

More than Cool Reason: Why Should We Study Idioms in Intercultural Communication?

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Abstract:

Studying abroad equips learners with the necessary skills that help them get more prestigious and well-paid jobs and serves as a supplier of competent personnel for nations. However, learners abroad encounter many obstacles ranging from general living adaptation, emotional, cultural, social, academic challenges to intercultural communication issues. Amongst the causes of intercultural communication difficulties is the ubiquitous use of figurative entities in natives' ordinary conversations. Despite the possibility that Algerian students might have a good command of English, they still face such challenges in the use of metaphorical language, especially idioms; a situation which might result in misunderstanding in conversations between native speakers and the Algerian learners. This paper sought to contribute to a deeper understanding and identification of the miscommunication and the cultural misunderstanding associated with the pervasiveness of idiomatic expressions in natives' everyday language. The research took up a qualitative research method that involved an online questionnaire created through Google Form and shared on social media platforms and emails with 39 Algerian students learning in different English and Scottish universities. The paper evinces that incompetence in the use of idioms lead to breakdowns in communication with native speakers. Drawing on the established findings, it is advisable to adopt constructive attitudes and practices towards the teaching/learning of idioms in language classes.

Keywords: Intercultural communication, culture, idioms, communication challenges, Algerian students abroad.

1. Introduction

Recently, the need for communication across cultures dramatically increased because of the great wave of globalization and the increasing number of people moving to foreign countries for education or job opportunities. Accordingly, understanding others' languages,

heightening the level of students' motivation to embrace the cultural knowledge about the others, and fostering the development of interest in the field of foreign languages is no longer an option; it becomes a necessity, especially for language learners. Language learners need to assimilate and live through the

intercultural experience to better understand the FL in its real context and develop their communicative competence more effectively. "Learners are not only expected to acquire accurate forms of the target language, but also to learn how to use these forms in a given social situations in the target language setting to convey appropriate, coherent and strategically-effective meanings for the native speakers". (Alptekin, 2002, in Ruschoff, 2016, P. 37) Dombi (2021, p. 9) supports this idea saying that "proficiency in a foreign language has been acknowledged to comprise an intercultural dimension, so much so that even the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (*CEFR*, Council of Europe, 2001, pp.103-105) lists intercultural awareness and intercultural skills and know-how under the general competences learners need to attain". To be a successful intercultural communicator and interact naturally and effectively with native and non-native speakers, one needs to be aware of the specific expressions and conventionalized phrases such as phrasal verbs, proverbs, collocations, and idioms in which the communication take place. "Figurative language is far from being a decorative feature of esthetic value. Rather it is important and pervasive in everyday communication and serves various functions". (Galantomos, 2021, p. 18) In English, idioms are the most remarkably pervasive form of figurative language and exerted a considerable influence on the success of communication. They are spontaneously used by native speakers in both formal and informal contexts, and in both written and spoken

forms of language. Thus, students of English as FL/SL have to learn idiomatic expressions and practice using them in their conversations to facilitate the comprehension and production of the foreign language. Galantomos (2021, P 19) insists upon the indispensability of idioms in communication arguing that "idiomatic competence is an integral aspect of all components of communicative language ability". In his article "Problems in the Analysis of Idioms", Weinreich (1969, p.23), in turn, asserts that "Idiomacity is important for this reason, if for no other, that there is so much of it in every language". Idioms, then, are used in all languages to express the thoughts, feelings, and ideas of people's daily life. Actually, they are the mirror and spiritual soul of cultures and languages.

2. Theoretical Background:

2.1. Intercultural Communication:

In order to clarify the notion of intercultural communication, we need first to understand the two root words— culture and communication. The word culture derives from the Latin word *cultus* the past participle of the verb *colere*, which means to till, cultivate, protect, and worship (Ignatius & Mello, 2016; Kirk, 1993; Danesi and Rocci, 2009). Samovar, Porter, and Stefani (2000, p.36) proposed a definition that might highlight the essential features of the term culture. They stated that culture is "the deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, actions, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and artefacts acquired by a group of people in

the course of generations through individual and group striving". To put it shortly, culture is "the rules of living and functioning in society" (McDaniel & Samovar, 2015, p. 10). Another prominent and comprehensive definition of culture is the Tylor's classic definition. Tylor (1871, p.1) defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". In that, culture consists of how we relate to other people, how we think, how we behave, how we perceive, and how we see the world. These behaviours, according to Nuessel (2013), include oral and written symbols, like language; traditions including dress; religion, rituals; artefacts such as paintings, pottery, sculpture, written literature, architecture, and the tools necessary to create them – all of which are transmitted from one generation to another. "There is not one aspect of human life that is not touched and altered by culture" (Hall, 1976, in Skow& Samovar, 2017, p. 141).

