**ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH IDIOM COMPREHENSION AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN UNGUJA**

**NGOGE TABLEY AMOS**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN LINGUISTICS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA**

**2022**

# CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend for acceptance by the Open University of Tanzania a thesis entitled, **Assessment of English Idiom Comprehension among University Students in Unguja** in fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Dr. Hannah Simpassa

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Dr. Dunlop Ochieng

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Signature

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Date

# DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Ngoge Okindo, for their continued support both academically and socially. May the Almighty God bless them all!

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Writing this PhD thesis has been a long, challenging, but the most exciting journey. It has compelled me to search for my innermost qualities as an academician. I have, without doubt, learned a lot, both professionally as well as mentally. It would not have been possible to finish this task without the help of people around me.

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Third, I thank my family members for their patience during the whole course of this work. They realized how important the work is for me in my career. Right now, they are probably happy that the finishing line is reached at last. God bless them all.

**Abstract**

Understanding English idioms is essential in mastering the language. Despite idioms being extensively studied in the African context, showing the importance of idiomatic competence, studies on how Zanzibari students comprehend idioms are still very limited. Therefore, the objective of this study was to assess the comprehension of English idioms among University students in Unguja, which will lead to increasing their English proficiencies. It includes the extent of students’ comprehension of idioms, factors affecting comprehension of the idioms and whether inherent features of an idiom influence students’ comprehension.

The study adopted a quantitative approach and a descriptive research design. The researcher used questionnaires and cloze tests to collect data from 180 respondents from three universities in Zanzibar; the State University of Zanzibar, Sumait University, and Zanzibar University. The findings revealed that the respondents’ performance in idiom comprehension was below average. The results showed that the respondents performed better in idioms presented with an enabling context than those presented in isolation, i.e. without an enabling context. The results also showed that the inherent factors such as ambiguity, transparency, and compositeness of idioms influenced the comprehension of English idioms. The findings from this research have several implications for the students, lecturers, syllabus designers, material developers, and researchers. Idioms should be emphasised in classroom instruction, introduced in vocabulary lists, and provided more exercises to motivate learners to apply various effective language learning strategies.

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA Analysis of Variance

CC Correlational Coefficient

CEI Context Enabled Idioms

EFL English as a Foreign Language

EIE English Idiomatic Expression

ESL English as a Second Language

FGDs Focus Group Discussions

FL Foreign Language

FLA First Language Acquisition

FTJT Familiarity and Transparency Judgment Tasks

IA Idioms in Isolation

IE Idiomatic Expression

IF Inherent Features

ILH Idiom List Hypothesis

IRP Idiom Representation and Processing.

L1 First language

L2 Second Language

LEH Language Exposure Hypothesis

LRH Lexical Representation Hypothesis

MCQ Multiple Choice Questions

MWU Multi Word Units

NES Native English Speakers

NL Native Language

OI Opaque Idioms

PV Phrasal Verbs

SLA Second Language Learning

ST Semantic Taxonomies

STD Standard Deviation

TCU Tanzania Commission for Universities

TI Transparent Idioms

TL Target Language

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

# 1.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the background of the study titled Assessment of English Idiom Comprehension among Students in Unguja. The chapter covers explanation of the problem of the study, general and specific objectives, and the corresponding research questions, the significance of the study, limitations and delimitations, the definition of keywords, and the organization of the study.

# 1.2 Background of the Study

Human language consists of various secondary meaning words that vary from direct meanings and serve particular purposes in discourse. Figurative language has become one of the fascinating facets of human language, with the most common forms, such as proverbs, idioms, and metaphors. It caught the attention of researchers in psycholinguistics, semantics, cognitive, and applied linguistics areas for the intricacy of such stimulating subject as conceptual structuring (Cooper, 1998). Idiomatic expressions can be found in most human languages. It stands out as a significant research area as it clarifies human cognition and conceptual systems. With its pervasive nature, idioms are considered speech instances in communication with deep meaning, popular linguistics, and cultural elements. Idioms are fascinating examples of complex communication that explained abstract phenomena, verbalized through limited words of expressions that make vivid and colourful conversation (Cooper, 1998).

According to Poppiel & McRae (1988), in the traditional sense, idioms were considered as multiword expressions of highly frozen or relatively flexible componential structure. The meaning of idioms should be interpreted as the entirety of the meanings of each constituent that show different frequencies of occurrence throughout natural languages. It implied that according to the traditional sense, idioms were considered to have little to no link between the literal and figurative meaning. To be precise, idioms have little to no effect on the literal meanings of the constituent parts (Ortony, Turner, and Larson-Shapiro, 1985). Idiomatic phrases are considered dead metaphors whose meanings cannot be simply described by analyzing individual meanings (Lattey, 1986; Katz, 1973). It indicates that the students acquire idioms as compiled lexical units instead of constituent parts (Hoffman and Honeck, 1980). However, Idiom compositionality has some degree of interpretation to the relationship between the literal and figurative meanings (Gibbs, 1987; Gibbs, Nayak, & Cutting, 1989; Gibbs, Nayak, Bolton & Keppel, 1989; Nurnberg, 1978). It thus implies that the decomposition idioms are a metaphorical extension of the literal meaning. In contrast, the non-decompositional idioms show no association among the literal and figurative senses of an idiom.

Two significant propositions in literature, such as the language experience hypothesis and the global elaboration hypothesis, were applied in explaining idiom comprehension (Levorato & Cacciari, 1992). The language experience hypothesis claims that children's acquisition and understanding of idioms obtain through the exposure of such linguistic items. The hypothesis explains only the simple idioms that the children can comprehend and be familiar with because the level of familiarity enhances the comprehension of an idiom (Ezell & Goldstein, 1992; Nippold & Martin 1989; Prinz, 1983). Nevertheless, the theory was unsuccessful in explaining the difficulty for children to understand new idioms. This led to the emergence of a more comprehensive approach in explaining the idiomatic comprehension known as the global elaboration hypothesis (Boers & Demecheleer, 2001; Levorato & Cacciari, 1992). The hypothesis claims that the same skills required to understand the literal language are also needed in comprehending the idiomatic expressions. Nonetheless, the two hypotheses failed to expound much on the factors that affect idiom comprehension in different contexts.

Contrary to the conventional view, the cognitive-linguistic perspective of idioms offers a theoretical basis for the construction and interpretation of idioms (Makkai, Boatner, & Gates,1995).The proposition to figurative language sees idioms as the result of the individual intellectual processing that includes interactions among knowledge domains. Flores (1993) points out two questions that absorbed most psycholinguistic studies of idioms: 1) Does the reader or listener obtain both the literal and the figurative interpretation of the idioms, or just the figurative one; 2) which of the two is obtained first. In the field of linguistics and communication skills, research has been carried out on other idiomatic expressions in reference to idiomatic comprehension and language acquisition (Cooper, 1999; Irujo, 1986b; Kellerman, 1983; Liontas, 2002).

Kellerman (1983) investigated the correlation between the knowledge in the first language (L1) and the understanding of the figurative expressions in the second language (L2). The study suggested that when the learners perceive the meaning as figurative, it is less likely for them to transfer the first language (L1) knowledge. However, L1 knowledge has a significant role in the second language (L2) idiom processing. The transmission of L1 items to L2knowledge is regarded as an active learner strategy. The strategy requires the learners’ separation among the L1,L2, and the structure in L1.

Tran (2012) explored the competence of figurative idiomatic expressions of language learners and their perceptions of idiom learning in English as a foreign language (EFL) context in Vietnam. The results revealed that the subjects had poor idiomatic competence. His efforts also uncovered the paradox between students’ situation of using and learning idioms and their desires to learn. Tran (2012) claimed that figurative idioms should be taught along with the skills for negotiating idiomatic meaning. Further, learners have to be exposed to a variety of idioms that are not exclusively from traditional English-speaking countries but also the countries of the outer- and expanding-circle context. Tran (2012) found that the context affects learner’s comprehension of idioms. However, this context is not static because learners are not exposed to the language to the same degree. This study showed that different levels of exposure to idioms could also affect the comprehension ability of students in Unguja.

Even though many studies have been carried out on the acquisition and comprehension of idioms by different scholars, comprehension of English language idioms is still poor. The reviewed research studies demonstrated that the factors that influence idiom comprehension vary from one research study to another, yielding varied results whose generalizability cannot be accepted. This claim is further supported by Gibbs (1995) in his general conclusion on the research entitled “challenges facing comprehension and translation of figurative languages”. He recommends that such a study on different subjects with different characteristics is likely to yield interesting findings. In this regard, the researcher wanted to explore the comprehension of idioms in the case of University students in Unguja to bridge the gap of knowledge in comprehension of idioms.

In summary, throughout the history of the English language, idioms play a significant role in communication as they are used to express ideas more concisely and effectively. They form an essential pragmatic function in a language as advanced by Cooper (1998) and further supported by Makkai, Boatner, and Gates (1995). Furthermore, Gibbs (2011) reiterates that one cannot claim to be fluent in the English language without knowing and mastering idioms. However, despite idioms being paramount in any language, they are challenging to comprehend compared to other language elements.

Brasseur and Jimenez (1989) studied seventy-one students of 18 to 43 years old, categorized them into groups based on age: 18-21 years; 22-29 years; and above 30 years. The students were tested using Thorum’s (1980) Fullerton Subtest of Idioms. The results showed that half of the students within the scope of age 18-21 have unsuccessfully scored within the skilful category. In the Fullerton test manual (Thorum, 1980), the skilful category was determined as a basic score range from 13-20 (from a possible score of 20) for students aged 11 and 18 years. The students in this age range (18-21) were enrolled in academic courses; thus, they were assumed to have at least average or above-average intelligence. The findings suggested that as the students’ chronological age increased, their performance improved in comprehending English idioms.

Several theories have been put forward to explain the basis of idiom comprehension. However, each theory had its weaknesses in terms of the idiom comprehension process. The reviewed theories include; (i) the literal first or idiom-list hypothesis, (ii) the dual-processing or lexical representation hypothesis, (iii) the direct access hypothesis, (iv) the compositional hypothesis, and (v) the dual idiom representation model. Gibbs (2011) argues that the emergency of new theories was basically because the current ones failed in one way or another to account for comprehension challenges faced by students comprehensively.

Several empirical works of literature on idiom comprehension were reviewed from the historical perspective. However, they lacked a substantive account for idiom comprehension, as advocated by Nunan (2003). This research aimed to assess English idiom comprehension by university students in Unguja and suggest appropriate methods that can be used to help students’ comprehension of idioms.

# 1.3 Statement of the Problem

Gass and Selinker (2001) showed the importance of idiomatic competence, given that L2 speakers tend to find it challenging to comprehend idioms because of their rigid structure compared to other language elements. Despite the several studies on idioms that have been done in Africa by different scholars, e.g., Ghassan (2014), Zipporah (2011), and Ngwoke (1999), an account of how idioms are comprehended is lacking.

Owing to the fact that idioms form a major component in any language, understanding how idioms are comprehended will help in bridging the gap of knowledge in understanding of English language. In the case of Zanzibar, there is insufficient research that has been conducted on English idioms. Research on idiom comprehension, in this case, will be more valuable as it will help bridge this gap of knowledge in language mastery and idiom comprehension. An account of how idioms are comprehended will bridge the gap of knowledge in the mastery of the English language since idiomatic expressions differ substantially from literal language because of their structure, semantic, and discourse features and constraints, as asserted by Makkai, Boatner, and Gates (1995).

# 1.4 Objectives of the Study

The following objectives guided the study:

## 1.4.1 General Objective

The study sought to assess the comprehension of English idioms among University students in Unguja.

## 1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Examine the comprehension of English idioms among University students in Unguja.
2. To find out factors affecting comprehension of English idioms among University students in Unguja.
3. Examine whether inherent features of an idiom influence its comprehension among University students in Unguja.

# 1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions guided this research**:**

1. To what extent could University students in Unguja comprehend English idioms?
2. What factors affect English idiom comprehension among university students?
3. In what ways do inherent features of a given idiom affect the students’ comprehension of idioms?

# 1.6 Significance of the Study

Results and findings from this study will give a new approach to studying and comprehending idiomatic expressions. There is currently no documented research on comprehension of English idioms done in Unguja. Therefore this research will be helpful to grammarians, academicians, lexicographers, and students who pursue the English language and other related linguistic disciplines as it will provide them with substantive information on English idioms.

This research will also form a basis for understanding the challenges students face in their attempt to use and comprehend idioms and find solutions to the challenges they face. This research will further lay a foundation for further studies in idioms and idiomatic expressions. In addition, this research will help teachers understand the factors that influence comprehension of idioms and simplify the communication process.

Additionally, since the reading ability is associated with figurative language competence, as reported mainly in the child language literature (Nippold, Taylor & Baker 1996; and Qualls & Harris, 1999), the assumption is that good reading ability enhances lexical development and increases knowledge of figures of speech. To date, there is a positive correlation between reading ability and figurative language comprehension in adults. Therefore, finding out the challenges learners face in comprehending idiomatic expressions will help to solve the problems associated with the reading.

In addition, this study on comprehension of English idioms is also valuable because it enables researchers to discover underlying patterns related to the semantic, structural, and lexicographical aspects of language itself. Challenges encountered in comprehending English idioms due to their semantic, structural, and lexicographical aspects are solved.

Moreover, this research can also illuminate some of the strategies language learners use to find out the meaning of unknown idioms and interpret figurative language. Gibbs (2008) argues that idioms are not a separate part of the language that one can choose to use or omit. However, they form an essential part of the general vocabulary of English. A description of how the vocabulary of the language is growing and changing will help to place idioms in perspective. Therefore, learners have an obligation to master idioms if they want to master a given language. In order to understand a language, we must know what the idioms in that language mean. If we try to figure out the meaning of an idiom, word by word, we will get befuddled. We have to know its hidden meaning. Without this, learning a language can be complicated. However, it seems that teachers and students have not given them much attention, as argued by Gibbs (2008).

Furthermore, this research may help in increasing vocabulary in the English language. A study by Luckoff and Hudson (2003, p. 58) advances that since vocabulary and culture are intertwined, speakers could gain more vocabulary through idioms and conversely, could learn more about idioms from being exposed to the target culture. The more comprehensible input there is, the more learners’ listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills would improve. This is because they share cultural and historical information and broaden people’s understanding and manipulation of a language.

The study might create more awareness of the curriculum designers on the importance of idioms and their influence on any language. This will help to cover the knowledge gap among learners of the English language in the part of comprehension.

The other significance of comprehending English idioms is that it will help language learners share cultural and historical information. This owes to their (idiom) characteristic nature that is inherent in their widely accepted definitions. Consider, for example, the definitions from the following scholar; Gibbs (1995) defines idioms as construction or expression having a meaning different from the literal one or not according to the usual patterns of the language. He further adds that these idioms are peculiar to a people, country, class, community, or, more rarely, an individual; this implies that comprehension of English idioms is significant in that it gives students an insight into the nature of the society in which this language is used. This is because language and society are inseparable.

Finally, Idiomatic Expressions (IE) pervades English with a peculiar flavour and gives it an astounding variety, bright character and colour. Therefore, it is quite important for University students, especially those who major in the English language, to comprehend English idioms. This is because they help language learners understand English culture, penetrate the customs and lifestyle of the English people, and gain a more in-depth insight into English history. Therefore this study on comprehension of English idioms will be of much significance in not only understanding the meaning of idioms but also assist in understanding the history of the English language.

# 1.7 Limitation of the Study

The level of proficiency of the participants was confined to students who were undertaking Bachelor degree courses in English language. Diploma and certificate students were not considered.

# 

# 1.8 Definition of Key Words

## 1.8.1 Idiom

Cacciari (2004) defines an idiom as “an expression whose meaning is different from the meanings of the individual words in it” (p.21). In addition, Cooper (1998) described an idiom as a fixed expression whose meaning cannot be predicted from the meaning of its components. Liu (2008), on the other hand, views an idiom as “a single constituent or series of constituents, whose semantic interpretation is independent of the formatives which compose it” (p. 3).

In the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, an idiom is described as a single unit of expression that cannot be understood separately from its constituent. Similarly, Bollinger (1975) described an idiom as set meanings that cannot be calculated by adding up the separate meanings of the parts. Baker (1992) pointed out that idioms, as frozen patterns of language, often carry meanings that cannot be inferred from their components. Moreover, Alexander (1987) defines idioms as “multiword units which have to be learned as a whole, along with associated sociolinguistic, cultural and pragmatic rules of use” (p. 07).

This study adopted Mäntylä’s (2004) definition of an idiom as an expression whose meaning is diverse with the entirety of the literal meanings of its constituent. This definition does not include proverbs, sayings, and conversational phrases. Mäntylä (2004) explained that although they are multiword expressions with non-literal meanings, they also belong to a category of their own based on their function.

In summary, idioms shared two prevailing properties. First, idioms have an unchangeable word structure and are generally accepted expressions. Second, it is difficult to predict the meaning of a single word that forms an idiom.

## 1.8.2 Idiomaticity

Baker (2007) deﬁnes the term idiomaticity as a subset of maximally conventionalised phrases and exhibits some idiomatic features to different extents. Strässler (1992, p. 21) remarks that many works have been written on idioms since the beginning of the 20th century. However, most of them tend to be etymological collections. Gläser (2000) stated that in describing a set of expressions, the meaning could not be derived from the meanings of their parts. Idiomaticity is the core of the notion of idioms. Mainly, the question in idiomaticity is to scale or analyze how idiomatic idioms are, i.e. how unpredictable the meaning of an idiom is from its literal counterpart. Some idioms are wholly idiomatic and the words constituting the idiom seem to have no sensible meaning of their own as a unit without the idiomatic meaning (pseudo-idioms, pure idioms). Some idioms have literal and idiomatic meanings (metaphorical or arbitrarily different meanings), which are used alongside; some idioms are only partially idiomatic, i.e. one word of it can be taken literally, and the rest of them can be taken literally idiomatically (semi-idioms). Thus grading of idiomaticity is a gradual phenomenon as some idioms are considered more idiomatic than others. The rule of the thumb might be that the less the idiomatic meaning corresponds to its literal counterpart, the more idiomatic it is. The following sections give some general views about the attempts of grading idiomaticity that have been made.

## 1.8.3 Ambiguity

According to Lodge & Leach (1975), most idioms entail ambiguity because of the multiple meanings. This implies that an idiomatic expression has literal and secondary meanings. In other words, idiomatic expressions have two separate semantic representations, literally and figuratively. For instance, the idiomatic expression *to catch the tail* has both the literal interpretation ‘to hold the tail of an animal’ and the figurative interpretation ‘to be the last’. When received such expression, the listener requires discovering the projected meaning of the speaker.

As Swinney and Cutler (1979) state, most idioms have the feature of ambiguity. This means that idioms that are grammatically well-formed have an acceptable literal meaning as well as figurative meaning. So, the comprehension of such idioms will be problematic. Swinney and Cutler (1979) believe that idioms are stored and processed in a mental lexicon like other words and sentences, and their literal and non-literal processing take place simultaneously (lexical representation hypothesis). In the case of normal phrases and sentences, this ambiguity seems to be resolved through a prior context. In other words, contextual clues can influence the interpretation of an ambiguous sentence with literal and non-literal meanings (Bobrow& Bell, 1973). Hence, contextual clues can account for ambiguous idioms too.

## 1.8.4 Literality

The definition adopted in this research on the term literality is Roberts and Kreuz (1994). Literality refers to an idiom’s potential for a literal interpretation. For example, some idioms, such as *bite the bullet*, have a well-formed literal meaning, whereas other idioms, such as *break her word*, only have a meaningful idiomatic interpretation. Finding satisfactory equivalents for idioms is one of the most challenging aspects of translating. Many English idioms can be translated in a literal way. For instance: *a wolf in sheep’s clothing* is translated literally as a wild animal called a wolf among the sheep. The implied meaning is that a dangerous person is pretending to be a good person. So literality simply means that the meaning is taken as per the words that compose a given idiom.

## 1.8.5 Transparency

Kombo (2010) defines transparency as the degree of agreement between an idiom's literal and figurative meanings. The meaning of a transparent idiom matches well with the image it depicts. An idiom like *go by the book* is highly transparent because its literal meaning, to follow directions in a book exactly, is closely associated with its non-literal meaning, to follow the rules and regulations carefully. However, the expression “beat around the bush” is not transparent because its literal meaning is not associated with its non-literal meaning, reluctance to talk about a topic. Semantic transparency is not a fixed and absolute feature. It can be regarded on a continuum from highly literal to highly figurative correspondence.

## 1.8.6 Opaque Idioms

Opaque idioms are the most challenging type of idioms because the literal meanings of their parts have little to do with the actual sense of idioms (Singer, 1994). That is, the meaning of an opaque idiom cannot be derived from the meanings of its parts because there are items that have cultural references (p. 33). For example, *to burn one's boat,* which means to make a retreat impossible. Consider also the idiom to *spill the beans,* which means to (reveal a secret). These examples of idioms are what Singer (1994) classifies as opaque types of idioms.

## 1.8.7 Context

Katz (1973) defines the term context as a theoretical construct, in the postulation of which the Linguist abstracts from the actual situation and establishes as contextual all the factors which, by virtue of their influence upon the participants in the language event, systematically determine the form, the appropriateness or the meaning of utterances (p. 45).

As a concept, context is studied in great depth by various Linguists working in both Pragmatics and Systemic-Functional Linguistics. The objective of their studies has been to define the various meanings of the term context as it is understood in different fields of study. For example, Sperber and Wilson (1986) define context as a psychological construct. Concerning their theory of relevance, they describe the context as a range of premises utilised to decipher what an utterance is about. The psychological aspect of the theory stems from the realisation that listeners make assumptions about what they hear. Such assumptions are based on their background knowledge and not simply the physical environment of the spoken or written words (Sperber& Wilson, 1986, p. 8).

On the other hand, Lyon (1982) defines a context as a set of entities (things or events) that are related in a certain way. These entities have individual characters such that other sets of entities occur having the same characters and related by the same relations; and these occur “nearly uniformly (Lyon, 1982, p. 51).

In simple terms, context is a widely known linguistic term that “refers to that which comes before or after something” (Sullivan 2003, p. 212). Sullivan (2003) also argues that context is a very widely used term in linguistics. Consequently, any account of its meaning will involve us in specifying exactly how it is being used. He determines two types of context, namely linguistic and situational. In many descriptions of context, its pragmatic and semantic notions can be understood because the notion of context surrounds the utterance of linguistic meaning. That is to say, a text can have many different meanings that may be disparate from the literal meaning.

This research adopted the definition by Sperber& Wilson’s (1986) definition. This is because their definition is comprehensive. Hence, it can be used to classify and analyze a variety of English idioms used in this study.

## 1.8.8 Inherent Features

Many scholars from both linguistic and social Linguistics have defined inherent features in a language in various ways. For example, Gibbs (1991) defines inherent features as qualities that are considered permanent or cannot be separated from an essential character. On the other hand, Kombo (2010) defines the term inherent feature as something that is "stuck in" something else so firmly that they cannot be separated. However, in this research, Gibbs’s (1992) definition is applied. This is because this definition is comprehensive, and it is in line with objective number three of this research. The inherent features considered permanent in idioms are; semantic non-compositionality (lack of correlation between syntax and sense), lexical integrity (in various degrees), institutionalization, and compositeness.

## 1.8.9 English Speaking Countries

Bloch (1977) defines language as “a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group cooperates” (p. 23). Human beings can communicate with each other. They are able to exchange knowledge, beliefs, opinions, wishes, threats, commands, thanks, promises, declarations, feelings through the use of language. Countries that use the English language as their first language (Mother Tongue) are the ones referred to as English speaking countries. In these countries, English is the sole language for legislation, regulation, and court rulings. It has the largest number of speakers around the world and is the third most spoken native language. These countries are; United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, South Africa, the Republic of Ireland, and New Zealand. These countries are known as English speaking countries. This research will be referring to L2 as those students whose second language is English.

## 1.8.10 Composability

An idiom is considered to be non-decomposable if the individual components of that given idiom do not contribute to comprehending the figurative meaning. While an idiom is decomposable, its components contribute to comprehending its figurative meaning. The words comprising a rather decomposable idiom are retrieved from the learner’s mental lexicon and then combined with the other components while the meaning of a non-decomposable idiom is retrieved directly from the lexicon.

**1.8.11 Global Decomposability**

The current research adopted the meaning of advocated by Kreuz and Roberts (1993). According to Kreuz and Roberts (1993), global decomposability refers to how an idiom’s words make independent semantic contributions to the overall figurative meaning (p. 67). Idioms considered to be globally decomposable may be further classified as normally decomposable or abnormally decomposable. Typically decomposable idioms are expressions in which a part of the idiom is used literally (e.g., the question in the phrase “pop the question”). Abnormally decomposable idioms are expressions in which the referents of an idiom’s parts can be identified metaphorically (e.g., maker in “meet your maker”, which metaphorically refers to a deity).

## 1.8.12 Literality

The definition adopted in this research on the term literality is that of Roberts, and Kreuz (1994). Literality refers to an idiom’s potential for a literal interpretation. For example, some idioms, such as *bite the bullet*, have a well-formed literal meaning, whereas other idioms, such as *break her word*, only have a meaningful idiomatic interpretation. Finding satisfactory equivalents for idioms is one of the most challenging aspects of translating. Many English idioms can be translated in a literal way, for instance: *A wolf in sheep’s clothing* is translated literally as the wild animal called wolf that is in between the sheep. The implied meaning is that a dangerous person who is pretending to be a good person. So literality simply means that the meaning is taken as per the words that compose of a given idiom.

# 1.9. Organization of the Study

This research is divided into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the background to the study, the statement to the problem, general and specific objectives of the study, significance of the study, limitations of the study, definition of key terms, and finally, the general organization of the chapter. Chapter two presents a review of related literature, which encompasses the theoretical literature and empirical literature conducted as well as the theoretical framework. Chapter three presents methods, materials, and procedures used to conduct the study and a brief introduction and discussion of the pilot study used to test the design. In addition, it includes a description of the respondents who participated in the investigation, the selection of idiomatic expressions, and the factors to be explored. Finally, the methods used to process the accumulated raw data are introduced and explained. Chapter four contains the analysis and discussion of the findings in line with the stated objectives of the study. The last chapter (chapter five) summarises findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further studies.

# CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

# 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a literature review in relation to idiom comprehension. The review is categorized into the following parts: theoretical studies on idiom comprehension, empirical literature review on idioms, characteristics of idioms, and a theoretical framework. This chapter also provides the research gap which this research intends to fill upon its completion.

# 2.2 Theoretical Literature

This section deals with theoretical literature on idiom comprehension. It covers a review of several research works done and documented by various scholars in the field of idiom in general. According to Gibbs (1995), a theory is a logically interrelated set of propositions about empirical reality. Kombo and Tromp (2011) define it as a set of assumptions, propositions, or accepted facts that attempt to provide a plausible or rational explanation of cause and effect (causal) relationships among a group of observed phenomena. This section reviews theoretical literature on idioms as put forward by different researchers in the field of linguistics and languages.

According to Titone and Connine (1994), studies on Idioms mostly involved native speakers of English. However, researchers (Cieślicka, 2006; Cooper, 1999; Irujo, 1986; Liontas, 2002) began to examine the learning and processing of L2 idioms. These studies investigated two dominant issues; the impact of the first language on comprehension of idioms in the second language and the approaches that students implement in learning the second language idioms. Studies on how L2 learners process idioms and idiomatic expressions are still lacking. That is why this research on the comprehension of idioms by university students in Unguja is worthy of being undertaken. It will try to bridge the gap of knowledge in terms of idiom comprehension.

Additionally, past research has suggested that learners, especially those who undertake L2, experience difficulty comprehending idioms because they tend to interpret them literally rather than by their intended figurative meaning (Siyanova-Chanturia, Conklin, & Schmitt, 2011). Current research claims that idioms are not as susceptible to L1 learning but rather to length and type of exposure to a specific language (Camisa, 2013). Since idiomatic phrases fall under the category of figurative language, they are assumed to require a different encoding condition than literal language (Camisa, 2013). For instance, when learning to interpret common phrases such as *see you soon* requires encoding it by its component words. Meaning, one must understand that “see” refers to the sense of vision, while “you” refers to the second person, and “soon” refers to a point in time to be encountered in the near future. In contrast, learning a common idiomatic phrase such as *spill the beans* requires an additional step after learning to interpret the literal meaning of each word.

# 2.3 Different Taxonomies of Idioms

Classifications of idioms proposed by many linguists are quite numerous and with contending rationales (Irujo 1993). First, while traditionally some linguists categorized idioms as one type of formulaic sequences, under which lie other categories, i.e., collocations, social formulas, and multiword units, others classified them as one subcategory under multiword units (MWUs), which means “a fixed and recurrent pattern of lexical material sanctioned by usage” (Irujo, 1993, p.206). From such categorizations, it is difficult to clarify what linguistic characteristics idioms have and to what extent they differ from other types of multiword units. Second, some concepts that are proposed to classify idioms are, to a certain extent, overlapping. For example, Fernando (1996) focused her study on idioms' engagement in several aspects of the English language. Idioms can be observed in proverbs, similes, dead metaphors, allusions, slang, social formulations, and collocations. Fernando (1996) claims that idioms are classified based on their respective group, as indicated above. In addition, idioms were categorized by Ghazala (2003) into five types:

1) Full/pure idioms,

2) Semi-idioms,

3) Proverbs, popular sayings and semi-proverbial expressions,

4) Phrasal verbs, and

5) Metaphorical catchphrases and popular expressions.

