum. The aim of this chapter is divided into three major sections: theoretical frameworks, literature review, and replication research. The theoretical framework presents important theories that would set the premise in justifying the preferred method of data collection and analysis and guide the current research. The literature review sheds light on the following: English idiomatics, second language acquisition (SLA) learning strategies, and SLA assessment. Since the current research is a replication, a brief review of replication research in SLA is discussed. The existing gaps in L2 English idiomatics concerning Arabic ESL/EFL learners are touched upon.

Theoretical Frameworks of the Study

According to VanPatten et al. (2020), the following terms are distinct features of research and are not interchangeable: *theory*, *model*, and *hypothesis* (Figure 2). VanPatten et al. (2020) defined the following terms: A ***theory*** is fundamentally "a set of statements ("law") about a natural phenomenon that explains why these phenomena occur the way they do" (p. 2). A ***natural phenomenon*** can be defined as "things that we observe every day or are somehow observable" (p. 1). Theories are explanatory, predictive, and have ***constructs***, which are "key

features, concepts, or mechanisms on which theory relies; they must be definable in the theory"

(p. 6). **Models** are descriptive in nature and are defined as "A model describes processes or sets

of processes of a phenomenon" (p. 5). A model might show "*how* different components of a

phenomenon interact" but does not need to explain *why* it happens. A **hypothesis** is a prediction

that can be tested by experimentation or observation. A theory generates hypotheses, and "a

hypothesis does not unify various phenomena; it is usually an idea about a single phenomenon"

(p. 5).
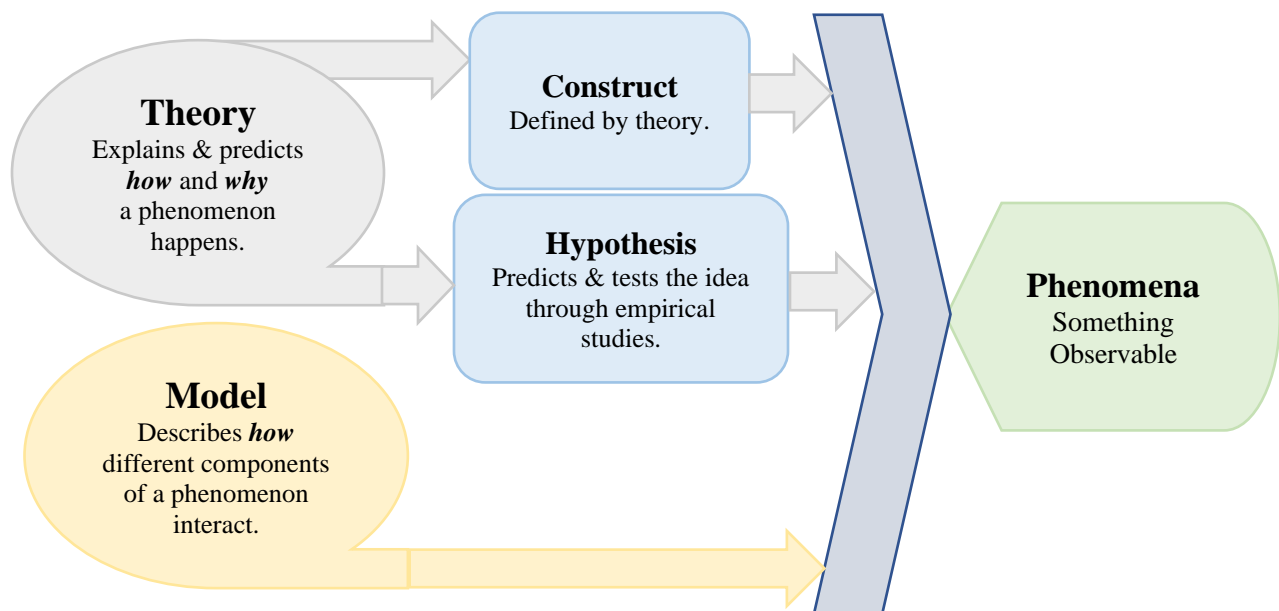
Figure 1

Research Definition Terms Summary (VanPatten et al., 2020, pp. 1-5).

This conceptualization can be applied to SLA. Each word in SLA (*second*, *language*, and

acquisition) is a construct. For example, in SLA theories, the word *second* means any other

language other than a person's first language. It does not matter which language the learner is

learning, where it is being learned, or how it is learned, which makes the construct *second*

encompassing various language learning contexts and affects the scope of the theory and makes it generalizable. *Language* is also a construct that needs to be clearly defined by the theory to "guide the questions needed to conduct research" (VanPatten et al. 2020, p. 9). Therefore, the definition needs to be specific on what is meant by language, or which part of language is being researched.

According to VanPatten et al. (2020), some specific theories that are related to L2 context are *input processing*, *processability*, and *interaction*. VanPatten et al. (2020) stated that "In the field of second language acquisition (SLA) research, theories have also come to occupy a central position. Although not all researchers agree, some would even say that the only way SLA can advance as a research field is if it is *theory driven*" (p. 1) (Figure 2). Thus, conducting research with a theoretical framework in mind is important for generalizing learning pedagogical implications.

Theories	"Explain observable phenomena."
	"Unify explanation & generalizations of various phenomena, where possible, and connect & combine them under one umbrella."
	"Generate hypotheses (predictions based on generalizations of what could occur under specific conditions) that can be tested empirically by observations or experimentations."
	"May be an explanation of a ***thing*** (such as language) or explanation of ***how*** something comes to be (such as the acquisition of language)."
	"Have constructs, which in turn are defined in the theory."

Figure 2

Theories Characteristics Summary (VanPatten et al., 2020, pp. 2-4)

Because this is a replication study, it is important to understand Liontas (1999) study and

theory, which focused on second language (L2) learning/reading strategies used to interpret and

construct meaning of English *vivid phrasal* (VP) *idioms*. According to Liontas (1999), learners'

comprehension of VP idioms increases when it is presented within a reading context in

comparison without context. Since the word *second* is a construct in this research and it is

describing the population, which in this case are Saudi students learning English as a second

language, but in an FL setting (e.g., where English is spoken only in the classroom), the scope of

the word second might be limited to the first context of language learning. *Language* is a

construct in this research and is defined as the aspect of constructing meaning of English VP

idioms, which is limiting it to learning a part of the English language. Thus, the research pertains

to a certain population with certain characteristics and investigates a certain part of the English

language in a specific context.

The Second Language Comprehension and Interpretation Model of Vivid Phrasal Idioms

The Second Language Comprehension and Interpretation Model of Vivid Phrasal Idioms

that was developed by Liontas (1999, pp. 377-390) "gives precise information about the factors

that influence a learner's interpretation of an idiom and serves as a means for examining the

nature and extent of learners' interpretation skills" (pp. 377-378). The model is used to describe

and explain L2 learners' observed behavior. The model has a predictive framework based on the

idioms lexical level that informs future research hypothesis concerning what level will be easier

for the learner and what will be harder for them to interpret and comprehend. It also "explains

how and why learners overcome the processing constraints;" and "informs how learners come to

comprehend and interpret idioms and, furthermore, how comprehension and production interact"

(p. 286). As such, the model proposed that the closer an idiom is to the learners L1 the easier it

might be to comprehend and interpret the phrase, and the farther away an idiom is from the learners L1 the harder it might be to comprehend and interpret the phrase.

Idiom Diffusion Model of Second Languages

The *Idiom Diffusion Model* (IDM) of Second Language proposed by Liontas (2002d, p. 182) is an outgrowth from *The Second Language Comprehension and interpretation Model of Vivid Phrasal idioms* that was developed by Liontas (1999). The IDM is used to describe the process of learners' construction of English VP idioms meaning, with or without context. The IDM has two learning phases: a prediction phase, and a confirmation, replacement, or reconstructive phase (Figure 3). There are two aspects to the prediction phase: (1) if a given L2 idiomatic phrase is close to the learners L1, then it would be easier to predict; (2) learners' processing of information could differ based on the amount of information that the learners need to interpret in each given task. There are three aspects to the confirmation phase: (1) learners' attention is selective due to the amount of information they need to attend to; (2) learners' construct information based on the given context and clues provided; (3) learners' reading inferences depends on the type of coding required whether it is graphophonic, semantic, pragmatic, or cultural, and whether it is with or without context. Other learning theories such as noticing theory, cognitive load theory, constructive/interpretive theory, and interaction theory might contribute to describing learners L2 idiomatic comprehension.
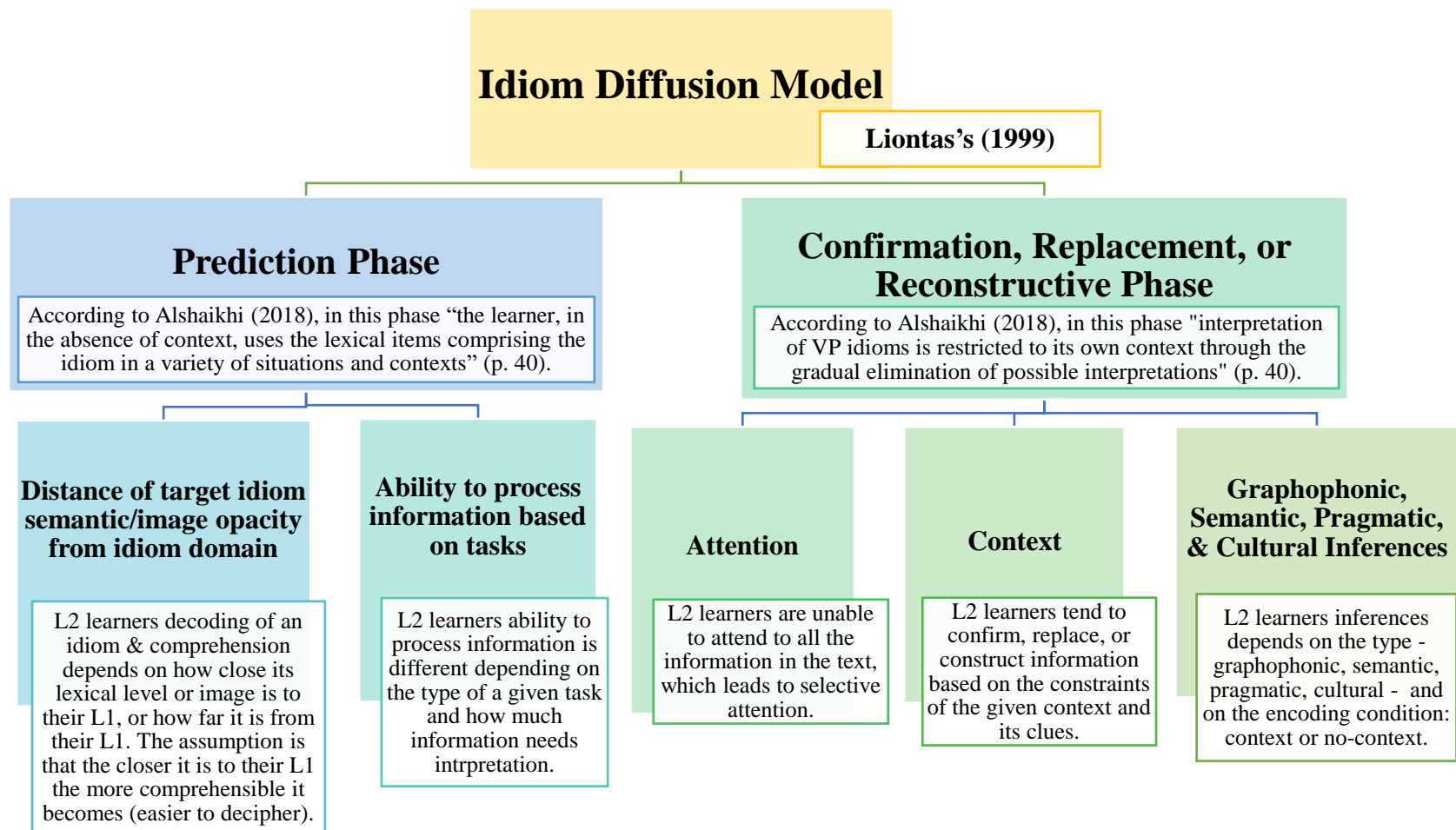
Figure 3

Idiom Diffusion Model (IDM)

Note: This figure is based on Alshaikhi's (2018) Explanation, Interpretation, & Figure of "Liontas's Idiom Diffusion Model (1999, 2002c)" (pp. 38-41).

Transactional Idiom Analysis

According to Liontas (1999), Transactional Idioms Analysis (TIA) employs the four cueing systems (*graphophonic*, *lexico-grammatical*, *semantic*, and *pragmatics*) to explore what readers do during reading as a transactional process by "placing the reader at the center of contextual issues and emphasizing the importance of prior knowledge, inferencing and reader activity, and that readers teach themselves and learn from their mistakes" (Liontas, 1999, pp. 105-106). Liontas (1999) explained that the goal of TIA is to provide an accurate account of the learners' idiomatic competence and find the systematic learning patterns in the learners' development and control of L2 idiomatic knowledge (p. 106). There are various factors that could either impede and/or enhance idiomatic comprehension and interpretation, which may be important at different development stages.

Simply put, TIA is concerned with discovering the hidden linguistic system that would explain the learners' knowledge and use of idioms and the factors that affect idiom comprehension and interpretation in second language contexts (Figure 4); thus, making it a vital method of analysis to reveal information about how much a learner has processed, how an idiom was comprehended and interpreted, and how the learner made the connection between the context and idiomatic meaning (Liontas, 1999).

Figure 4

Liontas (1999) Transactional Idiom Analysis (TIA) Summary

Generative Linguistic Theory on L2 Interlanguage Competence

The *generative linguistic theory*, according to White (2020), aims to characterize L1 linguistic competence and explain how it is possible to achieve that competence. When applying the generative linguistic theory to L2 acquisition, it is assumed that L2 acquisition has the same aim, which is "to account for the nature and acquisition of interlanguage competence" (p. 19).

White (2020) states that "The generative perspective on L2 explores the nature of interlanguage competence by adopting a variety of performance measures to try to discover the essential characteristics of underlying mental representations" (p 25). However, it is difficult to construct tasks that measure conscious and unconscious knowledge learned explicitly in language classrooms. White (2020) further elaborated that *interlanguage* is a term coined by Selinker (1972) and has been adopted to refer to L2 learners' and speakers' linguistic competence. White (2020) divided interlanguage competence performance data into three broad categories: *intuitional data*, *production data*, and *data relating to comprehension or interpretations*. White provided two examples of ways that were used to investigate L2 learner's comprehension or interpretation: (1) learners were shown a picture and asked a test question, and their responses showed how they have interpreted the question; (2) learners were given a short story or picture (context) and asked to judge whether the given sentence is true or false, which is called the *truth-value judgment*s task. White (2020) rationalizes that "…when researchers are interested in phenomena that might not show up readily in production, alternatives are required" (p. 25). This conceptualization is important because the current research is interested in the learner's comprehension of VP idioms within or without context, which is not easily understood without the learners' responses.

The current research is focused on performance tasks that collect data relating to comprehension or interpretation. This theory helps the redear understand the purpose of the idiomatic tasks, which require learners to look at a given idiomatic phrase first with no context then in context, and then provide their comprehension or interpretation of the VP idiom phrase.

Skill Acquisition Theory

The skill acquisition theory (Dekeyser, 2020) accounts for learners' progress learning various skills from initial learning to proficiency. It is applicable in various psychological development domains such as behaviorism, cognitivism, and connectivism, and its research ranges from theoretical to application. According to Dekeyser (2020),

> The basic claim of Skill Acquisition Theory is that the learning of a wide variety
>
> of skills shows a remarkable similarity in development from initial representation
>
> of knowledge through initial changes in behavior to eventual fluent, spontaneous,
>
> largely effortless, and highly skilled behavior, and that this set of phenomena can
>
> be accounted for by a set of basic principles common to the acquisition of all
>
> skills. (p. 83)

The skill acquisition theory in SLA aims to move learners from initial learning to autonomous language use and achieving "faster and more accurate processing" (Lyster & Masatoshi, 2013, p. 71). Dekeyser stated that there are three developmental stages that characterize learners' progress from knowledge acquisition to knowledge application; however, there are different terms that have been used for these developmental stages, but they basically represent moving from "declarative knowledge" to "procedural knowledge" such as (a) "cognitive, associative, and autonomous" used by Fitts and Posner (1967) and (b) "declarative, procedural, and automatic" used by Anderson (e.g., Anderson, 1982, 1993, 2007; Anderson et al.

2004; Taatgen, Huss, Dickison, & Anderson, 2008) or (c) "presentation, practice, and production" used by Byrne (1986) (as cited in Dekeyser, 2020, p. 84).

Concerning idiomatics, Liontas (2015) explained that idiomatic competence goes through three developmental stages "from the declarative stage (declarative idiomatic knowledge or receptive control) through the associative stage (controlled idiomatic knowledge or partial control), and ultimately to the autonomous stage (automatic idiomatic knowledge or full control)" (p. 626). Dekeyser (2020) explained that the development stages require intensive practice to move learners from the proceduralization stage to the automatization stage.

Dekeyser (2020) expressed the need for a method of evaluating L2 learners' language progress in a language learning classroom. One method of accounting for skills learning progress is through collecting and analyzing behavioral data such as the decrease in reaction times, error rates, and differences in performance from one task to another due to interference (Dekeyser, 2020), which can be observed and recorded. From a cognitive perspective, the skill acquisition theory aims to show how cognition works and affects reaction time and error rate as a result of practice – whether distributed practice or massed practice, but it does not account for all the processes that might be taking place in the mind (Dekeyser, 2020). Dekeyser (2020) stated that research on L2 acquisition from a skills acquisition perspective is limited due to the methodological process challenges it poses such as control of experiments, length of time of longitudinal studies, large number of participants, and investments in software. However, newer research has begun to investigate individual differences in L2 acquisition. Dekeyser (2020) mentioned some L2 acquisition research that took skill acquisition theory perspectives into account, and their findings were:

Bird (2010) found distributed practice to be superior for past tense practice in English as a second language (ESL), and Nakata (2012) obtained similar results for vocabulary learning in ESL. Suzuki and Dekeyser (2017a, 2017b), however, in a study which narrowly focused on the "gerund" in Japanese SL but still required integration of grammatical skills and vocabulary knowledge found that massed practice was best for the acquisition of procedural skill; they also found that memory was more important in massed practice and analytical ability more in distributed practice. Li and Dekeyser (2019), in a study on the learning of tone in Chinese L2, found the same advantage of massed practice for procedural skills, but an advantage of distributed practice for declarative knowledge. (p. 89)

In sum, previous L2 research on the skill acquisition perspective have found that distributive practice is beneficial for learning declarative knowledge that requires analytical ability such as vocabulary learning; while massed practice is beneficial for learning procedural knowledge that requires memory and procedural skills such as tone and gerunds. Knowing which type of practice is better (distributed or massed practice) depends on the treatment length, scope of knowledge involved, and extent of declarative and procedural learning involved (Dekeyser, 2020). The learning of VP idioms might require both distributed practice (e.g., vocabulary learning) because it requires analytical ability as well as massed practice because it requires memorization. Both types of practice could help learners go from declarative knowledge skills to procedural knowledge skills, and eventually to automatization of knowledge (full control) that is similar to native-like language knowledge and use (Dekeyser, 2020; Liontas, 1999, 2015). In the current research, this theory aids in explaining the type of activities that would facilitate learning and retaining idiom knowledge.

Related Theories: Noticing Theory, Cognitive Learning Theory, Situated Learning Theory,
and Constructivist/Interpretive Theory

The following theories could contribute to understanding learner's comprehension of English idiomatics. The *Noticing Theory* (Schmidt, 1990) is a framework for this research since learners need to notice what they are reading to construct meaning. Schmidt (2012) stated that "The Noticing Hypothesis–a hypothesis that input does not become intake for language learning unless it is noticed, that is, consciously registered" (Schmidt, 1990). According to Schunk (2012), "cognitive theories stress the acquisition of knowledge and skills, the formation of mental structures, and the processing of information and beliefs" (p. 22). Thus, the *Cognitive load theory* (Paas et al., 2010; Sweller, 1988) describes the mental processes in an individual's brain when they are learning. Furthermore, it describes how learning might be hindered when instruction provides an overwhelming amount of new information. The *Situated learning theory* (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989) "posits that all learning takes place within a specific context and the quality of the learning is a result of interactions among people, places, objects, processes, and culture within and relative to that given context" (as cited in Dunleavy & Dede, 2014, p. 736). The *Constructivist/interpretive theories* (Dede, 2008) "of learning assume that meaning is imposed by the individual rather than existing in the world independently" (as cited in Dunleavy & Dede, 2014, p. 737). This theory suggests individuals construct new knowledge and understanding based on various factors such as their educational background, developmental level, prior experiences, and sociocultural background and context.

Theoretical Frameworks Summary

There are several theoretical frameworks that are used for constructing and analyzing the current research topic. Important elements of each theory, as well how each theory applies to the

current research is summarized below (Table 2).

Table 2

Theoretical Framework Summary

#	Author	Theoretical Framework	Description	How it applies to this research
1	Liontas (1999, 2002d)	Idiom Diffusion Model (IDM) of Second Languages This model is an outgrowth from the model developed by Liontas (1999) called "*The Second Language Comprehension & Interpretation Model of Vivid Phrasal idioms.*"	There are basically two phases: prediction and confirmation, replacement, or restructuring phase. The model aims to describe the interaction of L1 and L2 that takes place when learning VP idioms, how learners identify idioms, and what strategies learners use to comprehend and interpret VP idioms in context or without context.	IDM would describe and analyze participants' responses in respect to L2 VP idioms lexical being close to L1 lexical (LL, SLL, PLL), and the metacognitive skills participants use with context or no context.
2	Liontas (1999, 2002c)	Transactional Idiom Analysis (TIA) As a theoretical construct, it accounts for learners L2 idiomatic knowledge.	TIA focuses on learners' reading as a transactional process while considering the learners' background knowledge, inferencing, and reading activity, and, finally, metacognition.	TIA is useful to account for learner's language background knowledge, language use, and L2 reading strategies that assist in idioms comprehension.
3	White (2020) Interlanguage, Selinker (1972)	The Generative Linguistic Theory's perspective on L2 Interlanguage Competence	Generative linguists are concerned with characterizing L2 interlanguage competence and how it is achieved by analyzing performance measures to characterize mental representations.	In the current research, interlanguage competence performance data (*data relating to comprehension or interpretations*) was collected to analyze L2 learner's comprehension or interpretation of VP idioms.

Table 2 (Continued)

#	Author	Theoretical Framework	Description	How it applies to this research
4	Dekeyser (2020)	The Skill Acquisition Theory	Skill acquisition is based on how learners acquire knowledge and use it. There are three developmental stages that move learners from declarative to procedural knowledge that makes learning autonomous.	Behavioral data shows cognitive development such as reaction time and error rate. VP idioms might benefit from distributed practice (analytical skills), and massed practice (memory and procedural skills).
	Liontas (1999, 2015)	Liontas clarified the 3 idiomatic developmental stages		

English Idiomatics: Overview, Definition, and Terminology

Idiomatics Overview

According to Liontas (2019) there are numerous terms and definitions used to address English idiomatics. For example, Liontas *figurative language*, *idioms*, *idiomatic language*, *proverbs* (*proverbial idioms*), and *vivid phrasal idioms*, have all been used by Liontas in his research articles. Liontas defined "*idiomaticity* or *idiomatology*" as "the study of idioms and idiomatic language" (p. 56). Many have confused idioms with idiomaticity when they are in fact not the same, and for that reason this overview addresses this issue very briefly.

Liontas (2017) explained in an interview that ***English idiomatics*** is the umbrella term for anything and everything a native speaker would say and do with language (Figure 5). Idiomatic language has various subcategories such as proverbs, phrasal verbs, slang, cliché, idioms, figurative language, metaphors, simile, alliteration, tone, etc. Liontas further explained that *idiomatic language* can be defined as an individual's competence of using language like a native speaker, thus understanding when and how to use a language (appropriately and competently) with the least amount of effort. Thus, it can be said that when a person has full idiomatic control

29

of a language, said control is also an indication of the level of proficiency and competence, which is called *Idiomatic Competence* (Liontas, 2002b; J. Liontas, personal communication, 11/1/ 2017).

Idiomatics

Jargons
(language used by a group)

Culture
(shared by a group)

Rhetorics
(figurative language)

Language (Pragmatics)
(language knowledge & use - spoken, written, body, etc.)

Pedagogy
(teaching & learning methods)
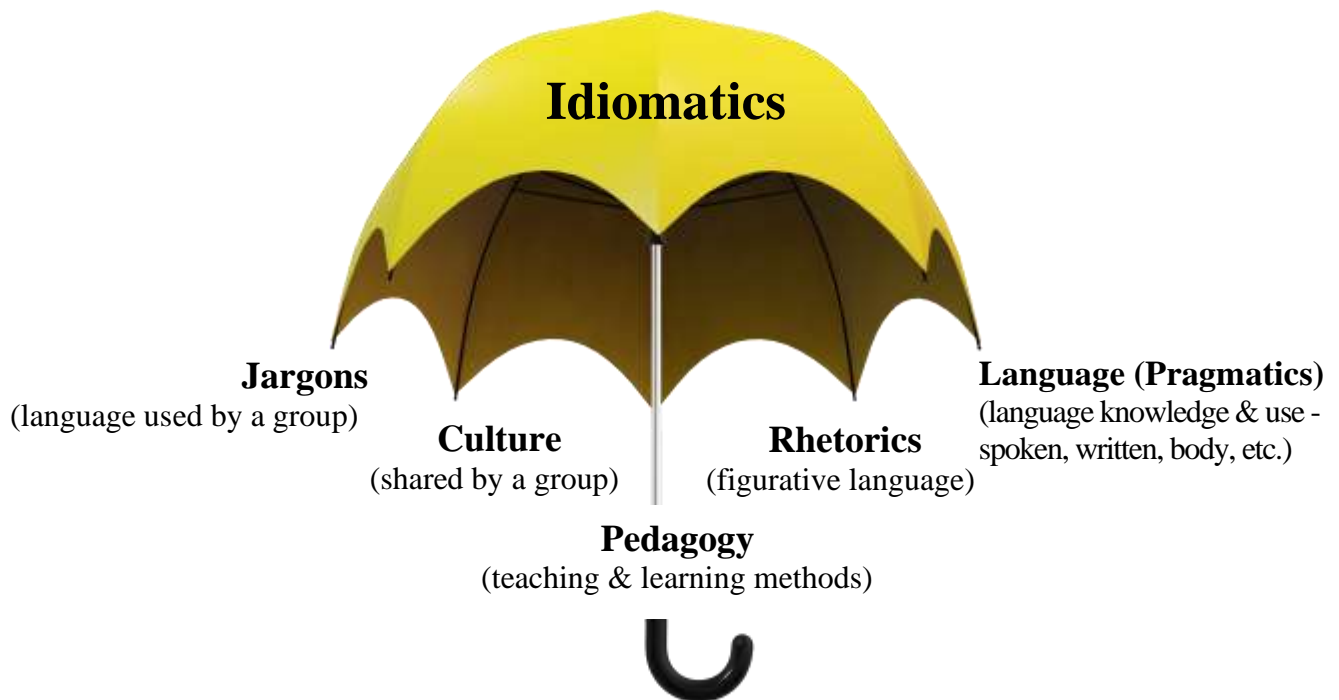
Figure 5

Idiomatics as an Umbrella Term

Liontas (2021) explained in writing that idiomatics is

the scientific study of idiomatic language and figurative language. Idiomatic

language is the natural mode of expression and phrasing of a language, that is,

language that uses, contains, or denotes peculiar or characteristic expressions,

words, or phrases native speakers would routinely use and consider natural and

correct. Figurative language is the extraordinary creative use of language that

deviates from the conventional work order and plain meaning to suggest meaning

rather than directly giving meaning, that is, any figure of speech that plays

imaginatively with the meaning of words in order to build and furnish layers of

meaning beyond the purely literal for particular descriptive effect.

Idiomatic Language Definition and Terminology

Liontas (2002b) points out that idiomatics is a complex phenomenon which requires a

more comprehensive definition. One way to define idiomatics is to define each type and its

criteria. Liontas (2018c) defined some language features that are part of English idiomatic

language in his article that need to be expressed to further explain the complexity of idiomatics

(as shown in Table 3). Liontas (2018c) further expressed that all languages have figures of

speech, which he defined as:

> A *figure of speech* (also called rhetorical figure or stylistic device) is figurative
>
> language in the form of a single word or phrase that may have a meaning other than its
>
> ordinary literal meaning. The use of a word(s) differing from its standard meaning is
>
> purposefully used in a figurative or nonliteral sense to add rhetorical force to a spoken
>
> or written passage, freshness of expression, or clarity. … Resting in the hands of
>
> skillful writers, they become rhetorical figures (and devices) used to convey meaning
>
> or heighten effect often by comparing or identifying one thing with another in creative,
>
> nonliteral ways. (p. 2)

English is not unique in the occurrence of idiomatic expressions. Indeed, there are myriad

idiomatic expressions in every language. Furthermore, every generation adds new expressions

and words to the list while others will become outdated but might still be used in some capacity

over the years (Liontas, 2018c). Each type of English idiomatics has its own definition and

characteristics, which challenges learners of the English language since the individual words do

not necessarily add up to the whole figurative or ambiguous nature and meaning of the word(s) that were used in the language. For example, using simile to compare two things to impart an idea, thought, or advice, etc. is shown in the following quote from the "Forest Gump" movie "*Life is like a box of chocolate*." Or the phrase, '*he is cold as ice*' does not mean the person is cold or if you touch him that he will feel cold, but rather his demeanor is rigid and lacking compassion.

Table 3

Figurative Expressions Definitions - taken from Liontas's (2018c)

Idiomatic Language Types	Definition
Hyperbole	An exaggeration or impossible statement that is so dramatic that no one would believe the statement is true.
Simile	A comparison drawn between two or more unlike things, objects, or ideas to suggest they are alike.
Metaphors	They use similes and metaphors (comparing two things by using one kind of object or using in place of another to suggest the likeness between them) to compare or describe things in an unusual way.
Alliteration	The repetition of the same initial letter, sound, or group of sounds in a series of words.
Assonance	The repetition of a similar set of vowel sounds in a phrase.
Cacophony	The use of words with harsh consonants, usually at the beginning of a word.
Personification	Bestowing human-like characteristics, qualities, or traits to an animal, an object or idea.
Onomatopoeia	Naming a thing or an action by emulating the sound associated with it.
Imagery	Language which creates a picture in the mind of the reader.
Symbolism	A noun which has meaning in itself is used to represent something else.
Rhyme	Paired words which sound alike.
Idioms	Expressions whose meanings are only known through common use and whose meanings are not predictable from the usual meanings of the actual words in them; and they are used when economy of words is needed most to move beyond the literal meaning of a word or phrase.

Table 3 (Continued)

Idiomatic Language Types	Definition
Proverbs	Employ expressive use of language in a figurative or nonliteral sense to convey in laconic ways conditions of human behavior not easily inferred from the strict literal meaning of the words comprising the phrase.
Clichés	An often-repeated phrase that has become trite with overuse. to say one thing when they mean something else.
Understatement	The expression of an idea with significantly less force than is expected or would be required to accurately describe an idea.
Metonymy	A figure of speech where one thing is replaced with a word that is closely associated with it.
Synecdoche	A figure of speech using a word or words that are a part to represent a whole.
Slang	Lexicon of non-standard words and phrases in a given language; very informal but colorful language that is usually spoken rather than written and specific to certain geographical locations, context or group of individuals.
Oxymoron	The joining of two contradictory ideas, terms or words containing a concealed point to create an incongruous, seemingly self-contradictory rhetorical effect.
Paradox	A statement, situation, concept, proposition, assertion, existing belief or opinion that, contrary to perceived expectations and despite apparently sound reasoning from acceptable premises, leads to a senseless, logically unacceptable, or self-contradictory conclusion.
Irony	The use of words to convey meaning exactly opposite from their literal meaning, typically for humorous or emphatic effect.
Sarcasm	A harsh, acrimonious derision or an ironic or satirical remark that lucidly means the opposite of what it says to humble, mock, hurt, insult, offend or rebuke someone, convey contempt, show irritation, or to be funny.
Pun	A play on words by utilizing the multiple meanings of a single word or by exploiting two words similar in sound but different in meaning.
Schemes	Figures of speech that change the ordinary or expected pattern of words.
Tropes	Figures of speech that change or turn the general meaning of a word, phrase or image to create an artistic and figurative or metaphorical effect.

Note: All the definitions above are from Liontas (2018c).

Researchers have also defined idioms "as expressions whose meanings are non-compositional, that is, their meanings are not the functions of the meanings of their individual

parts (Chomsky, 1980 & Fraser, 1970; as cited in Vahid Dastjerdi & A'lipour, 2010, p. 71).

Since the current research also included a few proverbs, providing a definition is needed to note that. Proverbs were defined "by Gibbs (1994) as short and snappy sayings that express social norms or moral concerns (as cited in Vahid Dastjerdi & A'lipour, 2010, pp. 71-72). Prodromou (2003) explained that

> The flexible nature of 'fixed expressions' is one of the many paradoxes one encounters when dealing with idiomatic language, and while such paradoxes are the stuff of which creativity in the use of idioms is made (Tannen, 1989), for the non-native speaker they may constitute an obstacle to acquisition of that feature of the language. (p. 42)

Nation and Webb (2011) indicated that there are numerous "terms used to describe multiword units, which include collocations, formulaic sequences, lexical bundles, idioms, core idioms, lexicalized sentence stems, and so on" (p. 176). Nation and Webb use the term "multiword unit" as a "blanket term" and explained that it covers "all kind of continuous and discontinuous sequences of words" (p. 176).

Why Teach Idioms?

Idiomatics is complex and challenging to both teach and to learn, which is why many teachers and learners shied away from it, even though it is part of any language. A potential reason why idiomatics is not taught is that idiomatic expressions are cultural language rather than literal language (Costa & Mendes, 2015). Li (2019) expresses that perusing the study and research of English idioms would enable him to understand the culture and learn about the cognitive and linguistic aspect of the English language, and that "idiom learning is essential to L2 learner's language development, and more importantly, it promotes L2 learners' better

understanding of that language's history, heritage, and culture" (p. 22). Liontas (2017) discussed why we should teach idioms and offered five compelling reasons (Table 4 & Figure 6).

Table 4

Why Teach Idioms? – taken from (Liontas, 2017, pp. 3-11).