Communication, on the other hand, is the process of exchanging messages for sharing information, ideas, feeling, and so forth. It is a "dynamic process that involves a host of variables (seeing, listening, talking, smiling, touching) that are all in operation at once" (Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy, 2017, p.32). This process, regardless of its situation or context, has different objectives to (1) persuade, (2) inform, or (3) entertain. That is to say, when we communicate, we do so with a purpose, an objective. Morale (2010) defined communication as "the

process of managing messages and media for the purpose of creating meaning and promoting understanding" (P. 5). According to him, messages, media, meaning, and understanding are crucial for successful and competent communication.

Accordingly, communication is purposeful and has crucial structural components that are used to manage messages and create meaning and understanding: a sender, a receiver, content to be communicated, a medium for transmitting the information, and a social and cultural context. In essence, communication is "the vehicles by which people initiate, maintain, and terminate their relationships with others. Communication is the means by which people influence and persuade others. Through communication, local, regional, national, and international conflicts are managed and resolved". (Neuliep, 2018, p. 44)

Culture and communication are intertwined in the process of communication. In fact, communication between members of different cultural backgrounds would be unsuccessful if one of the participants ignores about the cultural components of the other. At this point, Neuliep (2018, p.47) maintained that "culture shapes communication, and communication is culture bound. People from different cultures communicate differently. The verbal and nonverbal symbols we use to communicate with our friends and families are strongly influenced by our culture". The assumption of culture and communication are tightly interwoven and interlinked on account of the various

manifestations of culture – that is, the symbolic presentation of observable artefacts (costumes, dress, food, tools, housing, representational art, and so forth) and the reproducible linguistic aspects (oral history, folk tales, and so forth) of a society – may be communicated in a wide variety of print and non-print means. (Nuessel, 2013, p. 207)

According to McDaniel and Samovar (2015), intercultural communication is not a new phenomenon; people from different lands and diverse cultures have been interacting across the span of time. However, intercultural communication, as an academic discipline, is relatively new. It emerged in 1959 when Hall published “the silent language” in which the relationship between language and culture was analysed. This book is considered the seminal work in the field. By the late 1960s, we saw the first intercultural communication courses being offered at universities (Neuliep, 2018).

Intercultural communication has many various approaches in different domains, like politics, media, business, and aviation. Each domain focuses on a specific aspect of intercultural communication. The focus of this study is on the more personal aspect of communication, exactly on the personal interactions among individuals of diverse cultures, i.e., the interpersonal dimension of intercultural communication across different contexts. According to McDaniel and Samovar (2015, P.7), intercultural communication “occurs whenever a

person from one culture sends a message to be processed by a person from a different culture”. Rogers and Steinfeld (1999, P. 1 as cited in Jackson, 2014, p. 2) defined intercultural communication simply as “the exchange of information between individuals who are unlike culturally”. Intercultural communication is, thus, the exchange of messages between persons of different cultural backgrounds.

2.2. Idiomatic Expressions:

Idioms are the special riddles that we (natives) have the ability to use so readily without paying attention to their character unless we have the misfortune of being non-natives (Johnson-Laird, 1993). In other words, idiomatic expressions are commonly used effortlessly and most of the time unconsciously by native speakers. For non-native speakers, who aspire to English language proficiency, however, idioms are a stumbling block to effective communication. Idioms can occur in different structures and forms; they can be a phrase, a clause or even a complete sentence (Zerfas, 2014). The word idiom originally used in Greek and French to denote dialectical variability and can be branded under two categories. The first one is the distinctive way of expressing something in music, art, writing, etc. that characterizes a person or a group. The second, however, refers to a specific lexical collocation which exhibits certain degree of phraseological peculiarity. (Panou, 2014) Thus, idioms are deeply rooted in a nation’s culture; they convey a unique aspect of culture. In this concern, Zerfas (2014, p. 3) confirmed that “every country or nation has got their

own idioms that are specific to their own culture". Mardar (2022, p. 148) has gone so far as to claim that "if idioms are the signature of culture, and it has been demonstrated that they are, then it should be the signature of everything: the signature of the degree of education, the signature of the culture in which the speaker has been raised, a personal signature because le style est l'homme meme and the signature of the age of the language itself."