According to Aldahesh (2003), phrasal verbs (verb + particle, such as*put up*, *back off*, etc.) contributes to an essential part of English idiomatic expressions. Similarly, researchers such as Alexander (1987), Fernando (1996), Ghazala (2003), Spears (1987), and Urdang (1979) classified Phrasal Verbs (PV) as one type of English idiomatic expression. Through the combination process, the elements of a phrasal verb lose their individual meanings and take up a new idiomatic meaning. For instance: *give up* (meaning: stop trying), *pass away* (meaning: die), *tell off* (meaning: to criticize severely), *iron out* (meaning: to resolve by discussion), *clam up* (meaning: to refuse to speak), and *abide by* (meaning: to respect or obey a decision, a law or a rule). Baker (2007) indicated that the individual parts of idiomatic phrasal verbs show little to none of the meaning of the entire expression.

Below are descriptions of classifications by Nunberg (1978), Cacciari and Glucksberg (1991), Fernando (1996), Yoshikawa (2008), and Grant & Bauer (2004), all of which seem to be more comprehensive.

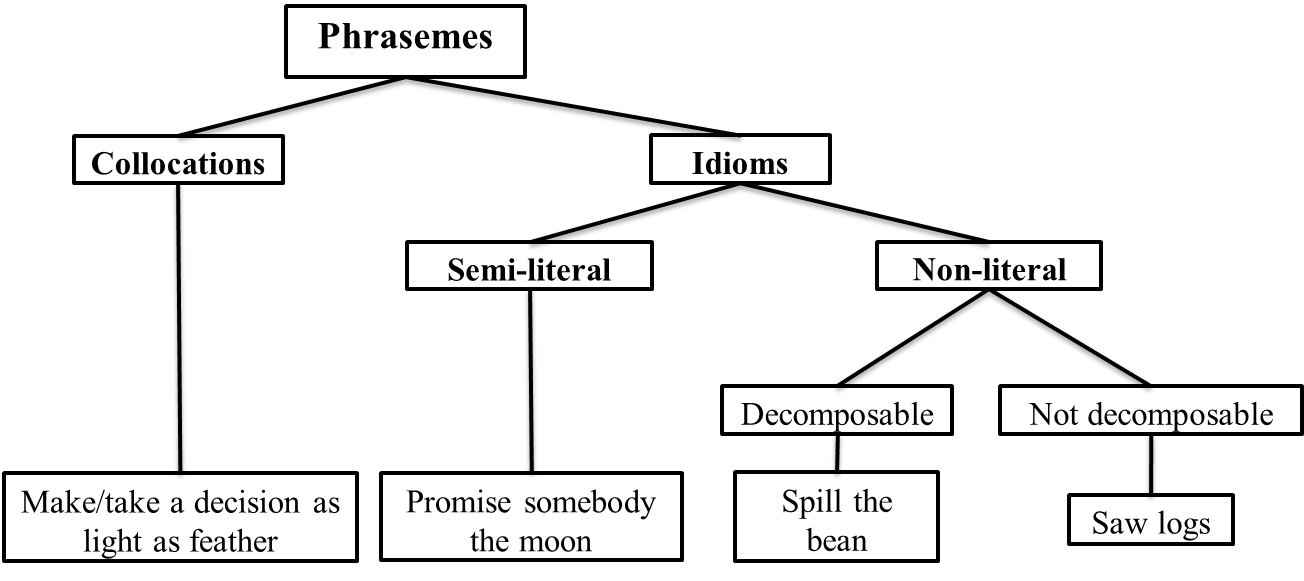
## 2.3.1 Nunberg’s(1978) Taxonomy

Nunberg’s (1978) Semantic Taxonomies illustrates how idioms vary in their compositionality and how these distinctions implicate the process model of idiom comprehension (Titone &Connine, 1999). Nunberg (1978) suggested a typology of whether an idiom's literal meaning influences the interpretation of the idiomatic phrase.

Nunberg (1978) classified idiomatic expressions into three categories: normally decomposable idioms, abnormally decomposable idioms, and semantically non-decomposable idioms. Normally decomposable idioms are phrases that are used literally (e.g., the question in *pop the question*). According to Nunberg (1978), abnormally decomposable idioms are phrases of the referent part of an idiom that could be determined metaphorically (e.g., buck in the idiom *pass the buck*). Finally, semantically non-decomposable idioms are idioms with meaning unlikely to originate from the words that combine into a sequence (e.g., *chew the fat*) (Titone & Connine, 1999).

## 2.3.2 Cacciari and Gluckberg’s (1991) Taxonomy

Cacciari and Glucksberg (1991) categorize idioms as opaque, transparent, and quasi-metaphorical. First, opaque idioms are expressions with some degrees of semantic constraint in the interpretation (for example, *kick the bucket*).Second, transparent idioms are expressions with a direct connection from the literal word meanings to idiomatic meanings. For example, spill in the idiom *spill the beans,* which translated literally to *divulge a secret* directly connected to the verb *divulge*, and *the beans* directly map a *secret*. Finally, quasi-metaphorical idioms are phrases where the literal meaning maps onto the idiomatic meaning. These idioms convey their meaning via allusion content (Glucksberg, 1991, p. 34); that is, they simultaneously refer to an ideal exemplar of a concept and the contextually determined referent in a particular communicative situation. Figure 2.1 below summarizes Cacciari and Glucksberg’s taxonomy of idioms.



# Figure 2.1Cacciari and Glucksberg’s Taxonomy

## 2.3.3 Yoshikawa’s (2008) Taxonomy

According to Yoshikawa (2008)and Saberian and Fotovatnia (2011), there were five types of idioms category: A, B, C1, C2, and D. L1 and L2 levels of structural and semantic relationship are considered as the main principle in English idioms classification. A second language idiom has a similar structure to a first language idiom if the words could be literally interpreted into the first language, be applied in similar contexts (pragmatically congruent), and have the same concept semantically similar to the first language idiom (Cedar, 2004). Type A idioms are English idioms that have structural and semantic similarities to the first language idioms. Type B idioms are partial idioms similar in structure and semantic to the first language idioms. In contrast, type C1 are idioms with similar structure but different in meaning from the first language idioms. In contrast, type C2 idioms differ in structural and semantical from the first language idioms. Lastly, type D idioms differ in structure but are similar in meaning to the first language idioms.

## 2.3.4 Fernando’s (2000) Taxonomy

Fernando (2000)proposed classifications of idioms. Fernando’s classification was similar to Makkai's (2001), who categorized two principle forms of idioms; idioms of encoding and idioms of decoding. According to Fernando (2000, p.7), idioms of decoding showed constructional homonymity with their parallel literal counterpart, while idioms of encoding do not show constructional homonymity.

Fernando (2000) claimed that idioms could be grouped into three sub-classes: pure idioms, semi-idioms, and literal idioms. A pure idiom is a conventionalized, non-literal multiword expression whose meaning cannot be understood by adding up the meanings of the words that make up the phrase. For example, the expression *spill the beans* is a pure idiom because its real meaning has nothing to do with beans. On the other hand, a semi-idiom has at least one literal element and one with a non-literal meaning. *Foot the bill* (meaning: pay) is one example of a semi-idiom, in which *foot* is the non-literal element, whereas the word *bill* is used literally. A literal idiom, such as *on foot* or *on the contrary,* is semantically less complex than the other two, and therefore easier to understand even if one is not familiar with these expressions. Fernando's classification of idioms is based on the degree of lexical variance in idioms.

## 2.3.5 Grant’s (2004) Classification

Grant (2004) classified idioms into core and non-core. To be qualified as core idioms, the following pre-requisites must be met. Idioms must be: i) Multiword units (MWUs), i.e., an idiom should consist of at least two words), ii) Non-compositional, iii) Frozen and fixed, i.e., the inflexibility of idioms in terms of grammar and, iv) Institutionalized, i.e., the expressions being commonly used by a large number of people in a speech community. Being frozen and fixed suggests that idioms' inflexibility in terms of grammar and being institutionalized suggests that many people in a speech community commonly use the expressions. For the test of compositionality, Grant and Bauer (2004) defined compositionality as follows. “if the meaning of the construction can be gained from the meaning of its elements, the meaning of the construction should remain unchanged if each of those elements is replaced by its own definition” (p. 4).

Grant and Bauer (2004) identified the multiword units as core idioms that consisted of a very small group of idioms. In addition, Grant and Bauer (2004) excluded the following groups from the main idiom classification; first ,the composition or literal explanations (e.g. gathering dust); second, figurative explanations (e.g. hit the nail on the head); and third, explanation with only one word of the multiword units is non-compositional or non-literal (e.g. *a curly issue*, where *curly* is the only non-literal word). Moreover, Grant and Bauer (2004) claimed that the classification of core idioms and figurative expressions would help the teachers and learners deal with idioms. The purpose of the classifications was to support “a learner to verify whether something is or is not an idiom by getting the ‘core’ or the heart of what an idiom is” (Grant & Bauer, 2004, p. 59). The classification of idioms, in this case, is restricted. Thus, it does not apply to this study.

## 2.3.6 Moon’s (1998) Classification

Moon (1998) classified idioms into three categories, namely anomalous collocations, formulae, and metaphors. Anomalous collocations area group of words arranged in lexico-grammatical terms. Formulae are specified pragmatically and metaphors related to semantics (Moon, 1998, p. 20). The idioms are further divided into smaller groups. These are transparent idioms, semi-transparent idioms, and opaque idioms. These subcategories are non-compositional and vary in degrees of transparency.

According to Moon (1998), an idiom is transparent when the language users can quickly understand the figurative meaning (e.g. *pack one’s bags*). Semi-transparent idioms have an ambiguous link between literal and figurative meaning. In order to explain a semi-transparent idiom (e.g. *grasp the nettle*),a more in-depth analysis is needed. Opaque idioms require the knowledge of etymology to have better comprehension and interpretation (e.g. *red herring*).

Moon’s (1998) classification is practical in analyzing the level of idiom transparency for the present study. The classification is sufficient to identify and comprehend the stages of metaphoricity. However, it cannot justify having more categories other than the three mentioned above because the categories may intersect and blur the boundary (Mäntylä, 2004, p. 23). The taxonomy “represents a continuum rather than discrete categories” (Moon, 1998, p. 22).Approximately 25% of expressions in her data were distributed into levels: 33.4% were metaphors, and of these, 37% were transparent; 51% were semi-transparent, and only 12% were opaque. The data were used as a base to select the idioms in this present study. The use of opaque, semi-transparent, and transparent idioms in this research was borrowed from Moon’s (1998) study.

## 2.3.7 Yorio’s (1980) Classification

Yorio's (1980) classification consisted of idioms and routine formulas. The occurrence of standardized expression is linked to situational communication. These phrases are grouped in line with the structural, syntactic, and semantic criteria. However, only the semantic criteria will be explained. From the semantic viewpoint, expressions that are not idiomatic are considered transparent idioms (e.g. *your face looks familiar*). Somewhat metaphorical idioms are considered to be semi-transparent (e.g.*to shake hands* or *skyscrapers*).

In contrast, idioms with an uninterruptable meaning from their morphemes are considered to be opaque (e.g.*to knock on wood*). Yorio's (1980) categorization is somewhat similar to Fernando's and Moon's. However, the categorization disregarded transparent expressions as idioms. Thus, it cannot be used in the present study.

## 2.3.8 Grading Based on Semantic Intelligibility

Fernando and Flavell (1999) constructed a simple way of grading idiomaticity based on semantic intelligibility. The grading system is operated by comparing the literal expression of a word string with its idiomatic meaning. Table 2.1 below shows two models where idioms are graded by their semantic opaqueness, i.e. how transparent they are; a model by Fernando and Flavell (1999) and a model by Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English (ODCIE, 2, 1985, p. xii-xiii).

# Table 2.1

Grading of Idioms on Intelligibility

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Class of Idiomaticity** | | | | |
| **OCDIE 2 (1985)** | | **Fernando & Flavell (1981)** | **Example** | **Explanation** |
| 1 | Open collocations | Transparent expressions | *To cut wood* | Not an idiom at all, only a literal meaning. |
| 2 | Restricted collocations or  semi-idioms | Semi-transparent phrases | *To skate on thin ice* | Can be used both idiomatically and literally. Or have one literal and one figurative constituent. |
| 3 | Figurative idioms | Semi-opaque phrases | *To burn one’s*  *Bridges* | Mostly used as idioms, because the literal meaning is often odd or irrational. |
| 4 | Pure idioms | Opaque phrases | *To pass the buck* | An idiom, the literal meaning is unintelligible |

Source: Runasalo (2005, p. 11).

The titles of the classes were varied. However, in both models, the rule of taxonomy is similar. The models show idiomaticity as a series of idioms wherein one end, there are open collocations, which can only be interpreted literally. On the other end, there are true *pure idioms*, which can only be interpreted idiomatically. The classes that fall in the middle include the so-called *semi-idioms*. The scale showed variations from transparent to opaque expressions. The more transparent the expression is, the less idiomatic it is. In class 1, the meaning can be obtained directly from its constituents. Thus, the idiom *to cut wood* is considered transparent and literal and does not have figurative meaning. Hence, all open and free combinations of collocations with other elements can be included in class 1.

Class 2 comprised idioms with literal and figurative meanings. For instance, the idiom *to skate on thin ice* can be explained in two ways. First, a person is skating on ice, which is thin. Second, someone is doing something, which is considered risky. Restricted collocations, also known as semi-idiom, are a mixture of constituents used in their literal and figurative meaning. For example, the idiom *to jog one’s memory,* ‘jog’ is used figuratively, while ‘memory’ is to be understood literally in its familiar meaning. The idiom someone or something *jogs one’s memory* subsequently means one who suddenly recalls something that one had forgotten.

Class 3 idioms have more idiomatic meanings than class 2. The literal meanings are somewhat incomprehensible or sound funny. However, not all are entirely unintelligible. For example, *to burn one’s bridges* can be visualized to be literally performed. However, the figurative meaning of it is commonly used. The literal meaning of the phrase in this class is superseded, and only the figurative meaning is normally used.

Class 4 is the last process of idiomatisation. The combined words were continuously reused and become idiomatic, which led to an unusable literal meaning. This implies that the meaning of the pure idioms was not originated from their constituents. For instance, *to pass a buck* does not mean passing on a dollar, but a refusal to accept responsibility and pass it to someone else. When interpreting these models, only idioms in class 4 are categorised as true idioms.

Frequently used expressions in their literal meanings were generally recognized as figurative meanings. These expressions are categorized as idioms, similar to pure idioms. The basic meaning of whether or not the expressions have idiomatic sense depends on the speaker or writer's context and objectives. In this manner, any open collocation has a figurative meaning. Idioms are conventionalized figurative expressions, point out the distinction between figurative and idioms.

Several factors affected the semantic transparency of idioms (Boers &Demecheleer, 2004). First, some idioms have constituents that affect the whole interpretation and are more transparent than idioms that have non-decomposable constituents. In this regard, Boers and Demecheleer (2004) evaluate two idioms as an example: *to pop the question* and *to kick the bucket.* The first idiom (*to pop the question)* is more decomposable than the latter (*to kick the bucket*).This is because *to pop* can be explained as ‘asking’ and *the question* as ‘the marriage proposal’. However, the latter idiom cannot be decomposed in this manner. Second, Boers and Demecheleer (2004) claim that idioms that replicate a common metaphoric theme are more transparent than idioms that are not based on a common metaphor. For example, *to let off steam* or *she erupted* both signify a common metaphoric theme of ‘anger is heat’ and become easier to interpret. In addition, a clear etymological word origin and culture-specific basis used in an idiom affect the degree of the semantic transparency of the idiom. A summary of this classification is done and tabulated in Table 2.2.

# Table 2.2

Summary of Classification of Idioms Based on Semantic Features

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Fernando (1996)** | **Moon (1998)** | **Yorio (1980)** | **Grant & Bauer (2004)** |
| Literal Idioms*: Dark & Handsome, for example* | Transparent Idioms: *Park one’s bags, alarm bells ring* | Transparent (not idioms): *your face looks familiar, let me be the first to congratulate you* | ONCE (not idioms): *a curly issue, the dog days* |
| Semi- Literal idioms: *drop names, kith and kin* | Semi-transparent idioms: *the pecking order, grasp the*  *nettle* | Semi-transparent (expressions or idioms): *shake hands, bumper to bumper* | Figurative expressions (not idioms): *be like a dog with two tails, pay dividends* |
| Pure idioms: *spill the beans, smell a rat* | Opaque idioms: *red herring, kick the bucket* | Opaque/ true idioms: *by and large, take a leak* | *Core idioms: by and large, so long* |

# 2.4 Semantic classification of idioms

Table 2.2illustrates the semantic classifications reviewed in this subtitle. Grant and Bauer (2004) indicated few challenges in categorizing idioms, such as argument over the degree of transparency of some idioms (e.g. *spill the beans*) and the terminology. However, in the current study, some of the classifications are practical and useful for second language students. Grant and Bauer (2004) point out that the students will benefit from recognizing the structural and semantic properties of idioms to precisely apply the idioms. However, it was also noted that some recent scholars in linguistics have come up with several categories of idioms. For example, Badger (2000) specifically classified idioms into three classes, as shown below.

## 2.4.1 Simile idioms

Similes are possible or true figures of speech even though the implication may not be appropriate or obvious (Gibbs, 1998, p.11). Sometimes, the comparison can be between very different yet explicit domains. In English, examples like *as clear as crystal*, *as white as snow*, and so on. Similes are popular poetic devices characterised or signalled by words such as “like”, “as”, “compare”, “resemble”, and so on, in English.

Gibbs (1998) further notes that similes are different from metaphors in the sense that metaphors are literally impossible or untrue and, on the surface, may look paradoxical and false. However, both metaphors and similes are used in language for comparison. Simile idioms are those types of similes that function as idioms in given contexts. Though the comparison involved may not be overtly imaginative or insightful, the beauty lies in mapping explicitly different domains together. In some cases, the mapping of the overtly remote realm is brought together through the artistic creation of linking stories to bring more systematically and concisely. Mastering similes requires one to have a good understanding of the culture that is dominant in that language. Hence idioms share the cognitive measure as idioms. This indicates the heightened awareness of the community to the original subject, the thing, person, or event. The domain of comparison reflects a measure of sensitivity, which in idioms is captured as either opaque or transparent idioms.

## 2.4.2 Phrasal verbs idioms

Phrasal verbs are usually combinations of simple monosyllabic verbs like put, take, get, etc., and members of a set of particles like on, up, out, etc. However, a phrasal verb looks like a phrase word. In an example of a single word, it functions in many respects. For example, *she put on the new dress*, put on functions because the phrase can be substituted by the word wore, or in *she gave up* trying, gave up can be replaced by the word abandon. Under certain conditions, a direct object or an adverb can come between verb and particle, as in *she put the dress on*. Phrasal verb idioms are idiomatic expressions that function as verbs. They usually contain one or more individual verbs and prepositions that act as a single verb when used together in a sentence. For example, the phrasal verb *to get away with* is used to mean “avoid punishment”, as in the sentence “She will get away with stealing that car.”

The English language abounds in such two-part verbs. These verbs do not pose a problem if the meaning of the whole two-part verb is equal to the meaning of the sum of its two parts. The meaning of the phrase *brought up* in the example “he brought up the heavy table” is clear if one knows the meaning of brought and up. Nevertheless, in examples like “she brought up” the point and “she brought up the child”, knowing the meaning of the parts does not help a learner to know the meaning of the whole. The meaning of “brought up” in the latter instances is idiomatic. In such phrases, each verb has to be learned separately along with the lexical company, and it regularly keeps in certain situations. It is interesting and useful to know that the verb *blow* can be considered as five different verbs in different situations:

1. Blow up a bridge
2. Blow up a balloon
3. Blow up with anger
4. The storm blew up, and
5. Blow up a photograph.

Such multiple meanings baffle learners of English. Therefore, it implies that a lack of good mastery of how the verbs in phrasal idioms behave can be quite challenging.

MacArthur (2000) points out that those native English speakers perhaps learn phrasal verbs earlier than they learn any other kind of idioms. However, for a foreign language learner, the phrasal verb is one of the most challenging language items to master (MacArthur, 2000, p. 34). According to MacArthur (2000), the problem is four-fold:

1. A verb of this type may have a meaning which bears little apparent relation to their parts, e.g., in *let’s go over this book quickly*. Here go over means review.
2. The particle may indicate some kind of direction but may first as easily have a meaning little related to direction, e .g. in “she took to the little boy”. Here “took” means liked or developed a liking for.
3. The same particle can serve as a preposition or adverb, and a student can easily confuse these functions. For example, *He came by bicycle* means he rode a bicycle, and he happened to find a bicycle.
4. Phrasal verbs in English are essential not only in the written but also in the spoken language, and they have many shades of meaning. A learner may despair of ever mastering them. As an instance of this, the researcher has already demonstrated the five different ways the phrasal verb blow up can be used in five different situations.

Makkai, Boatner, and Gates (1995) discuss how many English verbs occur with adverbs in as many as eight different ways in forming phrasal verbs idioms.

* 1. The combination of verb + particle with a literal meaning, e.g. *When did he go away?* The phrase “go away” has a literal meaning.
  2. The combination occurs both with a literal meaning, i.e., as a literal constitute and as an idiom. For example, “Has he *come up from* the basement yet?”.*Come up* has a literal meaning. However, it is an idiom in “The matter came up for discussion”.
  3. The combination occurs only as an idiom. For instance, in “he gave in too easily”, gave in is an idiom.
  4. The combination can have several idiomatic and literal meanings, e.g. “put up” has a literal meaning in “Put up that picture near the clock”. The phrase *put up* can, like the phrase *blow up*, have five idiomatic meanings.
  5. The combination does not have a literal meaning but has several idiomatic meanings, e.g., “work up” does not occur in the literal sense. In the example, “I worked up to six o'clock and then took a break”, the phrase “work up” does not have a literal meaning. Idiomatically it occurs in the sense of (a) master as in I could not work up the courage; (b) prepare or digest mentally, as in “Work this text up for tomorrow” or “Work up this text tomorrow; (c) be distraught as in I was all worked up about it, with a passive restriction.
  6. Some combinations have nominalised forms that may or may not be related to the corresponding original combination. For example, consider “the take-off” was smooth, where the noun take-off is the nominalised form of a corresponding phrasal verb idiom to take off, meaning become airborne. Both contrast with the literal meaning of takeoff, as in “take it off the shelf”. In some nominalised forms of the original combination verb + adverb, the order of the constituents is reversed, and the resultant pattern is adverb + verb.
  7. Some combinations have an attributive function (from *to take off*, we have the noun take-off), but there is also the attribute “take off”, as in “this is the take-off point”. Some attributes of this type behave as genuine adjectives. Some of them take on modifiers such as quite, rather, really, very, etc. Often the genuine adjective type has the (-ing suffix) added as in upcoming (next), outgoing (cordial), and outstanding (excellent). There are also forms without a suffix, such as upset (overturned), upset (mentally disturbed), overrun (infested), and rundown (devastated, exhausted). The suffix occurs with forgetfulness. It is important to note that not all nominalisations occur as attributes. Some of those that do not occur as attributes or occur only under special circumstances are let-up, “hold-up”, “give-up”, “get-up”, “upbringing”, “outcome”, “handout”, “holdout”, “outlay”, “output” and “outreach”. It is rare to find “holdup” and “upbringing” as attributes. However, one may come across sentences like the *bandits were making holdup preparations*, or *she made all sorts of upbringing hints to her sister*. Most speakers avoid such attributions usages for stylistic reasons.
  8. In addition to having nominalisations and attributively used forms, some combinations also have verbalisations, e.g., *upset* (overturn, disrupt) with corresponding nominal and attributive forms. Many verbalisations occur with, for example, the formant over even where no nominalisations or attributes occur as in overplay, overreach which have literal meanings.

## 2.4.3 Metaphorical Idioms

A metaphorical idiom is a phrase that ordinarily designates one thing is inferred to another, making an implicit comparison (Nicolas, 1995). It compares two situations, objects or actions. However, idioms based on metaphors do not use words “like” or “as” to connect the two ideas. For example, a “carrot and stick method” is used to mean a method of coercion. It compares the situation at hand to the practice of luring a stubborn horse or mule by dangling a carrot in front of him and prodding with a stick behind. Many scholars seem to use idioms and metaphors interchangeably, i.e., metaphors and idioms are the same things. However, Deignan (2003) advocates that lexicogrammatical variability seems to be an essential property in demarcating idioms from metaphors. However, it would be misleading to treat all metaphors as entirely free, just as it would be a mistake to regard all idioms as wholly frozen. Extensive corpus investigations have revealed a tendency for metaphorica1 words to form idiom-like expressions. It is not claimed that rnetaphorica1 words never combine freely. Deignan (2003) found out that body part metaphors such as heart 'centre' or hand 'help' retain their figurative meaning in a wide variety of contexts. More typically, however, figurative use goes hand in hand with some degree of frozenness. *Face*, for example, is used in *lose/save face* (Deignan, 2003, p. 160-61). Fruit usual1y collocates with a bear, or it is post modified by an “of-phrase” (Deignan, 2003, p. 181).

Although idioms and metaphors are overlapping categories with graded membership and fuzzy boundaries, distinguishing them necessitates recourse to the criteria of conventionality, lexical, and syntactic variability and figuratively (Deignan, 2003). Idioms involving figurative devices other than metaphor obviously cannot be called metaphors, while metaphors that bear the least resemblance to idioms are the innovative, lexical1y, and syntactically highly variable types.

Carter (1987) noted that it is perhaps surprising that researchers use metaphor and idiom to mean the same thing. In his discussion of the lexical field of cooking, Carter (1987, p.55) establishes two groups of figurative language, including idioms (in addition to proverbs and sayings) and another containing metaphor and slang. These labels suggest a clear distinction between idioms and metaphors. This research on idiom comprehension by university students treats idioms as different from metaphors, a concept borrowed from Deignan (2003).

## 2.4.4 Idiom Versus Metaphor

Idioms are not the same as metaphors, as some researchers claim (Roberts & Kreuz, 1994, p. 23). There is a difference between the two most intriguing linguistic terms. The first difference is based on their dictionary meaning. An idiom is an expression combined by a group of words whose meaning is separate from the literal meaning of each word. In contrast, a metaphor is identified as a correlation among two objects or ideas expressed by comparing two distinct objects. This difference in meaning is based on the Oxford English Learners Dictionary 8th Edition.

Prinze (1983) advances that the terms metaphor, idioms, phrases, proverbs, etc., contribute a significant role in linguistics, as these technical jargon are typically applied to explain figurative expressions. These jargons link two ideas in composition and build colourful images for the reader. Therefore, for future writers, it is essential to understand the differences between idioms and metaphors.

Metaphor is specified as a figure of speech that illustrates a subject by comparing it with another subject (Gibbs, 1995). It is a figurative expression used to contrast two diverse and distinct subjects or things. It gives comparisons of two or more unrelated things, which is quite different from what idioms do. In short, a metaphor compares two unrelated subjects without using the terms ‘as’ or ‘like’. Some examples that will help to understand metaphors: “*Ben can be a bull in a china shop”, “OMG, her gaze was icy”, “He is meaner than Oscar, the grouch”.* The subjects compared to other subjects from these examples, which can be seen in the first example. In contrast, *Ben* was signified as a bull, not implying *Ben* is becoming a large bull in a china shop. The metaphor constructs an image that *Ben* could create damage because there is an incompatibility between his presence and the delicacy of the circumstances.

On the other hand, an idiom is described as a group of words whose meaning is entirely diverse from the literal meaning of each word (McArthur, 2011). Idioms are a group of words, phrases or expressions that should not be interpreted literally. Idioms are figures of speech with a figurative meaning. The figurative meaning is somewhat diverse from the literal meaning. However, both idioms and metaphors illustrate imaginary and figurative outcomes or images despite the differences noted above. Although there is no relationship between an idiom and a metaphor, idioms were sometimes considered a metaphor (Gibbs, 1995).For instance, the phrase *carrots and sticks* express incentives and punishment to motivate a horse or donkey. The carrot was hung before the horse as bait, while the stick drew on stubbornness. Therefore, even not knowing the connection between carrot and stick used in a group of words, the sentence is said to be idiomatic in nature.

**2.5Characteristics of idioms**

According to Langlorz (2006), idioms are unique linguistic configurations that often puzzle beginner users of a language. Idioms possess specific linguistic features. As suggested by Gibbs (1987), the first characteristic of idioms is semantic unity and structural stability. For example, *no practice, no gain in one’s wit* means *a fall into the pit, a gain in your wit*. Idioms have a steady construction. The constituents of idioms cannot be substituted, removed or inserted into, not even an article. Gibbs (1987) argued that if the idioms got deleted or added a word, it may affect the meaning. The word order cannot be changed, or it may convey a different meaning (Gibbs, 1987, p. 23). For example, idioms such as *out of question* and *out of the question* have a separate meaning. Idioms cannot be grammatically analyzed.

The second characteristic is their concordance. Harris, Kruithof, Terwogt, and Visser (1981) define concordance as the agreement of words, sounds and phrases in a given sentence (p. 67). An example of a concordance characteristic is phonological harmony. The concordance harmony is used to attain appealing, memorable and simple idioms. For instance, alliteration idioms such as *no root, no fruit*, *part and parcel*, and so on; end rhyme idioms such as *high and dry*, *by hook or by crook*, *man proposes, God disposes*, and so forth; repetition idioms *step by step*, *neck and neck*, and so on. These idioms were used to enhance the beauty of language phonetic and rhetorical effect in idioms. However, to make the idioms appealing, both alliteration and end rhyme are applied simultaneously in one idiom: *no money, no honey*; *no pains, no gains*; *no sweat, no sweet*, and so on. The trait of concordance applied in idioms is to escalate the aesthetic value.