	Why Teach Idioms?
Reason One	"Because idioms help learners to encounter and understand the workings of natural human language; that is, they help them to gain a deeper knowledge of the creative expression of human thought and language development over time."
Reason Two	"Because learners can go beyond the literal meaning of idioms and see the pivotal role that context plays in the understanding of idiomatic expressions."
Reason Three	"Because requiring learners to produce idioms in ways that native speakers use them enhances learners' mastery of them, facilitating the binding and mapping processes of idiom internalization."
Reason Four	"Because idioms afford learners the opportunity to examine their own mental images associated with idiomatic phrases and the conceptual metaphors mediating their figurative meanings."
Reason Five	"Because the study of idioms in the classroom can help the SLA profession to build a systematic program for the development of idiomatic competence in second language learners."
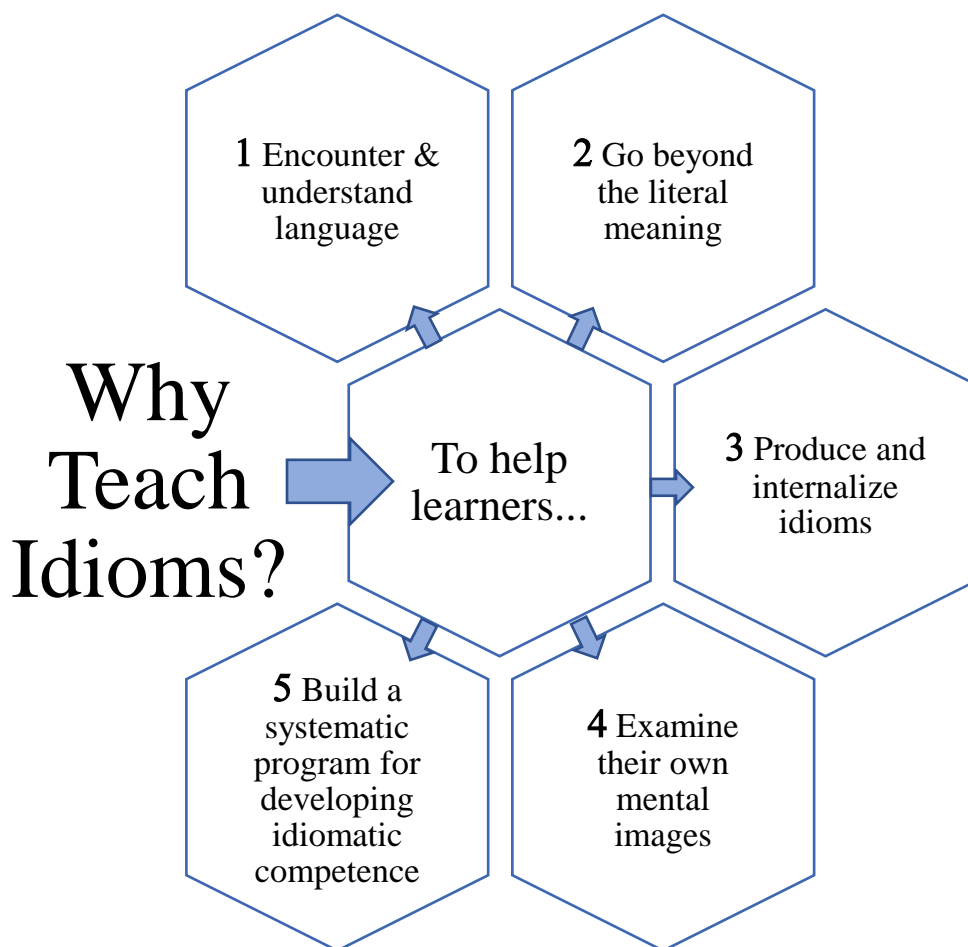
Figure 6

Simplified Explanation for "Why Teach Idioms?" (Liontas, 2017).

Vivid Phrasal Idioms

There are many different types of idioms. Liontas (2002b) proposed the term Vivid

Phrasal (VP) Idioms, which is different from other idioms in that a vivid picture pops up into

one's mind when they hear certain phrases such as *to pull one's leg*, *bend over backwards*, *I've

got your back*…and many others. Since the current research investigates VP idioms, it is

important to explain their characteristics. Liontas (1999, 2002b) stated that for a phrase to be

considered a VP idiom it needs to adhere to the following characteristics to distinguish it from

other phrases (Table 5 & Figure 7).

Table 5

Vivid Phrasal Idioms Characteristics – taken from (Liontas, 1999, p. 40)

	Vivid Phrasal Idioms Characteristics
1	"They are not monomorphemic or polymorphemic expressions such as pad, flop, to splurge, to freeload, to rely on, to object to, and the like, just as they are not ungrammatical expressions, connective prepositional phrases, incorporating verb idioms, or social formula expressions."
2	"They do not readily correlate with a given grammatical part of speech and more often than not require a paraphrase longer than a word."
3	"They can easily be painted in the mind of the learner by evoking powerful, energetic pictorial mental images due to their strong concrete, imageable meanings, hence vivid."
4	"They are conventionalized complex multilexemic phrasal expressions occurring above word level and often, but not always, in the length of a sentence, hence phrasal."
5	"They are polysemous and have both a common literal, referential meaning and an institutionalized figurative, metaphorical meaning, the latter of which is neither always predictable nor entirely logically deducible from the grammatical, syntactic, structural, and semantic character of its individual constituent elements."
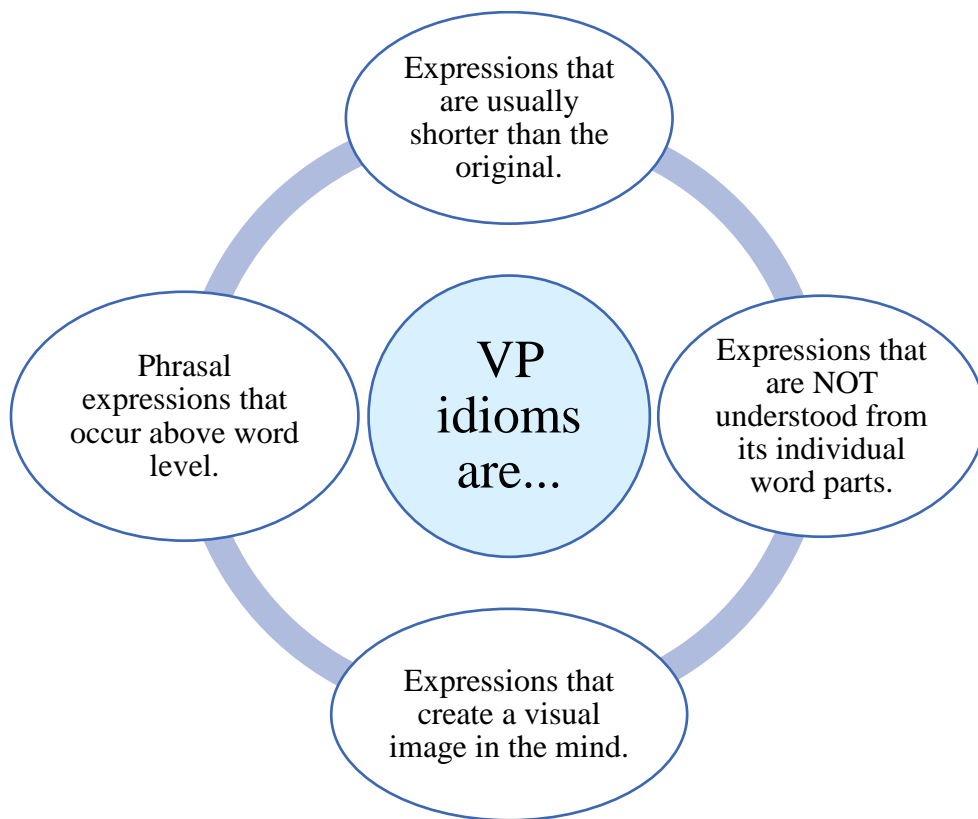
Figure 7

Vivid Phrasal Idioms (VP Idioms) – (Liontas, 1999)

Therefore, Vivid phrasal idioms are considered idioms that are a combination of words

(Hinkel, 2019) that create new meaning that cannot be predicted from its individual parts

(Liontas, 1999). Hinkel (2019) further discussed multiword constructions dilemma and explained

that

due to the fact that many recurrent word combinations can have unpredictable meanings and

grammatically irregular structures – these units of language cannot be derived and formed

according to grammar rules – noticing their occurrences and components is very important if

learners are to increase their linguistic repertoire, fluency, and proficiency (p. 110).

Hinkel suggested ways educators can help facilitate students learning new combinations

and guide them to become more autonomous when encountering this complex language feature

as shown in Figure 8.
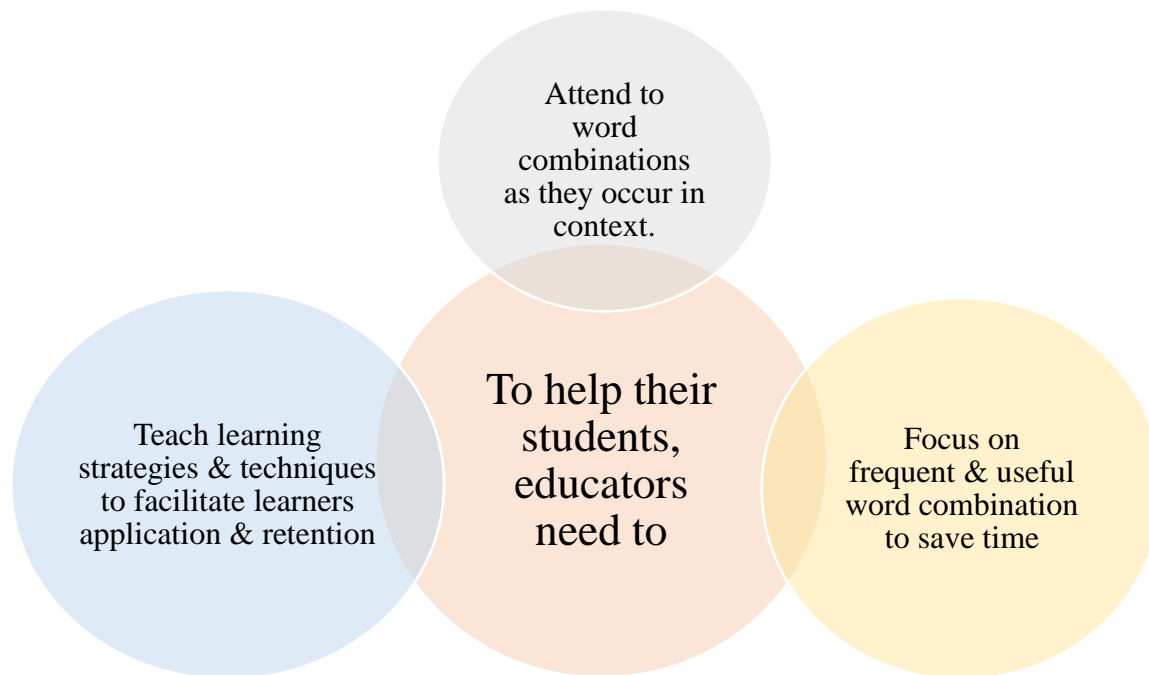
Figure 8

Facilitating Learning Summary – adapted from (Hinkel, 2019, p. 112).

Saudi EFL learners might face challenges when trying to interpret an idiomatic meaning

since (1) there might be two English VP idioms that have one phrase in Arabic that encompasses

both phrases in English (Figure 9, for examples of English VP idioms and their Arabic

counterpart in each of the lexical level types), and (2) some English VP idioms that have no

Arabic equivalent making them challenging to interpret.

Lexical Level	
hit two birds with one stone (get two results from one actions)	**ضرب عصفورين بحجر** **hit two birds with one stone** (get two results from one actions)

Semi-Lexical Level	
a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush (Something you already have is better than something you might get)	**عصفور في اليد خير من عشرة فوق الشجرة** **a bird in the hand is better than 10 on a tree** (Something you already have is better than something you might get)

Post-Lexical Level	
Dressed to the teeth - (Dress elegantly) **Dressed to kill -** (Wear one's finest clothing)	**على سنقة عشرة** **On the tenth dot** (Dressed elegantly and wearing one's finest clothing)

Figure 9

Examples of English VP Idioms Type and its Saudi Arabic Counterparts.

Second Language and Foreign Language Learning Strategies

Language Learning Strategies Role in Research and its Instructional and Use Features

Learning strategies research has gained popularity due to it being an effective fit with content-based instruction and should not be taught in isolation of the content area or language curriculum (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). Cohen (2011) explained that there are various roles in research regarding language learner strategies: "the good language learner studies, strategies for learning a skill (listening, reading, speaking, writing, vocabulary, and grammar), strategies for learners in distance learning courses, test-taking strategies, and research on validating measures of learner strategies" (p. 681). Scholars concerned with advancing language learning and language use found there are common features to strategies instruction and use. Below (Table 6) is a simplified summary of these features (Cohen, 2011; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013).

Table 6

Language Strategies Features

	Language Instruction and Use Strategies Features
1	Introducing and modeling language learning strategies and raising learner's awareness of strategies they already use for academic success.
2	Relating strategies to learners' goals whether they are short or long goals to trigger intrinsic motivation.
3	Relating learning strategies to the learner's individual or situational differences.
4	Providing multiple hands-on experience opportunities that enables learners to acquire strategies by evaluating its effectiveness and transferability to different learning situations.
5	Enabling learners to become autonomous learners that learn independence and self-regulation through self-assessments.

Cohen (2011) noted that there are two contrastive views that emerged in learning strategies research: "that strategies need to be specific, small, and most likely combined with other strategies for completing a given task, and that strategies need to be kept at a more global, flexible, and general level" (pp. 681-682). However, the consensus is that strategies enhance performance of language learning and use whether it is general or specific by making language learning easier and faster. Thus, incorporating learning strategies training in a content area of learning or in a language curriculum would continue to be of benefit to the learners to learn after they have finished their formal learning (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013).

Language Learning Strategies Definitions, Categories, and Examples

According to Cohen (2011), Language Learning Strategies are defined "as thoughts and actions, consciously selected by learners, to assist them in learning and using language in general, and in the completion of specific language tasks" (p. 682). Researchers have identified several different learning strategies categories: communicative, metacognitive, cognitive, social, and affective strategies (Cohen, 2011; Chamot & O'Malley, 1994, as cited in Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). Cohen (2011) further elaborated that these categories can be classified as: (1) language learning (for first time learning) and language use (communicative strategies), (2) skill area strategies (listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, translation) – but there are other non-traditional skill areas (L2 Pragmatic), and (3) function strategies (metacognitive, cognitive, social, affective strategies). These strategies can be used independently or collectively depending on the learning experience and interaction required at the time (Table 7).

Table 7

Strategies Benefits and Uses

	Strategy	Benefits	Activities/Uses

1	Communicative Strategies	Provides learners with strategies to use when they are struggling with communicating with native speakers.	• Paraphrasing
			• Coining words
			• Miming or using facial expressions or gestures
			• Literal translations
			• Conversational interaction strategies such as
			  o Asking for help
			  o Clarification
			  o Confirmation
			  o Using fillers or hesitation devises as repeating words

2	Metacognitive Strategies	Helps learners to plan, check, and evaluate their learning.	• Understanding the conditions that would help in learning • Setting learning goals • Checking one's comprehension
3	Cognitive Strategies	Helps students with the process of leaning, which is interacting and manipulating the new knowledge to achieve comprehension.	• Replaying a word in one's head to hear it again • Outlining and summarizing what was learned • Assigning a keyword or an image to remember what was learned
4	Social Strategies	Social strategies are means employed by learners when interacting with native speakers to assist in their learning.	• Asking questions or explanations • Clarifying social roles and relationships • Cooperating to complete a given task

5	Affective Strategies	Helps learners regulate their emotions, their motivation, and their attitudes.	• Reducing anxiety and providing self-encouragements by creating situations to practice using the language whether it being with others or by oneself such as
			  o Self-talk
			  o Discussions
			  o Receiving feedback

(Cohen, 2011; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013)

Cohen (2011) suggested that the effectiveness of strategy instruction does not depend solely on the educator's knowledge of presenting and modeling these strategies. Rather, it also depends on the specific learning context, task at hand, and learners' characteristic such as their background knowledge, their goals for learning a language, their preferred style, and their present strategies knowledge, use, and awareness (Cohen, 2011; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). For example, invoking the learner's prior knowledge and strategies that they used in their first language (L1) might be one way to ensure the effectiveness of strategy instruction and to achieving academic success. Figure 10 summarizes the various language learning strategies.
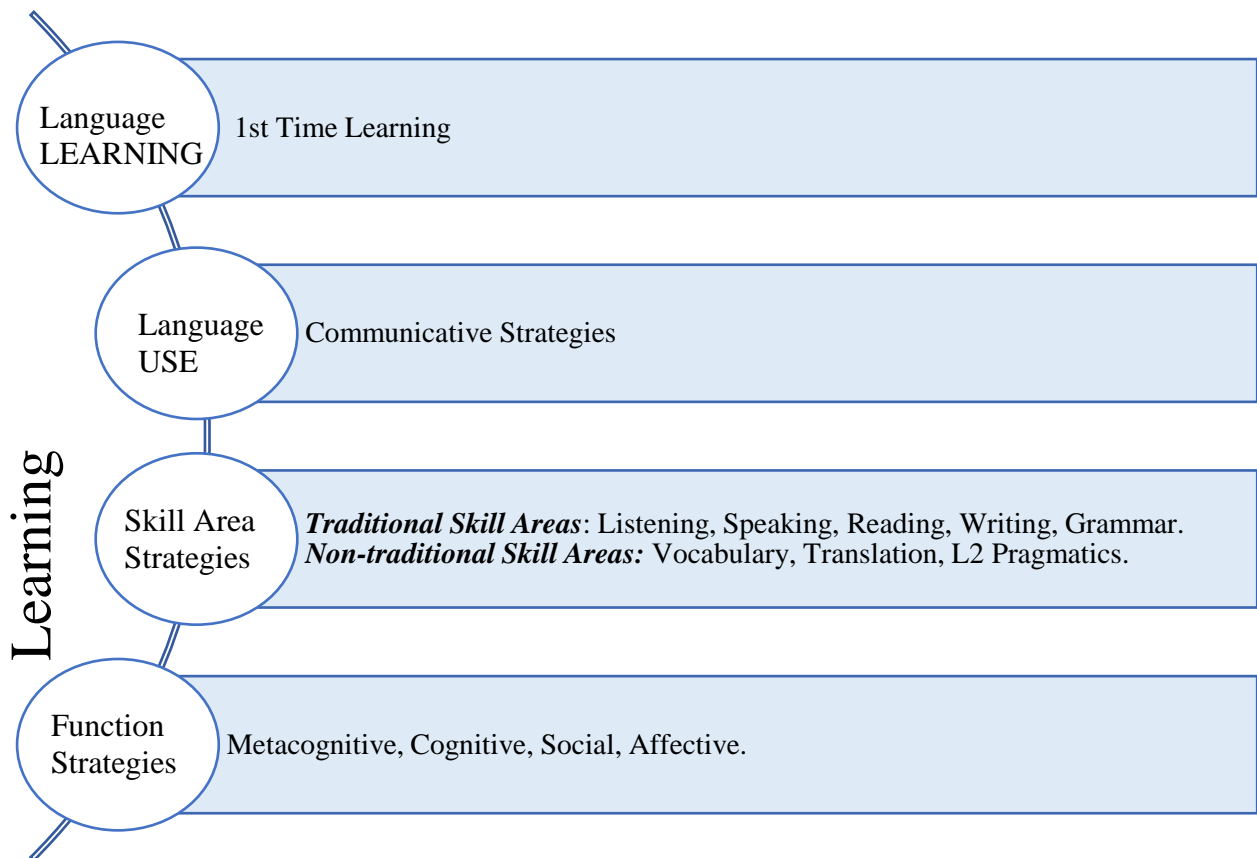
Figure 10

Learning Strategies

The reader should note that participants were asked to report the strategies they used to detect and comprehend the idiomatic expressions, which is why it is important to explain the different types of strategies.

The Current Research Focus Regarding Learning Strategies

One area of previous language learning strategies research involves the validation of learning strategies measures. Those studies included children and/or adults as participants with respect to different skills (Cohen, 2011). Some examples of instruments that were used with adults include: Oxford's 50-item *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* (SILL) – (Hsiao, 2005); *Listening Practice Strategy Questionnaire* (LPSQ) – (Lee, 2007); *Oral Communication Strategy Inventory* (OCSI) – (Nakatani, 2006); *self-regulatory capacity* – which is a psychometrically-based measure of L2 learners' strategic learning of vocabulary – (Tseng, Dörnyei, & Schmitt, 2006); *Language Strategy Use Survey* – (Cohen, Oxford, & Chi, 2002). Other resources Cohen (2011) mentioned in his chapter are *Styles and Strategies-based Instruction: A Teachers' Guide* (Cohen & Weaver, 2006) and the *Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) Handbook* (Chamot, 2009).

Reading is considered a skill that includes both "bottom-up skills–recognizing and making sense of letters, words, and sentences–and top-down processing that deals with whole texts" (Coombe, Folse, & Hubley, 2007, pp. 44-45). Reading is assessed through subskills and strategies by most language educators because reading is not an observable skill. According to Coombe et al., learners should be trained "in effective strategies for the various skill area to be tested" (p. 138). For example, one way to prepare learners is to alert them of some words that might appear in the instructions, so they understand what is required before reading and read with a purpose.

Research on reading strategies include various aspects such as linguistic factors – first language (L1) reading impacts second language (L2) reading, and non-linguistic factors – cultural knowledge, motivation, and interest (Cohen, 2011). Most of that research used questionnaires or guided interviews that asked learners to report the reading strategies they used, and the frequency of each strategy used. Idioms fall under the L2 Pragmatic skill area, which also can be divided into learning L2 Pragmatic strategies and using L2 Pragmatics strategies. An example of a developed taxonomy for L2 Pragmatics is *Dancing with Words: Strategies for Learning Pragmatics in Spanish*, which was validated by comparing two group environments: a website vs an online virtual environment (Cohen, 2008; Sykes & Cohen, 2008, 2009, as cited in Cohen, 2011).

Concerning Saudi learners use of reading strategies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, there is a need for more explicit teaching, modeling, and practice opportunities. Alsofyani (2019) found that Saudi learners did better with reading comprehension after being explicitly taught metacognitive reading strategies, seeing those strategies modeled by the instructor, and learning to apply metacognitive strategies in an interactive e-book setting, which increase students' motivation to learn. She further found that collaborative discussions are an additive feature to metacognitive strategies and facilitated learning. She stated that her study's "findings confirm that in most EFL contexts the prevalent pedagogical methods of teaching reading skills and strategies need attention" (p. 121). Alsofyani further elaborated that "Reading classrooms in Saudi Arabia are described by Al-Nujaidi (2003) and Al-Samadani (2009) as being focused on the traditional comprehension structures, testing model, and vocabulary learning, which do not provide improvement opportunities in reading comprehension" (Al-Nujaidi, 2003; Al-Samadani, 2009, as cited in Alsofyani, 2019). Thus, there is a need to investigate whether

Saudi learners know reading and L2 pragmatic strategies and are using them, or not; and to know which strategies they are currently using to decipher unknown and ambiguous meanings encountered with or without context.

Comprehension of Vivid Phrasal Idioms (VP Idioms) is a part of the factors affecting second language (SL) reading comprehension. Retelling, think aloud, and reflective activities are some of the instructional intervention activities that make the learners conscious of differing learning strategies that would develop their awareness and retention of SL idioms. Teaching specific learning strategies would aid learners in taking charge of their learning.

The current research is concerned with reading and L2 pragmatic comprehension learning strategies used to comprehend and interpret VP idioms with or without a reading context using the instruments developed by Liontas (1999). The current research results might be beneficial to explore strategies that Saudi learners used and if learners were aware of these strategies or were just reporting their thinking process. Exploring Saudi learners' current strategies knowledge would aid educators to be aware of Saudi learners' strategies level of knowledge to remediate, if necessary, and incorporate those strategies in their L2 curriculum and explicitly teaching various learning strategies, which in turn would benefit Saudi L2 learners of English.

Second Language and Foreign Language Assessment Challenges

Any learning environment should include assessment, which enables educators to monitor and evaluate learners' language proficiency and achievement; measure growth and progress based on the different goals and objectives; and develop an effective, interactive, and integrated curriculum design. The results of the current research would not only benefit educators in evaluating learning gains and progress, but it would also allow learners to understand their strengths and weaknesses, which in turn would enable them to take charge of

47

their learning and become autonomous learners. Assessment is considered an umbrella term that is defined as "the process of planning, gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data for decision making" (Gottlieb, 2016). Assessment is an area can be challenging to educators - mostly novice and pre-service teachers, administrators, and staff developers, as they struggle to assess L2 or FL learner's knowledge and ability (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996).

Assessing second language and foreign language learners is more complex and challenging than assessing native speakers because additional variables – such as their background knowledge, educational background, and proficiency level in their first language (L1), second language (L2), or their foreign language (FL) – play a role in language teaching and learning (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). Moreover, determining whether a student is simply an English Language Learner (ELL) or an ELL with challenges in learning (the unpreferable term mostly used is learning disabilities) is a perplexing matter (Gottlieb, 2016). However, caution is crucial when using these terms. These different factors compiled with other factors not yet mentioned add to the varied layers that contribute to the challenges that educators face.

As mentioned, part of the challenge is due to the myriad terms related to assessment such as benchmark, classroom, common, criterion-referenced, diagnostic, formal, formative, high-stakes, informal, instructional, interim, large scale, norm-referenced, performance, standardized, and summative (Gottlieb, 2016). It is imperative to define assessment and understand how it can be incorporated into curriculum design and development, especially since there are different terms used and different types of assessment in education. This in turn would contribute to understanding assessment and provide rationale for why we assess student learning. Furthermore, assessment demonstrates how we can utilize and apply that knowledge in developing and designing effective interactive materials that would benefit everyone involved.

The following sections will give provide more information on assessment research, including the differing types, definitions, and purposes of assessment.

Assessment, Types, Definitions and Purposes

There are several purposes for L2 or FL assessment including screening and identification, placement, reclassification or exit, monitoring student progress, enhance teaching and learning, program evaluation, and accountability (Gottieb, 2016; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Coombe, Folse, & Hubley, 2007; Purpura, 2016). Parents and students also have a role in monitoring student progress to ensure growth, but they need to be able to understand how assessment is being used and what learning outcome it is measuring to be able to make use of assessment results. Coombe, Folse, and Hubley (2007) expressed that assessment has a cycle and the "*analysis*, *feedback*, and *reflection*" phase is often ignored. Providing learners with feedback is important for their growth and should be shared with the learners after an assessment for them to make progress. According to Papadima-Sophocleous (2017),

> language assessment literacy (Fulcher, 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2013) is a relatively new
>
> field, 'as far as theoretical and empirical research is concerned' (Taylor, 2013).
>
> According to the language assessment and testing literature, assessment literacy began
>
> around 2003. L2 assessment literacy requires special teacher training. (p. 249)

Research on assessment is scant because language assessment literacy is still in its infancy. Although it is a new field, emerging L2 digital assessment is becoming more accessible and feasible as new research is being done in that field. However, there might be challenges that arise and one of the solutions is to provide digital literacy learning and training opportunities to assist both teachers and students in the use of the upcoming emerging technologies, interactive

49

assessment development, and applying and understanding learning assessment outcomes based on the learning goals and objectives. Thus, there is a need to research which technology-supported assessments have been used and which of those had effectively assessed language learning. Moreover, there is a need to investigate what features have been examined so far to find potential gaps for future research.

Prior to further discussing assessment, it is important to define what learning and teaching entail to fully understand why and how it is measured. According to Brown (2014) *learning* is "acquiring knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience, or instruction" (p. 375). Learning entails taking new knowledge and applying it to the real world, whereas *teaching* is "showing or helping someone to learn, giving instructions; guiding; providing with knowledge; causing to know or understand" (Brown, 2014, p. 382). Understanding learners' needs enables educators to facilitate and guide them in acquiring necessary knowledge and skills. It also enables educators in developing interactive activities to bridge the gap between the theoretical knowledge and its application, which is important for learning to occur. According to Coombe, Folse, and Hubley (2007) *evaluation* is term that encompasses the basis for collecting educational information, while *assessment* is a term that refers to the various ways to collect learner's achievement and ability information and includes all measures that evaluate learners progress, while *tests* are a formal, and systematic part of assessment. The following discussion provides various types of assessment as well as examples for each.

Authentic Assessment is a term used "to describe the multiple forms of assessment that reflects student learning, achievement, motivation, and attitudes on instructionally-relevant classroom activities. Examples of authentic assessment include performance assessment, portfolios, and self-assessment" (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996, p. 4).

Performance Assessment consists of any form of assessment in which the student constructs a response orally or in writing (Feuer & Fulton, 1993; Herman, Aschbacher, & Winters, 1992; as cited in O'Malley & Pierce, 1996, p. 4).

Summative assessments are conducted to summarize students overall learning (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). These assessments are used in the form of activities or tests at the end of a unit or in the form of midterm and final exams that assesses students overall progress at the end of a course.

Formative assessments are conducted to evaluate students and help them as they are building their knowledge. These assessments can be conducted during class time in the form of classroom discussions and activities (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). Course material and teaching method are assessed at the end of the class in the form of one-minute surveys to adjust the curriculum based on students' feedback and needs.

Dynamic Assessment is considerably new and does not view variables as discrete. Nor does it separate instruction from assessment (Hill, 2015). Dynamic Assessment and SCT are both based on the Vygotskian (1978, 1986) theory of the mind.

According to Coombe, Folse, and Hubley (2007) in addition to traditional assessments, there are also alternative assessments, (e.g., self-assessment). Self-assessment leads to self-regulation which enables learners to become independent and autonomous learners (Cohen, 2011; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). According to Liontas (1999) "self-report data have proved valuable in exploring individual differences in learners and identifying the various learning strategies they employ" (p. 378).

The current research uses instruments that incorporate two idiomatic language performance assessments in which student write their detection and comprehension responses.

51

These instruments are also considered a basis for a needs analysis in the field.

Needs Analysis

A needs analysis allows educators to investigate the learners' needs before designing and developing courses, and it also allows them to modify current courses and activities based on the learners' needs. Mihai and Purmensky (2016) stated that "Needs analysis for the second language classroom is a critical aspect of the language curriculum" (p. 39). Mihai and Purmensky (2016) further elaborated that

> A needs analysis, or needs assessment, is a way to determine who your students are, where they are in their language development, what the content and goals of the course should be, how tasks should be accomplished, and what assessments are best for a particular class. (p. 39)

Nilson (2010) explained that "learners' academic preparation, aspiration, and cognitive development" are elements that might affect the way learners learn and could predict the way materials should be taught and presented. Mihai and Purmensky (2016) elaborated that needs analysis allows teachers to identify learners' needs and provide them with tools that will facilitate success. Students learning might similarly depend on the various ways the new information is presented to them, connecting the new materials with what they already know (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999), and by the emotions invoked by the new knowledge (Leamnson, 1999; Mangurian, 2005).

Since learning has different goals and objectives, it is important to have a variety of needs assessments to meet learners' needs. Mihai and Purmensky (2016) explain that "A student-centered approach focuses on the L2 learner's perception of his or her needs in the classroom and can include personal, sociocultural, and/or language needs depending on the L2 teacher's goals"

(p. 43). Examples of a student-centered needs analyses that could be done in classrooms include surveys/questionnaires, open-ended interviews/informal observations on language performance, learner-compiled inventories of language use, examining/reviewing reading materials, class discussions, and personal/dialogue journals (Mihai & Purmensky, 2016). Incorporating needs analysis results with curriculum development is an important part in ongoing course design and development (Mihai & Purmensky, 2016). This is important for curriculum development with the target learners needs in mind, such as an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curriculum, which would make it more beneficial than an all-encompassing language class that might include topics that are of no importance for the learners. For example, teaching business jargon to learners that are pursuing a higher education in academia would not be as beneficial as teaching them, for example, Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List (AWL).

In the current research, students complete the idiom needs survey, which requires them to evaluate statements about their perceptions on the need for learning idioms in second and foreign languages. These statements might serve as a basis for a needs analysis in the field of idiomatics with Saudi learners of English.

Language Assessment Research and Technological Tools

Technology has increased in recent years, and it is becoming the future of education (Mohamadi, 2018b; Reiser & Dempsey, 2018; Stockwell, 2022). Educational Technology is the process of facilitating and enhancing learning and performance by utilizing different technological resources and processes (Reiser & Damsey, 2018). Future classrooms will continuously need to change their learning spaces to motivate students creative and digital experiences. This is especially true for higher education, which is continuously looking for better platforms that enable teachers and students to collaborate and have access to learning materials

and opportunities anytime and anywhere (Becker et al., 2017).

Previous research has shown some common assessment types and technological tools used with language learning and teaching. The two common technologies utilized across the different skills were *Videos* (Hung, 2016; Mohsen, 2016; Suvorov, 2015; Hill, 2015; Wagner, 2010) and *synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC)* (Mohamadi, 2018a; Darhower, 2014; Papadima-Sophocleous, 2017; Ene & Upton, 2018). The videos were more common with oral (listening and speaking) skill assessment, while SCMC was more common with writing. Although videos and SCMC were the most common technologies, other methods were also used. For example, social platforms were common with oral skill assessments. Writing skills had a variety of technology-based assessments, while other skills did not utilize specific technologies. These results show that videos and audio recordings are what is commonly used with Oral skills, which is understandable since listening and speaking can only be captured through those means. However, SCMC and automated feedback might be the direction where future research related to writing skills research is headed. The results also show a need to further research technological assessments development in skills other than writing.

According to previous language assessment research, the two common types of assessments used for language skills were *feedback* (Brunfaut et al., 2018; Ene & Upton, 2018; Ranalli et al., 2018; Cheng, 2017; Kim & Kim, 2017; Rakedzon & Baram-Tsabari, 2017; Yeh & Lo, 2009; Akiyama, 2017; Hung, 2016; Darhower, 2014; Elmahdi et al., 2018) and *computer-assisted testing, scoring, rating, and mediation* (Bestgen, 2017; Rakedzon & Baram-Tsabari, 2017; Wind et al., 2017; Suvorov, 2015; Darhower, 2014; Wagner, 2010; Mohsen, 2016; Ebadi, 2016; Darhower, 2014; Papadima-Sophocleous, 2017). Feedback was the common type of assessment used with most of the skills and it focused on teacher-feedback rather than peer-

feedback. Feedback was used more with writing assessment. Feedback is providing comments and suggestion on way learners can improve their work or language. Conversely, computed-mediated or assisted testing, scoring, or rating is a common technological assisted assessment that has been increasing in recent years due to the increase in the use of technology in higher education. Hill (2015) identified a *Dynamic assessment* as a new way to assess student learning which is an interactive and integrated skills assessment. It is likely that dynamic assessment will gain popularity in the field of technological language assessments since it is an interactive multi-skill assessment.

Concerning the current research, the use of an online platform is used. This online link can be used on computers, mobiles, and notepads and/or iPads. This method was chosen to facilitate data collection from students in Saudi Arabia, and this method was convenient because learning in Saudi Arabia transferred online during the pandemic.

Second Language and Foreign Language Learners Challenges

Learners acquiring a first language versus a second language use similar processes such as categorization, generalization, memory, and perception (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). The difference stems from the conditions of learning, the learners' prior knowledge about a language, and how the learner's prior knowledge influences their understanding of the new knowledge (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Learners acquiring a second language might face differing challenges depending on the L2 and its closeness to the L1, the L2 feature being learned, the learning environment, the language they are attempting to learn, and well as the individual's learning aptitude. For example, those learning a L2 that is part of the same language family (e.g., English and Spanish are both from the Indo-European language family) will find it easier to learn than those learning a L2 from a completely different language family (e.g., Arabic is from the

Semitic language family while English is from the Indo-European language family). Learners L1 might interfere with their learning of a L2 in various ways. One way is to avoid the unfamiliar, which according to Lightbown and Spada (2013) this phenomenon was described as *avoidance* by Jacquelyn Schachter (1974). Concerning L1 interlanguage interference, L2 learners tend to avoid a feature in a L2 language because it seems far from their L1, and they prefer not to risk trying it (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Learners' inability to notice the differences between a language is another way L1 interferes with learning a L2 (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Concerning the current research, participants respond to open-ended questions to express their thought process during the tasks. Thus, this information would hopefully provide an understanding of the students' challenges Arabic English learners may face and the learning strategies that they have used.