Crystal (1980, p. 179) defined an idiom as: "A term in grammar and lexicography to refer to a sequence of words which is semantically and often syntactically restricted, so that they function as a single unit". This is similar to Langacher (1968, p. 79) conception, who defined idioms as "a kind of complex lexical item. It is a phrase whose meaning cannot be predicted from the meanings of the morphemes it comprises". So, idioms are fixed expressions, whose meaning cannot be determined from the literal meaning of the constituent words; it refers to a figurative meaning that only be known metaphorically or through common use. Idioms are expressions that are basically metaphorical in nature. For example; "The old man kicked the bucket" when translated word for word, it will literally mean that an old man has kicked a bucket, but the figurative and real meaning of this idiom (that will be understood by native speakers) is "the old man died". "Off your trolley" is another example in which the word trolley has nothing to do with the real meaning it carries, silly or crazy. Another well known English idiom is "That's the last straw" which doesn't mean

that the speaker has left with one straw, but it means the speaker patience has run out. The aforementioned examples highlight the fact that idioms "do not mean what they say" (Irujo, 1986, p.236), and that if taken literally, idioms could cause confusion and communication problems.

Fernando (1996; in Cooper, 1998, p. 256) stated that "the sheer number of idioms and their high frequency in discourse make them an important aspect of vocabulary acquisition and language learning in general". In this regard, Cooper (1998) and Moreno (2011) asserted that, among the different kinds of nonliteral expressions, idioms are the most frequently encountered in discourse. Moreover, Lundblom and Woods (2012, p. 203) claimed that idioms "appear in conversation, print (magazines and newspapers), and media (movies, radio, and television)". Since idioms are so frequently encountered in all types of language, formal and informal, spoken and written, special attention needs to be paid to them in the process of learning a foreign language. Idioms "should not be relegated to a position of secondary importance in the curriculum" Cooper (1998, P. 259). In his article "The role of etymology in the teaching of idioms related to colours in an L2", Moreno (2011) listed several main reasons behind the crucial importance of teaching idioms:

- Firstly, idioms are the grease that makes language flow; they give it a peculiar flavour, variety, character and colour. Figurative competence, in a

foreign language, helps learners develop their communicative competence. Moreover, learning idioms facilitates the understanding of the English culture, and help learners penetrate into English people customs, lifestyles, and history.

- Secondly, the ability of teaching and learning idiomatic expression is proved by different cognitive linguistic studies, which demonstrated the crucial role of memory in learning fixed expressions.
- Finally, not all idioms possess an equivalent in other languages because many of them have been changed over time; they are in a constant flux. In order to ascertain the roots, which underline their essence, we have to resort to cultural and even anthropological factors, as well as to a diachronic view of the language

2.3. Why Should We Study Idioms in Intercultural Communication:

Idiomatic expressions are one of the universal aspects of all languages; they are considered as an intrinsic part of human communication. Idioms may cause not only linguistic but also cultural and technical problems for non-native speakers; hence, these problems might affect communication negatively. Therefore, idioms are essential in communication, especially with people from different cultures. According to Samovar and Porter (1997, p. 214), there are four reasons why idioms should be an important subject in intercultural communication:

- First, idioms are figurative in nature.

- Second, figurative meaning often cause comprehension problems for people from different cultures.
- Third, we do not explain idioms completely.
- Finally, idioms open up an avenue to interpersonal closeness.

Likewise, Moreno (2011) argued that learning idioms is believed to be able to promote the understanding of the English culture and help learners penetrate into the English people's customs, lifestyles, and history. More than that, knowledge of idiomatic expressions facilitates negotiation and exchange of ideas, improves interpersonal relationships, and promotes successful communication in intercultural settings. In this concern, Samovar and Porter (1997, p.215) asserted that

Idioms are an important subject in intercultural communication because they create problems as well as closeness. Idioms create problems because idiom users often are unaware of the potential for confusing those who do not share their life world. Idioms have the potential to create closeness because of the informality and fun associated with them.

Idiomatic competence is a crucial aspect in learners' intercultural communication because communication between members issuing from different cultural backgrounds is fragile if one of the participants has difficulties in understanding the figurative language of the other.