The third characteristic of idioms advocated by Gibbs, Bogdanovich, Sykes, Barr (1997) is transparency. Transparency is a measurement of the extent to which the meaning of a literal and figurative idiom is connected. When the literal and figurative meanings are directly connected, idioms are considered transparent. However, when the literal and figurative senses are separated, idioms are considered opaque. For instance, the figurative sense of the idiom *to get away with murder* (to avoid some serious sentences) could be taken from the literal explanation of the words component. Although the figurative sense *to keep one’s shirt on* (to stay calm and not over-react) cannot be explained from the individual words. Idioms are varied in their level of transparency. The meaning can be taken from the literal meanings of the individual words. Compare the idioms, *make up one's mind* and *kick the basket*. The first one is slightly transparent in suggesting the meaning “reach a decision”, while *kick the bucket* is far from transparent in representing the meaning “die”.

Fourthly, idioms possess rhetoric characteristics. Gibbs (2011) found out that both L1 and L2 idioms have varieties of rhetoric meaning, such as simile, metaphor, metonymy, chiasmus and inversion. Gibbs (2011) highlighted out that most idioms use a graphical consonance to create life-like expressions. Idioms with rhetoric have vibrant and colourful in meaning, which is rich and diverse. Simile consists of ontology, metaphors and comparing words, for instance, *like a cat on hot bricks*, *as busy as a bee*, *as timid as a rabbit*, *as cold as a cucumber*, *as cold as marble* and so on. Metaphor includes ontology with no comparing words, such as *have a screw loose*, *have many irons in the fire*, and so on (Gibbs, 2011, p.91). Metonymy is defined as applying something that has close relations to the other ontology things. Some examples of metonymy Such as *old steel in the stable still aspires to gallop a thousand Li*, *actions speak louder than words*, and so on. Chiasmus consists of a repeated phrase in a sentence but the opposite order. Idioms that contain chiasmus, such as *some people eat to live, and others live to eat*, *we will not attack unless we are attacked; if we are attacked, we are sure to counter-attack*. Inversion signifies an alternate position of surrounding objects, particularly a modification in standard word sequence, such as the sequence of a verb before its subject. For instance, *a thousand sails pass by sunken ship, ten thousand saplings shoot up beyond the withered tree*, and so on. The meaning conveyed in the form of rhetorical idioms is vivid and various.

The other characteristic of idioms is that they are culture centred, Cellica (2011). Comprehension of idioms is partly based on the demographics and linguistics aspects centred in that language (Cellica, 2011, p. 45). For example, if a given society practices agriculture, then most idioms will tend to reflect agriculture. For example, Kenya is an agricultural country, surrounded by farms, mountains, hills, soil and plants, illustrated in metaphors such as *be as steady as Mount Kenya*, *spend money like soil* and so on. While Zanzibar is surrounded by islands, sea water, and developed fisheries, described through metaphor, such as *the best fish swim near the bottom*, *spend money like water* and so on. Idioms such as *spend money like soil* and *spend money like water* present a similar meaning.

Another property of idioms is that idioms have an independent and fixed part in language. Heinemann (2004) points out that idioms are a series of words with a collective meaning separated from the individual words. Moreover, idioms are sentences comprised of two or more words whose meanings were unpredicted from the literal meaning, such as in “He’s pushing up daisies” and “He’s Dead and Buried” (Heinemann, 2004, p. 344). In short, idioms are a non-dependent and unchanged category of a language. Some idioms originated from various historical references and procedures. They should be taken as a unit to comprehend and interpret. For example, *to lose one’s head* does not imply that somebody has misplaced his head; instead, it means to panic. Another example of an idiom is *to jumps off end of the page,* which does not mean that somebody leaves the page quickly, but means that somebody is extremely intelligent or talented.

Another characteristic of idioms is compositionality, as advocated by Gibbs, Nayak and Cutting, (1989) and Gibbs, Nayak, Bolton and Keppel (1989). In their research, these scholars identified three characteristics predominant in most of the idioms. Gibbs, Nayak, and Cutting(1989, p. 133–34) include; decomposable (e.g., *pop the question, break the ice, clear the air*), abnormally decomposable (e.g., *carry a torch, spill the beans, bury the hatchet*), and non-decomposable (e.g., chew the fat, shoot the breeze, pack a punch). As mentioned above, in decomposable idioms, the constituents contribute to the idiom’s figurative meaning; in non-decomposable idioms, they do not.

Abnormally decomposable idioms are a subgroup of decomposable idioms, “whose individual components have some metaphorical relation to their idiomatic referents” (Gibbs, Nayak, & Cutting, 1989, p. 109). The results show that decomposable idioms are syntactically more productive, lexically more flexible and more quickly processed than non-decomposable ones. One criticism noted in Gibbs research is that the participants had to judge idioms preselected by the authors based on the three groups of idioms described above, thus implying a balanced distribution of all English idioms among the three groups.

Titone and Connine (1994) made their participants freely comment on 171 idioms and found an asymmetrical division, i.e., they found that native speakers of English judge 41.9% to be decomposable idioms and 58.1% to be non-decomposable. Furthermore, they identified some fundamental problems with regard to abnormally decomposable idioms: “subjects cannot easily make this distinction for all but a few idiosyncratic phrases. In contrast, the decomposable and non-decomposable sorting task was more reliable” (Titone & Connine, 1994, p. 262). It seems that the subdivision of decomposable idioms into usually and abnormally decomposable ones is of low psychological validity. In conclusion, the English language is full of idioms and different types of figurative expressions, such as metaphors, similes and irony. These expressions develop and brighten communication.

According to Makkai, Boatner and Gates (1995), idioms are sets of words that acquire additional figurative or semantic meaning. It is challenging to master idiomatic expressions because the meanings could not be interpreted using a literal analysis of the separated word meanings. For example, the figurative sense of *to kick the bucket* (to die) cannot be interpreted by its constituent words *kick, the, bucket*. Cooper (1999) claimed that idioms are challenging for most students because the figurative senses are unreliable. However, idioms can be found in daily verbal and non-verbal communication (Polio, Barlow, Fine, & Polio, 1977). In addition, idioms have “three aspects of language, form, meaning, and usage, i.e. they have syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic dimensions” (Al-Kadi, 2015, p. 514). Fernando and Flavell (1981, p.103) suggested the syntactic and semantic properties of an idiom with the following five characteristics:

1. The meaning of the idiom is not the calculation of its constituents.
2. The idiom has a homonymous literal equivalent or at least a literal individual, although the idiom as a whole would not be translated literally.
3. The idiom is lacking transformation in one way or another.
4. The idiom is formed as a series of words in a given language.
5. The idiom is regulated.

# 2.5 Importance of Mastering of Idioms

Nunan (2003) points out that understanding the lexicon of English demands more than just knowing the denotative meaning of words. It also requires its speakers to understand connotative word comprehension and, more, an understanding of figurative language. Idioms fall into this final category (Nunan, 2003, p. 23).

Additionally, the English language is full of idioms and other figurative aspects of a language. Therefore mastery of English idioms enables students to learn the English language easily. Research by Roberts and Kreuz (1994) on figurative language points out that among the areas that are quite challenging to learners of the English language is idiom comprehension. Mastery of an L2 (English idioms) presents a unique difficulty in part because idiomatic expressions are made up of stereotyped forms associated with conventionalized meanings, allowing only narrow ranges of variability in usage (Roberts & Kreuz, 1994, p.11). Words in the idiom are often not used with their usual meanings (e.g., “She has him eating out of her hand”). The expression occurs on a narrow range of possible intonational contours (Bolinger, 1986, p. 28). Therefore, learning how idioms are comprehended and sorting out the challenges involved in comprehending the meaning of idiom will be a depository towards learning the English language quickly and will lead to higher performance in English language examinations.

Aside from the previous explanation, idioms are an essential feature of a language. They are applied to communicate ideas concisely and effectively (Gibbs, 1995, p. 23). Idioms contain a significant role in a second language as well as in the first language. Gibbs (1995) claimed that idioms are regularly used in each language hence disregarding them will lead to numerous problems for the students regarding fluency and competency in a language (Gibbs, 1995, p. 28). The second language students acquire the grammar construction and lexicon of the second language and the idioms to incorporate into the culture of the second language. Dixon (1994) considered idioms crucial in language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is out of this importance of idioms that linguists and psycholinguists proposed some theories to explain the process and conception of idioms (Dixon, 1994, p. 11).

Additionally, mastery of idioms has a vital role in the English teaching and learning process (Wood, 2002, p. 15). Therefore, idioms usage in and outside the classroom is widely believed to help teachers and students promote an innovative communication environment. In this regard, the types of activities employed in the classroom are the most critical aspects that help in the success of using idioms in and outside the classroom. Since idioms have a significant influence on the teaching and learning process of a foreign language, it could be one of the ways to give students better conditions to improve communicative skills in the daily context.

Furthermore, idiomatic expressions are found to be culture-based. Idiomatic expressions carry the history, heritage, culture, and customs of their native users (Rizq, 2015). Therefore, understanding idioms in the case of Zanzibar will not only help in communication but also help in understanding the culture of Zanzibaris. It can be said that idioms derived from human physical experiences are culturally equal in general. Idioms based on human physical experiences, such as “anger” being associated with “heat”, are easier to recognize and understand by non-natives. Due to the strong similarities across different cultures in essential physical experiences such as being sick or well, hot or cold, idioms derived from such images are often the same and fairly easy to understand (Ellis, 1997). However, idioms that are derived from specific domains are usually different across cultures because these domains are not equally important across cultures. Furthermore, mastery of idioms is considered a vital sign of communicative competence and intercultural awareness (Boers, Eyckmans & Demecheleer, 2004; Ellis, 1997; Kovecses & Szabo, 1996; Littlemore & Low 2006). Idioms help in broadening learner’s knowledge of the culture and history of a language. Mastery of a language is incomplete without an understanding of the culture of that language. Therefore, idioms are vital to attaining mastery of a foreign language.

Another reason for the importance of mastery of idioms comes from the fact that they indicate proficiency. Non-natives that utilize formulaic language in spoken and written discourse are judged as more proficient (Boers, Eyckmans, Kappel, Stengers &Demecheleer, 2006). In addition, many researchers consider mastering a wide range of idioms to be an indication of native-like command of the language (Brown, G., Brown, G. D., Brown, G. R., Gillian,& Yule, 1983; Cowie &Mackin, 1983; Fernando, 1996; Schmitt, 2000; Wray, 2008). Therefore, idiomatic expressions are used to assess learners’ language proficiency. The absence of idiomatic competence classifies the leaner as a member of the foreigner camp (Bulut & Çelik-Yazici, 2004).

Mastery of idioms is essential in ESL/EFL contexts. Researchers stressed the importance of idioms for successful communication in both academic and non-academic contexts (Fernando, 1996; Liu, 2008). According to Fernando (1996), “No translator or language teacher can afford to ignore idioms or idiomaticity if a natural use of the target language is an aim” (p. 234). The first reason for the paramount importance of mastery of idioms is that they are pervasive (Bortfeld, 2003). Bortfeld pointed out that English is abundant with idioms and mastering them constitutes the soul of the language. Native speakers use idioms frequently, and they find it hard to speak or write without such expressions (Bortfeld, 2003, p. 45)

Additionally, Makkai (1978, p. 83) found out that no known languages do not have some idioms. Therefore mastery of idioms is essential not only to the English language but to all languages in general. Polio, Barlow, Fine, and Polio (1977, as cited in Cooper, 1999) estimated that “most English speakers utter about 10 million novel metaphors per lifetime and 20 million idioms per lifetime, and this works out to about 3,000 novel metaphors per week and 7,000 idioms per week” (p. 233). Since English idioms are commonly used in a myriad of daily situations, they must form an integral part of the syllabus.

As pointed early in this research, idiomatic expressions are culture-bound, and they carry the cultural beliefs and customs of their native language users. As such, non-native users of the English Language may be influenced by his or her culture regarding their realization of the meaning of their idiomatic expressions. Nevertheless, mastery of idiomatic expressions will enable the English Language learner to become more knowledgeable and better aware of the English culture and customs (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams, 2018). The importance of mastery of idiomatic expressions also lies in the fact that it is an everyday routine of the native English speakers' language. Learning idiomatic expressions by non-natives speakers (like in the case of most Zanzibar students) leads them to improve their English proficiency. Thus, learning English idiomatic expressions improves one's second or foreign language skills; it helps non-native speakers of a language understand that target language better and, therefore, should not be taken for granted (Yule, 2006).

In summary, the mastery of idiomatic expressions or idioms should not be neglected and should not be taken for granted. Idioms are used daily and repeatedly by native speakers of the English language. They are a part of every language's vocabulary and are based on its history, heritage, and culture. Mastery of idiomatic expressions helps non-native speakers of a language become more fluent and sound more native-like. Mastery of idiomatic expressions increases the vocabulary and lexicon of the English Language learner. Moreover, idiomatic knowledge leads to a better understanding of the culture and customs of that particular language. English language teachers should teach idiomatic language to their students and not overlook such a vital issue. Becoming more native-like in the English language is by learning idiomatic expressions, understanding their meanings and using them frequently parallel to English language native speakers.

# 2.6 Empirical Literature

This section deals with reviewed literature on idiom comprehension based on documented empirical evidence. It focuses on how empirical evidence from other researchers' findings is related to the current research study. This section is arranged in line with the research objectives that are guiding this research.

## 2.6.1 Comprehension of Idioms

Many scholars in the field of Linguistics have carried out research on idioms and have documented their empirical findings in various sources. The sources include textbooks, newspapers, journals, websites, and research papers. This research on comprehension of idioms reviewed the following empirical literature sources as documented referenced scholars. These sources are considered relevant to this study as they shed light on the comprehension of English idioms. The methods used in selecting samples, collecting data, and analysing data are reviewed to select the appropriate research methods for the current study. The relevance of the findings is also analysed in comparison with other findings.

Irujo (1986b) investigated the understanding and the construction of English idioms among Spanish speakers. In her first study, Irujo (1986b) examined whether the L1 (Spanish) knowledge supports the understanding and the production of idioms in L2 (English). The sample of the study involved twelve advanced learners of English studying at an American university. Forty-five idioms were tested in this sample. Among these idioms, one-third was identical in form and meaning to their Spanish equivalents, one-third were very similar, and one-third were in entirely different forms. The results showed that the identical idioms were the least challenging to explain and generate. In contrast, similar idioms indicated an intervention from Spanish but were recognised correctly. However, idioms without corresponding in Spanish and English were the most challenging. Irujo (1986b) also pointed out that the students could produce and explain the idioms that were frequently used and transparent with easy structure and vocabulary (p. 287). Also, the students applied both L1 and L2 strategies in producing idioms. The students showed no hesitation in relying on their L1 knowledge.

Another study presented by Irujo (1993) investigated the production of English idioms by non-native speakers. The study aimed to examine the assumption that the skilful and proficient speakers of a second language refrain from using idioms. Also, she wanted to expose the type of idioms that the most used by second language learners. The sampling involved in the study was twelve Spanish native speakers. They were residing and working in an English-speaking environment as well as skilful in using the language. The samplings were required to translate from Spanish to English, 45 paragraphs that contained idioms. Among the tested idioms, each fifteen were identical, similar, and completely different in forms and meaning in English and Spanish. The results showed that 59% of the samplings were able to produce idioms correctly. The samplings were not trying to avoid idioms. Instead, they tried using the idioms in two-thirds of the translations. Another exciting discovery was that the same idioms were much more comfortable producing than similar or different idioms.

Kellerman (1983) conducted research on idioms recognition study and examined the recognition of English idioms by the Dutch university students. The participants were first, second and third-year university students and first-year College of education students. A list of English sentences was distributed to the participants to assess whether the sentences were correct or not. The sentences consisted of idiomatic and non-idiomatic expressions. The expressions consisted of Dutch-like idioms with the same form and meaning in English; expressions of Dutch-like idioms that were not transferable to English; idioms that were transferable to Dutch; and idioms that were not transferable to either Dutch or English.

The results showed that the college of education students and the first-year students were likely to avoid Dutch-like idioms, while the third-year students had minor rejections. Kellerman (1983) indicated that the college of education students and the first-year students were linguistically inexperienced and that the school’s focus is not on grammatical production but on communication. In addition, the idioms did not have a significant part in the school curriculum. Therefore, students depended on their prior knowledge. The proficient learners of English considered Dutch-like idioms as untransferable. However, the third-year students were able to distinguish correct English idioms that are similar to Dutch idioms effectively. Moreover, a correlation between opacity and rejection was found in this study. All students seemed to avoid semantically opaque idioms and accepted more transparent idioms.

On the other hand, Arnaud and Savignon (1997) investigated the increase of knowledge of rare words and idioms among proficient learners when they make progress in their studies. The scarcity of words was established through the frequency list and included only opaque idioms. Arnaud and Savignon (1997) also examined whether or not the advanced learners achieved native-like proficiency. The study used rare words and idioms because uncommon words contain the highest load of information. Thus, initiate comprehension problems. Arnaud and Savignon (1997) pointed out that the familiarity of rare words made L2 readers understand the sentences promptly and effortlessly. Two hundred thirty-six native speakers of French consisted of students, teacher trainees, and secondary school teachers participated in the study. Fifty-seven native English students assisted as the native controls.

The findings showed that the students’ familiarity with rare words and idioms developed throughout their studies.Arnaud and Savignon (1997) also found that regarding rare words, the students might achieve native-like proficiency, but not in that of idioms. Regarding the opaque idioms, the native-like performance was not achievable even by the teachers, as advanced non-native speakers and had devoted sometime in English-speaking countries. According to Arnaud and Savignon (1997), “it could be that continuous exposure to the language is necessary for native-like performance in the case of idioms” (p.167). This study on University students in Unguja will also want to ascertain whether exposure to the English language can be a factor in idiom comprehension.

Similarly, Mäntylä (2004) investigated how the Finnish students of English comprehend and explain the English idioms and the extent to which the explanations comply with native speakers and dictionaries. Mäntylä (2004) also examined how idioms recognition is affected by their characteristics. 144 Finnish university students of English and 36 British university students participated in this study. Data was collected using a 65 idioms multiple-choice questionnaire. The findings showed that idioms are somewhat challenging for Finnish students. The easiest idioms to understand were those which had an equivalent in Finnish. The students could not benefit from the relationship between figurative and literal meanings of idioms in understanding unfamiliar idioms. Thus, they were unsuccessful in recognizing idioms as wholes (Mäntylä, 2005, p. 175). Errors in interpretations developed when the students involved their L1. This practice resulted in the disagreement of the meaning of idioms by the native speakers. Mäntylä (2005) also found that the characteristics of idioms have no significant effect on recognition or interpretation. Moreover, only the transparency idioms were found somewhat helpful, but the effect was not as significant as that of L1 (Mäntylä 2005, p. 179).

Gibbs (1987) investigated how metaphoric transparency influenced the analysis of idioms among young children. From kindergarten through the fourth-grade children were participated in the study. These children were requested to describe the meanings of ten opaque and ten transparent idioms. Then, the children were required to select from two plausible answers (forced-choice task) the best explanation of the idiom. A partial part of the respondents perceives the idioms through supportive story contexts, while the other part perceived the idioms through isolation. The findings revealed that the transparent idioms were less complicated to describe than the opaque idioms. However, the discrepancies between opaque and transparent idioms were unclear. Gibbs's study of transparency and opaque idioms is adopted in this research on idiom comprehension by university students in Unguja.

Nippold and Rudzinski (1993) broadened Gibbs' metaphoric transparency study to older children and adolescents. The study used an explanation only task according to the proposition that compared to the forced-choice task. The explanation only task was more subtle to the factors that influenced the idioms interpretation. A total of 150 students, with 50 each from grades 5, 8, and 11, participated in the study. The students were required to describe 24 different idiomatic expressions. These expressions were given toward the end of a four-sentence paragraph with a supportive context. The findings showed that idioms that were easy to explain have higher transparency than opaque idioms. The findings were in line with Gibbs' study on the explanation task.

Another study conducted by Nippold and Taylor (1995) investigated the transparent idioms comprehension through a forced-choice task. Similar idioms and stories used in the previous study of Nippold and Rudzinski (1993) were adopted in Nippold and Taylor (1995) study. Additionally, the respondents were selected from the same schools and grade levels that participated in Nippold and Rudzinski (1993) study. A total of 150 students, with 50 each from grades 5, 8, and 11, were selected. The respondents were given a forced-choice task with four possible options. The respondents were then required to select the best answer that explains every idiom. The findings showed that transparent idioms were less challenging for the respondents to comprehend compared to opaque idioms.

Conversely, Gibbs (1987) discovered that during the forced-choice task, the distinction between transparent and opaque idioms become less noticeable. Nippold and Taylor (1995) argued that the distinction in their findings occurred since the forced-choice task in Gibbs (1987) research was too simple. Thus, the differences in types of idioms could not be observed. Gibbs (1987) study used two possible answer choices, while Nippold and Taylor (1995) study presented the respondents with a set of four plausible answer choices. Nippold and Taylor (1995) claimed that the differences would be exposed when using a more difficult task. The current research relates to the study by Nippold and Taylor (1995)in the sense that the criteria used in selecting idioms for this study are the same. The research by these scholars is also the basis of using multiple-choice tests in this research.

Mahmoodi-Shahrebabaki (2015) investigated the perceptions of Iranian EFL learners towards learning and comprehending English idioms and explored the effect of using two different methods of teaching the idioms. The results showed that subjects exposed to the idioms via etymology and movie clips performed well and had positive attitudes towards the comprehension of idioms. In the same vein, Tadayyon and Ketabi (2014) conducted a study on Iranian EFL learners’ attitudes towards learning and comprehension of English idioms. Their study indicated that Iranian EFL learners had positive attitudes towards learning English in general and learning idioms in particular. The current study aimed to find out whether there could be other factors other than the exposure that affects idiom comprehension, as put forward by Tadayyon & Ketabi (2014).

Gibbs (1990) researched the difficulties of non-equivalence posed in translating English idioms into Arabic and vice versa. Gibbs (1990) considered the challenges that second language learners face in translating idioms from English to Arabic. His research found out that context and the characteristics of given idioms affected the translation of idioms. His research was basically on the translation aspect. There is a fundamental question that the researcher intends to find out. That is, what factors affect idiom comprehension to the students who are learning English as a second language?

In addition to the above studies on idioms, Warren (2005) and Majuri (2014) also researched idioms extensively. Warren based his research on non-native speaker’s comprehension of idioms in dialogue, while Majuri’s research is based on the impact of the occurrence and clarity of idioms on the meanings of English idioms recognition among Finnish and Italian students. It was found that no significant impact on frequency, while transparency supports the impact. The current study will want to ascertain if transparency is a factor that affects University students idiom comprehension.

In addition, Sameer (2013) investigated the perceptions of familiarity, clarity, and the conception of English idioms among the students in Saudi Arabia. The findings suggested that Year 4 students were more familiar and had better accuracy in understanding the idioms than the Year 1 students. On the other hand, in the idiom transparency task, both groups achieved similar scores. These research findings do not give a detailed account of how students comprehend idioms.

Fraser (1970) investigated idioms in the structure of transformational grammar. In this study, Fraser (1970) examined two problems: 1) the representation of the meaning of idioms in the deep structure of a sentence; 2) the expected syntactic transformation of idioms. Fraser (1970) assumed that idioms are “… constituent or series of constituents for which the Semantic interpretation is not a compositional function of the formatives of which it is composed” (p. 22). It implied that idioms have structure analysis similarly to their equivalents. Nevertheless, he also noted that idioms function contrarily to what was expected based on their structure. English idioms varied widely concerning their frozenness and acceptance of different syntactic transformations. Fraser (1970) claimed that different parts of the idiom had not maintained their literal interpretations. These parts of the idiom do not enhance the semantic interpretation of the idiom after being constructed.

Similar to Irujo's (1986b) study, Bulut and Çelik-Yazici (2004) explored the L2 idiom processing and the role of context versus literal meaning in interpreting idioms, the effect of the types of idiom (formal or informal) upon idiom interpretation, and L1 influence in interpreting L2 idioms. The results demonstrated that L1 affected L2interpretation of transparent idioms. Bulut and Çelik-Yazici (2004) study encourage many researchers to research idioms as a topic in various contexts with different objectives and have come up with interesting findings. The models of idiom comprehension used in each case study differ in their predictions concerning compositionality. Some claim that idiomatic meaning is the result of compositional analysis initiated at the earliest stages of comprehension. However, with a divergence view, Gibbs (1992) claims that compositional analysis occurs only at late stages, subsequent to direct retrieval, especially for highly familiar idioms.

Bobrow and Bell (1973) conducted a study on idiom comprehension. The study was based on Quillian’s (1968) proposition that idioms appear to be operated as a single word. Bobrow and Bell (1973) suggested that the idiomatic expressions could improve the likelihood that respondents reacted to the idiomatic meaning first (p. 344). Bobrow and Bell (1973) used an experimental design where sentences were presented with literal or idiomatic sets or no set. The first experiment was conducted using sentences with highly biased in their idiomatic meaning. Two explanations for each sentence accompanied the test, and the subjects were required to describe which meaning they thought of first. The subjects reported that they observed the idiomatic meaning of the sentence in a no set condition (neither idiomatic nor literal). The second experiment used idioms that were considered weakly biased concerning idiomatic meaning in a no set condition.

The findings indicated that highly biased idioms in the literal set reduced the number of statements from the subjects who reportedly saw the idiomatic meaning first, while less biased idioms in the idiom set escalated that number. The experiments concluded two distinguished strategies in idiomatic and literal expressions processing mode: in idiomatic ambiguities and the literal meaning. During the experiment, the subjects were encouraged to use either of the processing modes in an appropriate set condition. However, more research is needed to categorize the variables that affect the reasons for choosing a processing model. That is why a study on the comprehension of idioms in the case of Zanzibar students is a study worthy of being undertaken. In so doing, this study aims to investigate idiom comprehension in the English language by University students in Unguja.

Levorato, Nesi, &Cacciari (2004) conducted two experiments to investigate the relationship between text comprehension and idiom comprehension. The subjects’ were 101 second-graders and 98 fourth-graders from an Italian Elementary School. The results of both experiments showed that the ability to understand a text indicated the children’s understanding of idioms in context. Experiment 3 was conducted to verify the possibility of improvements in figurative language understanding among the children’s comprehension skills. A group of poor comprehenders who participated in Experiments 1 and 2 are tested eight months later. The results of Experiment 3 showed that children’s general comprehension skills improved their performance on an idiom comprehension test.

The same study was done by Cain, Oakhill, and Lemmon (2005). The study used 56 idioms that were classified into three main classes, namely, “real- transparent”, “real-opaque”, “novel-transparent”, and “novel opaque”. The participants were 28 Caucasian children from urban schools. The majority of them are from lower-middle-class families were tested individually. The findings revealed that children are slightly more likely to recognize “real-transparent” idioms than “real-opaque” idioms. In context, the natural idioms were more likely to be interpreted more correctly than the novel expression.

Another study was done by Liu (2008), who shared the results of a small scale project based on guiding students in the use of idioms through dialogues and readings to improve students' communicative skills. The project was applied to eleven Electronic Engineering students at Universidad Santo Tomás-Tunja who attended an undergraduate education programme. Dialogues, interviews, and informal speech or conversations were used to collect the data in this action research study.

On the other hand, Andriani (2014) did the same case with this current study. The method used in her study was quantitative, and the data analysis technique used was correlational. In collecting the data, the idiom test and reading comprehension test were used. The scores of the idiom test were collected from twenty multiple-choice questions. In addition, the reading comprehension test was also given to the students to assess their reading comprehension. The result of her study shows that there was a positive relationship between idiom mastery and reading comprehension.

In addition, Kurnia (2016) investigated idiomatic expression in speaking skills. The data of this study was validated by applying a percentage formula. They were analyzed based on observation and a multiple-choice questionnaire. The study exposed that students with the best idiomatic mastery and best speaking skills are 13.89% students within the predicate excellent, the second-best is 77.78% students within the predicate good, the third is 8.33% of the proper predicate or fair. The conclusion is that students who master idiomatic expressions speak natural English better than those who do not master the expressions.

Titone and Connine (1994) conducted two separate studies on English idiom comprehension. They used nonnative judgments on the decomposability of English idioms. Their first study in corporate entirety with verbal idioms (V + DET + N, e.g., “miss the boat,” “steal the show”, “shoot the breeze”).Their second study applied idioms in various syntactic forms (e.g., “back to square one”, “a piece of cake”). The first study was constrained to unwritten idioms to limit the syntactic structure and preserve the uncomplicated task. The second study was intended to yield a matching dataset to that claimed by Titone and Connine (1994) to compare the natives and non-natives. Although the emphasis of the study was on the decomposability sorting task, the respondents also evaluated the familiarity of idioms and the simplicity of the decomposability evaluation. Familiarity implies that the awareness of meaning that a respondent submits about an idiom. The simplicity of decision was verified in order to limit the challenges non-natives might experience in rating idioms.

The respondents who evaluated decomposability were also required to show how complex or unproblematic the decision about each idiom’s decomposability was on a 5-point scale. The results did not demonstrate significant distinctions between the non-native participants and the native group, which implied that the non-natives found judgment tasks of this type less challenging. The current study will also try to ascertain whether decomposionality influences idiom comprehension by university students. This factor is dealt with in objective number three of this current study under inherent factors.

Ackerman (1982) examined children’s understanding of idioms on contextual information role and the conventional forms. The findings showed that children of 6-year and 8-year-olds could recognize the expressions in idiomatic settings correctly. However, children of 10-year-olds and adults were able to explain idiomatic sentences and literal sentences. It implied that younger children required more idiomatic biased contexts than older children in figuring out the real meanings of idioms.