English Idiomatics Research

Researchers are better understanding how English idiomatics affect the L2 learners. That research focused on the challenges of idiomatic language and benefits of different idiomatic instructional methods. In this section I summarize the research of idiomatic language conducted with Arabic learners of English.

Liontas (2018a) investigated the effectiveness of digital tools on teaching figurative language in general, and on learning figurative language. He also explains the importance of teacher training when it comes to idiomaticity, especially where learner's perspective is considered. These issues are particularly important to the field of idiomaticity and figurative language because it considers methods of teaching while using digital tools, which are becoming increasingly part of the future of language teaching. Furthermore, Liontas discusses learning and methods to evaluate the learner's idiomatic competence, which has been a difficult issue for

56

educators over the years. Finally, he considers various viewpoints and aspects such as theoretical considerations, pedagogical construct, issues regarding learners, solutions and recommendations, and further research directions were also discussed.

Young and Snead (2017) examined eleven female and male Saudi students' experiences in a U.S. university and investigated what challenges and barriers they encountered during their first semester at the university. They found that "Participants also mentioned critical thinking skills, writing ability, notetaking, language difficulties involving usage and *slang* as well as difficulty with comprehension of lectures, readings, and testing material as being especially challenging" (p. 40). Alsofyani (2019) found that Saudi EFL learners benefited from explicit instruction in reading strategies. This indicates that idiomatic language and reading are a challenge to L2 learners and that learners would benefit from explicit instruction in the mentioned challenging areas.

Concerning L2 learners understanding of idioms, Salamah (2015) investigated Saudi L2 learners of English challenges of idiom comprehension and translation. There were two groups of female students who were selected randomly from in the fourth or fifth year of university. They found that the participants did not necessarily face difficulty in the comprehension of idiomatic expressions but did face difficulty in the translation of idiomatic expressions. Salamah (2015) also identified and categorized the errors made by the participants as well as the translation strategies, which included miscomprehension of original expression at 41%. That type of error could indicate that learners might indeed face challenges when interpreting and comprehending idiomatic expression.

Idiomatic language competency might be an indication of a learners' language proficiency. Ilinska, et. al (2016) described the complexity of metaphorical competence and how

they investigate its role in the process of professional communication, its different uses, and the challenges of utilizing it in a multilingual setting. They explain that these metaphoric expressions are considered one way to show successful professional interactions. The authors investigated this phenomenon in a multilingual setting because it is more difficult for learners who do not share the same culture, knowledge, social, or linguistic background to understand these expressions. They concluded that the level of competence in a language is related to the successful use of metaphorical expression, which are part of figurative language.

Comparably, Aleshtar and Dowlatabadi (2014) investigated the relationship between the metaphorical competence (MC) and language proficiency level for gaining insight that will aid in the understanding and the implementation of MC in the classroom. Scores on two tests were used to divide participants into low and high proficiency levels in both the MC and language proficiency level. The results of the high proficiency group scores showed that there is a positive relationship between the MC and language proficiency. This indicates that those with higher language proficiency were more familiar with metaphorical concepts, which is important for those teaching figurative language.

Although the teaching idioms to L2 students may be challenging, there are some teaching methods that are effective. Razmjoo et al. (2016) explored the effectiveness of three teaching methods used in teaching idioms: *etymological elaboration method*, *typographic salience method*, and the *traditional method*. Participants in their study were divided into three groups, and each group was taught utilizing one of the three methods. There were two experimental groups (the etymological elaboration experimental group, the typographic salience experimental group) and one control group (traditional group). Results from a post-test and delayed post-test indicated that the etymological method participants scored higher than those in the typographic

salience group and the traditional (control) group. This indicates that the etymological elaboration method is more effective in the recall and retention of figurative language. This is important because it provides an effective method for teaching and learning figurative language.

Similarly, Vasiljevic (2015) conducted a study that investigated the effectiveness of two imagery-based techniques: the pictorial support that contained both the literal idiomatic meaning, and the etymological notes that explained the origin of the phrase in the student's native language. The results showed that the use of etymology promoted the retention of the idiomatic expressions and their meaning, while pictorial support facilitated the recall of their linguistic form. These finding are important because it provides what imagery technique was an effective method for teaching and learning figurative language. Larsen-Walker (2020) investigated the effect of two instructional methods on L2 learners' comprehension and production of VP idioms. There were three groups, which were the control group, the audio-visual authentic material group, and the learners generated digital images of nine target idioms in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course. Larsen-Walker (2020) found that the learner generated image group was more effective in eliciting L2 learners' idiom comprehension. This indicates that using digital tools and pictures are effective instructional methods.

There are many elements that contribute to learning and acquiring a second language. One important teaching component is culture. Cobley (2008) expressed that culture is a complex and difficult to define. Jahoda (2012) states that culture is "a social construct vaguely referring to a vastly complex set of phenomena" (p. 300). According to Faulkner et al. (2006), Talcott Parsons (1964) defined culture as a shared symbolic system that both sides understand and agree upon. Culture is then what a community agrees upon concerning accepted social and behavioral norms, language constructs, and communicative thoughts that a group of people share (Faulkner

et al., 2006). Culture is important because it affects the way language is used and when it is appropriate to use it (Liontas, 2017, personal interview). Li (2019) explained that L2 learners face difficulty with English idioms because it is an integral part of a native speakers' (NS) linguistic repertoire, and NS are "able to produce appropriate forms of English language in line with pragmatic and culture" (p. 24). Costa and Mendes (2015) state that

> …teachers must provide students with a realistic contact with the culture of the target language and, to do that, they must present concrete and real situations to use it, relating it to its culture and revealing similarities and differences. Hence, taking a cultural approach during English language teaching is necessary and important. (p. 154)

Liontas (2002a) investigated how learners themselves assess their knowledge of idioms and their opinions and attitudes toward idiom teaching and learning. Results indicated that participants were influenced based on their personal experiences, background, and culture. The researcher found that "an effective way to develop idiomatic competence over time is through extensive exposure to and systematic practice with idioms" (p. 303). Liontas (2017) further elaborated that "Through idiomatization, students develop and attain high levels of communicative competence" (p. 8). Similarly, Liu (2008) stated that all languages have idioms, but sometimes one type of idiom is more prominent in one language compared to another language. This is important because it shows that participants background, culture, and experiences influence their perspectives on learning idioms in a second language.

Lin's (2015) research focused on what factors that had an effect on EFL Taiwanese learner's perception of an idiomatic transparency level. The study employed 18 number idiomatic expressions. Participants were divided into four groups. The first group had the idiomatic meaning provided to them in the L2, while the second group had the idiomatic

60

meaning provided to them in the L1. This was done to investigate if translation assisted in the learners' judgment of the transparency level. The third and fourth groups engaged in an activity that guided them to consider the relationship between words and concepts, and then asked to judge the idiomatic transparency level. The third group was given the meaning of the idioms, while the fourth group was given the number idiom and asked to complete the sentence. After two weeks, group three and four were then given brief explanations on the relationship between the literal and the figurative expression and asked to evaluate the transparency level of the 18 number idiomatic expressions. Results showed that translation did not help relate the idioms literal meaning to its figurative meaning. The results also indicated that sentence completion tasks that utilize idiomatic expression raised student's transparency ratings. The author concludes that guiding students to think about the relationship between words and concepts might aid in making connections between literal and figurative expressions. This study is important because it provides a way to teach idioms to EFL students.

Oxford et al. (2014) in their article describe figurative language and how it relates to the different language learning strategies that were used over the years. They conducted a three-stage qualitative analysis to examine six international experts' narratives (stories) about the different learning strategies they used, and their use of figurative language instances, specifically metaphors and similes, to explain their stories. The first stage analysis of content showed that the metaphors and similes used by these experts were associated with themes, which included business, food and drinks, sports, temperatures, etc. The second stage analysis of conceptual similarities made it possible to combine these themes into three bigger themes, which included awakening to strategies for the first time, learner self-management, and receiving and giving powerful gifts along the journey. The third and final stage resulted in an overall theme that

showed the relationship between the theories and learning strategies, which was the necessity of understanding learning strategies and applying appropriate theories to explain them. This was done since learning can be considered a social act that many learners struggle with. Although this research is not quantitative, it provides an example of conducting a thematic analysis of figurative language, which is part of the current research analysis method.

Aljabri (2013) investigated Saudi students' judgment of the familiarity and the transparency of English idioms and its association with comprehension. There were 90 male participants enrolled in the English department in a Saudi university. The study included 20 idioms selected from published articles and books on English idioms. Participants were divided into two groups: level 1 students and level 4 students. Two experts judged the 20 idioms and considered them of varied familiarity and 10 idioms were transparent, while the other 10 were opaque. Aljabri applied Nippold and Taylor (2002) judgment tasks, where participants in the classroom finished three tasks for one 80-minute session in the following order: familiarity judgment task (20 idioms x 5 = 100 points), idiom comprehension task (20 points), and transparency judgment task (20 idioms x 3 = 60 points). The results showed that level 4 participants' familiarity with idioms was higher than level 1 participants. There was also a positive relationship between participant level and idiom comprehension. However, there were no differences between the groups for transparency judgment. The results of this research suggest that learners' language proficiency might affect idiom comprehension.

One way to help L2 learners might be through the use of instructional technology. According to Basal et al. (2016), vocabulary can be taught utilizing technology since mobile daily use has been increasing in the last few years. In their study the researchers investigated the effectiveness of teaching 40 figurative idioms taken from the Michigan Corpus of Academic

Spoken English (MICASE) corpus using a mobile application compared to traditional methods. After four weeks, participants in the experimental group scored higher than the control group on the post-test, which indicates that mobile application had a positive effect on learning figurative idioms.

Research shows that idiomatic competence is influenced by language proficiency. Comprehension of idioms increases with increased vocabulary knowledge and higher levels of proficiency. Idiom comprehension and strategies are challenging for L2 learners. There were multiple teaching methods that were effective for idiomatic language learning such as etymology and pictorial support. Although researchers have studied idioms with Saudi learners, there is no known research that addresses the VP idioms and/or proverbs or research that considers the idiomatic lexical level types with Saudi learners of English. Thus, the current research was conducted to fill this gap.

Replication Studies in Second Language Acquisition

Replication as a Research Design

Purposeful replication research that tries to improve the study is necessary to extend the results that generalize findings and add to the field because language learning occurs in different contexts. Moreover, it is essential for meta-analytic research, encourages communication between researchers, and promotes explicitness in reporting (Santos, 1989; Valdman, 1993; Polio & Gass, 1997; Gregg et al., 1997; Noriss & Ortega, 2006; Port, 2010; as cited in Polio, 2012, pp. 48-50). There are several different ways to improve a research study such as keeping central variables constant, eliminating extraneous variables, and improving the design and/or measurement tools (Polio, 2012). Polio discussed the benefits of replication in the field of second

language research, and quoted Santos (1989) "What is considered standard procedure in other

disciplines that hypothesize, quantify, and generalize is ignored in ours" (p. 699, as cited in

Polio, 2012, p. 48). Santos further elaborated that "Replication is an accretive process; it is the

accumulation and consolidation of knowledge over time. Replication of research confirms or

calls into question existing findings; without it, a discipline consists of scattered hypotheses and

insufficiently substantiated generalizations" (Santos, 1989, p. 700; as cited in Polio, 2012, p. 48).

The term "accretive process" used by Santos (1989) refers to gradual growth or incremental

growth, which implies that ongoing replication research would keep adding to the field's

maturity. Polio (2012) agrees with Santos that ongoing replication research would provide more

insights such as whether the variables of the previous studies were correctly identified. Polio

cited Valdman statement that

> Re-running experimental studies under different conditions while maintaining *central*
>
> *variables constant* promises to eliminate much uncontrolled variance. If the same or
>
> another team of researchers fails to obtain nearly the same results on a second trial, then
>
> it may suspect that the key variables were not properly identified in the original study.
>
> [italics added by Polio] (Valdman, 1993, p. 505; as cited in Polio, 2012)

Although valuable, replication research is sometimes not looked upon favorably due to

various reasons. Hüffmeier et al. (2015) summarized that research replications were not

appreciated and stated that

> …replications were previously – and in part remain – insufficiently appreciated (Neuliep
>
> & Crandall, 1990, 1993) and incentivized (Koole & Lakens, 2012) even though they are
>
> considered 'the Supreme Court of the scientific system' (Collins, 1985, p. 19; Blaug,

1992) and even though they serve the important purpose of establishing the stability of our knowledge (Radder, 1996). (p. 81)

Researchers prefer to change some of the parameters of a study than replicating it as a "carbon copy" of the original research to be able to find new applications in the field (Van IJzendoorn, 1994). The original research outcome is usually accepted until proven or disproven (Van IJzendoorn, 1994). However, replications are important in the scientific process and provide benefits that go beyond the benefits of conducting primary research (Figure 11). Brandt et al (2014) said that replications are "essential for theoretical development through confirmation or disconfirmation of results".
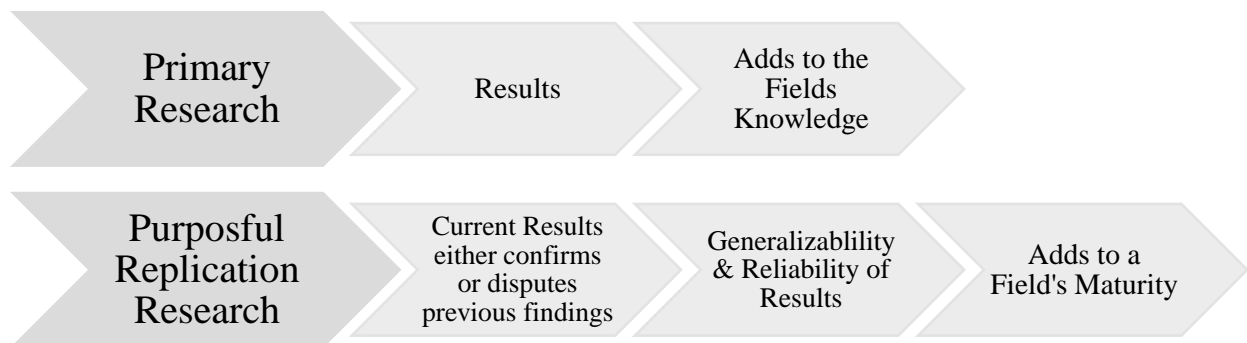
Figure 11

Research Benefits in Simple Terms

Replication Research Reliability of Results and Generalizability

A reliable way to confirm generalizability in L2 research would be to conduct replication research and for L2 researchers to find ways to replicate their own findings (Polio, 2012). According to Polio there are two ways to assess replicability of research outcomes: *internal replicability*, which the original researcher conducts a replication of their study with the same participants and without restructuring the study; *external replicability*, which is considered the most informative method of replication and most SLA researcher are familiar with, which involves conducting the study with new participants and collecting new data from new samples.

Brandt et al. (2014) mention two ways to evaluate the replication, which are: "(1) the size, direction and confidence interval of the effect, which tell us whether the replication effect is significantly different from the null; (2) an additional test of whether it is significant different from the original effect" (p. 221). They further explain that "One *testable* consideration for explaining differences in the results of a replication study and an original study are the many features of the study context that could influence the outcome of a replication attempt. Some of these contextual variations are due to specific theoretical considerations" (p. 221).

Replication Types and Definitions

While other scientific fields have their own definitions and types of replication research, Polio (2012) suggested that there are three main replication types for the field of second language: *exact*, *approximate*, and/or *conceptual*. These definitions and replication types are shown in Figure 12.

Kelly, Chase, and Tucker (1979)	Hendrick (1990)	*Language Teaching Review Panel (2008)*
Literal "Both the manipulation (i.e., treatment, intervention, independent variable) and measurement of variables are kept the same."	**Conceptual** "This type of replication is "an attempt to convey the same crucial structure of information in the dependent variables to the subjects" (p. 45) but with a change in "primary information focus" (p, 45) and possibly task variables."	**Exact** "Everything, including the subjects, is kept the same."
Operational "The manipulation is kept the same, but the dependent variables are measured differently, thus resulting in a different operationalization of a construct."	**Partial** "Changes to the procedural variables are made whereas other parts of the study are kept the same."	**Approximate or Systematic** "One "key variable (such as the learners' proficiency, L1 background, or learning context) is changed" (p. 3)."
Instrumental "The manipulation is changed but the measurement of the dependent variable stays the same."	**Exact** "The contextual variables are kept as close to the original as possible, and so are the procedural variables."	**Constructive or Conceptual** "This may involve changing the operationalization of a construct, the study design, or a "nonmajor" (p. 3) variable."
Constructive "Both the manipulation and the measurement of the dependent variable are changed."	**Systematic** "This type of replication involves a range of variation in the procedural variables to "bracket the original set results" (p. 48)."	

Figure 12

Replication Types & Definition Table – taken from (Polio, 2012, pp. 51-52)

Note: All the definitions above are from Polio (2012).

There are other ways of conceptualizing replication research. For example, Huffmeier et al. (2016) used terms such as "exact replication, constructive replication, and close replication." They defined exact replication as studies that are "conducted by the author(s) of an original finding" (p. 82). Constructive replication also called "follow-up studies" are studies "that include an exact or close replication of an original study" but "adds at least one new element to the original study (p. 86). Close replication are studies "conducted by *independent researchers* with the intention to adhere to the proceedings of the original study as closely as possible" (p. 84). However, Brandt et al. (2014) defined close replications as replications that adhere to the methods and procedures of the original research as much as possible. They further elaborate that the purpose of close replication research is to recreate the research, so the only difference is the participants. Understanding the different terms used for replication research is important to identify the current research replication type, as well as what was similar or different in the replication.

Previous Second Language Acquisition Replication Research

Concerning previous replication studies in our field, Polio (2012) found that the most common replication research types were approximate/instrumental, "where the measurement of the dependent variable was the same" (p. 65). Polio stated that she

> found it somewhat surprising that I found no studies in which only the population was
> changed, and the dependent and independent variables were kept the same. However, …
> causal-comparative studies (i.e., studies looking at group differences) are common and
> thus changing the participants would be the same as changing the independent variable.
> Furthermore, changing the population often necessitates a change in the instrument
> because of, for example, a different proficiency level or L1. (p. 53)

Concerning the Current Replication Research

The current research is a conceptual replication of Liontas (1999) research, using a different population and minor changes in materials and instruments. Since the current population, Saudi learners of English, L1 background is different, hence requiring differentiated task items ensuring that the target L2 language items correspond with the L1 language (i.e., making sure the task items have 10 VP idioms in each of the following criteria LL, SLL, PLL). Since the purpose of replicating research is to add to the current literature in the field of second language and to either concur or dispute previous research, then external replicability is a method used to ensure the reliability of the replicated research results. Consequently, the current research would be considered not only a conceptual replication research but an external replication research as well.

Chapter Summary

The chapter begun with introducing the theoretical frameworks of the study. An overview of English idiomatics followed by definitions and terminology was presented. Vivid phrasal idioms that were proposed by Liontas (1999) was explained since VP idioms are being explored in this research. Then it discussed learning strategies, assessment, and previous idiomatic research. There is an apparent gap in the following: the use of English VP idioms with Saudi learners in an EFL setting, the learning strategies used to comprehend and interpret English VP idioms and investigating the benefits of context on the comprehension of English idiomatics in Saudi Arabia. The chapter also discussed replication research and explained the current research replication type. In the next chapter, the methodology of the current research was discussed.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Overview

English idiomatics encompasses a native speaker's norms and practices of social language and cultural attitudes, which is not inherently learned from learning the different language skills and words, thus making it a challenging language feature for L2 learners. The detection and comprehension of vivid phrasal idioms with or without context with Saudi learners of English has not yet been addressed in the literature and this study is meant to fill that gap. The current research aimed to investigate Saudi English learners' ability to (1) detect VP idioms from within context and (2) comprehend and interpret VP idioms in isolation and in context. It also aimed to uncover challenges and strategies the learners used is so doing. Consequently, the results are likely to contribute to the current body of research in the field of English idiomatics. The current chapter covers the research questions, hypotheses, design, comparison between the initial research and the current research to explain the type of replication research, methodology and rationale, materials selection, instruments, pilot study, and data collection and analyses.

Research Questions

Q1: What are the differences between Saudi EFL learners' idiom detection task scores in the lexical level, the semi-lexical level, and the post-lexical level of English vivid phrasal idioms?

Q2: What are the differences between Saudi EFL learners' idiom comprehension task scores in the lexical level, the semi-lexical level, and the post-lexical level of English vivid phrasal idioms between the zero-context condition and the full-context condition?

Q3: What are Saudi EFL learners' perceptions on the need for learning idioms in second and foreign languages?

Q4: In what ways do Saudi EFL learners detect and comprehend English vivid phrasal idioms?

Research Hypotheses

H_{a1}: Saudi EFL learner's lexical level (LL) idiom detection task scores will be statistically significantly higher than semi-lexical level (SLL) idiom detection task scores which will, in turn, be statistically significantly higher than the post-lexical level (PLL) idiom detection task scores.

H_{a2}: For Saudi EFL learners, a main effect of groups will show Group 1 having a statistically significantly lower comprehension task mean score than Group 2 and a main effect of lexical level will show LL as having a statistically significant higher comprehension task mean score than the SLL comprehension task mean score which will, in turn, be statistically significantly higher than the PLL idiom comprehension task mean score.

H_{a3}: The mean rating of Saudi EFL learners on the Idiom Needs Survey will be higher for those in the zero-context condition group than those in the full context condition group.

Note: These hypotheses were made based on Liontas's (1999) prediction of the VP idioms lexical level types, but they were applied to the L2 learners' detection and comprehension of VP idioms. While the Idiom Diffusion Model (IDM) was originally used to predict L2 learners' idiom comprehension, in the current research it is also used to predict L2 learners' idiom detection.

Current Study Hypotheses vs. Initial Study (1999) Hypotheses

To predict learners' idiomatic performance outcome, a comparison of Liontas's (1999) initial research and the current research was summarized in a table format in Table 8.

Table 8

Liontas's Initial Study (1999) Hypotheses vs. the Current Study Hypotheses

#	Initial Research (Liontas, 1999)	Current Research Hypotheses
1	In Liontas (1999) the first hypothesis is stated as follows: "Lexical-Level or Idiom-Matching Hypothesis (LL). If a target (L2) idiomatic expression already exists in the learner's native (LI) language, the learner will attempt to assign meaning to the L2 expression by referring first to the available lexical entries in his L2 (or L3, L4, etc.) "master" mental lexicon. Upon a one-to-one match between the L2 and LI expression, the learner will then assign meaning to the L2 idiomatic expression. In other words, the learner will make use of his bottom-up processing skills first before assigning meaning to an L2 expression. Transfer of knowledge from L2 to LI and vice versa is strongly anticipated. No contextual support is needed for the interpretation of such idioms." (p. 118)	Saudi EFL learner's lexical level (LL) idiom detection task scores will be statistically significantly higher than semi-lexical level (SLL) idiom detection task scores which will, in turn, be statistically significantly higher than the post-lexical level (PLL) idiom detection task scores.
2	In Liontas (1999) the second hypothesis is stated as follows: "Sem-Lexical Level Hypothesis (SLL). If the LL hypothesis holds, then the learner will undergo the same processes as stated above with the addition that at least one more lexical item will have to be inferred which may or may not be present in the LI idiom. In other words, recognition of the L2 idiom would still be possible but should require additional processing effort due to the added inferencing. Some contextual support may be needed for the interpretation of such idioms." (p. 118)	For Saudi EFL learners, a main effect of groups will show Group 1 having a statistically significantly lower comprehension task mean score than Group 2 and a main effect of lexical level will show LL as having a statistically significant higher comprehension task mean score than the SLL comprehension task mean score which will, in turn, be statistically significantly higher than the PLL idiom comprehension task mean score.

Table 8 (Continued)

#	Initial Research (Liontas, 1999)	Current Research Hypotheses
3	In Liontas (1999) the third hypothesis is stated as follows: "Post-Lexical Level Hypothesis (PLL). If an L2 expression does not exist in the learner's LI language, or even if it exists, but is embedded in lexical items that evoke a totally different thought or mental image, 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 the semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic contextual cues, and 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. In other words, the learner will first make use of his or her bottom-up processing skills, and upon semantic hindrance or ambiguity, he or she will then attempt to feed back down (top-down processing) to the existing target lexicon by solidifying the interpretation(s) of the L2 idiomatic expression based on the greater contextual and pragmatic framework in which that particular expression was used. Without contextual support, the interpretation of such idioms will be difficult." (p. 119)	The mean rating of Saudi EFL learners on the Idiom Needs Survey will be higher for those in the zero context condition group than those in the full context condition group.
*	The hypotheses were made for the VP idioms lexical levels concerning comprehension.	These hypotheses were made based on Liontas's (1999) prediction of the VP idioms lexical level types, but they were applied to the L2 learners' detection and comprehension of VP idioms. While the Idiom Diffusion Model (IDM) was originally used to predict L2 learners' idiom comprehension, in the current research it is also used to predict L2 learners' idiom detection.

*= Note

Research Design

The current research replicated Liontas's (1999) initial research utilizing a different population. This entailed changing the research instruments, materials, data collection and analysis, and research design to fit the intended population: Arabic English learners. The method used was a mixed method approach, which meant data were analyzed both quantitatively (using descriptive statistical analysis) and qualitatively (using thematic analysis). The population of the current study was undergraduates from a mid-western university in Saudi Arabia. The participants were considered advanced English language proficiency level based on a placement test.

A group of English vivid phrasal (VP) idioms and proverbs that correspond with Arabic VP idioms and proverbs were identified, and 30 idiomatic expressions were selected to be used in the performance tasks. The selected VP idioms and proverbs were taken from Collis's (2007, 2009) books, then their Arabic equivalents were gathered through a collection and evaluation process, which included a professional review panel. I discuss this more fully in the material selection process below. The VP idioms and proverbs were categorized and grouped into three idiomatic groups. *Lexical Level (LL)* refers to the idiomatic phrase that has literally the same wording in the L1 and L2 and creates the same image in the mind of learners. *Semi-Lexical Level (SLL)* refers to the idiomatic phrase with most words similar between the L1 and L2, but some words or images that come to mind may be slightly different from those evoked in the L1. *Post-Lexical Level (PLL)* refers to the idiomatic phrase that has words or images that come to mind that are totally different from those evoked in the L1 (Figure 13). These idiom lexical level types, initially proposed by Liontas (1999), could be considered representative of the idiomatic expression's distance between the first and second language.

74

Lexical Level
Same as L1 expression
- non or less challenging to comprehend.

Semi-Lexical Level
Some words are different in L1
- somewhat challenging to comprehend.

Post-Lexical Level
 It does not exist in L1 or different image in L1
- challenging to comprehend.
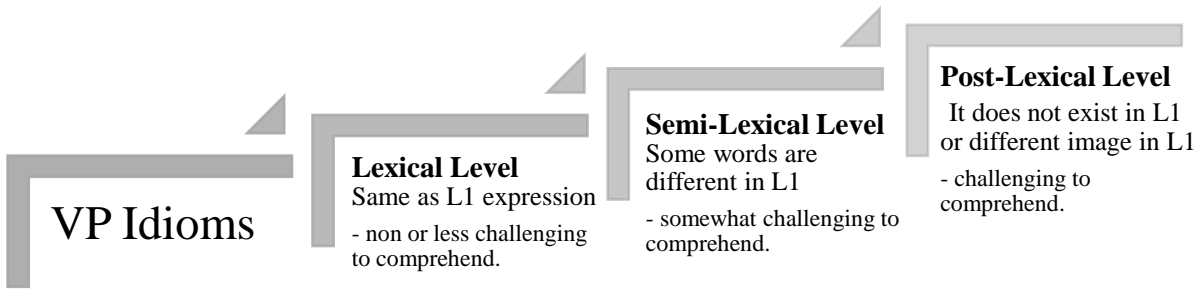
VP Idioms

Figure 13

VP Idioms' Lexical Level Types

Design Summary

The design of the study is summarized in Figure 14.
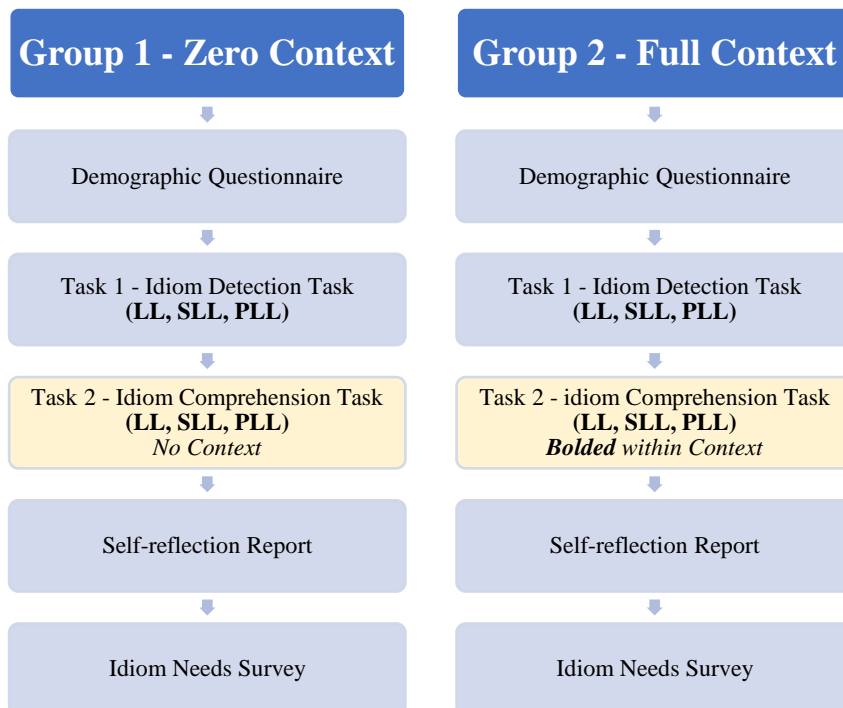
Figure 14

Research Design Summary

Initial Study vs Current Study

To identify the type of replication, a comparison of Liontas's (1999) initial research and the current research is summarized in a table format in Table 9.

Table 9

Summary of Liontas's Initial Study (1999) vs. the Current Study

	Initial Research (Liontas, 1999)	Current Research
Research Questions		
	Main Question Is there a universal *modus operandi* in the comprehension and interpretation of VP idioms in second languages and whether this is a cross-cultural phenomenon of language in use?	This question was not included because the current research does not contain cross-cultural participants.
	Sub-Questions **Q1:** How do adult L2 learners locate VP idioms in reading of texts containing them? On what text "cues' are their decisions based? **Q2:** How do adult L2 learners decode and comprehend VP idioms once they have been located in a text? **Q3:** What reading strategies do adult L2 learners employ in the comprehension and interpretation of VP idioms? **Q4:** What are the processing constraints that adult L2 learners are likely to exhibit during VP idiom comprehension and interpretation? **Q5:** Which sub-types of VP idioms (LL, SLL, or PLL idioms) are easier to comprehend and interpret and why? **Q6:** Does context significantly affect the comprehension and interpretation of VP idioms?	**Q1:** What are the differences between Saudi EFL learners' idiom detection task scores in the lexical level, the semi-lexical level, and the post-lexical level of English vivid phrasal idioms? **Q2:** What are the differences between Saudi EFL learners' idiom comprehension task scores in the lexical level, the semi-lexical level, and the post-lexical level of English vivid phrasal idioms between the zero-context condition and the full-context condition? **Q3:** What are Saudi EFL learners' perceptions on the need for learning idioms in second and foreign languages? **Q4:** In what ways do Saudi EFL learners detect and comprehend English vivid phrasal idioms?

Table 9 (Continued)

	Initial Research (Liontas, 1999)	Current Research
Aim of the Study	The general aim of the study is to investigate if there is a *modus operandi* utilized by L2 learners in the comprehension of English VP idioms; the effects of context on comprehension; their awareness, use and understanding of learning strategies; and their perceptions of idioms.	The general aim of the study is to explore Saudi EFL learners' detection and comprehension of English VP idioms, the learners' perceptions on the need for learning idioms in SL/FL settings, and learners' idiomatic language challenges and learning strategies.
Research Design	Mixed Method	Mixed Method
Context & Study Participants	Participants were enrolled in the third year of a foreign language course (e.g., French, German, Spanish) at a US western university in a foreign language (FL) setting. Participants consisted of both female and male students.	Participants learn English as a L2 in an EFL setting. Participants had an advanced proficiency level based on the Oxford Online Placement Test at an English language institute (ELI) in a midwestern university in Saudi Arabia. Participants consisted of both female and male students.
Groups	2 Groups Computer-mediated Interactional (CMI) group Computer-mediated Interactional Video (CMI+V) group The difference between the 2 groups was the presence or absence of a think-aloud oral reading and a text retelling procedure.	2 Groups Group 1 – Zero-Context Condition Group 2 – Full Context Condition Using Qualtrics® to administer the questionnaire and tasks online.
Participants L1 & L2	L1 = English L2 = Learners of Spanish, French, and German	L1 = Arabic (Saudi Arabian) L2 = English Learners
Participants Level	Third-year language learners.	Undergraduate Saudi advanced English proficiency level based on the university's ELI placement test.
Sample Size	CMI Group = 58 Participants CMIV Group = 7 Participants	166 Participants Group 1 = 80 & Group 2 = 86
Collection	Purposeful and convenience sampling.	Purposeful and convenience sampling.

Table 9 (Continued)

	Initial Research (Liontas, 1999)	Current Research

Material Selection	Context taken from the book titled "101 American English Idioms" by Harry Collis (1987).
	
	45 idioms total
	
	15 idioms for each second language as follows:
	English vs French
	      vs German
	      vs Spanish
		Context taken from the book titled "101 American English Idioms" by Harry Collis (2007) and from the book titled "101 American English Proverbs" by Harry Collis (2009).
		
		30 idioms and proverbs total
		Each task contained a set of 15 idioms
		
		English vs Arabic equivalent

Instruments	2 Questionnaires (pre & post)
	
	3 Tasks (IDT, ZCT, FCT)
	
	1 Post-task Summative Evaluation
	
	4-5 individual interviews
	
	Used think-aloud reading and self-reports.
	
	Note: the CMIV Group = 7 Participants were video recorded
		1 Demographic Questionnaire
		
		2 Idiomatic Performance Tasks:
		  Task 1 – idiom detection task.
		  Task 2 – idiom comprehension task:
		    (Group 1 – zero-context task).
		    (Group 2 – full context task).
		
		1 Self-reflection Report
		
		1 Idiom Needs Survey

Pre-Study Questionnaire	Pre-Study Questionnaire has 25 items, but item number 24 has 11 statements, which makes the total 35 items.	Demographic Questionnaire has 23 items, but item number 22 has 11 statements, which makes the total 33 items. Two items were removed.
Task 1 Idiom Detection Task (IDT)	Task 1 (IDT) has 15 VP idioms in context, and 3 open- ended questions for each idiom. 1st question is scored 0/2 with 30 possible points. Identify the idioms in the context and write the learning strategy. There are 15 idioms in context.	Task 1 (Idiom Detection Task) has 15 VP idioms and proverbs in context, 1 yes/no question, and 3 open- ended questions for each idiom. 1st and 2nd open-ended questions are scored 0/1 with 15 possible points. Idioms and instruction were changed to suit the culture and language of this sample.