3. Research Design and Methodology:

This paper aims to scrutinize and offer some deeper understanding of the impact of the deficits in the ability to use and comprehend idioms on the success of communication between Algerian students and native speakers of English in England and Scotland. It has been carried to answer three principal questions: 1) What intercultural communication barriers do Algerian students have during their stay in England/Scotland?; 2) What are the main communication misunderstandings the Algerian students in English and Scottish universities have encountered because of idiomatic expressions?; 3) How can Algerian learners overcome miscommunication caused by native speakers' use of idiomatic expression? To answer these questions, an online questionnaire via Google-Form is transmitted to the participants through social media platforms and emails. The aim of the questionnaire is to investigate students' attitudes, opinions and knowledge about the intercultural communication challenges they face because of the native speakers' figurative language, especially the use of idioms in their daily communication. The participants were 39 Algerian students attending different universities in England and Scotland for their postgraduate studies. The participants are living in different regions in England and Scotland at the time the study was conducted. They have been there for a period between 6 months and 7 years. The participants have been studying English as a foreign language for about 10 to 18 years.

3.1. Results and Discussion:

This study aims to investigate the Algerian study abroad learners' perceptions of the importance of figurative language, namely idioms in ensuring a high degree of success in communication as well as in its breakdown between them and the native speakers of English in England and Scotland during their study abroad experience. The results revealed that most of the respondents (66.7%) find communication with native speakers of the target language comparatively harder than ordinary conversations in their language; and 28.2% of the questionnaire respondents pointed out that they find it as easy as ordinary conversation in their language. For 5.1 % of the respondents, it is extremely difficult. We can notice through the answers provided by the respondents that the students do face some difficulties when it comes to interaction with native speakers in their language. Conversation between a native speaker and a non-native speaker is not always easy. Native speakers of English usually talk rapidly or use conventional words and expressions and figurative language, which are culture bound that even an intermediate non-native speakers of English cannot understand.

When questioned about the main communication challenges they face when interacting with natives, respondents stated the following (These are seven exemplary responses):

- **Participant a:** "The use of specific terms and phrases like slangs, idioms, collocations, and proverbs that interrupt understanding".

- **Participant b:** "Some accents are very unclear and hard to decode like the Scottish one".
- **Participant c:** "Their dialect is different from the RP English we have been taught. Sometimes, they talk faster than expected, and I do not get the message. In addition they tend to use a lot of idioms in their sentences".
- **Participant d:** "I face difficulties in explaining certain Arabic or Islamic words like "InshaAllah" or idioms".
- **Participant e:** "Their jokes, the context of their discussions, their idiomatic expressions".
- **Participant f:** "Their choice of words that sometimes I am not familiar with, like colloquial expressions and idiomatic expressions , their pitch of speech is very fast, use of implied meaning".

background about how to express your ideas".

According to the students' answers, their communication challenges are mainly due to the native speakers' use of idioms and other fixed expressions. In this respect, Dodd (1995, p. 149) argued that "in intercultural communication, we should avoid slang, jargon, and personal references that exclude another person's experience". In fact, successful intercultural communication requires mutual intercultural awareness. Furthermore, natives have to make adjustments when communicating with non-native speakers through speaking clearly, slowly, and accurately, using fewer idioms, slangs and other aspects of figurative language, and using body language. Thus, communicating with non-native speakers is mostly effective when using simple words and body language,

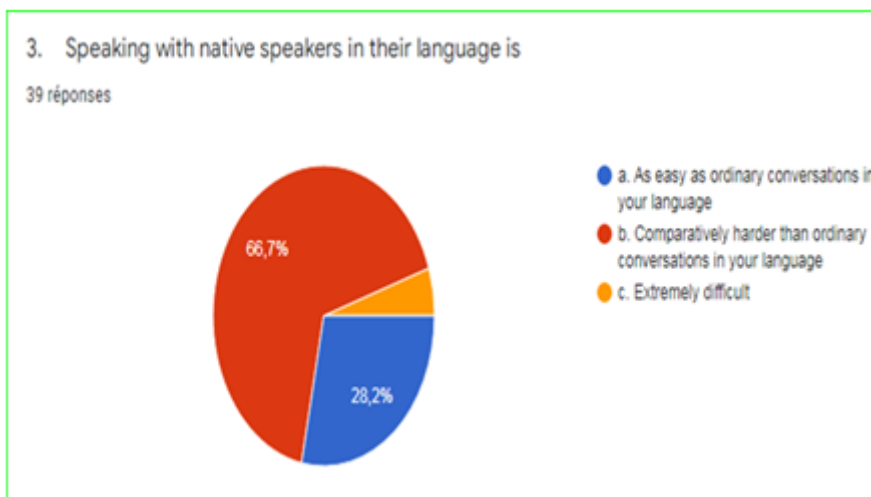


Figure 1- Respondents Perceptions of Interaction with Native Speakers.