Similarly, Nippold and Martin (1989) investigated the interpretation of idioms, with or without contextual information, among adolescents of 14 to 17 years of age. The findings illustrated that the adolescents’ explanations of idioms improved by linguistic contextual information. In the same way, the accuracy of interpretation, with or without context, enhanced as the age increased. This finding corresponds to Liontas (2003) study on exploring the influence of context on idiom comprehension among adult Spanish learners. Liontas (2003) also discovered that context had a significant benefit in the creation of idiomatic meanings. The current study also sought to ascertain whether the context influenced idiom comprehension among university students.

In addition, Brasseur and Jimenez (1989) discovered that using the Fullerton Subtest of Idioms (Thorum, 1980) to students ages 18 to 43 resulted in nearly half of the 18-21 age range students were unsuccessful in scoring within the competency range. A total of seventy-one students joined the study. The participants were separated into three groups according to their age. In the Fullerton test manual (Thorum, 1980), the "Competence Range" was classified as a raw score for adolescents of 11 and 18 years of age. The raw score was within the point range of 13-20 (from a possible score of 20). Using this classification, Brasseur and Jimenez (1989) found that 51% of the 18-21-year-old group, 84% of the 22-29-year-old group, and 91% of the 30+-year-old group belong to this range. The findings verify the idea that idiom comprehension is still a challenge to language learners. It causes great comprehension difficulties to both L1 and L2 learners (Brasseur& Jimenez, 1989).

Another empirical study on idiom comprehension was the classic cross-modal lexical priming (CMLP) study conducted by Titone and Connine (1994). Titone and Connine (1994) examined the influence of predictability on idiom comprehension. Briefly, the CMLP task is used to detect lexical information activation during sentence comprehension (Swinney& Cutler, 1979). In this task, participants listen to recorded sentences containing lexical ambiguities while simultaneously a string of letters is flashed on a computer screen. The participants heard sentences containing either high-predictable (e.g., “George wanted to bury the hatchet soon after Susan left”) or low-predictable (e.g., “Fred wanted to hit the sack after his long day hiking”) idioms and made lexical decisions to idiom-related (e.g. “forgive”) or control targets (e.g., “sleep”). In this task, participants made lexical decisions in which they decided whether the target (e.g. “forgive” verses “sleep”) was a legal (real word) or illegal (non-word) word in English. Targets were presented at the idiom offset for experiment 1 and at the penultimate position (second to the last word of the idiom) for experiment 2. Results of these studies revealed that, at idiom offset, both high- and low-predictable idioms showed priming of the idiom related targets (Titone &Connine, 1994). In contrast, at the penultimate position, high-predictable idioms showed more priming of the idiom-related targets than did low-predictable idioms.

A third experiment examined the activation of the literal meaning of the last word of an idiom (Titone & Connine, 1994). Participants heard sentences containing idioms from one of four categories: high predictable literal (e.g., “The young student had cold feet about giving the presentation”), high predictable nonliteral (e.g., “Harry had to burn the midnight oil to finish the project”), low predictable literal (e.g., “The class was ready to paint the town after exams were over”), and low predictable nonliteral (e.g., “Fran tried to make a clean sweep of her overdue project”). Literal (e.g. “toes” / “fuel” / “city” / “broom”) and control targets were presented at idiom offset.

The results from experiment 3 revealed that activation of the literal meaning of idioms was found for high predictable literal, low-predictable literal and low-predictable nonliteral idioms (Titone & Connine, 1994). There was no significant meaning activation found for high-predictable nonliteral idioms. It can be concluded that these results were incoherent with the LRH. The LRH was one of the theories that are applied in this current study.

Gibbs (1980, 1992, 1995) has had a significant stimulus on idiom comprehension studies. He researched how conventional and unconventional applications of idioms are recognizable and memorizable. He used 240 college students in his research. The sentences were initiated with idiomatic, literal or no context, and reaction times were calculated. The idioms in this study had both literal as well as idiomatic meanings. The participants demanded more time to comprehend the literal meanings of idioms than idiomatic meanings. He further recommends that researchers need to do more research on comprehension of idioms in the future as they still pose a great challenge to learners (Gibbs, 1980, p. 151). Gibbs’s recommendations form part of the objectives for carrying out this current study.

## 2.6.2 The Semantic Structure of Idioms

Semantic structure is one of the aspects of comprehension and use of idioms. It implicates the connection between individual meanings of and general figurative meaning of the idiom. It implies that the semantic structure of idioms can be regarded as relevancy between literal and figurative meanings of idioms that have various degrees of semantic transparency. Some studies (Arıca-Akkök, 2008; Gibbs, 1991; Nippold & Rudzinski, 1993; Nippold& Taylor, 1995) indicated that the role of composition in idiom comprehension contributes to the individual parts of an idiom. It implied that the degree of compositionality and the internal semantics of idiom that concerned with word associations and inferences displayed a positive effect on idioms comprehension.

Contrary to Ackerman (1982) study, Tran (2013) argued that children understand idioms as single lexical units. Gibbs (1987, 1991) claimed that idioms could be distinguished according to their semantic analyzability and metaphorical extensions of the literal meanings. Therefore, students apply different strategies in comprehending idioms. For example, some idioms area acquired in replication, and others are grasped from semantic analysis of individual meanings of an idiom.

Gibbs (1991) described that children’s comprehension of idioms was based on their perceptions about the internal semantics of figurative expressions. Gibbs (1991) indicated that younger children (5 and 6-year olds) understood decompositional idioms better than non-decompositional idioms. The children in the 8 and 9-year-old group could comprehend both idioms equally well in supportive contexts. On the other hand, when idioms were introduced out of context, these children can explain decomposable idioms better than non-decomposable idioms.

Additionally, Nippold and Taylor (1995) investigated the impact of semantic transparency and familiarity on enhancing idiomatic language among children age 11, 13 and 17, using a forced-choice task. The findings indicated that there was a consistent relationship between transparency, familiarity and idiom understanding. This implied that transparent and familiar idioms were less challenging to understand than the less familiar and opaque idioms.

Similarly, Levorato and Cacciari (1999) found that the degree of comparison between the constituent words and the figurative meanings of the idiom has a positive or negative impact on the selection of correct answers. This implied that the children of 7 and 9 years age groups were more capable of identifying the meaning of semantically analyzable idioms than semantically non-analyzable idioms in a supportive context. On the contrary, in their second experiment, Levorato and Cacciari (1999) discovered a steady and robust development in idiom acquisition by 6, 8 and 10 year of age students. When the idioms were introduced without context, recognizing the correct idiomatic answer gradually developed.

On the contrary, Gibbs (1987) investigated the role of transparency in the idiom comprehension of children between 5 to 9 years old. Two kinds of tasks, a forced-choice task and an explanation task, were used in this study. The findings indicated that children were able to answer accurately on the explanation task regarding transparent idioms. On the other hand, differences between the transparent and opaque idioms were less visible regarding the forced-choice task.

# 2.7 Research Gap

Owing to the vital role of idioms in L2 acquisition and the difficulties EFL learners experience in their learning, finding a way to enhance their learning is significant. However, this would be possible if there is an awareness of the processes and the factors involved in comprehending idioms. Such awareness can help the language teaching in Universities and other learning institutions together with language practitioners and material developers in decision making, which would, in turn, lead to the development of a better curriculum.

Previous research on idiom comprehension that the researcher reviewed mainly focused on L1 speakers. For example; the following linguistic scholars have conducted and documented comprehensive research on idioms and idiomatic expressions with different variables in different contexts (Cain, Oakhill,& Lemmon, 2005; Cain, Towse, & Knight, 2009; Holsinger & Kaiser, 2010; Levorato & Cacciari, 1995; Levorato, Nesi, &Cacciari, 2004; Nippold, Moran & Schwarz, 2001; Simpson, 1989). However, they focused on L1 speakers. On the contrary, those few studies focusing on L2 learners conducted by some scholars (Chomsky, 1980; Fraser, 1970; Katz 1973; Weinreich, 1969) were mainly paid attention to L1 transfer and have hardly attempted to investigate the processes and factors involved in comprehending idioms in different contexts. The present study attempted to fill such a gap and hence provide empirical knowledge in idiom comprehension, which will help language practitioners and curriculum developers develop a better curriculum.

# 2.8 Theoretical Framework

Different theories exist in the literature regarding how idioms are comprehended. Throughout the years, several advances have been made in the field. Gibbs (1995) argues that the mental representation of idioms determines considerably how those idioms are processed in a particular utterance. He further adds that the information represented often depends on the information available in the context where the idiom is processed. Therefore, an adequate account of idioms needs to answer three basic and highly related questions. These are: How are idioms represented in mind? How are idioms processed? Moreover, what theories apply to which class of idioms?

Gibbs (1995) made a synthesis of theories of idiom comprehension and came up with five categories of comprehension of idiom hypotheses:

(i) *The Literal First* or *Idiom-List* Hypothesis,

(ii) The *Dual-Processing* or *Lexical Representation* Hypothesis.

(iii) The *Direct Access* Hypothesis,

(iv) The *Compositional* Hypothesis, and

(v) The *Dual Idiom Representation* model.

This study adopted the Lexical Representation Hypothesis (LRH) and Glucksberg (2001) theory and their tenets. These two theories are quite applicable in this study because they bring the concept of idiom comprehension in a simple and description manner that is easy to understand. The choice of adopting these theories is also grounded on the guiding objectives of this research.

## 2.8.1 Lexical Representation Hypothesis (LRH)

This theory was proposed by Swinney and Cutler (1979) as a remedy to the weaknesses realised in terms of idiom processing by the early theories, i.e. The Literal First Hypothesis (LFH) proposed by Bobrow and Bell (1973) and the Traditional (non-compositional) views on Idiom Representation and Processing proposed (IRP) by Fraser (1970). This theory claims that the entire idiomatic word string is stored in the same mental lexicon as any other word. Thus, when a hearer/reader encounters the first constituent word of an idiom string, both figurative and literal processing run in parallel. However, the figurative interpretation is often soon favoured. During processing, accessing the idiom and computing the literal meaning of the expression proceeds in parallel, with the apparent speed advantage of idiomatic expressions emerging because idioms can be accessed directly in the mental lexicon without the need for additional computational steps. Swinney and Cutler (1979) termed this model the *Lexical Representation Hypothesis (LRH).*

In addition to offering an intuitively appealing explanation for the rapid recognition of idioms, the LRH also allows us to delegate the resolution of the pervasive literal/non-literal ambiguity to the same sort of systems that handle other kinds of lexical ambiguity. The ability of the LRH to delegate the resolution of the pervasive literal/non-literal ambiguity (that was not accounted for by the early theories) and offer an intuitively appealing explanation of idioms is the basis of its selection as a theory in this research.

The early theories failed to account for the processing of figurative and literal idioms. They treated idioms as any other lexical items, and therefore they (idioms) did not require any special processing. This proposal was put forward by the Literal First Hypothesis (LFH). However, Swinney and Cutler (1979) realised that this theory had a significant weakness. It does not account fully for the processing involved in comprehending both literal and figurative idioms. Therefore Swinney and Cutler (1979) came up with the Lexical Representation Hypothesis to remedy the weaknesses paused by the traditional IRP and the LFH.

Contrary to the LFH and the traditional view of IRP, the figurativeness and the literalness of idioms in terms of their processing is accounted for by this theory. Lack of accountability in terms of processing literal and figurative idioms was a weakness created by the LFH. This weakness necessitated Swinney and Cutler (1979) to develop the LRH to account for literal and figurative idioms processing. Out of this weakness in terms of idiom comprehension by the LFH, the current study on comprehension of idioms by University students in Unguja departs from this theory and adopts the Lexical Representation Hypothesis in its analysis. The LRH accounts for the figurative and literal comprehension in idioms, and it accounts for a wide range of idioms that this research used.

In addition to the above weakness, the motivation for departing from the Idiom List Hypothesis comes from experimental findings of Ortony, Schallert, Reynolds, and Antos (1978) on idiom processing. Ortony *et al*. (1978) found that contrary to the proposal put forward by ILH, subjects take longer to process and understand idioms. The variation in terms of time taken to process idioms by the two classes of idioms was not accounted for by the ILH. The LRH came in as a remedy to solve this weakness paused by the ILH by giving an account for the time taken in processing idioms by different subjects. In addition to the findings of Swinney and Cutler (1979), idioms are stored as fixed units alongside non-idiom phrases. They were processed faster than the non-idioms because the non-idioms required complete linguistic processing, including a lexical, syntactic (sentence structure) and semantic analysis. The time taken to process idioms was not a factor to think through in this research. However, various classes of idioms with literality and figurativeness were used in the analysis in this research.

There are at least two factors that militate against accepting the Idiom List Hypothesis. The first and most important of these is that the research supporting the Idiom List Hypothesis has relied exclusively upon post-perceptual measures to support inferences about ongoing idiom comprehension processes. Some reasoned arguments exist as researched by Cutler and Norris (1979), Glaser (1988), Kayser (1996), and Marslen-Wilson (1976). The second related, factor is that many such post-perceptual tasks appear to reflect merely a reprocessing and/or conscious access of the material under consideration. In summary, post-perceptual tasks are not necessarily capable of supporting inferences about perceptual processes. Any task that measures effects, only after they are, overruns the risk of reflecting merely the final, conscious result of such processing and not the processes by which that final interpretation was achieved. Indeed, the Bobrow and Bell experiments, which provide the most reliable support for the Idiom List Hypothesis, fall into this category.

In other words, if idiomatic meanings are computed by reference to a special idiom list via some special mode of processing, which is instigated following an attempt at literal computation, the phrase classification decisions should take longer, or at least no less time, for grammatical idioms than for non-idiomatic phrase controls. On the other hand, the Lexical Representation Hypothesis holds that decisions made to idiomatic strings should be faster than those made to literal word string controls. Under this hypothesis, the computation of literal meaning and the access of a lexical (idiomatic) meaning should be undertaken simultaneously for the idiom string.

The access of the lexical interpretation should conclude far more quickly than the access and computation of the relationships among the several lexical items in the literal interpretation of the idiom. Similarly, the lexicalized idiom meaning should also be recovered before the access and computation of relationships between words in the literal control phrase. In this, both the lexicalized idiom and the literal analysis are undertaken simultaneously on the idiom string, thus providing two interpretations for that string. Since the control string will have only a single interpretation, one would expect that, on average, classification responses to the idiom would be faster than those made to the control. That is, anyone of the two simultaneously generated interpretations will suffice for a decision in the case of an idiom, but only one is available for the control; thus, in a horse-race model, the idiom will win. Again, this result will hold only if the Lexical Representation Hypothesis is correct, and both interpretations are accessed simultaneously for the idiom string.

In summary, when encountering an idiom, the Lexical Representation Hypothesis holds that both the literal and figurative meanings are processed simultaneously, with context as the final determiner as to which interpretation fits the best. The Lexical Representation Hypothesis assumes that idioms reside in the mental lexicon as the sets of long words alongside the ordinary words, i.e. there is not a separate list of idioms as was suggested by the above discussed *Literal First* hypothesis. Speakers would, in this case, then access both literal and figurative expressions at the same time until they decide on the appropriate interpretation based on what context surrounds the idiom. This hypothesis was based on the discoveries from a study where the subjects were asked to read 152 sequences of words on a computer screen and judge if they were meaningful English expressions or not. The results illustrated that all the subjects recognised the idiomatic expressions faster than the non-idiomatical control sequences.

Despite the above-outlined shortcoming of the LRH, this hypothesis is appropriate in handling opaque and transparent idioms together with a wide range of other classes of idioms with similar characteristics that the current researcher used as part of this study. The theory brings the concept of idiom comprehension in a simple description that is easy to understand. In addition, the choice of adopting this theory is also grounded on the general objectives of this study.

## 2.8.2 Idiom Comprehension by Glucksberg

Glucksberg (2001) proposes a typology of idioms based on the degree of compositionality and semantic transparency. This theory came in to solve the shortcomings created by the previous theories that some early scholars proposed. The compositionality proposed by Glucksberg opts for the compositional approach to idiom structure in which the literal meanings of idiom’s constituents map onto the components of idiomatic meaning. Compositional idioms, according to Glucksberg, may be opaque or transparent. Transparency indicates to what extent the meaning of an idiom may be inferred from the meanings of its constituents. This typology came as a result of weaknesses realized from the early theories, such as the Traditional (non-compositional) views on Idiom Representation and Processing (IRP) by Fraser (1970) and The Literal First Hypothesis (LFH) proposed by Bobrow and Bell (1973).

The traditional view of Idiom Representation and Processing (IRP) treated idioms as lexical items which are listed and retrieved as chunks from the lexicon. The comprehension process of a given idiom depends on how long the retrieval process takes. This research deviates from this argument proposed by the traditional view because the IRP fails to account for opaque and transparent idiom classes in terms of processing. The lexicality proposed by the traditional view fails to account for these two classes of idioms, i.e., opaque and transparent classes of idioms. If idioms are listed and retrieved as chunks from the lexicon, what makes opaque idioms difficult? The traditional IRP does not account for the differences in terms of difficulties realized in opaque and transparent idioms processing. This is a significant weakness, and that is why this research deviates from the traditional IRP proposal by adopting Glucksberg's (2001) typology of idioms based on the degree of compositionality and semantic transparency. The challenges and weaknesses created by the traditional IRP in terms of idiom processing are solved. Accountability of the processing involved in both opaque and transparent idioms is also dealt with. In a real sense, this theory came in as a remedy to solve the challenges caused by the traditional view. It accounts for both the transparent and opaque classes of idioms.

In addition to the above weaknesses of the traditional IRP, the theory’s argument that there is no need to worry about idioms, no need for an elaborate theory of how to communicate with them cannot be applied in this research. The motivations for claiming this are based on the belief that the meaning of an idiom is in no way recovered from the meanings of its individual constituents and that idioms behave as syntactic as well as semantic units. That is, there is nothing in the meanings of ‘the’, ‘kick’ and ‘bucket’ that tells us that *kick the bucket* means ‘die’. That is why this research adopted Glucksberg’s (2001) theory as a remedy to solve these weaknesses realized by the traditional IRP to try and give an account for a wide range of idiom classes, including opaque and transparent classes.

According to Glucksberg (2001, p. 71), idioms in the case of which there is no relation between the figurative meaning and the meanings of its constituents are non-compositional idioms. The examples of these are idioms such as *cheesecake*, meaning ‘pinup art’ and *lemon*, meaning ‘product hopelessly flawed, impossible to repair’ (Glucksberg, 2001, p. 73). Glucksberg opts for the compositional approach to idiom structure in which the literal meanings of idiom’s constituents map onto the components of idiomatic meaning.

Compositional idioms, according to Glucksberg, may be opaque or transparent. Transparency indicates to what extent the meaning of an idiom may be inferred from the meanings of its constituents. In the case of fully transparent idioms, such as *spill the beans* and *smell a rat,* we can see one to one relation between the idiom’s constituents and the components of the metaphorical meaning. In this example, the word “spill” corresponds directly to the act of revealing, and the word “beans” maps directly onto secrets. He further explains that in opaque idioms, such as *kick the bucket*, the relation between the idiom’s constituents and its idiomatic meaning may not be evident, but still, the meanings of individual constituents constrain how language users interpret and use the idiom.

Idiomatic expressions such as *kick the bucket* behave as predicative metaphors. The word “kick” means ‘to strike something with one’s leg’ .In the idiom *kick the bucket* stands for an abrupt and swift action which maps on the manner of death and contributes to the metaphorical meaning of the idiom ‘to die suddenly’. What is more, the act of kicking is a discrete action, and that is why the meaning of the word “kick” constrains the use of the idiom. While it is acceptable to say *He laid dying all week*, the sentence *He laid kicking the bucket all week* is unacceptable. A similar mapping may be observed in the idiom *fly off the handle*. In Glucksberg’s (2001) classification, another class of idiomatic expressions, called quasi-metaphorical idioms such as *skating on thin ice*, act as simple metaphors. They refer simultaneously to a hypothetical situation, an ideal exemplar of a situation of a particular sort, and an actual situation described in terms of the hypothetical, ideal one. The features of the ideal exemplary situation are directly mapped onto the situation in reality.

The theory of idiom comprehension developed by Glucksberg (2001) accounts for the understanding of semantically transparent idioms, such as *spill the beans* and *smell a rat*. In this theory, Glucksberg (2001) proposes that the idiom *spill the beans*, when heard for the first time, is opaque to the hearer, which means that the hearer cannot infer the figurative meaning of the idiom from the meanings of its constituents. However, due to frequent use in a metaphorical context, the idiom’s components become polysemous as they acquire their idiomatic meanings as secondary, literal senses. Thus the components of the idioms *spill the beans* and *smell a rat* have at least two interpretations; the literal meaning, which is context-free, and the idiomatic meaning activated in idiomatic contexts. This theory captures the concept of context-enabled idioms, which is used in this current study.

The drawback of Glucksberg’s theory of idiom comprehension is that it does not explain how the idiom constituents and the idioms as a whole would acquire their meaning. Nevertheless, the concept of opaqueness and transparency in idioms which the researcher applied in this research, made the theory appropriate for this research study.

In summary, when encountering an idiom, the Lexical Representation Hypothesis holds that both the literal and figurative meanings are processed simultaneously, with context as the final determiner as to which interpretation fits the best (Cooper, 1999). This proposition is held by the researchers’ second objective of this study which was to find out factors that affect idiom comprehension. So the operation of this theory will be more relevant in this study.

Along with this theory, the researcher also adopted Glucksberg’s theory on the ground that this theory conforms with the third objective of this study which was to examine whether inherent features of an idiom influence its comprehension among University students in Unguja. This is based on the fact that Glucksberg’s theory advocates that when a language user encounters an idiom, he or she first processes it literally. However, when the context does not aid a literal interpretation, the person then accesses an exclusive idiom list, which is not part of the everyday mental lexicon. This hypothesis was based on an experiment carried out in their study. Subjects were presented with several sentences with literal but ambiguous meanings or a number of sentences containing idiomatic expressions that could be interpreted either literally or figuratively. This research uses the same methodology in the collection of data (idioms). Hence there was some correlation between the methodology behind the selection of this theory and the researcher’s methodology.

# 2.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a theoretical framework for the present study by reviewing relevant literature on idioms in line with the objectives of the study. Both the theoretical and empirical literature reviews on idiom comprehension were covered in this chapter. The reviewed literature formed the basis in identifying the knowledge gap that this research study wants to bridge. This chapter forms a good overview of the relevance and the worthiness of undertaking this topic of study.

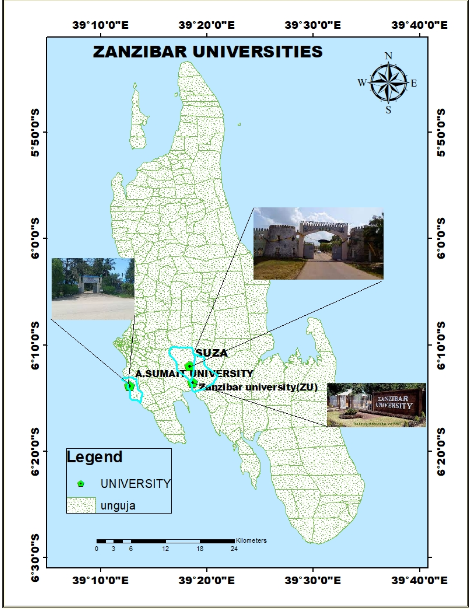
# CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

# 3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with methods, materials, and procedures that the researcher used to conduct the assessment. In addition, it includes descriptions of the respondents who participated in the assessment, the selection of idiomatic expressions, and the explored variables. Finally, the methods that were used to process the accumulated raw data are introduced and explained.

# 3.2 Area of Study

This research was conducted in Unguja Island, which is found in Zanzibar. Zanzibar is a semi-autonomous region of Tanzania. Students from three universities in Zanzibar participated. The universities were: Zanzibar University, the State University of Zanzibar, and Sumait University. Both State University and Zanzibar University are located in the Tunguu area in Unguja, while Sumait University is located in Chukwani area in Unguja. Figure 3.1 is a map of the Unguja area where the researcher conducted the study.



# Figure 3.1 The Map of Unguja Showing Research Area

Poor examination results from students on comprehension of figurative language in Sumait triggered the researcher to find out whether the same challenge is affecting other students from the two other Universities in Unguja. Despite idioms being extensively studied in the African context, showing the importance of idiomatic competence in the mastery of any language still the performance of idiom comprehension is low. That is why the researcher wanted to find out factors behind the low performance in idiom comprehension in the case of Zanzibar universities English language students.

The researcher conducted a pilot study by administering the same test administered in Sumait university to the State University of Zanzibar and Zanzibar University. This pilot study aimed to determine whether the performance of idiom comprehension by these other two universities was similar, i.e., low. A pilot study was also necessary for determining whether the tools used in collecting data were appropriate. In this case, it helped determine whether the cloze test and the questionnaire will work during the actual data collection date. The pre-testing of elements provided a means for solving unforeseen problems in its administration in the field. A pilot study may also indicate the need to add or delete questions in the actual tool for data collection. In this study, a pilot test helped the researcher delete some questions in the cloze tests and in the questionnaire to make it easier in data collection during the actual date of collecting data. The pilot study had 30 questions, but after a pilot study, the researcher reduced the questions to 20. The trend informed this of answering the questions from 21-30. The trend was predictable. The pilot study also necessitated editing of some questions to make them clear and easy to understand. The pilot study on these universities was carried in May 2016.

# 3.2.1 The Choice of Conducting Research from the Three Universities

The researcher chose to conduct research from these three universities for the following reasons; first, these universities offer English language courses to undergraduate students. Therefore, since the researcher was to conduct research in English idiom comprehension, these universities were appropriate for collecting data. There are five main subject combinations undertaken with English subjects in these universities, i.e., English language with Kiswahili, English language with History, English language with Geography, English language with Arabic, and English Linguistics. Therefore there will be an adequate sample for the researcher to use in his research.

Secondly, these universities were convenient for the researcher because of their accessibility. According to Orodho and Kombo (2002), the accessibility of the population in which a survey will be conducted is as good as the data itself. These researchers argue that it is impossible to collect data from an area that is not accessible. Therefore accessibility is a significant factor that any researcher needs to consider before selecting a place to conduct research. The selected universities are accessible using a well-tarmacked road network.

The third reason the researcher chose these three universities (Sumait University, Zanzibar University, and the State University of Zanzibar) to carry out the study is because of assured security. There is adequate security in all these universities. Trained police officers supported with local guards guard these universities. Therefore there will be no interference either from internal or external during the data collection period.

# 3.3 Research Design and Approach

## 3.3.1 Research Design

A research design is a systematic plan to study a scientific problem. The research design defines the study type (descriptive, correlational, semi-experimental, experimental, review, meta-analytic) and sub-type (e.g., descriptive-longitudinal case study). Gibbs (1998) regards research design as the framework created to seek answers to research questions. Kothari and Orodho (2004) defined a research design as a plan that shows how the researcher will go about his/her research showing the research area, sampling the research population, data collection methods, and analysis. They further add that any sound research design aims to provide results that are judged to be credible as it is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research strategy.

The study adopted a descriptive research design to find data that conform to the research objectives and questions. Descriptive research does not fit neatly into the definition of either quantitative or qualitative research methodologies. However, instead, it can utilize elements of both, often within the same study. The term descriptive research refers to the type of research question, design, and data analysis applied to a given topic. It involves gathering data, describing events, and organizing, tabulating, depicting, and describing the data collection (Glass & Hopkins, 1984). It often uses visual aids such as graphs and charts to help the reader understand the data distribution. Because the human mind cannot fully import a large mass of raw data, descriptive statistics are vital in reducing the data to a manageable form.

Descriptive research can employ cross-sectional or longitudinal design for the survey. In the cross-sectional design, information is collected from a given sample of the population at only one point, while in a longitudinal design, the sample units of the population are contacted over a different period (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013; Feinberg, Kinnear & Taylor 2012; Kothari &Orodho, 2004).

In this study, a single cross-sectional design was adopted because a collection of raw data from students was done from individual universities at a time. The data collected started with Sumait University. It took a single day. Then, the State University of Zanzibar and finally, from Zanzibar University. In each of these universities, a cross-sectional design was applied in data collection.

According to Feinberg, Kinnear, and Taylor (2012), descriptive research is appropriate when the research objectives include (1) portraying the characteristics of a given phenomenon and determine the frequency of occurrence, (2) determining the degree to which variables are associated and (3) making predictions regarding the occurrence of a given phenomenon. It was therefore deemed appropriate in this study as statistical methods of data analysis were employed. Contrary to exploratory research, a descriptive study is systematic, fixed format, and structured (Kothari &Orodho, 2004, p. 33). The research objectives of the study match the two types of objectives.

### 3.3.2 Research Approach

Various scholars such as Kothari and Orodho (1994) and Orodho and Kombo (2002) identify two main approaches, qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative research is used to understand underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations for a phenomenon. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research. Qualitative research is also used to uncover trends in thought and opinions and dive deeper into the problem. Qualitative data collection methods vary using unstructured or semi-structured techniques. Some conventional methods include focus group discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews, key in the form of interviews, and participant observation.

One of the characteristics of descriptive research is quantitativeness. Descriptive research uses a quantitative research method by collecting quantifiable information for statistical analysis of the population sample. Quantitative research relies on collecting and analyzing numerical data to describe, explain, predict, or control variables and phenomena of interest (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). The purpose of quantitative studies is typically specific and narrow, focusing on only a handful of measurable variables. This is very different from the holistic perspective of qualitative research. In this study, the quantitativeness can be seen through the measurable variables such as the students’ comprehension of idioms measured using the idiom cloze test.