Table 9 (Continued)

	Initial Research (Liontas, 1999)	Current Research
Task 2 *Zero Context Task (ZCT)*	Task 2 (ZCT) has 15 VP idioms without context, and 2 open- ended questions for each idiom.	Group 1 Task 2 (Idiom Comprehension Task) has 15 VP idioms and proverbs with no context, 1 yes/no question, and 2 open-ended questions for each idiom.
	1st question is scored 0/2 with 30 possible points.	1st question is scored 0/1 with 15 possible points.
	Guess the idioms meaning without context and write the learning strategy.	Idioms and instruction were changed to suit the culture and language of this sample.
	Responses were timed. The 15 idioms were different from the 15 idioms used in task 1.	
Task 3 *Full Context Task (FCT)*	Task 3 (FCT) has 15 VP idioms in context, and 2 open- ended questions for each idiom.	Group 2 Task 2 (Idiom Comprehension Task) has 15 VP idioms and proverbs bolded in context, 1 yes/no question, and 2 open-ended questions for each idiom.
	1st question is scored 0/2 with 30 possible points.	1st question is scored 0/1 with 15 possible points.
	Guess the idioms meaning without context and write the learning strategy.	Idioms and instructions were changed to suit the culture and language of this sample.
	Same 15 idioms used for task 2.	
Post-task Summative Evaluation	Participants write an overall summary of their experiences during the tasks.	The Self-reflection Report has 5 guiding questions that participants answer after completing Tasks 1 and 2 to help them summarize their experience.
	Learners write about the challenges they faced, the learning strategy they used, and their feelings completing the tasks.	This instrument was the same.
Post-Study Questionnaire	Post-Study Questionnaire has 75 items. It included items about the software program "*It's All Greek to Me!*" that was developed by Liontas (1999).	The Idiomatic Needs Survey has 33 items. It was changed because (1) some items were geared towards instructors' feedback on curriculum needs and development, and (2) the length of the instrument was longer than most students would be willing to complete.

Table 9 (Continued)

	Initial Research (Liontas, 1999)	Current Research
Data Collection Procedures	Data collection procedures were mentioned in initial study (Liontas, 1999).	Data collection facilitation approval from participants' university. IRB Approval. Participants' Online Consent. Participants' responses collected online.

Number of Session(s)	Data was collected in two session that were one week apart:
	Session One – consisted of the Pre-Questionnaire (Questionnaire 1) and the Idiom Detection Task (IDT).
	
	Session Two – consisted of the zero-context task (ZCT), full context task (FCT), and the *post-task Summative Evaluation* for each of the aforementioned tasks.
	
	The session ended with the Post-Questionnaire (Questionnaire 2).
		Data was collected online through a Qualtrics® link that led to:
		(1) Demographic Questionnaire
		(2) Task 1 – Idiom Detection Task
		(3) Task 2 – Idiom Comprehension Task
		    G1 = no context (ZCT)
		    G2 = in context (FCT)
		(4) Self-reflection Report
		(5) Idiom Needs Survey

Replication Type and Justification

The reasons for choosing a conceptual replication were because (1) the population's first language (L1) is different, (2) different materials were required – the use of different idioms than the ones used in the initial study – to ensure it was appropriate for the specific population, and (3) some instruments were changed to suit the intended population at the time. The current replication research is focused on performance tasks that collected data relating to detection and comprehension.

Research Methodology and Rational of the Study Design

Methodological Framework

The current research integrated a strategy-based research. According to Mackey and Gass (2016) "Strategy-based research is aimed at determining the strategies used when learning a second language together with the variables that determine the selection of strategies" (Mackey & Gass, 2016, p. 85). Asking learners through a questionnaire or asking them directly which strategies they use in general, and which strategies they use when performing a certain task is one way of gaining access to that information (Macaro, 2001, p. 37, as cited in Mackey & Gass, 2016, p. 85). An introspective method is one way to gather learners' strategy information by asking them to report their process of 'solving a problem' such as immediate recall, which "is a technique used to elicit data immediately after the completion of the event to be recalled" (p. 94). According to Mackey and Gass (2016), "introspective methods, or data elicitation techniques that encourage learners to communicate their internal processing and perspectives about language learning experiences, can afford researchers access to information unavailable from observation alone" (p. 253). They further explained that there are various research design types such as correlational (associational) research; experimental and quasi-experimental research that includes comparison group design or control group design; measuring the effect of treatment that includes pre-test and post-test design or post-test only design; repeated measure design; factorial design; time-series design; one-shot design; and meta-analysis.

To summarize the methodological framework, the research is a mixed method research because it collected performance data relating to the comprehension or interpretations of English VP idioms, which measures interlanguage competence (White, 2020), and responses in the performance tasks were either quantified (quantitative) or grouped in themes (qualitative). The

81

research asked participants about the strategies they used which means it incorporated a strategy-based method to collecting data that was an immediate recall introspective method (Mackey & Gass, 2016). Finally, the design that matches this research is a one-shot design because there is no experiment (Mackey & Gass, 2016).

Research Variables

According to Mackey and Gass (2016), **v**ariables in research are characterized as "features or qualities that change" (p. 152). There are two main types of variables: independent and dependent. The authors explained that "the independent variable is the one that we believe may "cause" the results; the dependent variable is the one we measure to see the effects the independent variable has on it" (p. 154). They further explained that some variables such as proficiency level or background knowledge might interfere with participants' responses and as such should be controlled. It follows that controlling variables and factors such as participants' proficiency level is difficult in second language (L2) research. In the current research, the following variables were identified:

Independent Variables: Context, and the three levels of English VP idioms (Table 10).

Dependent Variables: Detection of VP idioms, Participants' performance scores for Task 2.

Controlled Variables: Participants' proficiency level.

Table 10

Independent Variables

		Lexical level types		
		LL	SLL	PLL
Comprehension	In Isolation			
	In Context			

Context of Inquiry

Research Setting

This research was conducted in a midwestern university in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Data was collected using an online website Qualtrics® that provides a platform for researchers to create surveys or use some available samples. The participants were students that had an advanced English proficiency level based on the Oxford Online Placement Test (OOPT) taken at the English Language Institute (ELI) at the university in a FL setting. Participants consisted of both female and male students that were currently enrolled in a higher education setting at the time of data collection.

Participants and Sample Size

There were 166 participants at or above the age of 18 who have consented to take part in the current study. In the age group 18-20 were 65 (39.2%), in the age group 21-25 were 100 (60.2%), in the age group 26-30 was 1 (.6%). Of the 166 participants, 90 were male (54.2%) and 76 were female (45.8%). Their current university standing was approximately evenly spaced with 53 freshman (31.9%), 37 sophomores (22.3%), 32 juniors (19.3%), and 44 seniors (26.5%) ($X^2=6$, $p=.112$). The years of experience with English was also approximately evenly spaced for those less than 5 years of experience but the group consisted of significantly more in the 5+ years group as follows: Less than 1 year, 18 (10.8%), 1 year, 31 (18.7%), 2 years, 21(12.7%), 3 years, 22 (13.3%), 4 years, 23 (13.9%), and 5+ years, 51(30.7%) ($X^2=27.8$, $p<.001$). The years of college classroom experience in the foreign language was not as evenly spaced as those with one year significantly different than those in the other groups as follows: Less than 1 year, 38 (22.9%), 1 year, 55 (33.1%), 2 years, 19 (11.4%), 3 years, 18 (10.8%), 4 years, 24 (14.5%), and

5+ years, 12 (7.2%) (X^2=47.6, p<.001). The number of students who had spent no time abroad outnumbered those who had spent time in a foreign country as follows: No time, 108 (65%), Less than 1 year, 38 (22.9%), 1 to 3 year, 16 (9.6%), More than 3 years, 4 (2.4%). The rating these students gave to their own level of fluency in the foreign language were as follows: No fluency, 9 (5.4%), Some fluency, 55 (33.1%), Average fluency, 63 (38%), High fluency, 30 (18%), Near-native fluency, 8 (4.8%), Native fluency, 1 (.6%). Their self-rating on the ease of comprehending and interpreting foreign language texts was as follows: Not easy, 22(13.3%), Marginally easy, 83 (50%), Easy, 46 (27.7%), Very easy, 15 (9%).

Concerning sample size, Dörnyei (2007) explained that there are "no hard or fast rules in setting the optimal sample size" (p. 99). He further explained that sample size depends on the type of study being conducted. Dörnyei (2007) provided the following examples concerning sample size for each of the following quantitative studies: correlation research – at least 30 participants; comparative and experimental procedures – at least 15 participants in each group; factor analytic and other multivariate procedures – at least 100 participants (Dörnyei, 2007, pp. 99-100). Hatch and Lazaraton (1991) argued that to achieve normal distribution, in statistical consideration, there needs to be at least 30 or more participants (as cited in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 100). Dörnyei (2007) stated that a sample size of 6-10 participants in qualitative studies "might work well" (p. 127).

For the current research, using G*Power software, the sample size estimate was determined based on the following input information for each the t-test (Table 11), one-way ANOVA (Table 12), and within-between ANOVA (Table 13).

Table 11

*G*Power Software Parameter Input for t-test*

	Parameter	Input Selection
1	**Test Family**	t-test
2	**Statistical test**	Means: Difference between two independent means (two groups)
3	**Type of power analysis**	A Priori: Compute required sample size – given α, power, and effect size.
	Tail(s):	two
	Effect size d:	0.5
	α err prob:	0.05
	Power (1-β err prob):	0.8
	Allocation ratio N2/N1:	1

The software estimated that the total sample size needed was 128 participants, with 64 participants in each group. Previous research related to the topics of idiomatic language, reading, metacognitive learning strategies, and/or online data collection with Saudi learners of English such as Alshaikhi (2018) and Alsofyani (2019) also used similar parameters for *effect size*, *α err prob*, and *power* (*1-β err prob*), but their sample sizes were based on their own specific research design and data analysis method.

Table 12

*G*Power Software Parameter Input for one-way ANOVA*

	Parameter	Input Selection
1	**Test Family**	F tests
2	**Statistical test**	ANOVA: Fixed effects, omnibus, one-way
3	**Type of power analysis**	A Priori: Compute required sample size – given α, power, and effect size.
	Effect size f:	0.25
	α err prob:	0.05
	Power (1-β err prob):	0.8
	Number of groups	2

The software estimated that the total sample size needed was 128 participants. Similar parameters for *α err prob*, and *power* (*1-β err prob*) were computed.

Table 13

G*Power Software Parameter Input for within-between ANOVA

	Parameter	Input Selection
1	**Test Family**	F tests
2	**Statistical test**	ANOVA: Repeated measures, within-between interaction
3	**Type of power analysis**	A Priori: Compute required sample size – given α, power, and effect size.
	Effect size f:	0.25
	α err prob:	0.05
	Power (1-β err prob):	0.95
	Number of groups	2
	Number of measurements	3
	Corr among rep measures	0.5
	Nonsphericity correction ε	1

The software estimated that the total sample size needed was 44 participants

Participants Selection/Sampling Method

Participants' selection made use of *purposeful selection*. According to Babbie (2016) *purposive (judgmental) sampling* is "A type of nonprobability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher's judgment about which ones will be the most useful or representative" (p. 187). Dörnyei (2007) differentiated between the sampling terminology in quantitate and qualitative research. In quantitative studies, the common type of non-probability sampling used in L2 studies is *convenience or opportunity sampling*, where "members of the target population are selected for the purpose of the study if they meet certain practical criteria, such as geographical proximity, availability at a certain time, easy access, or the willingness to volunteer (Dörnyei, 2007, pp. 98-99). Dörnyei (2007) further explained that convenience sampling is rarely fully convenience based, but rather *partially purposeful*, which means that participants are chosen for ease of access and because they possess certain key characteristics that are related to the purpose of the study. However, generalizability is negligible

in non-probability sampling since it pertains to that specific population being studied. In the

current study it pertains to L2 learners. In qualitative studies, sampling, *purposeful or purposive*

sampling is best "to find individuals who can provide rich and varied insight into the

phenomenon under investigation so as to maximize what we can learn" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 126).

According to Brown (2014b), basic mixed method sampling in research uses a combination of

sampling procedures such as *purposive* and *convenience*, while also being *random*. Mackey and

Gass (2016) explained that there are types of random sampling such as: *simple random sampling*,

where participants are randomly selected, which is considered to be the best random type of

sampling; *stratified random sampling*, where participants are grouped, and preselected

characteristics are identified before selecting randomly from those pre-selected groups to ensure

that they represent the intended population; and *cluster random sampling*, where an entire class

is selected rather than the individuals, which is most useful with large samples.

Since the current research includes L2 learners, *purposeful* sampling is the best method

for selecting the sample from the intended population, while also being a *convenient* and *simple*

random sample. The sampling is considered purposeful and convenient while using the simple

random sampling because of the following reasons: (a) the proficiency level of the students was

pre-selected, which makes it purposeful; (b) the target population are L2 learners in an EFL

setting at a single university, which makes it convenient; and (c) the learners were randomly

distributed to their groups, which is considered random assignment. Since the data were

collected during the Covid-19 pandemic, in-person administration was not possible.

Participants Privacy and Safety (Ethical Considerations)

Participant data were secured and made anonymous by removing students' names from

the instrument. Each questionnaire was then assigned a code if responses were mentioned in the

results and discussion. Data collected was stored and maintained on a password protected PC.

After obtaining IRB approval, the researcher provided the university with the recruitment letter. The university then distributed the online link to possible participants to ensure participants anonymity and safety, and to ensure their participation or withdrawal is voluntary. Possible participants then volunteered to participate. Participants could withdraw anytime without providing a reason. Only completed instruments were included in the data analysis.

The Research Population's Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria: Undergraduate L2 English learners whose L1 is Arabic and are considered to have an advanced English proficiency level based on the placement test – the Oxford Online Placement Test (OOPT) – taken at the English Language Institute (ELI), in a Saudi midwestern university.

Exclusion Criteria: Native speakers of English and all other students that do not match the description.

Participants Summary

Below is a summary of the participants EFL setting, sample size, and selection method.

Table 14

Participants Summary

Participants		
	EFL Setting	Undergraduates who learned English as a L2
		Advance English proficiency level
		Took the Oxford Online Placement Test (OOPT)
	Sample Size	Two groups of Saudi Students
		166 Participants: 80 in group 1 and 86 in group 2
		Male & female participants
	Selection Method	Purposeful and convenient sampling
		Random distribution
		Completed all the instruments

Materials Selection and Use

Material(s) selected and used were from the same source as Liontas's (1999) research, which used Collis's (1987) book titled "*101 American English Idioms*," but the current research used an updated version for Collis's book, which was Collis (2007) titled "*101 American English Idioms*," and Collis (2009) titled "*101 American English Proverbs*." However, the English VP idioms selected were different because the participants' first language (L1) and their target second language (L2) are different from the initial research populations L1 and L2. There were two sets of 15 VP idioms and proverbs distributed. The first set included the 15 VP idioms and proverbs that were used in the first task – the Idiom Detection Task, while the second set included the other 15 VP idioms and proverbs that were used in the second task – the Idiom Comprehension Task. In each set, the selected English VP idioms and proverbs were categorized as follows: five LL, five SLL, and five PLL.

In these tasks, the six following proverbs were included because they are culturally appreciated and commonly used in the culture: *Absence makes the heart grow fonder*; *An apple a day keeps the doctor away*; *Don't judge a book by its cover*; *The way to a man's heart is through his stomach*; *All that glitters is not gold*; and *Don't put off for tomorrow what you can do today*. The five VP proverbs were selected from Collis's (2009) book titled "*101 American English Proverbs.*" They are considered a VP proverb because under Liontas's (1999) VP characterization it is considered: "…conventionalized complex multilexemic phrasal expressions occurring above word level and often, but not always, in the length of a sentence, hence phrasal" (p. 40); and "…polysemous and have both a common literal, referential meaning and an institutionalized figurative, metaphorical meaning, the latter of which is neither always predictable nor entirely logically deducible from the grammatical, syntactic, structural, and

89

semantic character of its individual constituent elements" (p. 40).

The idioms and proverb were selected after an extensive professional review panel that took approximately seven months. A table with all 101 English idioms and their meaning from Collis's book (2007) was created, and space for the Arabic equivalent and literal translation and meaning was provided, so it can be filled out. A similar table was created for 101 English proverbs and their meaning from Collis's (2009), and space for the Arabic equivalent and literal translation and meaning was provided as well. Both tables were uploaded to Google Documents. An explanation of the study, and what was needed (written in both English and Arabic) was also uploaded online. The Google Document was then sent to 15 TESOL professionals, graduate students, or individuals that have lived at least five years in both the United States and Saudi Arabia. Recipients were asked to: (1) fill out the table with the Arabic equivalent and provide a literal translation and meaning, and (2) send it to other professionals who meet the same criteria. Each recipient indicated they had sent the link to at least one other person, 90% of them assured me that they contacted at least one person, which makes me assume that approximately 30 – 35 individuals were contacted.

The researcher also searched for dictionaries that would include either English – Arabic idioms, or Arabic idioms. However, the only books that were found and bought from overseas countries might not have been accurately named or might not have provided an accurate description after perusing their contents, which Liontas (2019) addressed the dilemma of defining idiomatic language. The books found were: "*The modern dictionary of phrasal verbs and idiomatic expressions*" (Mazyad, 2015) and "*A dictionary of idiomatic expressions in written Arabic: For the reader of classical and modern texts*" (Moussa, 2014). They mostly contained single word or multi-word vocabulary and their word family, phrasal words, collocations, and

synonyms and antonyms like a thesaurus. To my knowledge, there were no VP idioms or proverbs included in these purchased books. Furthermore, searching for Arabic idioms used in other academic research yielded no success of finding equivalents to the list provided in Collis's (2007) book of 101 English idioms to ensure they were VP idioms that created a visual image in the mind.

There were some issues with the professional review process, which were due to the reasons shown in Table 15.

Table 15

Professional Review of Materials Process

Professional Review of Materials Process	
Individuals	Only 17 out of about 35 individuals responded and contributed to writing in the Google Document.
Responses	Most respondents only provided a few Arabic equivalents with its literal translation and meaning, while some only provided the Arabic equivalent without providing its meaning. Some of the individuals had sent the link to others from a different region in Saudi Arabia, which led to a few items having two or more differing equivalents.
Link Access	Most respondents used the link to access the document, so the individual's contribution such as changes/edits were not recorded (unknown), which made it harder to contact the individual and verify what they meant.
Technical Issues	Some individuals reported technical issues with the link not working, or they reported that their input was not being saved after they did their best to fill out what they knew. Some individuals did not report that they encountered technical issues, and only after reaching out to them again to inquire about their contribution and input, did they explain that they had technical issues.
Completion Time	The process of collecting and validating the idioms and proverbs happened during the COVID-19 pandemic. For that reason, it took some time for review members to finally go online and fill out what they can following several requests to please do so. This resulted in a lengthy collection process with too many issues to overcome.

To ensure that the items selected were indeed equivalents and appropriate for the purpose of this study, I contacted the individuals to ask if they were willing to meet virtually to review the responses together and come to a consensus. Only four individuals and three professionals agreed to go over their written responses and discuss the suitability of each idiom and/or proverb. This step was conducted because some items had two or more differing equivalents in Arabic, and because of the various idiomatic language used in different regions in Saudi Arabia.

Selected English Vivid Phrasal Idioms and Proverbs for the Idiom Detection Task

In the Idiom Detection Task (Task 1), participants in both Group 1 and Group 2 were given a short context that included the first set of 15 VP idioms and proverbs (Table 16). Participants were asked to identify the VP idiom or proverb in the given context and write it or copy and paste it in the space provided. Participants were then asked if they knew the idiomatic expression by selecting either yes or no. Participants then answered the following two open-ended questions: (1) explain the meaning of the VP idiom or proverb and (2) explain the strategies used for locating or finding the idiom or proverb embedded in the context.

Table 16

Vivid Phrasal Idioms and Proverbs selected for Task 1 for Groups 1 and 2

#	Type	English Idioms & Proverbs	Figurative Meaning	Arabic Equivalent	Literal Translation	Figurative Meaning
1	LL Prov.	Absence makes the heart grow fonder	People often feel more affectionate towards each other when they are apart	البعد يزيد القلب ولوعا	Absence makes the heart grow fonder	People often feel more affectionate towards each other when they are apart
2	LL Prov.	An apple a day keeps the doctor away	Eating an apple every day helps a person to stay healthy	تفاحة في اليوم تغنيك عن الطبيب	An apple a day keeps the doctor away	Eating an apple every day helps a person to stay healthy

Table 16 (Continued)

#	Type	English Idioms & Proverbs	Figurative Meaning	Arabic Equivalent	Literal Translation	Figurative Meaning
3	LL Prov.	Don't judge a book by its cover	Don't form an opinion about something based on the appearance alone	لا تحكم على الكتاب من عنوانه	Don't judge a book by its cover	Don't form an opinion about something based on the appearance alone
4	LL Prov.	The way to a man's heart is through his stomach	The way to gain a man's love is by preparing food that he enjoys	الطريق إلى قلب الرجل معدته	The way to a man's heart is through his stomach	The way to gain a man's love is by preparing food that he enjoys
5	LL Prov.	All that glitters is not gold	Some things are not as valuable as they appear to be	ليس كل ما يلمع ذهبا	Not all that glitters is gold	Some things are not as valuable as they appear to be
6	SLL	On one's last leg	Sick and failing	على اخره	At one's end of his wits	Sick and failing
7	SLL	At the end of one's rope	At the limit of one's ability to cope	على اخر اعصابه	At the end of his nerve	At the limit of one's ability to cope
8	SLL	Shake a leg	Hurry	حرّك رجولك	Move your legs	Hurry
9	SLL	Lose one's shirt	Lose a great deal of money	خسر اللي فوقه واللي تحته	He lost everything above and below him	He lost everything
10	SLL	Bite the bullet	Endure in a difficult situation	يبلع الموس	Swallow the razor	Endure in a difficult situation
11	PLL	Face the music	Accept the consequences	النار ما تحرق الا رجل واطيها	The fire only burns the one who steps on it	Face the consequences of your decisions
12	PLL	Bend over backwards	Try very hard	يعمل المستحيل	Does the impossible	Tries hard to do something
13	PLL	Duck soup	Easy, effortless	زي شرب الماء	Like drinking water	Easy, effortless
14	PLL	Come alive	Brighten up and become active	صحصح	Wake up	Become active
15	PLL	Different strokes for different people	Everyone has different interests and tastes	الناس اذواق	People are tastes	People have different interests and tastes

Note. Lexical Level = LL, Semi-Lexical Level = SLL, Post-Lexical Level = PLL, Proverbs = Prov.

Selected English Vivid Phrasal Idioms and Proverbs for the Idiom Comprehension Task

In the Idiom Comprehension Task (Task 2), participants were presented with the second set of 15 VP idioms and proverbs, which differed from the ones in task one (Table 17). However, Task 2 was different for each group depending on the context condition. In Group 1, the VP idioms were presented in isolation, while participants in Group 2 were provided a short context (the idiomatic expression was bolded in the context). Participants in both groups were asked if they knew the idiomatic expression by selecting either yes or no. Participants were then asked to answer the following two open-ended questions: (1) explain the meaning of the VP idiom or proverb and (2) explain the strategies used in the process of comprehending the idiomatic expression or the phrase's figurative meaning.

Table 17

Vivid Phrasal Idioms and Proverbs Selected for Task 2 for Groups 1 and 2

#	Type	English Idioms	Figurative Meaning	Arabic Equivalent	Literal Translation	Figurative Meaning
1	LL	Eyes are bigger than one's stomach	Take more food than one can eat	عينه أكبر من بطنه	Eyes are bigger than one's stomach	Take more food than one can eat
2	LL Prov.	Don't put off for tomorrow what you can do today	Don't unnecessarily postpone doing something	لا تؤجل عمل اليوم إلى الغد	Don't postpone todays work until tomorrow	Don't unnecessarily postpone doing something
3	LL	Jump down someone's throat	Become angry with someone	نط في حلقه	Jump down someone's throat	Become angry with someone
4	LL	People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones	One should not criticize when one is equally at fault	الي عايش في بيت قزاز لا يحذف الناس بالحجارة او بالطوب	People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones or bricks at people	One should not criticize when one is equally at fault
5	LL	Bite the dust	Go down in defeat	اكل تراب	Ate dust/sand	Go down in defeat.

Table 17 (Continued)

#	Type	English Idioms	Figurative Meaning	Arabic Equivalent	Literal Translation	Figurative Meaning
6	SLL	Cat got your tongue?	Can't talk	إنربط لسانك or القطة اكلت لسانك؟	Your tongue got tied? or The cat ate your tongue?	Can't talk
7	SLL	Get up on the wrong side of the bed	Wake up in a bad mood	نام على جنبه اليسار	He slept on his left side	Wake up in a bad mood
8	SLL	Get away clean	Escape punishment	نفذ بجلده	Get away with one's skin	Escaped the punishment or danger
9	SLL	Go fly a kite	Go away!	روح طير	Go fly!	Go away!
10	SLL	Spill the beans	Reveal a secret	فرط السبحة	Spilled the beads	Reveal a secret
11	PLL	Feel like a million dollars	Feel wonderful	طاير في السماء	Flying in the sky	Feel wonderful
12	PLL	All's well that ends well	A successful outcome is worth the effort	العبرة بالنهايات العبرة بالخواتيم	The lesson is in the endings.	In the end, it is the results that count.
13	PLL	Bury the hatchet	Make peace	اكسر الشر	Break the evil	Make peace
14	PLL	Blow it	Fail at something	جاب العيد	Brought the celebration	Catastrophic failure
15	PLL	Dressed to the teeth	Dressed elegantly	على سنقة عشرة	On the tenth dot	Dressed elegantly

Note. Lexical Level = LL, Semi-Lexical Level = SLL, Post-Lexical Level = PLL, Proverbs = Prov.

As previously mentioned, the idiomatic phrases in both idiomatic performance tasks were presented one at a time with the required questions. The idiomatic phrases were organized in the following sequence: one from each idiomatic lexical level with its question (one LL, one SLL, one PLL) before repeating the sequence until all 15 were presented. Participants were asked in the last question for each idiomatic phrase, in both Task 1 and in Task 2, to think about their mental process of comprehension and the metacognitive strategy or strategies they used, and then provide responses in their own words.

Instruments: Questionnaire, Performance Tasks, Self-reflection Report, and Survey

The questionnaire, two idiomatic performance tasks, a self-reflection report, and a survey that were used in this study were originally developed by Liontas (1999). The demographic questionnaire included multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and 5-point Likert-scale items to gather participants' demographic, self-rating proficiency level, and their interests and opinions. The two idiomatic performance tasks included (1) the *Idiom Detection Task* and (2) the *Idiom Comprehension Task*. Task 1 – the idiom detection task tested participants' ability to identify English VP idioms (Liontas, 1999) embedded in a context. Task 2 – the idiom comprehension task examined participants' interpretation of English VP idioms (Liontas, 1999) in two context conditions: the *zero-context condition* for Group 1, and the *full context condition* for Group 2. Both idiom tasks used open-ended questions to gather participants' detection and comprehension of the given English VP idioms and the learning strategies used by these participants. The self-reflection report used guiding questions to gather participants' overall experiences and challenges while completing these two tasks. The idiom needs survey used 5-point Likert-scale statements to gather participants' thoughts and opinions about the need to learn idioms in second and foreign languages. One link included all instruments in this order: a demographic questionnaire, two idiomatic performance tasks (Task 1 and Task 2), a self-reflection report, and an idiom needs survey. Participants answered all questions for each task before moving on to the next task. Participants could complete the two-hour study in one session or save their responses and complete the instruments at their own convenience. Although participants had the choice to complete the instruments in one session as opposed to over multiple sessions, it was not possible to track how many completed the instruments in one session vs. multiple sessions. Consequently, it was not possible for me to code for it or control for it when analyzing the data.

The questionnaire, self-reflection report, and survey were used to gather information, while the tasks were used for an in-depth analysis of learners' metacognitive strategies and to obtain additional information about the participants and the detection and comprehension of idioms. Both groups received the same demographic questionnaire and Task 1.

Demographic Questionnaire

This questionnaire included 23 items about participants demographic information, language background, and self-rating proficiency as adopted from the Liontas (1999) study. It is important to note that: (1) the foreign language was change to English language, which was the target language of the Participants, and (2) items 6 and 8 from Liontas's pre-questionnaire were not used in the current study because they were culturally unsuitable for the intended population.

Idiomatic Performance Tasks

Participants were given two performance tasks, first the idiom detection task and then the idiom comprehension task in two context conditions: Group 1 – the zero-context condition, and Group 2 – the full context condition.

Task 1 - Idiom Detection Task

In the *Idiom Detection Task* (IDT), the participants were given 15 short texts containing the VP expressions. This task included one set of 15 English vivid phrasal idioms and proverbs presented in context. Participants were asked to (1) locate the VP idiom and/or proverb in the text; (2) indicate if they know the idiom (yes/no); (3) write or copy and paste the idiom and write the meaning of the idiomatic expression or phrase; and (4) write the strategies they used to locate the idiomatic expression or phrase. The tasks aimed to determine Saudi EFL learners' ability to

97

detect idioms embedded in context.

Task 2 – The Idiom Comprehension Task

The context condition was manipulated in Task 2. The VP idioms used in Group 1 had no context, while in Group 2, all VP idioms were provided in context. More specifically,

Task 2 for Group 1 – Zero Context Condition, included another set of 15 English vivid phrasal idioms and proverbs, different from Task 1, presented *without context* (in isolation). Participants were asked to (1) indicate if they know the idiom (yes/no); (2) write the most likely meaning for each given VP idiom and/or proverb; and (3) write the strategies they used to comprehend and interpret the meaning of the idiom. The tasks aimed to determine Saudi EFL learners' ability to provide the meaning of VP idioms presented in isolation.

Task 2 for Group 2 – Full Context Condition, included the same set of 15 English vivid phrasal idioms and proverbs used in Task 2 for Group 1, but these idioms were presented **bolded** *within context*. Participants were asked to (1) indicate if they know the idiom (yes/no); (2) write the most likely meaning for each given VP idiom and/or proverb; and (3) write the strategies they used to comprehend and interpret the meaning of these idioms. The task was designed to measure the effect of context on the comprehension of idioms, specifically at the post-lexical level. The task aimed to determine Saudi English learners' ability to provide meaning for idioms presented bolded within context.

The 15 idioms and proverbs, in the two idiomatic performance tasks, were presented one at a time with the required questions underneath. The 15 idioms and proverbs were sequenced as follows: one from each VP idiom level with its question, that is, one LL, one SLL, and one PLL before repeating the sequence until all 15 VP idioms were presented. An example of the two idiomatic tasks for both Group 1 and Group 2 in each task is provided in Figure 15.

98

Performance Tasks Example

Group 1 & 2 Task 1 (IDT)	Group 1 Task 2 (ZCT)	Group 2 Task 2 (FCT)
Mary, you always take such a long time to put on your makeup. Come on, shake a leg! I'll be finished in a minute. Be patient. You've got to hurry or else we won't arrive on time to see the last show.	Get up on the wrong side of the bed.	What's the matter with Bernard today? He started shouting from the moment he stepped into the office. I don't know. He usually doesn't act that way at all. I guess he **got up on the wrong side of the bed**. Just because he woke up in a bad mood is no reason for him to be so cross and to go around shouting at everybody. Hopefully he'll relax as the day goes on.
1. What is the idiomatic expression or phrase in the text, please write it down (or copy and paste it).	1. Do you know this phrase? Y/N	1. Do you know this phrase? Y/N
2. Do you know this phrase? Y/N	2. What does the idiomatic expression or phrase mean? Please write the meaning	2. What does the idiomatic expression or phrase mean? Please write the meaning
3. What does the idiomatic expression or phrase mean? Please write the meaning.	3. Please write the strategies you used to know the meaning of this idiomatic expression or phrase.	3. Please write the strategies you used to know the meaning of this idiomatic expression or phrase.
4. Please write the strategies you used in "locating" this phrase.		

Figure 15

Example of Task 1 (Detection) and Task 2 (Comprehension) for Groups 1 and 2

Idiomatic Task Sequence vs. Liontas's (1999) Study

It is important to note that the current study was a conceptual replication of Liontas's (1999) study with changes. In Liontas's (1999) study, each participant received all three idiom tasks: the Idiom Detection Task (IDT), the Zero Context Task (ZCT), and the Full Context Task (FCT). In the current study, the participants were randomly assigned to either the Zero Context Condition or the Full Context Condition Group, each group receiving only two idiomatic performance tasks: (1) the idiom detection task that presented the VP idioms embedded within context and (2) the idiom comprehension task that presented the VP idioms in isolation for Group 1 and bolded within context for Group 2, respectively.

After completing Task 2, both groups completed the same self-reflection report and idiom needs survey:

Self-reflection Report

This instrument included five guiding questions that asked participants to reflect and explain their overall experience, including a report of their challenges, emotions, as well as any other in-depth reflections on completing the two idiomatic tasks. The five guiding questions developed by Liontas (1999) were presented to help participants write their summary. Each question was presented separately with a writing space underneath, the selected space for writing was for an essay in Qualtrics®, to ensure students had enough space to write. The five guiding questions were:

1) What was the greatest challenge you faced?

2) Did you overcome this challenge? How?

3) What helped you and what did not?

4) How do you feel about your total performance?

5) Have you learned anything new about yourself as a language learner and reader?

Idiom Needs Survey

This instrument included 33 statements about their perceptions on the need for learning idioms in second and foreign languages. Participants rated the statements using a 5-Point Likert-scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral/Unsure, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree), concerning participants' (students) opinions regarding learning idioms in a second or foreign language setting. In this study, this survey was adapted by deleting some of the original statements/items. Items were deleted due to factors such as: (1) some statements were intended to gather teachers' thoughts; (2) all data were collected online due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and (3) it was not possible to implement Liontas's "It's All Greek to me!" software using an online survey website. One of the Idiom Needs Survey items (Item 15) was reverse coded, which is accounted for in the data analysis.

Instruments Summary

A summary of the current research design, instruments, and scoring for Task 1 and 2 for Group 1 and Group 2, respectively, is provided in Figure 16.