- **Participant g:** "Dialectal words, norms of address, cultural differences and

such as keeping eye contact. In addition, speakers can explain or define the idiom for the person who has not understood it

through using simple words, examples, or contextual cues. Non-native speakers, on the other hand, should familiarise themselves with natives' accent/dialect with its idiomatic expressions and phrasal verbs before moving to study abroad. This can be done by constantly watching movies and reading books. We believe that this will make their journey easier, and their communication more successful.

When presented with a list of figurative language aspects that might create barrier to effective communication, respondents most selected aspects are slangs and idioms with 48.7 %, and 35.9 % respectively. The next most frequently chosen barrier was "Metaphors" (3.8%). "Proverbs", "Collocations", and "Phrasal verbs" were the least chosen aspects with 2.8%.

According to the respondents, idioms are one of the most difficult aspects of figurative language that create communication misunderstanding and difficulties. It is par of the course that idioms are among the most challenging expressions to learn, use, and understand for FL learners. Idioms are difficult to understand because they are often unpredictable in meaning, thus, there meaning cannot be derived from the literal meaning of the constituent parts. Furthermore, idioms are sometimes illogical or strange. For example, the idiomatic expressions "fat chance" and "slim chance" mean exactly the opposite of what the words suggest. Fat chance carries the meaning of having no chance (zero chance), whereas slim chance carries

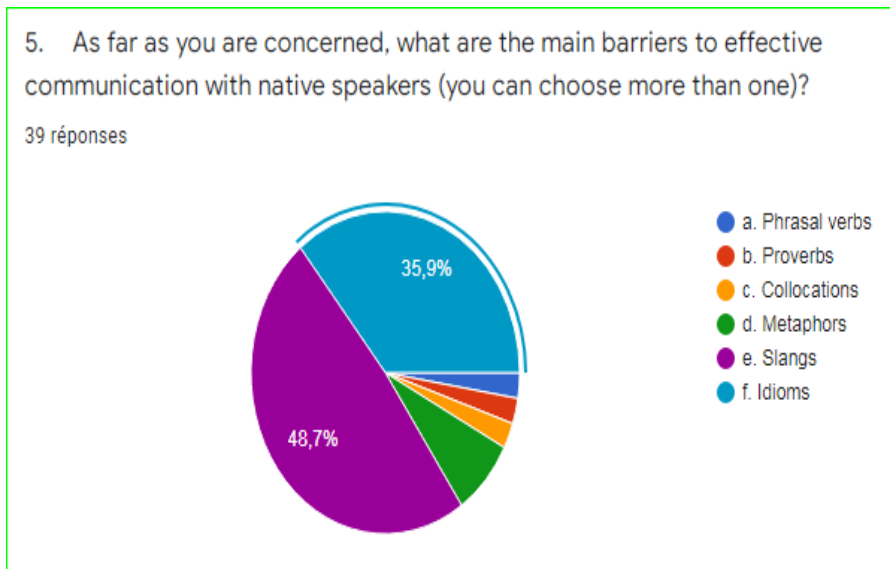


Figure 2-Students' Attitudes towards the Main Barriers to Effective Intercultural Communication

the meaning of possibility: very slight chance that something will happen. The exposure to idioms is also one of the reasons that makes understanding idioms difficult to FL learners. Thus, frequency of exposure is considered as an important factor for idiom acquisition. In FL classes, idioms are not taught as regularly as it should be. In addition, students usually have little or no exposure to written discourses or other types of authentic language.