In addition, according to Van Der Merwe and Vonk (1996), quantitative research is an approach that is intended to test theories, verify facts, describe relationships among the variables, and calculate outcomes. The method is designed to certify fairness, generalizability, and reliability (Weinreich, 2009). The procedures involve randomly selected participants, similar questionnaires, standardized intervention, and statistical approaches in testing the hypothesis. The researcher is regarded as external to the actual research. Results can be replicated, regardless of whoever conducts the research. This study adopted a quantitative approach to data collection and analysis. This is because the quantitative research techniques include a random selection of participants from the study population, standardized questionnaires, and statistical methods to test predetermined hypotheses. The adoption of this approach is based on the objectives of the study, considering the numerical data analysis that is undertaken during the data analysis stage. The study required the generation of numerical data and analyses to ascertain whether the study's objectives are met.

# 3.4 Research Philosophy

Kothari and Orodho (2004) define philosophy as a worldview. It is a basic set of beliefs or assumptions that guides a researcher‘s inquiry. This implies that every researcher will approach research with many interlocking and sometimes contradicting philosophical assumptions and standpoints. This viewpoint is further echoed by Creswell (2008), who indicates that the research design process begins with philosophical assumptions that the enquirers make when deciding to undertake a study. Researchers bring their world views, paradigms, or sets of beliefs to the research project, and these inform the conduct and writing of the study. Similar to Creswell (2008), Filinson and Niklas (1992) define one’s paradigmatic/ philosophical perspective as a researcher, the interplay between ontological and epistemological assumptions, meta-theoretical underpinnings, the research questions, and research methodology become prominent.

The researcher’s ontological beliefs are about the nature of reality which is explored through the researcher’s answers to problems such as the nature of the world, including social phenomena. If reality is orderly or lawful; the existence of the natural social order; if reality is fixed and stable or continuously changing, and whether it is unitary or multiple; and if reality can be constructed by the individuals involved in the research situation (Creswell, 2008, p. 76). The researcher‘s epistemological beliefs are about what is possible for one to know – the relationship of the researcher to what is being researched.

This research adopted the post-positivism (positivist) paradigm, which employs deductive logic and quantitative research methods (Anderson, 1978, p. 21). Allen and Harrell (1978) defined social constructivism as the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon social practices, being constructed in and out of an interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within a primarily social context. The questionnaire (quantitative instrument) embraced the post-positivist perspective by seeking answers to theory-driven questions. This is basically why the researcher adopted this philosophical approach.

# 3.5 Research Ethics

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the conduct of people and guides the norms or standards of behavior of people and relationships with each other (Blumberg, Cooper, & Schindler, 2005; Kovacs, 1985). It refers to an “ethos” or “way of life”, “social norms for conduct that distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour” (Akaranga & Ongong’a, 2013; Shah, 2011). Researchers are professionals; hence, research ethics has well-established rules and guidelines that define their conduct as a branch of applied ethics. Dörnyei (2007) states that “social research – including education research – concerns people’s lives in the social world and therefore it inevitably involves ethical issues” (p. 63).

In doing research, as indicated by Silverman (2006), the researcher should consider the participants of the study by making sure that they participated voluntarily, ensuring the confidentiality of the participants’ comments and behavior, protecting the participants against impairment, and establishing mutual trust between the researcher and the participants. The following procedures were followed in the current study:

1. The researcher obtained approval for conducting the study informed from Sumait University, Zanzibar University, and the State University of Zanzibar. This involved getting permission from the Deans and Heads of Departments in each university to obtain and use the necessary data, facilities, and help from the administrative staff during the data collection.
2. The researcher used a consent letter, that is to say, “research subjects have the right to know that they are being researched, the right to be informed about the nature of the research and the right to withdraw at any time” (Ryen, 2004, p. 231). This includes disclosing any anticipated risks to the subjects, whether the respondents would be compensated in any way, the methodology to be used, and data treatment. The individuals responsible for each university signed a compliance document between parties (researcher and the informant).
3. The researcher explained information about the research verbally and in written form to the participants so that the participants were fully aware of what they were about to be involved in. The researcher also ensured confidentiality of all research subjects, including data handling from systematic reviews of documents, which might be considered sensitive.
4. The researcher assured the participants that the data collected would only be used for research purposes, not for any other purpose. The researcher also assured the participants that no extra personal data would be gathered that is not immediately pertinent to the study. The personal data would be carefully organized and managed to ensure that no unauthorized use would be made of them.
5. Before beginning data compilation, the data processing method was fully disclosed to the participants and their respective heads of departments. This includes ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants and giving them an identity that is not easily disclosed.
6. The researcher assured the Dean and Head of Department of the respected universities that the processed data (anonymity and confidentiality) would be used for academic or educational purposes such as publications, conferences, teaching materials, and policy documents only if this been included in the written consent form signed by the informants. Anyone who was not directly involved in the data compilation might only have access to processed data for such purposes after requesting explicit permission from those responsible for the data collection.

# 3.6 Population of the Study

According to Orodho and Kombo (2002), the population is cumulative of elements that demonstrate a similar set of characteristics for the research objective. It consists of all participants who share a set of specific criteria. The population is predicted numbers (units). A population is a group of elements that hold the information required by the researcher and which inferences are to be made. The target population must be described, including the elements, sampling unit, extent, and time. A single member of any given population is referred to as an element. When only some elements are selected from a population, we refer to that as a sample; we call it a census when all elements are included.

In the present study, the target population was students pursuing degree programs in English and any other combination with English as a major from the three universities in Unguja. The universities are; The State University of Zanzibar, Zanzibar University, and Sumait University. The total population of students pursuing degree programmes in the three universities (Sumait, The State university of Zanzibar and Zanzibar University) was 4330 students.

# 3.7 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

## 3.7.1 Sample size

A sample is a small proportion of the population selected for analysis (Dunmore, 1989, p. 10). In addition to Dunmore’s claim, Mugenda (2010, p. 45) points out that a sample is a group of people, objects, or items taken from a large population for measurement. He asserts that the sample should represent the population to generalize the findings from the research sample possible to the population as a whole. However, there is no guarantee that any sample will precisely represent the population (Mugenda, 2010, p.46). The chance may dictate that a disproportionate number of untypical observations will be made. Nevertheless, any researcher is required to use an appropriate sample to be as close as possible to the representation of the total population.

This research study was a quan­titative study in approach. Simple random sampling was adopted with 180 students from the three universities aged from 17-30 years. The researcher made sure that the participants voluntari­ly participated in the study as they were aware of their right to withdraw from the test at any time they desired to do so, as their rights were highlighted by the researcher in addition to the formal paragraph in the questionnaire form that discussed this matter. Table 3.1 below summarizes sample distribution across universities and years of study.

# Table 3.1

Sample distribution

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **First-year** | **Second-year** | **Third-year** | **Total** |
| Zanzibar University | 20 | 20 | 20 | 60 |
| State University of Zanzibar | 20 | 20 | 20 | 60 |
| Sumait University- Zanzibar | 20 | 20 | 20 | 60 |
| **Total** | **60** | **60** | **60** | **180** |

## 3.7.2 Sampling Technique

The researcher employed a simple random sampling technique whereby he used 20 students (above 60% of the total student population) per year of study. A survey of the respective English and Linguistics Departments from the three universities found that the enrolment for each university was low. The total number of all students pursuing the English language with another subject combination was 332. This is a total population of students undertaking a bachelor’s degree with English as one of the subject combinations. In the State University of Zanzibar, there were 115 students, while in Zanzibar University, there were 97 students. Lastly, there were 120 students at Sumait University. The sample size of 20 students per year of study would represent 60% of the total population of the group. Therefore, it would confirm the reliability of the sample. That is why the researcher used 20 students as the sample size. It is above 60% of the entire population of the study. This percentage is in line with Gibbs's (1998) suggestion concerning the reliability of a sample test. Gibbs (1998) argued that the sample should not be too small or too big to handle statistically. He further adds that the sample should represent the ideal characteristics of the sampled population.

The researcher chose students of English as a test group because of their long period of exposure to the English language. Their exposure will be a prerequisite for comprehending English idioms. The sample is also based on the fact that they had studied English at both secondary and advanced levels before joining their current universities. It was therefore expected that their exposure to the English language was high. Hence, they were expected to have an excellent command of their language skills. The researcher collected data from 180 respondents undertaking Bachelor degrees in the Departments of Linguistics from the three universities in Zanzibar, as indicated above. The participants were both males and females and were conveniently sampled from the first year to the third year of the Linguistics Department from each university. Table 3.2 below shows the number of respondents who were conveniently sampled per course and per university.

Table 3.2

Respondents per study course with English

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Sumait University** | **Zanzibar university** | **State university** | **Total population** |
|  |  |  |  | **180 Students** |
| **Course Combination** | **Students** | **Students** | **Students** |
| English & Kiswahili | 20 | 10 | 10 |
| English & History | 10 | 10 | 20 |
| English & Geography | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| English & Arabic | 10 | 20 | 10 |
| English & Linguistics | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| **TOTAL** | **60** | **60** | **60** |  |

From the admission records reviewed by the researcher, it was noted that some English combinations attracted more students than others. Therefore, for equal representation of the sample, the researcher used 50% of the total population of a given English combination in selecting his sample. This is the sample per English subject with another combination. For example, in Sumait University, the English and Kiswahili combination attracted 40 students. Therefore 50% of the 40 students that were sampled gave the researcher 20 students. Therefore 20 students were selected to undertake the research. This formula was applied in all the other two universities in selecting the sample. Based on this percentage, i.e., 50%, the discrepancy in student distribution in the table above is explained. That is why in some subject combinations there were 10 students and other subject combinations 20 students.

# 3.8 Research Instruments

Researchers developed research instruments to achieve their stated objectives when carrying out a research study (Creswell, 2008). Creswell further explains that the instruments are in fact-finding strategies. They are the tools for data collection. Creswell (2008) further adds that data collection forms an essential component of the research process in any research. This is because it enables the researcher to obtain relevant information or gain the experience of others from which he or she imbibes lessons for the enrichment of his report. In this respect, different procedures and data collection instruments have to be employed. In data collection, it is essential to find out which instrument or tool will better serve the purpose of the study to obtain the correct information that will answer the research questions. Research instruments form a crucial component of the validity and reliability of any research project. Whatever procedure one uses to collect data must primarily be critically examined to check the extent to which it is likely to give the expected results. In summary, research instruments are designed tools that aid the collection of data for analysis. This study adopted the questionnaire and Idiom cloze tests as research instruments in collecting data.

## 3.8.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research instrument primarily used to collect information from a population of individuals in a specific geographical area. The researcher used questionnaires as an instrument in collecting data from the respondents. The research questions were designed based on the objectives of the research. The research questions are the ground for constructing research methodology, sampling techniques, measurements, pilot testing, data collection, and data analysis.

There was only one questionnaire that the researcher administered to the respondents. This questionnaire captured respondents’ personal information about idiom comprehension, academic background, and social activities. The respondents were required to respond to each questionnaire as instructed.

## 3.8.2 Idiom Cloze Test

The second tool used was a cloze test in which respondents were to select the best alternative from the options given. There were twenty items in the cloze test. Table 3.2shows the distribution of the idioms used in this research study. Out of the forty (40) idioms administered in the cloze tests used, there were ten transparent idioms, twenty semi-transparent, and ten opaque idioms. Since opaque idioms are difficult to comprehend, as Nunan (2003) advocated, the researcher had to reduce their numbers. Many idioms selected were from a semitransparent class. This is because they are neither easy nor challenging that they can make students start guessing. The mineralization of errors that are likely to occur due to the complexity and difficulty of items in a cloze test, as advocated by Irujo (1986b), is reduced.

# Table 3.2

The number of transparent, semitransparent and opaque idioms in cloze test

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Idiom classification** | Transparent | Semi-transparent | Opaque |
| **General idiom items/40** | 10 | 20 | 10 |
| **Total** | **40** | | |

The researcher had to limit the number of idioms since filling the cloze test was not too much class time. The idioms ranged from high to low-familiarity levels. Familiarity levels were constructed from a previous study by Nippold and Rudzinski (1993). The participants evaluated the frequency of hearing or reading 100 different idioms. Instructions were given to the respondents before taking the test. They were required to pick the correct answer to the idiom given.

The test was of multiple choice type, consisting of an idiomatic meaning (figurative interpretation), literal meaning (literal interpretation), and an interpretation contextually appropriate but not connected with the idiomatic or literal meaning of the idiom string (incorrect interpretation serving as distracters). The choice of selecting multiple-choice tasks was grounded on Levoratos’ research on idioms. Lecorato (1993) found that multiple-choice tasks were suitable when measuring independent variables, such as age or the informativeness of the context. In contrast, completion tasks told more about the strategies employed in the comprehension process (Levorato, 1993, p. 112). The multiple-choice test was chosen for the present study since the aim was to study the included variables rather than strategies. The idioms were presented in isolation and supportive short, brief and succinct story contexts to aid idiom comprehension.

The respondents were asked to read the idioms and select the appropriate interpretation. Prior to testing, respondents were assessed on the Verbal Aptitude Scale (adapted from McCarthy, 1970), including five verbal subtests (picture memory, verbal memory, vocabulary, verbal fluidity, and analogy). The function of this scale was to test whether the student had enough mastery of verbal repertoire in the target language. Afterward, each student was presented with twenty (20) idioms to respond to as instructed. An idiom interpretation task was administered to the respondents in the study. There was no strict time limit set for completing the task for the task was for research purposes and not an examination. Table 3.3 below is a sample of test items that were context-based.

# Table 3.3

Sample of Multiple Choice Questionnaires

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Idiom** | ***Multiple choice*** | ***Expected Answer*** |
| 1.Lissa always said you were the most important relationship in my life, and it used to piss me off when she said it. I *fought her tooth and nail* on it. She didn’t even say it to be cruel; she just said it because it was true. She was right, and I realize that now. | *Fought tooth and nail* means:  (A) with every available resource  (B) lost his teeth  (C) broke his nails  (D) I don’t know | (A) |
| 2. For a few minutes, Fatma couldn’t believe what had just happened. He’d dumped her! He’d just left her here to spend the night alone in a dark classroom. Fatma felt her *blood boil* and a sudden urge to strangle someone. | *Blood boil* means:  (A) very angry  (B) lose a lot of blood  (C) kill someone  (D) I don’t know | (A) |

## 3.8.3 Instrument Reliability

Reliability is the measurement regularity to measure whether or not the items in the questionnaire receive similar responses in persisted conditions. It is also connected to internal consistency to assess whether or not different persons exhibit similar characteristics. There are four ways to measure the reliability of a questionnaire: first, inter-rater (evaluator) or inter-observer reliability; second, test-retest reliability; third, parallel-forms reliability; and fourth, internal consistency reliability. These measurements assess the reliability of the questionnaire in different ways. Internal consistency is a commonly employed method to justify the reliability of the instrument.

This research applied the test-retest together with the internal reliability of the instruments in ensuring reliability achievement. The idea behind test/retest is to get the same score on, for example, in test 1 and test 2. Therefore, in ensuring reliability in this research, the researcher conducted the following.

1. The researcher administered questionnaires at two separate times for each university and did a computation of results.
2. A pre-test was done to detect any inconsistencies in terms of comprehension of idioms by university students. The aim was to find any inconsistencies in comprehension of items and rectify them before the second test was done.
3. The time in which the test was administered also remained the same as the first test.

In ensuring the instruments' reliability, the cloze test questions were objectively crafted to measure the same concept, i.e., comprehension ability. The basis of internal consistency is that questions in a questionnaire have to measure the same concept. For example, writing two sets of three questions that measure the same concept (say class participation). After collecting the responses, run a correlation between those two groups of three questions to determine if the instrument reliably measures that concept. In ensuring internal consistency in the reliability of this research on comprehension of idioms, the researcher objectively selected items in the questionnaire. Each question in the cloze test or the questionnaire was meant to respond to a given objective.

### 3.8.3.1 Methods of Administering Research Instruments

The researcher used the face-to-face method in administering questionnaires and cloze tests to respondents. The merit of this method is that clarification of any points that are not clear is done very fast. At the same time, the researcher would monitor the progress of filling in the questionnaires and cloze tests and offer any help where necessary. The face-to-face method of administering research instruments in the data collection process increases the accuracy of the data being collected. This is because the researcher's presence increases the respondents' seriousness in responding to the cloze tests and the questionnaires supplied. Even though this method requires that the researcher travel to the respective universities where respondents were, it is cheaper in the long run because the researcher manages data well. The chances of questionnaires getting lost are minimized.

## 3.8.4 Validation of Instruments

The validation of instruments is concerned with the accuracy of the measurements and an indication of sample representativeness. Validity is the strength of our conclusions, inferences, or propositions. More formally, Cook & Campbell (1979) define it as the "best available approximation to the “truth” or “falsity” of a given inference, proposition or conclusion. In short, validity tries to answer the question as to whether we were right or not in our research. Kothari and Orodho (2004) define validity a show accurately a method measures the intended to measure. If research has high validity, it produces results that correspond to real properties, characteristics, and variations in the physical or social world. High reliability is one indicator that measurement is valid. If a method is not reliable, it probably is not valid.

Validity is affected by the stability of survey construction and whether the correct questions are probed and identified. The instrument is considered qualified when it justifies the discriminant validity criterion, convergent validity criterion, and concurrent validity criterion (Construct Validity – Criterion). This is because of the following reasons. First, the items selected in each cloze test were objective-oriented. Each idiom was to assess a given objective of the study. Second, item selection was limited to give the respondents little time to concentrate on answering them correctly as required. Gibbs (2011) claims that when the items in data collection tools are few, the concentration in answering them is high. Equally, when the items are more, the chances of guessing are high. Based on these reasons, the researcher reduced the number of items in the cloze test to twenty to achieve the validity of the instruments.

Convenient sampling was adapted in sample selection aimed at achieving a reflection of sample representativeness. The researcher did the following in ensuring the validity of instruments: first, items in the questionnaires and cloze test were craftily selected to test only the comprehension of idioms and not any other test; second, a pre-test was administered to curb any inconstancies in tackling idiom test items; third, the items in the questionnaire and cloze tests remained the same in the questionnaires attempted by all the subjects. The same questionnaire and cloze test that students tackled at Sumait University was the same questionnaire and cloze test tackled by the students from the State University of Zanzibar and those from Zanzibar University.

## 3.8.5 Pilot Testing

Thirty idioms were pre-tested in the cloze test distributed to the students of Sumait University, the State University of Zanzibar, and Zanzibar University. The answers were inserted in a table to ensure whether or not the participants understood the questions accurately. In this process, ambiguous questions and the order of the questions were modified according to the received feedback before the actual questionnaire was administered. The aim was to do away with any intravenous factors within the cloze test that would negatively affect the comprehension of idioms during the exact date of data collection.

# 3.9. Data Collection

The data collection started with getting formal permission from the heads of respective departments of the three universities to collect the data from their students. The researcher was able to collect permission on 12th December 2018. The data collection process was achieved on 29th February 2019.

The instrument was mainly of the Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ). Thus the time limit was 40 minutes since answering required merely putting a tick in front of the correct choice. However, the researcher was not strict in timing since time was not a variable in this study, and that any answer had an implication that was based on the objective of this research. The researcher simplified the task to the stu­dents by explaining the test briefly without giving any hints that might affect the results of the study.

# 3.10 Data analysis

A score of one (1) was awarded for a figurative interpretation and zero (0) for an incorrect interpretation. The scoring of the multiple-choice task was relatively simple when only the correct definition selected was credited. The response is correct when the respondent captures the figurative meaning of the expression. Suppose the figurative meaning as a consequence of the context and the figurative meaning of the expression are included, then, in that case, it is a correct register. An example was provided of the response to the question, “What is the meaning of the expression *by the book* was ‘to follow the law’ and ‘to do everything as it should be done’. The respondents were given 1 point for each correct answer. On the other hand, a score of zero was awarded when there was no response or the response is incorrect (e.g., the participant’s response is unrelated to the figurative meaning of the expression). For example, definitions are given to the question, “What does it mean to *roll up one’s sleeves* was ‘give something back’ or ‘take a chance and try to help’. If a respondent did not attempt that idiom, then the score would be zero. If the respondent did not score the correct option given at the same time, then the score would also be zero. Table 3.4 below shows the guidelines for scoring that the researcher used in the comprehension task.

# Table 3.4

Guidelines for scoring the responses to the definition task after instruction

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Score** | **Guidelines** |
| Zero( 0) | No response or the response is incorrect (e.g. the participant’s response is unrelated with the figurative meaning of the expression). For example, definitions given to the question “What does it mean to ‘roll up one’s sleeves’” was ‘give something back’ or ‘take a chance and try to help’ |
| One (1) | The response is correct (e.g. the participant captures the figurative meaning of the expression; the figurative meaning as a consequence of the context and the figurative meaning of the expression are included, correct register). An example of the response to the question “What is the meaning of the expression ‘by the book’ was ‘to follow the law’ and ‘to do everything as it should be done’. |

The mean percentages of the type of interpretations were analyzed from the respondent’s attempts. The results from the responses from the test were recorded and then analyzed using the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical technique because this statistical technique allowed comparison of more than two groups at the same time to determine whether a relationship exists between them. The researcher used this technique to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups.  If the researcher found out a difference, he would need to examine where the group differences lay. This would be done by applying or running post-hoc tests, which were *t-*tests examining mean differences between the groups.

A t-test is a type of inferential statistics used to determine a significant difference between the means of two groups, which may be related to certain features. In other words, a t-test is used as a hypothesis testing tool, which allows testing of an assumption applicable to a population. In this current study, t-tests were applied to the respondent’s statistical data as a quantitative assessment on the idiom comprehension measure.

There are different types of correlation that can be used on different kinds of data with different objectives. However, the researcher used Pearson’s correlation coefficient because the data collected was non-parametric. All these were done in line with the objectives of this study. 

## 3.10.1 Quantitative Content Data Presentation and Analysis

In order to present the results in a clear and structured manner, this section was divided into three subsections, each of which represented a research question. Descriptive statistics were done to determine the mean percentage of the figurative, literal, and incorrect interpretations. The results were then tabulated and presented in simple graphs.

Regarding the Familiarity and Transparency Judgment Tasks (FTJT), the data of the idioms were recorded, and the respondents’ cloze test results were analyzed. In the Idiom Comprehension Task, both in isolation and in context conditions, the researcher's score was given when the accurate figurative meaning was introduced. However, when the incorrect answer was submitted, 0 scores were awarded.

# 3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter dealt with methods, materials, and procedures that the researcher used in order to conduct the investigation on comprehension of English idioms by university students in Unguja. One hundred eighty (180) respondents were randomly sampled from the three universities in Zanzibar to participate in the study. The three universities are Sumait University, Zanzibar University, and the State University of Zanzibar. A sample of 60 students from each university was conveniently sampled to participate in the research study. This research was quantitative in nature. This is because the researcher used questionnaires and cloze tests in collecting numerical data that was analyzed using statistical methods from the respondents. In addition, this chapter also includes a description of the respondents who participated in the investigation, the selection of idiomatic expressions, and the explored variables. Finally, the methods that were used to process the accumulated raw data are introduced and explained.

# 

# CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION,

# ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

# 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyzes, and discusses the research data. The analysis is organized as per research objectives and their subsequent questions, as responded to by the respondents (university students) from the items administered using cloze tests and questionnaires. The specific objectives which guided the presentation and discussion of findings were to:

1. Examine the comprehension of English idioms among University students in Unguja.
2. To find out factors affecting the comprehension of idioms among University students in Unguja.
3. Examine whether inherent features of an idiom influence its comprehension among University students in Unguja.

# 4.2 Comprehension of English Idioms

The first objective of this research was to examine the comprehension of English idioms among University students. This objective was arrived at after a pre-standardized test that was administered to the University students taking English Language in the three universities indicated a dismal performance in idiom comprehension. Table 4.1, Table 4.2 and Table 4.3 below shows the performance of pre-standardized test by the three universities in Unguja. There were thirty (30) idioms supplied to students using a cloze test tool. Respondents were required to supply the correct option (by circling it) from the four multiple choices given (See Appendix VI). Each correct and incorrect option selected by students was calculated and tabulated in its respective table below. The idioms used in this pre-standardized test were from The Penguin Dictionary of English Idioms (Gulland & Hinds-Howell, 2001) and some from the approved English Course Book for Tanzania Secondary Schools for form three by Kadhege Michael (2014).

# Table 4.1

Performance of Sumait University English students in a pre-standardized test

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Idioms** | **Correct Score/30** | **% in idiom comprehension** | **Incorrect scores** | **% of incorrect score** |
|  | **Idioms in Context** |  |  |  |  |
| 1 | No stone will be left unturned | 12 | 40% | 18 | 60% |
| 2 | Hit the nail on the head; | 14 | 47% | 16 | 53% |
| 3 | To earn a feather on a cap. | 11 | 37% | 19 | 63% |
| 4 | To be at cross purposes. | 9 | 30% | 21 | 70% |
| 5 | To be a backseat driver. | 13 | 43% | 17 | 57% |
| 6 | To feel something in your bones | 11 | 37% | 19 | 63% |
| 7 | By hook or crook | 11 | 37% | 19 | 63% |
| 8 | To keep the wolf from the door. | 6 | 20% | 24 | 80% |
| 9 | To lock, stock, and barrel. | 8 | 27% | 22 | 73% |
| 10 | To clear the coast was clear | 10 | 33% | 20 | 67% |
| 11 | To Batten down the hatches; | 5 | 17% | 25 | 83% |
| 12 | To be at sixes and sevens | 8 | 27% | 22 | 73% |
| 13 | To take one to know the rope. | 13 | 43% | 17 | 57% |
| 14 | To bring home the bacon | 7 | 23% | 23 | 77% |
| 15 | To be as cool as a cucumber | 10 | 33% | 20 | 67% |
|  | **Mean** | **9.7** | **32.9%** | **20.1** | **67.1%** |
|  | **Idioms in Isolation** |  |  |  |  |
| 16 | To act at the switch | 9 | 30% | 21 | 70% |
| 17 | To drop the ball | 7 | 23% | 23 | 77% |
| 18 | Dean's in the doldrums | 4 | 13% | 26 | 87% |
| 19 | Barking up the wrong tree | 6 | 20% | 24 | 80% |
| 20 | Beating about the bush | 4 | 13% | 26 | 87% |
| 21 | To Make a contribution | 10 | 33% | 20 | 67% |
| 22 | To buy a pig in a poke. | 6 | 20% | 24 | 80% |
| 23 | To add a nail in a coffin. | 7 | 23% | 23 | 77% |
| 24 | Down the tools | 5 | 17% | 25 | 83% |
| 25 | To pull someone’s legs | 8 | 27% | 22 | 73% |
| 26 | To put a buy in someone’s ear | 4 | 13% | 26 | 87% |
| 27 | To have a red herring. | 3 | 10% | 27 | 90% |
| 28 | To rock the boat. | 9 | 30% | 21 | 70% |
| 29 | To be wet behind the ear. | 7 | 10% | 23 | 90% |
| 30 | Give a cold shoulder | 6 | 13% | 24 | 87% |
|  | **Mean** | **6.3** | **19.6%** | **23** | **80.4%** |
|  | **Overall Mean** | **8.0** | **26.3%** | **21.7** | **73.7%** |

Source of idioms: The Penguin Dictionary of English Idioms (Gulland & Hinds-Howell, 2001)

**Key:**

Correct Score: the correct answers supplied by each student out of 30 idioms in a test.

% of Correct Score: the correct answers supplied by each student out of 30 idioms in a test multiplied by 100%.

Incorrect Score: the incorrect answers supplied by each student out of 30 idioms in a test.

% of Incorrect Score: the incorrect answers supplied by each student out of 30 idioms in a test multiplied by 100%.

Table 4.2

Performance of Zanzibar University English students in a Pre-standardized Test

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **IDIOM** | **Correct Score/30** | **% in idiom comprehension** | **Incorrect scores** | **% of incorrect score** |
|  | **Idioms in Context** |  |  |  |  |
| 1 | No stone will be left unturned | 9 | 30% | 21 | 70% |
| 2 | Hit the nail on the head; | 16 | 53% | 14 | 47% |
| 3 | To earn a feather on a cap. | 13 | 43% | 17 | 57% |
| 4 | To be at cross purposes. | 9 | 30% | 21 | 70% |
| 5 | To be a backseat driver. | 11 | 36% | 19 | 64% |
| 6 | To feel something in your bones | 13 | 43% | 17 | 57% |
| 7 | By hook or crook | 10 | 33% | 20 | 67% |
| 8 | To keep the wolf from the door. | 7 | 23% | 23 | 77% |
| 9 | To lock, stock, and barrel. | 7 | 23% | 23 | 77% |
| 10 | To wait until the coast was clear | 11 | 36% | 19 | 64% |
| 11 | To Batten down the hatches; | 7 | 23% | 23 | 77% |
| 12 | To be at sixes and sevens | 8 | 26% | 22 | 74% |
| 13 | To take one to know the rope. | 10 | 33% | 20 | 67% |
| 14 | To bring home the bacon | 9 | 30% | 21 | 70% |
| 15 | To be as cool as a cucumber | 8 | 26% | 22 | 74% |
|  | **Mean** | **9.8** | **32.5%** |  | **67.5%** |
|  | **Idioms in Isolation** |  |  |  |  |
| 16 | To act at the switch | 9 | 30% | 21 | 70% |
| 17 | To drop the ball | 11 | 36% | 19 | 64% |
| 18 | Dean's in the doldrums | 6 | 20% | 24 | 80% |
| 19 | Barking up the wrong tree | 6 | 20% | 24 | 80% |
| 20 | Beating about the bush | 7 | 23% | 23 | 77% |
| 21 | To Make a contribution | 6 | 20% | 24 | 80% |
| 22 | To buy a pig in a poke. | 8 | 26% | 22 | 74% |
| 23 | To add a nail in a coffin. | 9 | 30% | 21 | 70% |
| 24 | Down the tools | 5 | 17% | 25 | 83% |
| 25 | To pull someone’s legs | 10 | 33% | 20 | 67% |
| 26 | To put a buy in someone’s ear | 5 | 17% | 25 | 83% |
| 27 | To have a red herring. | 4 | 13% | 23 | 87% |
| 28 | To rock the boat. | 9 | 30% | 21 | 70% |
| 29 | To be wet behind the ear. | 5 | 17% | 25 | 83% |
| 30 | Give a cold shoulder | 7 | 23% | 23 | 77% |
|  | **Mean ( in isolation)** | **7.1** | **23.7%** | **22.9** | **76.3%** |
|  | **Overall Mean** | **8.5** | **28.1%** | **21.5** | **70.9%** |

Source of idioms: The Penguin Dictionary of English Idioms (Gulland & Hinds-Howell, 2001)

Key:

Correct Score: the correct answers supplied by each student out of 30 idioms in a test.