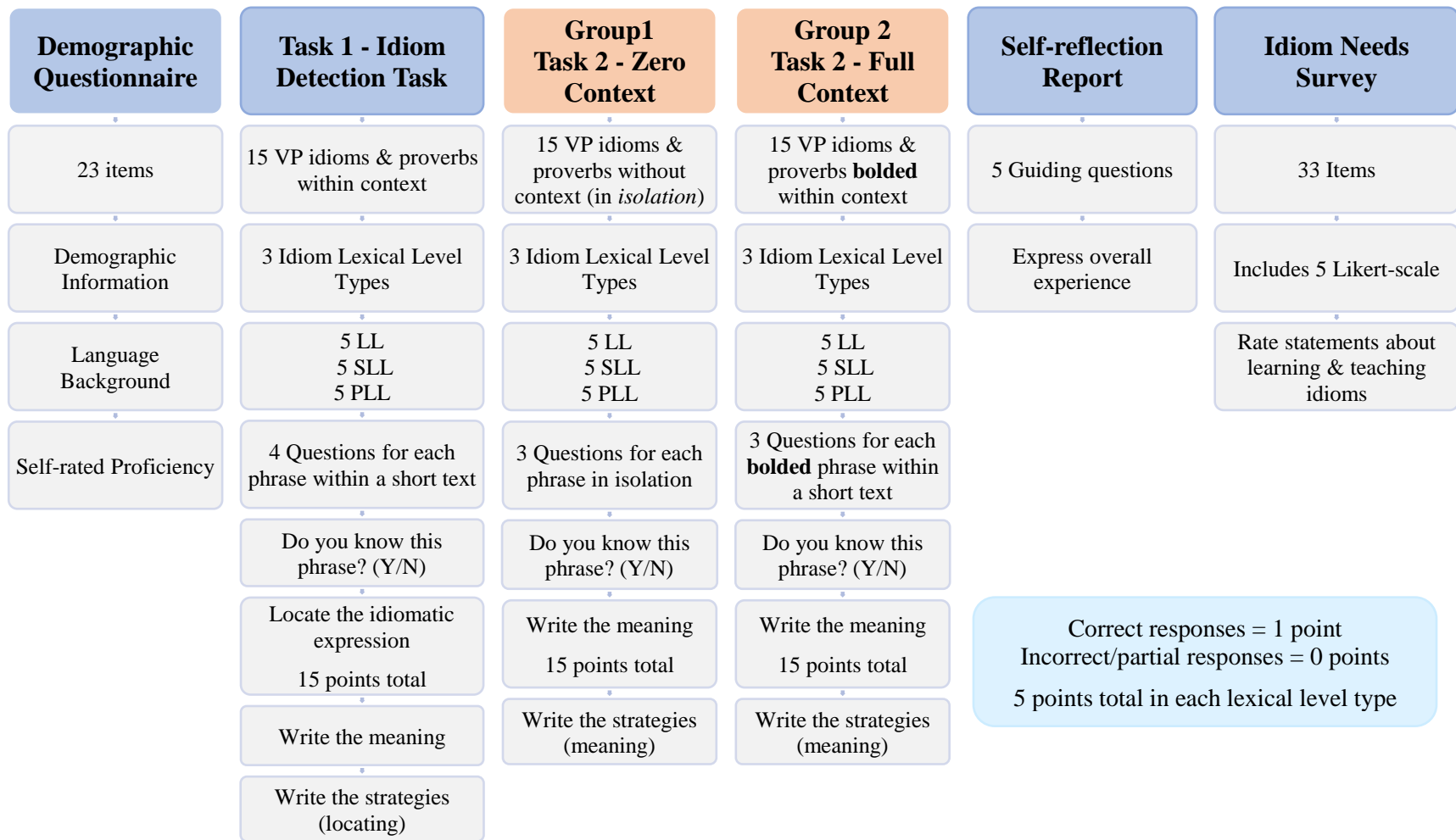| Demographic Questionnaire	Task 1 - Idiom Detection Task	Group1 Task 2 - Zero Context	Group 2 Task 2 - Full Context	Self-reflection Report	Idiom Needs Survey
23 items	15 VP idioms & proverbs within context	15 VP idioms & proverbs without context (in *isolation*)	15 VP idioms & proverbs **bolded** within context	5 Guiding questions	33 Items
Demographic Information	3 Idiom Lexical Level Types	3 Idiom Lexical Level Types	3 Idiom Lexical Level Types	Express overall experience	Includes 5 Likert-scale
Language Background	5 LL 5 SLL 5 PLL	5 LL 5 SLL 5 PLL	5 LL 5 SLL 5 PLL		Rate statements about learning & teaching idioms
Self-rated Proficiency	4 Questions for each phrase within a short text	3 Questions for each phrase in isolation	3 Questions for each **bolded** phrase within a short text		
	Do you know this phrase? (Y/N)	Do you know this phrase? (Y/N)	Do you know this phrase? (Y/N)		
	Locate the idiomatic expression 15 points total	Write the meaning 15 points total	Write the meaning 15 points total	Correct responses = 1 point Incorrect/partial responses = 0 points 5 points total in each lexical level type	
	Write the meaning	Write the strategies (meaning)	Write the strategies (meaning)		
	Write the strategies (locating)				

Figure 16

Instruments Summary

Pilot Study

According to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) '*field testing*' is an important part of developing questionnaires because questionnaires depend on the wording of the question and/or item. Field testing means '*piloting*' the questionnaire on a population similar to the intended population in order to collect feedback on the instruments' design and performance and to address any concerns before conducting research (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) proposed two options to ensure that the two versions of the questionnaire are equivalent: "To consult *external reviewers* or to recruit an independent translator to *back-translate* the target language version into the source language (Brislin, 1970)" (p. 51). Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) further elaborated that

> The first option can be combined with the initial piloting of the questionnaire…: One group of people, who are specialists in both the target and the source language, assess the equivalence of the original and the translated questionnaires, while another group of people, ideally people similar to the target population, check the naturalness of the translation. The second option, back-translation, involves an independent translator turning the L2 version of the questionnaire back into the source language and then comparing the two texts: If the back-translated version corresponds with the source language version, this is an indication that both instruments are asking the same questions, which attests to the accuracy of the translation… (p. 51).

Given the need to translate the questionnaire to Arabic, a pilot study was conducted to ensure participants understood the instructions and questionnaire items. A decision was made to use the first option proposed by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) since the aim of the pilot study was

to ensure the instruments are valid for the intended population. After the instruments were translated, a group similar to the intended study's population were given a link to complete the study. Professionals in the field also examined and reviewed the instruments before and after translation to determine their suitability for the L2 learner's proficiency level, ascertain its appropriateness to address any validity and reliability issues. The two groups (L2 learners and professionals) then provided feedback on the materials. This process was repeated after changes were made to ensure all feedback and concerns were addressed.

Materials and Instruments Suitability Steps

The study had three major steps: (1) obtaining materials, (2) translation, and (3) pilot study. To ensure the materials and instruments were suitable for the intended population, the following steps were taken:

1. Tables were made for all 101 idioms and 101 proverbs in a Google Document.

2. Materials were sent to professionals and individuals that have lived and/or studied for five years or more in both the United States and Saudi Arabia.

3. Professionals and individuals provided equivalents for the English idioms and proverbs in Arabic and provided a literal and figurative meaning for the Arabic equivalents.

4. Professionals and individuals sent the Google Document to other professionals and individuals that met the criteria.

5. Focus Groups were conducted to select, evaluate, and choose 30 appropriate idioms.

6. Selected materials were embedded into the instruments and only the instruments' questions and directions were translated to Arabic.

7. Professionals in the field at the population's intended university checked the English and Arabic translations of the instruments' questions and directions to ensure their equivalence

and precision.

8. Instruments were incorporated in one online link for each group that allowed learners to save their place and continue later at their own convenience.

9. Professionals in the field at the intended collection site evaluated the materials and instruments to ensure their suitability for the intended population.

10. A pilot study was conducted to ensure the validity of the English and translated versions of the instruments and ensure that they were appropriate for the intended population.

Data Collection Procedures

Participants received an online link containing all instruments. Participants in each group received the same instruments and in the same sequence, but Task 2 is different based on the context condition. In Group 1, the second idiomatic task required participants to look at a given idiomatic phrase *without* context (in isolation) while in Group 2, the second idiomatic task required participants to look at a given idiomatic phrase ***bolded*** *within* context. Each group was then asked to provide their comprehension or interpretation of that VP idiom's meaning. Finally, participants were asked to think about their mental comprehension processes or metacognitive strategies they employed in so doing and report the learning strategy or strategies they used in their own words. Both groups had identical demographic questionnaires and completed the same initial task.

Participant's performance task scores between the two groups were then analyzed to measure if there were differences between (a) the idiomatic lexical level types when comprehending and interpreting the idiomatic expressions; (b) the context conditions scores, the zero-context condition and the full context condition, and the scores of the three idiomatic lexical levels subsections; and (c) the idiom needs survey scores between the two context conditions.

Data sources vary in language research and could be either quantitative or qualitative data (Brown, J., 2014). Brown suggests that data could be collected from sources such as existing information, assessment procedures, intuitions, observations, interviews, meetings, language analysis, and questionnaires. In the current research, the data collected from the demographic questionnaire and idiom needs survey was used to ascertain participants' needs and is considered the *Needs Analysis* part of the study.

Procedure Steps

The current study had three major steps: obtaining approval, collecting data (demographic questionnaire, two performance tasks, self-reflection report, and idiom needs survey), and analyzing data. The following steps were taken to conduct this research:

1. Only the questions and directions in the instruments were translated into Arabic, and the idioms and contexts were left in English.

2. Instruments were incorporated in a single online link for each group allowing learners to save their place and continue at another time if they so wished.

3. A pilot study was conducted to ensure the validity of the English and translated versions of the instruments and ensure that they were appropriate for the intended population.

4. Data collection facilitation approval to collect data from university students was obtained from a Saudi Arabian university (Research Ethics Committee (REC) approval).

5. IRB approval was obtained from the University of South Florida (USF) to conduct the research here reported.

6. A letter was sent to the university with one online link for each group, and the university then distributed these to participants that met the criteria.

7. Data was analyzed and implications were discussed.

Data Collection Summary

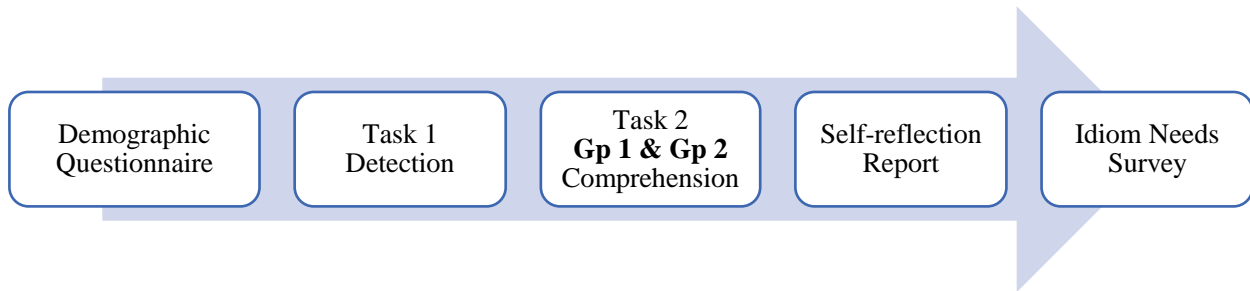A summary of the data collection procedure is shown in Figure 17.

| Demographic Questionnaire | Task 1 Detection | Task 2 **Gp 1 & Gp 2** Comprehension | Self-reflection Report | Idiom Needs Survey |

Figure 17

Data Collection Procedure Summary

Data Analysis Procedures

According to Babbie (2016), "*Descriptive studies* with individuals as their units of analysis typically aim to describe the population that comprises those individuals, whereas *explanatory studies* aim to discover the social dynamics operating within that population" (p. 99). Part of the current study analyzed using descriptive studies. There was one social group addressed in the current research: second language (L2) learners that are learning English as a L2 in a foreign language (FL) setting. The other aspect addressed the topic at hand, English idiomatics, which was addressed using an explanatory studies method in hope that it might shed light on participants' learning strategies, which, in turn, may guide future curricular efforts addressing such learner needs.

The data analysis conducted in the current study included descriptive analysis, inferential analysis, and thematic analysis. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to describe the populations demographic characteristics, language background, and self-evaluations with the purpose of uncovering any patterns or trends. Inferential analysis was used to provide

information that could be used to infer information about populations. Responses were quantitative and analyzed using statistical analysis to investigate the differences in detection and comprehension of English VP idioms, differences in the lexical level types of VP idioms, and any interactions that may become apparent. Thematic analysis was used to examine participants' learning strategies for identifying and understanding the idiomatic expressions this study sought to investigate. This method assisted in finding patterns between the participants' responses and perspectives. By finding patterns and themes, important information may be found about common challenges, the reasons why they were challenging, and what learning strategies participants used to overcome these challenges.

The results also provide insights into participants' curricular and personal learning needs, as well as measuring their comprehension of English idiomatics and identifying areas in the curriculum that might need improvement still. These steps are part of the Need Analysis process, which ascertained participants' needs and learning gaps in the current curriculum, thereby possibly informing future curricular development and design processes.

Analysis Process

The data analysis for each question is explained (Table 18) and the type of analysis that was used for each of the instruments is shown in Figure 18.

Table 18

Data Analysis

#	Research Question	Data Analysis
Q1	What are the differences between Saudi EFL learners' idiom detection task scores in the lexical level, the semi-lexical level, and the post-lexical level of English vivid phrasal idioms?	One way within subjects ANOVA followed by post-HOC tests.

Table 18 (Continued)

#	Research Question	Data Analysis
Q2	What are the differences between Saudi EFL learners' idiom comprehension task scores in the lexical level, the semi-lexical level, and the post-lexical level of English vivid phrasal idioms between the zero-context condition and the full-context condition?	Between-within ANOVA followed by post-HOC tests.
Q3	What are Saudi EFL learners' perceptions on the need for learning idioms in second and foreign languages?	One independent t-test to compare between the zero-context condition survey score and the full context condition survey scores.
Q4	In what ways do Saudi EFL learners detect and comprehend English vivid phrasal idioms?	Thematic Analysis

For the thematic analysis, students' responses were analyzed and categorized based on their commonality indicating themes. Identified idioms were evaluated using a two-point scale, where 1 is given for correctly locating idioms, and 0 is given for idioms that were partially or entirely missed, giving a total score of 15 possible points for these 15 items. Figure 18 summarizes the type of analysis used for each instrument.
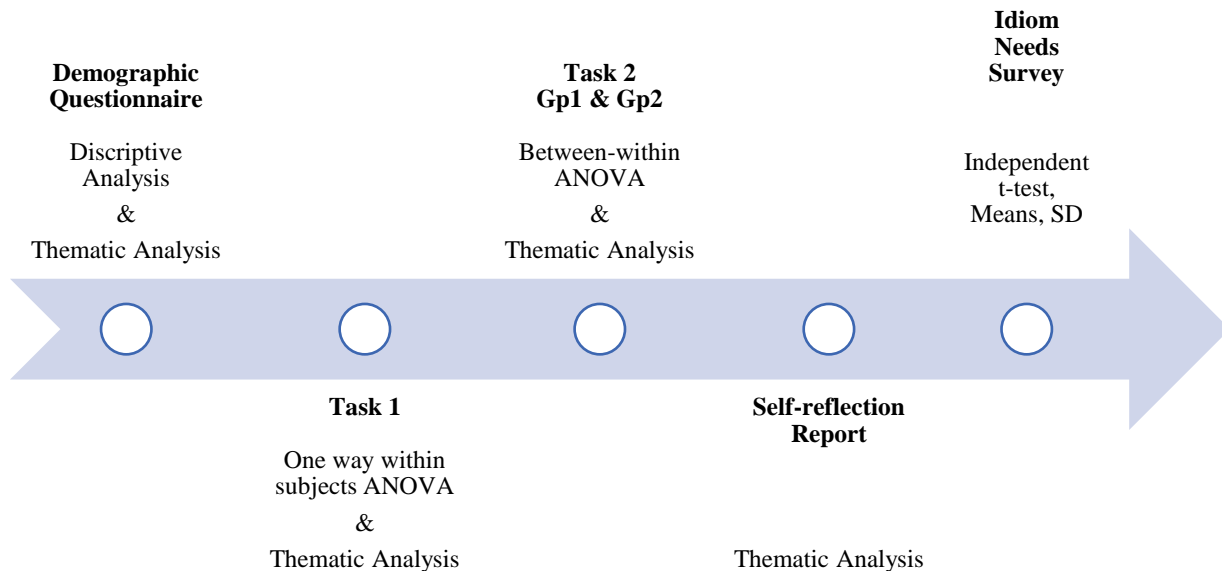

Figure 18

Data Analysis Summary

Scoring of Items in the Detection and Comprehension Tasks vs. Liontas's (1999) Study

It is important to note that responses in the idiom performance tasks in the current study were given a score of 1 for correct responses and 0 for incorrect or partial responses. In Liontas's (1999) study, scoring of partial responses was included, and responses were given a score of 2 for correct responses, 1 for partial responses, and 0 for incorrect responses. This was done because in the current study the selected idioms were not of the same lengths, so creating a partial response scoring rubric to follow was not possible, whereas, in Liontas's (1999) study, the idioms seemed to be of similar lengths to each other. Another reason was that partial scoring seemed unnecessary because in Liontas's (1999) study, the proportion of partial scoring in detection was .006 and in the comprehension was .025.

Validity and Reliability of the Current Research

There are two ways to view validity: *measurement validity* and *research validity*. Measurement validity is achieved when a test measures what it intends to measure (Dörnyei, 2007). There are three types of measurement validity: *criterion validity* is achieved by comparing the test with another similar measurement; *content validity* is achieved when experts in the field judge that the content is suitable; and *construct validity* is achieved when test results are related to the constructs theory (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 51).

Research validity is concerned with two things: *meaningful interpretations* and *generalizability*. The aspects, which are still used in research today, are called '*internal validity*' and '*external validity*' (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). According to Dörnyei (2007) explained that internal validity in "a research study or experiment" is achieved when the results are a function of the variables being measured, controlled, or manipulated in the study; while external validity is achieved when findings can be generalized to a larger population, other contexts, or different

periods of time.

Design validity is a term used with mixed methods research and is concerned with *internal validity*. Design validity has two aspects: (1) there needs to be justification for the mixed method chosen in the research; (2) the mixed method needs to demonstrate enhanced validity related to the chosen methods (Dörnyei, 2007)

Reliability describes data consistencies. Dörnyei (2007) explains that "…reliability indicates the extent to which our measurement instruments and procedures produce consistent results in a given population in different circumstances" (p. 50). If variation in the circumstances leads to inconsistent results or measurement errors, then the results are considered unreliable. Validity and reliability should be evaluated for each study because validity is a property of the conclusion while reliability is the property of the scores on a test for a specific population (Dornyie, 2007).

Building validity and reliability checks into the study is another way to ensure them. According to Dörnyei (2007) popular techniques to check validity and reliability include: *respondent feedback* (checking for meaning which can be obtained during interviews), *peer checking* (interrater reliability, professional advice or feedback, developing or testing some coding scheme, or performing an observational task), *method and data triangulation* (using different methods of data collection to determine if data analysis yield similar conclusions), *prolonged engagement and persistent observation* (observing a community over a long period of time) and *longitudinal research deigns* (could increase validity of inferences because of the length of time).

Validity and reliability were addressed in this study in several ways. First, by using professionals in the field in evaluating materials and the instruments to ensure its validity before

distributing them to the participants. Second, by rating internal consistency of constructs using Cronbach Alpha statistical analysis. Third, by utilizing previous valid and reliable measurement instruments used in the field. Fourth, by conducting a pilot study with a similar population before initiating data collection for the current research.

Chapter Summary

This chapter first re-introduced the research purpose, design, questions, and hypothesis. Then it compared Liontas's (1999) initial research to the current research to explain the rationale behind choosing the type of replication. Thereafter, it described the methodology, setting, participants, pilot study, and the data collection and analysis procedures. Next, it described the instruments developed by Liontas (1999) that were adapted for the purposes of the present study. Finally, it presented the English VP idioms/proverbs used in the two performance tasks.

As already noted, the study reported here replicated Liontas's (1999) mixed method research with a different population, context, materials, and procedures and is called a *conceptual replication* research. It consists of a demographic questionnaire, two idiomatic performance tasks, one self-reflection report, and one idiom needs survey. Collectively, they all sought to investigate the differences in Saudi participants' task scores for each idiom's lexical level of difficulty regarding American English VP idioms, the participants perceptions on the need for learning idioms in second and foreign languages, and the challenges and learning strategies they encountered along the way. Participant's proficiency level was advanced based on the Oxford Online Placement Test taken at the English Language Institute (ELI) at a midwestern Saudi university. They learned English as an L2 in an EFL setting. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, data collection was not supervised, and participants responses were collected online using Qualtrics®.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Overview

The current research aimed to explore Saudi learners of English detection and comprehension of English VP idioms during reading. The current chapter reports on participants' descriptive statistics, demographic information, and tests the assumptions for repeated measure ANOVA and T-test, which are independence of observations, normality, as well as sphericity and homogeneity, respectively. The results for each research question were reported, followed by a summary of the chapter.

Descriptive Statistics

There were a total of 166 advanced English proficiency level male and female participants, randomly distributed into two groups as shown in Table 19. The data collection was done fully online using Qualtrics® and data was downloaded in Excel format. The following table indicates the genders for both groups, which represented those who were presented with idioms with or without context.

Table 19

Total Participants that Completed the 5 Instruments

	Group 1 (No Context)	Group 2 (In Context)	Total
Males	44	46	90
Females	36	40	76
Total	**80**	**86**	166

Each group received one link that included five instruments presented in Table 20. As is shown in the section describing the levels, Cronbach's Alpha indicated that the reliability of this measure for the overall set of items in Task 1 (detection) is excellent and that for each level is acceptable; however, levels 2 and 3 of the meaning items showed a Cronbach's Alpha that may be cause for concern. For the overall set of items in Task 2 (comprehension), Cronbach's Alpha was excellent and for level 2, Cronbach's Alpha was acceptable; however, levels 1 and 3 showed a Cronbach's Alpha that may be cause for concern.

Table 20

Instruments & Description of Items

Instrument	Included
Demographic Questionnaire	23 items – mix item types

Task 1 – Idiom Detection Task (Detection)	15 idioms:
	    G1 & G2: idiom presented in a short paragraph.
	Each idiom was accompanied by the following questions:
	    Q1 – Detect (locate).
	        Cronbach's Alpha = .916
	        L1 = .813, L2 = .808, L3 = .775.
	    Q2 – Self-rating of previous knowledge (Y/N).
	    Q3 – Provide meaning.
	        Cronbach's Alpha = .851
	        L1 = .738, L2 = .622, L3 = .588.
	    Q4 – Provide detecting/locating strategies.

Task 2 – Idiom Comprehension Task (Context Condition)	15 idioms:
	    G1: idiom presented in isolation.
	    G2: idiom presented bolded in a short paragraph.
	Each idiom was accompanied by the following questions:
	    Q1 – Self-rating of previous knowledge (Y/N).
	    Q2 – Provide meaning.
	        Cronbach's Alpha =.881
	        L1=.665, L2=.740, L3=.669.
	    Q3 – Provide comprehension & interpretation (meaning) strategies.

Self-reflection Report	5 open-ended guiding Q.
Idiom Needs Survey	33 statements, 5-point Likert-scale

Demographic Information

In keeping with the purpose of the study, the sample was randomly separated into two groups. The demographic variables examined for similarity of these two groups included, age, gender, current university standing, years of experience with English, college years of classroom experience in English, years abroad, self-rating of fluency with English, ease in understanding and interpreting English text, language instructor taught idioms, ranked importance of idioms in English classroom, interest in learning idioms as part of that language study, self-evaluation of correct use of idioms during speaking, self-evaluation of dictionary use for idioms, self-evaluation of dictionary usefulness for idioms, self-evaluation of frequency reading specialized idiom dictionaries, confidence to detect idioms, confidence to discern meaning of idioms in isolation, confidence to discern meaning of idioms in text, and satisfaction of present English language knowledge.

As shown in Table 21, the only variables that showed significant differences between the groups on a chi-square test were current university standing (*p*<.001), college years of classroom experience in the English language (*p*=.015), self-evaluation of dictionary usefulness for idioms (*p*=.035), and confidence to discern meaning of idioms in isolation (*p*=.003).

Table 21

Demographic Variables Showing Chi-square Test of Independence of the 2 Groups

	Demographic Variable	Chi-square Statistic	P-value
Demographic Characteristics	Age	2.17	.338
	Gender	.038	.845
	Current university standing	21.62	< .001

Table 21 (Continued)

	Demographic Variable	Chi-square Statistic	P-value
Foreign Language Experience	Years of experience with English	4.82	.438
	College years of classroom experience in the English language	14.04	.015
	Years abroad	1.79	.617
	Self-rating of fluency with the English language	2.32	.803
	Ease in understanding and interpreting English language text	5.33	.149
Experience with Idioms	Language instructor taught idioms	.98	.322
	Ranked importance of idioms in English language classroom	2.23	.694
	Interest in learning idioms as part of the English language study	.30	.862
	Self-evaluation of correct use of idioms during speaking	.74	.947
	Self-evaluation of dictionary use for idioms	6.72	.082
	Self-evaluation of dictionary usefulness for idioms	8.60	.035
	Self-evaluation of frequency reading specialized idiom dictionaries	3.28	.351
	Confidence to detect idioms	4.15	.246
	Confidence to discern meaning of idioms in isolation	14.14	.003
	Confidence to discern meaning of idioms in text	4.88	.181
	Satisfaction of present English language knowledge	4.86	.182

Demographic variables are divided into three sections: participants (1) demographic characteristics, (2) English language experience, and (3) experience with idioms. The third section includes participants self-rating response for experience with idioms, dictionary, confidence, and present knowledge. The demographic variable frequencies and percentages are presented in Table 22 by level and by group and total group.

Table 22

Demographic Characteristic Frequencies and Percentages by Level and by Group and Total Group

Demographic Variable			G 1, n=80		G 2, n=86		G 1&2, n=166	
			#	%	#	%	#	%
Demographic Characteristics	Age	18-20	35	43.8	30	34.9	65	39.2
		21-25	45	56.3	55	64.0	100	60.2
		26-30	0	0.0	1	0.01	1	0.6
	Gender	Male	44	55.0	46	53.5	90	54.2
		Female	36	45.0	40	46.5	76	45.8
	Current university standing	Freshman	28	35.0	25	29.1	53	31.9
		Sophomore	24	30.0	13	15.1	37	22.3
		Junior	4	5.0	28	32.6	32	19.3
		Senior	24	30.0	20	23.3	44	26.5
Foreign Language Experience	Years of experience with English	< 1 year	9	11.3	9	10.5	18	10.8
		1 year	20	25.0	11	12.8	31	18.7
		2 years	9	11.3	12	14.0	21	12.7
		3 years	9	11.3	13	15.1	22	13.3
		4 years	9	11.3	14	16.3	23	13.9
		5+ years	24	30.0	27	31.4	51	30.7
	College years of classroom experience in the English language	< 1 year	21	26.3	17	19.8	38	22.9
		1 year	27	33.8	28	32.6	55	33.1
		2 years	13	16.3	6	7.0	19	11.4
		3 years	2	2.5	16	18.6	18	10.8
		4 years	12	15.0	12	14.0	24	14.5
		5+ years	5	6.3	7	8.1	12	7.2
	Years abroad (spent time in a English-speaking country)	No time	51	63.8	57	66.3	108	65.1
		< 1 year	21	26.3	17	19.8	38	22.9
		1-3 years	7	8.8	9	10.5	16	9.6
		3+ years	1	1.3	3	3.5	4	2.4
	Self-rating of fluency with the English language	Non	3	3.8	6	7.0	9	5.4
		Some	28	35.0	27	31.4	55	33.1
		Average	31	38.8	32	37.2	63	38.0
		High	15	18.8	15	17.4	30	18.1
		Near-Native	3	3.8	5	5.8	8	4.8
		Native	0	0.0	1	1.2	1	0.6
	Ease in understanding and interpreting English text	Not Easy	8	10.0	14	16.3	22	13.3
		Marginally Easy	47	58.8	36	41.9	83	50.0
		Easy	20	25.0	26	30.2	46	27.7
		Very Easy	5	6.3	10	11.6	15	9.0

117

Table 22 (Continued)

Demographic Variable		G 1, n=80		G 2, n=86		G 1&2, n=166	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Language instructor taught idioms	Yes	50	62.5	60	69.8	110	66.3
	No	30	37.5	26	30.2	56	33.7
Ranked importance of idioms in English language classroom	1	4	5.0	3	3.5	7	4.2
	2	10	12.5	10	11.6	20	12.0
	3	26	32.5	22	25.8	48	28.9
	4	23	28.8	25	29.1	48	28.9
	5	17	21.3	26	30.2	43	25.9
Interest in learning idioms as part of the English language study	Yes	32	40.0	38	44.2	70	42.2
	Not sure	42	52.5	42	48.8	84	50.6
	No	6	7.5	6	7.0	12	7.2
Self-evaluation of correct use of idioms during speaking	None	11	13.8	9	10.5	20	12.0
	1 – 5	27	33.8	29	33.7	56	33.7
	6 – 9	25	31.3	26	30.2	51	30.7
	10 – 19	12	15.0	16	18.6	28	16.9
	> 20	5	6.3	6	7.0	11	6.6
Self-evaluation of dictionary use for idioms	Never	8	10.0	8	9.3	16	9.6
	Sometimes	41	51.3	29	33.7	70	42.2
	Often	25	31.3	35	40.7	60	36.1
	Always	6	7.5	14	16.3	20	12.0
Self-evaluation of dictionary usefulness for idioms	Not Useful	6	7.5	1	1.2	7	4.2
	Marginally Useful	26	32.5	25	29.1	51	30.7
	Useful	36	45.0	34	39.5	70	42.2
	Very Useful	12	15.0	26	30.2	38	22.9
Self-evaluation of frequency reading specialized idiom dictionaries	Never	19	23.8	16	18.6	35	21.1
	Sometimes	39	48.8	37	43.0	76	45.8
	Often	18	22.5	23	26.7	41	24.7
	Always	4	5.0	10	11.6	14	8.4
Confidence to detect idioms	Not Confident	6	7.5	10	11.6	16	9.6
	Marginally Confident	48	60.0	39	45.4	87	52.4
	Confident	24	30.0	32	37.2	56	33.7
	Very Confident	2	2.5	5	5.8	7	4.2
Confidence to discern meaning of idioms in isolation	Never	0	0.0	7	8.1	7	4.2
	Sometimes	50	62.5	34	39.5	84	50.6
	Often	28	35.0	38	44.2	66	39.8
	Always	2	2.5	7	8.1	9	5.4
Confidence to discern meaning of idioms in text	Never	2	2.5	3	3.5	5	3.0
	Sometimes	43	53.8	40	46.5	83	50.0
	Often	31	38.8	30	34.8	61	36.7
	Always	4	5.0	13	15.1	17	10.2
Satisfaction of present English language knowledge	Not Satisfied	17	21.3	19	22.1	36	21.7
	Marginally Satisfied	40	50.0	33	38.4	73	44.0
	Satisfied	22	27.5	28	32.6	50	30.1
	Very Satisfied	1	1.3	6	7.0	7	4.2

Experience with Idioms

One of the demographic items was broken into 11 sections and allowed a 5-point rating scale (1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, 4 = very often, 5 = always) about perceptions on idioms in the classroom. Each of the items were summed for a total score using forward scoring for the first 10 items and reversed scoring for the last item. The final item indicated discomfort in being around people who used idioms; therefore, it was considered to be an item asking about the opposite construct. The overall mean for the total sample (n=166) for this questionnaire was 33.73 with a standard deviation of 7.720. To establish that the non-context group and the context group did not differ on this measure prior to the administration of the idioms, one t-test was conducted to compare the means of Group 1 (the zero-context condition) with Group 2 (the full context condition) on their experience with idioms. Levine's Test for equality of variances indicated homogeneity of variance (*F*=.206, *p*=.650). Results indicated there was no significant difference between the two mean scores (mean 1=33.04.48, SD 1=7.472, mean 2=34.37, SD 2=7.934, *t*(164)=-1.114, *p*=.267).

Preliminary Analysis: Testing the Assumptions

Testing the Assumptions for Repeated Measure of ANOVA

Independence of observations. The assumption of independence of observation was met because the participants were randomly selected and assigned to each group. This means everyone who responded had no connection with any other participant. Therefore, each row of data represents a person that is not associated with any other participant in the study.

Multivariate normal distribution. The assumption about the normality of the dependent variable is met because the number of participants in each of the conditions was greater than 30, therefore the skewness that is displayed in some of the following graphs will not

affect the outcome because a repeated measure of ANOVA is fairly robust against this violation. The skewness for each graph is displayed under each histogram on Table 23. Although the Shapiro-Wilk test for each of the dependent variables was significant, the number of participants in each group is large enough that we may consider the assumption met.

Equality of sphericity.   The assumption about the sphericity was met because the Mauchly's Test of Sphericity showed no significant differences in the variances between the groups.

In Table 23, a histogram of each group by lexical level is provided with means, standard deviation, sample size and skewness. Although visually a few of the histograms appear slightly skewed, the skewness statistic for every variable indicated sufficient normality (skewness range was from -.194 to .981).

Table 23

Dependent Variable Histograms for 3 Lexical Level Types of VP Idiom and 2 Idiomatic Tasks

Idiom Lexical Level 1 (LL)		Idiom Lexical Level 2 (SLL)		Idiom Lexical Level 3 (PLL)	
G1 Mean = 2.52	G2 Mean = 2.37	G1 Mean = 2.39	G2 Mean = 2.12	G1 Mean = 2.51	G2 Mean = 2.62
SD = 1.869	SD = 1.866	SD = 1.688	SD = 1.931	SD = 1.800	SD = 1.835
N = 80	N = 86	N = 80	N = 86	N = 80	N = 86
Skewness = -.052	Skewness = -.050	Skewness = -.100	Skewness = .193	Skewness = -.194	Skewness = -.067
G1 Mean = 1.33	G2 Mean = 1.55	G1 Mean = 1.40	G2 Mean = 1.62	G1 Mean = 1.26	G2 Mean = 1.91
SD = 1.178	SD = 1.500	SD = 1.580	SD = 1.610	SD = 1.394	SD = 1.577
N = 80	N = 86	N = 80	N = 86	N = 80	N = 86
Skewness = .719	Skewness = .711	Skewness = .909	Skewness = .668	Skewness = .981	Skewness = .397

Task 1 (Detect) — top row

Task 2 (Meaning) — bottom row

Independence of observations. The assumption of independence of observations was met because each individual who responded had no connection with any other participant. Therefore, each row of data represents a person that is not associated with any other participant in the study, which shows independence.

Normality. The assumption about the normality of the dependent variable is acceptable because the number of participants in each condition exceeded 30. Moreover, the skewness for each dependent variable was between -1 and 1.

Homogeneity. The assumption of homogeneity of variance is met because the number of participants in each group is roughly equal. Confirmation of this is provided with Levine's test for homogeneity of variances in question number three.

RQ 1 Results

What are the differences between Saudi EFL learners' idiom detection task scores in the lexical level, the semi-lexical level, and the post-lexical level of English vivid phrasal idioms?