Regarding the use of idioms, 48, 7% of the questionnaire respondents claimed that they rarely use idioms when interacting with natives. On the other hand, 41% said that they use them sometimes. In addition, students declared that their exposure to idioms is not enough, especially in interactive situation where they could benefit from the speakers feedback. It could be concluded that Algerian learners do not focus on idiomatic expression in the process of learning the foreign language. Hence, Algerian language educators have to be aware of the use of idioms and other figurative language in the process of endeavouring to help their learners acquire the target language. The constant use and exposure to idioms or any other figurative language aspect would help learners build successful conversations in intercultural setting. As a consequence, learners' self-esteem will be increased, and they would not be afraid to engage in any intercultural communication.

When the participants were asked how their contacts with natives have helped them in understanding idioms, they gave the following answers:

- a. "Quite a lot".
- b. "The more I interact with them, the better understanding I gain".
- c. "Constant communication with British/Scottish friends did help me to master the use of idioms. I learned and still learning the use of different idioms through understanding them from the context of the speech and in return start using them in my daily life use of English. Not only direct communication with them, but also watching movies!"
- d. "Through their extensive use of idioms, I try to look for their meanings and practice them also".
- e. "Speaking with natives allowed me to be exposed to some idiomatic expressions that I probably wouldn't have the chance to know on my own".
- f. "It helps since you will get the meaning directly after being used in a context".
- g. "I understood the stories behind many idiomatic expressions".
- h. "Through repetitively being exposed to them. In fact, studying abroad offers me a lot of authentic situation where I learn and try out what I've learned"
- i. "It helped a lot; I would say 8/10".

Interestingly, all the informants claimed that their stay in England and Scotland has helped a lot in learning idioms with their meaning and use and even the history behind using them.

Another important consideration in intercultural communication is the influence of culture on the way

individuals communicate and interact with each other. Thus, communication between people of different cultures is commonly affected by how the different societies perceive things, behaviours, and actions. Surprisingly, the results of this question show significant differences in the respondents' voices. A number of the respondents claimed that the Algerian culture has great influence on their communication with native speakers while others argued that it has no influence, and that they have the ability in making this bridge of understanding between their culture and the native's one. The following provides a sampling of the respondents' answers:

- a. There are Algerian words and phrases that have a sort of affect on my thinking in English and make me stuck trying to express myself. It is hard to compare both linguistic fields.
- b. We make sentences differently; we think differently, I was in blue in my 1st year and 2nd year in the England. MY ALGERIAN culture had influenced my communication with them when we talk about world issues that they agree on, otherwise religion is different, food is different, and living style is different.
- c. Living in London for almost 5 years enabled me to develop my transculturality. I became aware of embracing the self and other! I eradicated the beliefs that I once adopted; acquiring another culture requires the exclusion of the local culture. Rather, I searched for ways how to draw communication skills from the culture I belong to and

employ them to be a successful communicator with the foreign citizens. We belong to a society with a remarkable openness to others. We belong to a culture where engaging in conversations is context-related, and thus, drew upon these cultural norms and apply them during my conversations with foreign people.

- d. In being shy to ask more questions and the native speakers most of the time use a lot of slang language and swear words that I cannot use.
- e. The fact that French has a great influence on our Algerian culture and dialect makes it difficult sometimes to communicate in English, for instance, sometimes I know the English word for something, but I can't remember it and I only remember its French equivalent.
- f. Mainly in the way, I construct ideas. Perhaps, Algerian expressions are more direct and explicit than British expressions, which are more diplomatic
- g. It does affect our communication especially in joking, using slang, and idioms; it is not something we would do when communicating with strangers, especially as females.
- h. Being emotional, very hospitable, warm and do not drink. This has caused some differences in the backgrounds.
- i. The Algerian culture is very different from the British culture, therefore, I often found myself obliged to refer to and explain some Algerian cultural things in order to be able to deliver my message to them.

- j. Certainly translating in mind when communicating and with our Islamic orientations and with their too vulgar expressions that seem taboo, well for me personally, I feel embarrassed
- k. I sometimes unconsciously use words like "heh", "InshaAllah" when speaking to natives.
- l. The norms of respect in the Algerian culture, the generosity, being social with natives.

In the age of globalization, there is an urgent need for understanding others, and great demands of coping with the other's views, traditions, customs, beliefs, and morals. However, coping with other cultures doesn't mean forgetting ours because respecting our culture does not require us to relinquish others culture and vice versa.