% of Correct Score: the correct answers supplied by each student out of 30 idioms in a test multiplied by 100%.

Incorrect Score: the incorrect answers supplied by each student out of 30 idioms in a test.

% of Incorrect Score: the incorrect answers supplied by each student out of 30 idioms in a test multiplied by 100%.

Table 4.3

Performance of the State University of Zanzibar English students in a pre-standardized test

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **IDIOM** | **Correct Score/30** | **% in idiom comprehension** | **Incorrect scores** | **% of incorrect score** |
|  | **Idioms in Context** |  |  |  |  |
| 1 | No stone will be left unturned | 10 | 33% | 20 | 67% |
| 2 | Hit the nail on the head; | 10 | 33% | 20 | 67% |
| 3 | To earn a feather on a cap. | 8 | 27% | 22 | 73% |
| 4 | To be at cross purposes. | 12 | 40% | 18 | 60% |
| 5 | To be a backseat driver. | 12 | 40% | 18 | 60% |
| 6 | To feel something in your bones | 9 | 30% | 21 | 70% |
| 7 | By hook or crook | 11 | 37% | 19 | 63% |
| 8 | To keep the wolf from the door. | 9 | 30% | 21 | 70% |
| 9 | To lock, stock, and barrel. | 8 | 27% | 22 | 73% |
| 10 | To wait until the coast was clear | 10 | 33% | 20 | 67% |
| 11 | To Batten down the hatches; | 10 | 33% | 20 | 67% |
| 12 | To be at sixes and sevens | 7 | 23% | 23 | 77% |
| 13 | To take one to know the rope. | 11 | 37% | 19 | 63% |
| 14 | To bring home the bacon | 6 | 20% | 24 | 80% |
| 15 | To be as cool as a cucumber | 9 | 30% | 21 | 70% |
|  | **Mean** | **9.5** | **31.5%** |  | **68.5%** |
|  | **Idioms in Isolation** |  |  |  |  |
| 16 | To act at the switch | 7 | 23% | 23 | 77% |
| 17 | To drop the ball | 7 | 23% | 23 | 77% |
| 18 | Dean's in the doldrums | 6 | 20% | 24 | 80% |
| 19 | Barking up the wrong tree | 8 | 27% | 22 | 73% |
| 20 | Beating about the bush | 7 | 23% | 23 | 77% |
| 21 | To Make a contribution | 14 | 46% | 16 | 54% |
| 22 | To buy a pig in a poke. | 8 | 27% | 22 | 73% |
| 23 | To add a nail in a coffin. | 7 | 23% | 23 | 77% |
| 24 | Down the tools | 9 | 30% | 21 | 70% |
| 25 | To pull someone’s legs | 7 | 23% | 23 | 77% |
| 26 | To put a buy in someone’s ear | 3 | 10% | 27 | 90% |
| 27 | To have a red herring. | 3 | 10% | 27 | 90% |
| 28 | To rock the boat. | 11 | 37% | 21 | 63% |
| 29 | To be wet behind the ear. | 9 | 30% | 21 | 70% |
| 30 | Give a cold shoulder | 6 | 20% | 24 | 80% |
|  | **Mean** | **7.5** | **24.8%** | **22.7** | **75.2%** |
|  | **Overall Mean** | **8.5** | **28.2%** | **21.6** | **71.8%** |

Source of idioms: The Penguin Dictionary of English Idioms (Gulland & Hinds-Howell, 2001)

Key:

Correct Score: the correct answers supplied by each student out of 30 idioms in a test.

% of Correct Score: the correct answers supplied by each student out of 30 idioms in a test multiplied by 100%.

Incorrect Score: the incorrect answers supplied by each student out of 30 idioms in a test.

% of Incorrect Score: the incorrect answers supplied by each student out of 30 idioms in a test multiplied by 100%.

The idioms used by the researcher on the pre-standardized test were presented in two ways, in isolation, and in an enabling context. The first 15 idioms were presented in an enabling context while the other 15 idioms were presented in isolation, that is, minus an enabling context (See appendix VI). In addition to having idioms presented in an enabling passage and in isolation, each idiom was presented in four multiple-choice options for students to select the correct option from (See appendix VI). For statistical analysis, each student’s performance per idiom was recorded in Table 4.1, Table 4.2, and Table 4.3.

The mean percentage of correct scores from student’s performance in a pre-standardized test on idiom comprehension was calculated. The statistical analysis of the pre-standardized mean idioms in isolation and those presented in an enabling context for Sumait University was 8.0 out of 30. The 8 out of 30 represents a mean percentage of 26.3%, as shown in Table 4.1. On the other hand, the mean of idioms presented in an enabling context was 9.7, which translates to 32.9%. Similarly, the mean of idioms presented in isolation registered a mean of 6.3, which translates to 19.6%, as shown in Table 4.1. The overall mean of idiom comprehension (both in isolation and in an enabling context) as registered by Sumait university English language students was 26.3%.

On the other hand, Zanzibar University students registered an overall mean of 8.5 out of 30 idioms which translates to 28.1% of their idiom comprehension ability. The overall mean comprises of the mean of idioms in isolation and those in an enabling context. The mean of those idioms presented in an enabling context was 9.8, which translates to 32.5%. Those idioms presented minus an enabling context registered a mean score of 7.1, which translates to 23.7%, as shown in Table 4.2.

Finally, on the side of the State University of Zanzibar students registered an overall mean of 8.5, which translates to 28.2%of students' ability to comprehend English idioms. The mean percentage of idioms in isolation was 7.5, which translates to 24.8%. The mean of those idioms in an enabling context was 9.5, which also translates to 31.5%.

The overall mean of idiom comprehension by the three universities combined was found to be 27.5%. This is the total of overall mean percentage of the three universities divided by three. As shown in each table above, the overall mean per university is the mean score of students' correct scores in idioms in isolation plus those idioms presented in an enabling context.

A mean score of 27.5%% in English idiom comprehension by university students is dismal.27.5% is entirely below average considering that the respondents are pursuing a Bachelor degree in English with another subject. It, therefore, indicates that university student’s ability to comprehend idioms and idiomatic expressions is very low. That is why the researcher wanted to assess details of the comprehension of English idioms among university students in Unguja to bridge the gap of knowledge in idiom comprehension.

In attempting to determine the extent of comprehension of English idioms by the three universities in Unguja, the researcher used three sets of cloze tests containing idioms to collect data. Oral instructions were given to students on how to go through the cloze test supplied. The first set contained idioms in context enabled, .i.e. the idioms in this cloze test were informed of an enabling passage. The second type of a cloze test contained idioms in isolation, i.e., no enabling passage was supplied. In the two cloze tests, the idioms presented in an enabling context differed from those presented minus the enabling context. Each cloze test supplied to them contained twenty idioms that were objectively selected. The third cloze test contained similar idioms in an enabling context and in isolation, i.e., the idioms presented in an enabling context were the same as those presented minus an enabling context.

In this regard, Table 4.4 and Table 4.5 show the overall performance of 180 students from the three Universities in the comprehension of the forty (40) idioms administered. Table 4.4 contains the results obtained from the context-enabled idiom test, while Table 4.5 contains results obtained from idioms presented minus an enabling context. Analysis in terms of performance was done on each idiom that was in every cloze test. Correct and incorrect raw scores for each idiom were recorded in Table 4.4and Table 4.5.Subsequently, the mean percentage of the correct response in each Table was calculated and recorded.

From Table 4.4 and Table 4.5, it can be inferred that the mean raw score of the 180 students’ familiarity assessment of the 40 idioms was 40.75%, i.e., the mean familiarity score of context enabled idioms and those idioms in isolation. This percentage score is below the average since the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) stipulated the average standard score. The TCU is a body corporate established in 2005 under the universities act 2005 with a mandate to reorganize, approve and foresee quality standards in the Tanzanian universities education. It sets standards that are to be followed by all universities operating in Tanzania. According to the TCU regulations, any performance below 40% is considered below average unless otherwise. It implies that students’ awareness of the idioms was somewhat low. The overall performance in each idiom by the 180 respondents is also recorded in the table below. The overall mean percentage is also calculated and recorded in Table 4.4, as shown.

# Table 4.4

Students Knowledge of Context-Enabled Idioms

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Context(enabled) idioms** | **Correct raw scores/**  **180** | **% in familiarity** | **Incorrect**  **raw score/**  **180** | **% in**  **Unfamiliarity** | **Familiarity** |
| 1 | To develop a cold feet | 65 | 36% | 115 | 64% | 0.36 |
| 2 | Last straw | 72 | 40% | 108 | 60% | 0.40 |
| 3 | To see eye to eye | 61 | 34% | 119 | 66% | 0.34 |
| 4 | Do something by the book | 49 | 27% | 131 | 73% | 0.27 |
| 5 | To face the music | 83 | 46% | 97 | 54% | 0.46 |
| 6 | Have a long face | 47 | 26% | 133 | 74% | 0.26 |
| 7 | Hit the roof | 77 | 43% | 103 | 57% | 0.43 |
| 8 | Make up one’s mind | 94 | 52% | 86 | 48% | 0.52 |
| 9 | Take advantage of | 85 | 47% | 95 | 53% | 0.47 |
| 10 | Money talks | 94 | 52% | 86 | 48% | 0.52 |
| 11 | Hang out | 68 | 38% | 112 | 62% | 0.38 |
| 12 | Tip of the iceberg | 76 | 42% | 106 | 58% | 0.42 |
| 13 | On the right track | 110 | 61% | 70 | 30% | 0.61 |
| 14 | Green snake in a green grass | 75 | 42% | 105 | 58% | 0.42 |
| 15 | Cross someone’s mind | 81 | 45% | 99 | 55% | 0.45 |
| 16 | Cold hearted | 87 | 48% | 93 | 52% | 0.48 |
| 17 | Pull someone’s leg | 65 | 36% | 115 | 64% | 0.36 |
| 18 | Piece of cake | 119 | 66% | 61 | 34% | 0.66 |
| 19 | Break a leg | 63 | 35% | 117 | 65% | 0.35 |
| 20 | In the same boat. | 118 | 66% | 62 | 34% | 0.66 |
|  | **Mean % score** |  | **44.55%** |  | **55.45%** |  |

**Key:**

Raw score: number of respondents in this research =180 (Total number of students).

Correct raw score: numbers of respondents who scored correctly on the meaning of given idiom.

Incorrect raw score: number of respondents who scored the meaning of a given idiom incorrectly.

Familiarity: correct raw score divided by the total number of respondents who participated in this research multiplied by 100.

# Table 4.5

Students’ competence of English idioms in isolation

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/n** | **Idiom (in isolation)** | **Correct raw score/ 180** | **% Raw score** | **Incorrect raw score/ 180** | **% incorrect raw score** | **Familiarity** |
| 1. | To be a slippery slope | 76 | 42% | 104 | 58% | 0.42 |
| 2. | To be on a roll | 62 | 34% | 118 | 66% | 0.34 |
| 3. | To be a couch potato | 55 | 31% | 125 | 69% | 0.31 |
| 4. | To throw in the towel | 67 | 37% | 113 | 63% | 0.37 |
| 5. | To give someone a hand | 81 | 45% | 99 | 55% | 0.45 |
| 6. | At the top of one’s lungs | 61 | 34% | 119 | 66% | 0.34 |
| 7. | To be at one’s fingertips | 63 | 35% | 117 | 65% | 0.35 |
| 8. | Keep someone at one’s toes | 59 | 33% | 121 | 67% | 0.33 |
| 9. | Over my dead body | 64 | 36% | 116 | 64% | 0.36 |
| 10. | To turn the tables | 47 | 26% | 133 | 74% | 0.26 |
| 11. | Rule of thumb | 60 | 33% | 120 | 67% | 0.33 |
| 12. | To get a head-start | 48 | 26% | 132 | 74% | 0.26 |
| 13. | To take charge | 96 | 53% | 84 | 47% | 0.53 |
| 14. | To beat about the bush | 107 | 59% | 73 | 41% | 0.59 |
| 15. | To talk of the devil | 71 | 39% | 109 | 61% | 0.39 |
| 16. | To make up one’s mind | 97 | 54% | 83 | 46% | 0.54 |
| 17. | To roll up one’s sleeves | 52 | 29% | 128 | 71% | 0.29 |
| 18. | To break somebody’s heart | 90 | 50% | 90 | 50% | 0.50 |
| 19. | To add an icing on the cake | 53 | 29% | 127 | 71% | 0.29 |
| 20. | To be not my cup of tea | 41 | 23% | 139 | 77% | 0.23 |
|  | **MEAN RAW SCORE%** |  | **37.4%** |  | **62.6%** |  |

Key:

Raw Score: Number of respondents in this research= 180

Correct Raw Score: numbers of respondents who scored the meaning of a given idiom correctly.

Incorrect Raw Score: number of respondents who scored the meaning of a given idiom incorrectly.

Familiarity: Correct Raw Score divided by the total number of respondents who participated in this research.

Correct raw scores refer to the number of respondents who correctly scored the meaning of that given English idiom. There were 180 respondents in number. Therefore, the correct scores as recorded are taken as that number out of 180. Similarly, the incorrect raw scores refer to the number of respondents who did not correctly score the meaning of that given English idiom out of 180, which is the total number of respondents. Familiarity refers to the number of attempted respondents (correct or incorrect) divided by 180. For example, the number of respondents who scored the meaning of the idiom *to develop cold feet* correctly was 65 out of 180.The familiarity of this idiom is arrived at by dividing 65 by 180 (the total number of respondents). This gives us 0.36. On the other hand, percentages of familiarity are arrived at, taking the familiarity figure divided by 180 (total number of respondents) and then multiply it by 100 %. Equally, to find out the percentage of the unfamiliarity of a given idiom from the table, the incorrect raw score is divided by 180 (the total number of respondents) and multiplied by one hundred (100%). The same procedure applies in finding the percentage of unfamiliarity.

The familiarity concept is adopted from Gibbs (1998). The concept is deemed appropriate in analyzing the comprehension of figurative language as it gives a clear picture of each respondent’s performance in comprehending the figurative language task. It is also easy to calculate, present, and interpret the findings, as shown in the above tables.

From Table 4.5 above, the calculated mean percentage of incorrect raw score of the twenty idioms in isolation used in the test was 62.6%. This implies low idiom comprehension by students compared to the 37.4% of the correct options as answered by students. This was an indication that the familiarity level in idiom comprehension by university students in Unguja was weak.

In summary, the descriptive statistics in Table 4.4 and Table 4.5outline the distinctions of correct answers by University students between the two arrangement methods (context and isolation) for all of the three idioms in the forced-choice task (transparent, semi-transparent, and opaque idioms). Results illustrated in Table 4. and Table 4.5suggest that students performed better in context-enabled idioms than those presented in isolation (IS). The contrast among the two groups indicated that the forced-choice task generated higher scores for both groups in any situation. When examining the results in Table 4.4 and Table 4.5, it was noticeable that there is a more significant difference between scores for individual idioms in isolation and those presented in context. Significant differences between idioms in isolation and context enabled the idioms to be seen in several areas. Although the results on context and isolation comparison were different, the presentation mode is more likely to change when the task becomes more challenging. This would be the case when the idioms are less familiar or more opaque. That is why opaque idioms like *not my cup of tea* had a minimum number of students registering the correct score.

From data presented in Table 4.4 and Table 4.5, a paired-samples t-test was performed using the GRAPH PAD PRISM 5.01 program to compare the performance of university students on idiom comprehension among the isolation group, and the context enabled group. With the help of this program, average and standard deviation values were calculated for each treatment.

The hypotheses below were tested:

**H0:** There is no substantial distinction in students’ knowledge in comprehension of context-enabled idioms.

**H1:** There is a significant difference in student’s knowledge in comprehension of context-enabled idioms.

The result from paired samples t-test described that a statistically significant mean difference in test scores between the two groups, i.e., the context enabled idiom group versus the idiom in isolation group as follows; t= 2.347, df=19, p = <0.0299, CI -40.11 to – 2.295 was found, suggesting that students familiarity on knowledge on context-based enabled idioms (M = 79.45, SD = 20.19 and STD error= 4.514, n = 20) has a significantly lower mean on test scores compared to unfamiliarity in terms of idiom comprehension (M = 100.7, SD = 20. 201 STD error 4.519, n = 20).

Whether the difference between the results is meaningful or not was examined by the correlation test. From the statistical analysis, a correlation coefficient (r) was -0.9998, indicating a strong negative correlation between the students' knowledge in idiom context enabled idioms comprehension. The negative correlation is that the higher the negative correlation between two variables, the closer the correlation coefficient to the value -1.Two variables with a perfect positive correlation would have a correlation coefficient of +1. In contrast, a correlation coefficient of zero implies that the two variables are uncorrelated and move independently of each other. The researcher’s data shows a strong correlation between students' comprehension of idioms in context enabled.

To further determine whether the mean difference between the two groups (context enabled group versus idiom in isolation group) was statistically significant, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was also applied to the data. Results from the ANOVA indicated that the group mean is statistically significant. This is because the (p) value was <0.0001, which is less than α 0.05, the significance level of alpha. A multi-comparison test (post statistical analysis) was conducted to test whether or not the results between the groups are meaningful. The findings from the groups were recorded in Table 4.6 below.

# Table 4.6

Summary of ANOVA findings from idioms in isolation and those in context

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **One Way Analysis of Variance** | | | | | |
| P value | 0.0001 |  |  |  |  |
| P value summary | \*\*\* |  |  |  |  |
| Are means significant Different? | Yes |  |  |  |  |
| Number of groups | 4 |  |  |  |  |
| F | 29.59 |  |  |  |  |
| R squired | 0.52984 |  |  |  |  |
| Bartletts statistics (correlated) | 2.218 |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **ANOVA Table** | **Ss** | **Df** | **ms** |  |  |
| Treatment between columns | 29200 | 3 | 9732 |  |  |
| Residual within columns | 24990 | 76 | 328.9 |  |  |
| Total | 54190 | 79 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Tukeys multiple comparisons** | **Mean diff** | **Q** | **Significance** | **Summary** | **95%cl of diff** |
| Correct raw scores (isolation vs correct raw scores context) | -14.3 | 3.527 | yes | \*\*\* | -29.40 to 0.7971 |
| Correct raw score (isolation) vs incorrect raw score (isolation) | -49.7 | 12.26 | yes | \*\*\* | -64.80 to-34.60 |
| Correct raw scores (isolation) versus incorrect raw scores context | -35.5 | 8.755 | yes | \*\*\* | -50.60 to- 20.40 |
| Correct raw scores (context) vs incorrect raw score (isolation) | -35.4 | 8.73 | yes | \*\*\* | -50.50 to -20.30 |
| Correct raw scores (context) vs incorrect raw score (context) | -21.2 | 5.228 | yes | \*\* | -36.30 to -6.103 |
| Incorrect raw score (isolation vs incorrect raw score( context) | -14.2 | 3.502 | no | Ns | -0.8971 to 29.30 |

A Tukey multi-comparison post statistical analysis test was done comparing all four groups. The results showed that main effect of group, F = 29.59, p < .0001, and a significant main effect of task, F (1, 119) = 2.2.18 and a correlation coefficient p < .0001. This statistical analysis implies that the mean difference between the two groups (context enabled group versus idiom in isolation group) was statistically significant. This has alluded to the fact that there were statistical differences in performance between the two groups.

Further, in examining the extent of comprehension of English idioms by University students, a mean of performance of idiom comprehension by students as per individual University was calculated and recorded in Table 4.7 below. From this table, it was realized that the general trend in comprehension of idioms varied across the two groups. Generally, idioms that were presented in isolation registered a low mean as compared to those idioms that were presented in a context-rich. For example, in the State University of Zanzibar, first-year students' mean percentage in idiom comprehension was 40.5%. Out of this, the mean percentage of context-enabled idioms in this group was 43.4%, while those in isolation were 37.6%. It implies that the performance in idiom comprehension with the aid of the context was higher than those of idioms presented in isolation across the years of study. However, the overall mean in idioms comprehension by three universities varied as follows. Sumait University had an overall mean of 43.9%, the State University of Zanzibar had an overall mean of 42.4%, while Zanzibar University had registered an overall mean of 39.8%. The general performance is recorded in Table 4.7.

# Table 4.7

Students’ competence in idioms comprehension per year of study of students

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **First-year** | **Second-year** | **Third-year** | **Mean** |
| **State University of Zanzibar** | **40.5%** | **41.5%** | **45.3%** | **42.4%** |
| CEI | 43.4% | 44.7% | 46.2% | 44.8% |
| IA | 37.6% | 38.3 | 44.3% | 40.1% |
| **Zanzibar University** | **40.2%** | **40.3%** | **38.9.%** | **39.8.%** |
| CEI | 40.9% | 43.5% | 40.1% | 44.2% |
| IA | 39.5% | 37.0% | 37.6% | 39.6% |
| **Sumait University** | **43.6%** | **39.5%** | **48.7%** | **43.9%** |
| CEI | 47.6% | 48.1% | 50.4% | 48.7% |
| IA | 40.1% | 30.9% | 47.0% | 42.7% |

Key: CEI= Context enabled idioms IA =Idioms in Isolation

The scores from the three universities showed that students from the three universities performed better in CEI idioms than IA idioms, even though the overall performance was generally below average. For example, in the State University of Zanzibar, the mean standard score for CEI was 48.8%, while in isolation, IA was 39.9%. Zanzibar University and Sumait University realized the same trend. In Zanzibar University, a mean score of 39.6% was recorded in CEI, and a mean score of 28.7% was recorded in IA. Sumait recorded a mean score of 45.1% in CEI and 43.8% in IA. The detailed information is presented in Table 4.8.

Compared with the two other Universities, the mean score of CEI and that of IA, Sumait recorded a margin of 2.7%. This implies that as compared to the other Universities, the context had a minimal effect on the familiarity of idioms by students of Sumait. Zanzibar University recorded the highest mean difference between the CEI and IA. They had a 10.9% difference. The State University recorded a mean difference of 8.9% between CEI and IA idioms. The overall mean percentage in idiom comprehension for context-enabled idiom for the three universities was found out to be 44.5%. This is arrived at by taking the sum percentage of CEI divided by the total number of universities in this study. The procedure of arriving at the mean percentage of idioms in isolation (IA) is the same as the one for CEI. Table 4.8 represents the performance of idiom comprehension per year of study of students in each university combined.

# Table 4.8

Performance in idioms comprehension per year of study of students

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **First-year** | **Second-year** | **Third-year** | **Mean** |
| **State University** | **40.5%** | **41.5%** | **45.3%** | **42.4%** |
| CEI | 43.4% | 44.7% | 46.2% | 44.8% |
| IA | 37.6% | 38.3 | 44.3% | 40.1% |
| **Zanzibar University** | **40.2%** | **40.3%** | **38.9.%** | **39.8.%** |
| CEI | 40.9% | 43.5% | 40.1% | 44.2% |
| IA | 39.5% | 37.0% | 37.6% | 39.6% |
| **Sumait University** | **43.6%** | **39.5%** | **48.7%** | **43.9%** |
| CEI | 47.6% | 48.1% | 50.4% | 48.7% |
| IA | 40.1% | 30.9% | 47.0% | 42.7% |

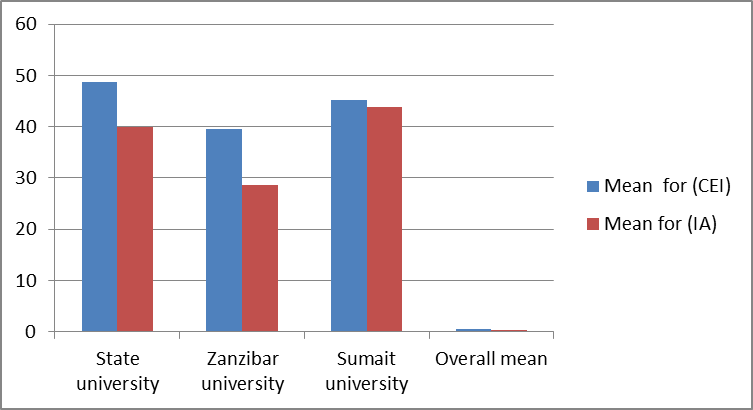
**Key: CEI= Context enabled idioms IA =Idioms in Isolation**

Out of the 20 sampled students who participated in this research, each class's mean percentage of idiom comprehension is calculated and recorded, as shown in Table 4.8 above. In the State University of Zanzibar, the performance of context-enabled idioms for the first year was 43.4%, while the mean percentage of idiom comprehension for idioms in isolation was 37.6%. The mean percentage of second-year students in CEI was 44.7%, while the mean percentage of IA was 38.3%. For the third-year class, the mean percentage score for CEI was 46.2%, while that IA was 44.3%. From the statistical data analyzed above, it was clear that whenever the context was enabled in a given idiom, comprehension increased through the year of study compared to the idioms provided in isolation. The same trend is realized by Zanzibar University and Sumait University consecutively. From first-year to third-year classes, the comprehension performance of CEI was seen to be higher than those idioms in isolation, as illustrated in Figure 4.1. The data of mean percentages in the three Universities are presented in Table 4.9 below.

# Table 4.9

The overall mean score in idiom comprehension per university

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Mean for (CEI)** | **Mean for (IA)** |
| State University | 48.8% | 39.9% |
| Zanzibar University | 39.6% | 28.7% |
| Sumait University | 45.1% | 43.8% |
| **Overall mean** | **44.5%** | **37.5%** |

****

# Figure 4.1 Bar Graph Representing the Mean Percentage of Idiom Comprehension per University

# 4.3 Factors Affecting Students’ Comprehension of Idioms.

This section addresses the second objective of the study, which sought to determine the factors affecting the students’ comprehension of idioms. This was arrived at after a pre-standardized test showed that students' overall comprehension of idioms was below average. That is why the researcher sought to find out the factors that could affect students' comprehension of idioms. Below are the factors that affect English idiom comprehension as deduced from the students’ handling of the idiom tasks.

## 4.3.1 Context

This subsection sought to find out whether the context had any influence on idiom comprehension. This is in line with objective number two of this study, which measured factors affecting the comprehension of idioms among University students in Unguja. In so doing, 180 University students conveniently sampled from the three Universities were supplied with different sets of cloze tests. The first set of cloze tests contained idioms in the form of a supportive context (context enabled). The other set contained cloze tests that were supplied in isolation. Instructions were given to them before responding to each set. The responses from the cloze test containing idioms that were in a given enabling context and those that were supplied minus an enabling context are recorded in Table 4.4 and Table 4.5.

Table 4.4 and Table 4.5 describe students’ presentation on idiom comprehension in both condition tasks as somewhat dissatisfying. In a supportive context, the mean score of accuracy was 44.5%, while in isolation, the mean score of comprehension was lower, 37.5%. This indicated that the context played a more significant role in idiom comprehension. Although the overall results were somewhat disappointing, the supporting role of context in idiom comprehension could be confirmed evidently. Using a supportive context, students’ comprehension of idioms has significantly improved to a great extent.

Table 4.4 and Table 4.5 illustrate how context supported better comprehension of idioms. From comparing the mean score of every idiom, both in isolation and the context condition, the median accuracy score improved more or less for most idioms. In students’ comprehension of figurative meaning in idioms such as, *to develop a cold feet, last straw, to see eye to eye, and to face the music*, the accuracy comprehension improved by over 40%. For the idioms such as *hang out, tip of the iceberg, on the right track,* and *a green snake in green grass,* in the isolation condition, students have barely understood the figurative meanings. They could only present the literal translations of the idioms.

Conversely, the students could quickly determine the figurative meanings when the idioms were introduced within the surrounding linguistic context. Table 4.10 and Table 4.11below show students' performance in idiom comprehension in isolation and context enabled.