The purpose of this question was to examine if Saudi learners of English were able to detect the idiomatic phrase (VP idioms) from a short context by comparing the three VP idiom type detection scores. In keeping with the hypothesis (H_{a1}) that Saudi EFL learner's lexical level (LL) idiom detection task scores will be significantly higher than semi-lexical level (SLL) idiom detection task scores which will, in turn, be significantly higher than the post-lexical level (PLL) idiom detection task scores, the data was analyzed by running a One-Way within subjects ANOVA followed by post-HOC tests. The Mauchly's test of Sphericity in a repeated measures

ANOVA determines whether the variances of the differences between all possible combinations of related groups are equal. The results show that the Mauchly's test of Sphericity was significant ($p<.001$), which means that the sphericity assumption was not met and the differences between the variances of the lexical level types in the groups were not equal. The correction that is required in this circumstance is that degrees of freedom for the averaged test of significance are adjusted. In this case, after this adjustment, a significant difference was found between the VP idiom lexical level types ($F(1,165)=5.073$, $p=.026$, $\eta^2=.03$, observed power=.61). Pairwise comparisons showed that there was no difference between the LL VP idioms (Means=2.45, SE=.145) and the SLL VP idioms (Means=2.25, SE=.141), or between the LL VP idioms (Means=2.45, SE=.145) and the PLL VP idioms (Means=2.57, SE=.141), ($p=.252$ and .719, respectively), but there was a significant mean difference between the SLL and PLL VP idioms ($p<.001$). As shown in Figure 19, the hypothesis was not supported because there was not significant difference between the LL and SLL idioms or between the LL and PLL idioms.
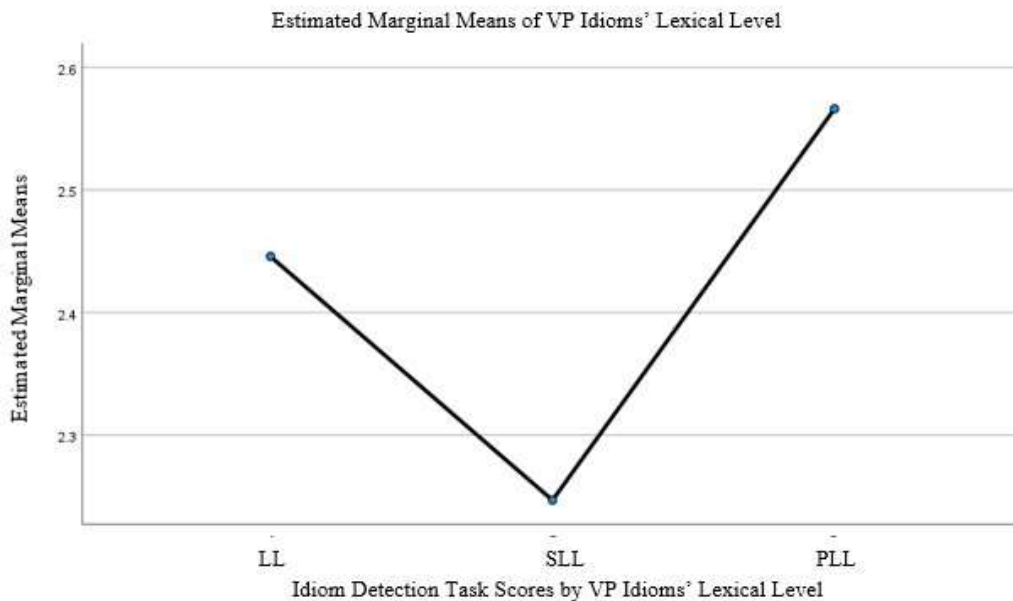

Figure 19

Means for Detection Scores

The significant difference shown between the detection mean scores for SLL and the detection mean scores for PLL indicates that the idioms selected to represent SLL were most challenging to detect for the total sample. This would mean that when learners see terms that are not recognizable in either Arabic or English, because they were specifically asked to detect idioms, their strategy would lead them to select the most confusing phrases as idioms. The SLL were the hardest to detect because these idioms would seem understandable to participants when, in fact, there were multiple meanings. The LL obtained a slightly higher score than the SLL as expected, but the difference was not significant. The findings were different than expected in that the hardest level was the moderate lexical level (SLL), the next hardest level was the easiest level (LL), but the highest scores were obtained on the hardest lexical level (PLL).

A concern as to the validity of the findings in case knowledge of the idiom was present, prompted the addition of a question as to whether they were familiar with the idiom prior to this exposure. Percentages were calculated for the overall group on every item and on every item by group. These percentages were compared to establish whether there was a significant difference between the overall group and those who professed to be familiar with the idiom. An example from the following table shows results of item one that 70% of the participants indicated that they were familiar with the first idiom, 52% were able to detect the first idiom correctly, and 44% were able to provide the correct meaning. However, of the 70% who indicated that they were familiar with the first idiom, only 59% and 51% were able to detect and provide meaning for this idiom correctly, respectively. When comparing these percentages, no statistical difference was found between the percentages of those who claimed familiarity and the overall group. This held true for all the SLL idioms, and for four of the five PLL idioms. Table 24 shows, however, that six of the items showed a difference in detection or meaning by familiarity with the item.

124

Table 24

Percentages Correct of Idiom Familiarity vs. Detection and Comprehension in the Idiom Detection Task

		#	% Detection	% Meaning	% Detection if Familiar	% Meaning if familiar	*Z* value Detection	*p* value Detection	*Z* value Meaning	*p* value Meaning
		1	52%	44%	59%	51%	1.34	0.180	1.49	0.135
		2	31%	23%	38%	39%	1.274	0.203	3.30	0.001**
	Level 1 - LL	3	53%	29%	60%	39%	1.24	0.216	2.17	0.030*
		4	58%	42%	76%	53%	3.99	0.000***	2.62	0.009**
		5	49%	30%	67%	43%	3.54	0.000***	3.00	0.003**
		1	61%	48%	59%	57%	-0.42	0.674	1.86	0.063
Lexical Levels of VP Idioms		2	48%	18%	42%	19%	-1.17	0.244	0.32	0.748
	Level 2 - SLL	3	52%	19%	48%	24%	-0.64	0.523	1.02	0.307
		4	38%	23%	37%	29%	-0.14	0.890	1.03	0.304
		5	25%	15%	32%	16%	1.29	0.196	0.21	0.832
		1	48%	24%	35%	23%	-2.17	0.030*	-0.26	0.795
		2	49%	28%	45%	35%	-0.63	0.530	1.41	0.158
	Level 3 - PLL	3	52%	36%	66%	46%	2.62	0.009**	1.95	0.051
		4	58%	36%	62%	44%	0.65	0.517	1.51	0.131
		5	49%	20%	43%	21%	-1.01	0.310	0.15	0.884

Note. *<.05, **<.01, ***<.001

LL Idioms: (1) an apple a day keeps the doctor away; (2) all that glitters is not gold; (3) absence makes the heart grow fonder; (4) don't judge a book by its cover; (5) the way to a man's heart is through his stomach.
SLL Idioms: (1) shake a leg; (2) on his last leg; (3) bite the bullet; (4) at the end of her rope; (5) lost his shirt.
PLL Idioms: (1) bent over backwards; (2) face the music; (3) came alive; (4) duck soup; (5) different strokes for different folks.

Except item PLL1, which showed a decrease in ability to detect the idiom when they stated that they were familiar with it (Z for detection=-2.17, p=.030), items that showed an increased ability to detect or giving meaning to the idiom when they stated they were familiar with it were as follows: LL2 (Z for meaning=3.30, p=.001), LL3 (Z for meaning=2.17, p=.030), LL4 (Z for detection=3.99, p<.001), LL4 (Z for meaning=2.62, p=.009), LL5 (Z for detection=3.54, p<.001), LL5 (Z for meaning=3.00, p=.003), and PLL3 (Z for detection=2.62, p=.009).

The findings in the table suggest that overall, the report from participants that they had previous knowledge of the idiom prior to this study did not mean they would be more successful than those in the overall sample at detecting the idiom from context. Of the 15 items, three of the items that showed statistical significance were in the LL and PLL. One of the items that showed statistical significance was in the PLL but had a significantly lower percentage for those who claimed previous knowledge. Overall, these findings suggest that asking participant whether they are familiar with an idiom provides information that is not usable in refuting validity of findings in the previous section concerning differences by VP idiom types. Generally, this finding indicates that claiming knowledge of an idiom does not generally enhance detection or comprehension. As to factors that might enhance or impede idiom detection it may be that participants were embarrassed to respond that they were unfamiliar with the idiom, which would account for the inability of such a large percentage to be unable to detect the idioms. It is also possible that participants were confused about being asked to locate the idioms, not fully understanding what that they were being asked about the idiom rather than the meaning of the individual words in the idioms. Some participants revealed that they misunderstood what an idiomatic phrase was.

The following graph presents the percentage of participants who answered correctly to the detection and meaning questions (Figure 20).
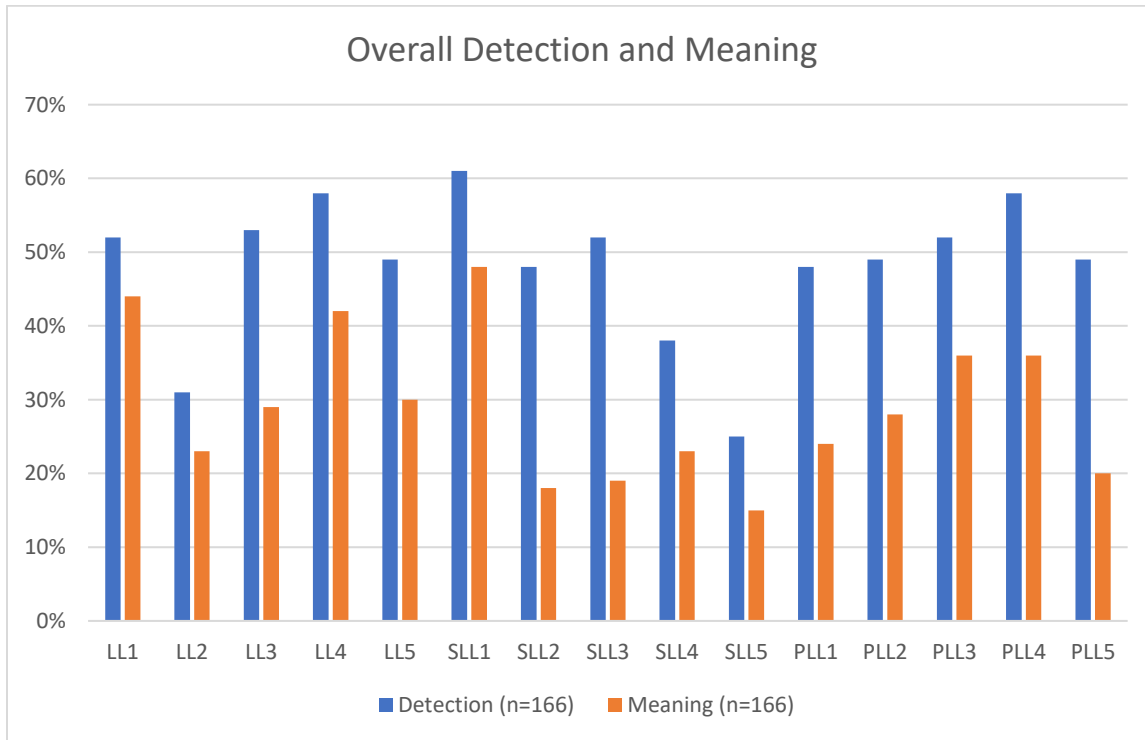

Figure 20

Overall Detection and Meaning

In Figure 20, the blue bars show the percent of those participants who were able to correctly detect the VP idiom, and the orange bars the percent of those participants were able to correctly provide the VP idiom meaning, respectively. The pattern suggests that participants were more able to detect than to provide meaning. This may mean that they were unable to express what they believed to have understood or that the detection of VP idioms requires a different kind of understanding of language other than the sole comprehension of the VP literal meaning. Therefore, educators need to provide instruction on writing by using metacognitive

learning strategies that would facilitate the learners thought process and in turn their ability to communicate. The average percentage of the 15 idioms that were detected correctly was 48%, which highlighted the fact that 52% were unable to detect the idioms, and therefore, emphasizes the need to bring the recognition of English idioms into the second or foreign language classrooms. This may mean that learners need instruction in learning strategies to enhance their recognition, which in turn would facilitate their ability to detect idioms. The average percentage of the 15 idioms that were comprehended correctly was 29%, which highlighted the fact that 71% were unable to comprehend the idioms. This may mean that learners were either unable to provide the meaning of the idioms even when they were detected, or they were unable to comprehend the meaning of the idiom even with context, and therefore, would benefit from instruction in learning strategies to enhance comprehension.

Liontas's (1999) Idiom Diffusion Model (IDM) predicted that there would be a difference between VP idiom types concerning comprehension. The IDM could also apply in this study to VP idioms' detection because the study was comparing participants detection scores between the VP idioms lexical level types. The findings showed that PLL were detected more than the LL and SLL idioms, which is the opposite of what the hypothesis in this study predicted. The differences found in these participants' comprehension of the idioms detected suggest that students spend time analyzing what they read but they may have difficulty expressing in appropriate words the meaning they believed to have detected. This could be because L2 learners need to be able to detect the idiom before they are able to use the context to comprehend the meaning of the idiom. Using instructional methods that focus on information processing techniques could be beneficial to L2 learners, especially in tasks that help explain meaning behind those detected VP idioms. It was expected, therefore, that highest scores would be at the

128

LL and the second highest scores would be at the SLL and the lowest scores would be at the PLL as shown in Figure 21.
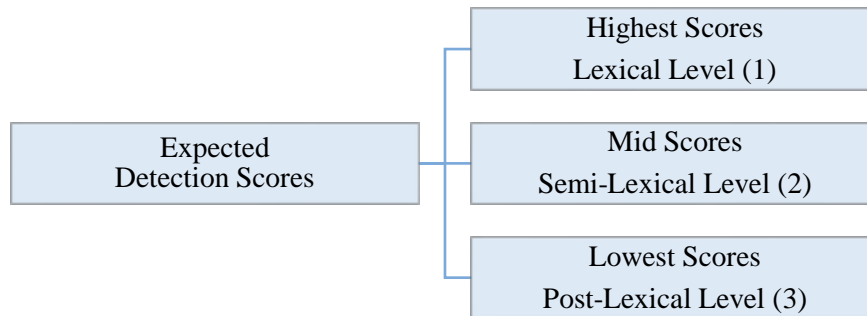

Figure 21

Expected Detection Scores by Lexical Level

There was no statistical significance found between the LL and the SLL idioms or between the LL and the PLL idioms, but there was a significance in participants' scores found between the SLL and the PLL idioms as shown in Figure 22. It is particularly interesting that the PLL had the highest detection, while the SLL had the lowest detection as shown in Figure 23. As concerns the comprehension of the idioms detected, since not all idioms were detected, the comprehension responses were also not correct. Therefore, to provide a correct meaning for an idiom, the idiom would first need to be detected.
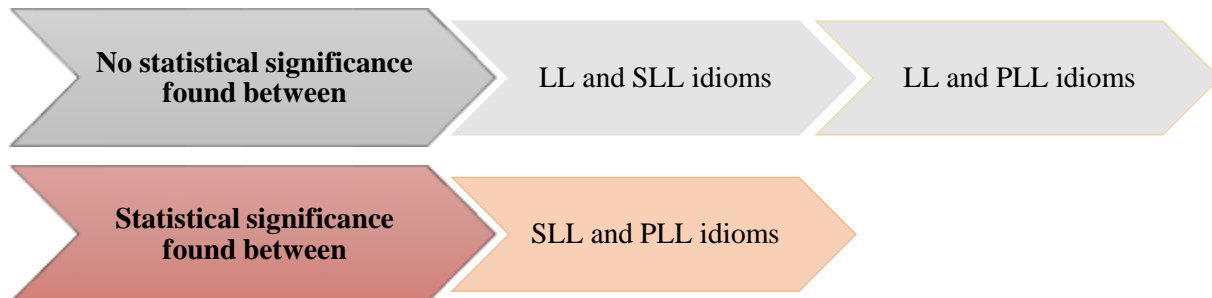

Figure 22

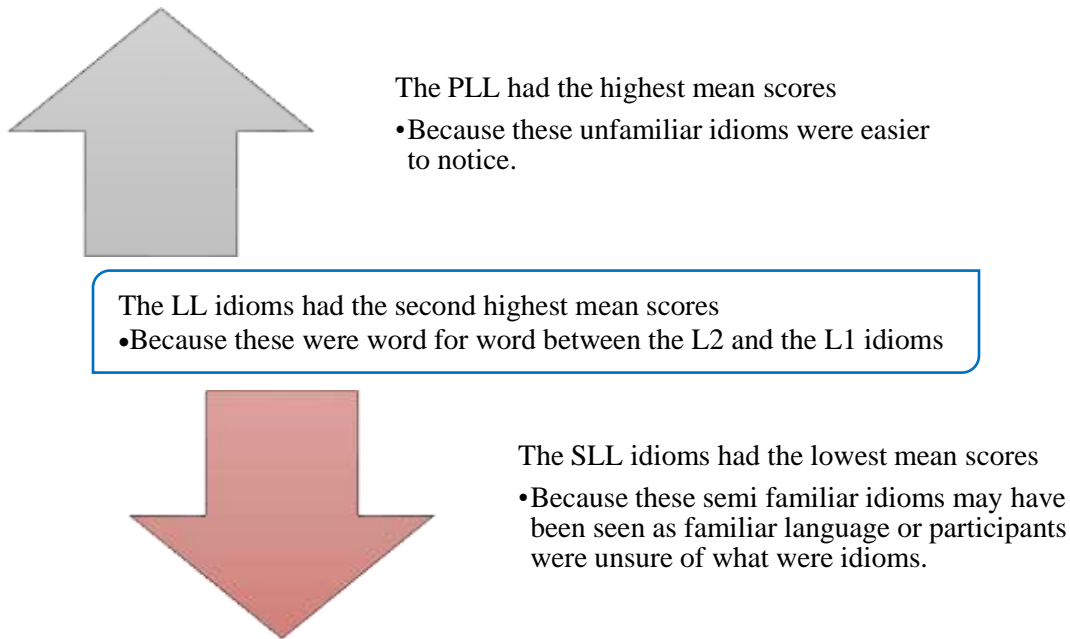*Results of Idiom Detection Mean Scores between the LL, the SLL, and the PLL*

The PLL had the highest mean scores
•Because these unfamiliar idioms were easier
 to notice.

The LL idioms had the second highest mean scores
•Because these were word for word between the L2 and the L1 idioms

The SLL idioms had the lowest mean scores
•Because these semi familiar idioms may have
 been seen as familiar language or participants
 were unsure of what were idioms.

Figure 23

Results of LL, SLL, and PLL Idiom Detection Mean Scores

The results in this study are consistent with what Liontas (1999) found concerning the

detection of VP idioms in that the PLL were the "most notable of the three types perhaps because

of their greater image/semantic distance with their domain idiom" (p. 178).

Table 25 restates research question 1, and summarizes the data source(s), analysis

procedure, and findings.

Table 25

Summary of Research Question 1, Data Sources, Analysis Procedure, and Findings

Research Question 1	Data Source(s)	Analysis Procedure	Findings
What are the differences between Saudi EFL learners' idiom detection task scores in the lexical level, the semi-lexical level, and the post-lexical level of English vivid phrasal idioms?	Task 1 (Q1/detecting)	One way within subjects ANOVA	• No statistically significant differences were found between LL & SLL or between LL & PLL. • A statistically significant difference was found between SLL & PLL. • H_{a1} was not supported.

RQ 2 Results

What are the differences between Saudi EFL learners' idiom comprehension task scores in the lexical level, the semi-lexical level, and the post-lexical level of English vivid phrasal idioms between the zero-context condition and the full-context condition?

The purpose of this question was to examine if Saudi learners of English were able to comprehend and interpret the VP idioms in isolation for Group 1 as compared to the VP idioms bolded within context for Group 2. In keeping with the hypothesis (H_{a2}) that for Saudi EFL learners, a main effect of groups will show Group 1 having a statistically significantly lower comprehension task mean score than Group 2 and a main effect of lexical level will show LL as having a statistically significant higher comprehension task mean score than the SLL comprehension task mean score which will, in turn, be statistically significantly higher than the PLL idiom comprehension task mean score, the data were analyzed by running a Between-Within ANOVA followed by post-HOC tests. There was no main within group effect of lexical level or group effect of context ($F(2,328)=1.614$, $p=.201$, and $F(1,164)=2.961$, $p=.087$, respectively), however, there was a significant interaction effect of group by VP idiom types ($F(2,328)=4.39$, $p=.013$). This hypothesis (H_{a2}) was not supported; however, an interaction effect was detected. Examination of the plot of the VP idiom types by group shows that FCT Group 2 diverged from ZCT Group 1 significantly at PLL. Figure 24 shows that while there is not a significant difference between groups at LL and SLL, the differences at PLL are clear. The FCT Group 2 outperformed the ZCT Group 1 at the PLL level. It is important to note that there were 5 items in each group mean of the lexical levels, with a maximum score of 5 and a minimum score of 0.
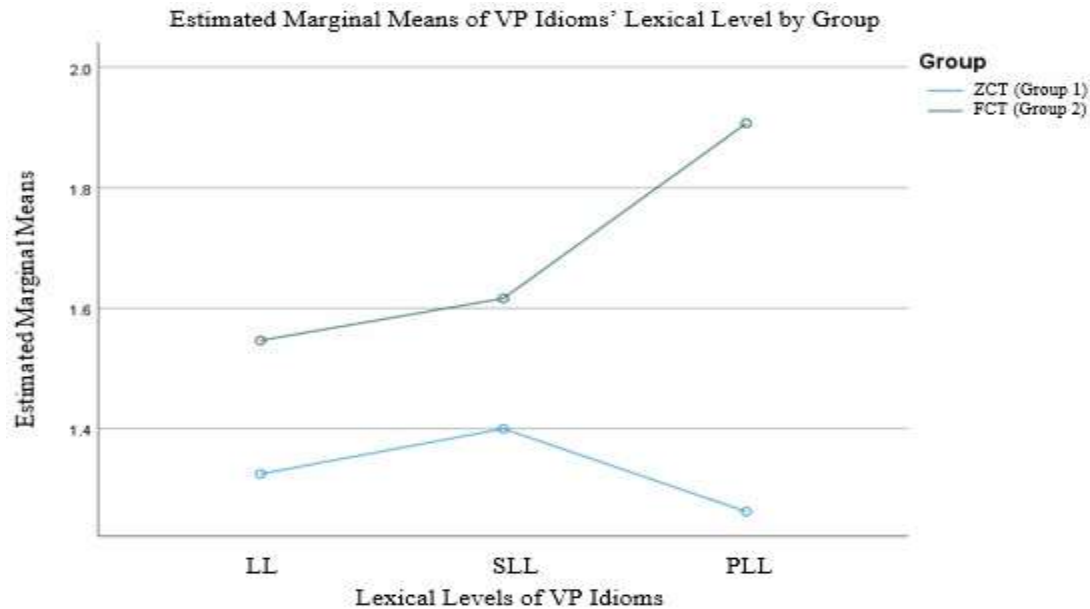
Estimated Marginal Means of VP Idioms' Lexical Level by Group

Figure 24

Means of Comprehension Task Scores by Lexical Level Type and Group

Table 26

Interaction Effect Means between Group by VP Idioms Lexical Levels

	LL	SLL	PLL	Total of Group
Group 2	1.547	1.616	1.907	1.69
Group 1	1.325	1.400	1.263	1.33
Totals of Lexical Level	1.436	1.508	1.585	

The chart on Figure 24 shows the interaction indicating that the two groups would obtain similar scores at both the LL and SLL levels, but at the PLL level, there is a divergence of scores such that the FCT Group 2 would be able to provide the meaning of the idioms more effectively than the ZCT Group 1. The results showed that there were significant differences (*p*=.013) between these two groups concerning the PLL level, which showed that the comprehension of the given L2 idiomatic phrase was more challenging to comprehend without context. This would

mean that context would enhance the comprehension of PLL idioms but would not enhance comprehension at the lower lexical levels. Table 26 showed the interaction effect means between group by lexical levels. Figure 25 portrays a replication of the chart showing the main effect means between lexical levels and between groups.
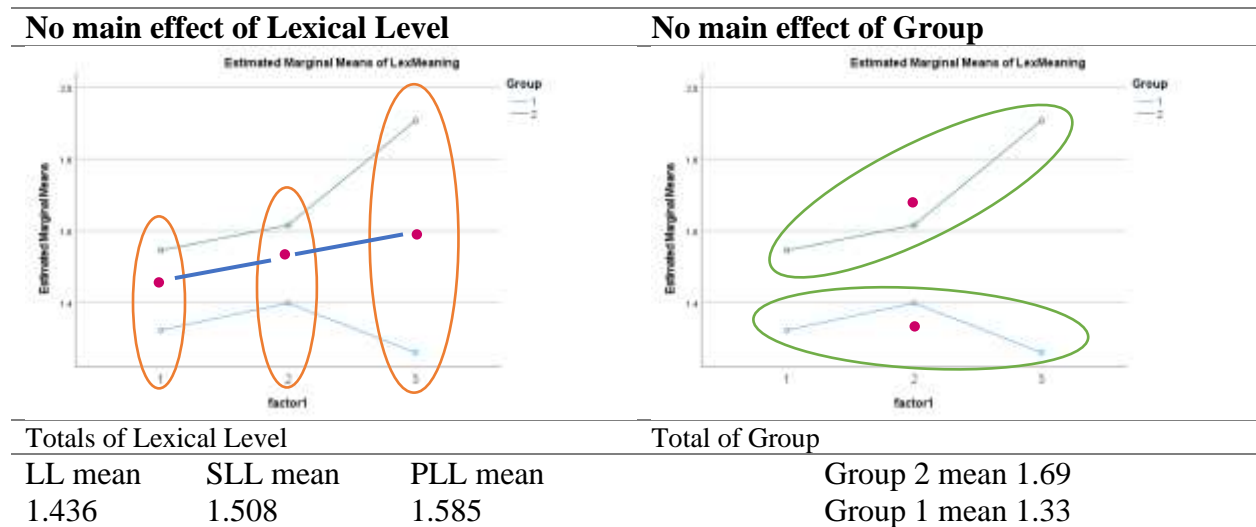
No main effect of Lexical Level	No main effect of Group

Totals of Lexical Level			Total of Group
LL mean	SLL mean	PLL mean	Group 2 mean 1.69
1.436	1.508	1.585	Group 1 mean 1.33

Figure 25

Overview Illustration of the Main Effect of Lexical Level and of Group

Please Note: Red dots indicate the main effect means.

Figure 24 shows that while Group 2 mean scores at all three levels were higher than Group 1 mean scores, the LL and SLL differences were not significant. The significant difference at the PLL level lends further support to Liontas's (1999) IDM theory, which states that when VP idioms are presented out of context, performance is decreased, and when VP idioms are presented in context, their performance is increased. Moreover, the IDM theory predicts that when the difference between L2 idiom and L1 idiom is small, differences between Group 1 and Group 2 would be less apparent than differences when L2 idioms and L1 idioms are large. It was expected, therefore, that highest scores would be at the LL and the second highest

scores would be at the SLL and the lowest scores would be at the PLL as shown in Figure 26. Similarly Figure 27 shows the expected group differences according to Liontas's (1999) IDM theory.
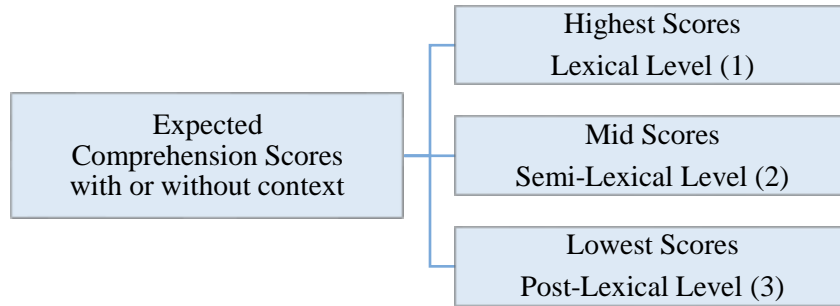

Figure 26

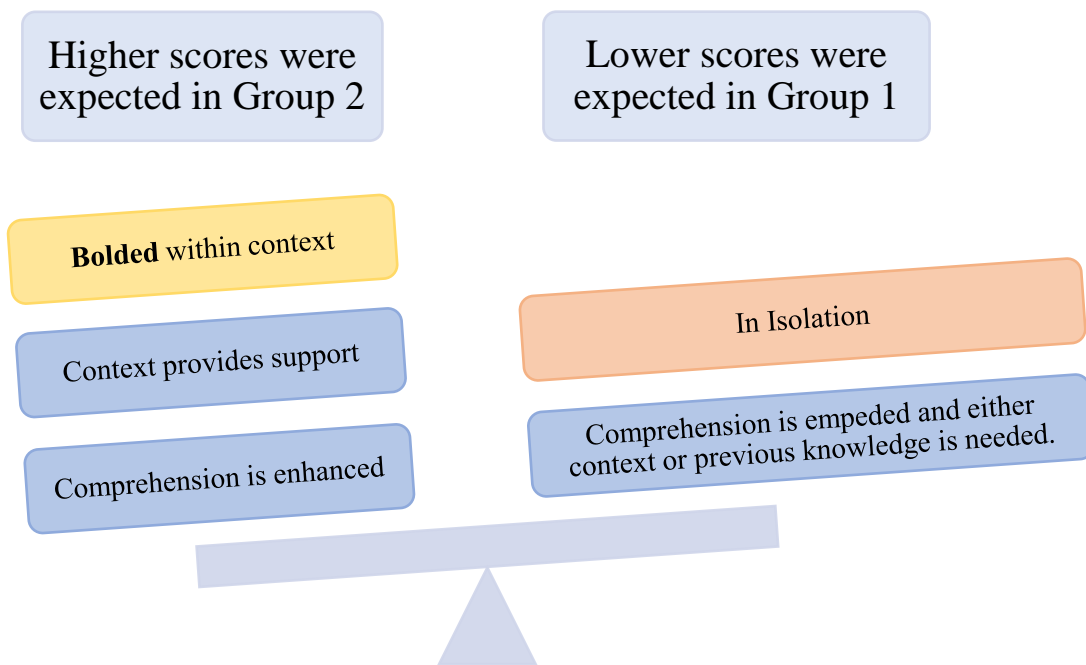*Expected Comprehension Scores by Lexical Level*

Figure 27

Expected Comprehension Group Differences

The results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups at the LL or SLL level types. This means that context did not enhance comprehension when the VP idiom was at the LL or SLL level in isolation or bolded and embedded within context. It is important to note that the VP idioms in Group 2 were **BOLDED** within the context, so participants did not need to detect the idioms, but participants had only to focus on providing a meaning of the idioms. However, results showed that comprehension was easier when the PLL idioms were bolded within context: a statistically significant difference was detected between the two groups at this level. Participants did poorly when the PLL idioms were in isolation compared to when the PLL idioms were bolded within context. The general sense is that context embedded language is less challenging than when language is presented in isolation. It is particularly interesting that this study found that context did not make a statistically significant difference in the case of VP idioms if the L2 learners already had a one-to-one (LL) or when the VP idiom is similar to their L1 (SLL) as shown in Figure 28.
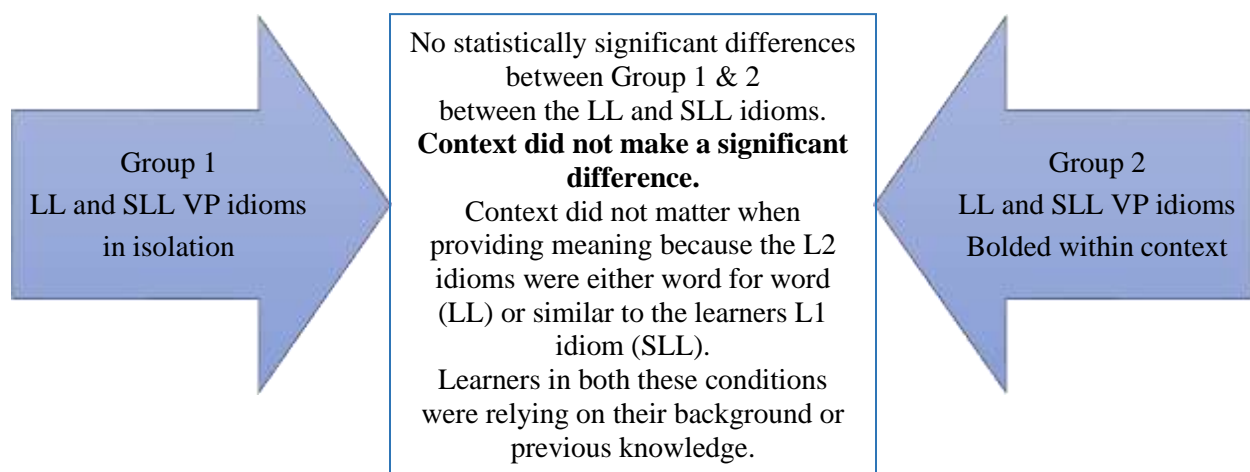
Group 1
LL and SLL VP idioms
in isolation

No statistically significant differences between Group 1 & 2 between the LL and SLL idioms. **Context did not make a significant difference.** Context did not matter when providing meaning because the L2 idioms were either word for word (LL) or similar to the learners L1 idiom (SLL). Learners in both these conditions were relying on their background or previous knowledge.

Group 2
LL and SLL VP idioms
Bolded within context

Figure 28

Results of LL and SLL Idioms between Groups 1 and 2

The interaction revealed in this study suggest that context would be needed when the idiom is unfamiliar (PLL) as shown in Figure 29.
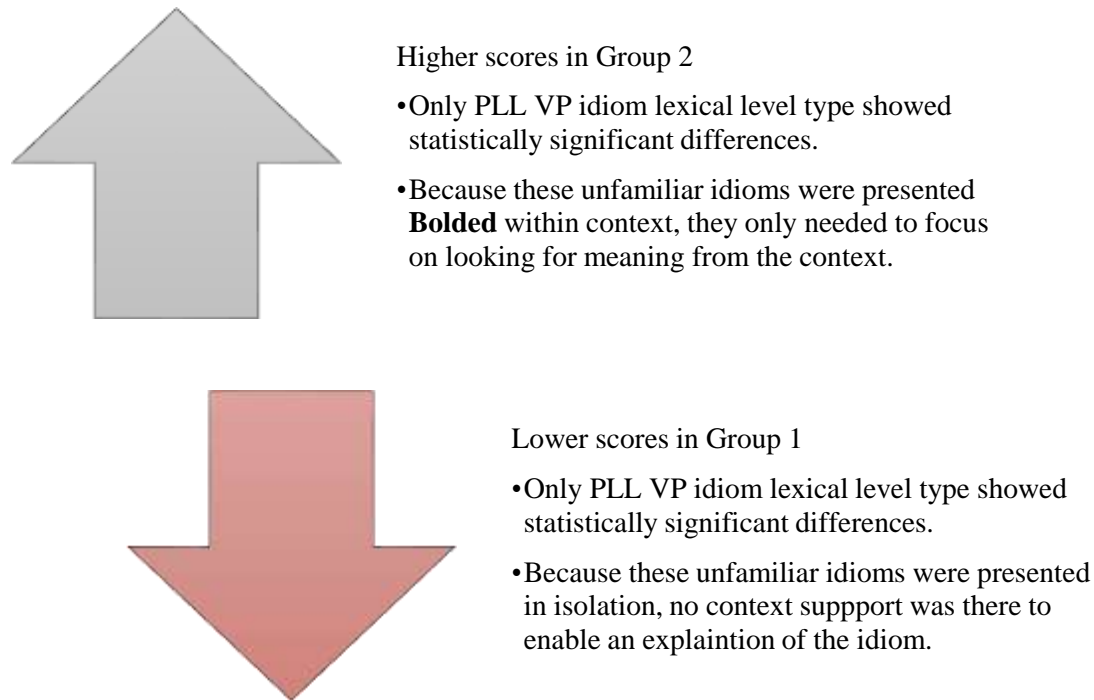

Higher scores in Group 2

•Only PLL VP idiom lexical level type showed statistically significant differences.

•Because these unfamiliar idioms were presented **Bolded** within context, they only needed to focus on looking for meaning from the context.

Lower scores in Group 1

•Only PLL VP idiom lexical level type showed statistically significant differences.

•Because these unfamiliar idioms were presented in isolation, no context suppport was there to enable an explaintion of the idiom.

Figure 29

Interaction at the PLL level between the Groups

As with the previous research question, to address the concern dealing with the validity of the findings in case of previous knowledge of the idioms, the question as to whether they were familiar with the idiom prior to this exposure was asked. Percentages were calculated for each group on every item. The percentages of the ZCT Group were compared to percentages of the FCT Group to establish whether there was a significant difference between the groups in providing the meaning of the idiom. The results indicated that there was a significant comprehension difference between groups on three idioms: LL1 idiom "bite the dust" (*Z*=-3.49,

p=.000), PLL1 idiom "don't put off for tomorrow what you can do today" (*Z*=-4.02, *p*=.000), and PLL5 idiom "dressed to the teeth" (*Z*=-2.74, *p*=.006). There were no significant differences between the groups on the remaining 12 items (Table 27).