Why is it important to study idioms across cultures and in intercultural communication? There was an agreement between the questionnaire respondents about the importance of learning idioms across cultures and in intercultural communication. According to the respondents, studying idioms helps in producing a natural communicative interaction with native speakers; it increases understanding and facilitates communication and relationships. It also minimizes the risk of rejection since it makes interaction safe. Accordingly, there is a crucial need for acquiring English idioms properly and stop neglecting them in the EFL classrooms in order to realise a successful intercultural communication. Idioms help learner to communicate a great deal of information in just a few words.

Questionnaire respondents were asked to suggest ways that would help Algerian learners overcome miscommunication caused by native speakers' use of idiomatic expression. The following are examples of the suggestions provided:

- a. I think the only way is to be in more contact with natives, the more you interact with them, the more you learn about the idioms and proverbs they use.
- b. I think it is important to have communication and interaction skills rather than having a wide knowledge of idiomatic expressions. The ability to talk to anyone about anything is a very important skill. I think simple conversation techniques like agreeing on the linguistic register with your interlocutor and asking for clarification could resolve the issue. Learning about idiomatic expression might be helpful in certain situations, however, it is important to teach our students conversational skill rather than knowledge of the language, that is, idiomatic expressions in the present case, as the latter can easily be acquired through interacting with 'the other'.
- c. Having a great exposure to films/ movies as well as direct contact with natives (both online and offline) would enable Algerian learners to acquire a big deal of idioms and other language chunks and their appropriate use. Only by then, they would be able to avoid any idiomatic expressions related miscommunication!

- d. By learning more idioms and trying to understand their use in different contexts to avoid misunderstandings.
- e. It's not really as big of an issue as it is made out to be for Algerian learners, in fact, most of the idioms we learn at schools are outdated and they would never encounter them with natives. A lot of idioms and slang words are specific to a given region, class, age, etc. There is no way to learn them all except by being exposed to them. I like to watch British comedies and sitcoms to learn British humour and expressions. Reality TV helps too.
- f. The problem is that they prepare the learners for academic purposes, while social interaction is as important as the later, because we do not deal with our supervisors only, but it's a whole different community and culture, not only a different language.
- g. Watch the tone of the speaker; 2. facial expressions; 3. Key words in the conversation; 4. Ask them to repeat themselves politely.
- h. Try to learn the idiomatic expressions, their slang, their jokes, and their culture.
- i. In order to overcome this obstacle, Algerian learners have to stay in touch with native speakers and to keep socialising and networking with them. Watching movies and programs with British accent can also help them overcome this communication issue
- j. by watching TV programmes specific to the culture (British), listening to podcasts and comedy shows (shows that use street language) this is something I wasn't aware of as I have

been more into American programmes than British being exposed to extensive input

Figurative language, especially idioms, is crucial for any language learner and should be given a main concern in the language class. Furthermore, the frequency of idioms in the English written and spoken discourse makes it difficult to speak or write without using them. Interaction with native speakers is one of the best and easiest ways that help learners learn idiomatic expressions. However, engaging students with authentic language through videos, audios, and books would also help. So, the role context plays in facilitating the processes of recognizing and comprehending English idioms effectively cannot be denied.

4. Conclusion:

With the intention of enhancing the quality of education and research in the Algerian higher education institutions, the ministry of higher education and scientific research has explored the mechanisms and patterns of cooperation between its institutions and institutions around the world. One of the main forms of cooperation is providing a number of scholarship opportunities to Algerian students for graduate and post-graduate studies in different universities. During their study abroad period, Algerian students' cognitive, affective, and behavioural skills are promoted. In addition, students learn to value cultural heritage, equality, freedom, and civic responsibility. Students, on the other hand, experience different problems and challenges. The current research explores

the extent to which idioms could be a stumbling block to successful intercultural communication between Algerian students' abroad and native speakers' of English in Scotland and England. The results obtained from this study revealed that misunderstanding, communication breakdowns, and different intercultural communication problems usually arise from the native speakers' use of idiomatic expressions and other figurative words, which the Algerian learners do not recognize or do not know how to use in a special context. These barriers to successful intercultural communication also create other problems, like hindering learners' motivation to speak with natives, confusion, mistrust, uncertainty, frustration, and even conflict and violence among people. Since English is a language which is full of idiomatic expressions, miscommunication caused by the inaccurate use of them should be put into scrutiny to gain further insights into idioms use, and acquisition in the FL; this helps also to provide a more complete picture of the effective methods of teaching idioms to EFL learners. In essence, idioms are a fundamental part of any language and can weaken the communication if disregarded.

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6. Appendices:

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