# 

Table 4.10

Students knowledge of context-enabled idioms

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Context(enabled) idioms** | **Correct scores/180** | **% Correct raw score** |
| 1 | To develop a cold feet | 65 | 36% |
| 2 | Last straw | 72 | 40% |
| 3 | To see eye to eye | 61 | 34% |
| 4 | Do something by the book | 49 | 27% |
| 5 | To face the music | 83 | 46% |
| 6 | Have a long face | 47 | 26% |
| 7 | Hit the roof | 77 | 43% |
| 8 | Make up one’s mind | 94 | 52% |
| 9 | Take advantage of | 85 | 47% |
| 10 | Money talks | 94 | 52% |
| 11 | Hang out | 68 | 38% |
| 12 | Tip of the iceberg | 76 | 42% |
| 13 | On the right track | 110 | 61% |
| 14 | Green snake in a green grass | 75 | 42% |
| 15 | Cross someone’s mind | 81 | 45% |
| 16 | Cold hearted | 87 | 48% |
| 17 | Pull someone’s leg | 65 | 36% |
| 18 | Piece of cake | 119 | 66% |
| 19 | Break a leg | 63 | 35% |
| 20 | In the same boat. | 118 | 66% |
|  | **Mean % score** |  | **44.5%** |

Table 4.11

Students knowledge of idioms in isolation

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/n** | **Idioms in isolation** | **Correct raw score /180** | **% Raw score in Isolation** |
| 1 | To be a slippery slope | 76 | 42% |
| 2 | To be on a roll | 62 | 34% |
| 3 | To be a “couch potato | 55 | 31% |
| 4 | To throw in the towel | 67 | 37% |
| 5 | To give someone a hand | 81 | 45% |
| 6 | At the top of one’s lungs | 61 | 34% |
| 7 | To be at one’s fingertips | 63 | 35% |
| 8 | keep someone at one’s toes | 59 | 33% |
| 9 | Over my dead body | 64 | 36% |
| 10 | To turn the tables | 47 | 26% |
| 11 | rule of thumb | 60 | 33% |
| 12 | To get a head-start | 48 | 26% |
| 13 | To take charge | 96 | 53% |
| 14 | To beat about the bush | 107 | 59% |
| 15 | To talk of the devil | 71 | 39% |
| 16 | To make up one’s mind | 97 | 54% |
| 17 | To roll up one’s sleeves | 52 | 29% |
| 18 | To break somebody’s heart | 90 | 50% |
| 19 | To add an icing on the cake | 53 | 29% |
| 20 | To be not my cup of tea | 41 | 23% |
|  | **Mean % Score** |  | **37.4%** |

As it can be deduced from Table 4.10 and Table 4.11, respectively, the performance in idiom comprehension by University students when the context was supplied is 44.5%. In contrast, when the context was not supplied, the idiom comprehension decreased to 37.4%.

In summary, this study has demonstrated that poor comprehenders’ difficulties with processing novel and unfamiliar idioms are related to their established impairments with inference from the context. Their semantic processing skills appear intact. These findings suggest that poor comprehenders can infer from the context in their attempt to give the correct meaning of a given idiom. However, they fail to get the correct meaning if they fail to take the text's overall meaning into account when deriving meanings for unfamiliar idioms. This is descriptively observed in Table 4.4 and Table 4.5.These statistical differences between the two groups of idioms imply that the context influences idiom comprehension. These findings are in line with the LRH used in this research. The LRH advocates the significance of context in aiding comprehension of idioms.

In general, the presentation of idioms in an in-context situation was determined by the students' proficiency in using linguistic knowledge, and evaluating the more reasonable answer in a given context determined the presentation of idioms in an in-context situation. Students have slowly developed an awareness that context enforces differences in what is said and what is meant. Therefore, the search for a figurative meaning combined the new knowledge with language skills and contextual cues. This is why the students were able to better understand idioms in context compared to idioms in isolation, as indicated in Table 4.4 and Table 4.5.

Evidently, contextual information facilitates the production of idiomatic response when the semantic information suggested by the short stories was alongside the Lexical Representation Hypothesis (LRH) on idioms interpretation. Also, supportive contextual information proposed by Glucksberg’s (2001) theory on processing idioms is also captured here. The LRH and Glucksberg (2001) theory all view that context plays a significant role in the comprehension of idiomatic expressions. They all agree that an enabling context facilitates the comprehension of idioms and idiomatic expressions at any one given moment. This fact accounts for the differences realized between comprehension of idioms with an enabling context and those presented without an enabling context. The performance of students as recorded in Table 4.4 and Table 4.5 reflects this view. With an enabling context, the performance in the idiom comprehension task was 44.55%, while without an enabling context, and the performance was 37.4%. This clearly shows that an enabling context facilitates the comprehension of idiom tasks. This view is held by the LRH and Glucksberg’s (2001) theory of idiom comprehension.

A simple explanation of the literal meaning is insufficient to understand an idiom. It is essential to incorporate the meaning of idiom into a semantic illustration of the text. The more comprehensible the semantic representation of the text is, the less challenging the explanation of the figurative meaning will be. On the other hand, regarding non-contextual idioms, the respondents faced some challenges in identifying the figurative meaning of the opaque and transparent idioms. Concisely, contextual information provides significant support to the majority of the university students in this study to comprehend the figurative meanings of new idioms.

To further examine whether the context influenced idiom comprehension, the researcher administered the respondents another idiom comprehension cloze test. The cloze test that the researcher administered to the same respondents had similar idioms in the context and in isolation (minus an enabling context). The researcher supplied 10 questions to the respondents in this cloze test. There were 3 opaque idioms, 3 transparent idioms, and 4 semi-transparent idioms in the cloze test. The reason behind using ten (10) questions in this section was to reduce the time spent answering all questions in the cloze test. As argued early in this chapter, if the items in the test or a questionnaire are too many, there is a possibility of leaving many blank spaces or guessing. So in reducing the number of idioms in this section, it was aimed at curbing the chances of guessing and leaving blank spaces on the cloze test by the respondents.

The opaque idioms used in the test were: “a pain in the ass”, “a cradle snatcher” and “feeling at cloud nine”. The semi-transparent idioms used in the test were: “a bed of roses”, “open the flood gates” “a humble pie” and “ride the storm” while the transparent idioms used were: “hit the rock”, “a walk in the park” and “lame excuse”. The source of the idioms used in this cloze test was from a combination of three different sources: The Penguin English Dictionary of idioms, an approved Tanzania secondary schools English course book for form three by Kadeghe M. (2012), and also from English Language textbook for Secondary Schools by James E. Kinunda and Gedfrey R. Bukagile(2005). This is an approved Tanzania Secondary Schools English Course book for form two.

Table 4.12

Respondents knowledge of similar idioms in the context

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Idiom** | **Correct Raw Score for CEI / 180** | **% of correct Score for CEI** | **Incorrect raw scores for CEI** | **% of incorrect idioms for CEI** |
| 1 | a pain in the ass | 32 | 18% | 148 | 82% |
| 2 | give a lame excuse | 116 | 64% | 64 | 36% |
| 3 | to eat a humble pie | 75 | 42% | 105 | 58% |
| 4 | feeling at cloud nine | 46 | 26% | 134 | 74% |
| *5* | a bed of roses | 87 | 48% | 93 | 52% |
| 6 | ride the storm | 92 | 51% | 88 | 49% |
| 7 | hit the rock | 128 | 71% | 52 | 29% |
| 8 | open the floodgates | 85 | 47% | 95 | 53% |
| 9 | a walk in the park | 147 | 82% | 33 | 18% |
| 10 | a cradle snatcher | 39 | 22% | 141 | 78% |
|  | **Mean** |  | **47.1%** |  | **52.7%** |

Key:

Correct Raw Score: This is the total number of correct scores by students from the idiom task.

CEI: Abbreviation for Context Enabled Idioms. Idioms that were presented in an enabling context.

% of Correct Score for CEI: Correct number of idioms scored by students divided by 180 then multiplied by 100%.

# Table 4.13

Respondents knowledge on similar idioms in isolation (minus context)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Idiom** | **Correct raw scores of idioms scores in isolation/ 180** | **% correct raw scores** | **Incorrect raw score/180** | **% incorrect raw score** |
| 1 | a pain in the ass | 21 | 12% | 159 | 88% |
| 2 | give a lame excuse | 89 | 49% | 91 | 51% |
| 3 | to eat a humble pie | 59 | 33% | 121 | 67% |
| 4 | feeling at cloud nine | 11 | 6% | 169 | 94% |
| *5* | a bed of roses | 67 | 37% | 113 | 63% |
| 6 | ride the storm | 50 | 28% | 130 | 72% |
| 7 | hit the rock | 97 | 54% | 83 | 46% |
| 8 | open the floodgates | 65 | 36% | 115 | 64% |
| 9 | a walk in the park | 115 | 64% | 65 | 36% |
| 10 | a cradle snatcher | 09 | 5% | 171 | 95% |
|  | **Mean** |  | **32.45** |  | **67.6%** |

**Key:**

Correct Raw Score: This is the total number of correct scores by students from the idiom task.

CEI: Abbreviation for Context Enabled Idioms. Idioms that were presented in an enabling context.

% of Correct Score for CEI: Correct number of idioms scored by students divided by 180 then multiplied by 100%.

The result was positive when the researcher used the same (similar) idioms to test whether the context influenced idiom comprehension. With an enabling context supplied, the mean percentage score for the idiom test was 47.5%. On the other side, when idioms were supplied minus an enabling context, the mean percentage in the idiom comprehension test dropped to 32.4%. A difference of 5.2% in terms of idiom comprehension between the two groups of idioms was realized. This result implies that an enabling context could have influenced the comprehension of idioms by facilitating students to select the correct answer from the four multiple choices given or indirectly giving a clue to the answer. It, therefore, implies that the context plays a significant role in idiom comprehension by university students in Unguja.

## 4.3.2 Exposure to the English Language

The same cloze test (Appendix II) was administered to the English-Arabic group of students to determine whether exposure to English affected English idiom comprehension. These students (Arabic students) are part of the study sample. They study the Arabic language together with the English language as their undergraduate subject degree combination. These students acquired Arabic as their L1 and Kiswahili as their L2, while English is their third language. In this research, the English and Arabic students were 40 students (See Table 3.2, p. 103). It was presumed that these Arabic students have little exposure to English. The criteria for selecting the sample population remained the same, i.e., convenient sampling was used. The general performance of English group students was taken as a control group. The mean percentages of raw scores were calculated, and their corresponding results are recorded in Table 4.14 below.

Table 4.14

Competence in idiom comprehension between Arabic group versus English group

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Idiom** | **General English Idiom comprehension by English Linguistics** | **% in idiom comprehension by English major group** | **Arabic students score** | **% comprehension**  **By Arabic group** |
| 1 | To be “a slippery slope” | 12 | 40% | 8 | 20% |
| 2 | To be “on a roll” | 11 | 37% | 10 | 25% |
| 3 | To be a “couch potato” | 9 | 30% | 5 | 13% |
| 4 | To “throw in the towel” | 7 | 23% | 4 | 10% |
| 5 | To “give someone a hand” | 15 | 50% | 12 | 30% |
| 6 | “At the top of one’s lungs" | 12 | 40% | 11 | 28% |
| 7 | To be “at one’s fingertips” | 11 | 37% | 6 | 15% |
| 8 | “keep someone at one’s toes” | 4 | 13% | 9 | 23% |
| 9 | “Over my dead body” | 9 | 30% | 8 | 20% |
| 10 | To “turn the tables” | 7 | 23% | 11 | 28% |
| 11 | “rule of thumb” | 10 | 33% | 7 | 18% |
| 12 | To “get a head-start” | 16 | 53% | 14 | 35% |
| 13 | To “take charge” | 12 | 40% | 10 | 25% |
| 14 | To “beat about the bush” | 11 | 37% | 9 | 23% |
| 15 | To “talk of the devil” | 11 | 37% | 9 | 23% |
| 16 | To “make up one’s mind” | 8 | 27% | 11 | 37% |
| 17 | To “roll up one’s sleeves” | 5 | 17% | 3 | 8% |
| 18 | To “break somebody’s heart” | 9 | 30% | 8 | 20% |
| 19 | To add an “icing on the cake” | 17 | 57% | 16 | 40% |
| 20 | To be “not my cup of tea” | 8 | 27% | 4 | 10% |
|  | **Mean** |  | **37.4%** |  | **22.5%** |

It was found out that the mean percentage in idiom comprehension by the Arabic group was 22.8% as compared to the English major group that had a mean percentage score of 37.4%. This, therefore, indicates that in terms of English idiom comprehension, the English major group performed better. However, it is worth noting that the Arabic students performed better in certain idioms than the English group. However, this did not affect the overall idiom comprehension ability as they were only three out of twenty idioms. Their mean scores were also not very much significant. For example, idioms *keep someone at ones toes* was performed better by the Arabic group.

Out of 40 students in the group, 9 scored the meaning of that idiom correctly compared to the English group that had 4 correct scores. In terms of percentage, the Arabic group registered a mean percentage of 23%, while the English group scored a mean percentage of 13%. The other idiom in which the Arabic group performed better than the English group was *to turn the tables*. The English group had registered a correct score of 7 out of 30, representing 23% of the total number of students. In comparison, the Arabic group scored 11 out of 40, representing 28% of the total number of students. Finally, in the idiom *make up one’s mind,* 8 out of 30 English group, representing 27% of the total number of respondents scored the meaning of that idiom correctly compared to 11 out of 40 respondents, representing 37% of the total number of respondents from the Arabic group.

Despite the above observation, the general performance in many idioms was very low by the Arabic group. In some idioms like, *not my cup of tea,* only four (4) students out of 30 scored the meaning of that idiom correctly. This represents 10% of the total respondents. This is relatively low as compared to the English group that had 8 respondents with correct scores. The eight (8) respondents represent 27% of the total number of respondents. The other idioms that Arabic students performed extremely low were *couch potato* and *throw in the towel*. Out of 40 respondents, their performance was dismally low, i.e., 5 and 4, respectively. This represents 13% and 10% of the total population, respectively, which indicates that a lack of exposure to the English language played a significant role in idiom comprehension.

Using the same raw data from Table 4.8 above, paired sample t-test was performed using the GRAPH PAD PRISM 5.01 program to compare the performance of university students on idiom comprehension between the English major group and the Arabic group. With the help of this program, average and standard deviation values were calculated for each treatment. In its application, the theories below were tested:

**H0:** There is no significant difference in students’ knowledge in comprehension of idioms between English major students and Arabic students.

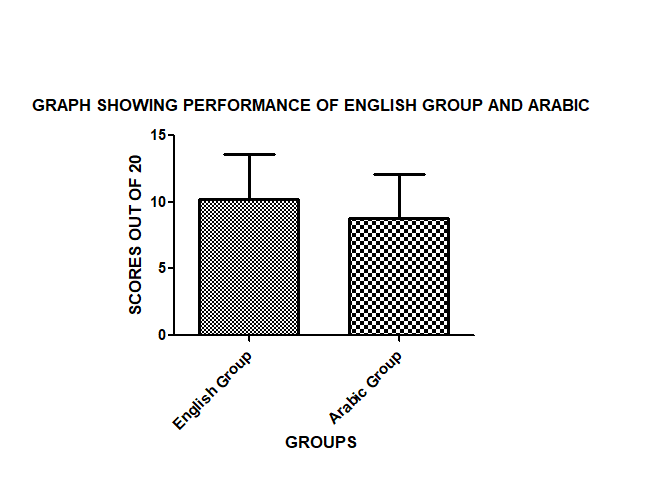
**H1:** There is a significant difference in student’s knowledge in comprehension of idioms between English major students and Arabic students.

# Table 4.15

A summary of results from a t-test

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of XY | 20 |
| Pearson r | 0.5175 |
| 95% confidence interval | 0.8317 to 0.7866 |
| P value (two-tailed) | < 0.0194 |
| P value summary | \*\*\* |
| Is the correlation significant? (alpha=0.05) | Yes |

There were twenty (20) idioms that were tested (XY) elements from Table 4.9. Pearson’s correlation coefficient (r) was found to be 0.5175 while at a 95% confidence interval, and there was a 0.8317 to 0.7866 mean difference. The correlation coefficient value implies that the correlation was significant. The principle tenet behind statistical correlations is that if the p-value is less than the significance level, the sample contains sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the correlation coefficient does not equal zero. In other words, the sample data support the notion that the relationship exists in the population. Therefore, this implies a significant difference in students' knowledge in comprehension of idioms between English students and Arabic students. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and consequently, exposure to the English language is a factor in idiom comprehension. A correlation graph below shows the performance of the English and Arabic groups in the comprehension of English idioms as drawn from the t-test values.



# Figure 4.2 Graph Showing Performance of English Group Against Arabic Group

Pearson’s correlation takes all of the data points on this graph and represents them as a single number. In this case, the statistical output below indicates that Pearson’s correlation coefficient is 0.5175. The scatter plot (scattered dots plotted) above displays the performance of English idioms by the English group versus the Arabic group. Each dot on the graph represents an individual student performance between the two groups. These data are actual raw data that was collected using a data collection tool. By using a statistical correlation, all students are represented by a correlation factor (r) which, in this case, is 0.5175. This figure is less than alpha <0.005.Therefore, the sample contains sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis, which stated, there is no difference in comprehension of English idioms between English students and Arabic students.

In summary, this study found that exposure to English is a significant factor in English idiom comprehension as revealed by raw, numerical, and statistical data from university students.

## 4.3.3 Impact of Mass Media

This subsection presents and analyses data obtained from respondents regarding the role of mass media in idiom comprehension. This is in line with objective number two of this research to measure factors affecting idiom comprehension among university students in Unguja. Does mass media have any impact on the comprehension of English idioms? This sub-section will answer this question based on the students' responses to the questions supplied to them from the questionnaire (Appendix I). This questionnaire contained 10 questions. It was used to test whether exposure to mass media had any impact on idiom comprehension. The exposure tested using the questionnaire was of two types: Exposure to mass media and exposure to the English language. On testing the impact of Mass media, questions 4, 5, and 8 on the questionnaire (See appendix I) were analyzed based on students' responses. Question 4 was based on what types of newspapers they love reading. Question 5 sought to know the type of radio station they love listening to in their free time. Question 8 sought to find out how much time per week they spend listening to music with lyrics in English. Students were then supplied with idiom cloze test (See appendix III) to respond to. The cloze test in appendix III was supplied to students after they (students) were exposed to mass media and exposure to English language. the cloze test in appendix III contained idioms that were taken from (The Penguin English Dictionary of idioms 3rd Edition (2004), an approved Tanzania Secondary schools English Course Book for Form three by *Kadeghe M. (2012)*, English Language textbook for Secondary Schools by *James E. Kinunda and Gedfrey R. Bukagile* (2005) and an approved Secondary School English Form Three by Angelina K, Adam K., & Leah K, (2012). Data that was collected from the respondents were recorded in Table 4.16. It was hypothesized that exposure to mass media has a positive impact on idiom comprehension.

# Table 4.16

Raw score in idiom comprehension with and without the influence of mass media

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Idiom** | **Idiom comprehension**  **without mass media** | **% of idiom comprehension without mass media** | **With aid of mass media** | **% comprehension**  **With aid of mass media** |
| 1 | To be a slippery slope | 76 | 42 | 81 | 45 |
| 2 | To be on a roll | 62 | 34 | 77 | 43 |
| 3 | To be a couch potato | 55 | 31 | 65 | 36 |
| 4 | To throw in the towel | 67 | 37 | 92 | 49 |
| 5 | To give someone a hand | 81 | 45 | 103 | 57 |
| 6 | At the top of one’s lungs | 61 | 34 | 80 | 44 |
| 7 | To be at one’s fingertips | 63 | 35 | 75 | 42 |
| 8 | keep someone at one’s toes | 59 | 33 | 77 | 43 |
| 9 | Over my dead body | 64 | 36 | 96 | 53 |
| 10 | To turn the tables | 47 | 26 | 77 | 43 |
| 11 | Rule of thumb | 60 | 33 | 83 | 46 |
| 12 | To get a head-start | 48 | 26 | 66 | 37 |
| 13 | To take charge | 96 | 53 | 127 | 71 |
| 14 | To beat about the bush | 107 | 59 | 162 | 90 |
| 15 | To talk of the devil | 71 | 39 | 111 | 62 |
| 16 | To make up one’s mind | 97 | 54 | 109 | 61 |
| 17 | To roll up one’s sleeves | 52 | 29 | 84 | 47 |
| 18 | To break somebody’s heart | 90 | 50 | 159 | 88 |
| 19 | To add an icing on the cake | 53 | 29 | 101 | 56 |
| 20 | To be not my cup of tea | 41 | 23 | 55 | 31 |
|  | **Mean** |  | **37.4%** |  | **52.2%** |

A paired-samples t-test was performed using the GRAPH PAD PRISM 5.01 program to compare the performance of university students on idiom comprehension between the group that had idioms presented with the help of mass media and those idioms that were presented minus mass media. With the help of this program, the average mean and standard deviation values were calculated for each treatment with the coefficient value p ˂ 0.05, which indicates that the difference is statistically significant.

The propositions below were tested:

**H0:** There is no substantial distinction in students’ comprehension of idioms with the help of mass media.

**H1:** There is a significant difference in student’s comprehension of idioms with the help of mass media.

A correlation coefficient was applied to the data to ensure the variables are related, positively or negatively. The Correlation Coefficient is a measure of association between two variables, and it ranges between –1 and 1. The principle tenet for this mathematical coefficient is that when the two variables are in a proper connection, the correlation measurement will be 1 or –1. The indication relies on whether or not a positive or negative relationship could be found among the variables. However, if the correlation coefficient is zero (0), it indicates that no linear relationship among the variables was found. Two types of correlation coefficients were used in the study. These are F, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, and the Spearman rank correlation coefficient. These correlation coefficients relied on the degree of connection among the variables. This research applied the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient to analyze idiom comprehension by students (without mass media influence) and those with (mass media influence). The reason for selecting Pearson product-moment in data analysis is that the data is non-parametric in nature. Pearson product-moment is widely used in measuring the association between two variables of such nature. Table 4.17 shows a summary of the findings from the correlation coefficient.

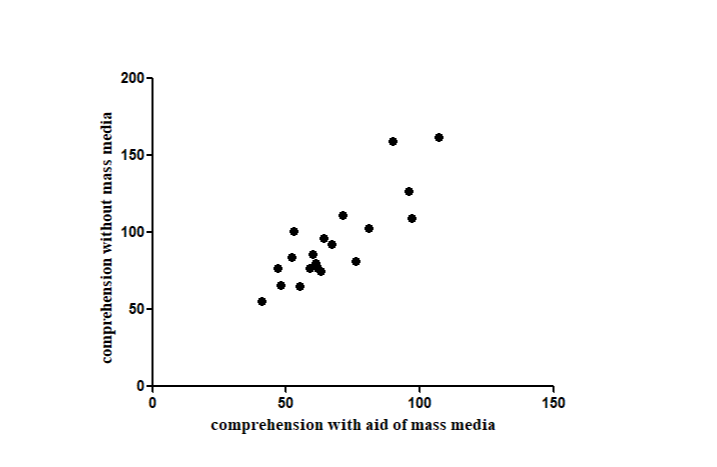
# Table 4.17

Summary of the findings from students’ knowledge from t-Test

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of XY | 20 |
| Pearson r | 0.8478 |
| 95% confidence interval | 0.6485 to 0.9383 |
| P value (two-tailed) | < 0.0001 |
| P value summary | \*\*\* |
| Is the correlation significant? (alpha=0.05) | Yes |
| R squared | 0.7187 |

There were twenty idioms from which university students were to respond to in the questionnaire supplied. The Pearson (r) was found to be 0.8478. This implies that the statistical data were closer to 1, which is a perfect leaner relationship. The (R) squired was found to be 0.7187. The (R) squired is a statistical measure of how close the data are to the fitted regression line. The closer the statistical figures are to one (1), the more robust relationship between the comparable variables. Therefore the statistical measure, which is 0.7187 (R), is closer to a leaner perfect 1 implying that mass media plays a significant role in the comprehension of idioms.

Additionally, this form of the Pearson correlation coefficient shows up in regression analysis. R-squared is a primary measure of how well a regression model fits the data. This statistic represents the percentage of variation in one variable that other variables explain. For a pair of variables, R-squared is simply the square of Pearson’s correlation coefficient. In this study, the R-Squired is 0.7187, implying that our regression model fits the data well. The following graph summarizes students’ knowledge in idioms with the help of mass media versus without the help of mass media.



# Figure 4.3 Graph of Students Idiom Comprehension with Mass media Against without Mass Media

Pearson’s correlation takes all of the data points on this graph and represents them as a single number. In this case, the statistical output above indicates that Pearson’s correlation coefficient is 0.8478. This is statistically a robust positive relationship. The scatter plot (scattered dots plotted) above displays the performance in the comprehension of English idioms with the aid of the Mass media group versus the group without Mass media aid. Each dot on the graph represents an individual student performance between the two groups. These data are actual raw data that was collected using a data collection tool. By using a statistical correlation, all students are represented by a correlation factor (r) which, in this case, is 0.8478. This figure is less than alpha<0.005. The sample contains sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis, which stated no difference in comprehension of English idioms between the English and Arabic group. Equally, this study p-value (two-tailed was <0.0001), indicating that there is a strong relationship statistically between the two comparable groups. In other words, it can be concluded that mass media is a strong factor in idiom comprehension, as depicted from the statistical data presented.

Further analysis was done to find out whether the kind of television students liked to watch had any impact on comprehension of idioms. In other words, the aim was to ascertain whether the television channel students liked to watch in their free time contributed to idiom comprehension. This question was captured by questionnaire (I) question number 10. In this question, students were supplied with three multiple choices to choose from. That is, BBC, ZBC and if they had any particular channel that they watched, they were to name it from the option of “OTHERS”. They were then given questions on idioms to respond to (See Appendix II). The raw data from 180 students regarding the three channels were recorded in Table 4.18.

# Table 4.18

Raw scores in idiom comprehension concerning the kind of television watched

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Idiom** | **Correct Raw Score/180** | **BBC** | **ZBC** | **OTHERS** |
| 1 | Piece of cake | 119 | 96 | 19 | 4 |
| 2 | In the same boat | 118 | 87 | 24 | 7 |
| 3 | On the right track | 110 | 99 | 5 | 6 |
| 4 | Money talks | 94 | 86 | 55 | 33 |
| 5 | Make up one’s mind | 94 | 52 | 23 | 11 |
| 6 | To develop a cold feet | 87 | 43 | 37 | 13 |
| 7 | Last straw | 88 | 23 | 56 | 13 |
| 8 | To see eye to eye | 77 | 04 | 77 | 22 |
| 9 | Do something by the book | 74 | 07 | 82 | 17 |
| 10 | To face the music | 74 | 17 | 45 | 44 |
| 11 | Have a long face | 75 | 53 | 29 | 23 |
| 12 | Hit the roof | 71 | 19 | 56 | 34 |
| 13 | Make up one’s mind | 67 | 15 | 44 | 54 |
| 14 | Take advantage of | 66 | 23 | 70 | 21 |
| 15 | Money talks | 62 | 34 | 61 | 23 |
| 16 | Hang out | 61 | 45 | 55 | 19 |
| 17 | Tip of the iceberg | 61 | 14 | 83 | 22 |
| 18 | On the right track | 60 | 8 | 81 | 31 |
| 19 | Green snake in a green grass | 57 | 16 | 77 | 30 |
| 20 | Cross someone’s mind | 55 | 20 | 89 | 16 |

Table 4.17 deduced that out of 119 respondents who scored in the comprehension of the idiom *piece of the cake,* 96 of them liked to watch BBC television channel during their leisure time. This translates to 80.6% of the total respondents who scored correctly on the meaning of that idiom. Those who liked to watch ZBC television during their leisure time were 19 out of 119, translating to 15.9% of the total respondents. Four respondents out of 119 liked watching other channels, including music channels or other non-English channels. They translate to 3.3% of those respondents who scored the meaning of that idiom correctly.

On the other hand, out of 110 respondents who scored the comprehension of the idiom *on the right track* correctly, 99 of them liked to watch BBC television which translates to 90% of the respondents. 5 out of 110 respondents liked to watch ZBC as their favourite TV channel. This corresponds to 4.5% of the total respondents who scored the correct meaning in the comprehension of that given idiom. The above statistical data shows that the TV channels students like to watch during their leisure time correlates with their idiom comprehension. This statistical data respond to objective number two, which was to assess the factors that affect idioms' comprehension among university students in Unguja.

Contrary to objective number two, the places (environment) where students live did not have any statistical implication on this study. Even though it was anticipated that the environment that one was in would affect the comprehension of idioms at a given time, this study never found so. It was anticipated that those who at one time lived in an English-speaking country could perform well in those idioms, but it was not statistically proven. Out of a sample of 90 respondents used in the study, it was indirectly observed that if one resided in an English-speaking country for a long time, one would correlate with comprehending English idioms.

Out of a sample of the 90 selected respondents, 45 (50%) of the respondents had lived in an English-speaking country for more than five years. However, when it came to comprehension of idioms, they performed below average. Their mean percentage score was 42.5%. Out of the remaining 45 respondents sampled, 15 indicated that they never lived in an English-speaking country. However, their overall performance in idiom comprehension was 49.6%.The remaining respondents did not indicate whether or not they had lived in an English-speaking country. The performance was contrary to the expectation of the researcher. It was anticipated that the longer one lives in an English-speaking country, the easier it becomes to comprehend English idioms. However, it was statistically proven that those who lived in an English-speaking country either doing a language course or exchange program had performed well compared to those who had gone there for a holiday or work-related. Out of the 90 sampled respondents, 51 respondents (56% of the population) went to the English-speaking country to either study or pursued an English course. From this statistical data, it was evident that it is not how long one has been in an English-speaking country that makes it easier for him or her to perform well in idiom comprehension, but rather what he or she was doing there matters a lot. Those who went to an English-speaking country to undertake an English course performed better in idiom comprehension than those who went there for either holiday or working.