To address the issue concerning validity with the responses from those who professed to be familiar with the idiom, a comparison was made between those in the ZCT Group who professed familiarity and those in the FCT Group who professed familiarity and the results indicated that, again, there was a significant comprehension difference between groups on three idioms: LL1 idiom "bite the dust" (*Z*=-3.49, *p*=.000), PLL1 idiom "don't put off for tomorrow what you can do today" (*Z*=-4.02, *p*=.000), and PLL3 idiom "all's well that ends well" (*Z*=-2.74, *p*=.006). There were no significant differences between the groups on the remaining 12 items (Table 27).

An example from the following table shows results of item one that 11% of the overall sample were able to provide the correct meaning, while 3% of the ZCT Group and 20% of the FCT Group provided correct meaning. The difference between the ZCT Group and the FCT Group on this item was statistically significant (*Z*=-3.49, *p*<.001), indicating that when this idiom is presented without context, significantly fewer people would comprehend the idiom. It is also important to note that, with Saudi students, as high as 70% would misunderstand the idiom even when presented in context. This difference was also apparent with those who claimed familiarity. The difference between 4% and 28% was statistically significant (*Z*=-2.97, *p*=.003). This significant difference did not hold true for all items.

Table 27

Percentages Correct of Idiom Familiarity vs. Comprehension between Groups in the Idiom Comprehension Tasks

		#	Overall			Claiming Familiarity			Overall		Claiming Familiarity	
			% ZCT	% FCT	% ZCT & FCT	% ZCT	% FCT	% ZCT & FCT	Z value for ZCT & FCT	p value for ZCT & FCT	Z value for ZCT & FCT	p value for ZCT & FCT
			(G1)	(G2)	(G1&2)	(G1)	(G2)	(G1&2)	(G1-G2)	(G1-G2)	(G1-G2)	(G1-G2)
Lexical Levels of VP Idioms	Level 1 - LL	1	3%	20%	11%	4%	28%	17%	-3.49	0.000***	-2.97	0.003**
		2	28%	34%	31%	52%	43%	47%	-0.87	0.385	0.75	0.454
		3	68%	58%	63%	75%	73%	74%	1.25	0.213	0.22	0.826
		4	21%	30%	26%	29%	39%	34%	-1.32	0.187	-1.26	0.208
		5	14%	14%	14%	17%	18%	18%	-0.04	0.970	-0.09	0.929
	Level 2 - SLL	1	24%	31%	28%	38%	44%	41%	-1.10	0.271	-0.55	0.581
		2	23%	34%	28%	30%	47%	38%	-1.60	0.109	-1.48	0.138
		3	39%	42%	40%	55%	59%	57%	-0.41	0.683	-0.40	0.687
		4	36%	28%	32%	55%	41%	48%	1.15	0.249	1.32	0.187
		5	19%	27%	23%	31%	38%	35%	-1.22	0.221	-0.71	0.478
	Level 3 - PLL	1	11%	38%	25%	15%	54%	37%	-4.02	0.000***	-4.23	0.000***
		2	34%	44%	39%	66%	62%	63%	-1.38	0.169	0.35	0.726
		3	33%	27%	30%	57%	31%	42%	0.81	0.417	2.56	0.011*
		4	30%	42%	36%	43%	55%	49%	-1.59	0.112	-1.19	0.232
		5	20%	40%	30%	30%	48%	40%	-2.74	0.006**	-1.36	0.174

Note. *<.05, **<.01, ***<.001

LL Idioms: (1) bite the dust; (2) eyes are bigger than one's stomach; (3) don't put off for tomorrow what you can do today; (4) people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones; (5) jump down someone's throat.

SLL Idioms: (1) get up on the wrong side of bed; (2) go fly a kite; (3) cat got your tongue; (4) spill the beans; (5) get sway clean.

PLL Idioms: (1) blow it; (2) bury the hatchet; (3) all's well that ends well; (4) feel like a million dollars; (5) dressed to the teeth.
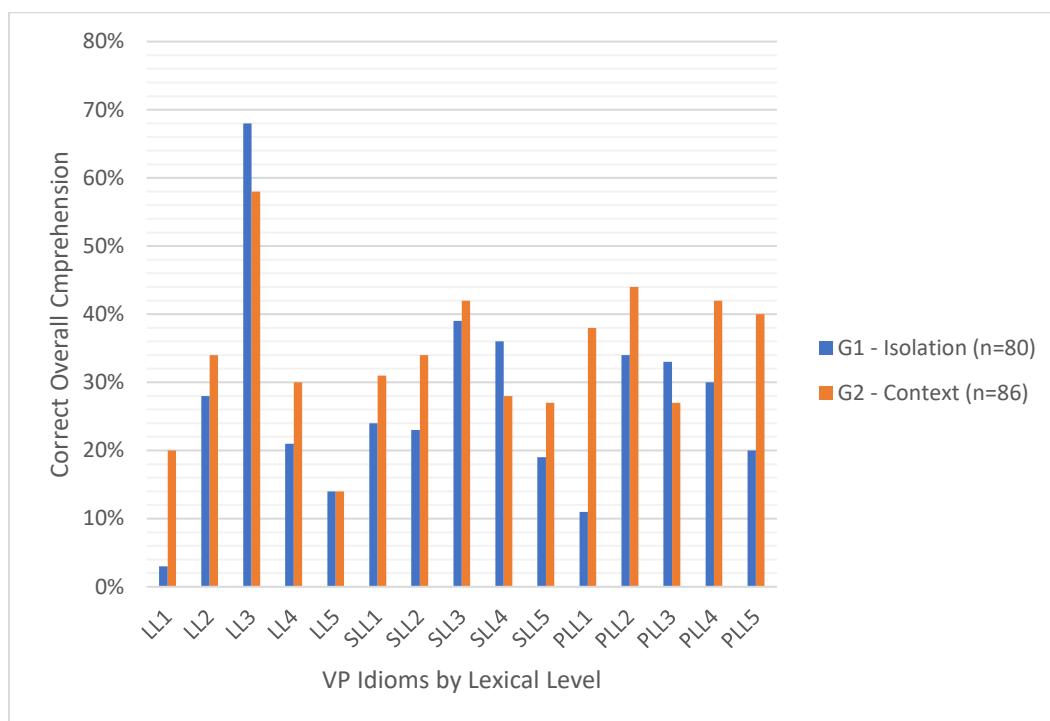
Figure 30

Overall Comprehension

Even though there was a slight difference between the context condition groups when providing meaning as shown on the bar graph (Figure 30), the majority of the items showed no statistically significant differences between the context condition groups as shown in Table 27.

The average percentage of the 15 idioms that were interpreted correctly was 30%, which highlighted the fact that 70% were unable to express the meanings for the idioms, and therefore, emphasizes that learners would benefit from including English idioms in L2 and FL classes. This may mean that learners need instruction in strategies to facilitate improved expression of what they understood the idiom to mean. Instruction in articulation strategies when describing observations and thought processes may help increase awareness of metacognitions.

The results in this study are consistent with Liontas (1999) results concerning the comprehension of VP idioms in that the PLL were most challenging to comprehend in isolation

but were least challenging to comprehend when presented bolded within context. According to

Liontas (1999), "Of the three types of VP idioms, PLL idioms were interpreted less successfully

than the other two types, indicating that in the absence of contextual support, PLL idioms are the

hardest ones to encode because, as was stated before, of the image/semantic distance between the

target and the domain idiom" (p. 230). Liontas (1999) also found that "PLL idioms were the least

successful ones in the Zero Context Task, with the introduction of context they became the most

successful of all types of VP idioms" (p. 296).

However, the results differed from Liontas's (1999) results concerning the

comprehension of the LL and SLL VP idioms. The current study found that context did not make

a difference when the VP idiom is from the LL or SLL type, while Liontas (1999) found

differences between the two groups with an increase that was "least pronounced in the LL

category given the already high success with these idioms in the Zero Context Task (15.63

percent difference)" and "The SLL category also showed a considerable increase of 27.79

percent" (p. 296).

Table 28 restates research question 2, and summarizes the data source(s), analysis

procedure, and findings.

Table 28

Summary of Research Question 2, Data Sources, Analysis Procedure, and Findings

Research Question 2	Data Source(s)	Analysis Procedure	Findings
What are the differences between Saudi EFL learners' idiom comprehension task scores in the lexical level, the semi-lexical level, and the post-lexical level of English vivid phrasal idioms between the zero-context condition and the full-context condition?	Task 2 (Q2/meaning)	Between-Within ANOVA	• Ha2 was not supported because there was no main effect of lexical levels or of group. • However, there was an interaction effect found between group by VP idioms lexical levels, because of the divergence shown at the post-lexical level (PLL).

RQ 3 Results

What are Saudi EFL learners' perceptions on the need for learning idioms in second and foreign languages?

The purpose of this question was to conduct a needs analysis survey on participants' thoughts concerning the learning of English idiomatics in their second or foreign language classes. To test the null hypothesis (H_{03}) that the mean rating of Saudi EFL learners on the Idiom Needs Survey will not be higher for those in the zero-context condition group than those in the full context condition group, the data was analyzed by conducting an independent t-test to compare mean idiom needs survey scores between Group 1 (the zero-context condition) and Group 2 (the full context condition). Levine's Test for equality of variances indicated homogeneity of variance ($F=1.7$, $p=.194$). Total scores were compared between the Group 1 and Group 2 and, in keeping with the null hypothesis, no significant difference was found between the mean scores of the two groups (mean 1=117.48, SD 1=19.198, mean 2=118.28, SD 2=22.948, $t(164)=-.244$, $p=.808$).

Upon closer examination of each individual item, it was found that only three items showed a significant difference between the means of the two groups (item 20, $t(164)=-2.01$, $p=.046$, item 23 $t(164)=-2.03$, $p=.044$, item 31, $t(164)=-2.01$, $p=.047$). This is not an unexpected number of items to show a difference merely by coincidence. As shown in Table 29, the null hypothesis was not rejected for any individual mean rating.

Table 29

Total Means and SD for Idiom Needs Survey Items

#	Statement	Group 1 Means	SD	Group 2 Means	SD
1	I like to study idioms on a regular basis.	3.11	1.091	3.16	1.105
2	I like to learn idioms along with the texts and contexts that support their use.	3.53	1.067	3.55	1.155
3	I learn idioms best with real texts as opposed to made-up texts.	3.36	1.034	3.66	0.953
4	Verbal (textual or audio) and visual (graphic, photographic, or video-graphic) information help activate my knowledge of idioms.	3.89	1.031	3.95	1.062
5	Illustrations and graphics support the study of idioms.	3.66	1.102	3.85	1.068
6	Idioms should be presented in a way that support my learning styles.	3.71	0.996	3.86	0.984
7	Idioms should be presented in a manner that mirrors real-life language use.	3.71	1.046	3.80	1.038
8	When learning idioms, presentation style and activity format should be varied.	3.90	0.894	3.88	1.056
9	Teaching each new idiom in the predictable same old way results in boredom and loss of motivation.	3.41	1.040	3.67	1.222
10	I learn idioms best when they are accompanied by a variety of activity.	3.81	1.020	3.80	1.136
11	Sequence of idiom presentation techniques need not be so rigid that it can be predicted effortlessly by me and the other students.	3.79	0.951	3.71	1.004
12	Authentic audio/video recordings and real texts should accompany the study of idioms.	3.66	0.980	3.51	1.186
13	When I am learning idioms, my main goal is to make sense of what I read or hear in context.	3.75	0.834	3.62	1.139
14	Idiom activities should make sense to me.	3.75	0.921	3.53	1.134
15	I should not be asked to engage in tasks and activities that I am not ready for.	2.44	0.979	2.67	1.173
16	When learning idioms, one should start with the most useful ones.	3.78	1.031	3.63	1.169
17	I like to learn and practice idioms in a variety of communicative contexts.	3.60	0.922	3.80	0.980
18	I like to work things out on my own when learning idioms.	3.68	0.854	3.64	1.062
19	I think idioms are useful in everyday communication.	3.63	1.084	3.56	1.123
20	I can often figure out an idiom from an equivalent one in my language.	3.89	0.981	3.84	1.126

Table 29 (Continued)

#	Statement	Group 1 Means	SD	Group 2 Means	SD
21	It is useful to me to observe how idioms are used in texts and what functions they fulfill.	3.66	0.899	3.70	1.117
22	It is useful to me to hypothesize how I understand texts containing idioms.	3.69	0.851	3.67	1.034
23	It is useful to me to predict the meaning of idioms.	3.61	0.987	3.71	1.083
24	I use many different strategies when learning idioms.	3.41	0.964	3.36	0.981
25	I like to know what other strategies I can use to make better sense of idioms.	3.74	0.838	3.57	1.184
26	I like to be taught specific strategies in learning idioms in foreign languages.	3.29	0.996	3.20	1.125
27	I like to be instructed on how idioms came about.	3.50	1.043	3.42	1.173
28	I like to be taught the skills and processes necessary to create meaning from idiomatic texts.	3.41	0.896	3.31	1.043
29	Collaborative pair and group activities should be encouraged, whenever interpretation difficulties arise with texts containing idioms.	3.41	1.040	3.76	1.017
30	I like to discuss the meaning of idioms in small group activities.	3.45	0.992	3.47	1.145
31	I like to write dialogues, narratives, and/or short stories that make use of idiomatic expressions.	3.16	1.119	3.15	1.223
32	It is useful to me to perform idioms in class.	3.25	1.013	3.47	1.070
33	If I had to perform an idiom, it would be nice to try different ways to do it: skits, dialog, games, etc.	3.84	1.024	3.79	1.097

Table 30 restates research question 3, and summarizes the data source(s), analysis

procedure, and results.

Table 30

Summary of Research Question 3, Data Sources, Analysis Procedure, and Findings

Research Question 3	Data Source(s)	Analysis Procedure	Findings
What are Saudi EFL learners' perceptions on the need for learning idioms in second and foreign languages?	Idiom Needs Survey (33 items)	One independent T-test	• Ho_3 stated that the mean rating of Saudi EFL learners on the Idiom Needs Survey will not be higher for those in the zero-context condition group than those in the full context condition group • Participants rated the statements similarly. • Ho_3 was not rejected.

RQ 4 Results

In what ways do Saudi EFL learners detect and comprehend English vivid phrasal idioms?

In keeping with the question concerning ways Arabic English learners detect and comprehend English vivid phrasal idioms, procedures identified learners' challenges and strategies used when: (1) locating idioms in a given context and (2) providing meaning to the given idiomatic phrase either in isolation or bolded within context. Multiple instruments were used to answer this question: Task 1 – Q4 (strategies to detect), Task 2 – Q3 (strategies to provide meaning), the self-reflection report questions (challenges and problem-solving learning strategies used while completing the two idiomatic performance tasks), and a demographic questionnaire – part 2 of item 13 (explanation of idiom inclusion importance ranking) (see Appendix A). Thematic analysis was consequently used to group responses and determine percentages for each theme.

Task 1 – Detection Strategies

Seven categories were established as codes denoting themes that reflected strategies the participants used to detect the idiomatic phrase. Table 31 presents the percentages of participants using each thematic detection strategy.

The responses "I don't know" and "context" had the highest percentages. No other strategy exceeded 9% of the sample, except the "previous knowledge" strategy for the LL1, LL4, and LL5. The remaining "previous knowledge" strategy items were 8% or below. The response "I don't know" seems to be used by participants who were either the least involved in the task or unaware of what strategies they used. The strategy "context" seems to have been the most used strategy by the participants who were possibly taught to look for context clues when trying to comprehend an unknown word or phrase.

Table 31

Percentages of Participants Using Seven Idiom Detection Strategies in Three Lexical Level Types of VP Idioms

	Strategies	Idioms in Lexical Level 1 (LL)					Idioms in Lexical Level 2 (SLL)					Idioms in Lexical Level 3 (PLL)				
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Thematic Analysis	I don't Know	36%	48%	43%	46%	45%	39%	46%	47%	47%	49%	43%	43%	45%	42%	45%
	Context	34%	30%	38%	29%	31%	38%	36%	39%	36%	32%	38%	39%	34%	42%	37%
	Previous Knowledge	10%	5%	5%	16%	12%	8%	3%	2%	4%	2%	2%	3%	6%	2%	3%
	Guessing	3%	5%	4%	2%	4%	2%	2%	2%	5%	9%	6%	5%	7%	4%	5%
	Skimming, Rhymes, Word Patterns	8%	4%	2%	2%	2%	6%	5%	2%	1%	1%	3%	3%	4%	2%	1%
	Searching (Google, dictionaries, etc.)	4%	4%	4%	3%	2%	4%	5%	5%	4%	2%	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%
	Translation, L1 or L2 Equivalence	4%	4%	4%	2%	4%	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	5%	4%	3%	5%	4%

Note. LL Idioms: (1) an apple a day keeps the doctor away; (2) all that glitters is not gold; (3) absence makes the heart grow fonder; (4) don't judge a book by its cover; (5) the way to a man's heart is through his stomach.
SLL Idioms: (1) shake a leg; (2) on his last leg; (3) bite the bullet; (4) at the end of her rope; (5) lost his shirt.
PLL Idioms: (1) bent over backwards; (2) face the music; (3) came alive; (4) duck soup; (5) different strokes for different folks.

Task 2 – Comprehension Strategies

Seven categories were established as codes denoting themes that reflected strategies the participants used to provide meaning for the idiomatic phrase. Table 32 presents the percentages of participants using each strategy in Task 2.

Table 32

Percentages of Participants Using Seven Idiom Comprehension Strategies in Three Lexical Level Types of VP Idioms

	Strategies	Idioms in Lexical Level 1 (LL)					Idioms in Lexical Level 2 (SLL)					Idioms in Lexical Level 3 (PLL)				
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Thematic Analysis	I don't Know	47%	49%	39%	44%	51%	48%	49%	42%	48%	51%	46%	53%	52%	46%	52%
	Context	28%	24%	23%	22%	23%	23%	27%	21%	23%	25%	27%	22%	24%	30%	24%
	Previous Knowledge	5%	11%	27%	23%	7%	12%	6%	20%	9%	9%	13%	10%	5%	8%	5%
	Guessing	7%	5%	5%	4%	7%	8%	7%	6%	6%	5%	6%	3%	8%	7%	7%
	Searching (Google, dictionaries, etc.)	6%	5%	1%	2%	6%	2%	6%	5%	7%	5%	4%	7%	5%	5%	5%
	Translation, L1 or L2 Equivalence	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	5%	4%	4%	3%	4%	2%	4%
	Skimming, Rhymes, Word Patterns	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%

Note. LL Idioms: (1) bite the dust; (2) eyes are bigger than one's stomach; (3) don't put off for tomorrow what you can do today; (4) people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones; (5) jump down someone's throat.
SLL Idioms: (1) get up on the wrong side of bed; (2) go fly a kite; (3) cat got your tongue; (4) spill the beans; (5) get sway clean.
PLL Idioms: (1) blow it; (2) bury the hatchet; (3) all's well that ends well; (4) feel like a million dollars; (5) dressed to the teeth.

Self-reflection Report – Idiom Detection and Comprehension Challenges

In keeping with the question concerning ways Arabic English learners detect and comprehend English vivid phrasal idioms, this section will present questions and proportions of coded responses to the self-reflection report. The guiding questions were open-ended, so the responses to each question were in the words that came to each participant, therefore thematic analysis was used to determine coding for each response. The guiding questions asked about their greatest challenge, whether they overcame it and how, what did and did not help, how they felt about their performance, and what they learned about themselves as language learners and readers. Responses were grouped by similarity and given a heading. A count of the number of responses that fell under each heading was made and percentages calculated.

Guiding Question 1 – Challenges Faced

Eight categories were established as codes denoting themes that reflected participants' thoughts after tasks completion about the challenges they faced while completing the tasks. As shown, Table 33 presents the percentages of participants' challenges from the self-reflection report.

Table 33

Percentages of Participant's Challenges from the Self-reflection Report

	Challenges	G1 (n=80)	G2 (n=86)	G1&2 (n=166)
Thematic Analysis	Meaning	40.0%	37.2%	38.5%
	I don't know/not sure/no information	21.3%	32.5%	27.1%
	Detecting	10.0%	18.6%	14.5%
	Long time	8.7%	3.5%	6.0%
	First time seeing	3.8%	5.8%	4.8%
	Not hard	2.5%	1.2%	1.8%
	Context	6.3%	1.2%	3.6%
	Difficult to explain strategies	7.5%	0.0%	3.6%

In Table 33, there were eight different strategies presented. The response that had the highest percentage was the "meaning" showing that most the participants found that providing meaning for the idioms were challenging. The second highest was the "I don't know/not sure/no information" which indicated the difficulty participants experienced in explaining what challenge they faced. The third highest was the "detecting" strategy showing that participants had difficulty even finding the idiom in the first task. The other strategies were below 9% as shown in the table.

The response "meaning" was the highest and seems to be because the idioms were unfamiliar, or participants were unable to express the meaning without great difficulty. Participants expressed that comprehending the meaning of the idiom was challenging because the idioms were not understood from their word parts or because a search for the idiom in the dictionary did not provide the meaning.

148

Table 34 gives examples of comments that were made by respondents supporting categorization of the theme. Misspellings, bad grammar, poor punctuation, and lack of capitalization were maintained to faithfully resemble the original responses, and accurately and reliably portray the proficiency level of the participants.

Table 34

Participants Challenges Responses

	Strategies	Participants' Response Samples
Thematic Analysis	Detecting	• "reading so many paragraph to allocate an idiom." • "there were some of the context with 2 idiomatic phrases" • "finding the idiomatic phrase in the long context"
	Meaning	• "I felt afraid of guessing the meaning of idioms." • "Trying to understand the meaning of the idiom without a context which made me looking for it in the dictionary" • "because I know the meaning of each word but as a sentence, it is not have a fully meaning." • "For some of the phases I knew them but didn't know thier meanings"
	Not hard	• "no challenge" • "nothing" • "Nothing facing me"
	Context	• "the sentences" • "some of the words were not understood" • "explanation of the context"
	Long time	• "I am sorry it's a LONG survey and the time is the problem I faced." • "this survey was so long comparing to others." • "getting through the tasks for the idiomatic expressions"
	First time seeing	• "some of them i did not know them." • "Many unusual idioms" • "It was the first time reading it"
	Difficult to explain strategies	• "because I am bad at explaining" • "knowing strategies is hard"
	I don't know/not sure/no information	• "no idea" • "I do not know"

Guiding Question 2 – Overcoming Challenges

In order to report on the question that dealt with whether and how the participant overcame the challenge, data was coded into twelve categories further broken into four and eight types. The themes that reflected participants' thoughts after task completion are shown using percentages. Table 35 presents the percentages of participants' responses to overcoming their challenges from the self-reflection report.

Table 35

Percentages of Participants' Responses to Overcoming their Challenges from the Self-reflection Report

	Part	Responses/Strategies	G1 (n=80)	G2 (n=86)	G1&2 (n=166)
Thematic Analysis	Part 1 – Overcome	Yes	46.3%	57.0%	51.8%
		Somewhat/mostly	31.3%	23.3%	27.1%
		No	12.5%	9.3%	10.8%
		I don't know/not sure	10.1%	10.5%	10.2%
	Part 2 – How	Not explained	38.8%	32.6%	35.5%
		Context	18.8%	25.6%	22.3%
		Searching	13.8%	10.5%	12.0%
		Translation/guessing	7.5%	9.3%	8.4%
		Learning	5.0%	8.1%	6.6%
		Previous knowledge	3.8%	7.0%	5.4%
		Perseverance	5.0%	5.8%	5.4%
		Practice	7.5%	1.2%	4.2%

In Table 35, there were twelve different categories, four for "did they overcome this challenge," and eight for "how they overcame the challenge." In the first part, the response that had the highest percentage was the affirmative response followed by the response of "somewhat/mostly" showing that most participants thought that they were able to overcome their challenges. The responses of "no" and "I don't know/not sure" showed that some participants felt that they did not overcome the challenges or were unaware if they did overcome the challenges faced while completing the tasks.

In the second part, the highest response was "not explained" showing that participants responded to the first part of the question and did not provide any explanation as to how they overcame the challenges faced during tasks completion. The second highest was the "context" strategy showing that they used the context to overcome their challenges. The third highest was the "searching" strategy showing that participants thought searching helped them overcome the challenges. The other responses were below 10%.

In the second part, the response "not explained" was the highest because participants might have thought that a yes or no was a sufficient response. The "context" strategy was second highest possibly because participants tried to find the idiom or the meaning of the idiom from the context. The "searching" strategy was third highest possibly because when they struggled with detection or comprehension, they relied on searching for the idiom and the definition online or in dictionaries.

Table 36 presents examples of each thematic response from the second part only. Misspellings, bad grammar, poor punctuation, and lack of capitalization were maintained to faithfully resemble the original responses, and accurately and reliably portray the proficiency level of the participants.

151

Table 36

Participants' Responses about Overcoming Challenges

	Part	Strategies	Participants' Response Samples
Thematic Analysis	Part 2 – How	Previous knowledge	• "because I knew it before" • "my previous knowledge of some expressions"
		Perseverance	• "challenging myself" • "by continuing and persisting"
		Practice	• "because I have to practice more to find it" • "maybe by practicing"
		Learning	• "by learning" • "I'm still trying to learn it"
		Context	• "I kept reading the paragraphs over and over trying to get the precise meaning" • "I looked for the odd phrases that sometimes make no sense"
		Searching	• "searching about its meaning." • "by asking and searching"
		Translation/guessing	• "I cant tell for sure but I tried to." • "by feeling and guessing" • "by translate some of sentences"
		Not explained	• "yes" • "a little"

Guiding Question 3 – Helped vs Did Not Help

To report on the question that dealt with what helped or did not help, data was coded into thirteen categories further broken into seven and six types. The themes that reflected participants' thoughts after task completion are shown using percentages. Table 37 presents the percentages of participants' responses for what helped vs did not help from the self-reflection report.

Table 37

Percentages of Participants Helped vs Did Not Help Responses from the Self-reflection Report

	Part	Responses/Strategies	G1(n=80)	G2 (n=86)	G1&2 (n=166)
Thematic Analysis	Part 1 – helped	Searching/translation	28.8%	29.1%	28.9%
		I don't know/no information/none	28.8%	20.9%	24.7%
		Context	17.5%	14.0%	15.7%
		Previous knowledge	11.3%	14.0%	12.7%
		Perseverance	8.8%	10.5%	9.6%
		Practice	2.5%	5.8%	4.2%
		Learning	2.5%	5.8%	4.2%
	Part 2 – did not help	None/no information	61.3%	66.3%	63.9%
		Hard to understand	11.3%	18.6%	15.1%
		Limited knowledge/first time	10.1%	5.9%	7.8%
		Incorrect/Multiple meanings	7.5%	2.4%	4.8%
		Length of survey/context	3.8%	5.9%	4.8%
		Searching	6.3%	1.2%	3.6%

In Table 37, there were thirteen different thematic responses, seven for what helped the learners and six for what did not help the learners. In the first part, the response that had the highest percentage was the "searching/translation" showing that most of the participants used searching and translation as a strategy to either detect or comprehend the idioms. The second highest was the "I don't know/no information/none" response showing that the participants either felt that they did not know what was helpful to them, or felt nothing helped, or they did not provide information on what was helpful but rather what was not helpful. The third highest were the "context" and the "previous knowledge" strategies showing that participants used context or their previous knowledge on the idiom to either detect or provide the meaning of the idioms. This was followed by the "perseverance" response showing that participants felt that what was helpful to them was that they tried their best to complete the two idiomatic performance tasks. The other two responses mentioned were "practice" and "learning" showing that participants felt that practicing and learning was helpful for them.

153

In the second part, the response that had the highest percentage was the "none/no information" showing that most the participants either felt nothing hindered them or did not provide what was unhelpful but rather what was helpful. The second highest was the "hard to understand" response showing that the participants felt that comprehending the idiom was challenging for them. The third highest was the "limited knowledge/first time" response showing that participants felt that their limited knowledge and/or it being their first time seeing the idiom was not helpful to them to answer the questions in the two idiomatic performance tasks. This was followed by the "length of survey/context", the "searching", and the "incorrect/multiple meanings" responses showing that participants felt that the length of the survey or the length of the context, searching, and incorrect or multiple meanings were what was unhelpful to completing the tasks.

The response "searching/translation" was the highest in what helped seems to be possibly because participants that did not know the idiom or its meaning, or had to search for the information, or translated what they thought to be the idiom. The response "I don't know/no information/none" might indicate that participants were either unaware of what was helpful or felt nothing helped or did not put much thought into what helped but rather what did not help. The response "context" in what helped seems to be possibly because participants used this strategy to try to detect or comprehend the idiom. As for what did not help the response "hard to understand" was the highest which seems that participants struggled with comprehending the idioms. The second highest in what did not help was the response "none/no information" may have been because participants either felt noting hindered them or they provided what helped and did not report on what did not help.

Table 38 shows examples of the participants' responses to what was helpful and what was not helpful while completing the tasks. Each of those sections are further broken down into themes. Misspellings, bad grammar, poor punctuation, and lack of capitalization were maintained to faithfully resemble the original responses, and accurately and reliably portray the proficiency level of the participants.

Table 38

Helped vs Did Not Help Responses

	Part	Responses/Strategies	Participants' Response Samples
Thematic Analysis	Part 1 – helped	Previous knowledge	• "maybe knowing some words helped me" • "the background I have"
		Perseverance	• "trying and not stopping"
		Practice	• "by practice with my family and friends"
		Learning	• "keep learning"
		Context	• "reading the context more than once"
		Searching/translation	• "I translated some words" • "searching for the meaning"
		I don't know/no information/none	• "I don't know"
	Part 2 – did not help	Hard to understand	• "hard to understand the context and phrase"
		Length of survey/context	• "the length of the context" • "Taking long time"
		Searching	• "searching but more than one source"
		Incorrect/Multiple meanings	• "incorrect meaning on some searching websites" • "more than one meaning so not easy to find meaning"
		Limited knowledge/first time	• "my limited knowledge hindered me" • "limited use of idioms"
		None/no information	• "nothing"

Guiding Question 4 – Overall performance satisfaction

To report on the question that dealt with participants' feelings on their overall

performance, data was coded into seven categories. The themes that reflected participants'

thoughts after task completion are shown using percentages. Table 39 presents the percentages of

participants' overall performance satisfaction from the self-reflection report.

Table 39

Percentages of Participants' Tasks Performance Satisfaction from the Self-reflection Report

	Performance Satisfaction	G1(n=80)	G2 (n=86)	G1&2 (n=166)
Thematic Analysis	Good/Ok	47.6%	43.0%	45.1%
	Satisfied/happy	6.3%	18.7%	12.6%
	Great	17.5%	7.0%	12.0%
	Not satisfied/not good/bad	12.6%	9.3%	10.8%
	Need to improve	10.0%	9.3%	9.6%
	Amazing	2.5%	7.0%	4.8%
	I don't know	3.8%	5.8%	4.8%

In Table 39, there were seven different categories presented. The response that had the

highest percentage was the "good/ok" showing that most the participants felt that they did well

on the two idiomatic performance tasks. The second highest were the "great" and

"satisfied/happy" responses showing that the participants felt that they did great and felt

satisfied/happy with their overall performance in the two idiomatic tasks. The third highest was

the "need to improve" and "not satisfied/not good/bad" responses showing that participants felt

that they need to improve to do well, or they felt unsatisfied, not good, or bad with their overall

performance in the two idiomatic tasks. The other two responses mentioned that explained how

participants felt about their overall performance in the two idiomatic tasks were "amazing" and

"I don't know" showing that some participants felt amazing while others did not know how they

felt.

The response "good/ok" was the highest possibly because participants tried their best to answer the question in the tasks and/or they felt that they previously knew the idiom, which results showed was not the case. This is consistent with the results that have been reported in the previous questions in that learner's previous knowledge did not necessarily mean they knew the idiom or its meaning, thus indicating the need for instruction in learning strategies to detect or provide meaning of a given idiom for many participants.

Guiding Question 5 – Self-reflection report on personal growth

Concerning the question that dealt with how participants felt about participation and learning during the idiomatic tasks, four categories were coded. Table 40 presents the percentages of participants' responses from the self-reflection report.

Table 40

Percentages of Participants' Feeling about Personal Growth from the Self-reflection Report

	Responses	G1(n=80)	G2 (n=86)	G1&2 (n=166)
Thematic Analysis	Yes	75.0%	81.4%	78.3%
	No	12.5%	11.6%	12.0%
	A little	8.8%	1.2%	4.8%
	I don't know	3.8%	5.8%	4.8%

In Table 40, there were four different categories presented. The response that had the highest percentage was the "yes" showing that most the participants felt that they learned something new about themselves as language learners and readers. The other responses included "no", "a little", and "I don't know" showing that some participants did not feel that they learned something new about themselves after completing the two idiomatic performance tasks.

The response "yes" indicates that participants felt that they learned something new about themselves and could possibly be because the questions asked made them think about the idiom

157

and the strategies they used. Therefore, their metacognitive strategies were engaged as they were completing the tasks, and these made the learners think about their learning. The other responses indicated that some participants were either unaware of their strengths and weaknesses as language learners or they were unable to express how they felt. This might suggest that some learners need instruction in metacognitive learning strategies and writing skills to be able to express themselves.

Demographic Questionnaire – Explanation of Idiom Inclusion Importance Rating

The following is an explanation as to why ranking by the participant on the importance of including idioms in foreign language classrooms, five categories were coded. Table 41 presents the percentages of participants perceptions on including idioms.

Table 41

Percentages of Participants' Perceptions on Including Idioms in L2 and FL Curriculum

	Response	G1(n=80)	G2 (n=86)	G1&2 (n=166)
Thematic Analysis	Improve English	22.5%	27.9%	25.3%
	Not explained	50.0%	41.9%	45.8%
	Understanding	13.8%	22.1%	18.1%
	Not main focus	13.8%	5.8%	9.6%
	Hard to learn	1.3%	2.3%	1.8%

In Table 41, there were five different categories presented. The response that had the highest percentage was the "not explained" showing that most the participants did not explain their idiom importance rating. The second highest was the "improve English" response showing that the participants thought that learning idioms might improve their English. The third highest was the "understanding" response showing that participants thought that learning idioms would aid in their understanding of the language. The other two responses mentioned were "hard to learn" and "not main focus" showing that participants thought that learning idioms was not

158

important either because they thought that idioms should not be the main focus when learning a language or because they thought idioms were hard to learn.

The response "not explained" was the highest and seems to be because participants did not put much thought into their responses. Instead, participants may have opted for putting the number rating chosen as a response to the why question. This is consistent with the results that have been reported in the previous questions in that learners seem to lack the skills to express their thoughts in writing, thus suggesting a need for instruction in metacognitive learning strategies.

Table 42 restates research question 4, and summarizes the data source(s), analysis procedure, and results.

Table 42

Summary of Research Question 4, Data Sources, Analysis Procedure, and Findings

Research Question 4	Data Source(s)	Analysis Procedure	Findings
In what ways do Saudi EFL learners detect and comprehend English vivid phrasal idioms?	Task 1 (Q4/detection strategies)	Thematic Analysis	Context or I don't know.
	Task 2 (Q3/comprehension strategies)	Thematic Analysis	Context, previous knowledge, or I don't know.
	Self-reflection report (Q1-Q5)	Thematic Analysis	1. Challenges – meaning and detecting. 2. Overcome challenges & how– yes by using context or searching. 3. Helped – searching/translation, context, and previous knowledge. Did not help – hard to understand. 4. Overall performance – good. 5. Learned something new about themselves as language learners and readers – yes.
	Demographic questionnaire (item13-2)	Thematic Analysis	Learning idioms would improve their English language, or it would improve their understanding.

Chapter Summary

In summary, this research explored detection and comprehension of English VP idioms of Saudi learners of English. This chapter reported descriptive statistics including chi-square comparisons, which showed the equality of gender and other variables by group. Frequencies and percentages by level and by group and total group were provided. Tests of the assumptions for repeated measure ANOVA and T-test were provided showing that the tests conducted were appropriate. Cronbach's Alpha for the measures demonstrated acceptable levels for the study. The results for each research question were reported and indicated that there was a significant mean difference between the SLL and PLL lexical level of VP idiom. A between-within ANOVA provided evidence of divergence between context groups for the post-lexical level only. Means and standard deviations were also provided showing participants were similar in their opinions by group. Finally, a thematic analysis presented percentages that participants used different learning strategies for both detection and providing meaning, along with examples of their self-reflection reports. This analysis provided a basis for speculation as to why some were more successful than others in idiom detection and comprehension. The responses allowed the researcher to detect themes about what challenges were faced by the participants. Comparing the tasks strategies used by participants for detecting and providing meaning of idioms it is clear that the same themes emerged at similar rate. Perhaps the most important insight gained from their comments is that participants are aware of some strategies but not all of the possible strategies that could be used with idioms and the main challenge they faced was comprehending the idioms.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Overview

Many L2 learners struggle with detecting VP idioms and comprehending and interpreting VP idioms (Liontas, 1999). However, this research was concerned with exploring Saudi learners of English (1) performance challenges with detecting and comprehending English idioms/proverbs with or without context, (2) learning strategies used to complete the two idiomatic tasks (detection and comprehension), and (3) self-reflection report summary. The current chapter goes over pedagogical implications, limitations of the current research, and future research recommendations.

Pedagogical Implications

The current research found that Saudi learners of English were able to detect PLL idioms more than LL and SLL idioms. The responses as to the strategies used indicated that this might be due to the detection strategy of looking for words that do not make sense in context. In Task 1 (IDT), 48% of the participants were able to detect the idioms, but only 29% were able to provide the meaning for those idioms. In Task 2, 30% of the participants were able to provide the meaning for the idioms. The participants in Task 2 who had idioms within context (FCT) did slightly better at interpreting VP idioms than those with idioms in isolation (ZCT), however, the difference was not statistically significant. The clear difference between participants' ability to detect idioms vs. ability to provide meaning for those idioms suggests that participants might

benefit from instruction in metacognitive strategies that enhance overall VP idiom comprehension so that they are better able to express the meaning of those VP idioms.

From the entire group of those who responded, over 80% expressed that they thought that learning VP idioms would improve their English language or enhance their understanding of the language. Participant's responses showed that there was a clear need for incorporating English idiomatics in the curriculum. Participants stated that detecting and interpreting VP idioms were challenging due to various factors including "unfamiliarity with the idioms," "translation and searching" did not yield the correct meaning, or "not knowing what strategy to use to detect or comprehend idioms." This indicates that there may be a need to teach high frequency VP idioms, searching methods, and metacognitive strategies that will enable learners to detect and comprehend unfamiliar VP idioms.

Liontas's (2018c) explains the dilemma L2 learners encounter when they are confronted with idioms:

> Said simply, figurative language is laconic language that must be "figured out" precisely because the words or expressions employed, in the way and manner in which they are being employed, do not mean what they literally state. As a result, the intended meaning the speaker or writer is pursuing must be figured out and interpreted anew within the context in which these words (or expressions) were used creatively for maximum rhetorical or communicative effect. (p. 1)

Liontas (1999) mentioned that when learners read a text and come across an idiom, their mind is trying to make sense of it by hypothesizing what it could possibly mean. Liontas further expressed that when VP idioms are presented without context, all a learner can do is guess the meaning; however, when VP idioms are presented with context, a learner's hypothesis about the

162

meaning may not always be correct no matter how much they believe to understand the syntax, the grammar, or the semantics comprising the parts of the VP idioms in question. Liontas explained that this is so because some VP idioms are so ingrained in their cultural character that their meanings would not be easily interpreted unless their meanings had been previously clarified. As a result, hypotheses predicting what a VP idiom may mean actually becomes "diffused" in the combined process of understanding involving comprehension and interpretation because context, in the end, would only allow a single idiom interpretation to take central stage as all other previous hypotheses become increasingly diffused and refuted. In the current study, participants' challenges in comprehending idioms showed that when the L2 VP idioms were of the PLL VP subcategory, regardless of context, learners struggled to comprehend their meaning. When the L2 VP idioms were either from the LL or the SLL VP subcategory, however, participants' responses were similar with and without context which is consistent with Liontas's (1999) Idiom Diffusion Model (IDM). Liontas (2015) further explained that "developing idiomatic competence cannot proceed in isolation from the greater process of learning language in context" (p. 647), a claim this study clearly supports here.

Participants' responses to the strategies used to detect and comprehend VP idioms were in order of helpfulness "searching/translation," "I don't know/no information/none," "context," and "previous knowledge." This is consistent with Liontas's (1999) Transactional Idiom Analysis (TIA) theory which states that learners' background knowledge, language use, and L2 reading strategies would either enhance or hinder VP idiom comprehension.

The Noticing Theory (Schmidt, 1990) was supported by the fact that participants expressed that the strategy they used to detect VP idioms was looking for words that did not make sense from within the context provided. By extension to VP idioms, this theory provides

163

plausible explanations that learners would likely need to notice the VP idiom to construct its

meaning.

Participants also expressed that "explaining the strategies," "the length of the study or

context," and "providing the meaning of an idiom" was challenging. This seems to indicate that

learners were overwhelmed with the amount of information they needed to comprehend which is

consistent with Sweller's (1988) Cognitive Load Theory that explains that learners might be

hindered when they are provided with an overwhelming amount of new information. To

overcome this predictable challenge, note that the participants were allowed to complete the

instruments over multiple sessions at their convenience. Data was not gathered as to whether the

participants took advantage of that accommodation. This is something that may need to be

rectified in future studies of this kind.

Participants were responding to the instruments in an online environment and a few

expressed that they found completing the instruments online without the teacher's help when

they did not understand was challenging indeed. This suggests that the online environment while

completing the task might have been an issue, which is consistent with the Situated Learning

Theory (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). This theory explains that learning happens by

interacting with the context or environment. A reasonable conclusion from participants'

responses is that they might have benefited from the presence of the teacher or researcher to

address their needs or concerns. Again, this is something future studies may want to address.

Participants were asked to provide their comprehension of the VP idioms in both the

idiom detection and comprehension performance tasks. They constructed responses of meanings

into their own words and understanding. The themes that were extracted from these responses

were consistent with the Constructivist/Interpretive Theory (Dede, 2008), which explains that the

meaning the individual provided was constructed using their own personal strategies.

As the findings of the current research suggest, the teaching and learning of idioms in general and VP idioms in particular may require a number of pedagogical interventions. The following review of these include a summary of recommendations for both teaching and learning VP idioms. Although it may be premature to conclude that these interventions would effectively increase both the detection and comprehension of VP idioms, this research, combined with findings from other studies on the subject, may offer educators insights not commonly reported in the field of idiomatics.

Alshaikhi (2018) found that text enhancement helped with collocation and VP idiom comprehension and that when VP idioms are opaque, context would then provide learners with more information to glean their meaning. The current research supports Alshaikhi's (2018) findings that context helps with PLL idiom comprehension. The significant interaction showing that PLL idioms presented in context were much better understood than when presented out of context. Nation (2021) explains that conditions that support vocabulary learning "through input are form recognition, the need for meaning retrieval, the spacing of repetitions, and the occurrence of the same words in different morphological forms and different sentence contexts (varied meetings)" (p. 6). Participants' responses in the current study showed that they struggled with VP idiom comprehension and, furthermore, that they may benefit from learning idioms when such idioms are taught explicitly. Moreover, some participants expressed that practice and VP idiom learning would be beneficial. The strategies one uses to build vocabulary knowledge may well be used here to build L2 idiom knowledge because learners would need to understand the phrase as a complete unit to know its figurative meaning. Nation (2021) expressed that "Because learning through input requires large amounts of input and is fragile, deliberate

learning of vocabulary is a very useful preparation and supplement to learning from input" (p. 6).

Participants expressed that they would like VP idioms to be included in their L2 language

instruction or curriculum because it would improve their English or help increase their

understanding of the English language. Smith (2016) expressed that vocabulary and multiword

combinations like idiomatic language is an essential element of reading and contributes to a

learner's ability to recognize words or make inferences. This suggests that this type of learning

enhances one's ability to comprehend what is read or heard. Flemban (2018) found that direct L2

vocabulary instruction with the use of a peer pedagogical agent helped learners, which further

suggests that using pedagogical agents to introduce idioms might benefit learners'

comprehension when VP idioms are taught explicitly. According to Liontas (2015), "Idioms are

best learned when they are taught in an explicit and systematic way across the curriculum as

learners move through higher levels of education and proficiency" (p. 640). Incorporating

various reinforcement activities may also facilitate idiom knowledge in the same way. Wallace

(2007) found that using reinforcement activities helped learners with their vocabulary

knowledge. Nation (2021) stated that "Meaning-focused output also provides opportunities for

vocabulary learning. Spaced repetition and retrieval through varied meetings and use are

important for vocabulary learning" (p. 6). This may also apply to the learning of idioms.

DeKeyser (2020) indicated that distributed activities would benefit the acquisition of knowledge

requiring analytical ability such as vocabulary learning, while massed activities would benefit

the acquisition of knowledge requiring memory and procedural skills such as tone and gerunds.

According to Briggs and Smith (2017), there are two ways to enhance the comprehension of

input: (1) to make the input easier to comprehend by simplifying the language, using visual aids,

or using the L1; (2) "to encourage negotiation of meaning" by using peer modified language

166

interaction activities (p. 36). This means learners would benefit from peer collaborative learning

activities when negotiating the meaning of idioms. Since idioms are social and cultural it would

be important to take note of Vygotsky's (1934) Sociocultural Theory, which theorizes that

individuals' need to socially interact with other more knowledgeable members in their

community to develop their personal beliefs, cultural values, problem-solving skills, and

language. As with vocabulary learning, VP idiom learning requires analytical ability as well as

memory and procedural skills suggesting that techniques encouraged by Nation and DeKeyser

may also apply to VP idiom learning.

Current techniques for teaching VP idioms do not adequately approach the subject of

idioms in real life environments (Liontas, 1999). According to Liontas, text enhancement may

improve comprehension, however, attention to the text cohesion must ensure the meaning of an

idiomatic phrase is not lost. Liontas (1999) stated that "the use of media-based pictures

representing idiomatic expressions can enhance figurative understanding," and expressed that

classroom discussions are necessary for learning to be successful (p. 528). In order for a student

of a language to acquire competence in that language, they would benefit by acquiring the skills

and knowledge necessary through becoming aware of the linguistic behaviors that make up that

language. These behaviors include both VP idioms and proverbs. Liontas (2018d) encourages

students to become aware of idioms that are similar to and different from their L1. He counsels

teachers to create meaningful interactions for idiomatic learning through exercises in which the

students' collect idioms or proverbs with their meanings and represent them in drawing or

sentences. Liontas (2018d) further explains that daily discourse is essential to help learners

absorb the way idiomatic language is part of a population's culture and social interaction, hence,

increasing their cultural awareness. He explains that students who gain idiomatic knowledge are

more able to use and communicate appropriately and in accordance with the cultural norms and practices of the language learned. Liontas (2018d) stipulates that L2 learners are able to remember idioms better when they discover the interplay between what is said literally and what is being communicated figuratively. He suggests the use of multimedia activities portraying real-life use of VP idioms and proverbs and portraying these meanings and pragmatic uses in their own work showing their proper application and function. An example of this was shown by Khoshnevisan (2020) who found that "AR-mediated material (AR-infused flashcards) have the potential to facilitate the idiom learning process" (p. 139), when his sample participants motivation level to learn idioms was increased. Therefore, L2 learning idioms would be enhanced by incorporating: (1) pictures that represent the idiom and providing the idiom's definition and etymology, (2) peer collaborative learning activities and explicit instructions, and (3) massed and distributed activities.

Limitations of the Study

Since the current research involved a mixed research methods approach that included both quantitative and qualitative methods, the following are potential limitations:

Researcher and Interrater Limitations

Hermeneutic consideration is a limitation to the current mixed method research since the researcher's or interrater's biases might affect the way the data was analyzed based on previous experiences and knowledge. Responses were graded based on the judgement of the researcher and interraters that spoke both English and Arabic to ensure reliability of scores. Consequently, grading was subjective and might have been scored differently if done by someone else (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). One reason that might account for the differences between the

current scoring and the scoring of others that do not speak both languages is that some of the responses included an explanation of an Arabic equivalent. Another reason that might account for the scoring differences is that other interraters might not be familiar with the English or Arabic idiomatic phrases or they are unsure of the meaning. Hence, this unfamiliarity might require those scoring to be discussed and agree on a consensus of what is an acceptable meaning of the idiomatic phrase, what responses should be considered correct or incorrect, and a rubric for scoring the located idioms and the idioms meaning. In this research, although interrater reliability was not perfect, every item obtained an interrater reliability score above 95%.

Participants and Instrument Measure Limitations

Participants' perceptions might be a limitation because participants might be hesitant to provide their opinions, or lack the ability to express themselves clearly, especially in the case of L2 learners. Another limitation might be that learners are shy or not used to expressing their ideas. Even though the instruments included an Arabic translation of the questions from English, it still might be a limitation with L2 learners, due to language differences and/or interference since participants could have differing proficiency levels even within a course that used a placement test before randomly assigning learners to their class and level, or it could be due to the participants' limited vocabulary knowledge. In this study, this limitation was dealt with by having the participants randomly assigned after selecting them from a pool of students in one university. Participants might not report accurately on what they found challenging, what strategies they used to locate an idiom, or what they understood during the tasks open-ended responses or might respond with inattention due to the length of the questionnaires and tasks. As a result, the items were kept as short as possible even when provided in context.

The length of the measure might be a limitation that hindered participants from

169

completing the instruments. It also might be a reason why some responses were short or did not

contain explanations as to why learners chose a certain ranking or rating, or what was

challenging or helpful. Another limitation might be that there were a lot of open-ended questions

that need scoring based on the researcher and interrater's judgment. This is considered a

limitation because scoring might change even if the research was replicated (O'Malley & Pierce,

1996). The selected idioms might be a limitation because they were of varying lengths, so

scoring partial responses was not possible even with a consensus on a rubric. Another limitation

is that the frequency of the idioms was not considered so the results of the scoring for each idiom

in each lexical level differed based on how familiar an idiom or proverb phrase was to the

participants. In addition, the measurement did not include a pre-test to evaluate the learner's

current knowledge level of idioms. The measurement did, however, include a yes/no question to

try to overcome this limitation, and it also included a self-evaluation of participants experience

with the English language and idioms.

Another limitation of this study was that participants were not selected randomly but

came from a single university in the midwestern region in Saudi Arabia and therefore

generalization to other regions or universities should be done with caution. The sample was a

convenient sample chosen for the specific purpose of obtaining college students learning English

as a second language. A further limitation was that students were measured at one time only and

were mostly between the ages of 18 and 25, thus limiting the age group of those to whom this

study would apply. Although the clusters of university students were not evenly distributed, the

limitation that there were differences between the clusters was not of serious concern. This

difference did not lead to a violation of independence as the participants were randomly assigned

to two groups.

The limitation that all data were collected utilizing Qualtrics® survey methodology means that frequency of behaviors were efficiently obtained but had the disadvantages of all self-report measures. These include (a) lack of language proficiency, (b) difficulty in self-assessment, (c) lack of ability for items to encompass the entire range of possible responses, (d) responders lack of commitment to complete every item, (e) misinterpretation of questions especially because the researcher could not be present to clarify meaning, (f) forced choice questions might not have fit the experience of the participants, (g) response bias because recall of responders is unreliable, (h) low reading ability of responders, (i) non-compliance because responders were not interested or felt a sense of retaliation (Sallis & Owen, 1999).

Future Research Recommendations

Future research concerning L2 learners is needed to get an overall understanding of the English idiomatic language phenomenon (Liontas, 1999, 2002). The current sample size was sufficient to carry out this research based on the G*Power software's prediction. However, conducting future research with a larger sample size might be beneficial to find statistical differences. The findings of the current research are only applicable to the specific population of Saudi learners of English being studied in this research. Gender was not considered in this research, therefore, future research of gender differences in idiom detection and comprehension would be beneficial. Since this research studies Saudi learners of English in an EFL setting, then conducting research with Saudi learners in an ESL setting might yield different results that would benefit educators in knowing where there is a gap in the learners' knowledge and remediate that gap. Exploring Saudi learners of English previous L1 idiom learning experience and whether they have received formal or informal exposure might be beneficial to know as shown in Barzanji (2021) research on collocations. Exploring the effects of cognitive load,

motivation, vocabulary knowledge, and metacognitive strategies similar to the research of

Alyahya (2021), Barzanji (2021), and Alsofyani (2019) might also shed more light on Saudi EFL

learners' idiom detection and compression. Experimenting with text enhancements (Alshaikhi,

2018), embodied pedagogical agents (Alyahya, 2021; Felemban,2018), or instructional ebooks

(Alsofyani, 2019) could be beneficial to explore the influence technology might have on idiom

detection and comprehension. Exploring the effects of pedagogical agent's social cues on

cognitive load, motivation, situational interest, and achievement similar to the research of Park

(2015) might shed light on how involved and motivated Saudi EFL learners are about learning

idioms. Exploring online collaboration and learners' perspectives (Oraif & Elyas, 2021) may

help Saudi EFL learners become more engaged when learning idioms. Exploring the relationship

between motivational strategies and cognitive learning of distant courses similar to the research

of Park and Yun's (2017) research but with Saudi EFL idiom courses might help these learners

become more autonomous. Exploring different collaborative genres on idiom comprehension

activities similar to the research of Sherry (2017) might ensure Saudi EFL learners' participation

in online learning. Studying the effect that anxiety has on learning idioms may help Saudi EFL

learners become aware that overcoming study anxiety would affect their learning (Lunsford,

2009). Exploring language anxiety with a focus on idioms that might influence language learning

achievements (Horowitz, 2001) would also be beneficial to help Saudi EFL learners learn

idioms. Investigating the effects of corrective feedback and teacher-student relationships on

learners' engagement (AlHarbi, 2018) may help educators to enable Saudi EFL learners to

overcome their fear of making mistakes using idiomatic language. Exploring the effects of

distributed and massed activities (Dekeyser, 2020) on idiom acquisition with a pre- and post-test

to evaluate learners' achievements would also be beneficial to Saudi EFL educators and

curriculum developers.

One possible recommendation for future researchers that would like to replicate the current research would be to request permission to (1) explain the research to participants before learners complete the instruments, (2) express to participants that they are able to complete instruments over several days since some participants did mention the length of the instruments as an obstacle, and (3) clarify instructions or address participants questions and concerns before they start.

Another recommendation would be to conduct the current research with appropriate changes on a population in Saudi Arabia in the same, different, and/or multiple universities or regions would be beneficial to ensure generalizability of the results. Even though the current research did not find generally that context enhanced comprehension, future research on items similar to the individual items that did see enhanced comprehension with context with a larger sample might yield different results. The current research did not interview participants, so including interviews with some participants might provide in-depth understanding of learners' thoughts about their experience, previous knowledge, challenges, and metacognitive strategies.

A possible adjustment that might ensure more participants complete the instruments is to adjust them to include multiple choice responses for the idiomatic tasks instead of most questions being open-ended questions, if possible, which might make it easier for them to respond because it would shorten the time it takes to complete the instruments. Another possible adjustment to ensure the idioms are easily scored equally is to choose idioms of equal lengths and low frequency to ensure a more concise scoring of participants detection and comprehension.

The current research could be conducted as an experiment by having multiple groups complete the instruments and the two idiomatic tasks (Task 2 either with or without context)

while controlling for confounding variables: (1) one control group that is given the instruments with no metacognitive and idiom instruction, (2) an experimental group that is given learning strategies such as reading and metacognitive strategies, (3) a second experimental group that is given idiomatic language instructions, and (4) a third experimental group that is given learning strategies and an introductory class on idioms and practice before completing the instruments. Another possible research is to have the two groups divided up even further into six groups: (1) one group for each of the three idiom lexical level types in the zero-context condition, and (2) one group for each of the three idiom lexical level types in the full context condition. Thus, exploring it further and shedding light on what might benefit or challenge learners when dealing with idioms.

Conclusion

The current research investigated Saudi EFL learners' detection and comprehension of English VP idioms using self-report measures to provide information on learners' challenges and strategies. To achieve the goal of determining what benefited or hindered learners, the factors that were examined were ability of Saudi learners to detect and give meaning to VP idioms either in isolation or in context. A mixed method approach also enabled the use of open-ended questions and thematic analysis to establish a basis for conclusions about the detection and providing meaning of VP idioms challenges and strategies.

The present study provides information that can contribute to the existing literature on the topic of learning VP idioms for improved communication and understanding. A review of the literature demonstrated a paucity of articles on the topic of VP idioms and none on the topic of Saudi learners of English VP idioms. The gap in the literature on the topic of Saudi learners of English VP idioms detection and comprehension is now filled partially by the results obtained in

this study. The present study explicitly presented findings on the interaction found between groups and VP idiom subcategories showing that differences between groups will depend upon the lexical level in which each VP idiom subcategory (LL, SLL, PLL) resides such that the more difficult the lexical level becomes from LL to SLL to PLL, said difficulty influences students' ability to provide VP idiom meaning when such idiom is bolded within context as compared to being presented in isolation.

Review of the literature revealed that L2 learners found idiomatic language challenging. Learners that had higher vocabulary knowledge and language proficiency had fewer challenges and used more strategies when attempting to explain the meaning of a VP idiom. This led to the research questions in the current study.

Most of the participants were able to detect the idioms especially the PLL type. Most of the participants struggled to provide accurate meanings for VP idioms. For those who responded, the most often used strategy was "context" for detecting and providing idiom meaning. Correctly interpreting the figurative meaning of VP idioms was the most challenging when completing the idiomatic tasks. Therefore, designing appropriate instructional methods in writing skills, metacognitive strategies, and attention to idioms may indeed decrease confusion and may even enable learners to better express the meaning of such idioms both in writing and speech, thereby developing better and more effective tools for achieving proficient communication. There was a difference between means of the idiom lexical level types by group in the PLL idioms in isolation and in context, but no difference for the LL and SLL idioms. Teaching unfamiliar VP idioms might benefit from explicit idiom instruction and metacognitive strategies that could potentially enhance comprehension and interpretation. These findings do inform L2 educators that learners might struggle with VP idioms. In turn, these findings would also help researchers

175

to develop better assessments that capture the challenges students face when learning idioms. Such assessments may also act as a guide for the development of future experiments on learning challenges and strategies employed. The fact that these students found that their greatest challenge was in determining VP idiom meaning emphasizes the point that idioms are an important language feature that continues to be ignored in the Saudi English language classes. This finding is a critical finding that needs to be addressed *post haste* if development of idiomatic competence is to be achieved in the near future. The challenge is clearly there. But so is the opportunity.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire Sample

Demographic Questionnaire

Part 1: Demographic Characteristics (asks about your background)

Name:

[   ]

Your nickname to be used in this study:

[   ]

Last four digits of your student ID

[   ]

Your age: (Mark ONE)

O 18 - 23
O 24 - 29
O 30 - 35
O 36+

Your gender:

O Male
O Female

Current university standing? (Mark ONE)

O Freshman (1st year)
O Sophomore (2nd year)
O Junior (3rd year)
O Senior (4th year)
O Graduate (Masters or Doctorate Level)

Appendix A (Continue)

Part 2: Foreign Language Experience (asks about your prior instruction or knowledge of the foreign language)

How many years of Experience have you had with English? (Mark ONE)

O Less than 1 year
O 1 year
O 2 years
O 3 years
O 4 years
O 5+ years

How many college years of classroom experience have you had in the English language? (years of college - Mark ONE)

O Less than 1 year
O 1 year
O 2 years
O 3 years
O 4 years
O 5+ years

How much time have you spent in an English-speaking country? (Mark ONE)

O More than 3 years
O 1 to 3 years
O Less than 1 year
O No time

How fluent are you in the English language? (Mark ONE)

O Native Fluency
O Near-native Fluency
O High Fluency
O Average Fluency
O Some Fluency
O No Fluency

How easy is it for you to understand and interpret English language texts? (Mark ONE)

O Very easy
O Easy
O Marginally easy
O Not easy

190

Appendix A (Continue)

Part 3: Experience with Idioms (asks about your familiarity and level of confidence with understanding and interpreting foreign language texts containing idioms).

Has your language instructor taught you any idioms? (Mark ONE)

O Yes

O No

On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the the *least important* and 5 being the *most important*), how would you rate the importance of students learning idioms in the foreign language classroom? Please explain your rating.
(Mark ONE)

	With 1 being the *least important* and 5 being the *most important* (Mark ONE).					Please explain your rating.
	1	2	3	4	5	Answer
How would you rate the importance of students learning idioms in the foreign language classroom?	O	O	O	O	O	

Are you interested in learning idioms as part of your English language study? (Mark ONE)

O Yes, very much.

O Not sure.

O No, not at all.

How many idioms can you use correctly when you speak? (Mark ONE)

O More than 20

O 10 to 19

O 6 to 9

O 1 to 5

O None

How often do you use your language dictionary to look up the meaning of an idiom? (Mark ONE)

O Always

O Very Often

O Often

O Sometimes

O Never

Appendix A (Continue)

How useful is your language dictionary in looking for idioms? (Mark ONE)

O Very Useful
O Useful
O Marginally Useful
O Not Useful

How often do you read specialized idiom dictionaries? (Mark ONE)

O Always
O Very Often
O Often
O Sometimes
O Never

If you were to read an English language text and point out the idiom, how confident would you be in doing so successfully? (Mark ONE)

O Very Confident
O Confident
O Marginally Confident
O Not Confident

If you were to read an idiom in isolation, how confident would you be in telling what it meant? (Mark ONE)

O Always
O Very Often
O Often
O Sometimes
O Never

If you were to read an idiom in a paragraph, how confident would you be in telling what it meant? (Mark ONE)

O Always
O Very Often
O Often
O Sometimes
O Never

Using the scale range 1-5 below, **how often do you:** (Mark ONE for each item)

	1 = Never	2 = Sometimes	3 = Often	4 = Very Often	5 = Always
a. Discuss idioms with your instructor in class?	O	O	O	O	O
b. Discuss idioms with your classmates in class?	O	O	O	O	O
c. Discuss the functions idioms serve in communication?	O	O	O	O	O
d. Wish you knew what an idiom means?	O	O	O	O	O
e. Wish you knew how an idiom came about?	O	O	O	O	O
f. Wish your instructor would teach idioms in class?	O	O	O	O	O
g. Wish you had more exposure to idiomatic knowledge?	O	O	O	O	O
h. Wish you could study idioms on a regular basis?	O	O	O	O	O
i. Wish you could practice idioms in real-life situations?	O	O	O	O	O
j. Want more idioms to be part of the English language curriculum?	O	O	O	O	O
k. Feel uncomfortable around people who use idioms?	O	O	O	O	O

Overall, how satisfies are you with your present knowledge of idioms in the English language? (Mark ONE)

O Very Satisfied

O Satisfied

O Marginally Satisfied

O Not Satisfied

Appendix B: Idiom Detection Task 1 Sample Question

Task 1 - Idiom Detection Task

Task Instructions

- You will be given a total of 15 short texts containing idiomatic expressions.
- Using the mouse, write the phrase the phrase you believe is the idiomatic expression, or copy and paste it in the space provided.
- Then report on the specific processes and strategies you used in "locating" this phrase.

The task is designed to challenge your overall comprehension process and to determine what text cues, learning strategies or reading techniques you employed for making sense of the idiom in general and its interpretation in particular.

Mary, you always take such a long time to put on your makeup. Come on, shake a leg!

I'll be finished in a minute. Be patient.

You've got to hurry or else we won't arrive on time to see the last show.

What is the idiomatic expression or phrase in the text? (please write it down, or copy and paste it)

```
[                                                              ]
```

Do you know this phrase?

O Yes
O No

What does the idiomatic expression or phrase mean? (Please write the meaning).

```
[                                                              ]
```

Please write the strategies you used in "locating" this phrase. (please write your answer)

```
[                                                              ]
```

Appendix C: Idiom Comprehension Task 2 – Group 1 Sample Question

Task 2 - Idiom Comprehension Task

Task Instructions

- You will be given a total of 15 idioms without any supporting context.

- You are asked to think about their meanings. Once you believe you know the meaning of the idiom or the paraphrase, please write the meaning.
- If you are unsure of the "equivalent expression," offer a paraphrase or describe the meaning as best you can in your own words.
- After completion, please report on the specific processes and strategies you used in "accessing" the meaning of the phrase given.

The task is designed to determine how the "idiom in isolation" has challenged your overall comprehension process and what images you created or thought of to interpret each idiom.

Get up on the wrong side of the bed.

Do you know this phrase?

○ Yes
○ No

What does the idiomatic expression or phrase mean? (Please write the meaning).

[   ]

Please write the strategies you used to know the meaning of this idiomatic expression or phrase. (Please write your answer).

[   ]

Appendix D: Idiom Comprehension Task 2 – Group 2 Sample Question

Task 2 - Idiom Comprehension Task

Task Instructions

- You will be given a total of 15 idioms **bolded** within context.
- Read the text carefully, and when you feel ready to interpret the idiom, write the meaning.
- If you cannot infer the meaning, please speculate on the most plausible possibility based on the overall context.
- After completion, please report on the specific processes and reading strategies you used in "accessing" the meaning of the phrase given.

The task is designed to find out how the "idiom in context" helped your overall comprehension, whether syntax and word meaning played a role in your understanding, and what images, if any, you created or thought of during this task.

What's the matter with Bernard today? He started shouting from the moment he stepped into the office. I don't know. He usually doesn't act that way at all. I guess he **got up on the wrong side of the bed**. Just because he woke up in a bad mood is no reason for him to be so cross and to go around shouting at everybody. Hopefully he'll relax as the day goes on.

Do you know this phrase?

O Yes
O No

What does the idiomatic expression or phrase in the text mean? (Please write the meaning).

What does the idiomatic expression or phrase in the text mean? (Please write the meaning).

Please write the strategies you used to know the meaning of this phrase. (Please write your answer).

Appendix E: Self-reflection Report Sample

Self-reflection Report

Task Instructions

Report on your total experience with the idioms and the texts containing them. I would like you to reflect back on all the tasks—Idiom Detection Task and Idiom Comprehension Task—and summarize your successes and failures during each of the procedures. Here are some questions that can guide your summary:

What was the greatest challenge you faced?

Did you overcome this challenge? How?

What helped you and what did not?

How do you feel about your total performance?

Have you learned anything new about yourself as a language learner and reader?

Appendix F: Idioms Needs Survey Sample

Idioms Needs Survey

Statements Regarding Learning Idioms in Second and Foreign Languages

Instructions

We would like to know your thoughts on the need for learning idioms in second and foreign languages. Read each statement carefully, think about it for a few seconds, and using the scale range 1-5, mark the number that best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral/Unsure
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

(Mark **ONE** for each item)

	1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral/Unsure	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly Agree
1. I like to study idioms on a regular basis.	O	O	O	O	O
2. I like to learn idioms along with the texts and contexts that support their use.	O	O	O	O	O
3. I learn idioms best with real texts as opposed to made-up texts.	O	O	O	O	O
4. Verbal (textual or audio) and visual (graphic, photographic, or video-graphic) information help activate my knowledge of idioms.	O	O	O	O	O
5. Illustrations and graphics support the study of idioms.	O	O	O	O	O
6. Idioms should be presented in a way that support my learning styles.	O	O	O	O	O

Appendix F (Continue)

	1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral/Unsure	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly Agree
7. Idioms should be presented in a manner that mirrors real-life language use.	O	O	O	O	O
8. When learning idioms, presentation style and activity format should be varied.	O	O	O	O	O
9. Teaching each new idiom in the predictable same old way results in boredom and loss of motivation.	O	O	O	O	O
10. I learn idioms best when they are accompanied by a variety of activity.	O	O	O	O	O
11. Sequence of idiom presentation techniques need not be so rigid that it can be predicted effortlessly by me and the other students.	O	O	O	O	O
12. Authentic audio/video recordings and real texts should accompany the study of idioms.	O	O	O	O	O
13. When I am learning idioms, my main goal is to make sense of what I read or hear in context.	O	O	O	O	O
14. Idiom activities should make sense to me.	O	O	O	O	O
15. I should not be asked to engage in tasks and activities that I am not ready for.	O	O	O	O	O
16. When learning idioms, one should start with the most useful ones.	O	O	O	O	O
17. I like to learn and practice idioms in a variety of communicative contexts.	O	O	O	O	O
18. I like to work things out on my own when learning idioms.	O	O	O	O	O
19. I think idioms are useful in everyday communication.	O	O	O	O	O

Appendix F (Continue)

	1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral/Unsure	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly Agree
20. I can often figure out an idiom from an equivalent one in my language.	O	O	O	O	O
21. It is useful to me to observe how idioms are used in texts and what functions they fulfill.	O	O	O	O	O
22. It is useful to me to hypothesize how I understand texts containing idioms.	O	O	O	O	O
23. It is useful to me to predict the meaning of idioms.	O	O	O	O	O
24. I use many different strategies when learning idioms.	O	O	O	O	O
25. I like to know what other strategies I can use to make better sense of idioms.	O	O	O	O	O
26. I like to be taught specific strategies in learning idioms in foreign languages.	O	O	O	O	O
27. I like to be instructed on how idioms came about.	O	O	O	O	O
28. I like to be taught the skills and processes necessary to create meaning from idiomatic texts.	O	O	O	O	O
29. Collaborative pair and group activities should be encouraged, whenever interpretation difficulties arise with texts containing idioms.	O	O	O	O	O
30. I like to discuss the meaning of idioms in small group activities.	O	O	O	O	O
31. I like to write dialogues, narratives, and/or short stories that make use of idiomatic expressions.	O	O	O	O	O
32. It is useful to me to perform idioms in class.	O	O	O	O	O
33. If I had to perform an idiom, it would be nice to try different ways to do it: skits, dialog, games, etc.	O	O	O	O	O

Appendix G: IRB Approval Letter

UNIVERSITY of **SOUTH FLORIDA**

EXEMPT DETERMINATION

October 18, 2021

Dear Ms. Moreb:

On 10/17/2021, the IRB reviewed and approved the following protocol:

Application Type:	Initial Study
IRB ID:	STUDY003399
Review Type:	Exempt 2
Title:	English Vivid Phrasal Idioms Comprehension and Interpretation during Reading
Funding:	None
Protocol:	• Protocol, Version #1, October 14th, 2021.docx;

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,

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 2

Appendix G (Continued)

UNIVERSITY of
SOUTH FLORIDA

Various Menzel
IRB Research Compliance Administrator

Institutional Review Boards / Research Integrity & Compliance
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Page 2 of 2

202