In conclusion, high-familiar idioms indicated higher mean scores than low-familiar idioms in both conditions of idiom comprehension. In addition, despite the familiarity level of idioms, students’ comprehension of idioms was significantly developed with the support of contextual information, compared to their comprehension when no context was applied.

# 4.4 Inherent Features of Idioms and their Effects on Student’s Idiom Comprehension

This section responds to objective number three of this study. The objective was to find out whether the inherent features of an idiom affect its comprehension. Inherent features are qualities that are considered permanent or cannot be separated from an essential character. In relevance to this study, the essential features that are permanent in given idioms are; transparency, semantic non-compositionality (lack of correlation between syntax and sense), lexical integrity (in various degrees), institutionalization, and compositeness. This research examined how the following inherent factors contribute to English idiom comprehension by university students.

## 4.4.1 Transparency of Idioms

Transparency refers to how an idiom is understood according to its real meaning concerning concordance with its syntactic and lexical structure. The antonym of this term is opaqueness, which is described as the discrepancy between the lexicalized meaning of an idiom and its syntactic and lexical structure. This subsection aimed to ascertain whether the “transparency” factor contributes to the comprehension of idioms by university students. Raw data from ten transparent idioms and ten opaque idioms were compiled for analysis. These raw data were taken from Table 4.4 and Table 4.5 for analysis. The 20 idioms used in Table 4.4 were classified into opaque, semi-transparent, and transparency categories. There were five opaque idioms, five transparent idioms, and ten semi-transparent idioms. Table 4.5 also had a total of 20 idioms. Out of the 20 idioms used for analysis, five were opaque, ten were semi-transparent, and five were transparent. In total, there were 40 idioms used in the two cloze tests: 10 were opaque, 20 were semi-transparent, and10 were transparent idioms. Table 4.19 below contains a classification of idioms used in these two cloze tests.

**Table 4.15**

**Classifications of idioms used in cloze tests**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Idiom Type** | **Examples in the Test** |
| **A** | **Transparent idioms** | 1. Piece of cake 2. In the same boat 3. On the right track 4. Take charge 5. Money talks 6. Make up one’s mind 7. Cold hearted 8. Take advantage of 9. Cross someone’s mind 10. Give someone a hand |
| **B** | **Semi-transparent idioms** | 1. To be at one’s fingertips 2. To beat about the bush 3. Keep someone at one’s toes 4. Rule of thumb 5. To break somebody’s heart 6. To be a couch potato 7. To be on a roll 8. On a slippery slope 9. To be a slippery slope 10. Break a leg 11. Pull someone’s leg 12. Green snake in a green grass 13. Tip of the iceberg 14. Hit the roof 15. Hang out 16. Do something by the book 17. To face the music 18. Last straw 19. To develop a cold feet 20. To see eye to eye |
| **C** | **Opaque Idioms** | 1. Not my cup of tea 2. Turn the tables 3. Get ahead start 4. Have a long face 5. Roll up ones sleeves 6. Icing on the cake 7. Talk of the devil 8. Throw in a towel 9. Over my dead body 10. At the top of one’s lungs |

In trying to ascertain whether the transparency of an idiom affects comprehension of a given idioms, raw data for transparent idioms from the two cloze tests from Tables 4.4 and 4.5 were selected and analyzed as demonstrated below. Each student’s response to opaque and transparent idioms was recorded in Table 4.19 and Table 4.20, respectively.

# Table 4.19

Raw data on comprehension of transparency idioms

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **s/n** | **Idiom** | **Raw Score/180** | **% Idiom Score** |
| 1 | Piece of cake | 119 | 66.1% |
| 2 | In the same boat | 118 | 65.6% |
| 3 | On the right track | 110 | 61.1% |
| 4 | Take charge | 96 | 53.3% |
| 5 | Money talks | 94 | 52.2% |
| 6 | Make up one’s mind | 94 | 52.2% |
| 7 | Cold hearted | 87 | 48.3% |
| 8 | Take advantage of | 85 | 47.2% |
| 9 | Cross someone’s mind | 81 | 45.0% |
| 10 | Give someone a hand | 81 | 45.0% |
|  | **Mean score** | **96.5** | **53.6%** |

# Table 4.20

Raw data on comprehension of opaque idioms

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **s/n** | **Idiom** | **Raw Scores /180** | **% Raw Score** |
| 1 | Not my cup of tea | 41 | 22.8% |
| 2 | Turn the tables | 47 | 26.1% |
| 3 | Get ahead start | 48 | 26.7% |
| 4 | Have a long face | 43 | 23.9% |
| 5 | Roll up ones sleeves | 52 | 28.9% |
| 6 | Icing on the cake | 53 | 29.4% |
| 7 | Talk of the devil | 54 | 30.0% |
| 8 | Throw in a towel | 67 | 37.2% |
| 9 | Over my dead body | 64 | 35.6% |
| 10 | At the top of one’s lungs | 61 | 33.9% |
|  | **Mean Score** | **53** | **29.5%** |

As it can be deduced from Table 4.19 on comprehension of transparent idioms, a raw mean score of 96.5 was realized based on the performance of the ten idioms supplied. The 96.5 is the mean score of the ten idioms tested. This mean score translates to 53.6% of their familiarity rate. On the other hand, students registered a mean raw score of 53 on opaque idioms. This translates to 29.5% of the total number of idioms tested, which was 10. The comparative score of the two classes of idioms (transparent and opaque idioms) indicates that students performed better in idioms that were transparent as compared to the opaque idioms as shown in Table 4.19 and Table 4.20, respectively.

The two classes of idioms (transparent and opaque) were further subjected to mathematical correlation to determine whether the relationship between opaque and transparent idioms was statistically significant. A paired-samples t-test was performed using the GRAPH PAD PRISM 5.01 program to compare the students' comprehension of opaque and transparent idioms. With the help of this program, average and standard deviation values were calculated for each treatment. The following hypotheses were tested:

**H0:** There is no substantial distinction in students’ knowledge in comprehension of opaque idioms.

**H1:** There is a significant difference in student’s knowledge in comprehension of opaque idioms.

Results from the correlation were recorded in Table 4.21 below.

# Table 4.21

Results from t-Test on opaque and transparent idioms

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **XY pairs** | **10** |
| Pearson r | -0.8154 |
| 95% confidence interval | -0.9548 to -0.3816 |
| P value ( two tailed) | 0.0040 |
| P value summary | \*\* |
| Is the correlation significant? (alpha = 0.05 | Yes |

Whether the difference between the results is meaningful or not was examined by the correlation test. From the statistical analysis, a correlation coefficient (r) was -0.8154, indicating a strong negative correlation between the students' knowledge in transparent idioms. The basis of the negative correlation is that the higher the negative correlation between two variables, the closer the correlation coefficient will be to the value -1.By the same token, two variables with a perfect positive correlation would have a correlation coefficient of +1, while a correlation coefficient of zero implies that the two variables are uncorrelated and move independently of each other. Data from this study showed a strong correlation between students' comprehension of transparent and opaque idioms as the correlation coefficient (r) is -0.8154. This implies that the transparency of idioms contributed towards idiom comprehension.

In summary, the results from this correlation showed a significant difference in students' knowledge of idiom comprehension between opaque and transparent groups. This is because the correlation coefficient (p) was found to be less than <0.05. When p<0.05, it implies that the difference is statistically different and, therefore, quite significant.

The results described above correspond well with the Lexical Representation Hypothesis (LRH) used in this research. According to the studies forming the basis of this theory, L2 learners (in this case, university students) have to rely heavily on their mother tongue when trying to interpret L2 idioms. However, since they had not created as many idiom entries in their L2 as in their L1, they are more inclined to decompose L2 idioms than native speakers. Unsurprisingly, as seen in Table 4.4 and Table 4.5, this technique works well with an expression that is transparent and semitransparent but not with opaque ones. That is why students scored higher in transparent and semi-transparent idioms as compared to opaque idioms.

The LRH advances this presupposition on what is anticipated when it is applied in idiom comprehension tasks. It holds that when L2 learners are faced with idioms and idiomatic expressions, they tend to first look at their counterparts from their L1. Suppose it fails to decompose it to the L2. In that case, they tend to incline to the lexical components making up that idiom and interpret them according to the dictionary meaning. In doing so, they lose the meaning of opaque idioms. However, they are likely to score on transparent and semi-transparent idioms. This view held by the LRH accounts for the reasons as to why idioms like, *to take charge*(see Table 4.4), which is a transparent idiom is were highly scored by students as compared to idioms like, *not my cup of tea*, which very few students scored the correct meaning from the same table. The idiom, *not my cup of tea,* is completely an opaque one. There is nothing in the lexical components of this idiom that can imply that one who is being referred to is not important.

## 4.4.2. Decomposonality

This sub-section aims to respond to objective number three, which was aimed at finding out whether inherent features of an idiom affect its comprehension. In this section, the researcher examined the influence of the compositionality dimension on the processing of idiomatic expressions. Compositional idioms are the type of idioms whose meaning is a function of the meanings of their sub constituents and their syntactic relations, while non-compositional idioms are the type of idioms whose meaning is not determined by the sub constituents and syntactic relations of a given idiom. This section aimed to determine whether the compositional and non-compositional inherent features of idioms affect the comprehension of idioms by university students in Unguja.

In this study, the respondents read sentences containing decomposable idioms, non-decomposable idioms, or control expressions and performed a lexical decision task on figurative targets presented. The lexical decision task was a vocabulary level test (See Appendix XI). This test was adopted by Huang (2007) in testing the Chinese EFL learners’ comprehension of L2 idioms based on the effects of idiom type and proficiency level. The function of this test was to find out the language proficiency of the university students before attempting the idiom comprehension cloze test. It usually prepares students to attempt the questions in the cloze test since the mode of answering the questions in the vocabrary test is similar to the cloze test presented to them afterward (See Appendix XI).Both decomposable and non-decomposable idioms were selected from idiom tasks on cloze test II and cloze test III(See Appendix II and Appendix III). Results from the ten idioms used are recorded in Table 4.22 below.

# Table 4.22

Most non-decomposable idioms deduced from respondents’ idiom task

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Idiom** | **Raw score/**  **180** | **Mean** | **Raw score**  **- mean** |  | **Variance =** | **SD =** |
| 1 | Not my cup of tea | 41 | **48.2** | -7.2 | 51.84 | **18.232** | **4.27** |
| 2 | Turn the tables | 47 | -1.2 | 1.44 |
| 3 | Get ahead start | 48 | -0.2 | 0.4 |
| 4 | Roll up ones sleeves | 52 | 3.8 | 14.44 |
| 5 | Icing on the cake | 53 | 4.8 | 23.04 |
|  | **Total** | **241** |  | **91.16** |

The mean score of five non-decomposable idioms from Table 4.22 above is 48.2, with a Standard Deviation (SD) of 4.27 and a variance of 18.232. The mean score of the five most decomposable idioms shown in Table 4.23below is 107, with a Standard Deviation (SD) of 11.06 and a variance of 122.4. This demonstrates that respondents performed much better in the idiom task on decomposable idioms than non-decomposable idioms.

# Table 4.23

Most decomposable idioms deduced from respondent’s idiom task

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Idiom** | **Raw score/180** | **Mean** | **Raw score -**  **mean** |  | **Variance =** | **SD =** |
| 1 | Piece of cake | 119 | 107 | 12 | 144 | 122.4 | 11.06 |
| 2 | In the same boat | 118 | 107 | 11 | 121 |
| 3 | On the right track | 110 | 107 | 3 | 9 |
| 4 | Money talks | 94 | 107 | -13 | 169 |
| 5 | Make up one’s mind | 94 | 107 | -13 | 169 |
|  | **Total** | **535** |  | **0** | **612** |

Whether the difference between the results is meaningful or not was examined by the correlation test. From the statistical analysis, a correlation coefficient (r) was found to be -0.9747, indicating a strong negative correlation between the students' knowledge in compositional idioms. The tenet behind a negative correlation is that the higher the negative correlation between two variables, the closer the correlation coefficient will be to the value -1.By the same token, two variables with a perfect positive correlation would have a correlation coefficient of +1, while a correlation coefficient of zero implies that the two variables are uncorrelated and move independently of each other.

This study showed a strong negative correlation between students' comprehension of transparent and opaque idioms as the correlation coefficient (r) is -0.9747. This implies that the compositionality of idioms contributed towards idiom comprehension. Results demonstrated a clear effect of compositionality on the activation of figurative meaning. These results are discussed in the framework of the hybrid model (Titone & Connine, 1999) and the construction–integration (CI) model (Kintsch, 1998).

## 4.4.3 Ambiguity as an Inherent Feature in Idiom Comprehension

The semantic structure of many idioms is constituted by concrete (literal) actions that convey abstract (figurative) mental states and events. Idioms have a general characteristic of ambiguity. Ambiguity is a situation in which something has more than one possible meaning and may therefore cause confusion. This research investigated the effect of ambiguity as an inherent factor in idiom comprehension. The researcher used a cloze test (Appendix VIII) in collecting data from the respondents. The cloze test was supplied in an enabling context with two multiple-choice options. Out of the two multiple choices provided, one was the correct option while the other was ambiguous. The correct option (response) captures the general figurative meaning of the idiomatic expression. The response reflects the concrete meaning of an idiomatic expression. On the other hand, an ambiguous option has nothing to do with the accurate figurative meaning of the expression. It is that vague response or reflects only a partial understanding of the figurative meaning of the idiomatic expression. In that regard, this test was guided by the following hypothesis:

**H0.** Ambiguity does not affect English idiom comprehension among university students in Unguja.

**H1.** Ambiguity affects idiom comprehension among University students in Unguja.

The extent to which the number of meanings associated with a linguistic unit in a given English idiom was tested using a cloze test (see Appendix VIII). There were twenty idioms provided in the cloze test. Each cloze test had an ambiguous option and the correct option. Instructions were given to the students, and afterward, they answered the questions from the cloze test supplied to them. The results from their responses are recorded in Table 4.24 below.

# Table 4.24

Students score on ambiguity in idioms

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sn** | **Idiom** | **Ambiguous option** | **Correct option** | **% Ambiguity** | **% Correct option** |
| 1 | “in the same boat” | 126 | 54 | 70 | 30 |
| 2 | “piece of cake” | 99 | 81 | 55 | 45 |
| 3 | “Icing on the cake” | 135 | 45 | 75 | 25 |
| 4 | “take charge” | 123 | 57 | 68 | 32 |
| 5 | “it's not my cup of tea” | 163 | 17 | 90 | 10 |
| 6 | “slippery slope” | 105 | 75 | 58 | 42 |
| 7 | “cross someone’s mind” | 77 | 103 | 42 | 58 |
| 8 | “put wool over people’s eyes” | 83 | 97 | 46 | 54 |
| 9 | “at one’s fingertips” | 88 | 92 | 48 | 52 |
| 10 | “at the top of one’s lungs” | 92 | 88 | 51 | 49 |
| 11 | “cold feet” | 65 | 115 | 36 | 64 |
| 12 | “last straw” | 99 | 81 | 55 | 45 |
| 13 | “see eye to eye” | 121 | 59 | 67 | 33 |
| 14 | “face the music” | 107 | 73 | 59 | 41 |
| 15 | “long face” | 177 | 3 | 98 | 2 |
| 16 | “hit the roof” | 171 | 9 | 95 | 5 |
| 17 | “money talks” | 101 | 79 | 56 | 44 |
| 18 | “take advantage of” | 129 | 51 | 71 | 29 |
| 19 | “Tip of the iceberg means” | 107 | 73 | 59 | 41 |
| 20 | “hang out” | 85 | 95 | 47 | 53 |
|  | **Mean Percentage** |  |  | **62.3%** | **37.7%** |

As can be deduced from Table 4.24, the mean percentage of raw data on an ambiguous option from the idiom task was 62.3%. On the other hand, the mean percentage of the correct raw score was 37.7%. It implies that the ambiguous option from multiple choices given in the cloze test was more than the correct option. In other words, at a rate of 62.35%, the university students selected an ambiguous statement compared to the correct option from an idiom comprehension task. For example, the idiom, *to have long face,* from the table above. Out of 180 respondents who responded to the meaning of that idiom, 177 students selected an ambiguous option. This translates to 98% of the total number of respondents who answered the meaning of that idiom.

However, in some cases, the results were not as expected. For example, the idiom number 7, *cross someone’s mind,* in the table above, out of 180 respondents, only 42 selected the ambiguous option. This means that the number of students who scored the correct option was larger than the number of those who selected the ambiguous option. Nevertheless, the overall comparison revealed that ambiguous ones surpassed the correct option by 24.6 %. It can, therefore, be concluded that ambiguity affects idiom comprehension.

A paired-samples t-test was performed using the GRAPH PAD PRISM 5.01 program to compare the respondents’ performance on idiom comprehension between the raw scores of selected ambiguous options versus scores of a given idiom correctly from the questionnaire. With the help of this program, the average mean and standard deviation values were calculated for each treatment with the coefficient value p ˂ 0.05, which indicates that the difference is statistically significant. The hypotheses were being tested can be seen below:

**H0:** There is no substantial distinction in students’ knowledge in comprehension of ambiguous idioms

**H1:** There is a significant difference in student’s knowledge in comprehension of ambiguous idioms.

To ensure whether or not the variables are related, a correlation coefficient was applied to the data. The principle tenet for this mathematical coefficient is that if the two variables are in a perfect linear relationship, the correlation coefficient will be either 1 or –1. The sign depends on whether the variables are positively or negatively related. However, the correlation coefficient is zero (0) if there is no linear relationship between the variables. This research applied the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient to analyze ambiguity in idiom comprehension by university students. The reason for selecting Pearson product-moment in data analysis is that the data is non-parametric in nature. The Pearson product-moment is widely used in measuring the association between two variables of such nature. Table 4.25 shows a summary of the findings from the correlation coefficient.

# Table 4.25

Summary of the findings from students’ knowledge from t-test on ambiguity

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of XY | 20 |
| Pearson r | 0.8568 |
| 95% confidence interval | 25.56 to 65.04 |
| P value (two-tailed) | < 0.0001 |
| P value summary | \*\*\* |
| Is the correlation significant? (alpha=0.05) | Yes |
| R squared | 0.7187 |
| t,df | t=4.67 df=38 |

There were twenty idioms from which university students were to respond to in the questionnaire supplied. The Pearson (r) was found to be 0.8568. This implies that the statistical data were closer to 1, which is a perfect leaner relationship. The (R) squared was found to be 0.7327. The (R) squared is a statistical measure of how close the data are to the fitted regression line. The closer the statistical figures are to one (1), the stronger the relationship between the comparable variables. Therefore our statistical measure, which is 0.7327 (R) is closer to a leaner perfect 1 implying that ambiguity plays a significant role in the comprehension of idioms.

Additionally, this form of the Pearson correlation coefficient shows up in regression analysis. R-squared is a primary measure of how well a regression model fits the data. This statistic represents the percentage of variation in one variable that other variables explain. For a pair of variables, R-squared is simply the square of Pearson’s correlation coefficient. In this study, the R-Squired is 0.7327, implying that the regression model fits the data well. From this correlational statistical finding, it is evident that ambiguity (as an inherent feature in idioms) affects the comprehension of English idioms. Therefore, it means that the null hypothesis is rejected.

In summary, the researcher administered two types of data collection tools to the sampled respondents in data collection. The first type was a questionnaire and the second type was a cloze test(s). The two tools were presented in the form of a multiple-choice option. The cloze test had idioms in a given context (Appendix II) and those in isolation (Appendix III). This cloze test was meant to test the students’ level of comprehension of idioms. The selected idioms ranged from opaque to semi-transparent and transparent ones. Table 4.24 gives a summary of the different categories of idioms that were used in this research. The idioms contained in this cloze test captured objective one, which was; “to examine the comprehension of idioms among university students in Unguja. Opaque and transparent idioms contained in the cloze test administered were meant to respond to objective number three, which was to “find out whether inherent features of an English idiom affect its comprehension among students in Unguja.”

The second set of a cloze test (Appendix III) contained varieties of selected idioms ranging from opaque, semi-transparent to transparent idioms like in the first cloze test above. However, idioms in this task (Appendix III) were in isolation. No context was given. The items in this cloze test aimed at giving responses to the general objective, which was “to assess the comprehension of English idioms among university students in Unguja,” the role of the context in idiom comprehension was captured by this task. Items in this idiom task were also meant to answer the second objective, which was “to assess the factors which affect the comprehension of English idioms among students in Unguja.” Each cloze test had twenty items to which respondents were asked to respond. The second data collecting tool (Appendix I) was an open-ended questionnaire. It was meant to ascertain the degree to which the context influences idiom comprehension. Items contained in this questionnaire were also aimed at answering the general objective of this study which was “to find out the factors that affect idiom comprehension among university students in Unguja”*.* In summary, the questionnaire and cloze tests were administered with each element(s) in the questionnaire and cloze test aimed at responding to a given objective, as stated in chapter one in this research study.

# 4.5 Discussion

This study assessed comprehension of English idioms among university students in Unguja. This problem emanated from poor performance in the comprehension of English idioms using a pre standardized test administered to the three universities in this research study. The researcher used questionnaires and cloze tests to collect data from a sampled population of University students from the three Universities. The general idiom comprehension by university students from the three Universities was analyzed in line with the stated objective of the study and also in line with the Lexical Representation Hypothesis (LRH) and Glucksberg's (2004) theory.

The first objective was to examine the comprehension of idioms among university students in Unguja. The findings revealed that the respondents’ performance in idiom comprehension was below average. Many factors are contributing to this below-average performance. Firstly, mastering the English language is challenging for university students. This is because English is not their first/native language. They had to dwell with two obstacles; language barrier and figurative language, which encompass idioms. When ESL learners process comprehension other than their native language, factors such as language interference might happen. This is in line with Gass and Selinker (2008), who claimed that interference occurs between L1 and L2 during the acquisition of L2, where L1 affects the L2 performance. The results are also in line with the arguments of the Lexical Representation Hypothesis, which advocates that idioms processing is difficult for L2 learners because the meaning is different from the lexical components of an idiom as it can be referred from the Dictionary. In other words, the LRH can account for these results obtained from the three Universities in Zanzibar in terms of idiom comprehension.

These findings are inconsistent with the findings of Giora (2002), who conducted similar research but with a different theoretical approach. Her research topic was “Understanding figurative and literal language,” using the graded salience hypothesis. Even though her theoretical approach was different from the theoretical approach used in this current research, the findings revealed that the subjects demonstrated a poor understanding of idiomatic expressions. Therefore, it implies that idiomatic comprehension still poses a significant challenge in processing idiom comprehension, whether in the L2 or the L1.

The second objective was to assess the factors which affect the comprehension of idioms among University students in Unguja. The findings revealed that the context, exposure to the English language, the familiarity of given idioms, and mass media are all contributing factors in the comprehension of idioms. Concerning the context as a factor of idiom comprehension, the current study discovered a statistical distinction among the idioms either presented with or without a supportive context (in isolation). From the descriptive statistics given in Table 4.4 and Table 4.5above (p.121), it was observed that students performed better in idioms presented with a supportive context than those idioms presented minus a supportive context. It indicated that in terms of percentage in comprehension, those idioms presented in a supportive context, the respondents’ score was 44.5%. In comparison, those presented minus a supportive context (in isolation), the respondents’ registered a mean percentage of 37.4%. This indicates that, among other unidentified factors, a supportive context had an influence on the comprehension of English idioms.

These findings on the influence of the context are also in line with the findings of Liontas (2002) and Ackerman (1982). Liontas (2002) investigated how context affects the understanding and analyzing of idioms in three different languages (French, German, and Spanish). The idioms were chosen according to their interlingual resemblance. The findings showed that the context considerably impacted idiom comprehension. Liontas (2002) suggested that context particularly more assisted in the L2 idiom comprehension that was dissimilar with L1 compared to similar or identical to L1 idioms. With the help of context, the respondents’ scores can achieve a higher percentage of accurate answers even in a task with no context. Liontas (2002) then concluded that when it comes to the L2 idiom comprehension task, a supportive context plays a significant role in aiding comprehension of idiom tasks. The findings from Liontas can also be seen to be in effect in the case of comprehension of idioms by University students in Unguja. In other words, the findings of this research are consistent with the findings of Liontas (2002).

On the other hand, Ackerman (1982) conducted similar research on English idiom comprehension of children with different age groups. Even though his methodology was different from this current researcher’s methodology, the results showed that idiomatic explanations and interpretations were easier when a supportive context was supplied. This is consistent with this research as it can be deduced from Table 4.4 and Table 4.5, respectively. The Lexical Representation Hypothesis can account for these findings. The hypothesis holds the view that a supportive context aids idiom comprehension. Therefore, it follows that the disparities in terms of idiom comprehension can be suggested to the current LRH applied in this research.

Additionally, the findings of the study are consistent with studies conducted by Baker (2007). Baker (2007) found that children and adolescents presented better descriptions of idioms when introduced in linguistic contexts supporting their figurative interpretations. The comprehension of the idiomatic expressions task was done by 6- and 9-year-old children and an adult control group. The subjects performed a story completion task (comprehension task) and a task of metapragmatic knowledge to justify their chosen answers. Two features of the stories were varied: the context (idiomatic vs. literal) and the idiom familiarity level (familiar vs. unfamiliar). The main results indicated that regardless of age, the context had a substantial impact on idiom comprehension.

Previous studies on English native speakers and EFL/ESL learners (Bulut &Çelik-Yazici, 2004; Cacciari & Levorato, 1989; Cooper, 1999; Gibbs, 1987; Nippold & Martin, 1989; Norbury, 2004; Qualls, O’Brien, Blood, & Hammer, 2003) also investigated the context of idioms. Students’ understanding of idioms improved when the context information was supportively accessible compared to their performance when no context was presented. Qualls et al. (2003) propose proportionality theory explaining decreasing idiom comprehension when the number of contexts lessens. Qualls et al. (2003) evaluated rural adolescents’ idiom comprehension in three different contexts: idioms in a story context, idioms in isolation, and idioms in a verification task. The findings showed that the story context generated the highest accuracy. It also indicated that the proportionality theory was applicable to non-native groups, such as Chinese EFL students (Qualls et al., 2003). The correct answers in idiom comprehension among the foreign language students were increased when the context was also improved. In general, idioms presented in a story context were accurately explained compared to those presented in isolation. The context supported the analysis of figurative expressions by presenting the required semantic information where the reader or listener obtained the correct meaning of the idiom.

The findings from this study also suggested that familiarity and context have supportive roles and improve the students’ idiom comprehension. Contextual information facilitates idiom comprehension specifically for less familiar idioms. On the other hand, the frequency of previous exposure will affect students’ idiom comprehension when the supportive context was unavailable. Therefore, highly familiar idioms suggested better accuracy. It implied that the EFL students could solve the challenges they had regarding unfamiliar idioms by using contextual cues from their previous exposure. Thus, there was no significant correlation in performance between the students who speak English as their first language and those who speak Kiswahili as their first Language.

The present study's findings were in line with Nippold and Taylor (1995) and Brasseur and Jimenez (1989),where the level of competency was somewhat low considering that the respondents did not score perfectly on explanation or the multiple-choice tasks of idiom comprehension. The Fullerton Subtest of Idioms competency specified a score ranging from 13-20 for respondents of 18 to 21 years of age. Consequently, the deficiency of a perfect score does not signify the absence of mastery. However, it may suggest that the respondents have a different level of competency.

The other factor that was found to affect idiom comprehension was exposure to the English language. The researcher found that the more students are exposed to the English language, the more likely they will score the meaning of given idioms. Descriptive statistics between the English and the Arabic-English groups indicated a statistical difference in terms of comprehension between the two groups in the idiom comprehension task. The respondent from the English group registered a mean score of 37.4%, while the Arabic-English group registered a mean score of 22.5%. This, therefore, implies that the English group performed better than the Arabic-English group on the idiom comprehension task. English major group had more exposure to the English language than their counterpart group.

Regarding the role of idioms familiarity, the respondents’ rating scale and the total score results were 35.1%. Zanzibar university students achieved unsatisfying results in idioms comprehension and were unfamiliar with idioms. This could result from poor quality in English teaching in both primary and secondary schools in Zanzibar. The teaching of English in Zanzibar was not emphatic on English idioms. The importance of teaching or explaining idioms was undermined. Therefore, the students did not put more effort into understanding or experiencing the use of idioms. In addition, there were insufficient systematic presentations and practices of English idioms in books and teaching materials. Teachers rarely used idioms in their presentations because of inadequate knowledge. Language acquisition occurs when the acquirer is given comprehensible input of the language structures through reading or hearing that is somewhat above their present ability (Brown, 2000). Insufficient input of idioms comprehension would thus deteriorate the improvements.

Although the respondents were not familiar with the idioms in the tests, their performance improved when presented with high-familiar idioms. This finding verifies the language experience hypothesis, which confirmed the developmental studies of native English speakers (Levorato & Cacciari, 1992; Nippold & Rudzinski, 1993; Nippold& Taylor, 1995, 2002; Ortony, Turner &Larson-Shapiro, 1985). The least challenging idioms to recognize for Chinese EFL learners were those much more familiar to them (Qualls et al., 2003). This current research on idiom comprehension by university students in Unguja will also ascertain whether familiarity is a factor that affects idiom comprehension.

The previous study on younger English native speakers found that it is less challenging for learners to comprehend high-transparency idioms (Gibbs, 1987; Levorato & Cacciari, 1999; Nippold& Taylor, 1995). In other words, when the literal meaning and figurative meaning of an idiom were more closely related, the difficulty of accurate idiom comprehension would decrease. However, the current study observed no strong correlation between learners’ ratings of idiom transparency and their performance in idiom comprehension. The small range of transparency rating for each idiom (1.83-2.29) showed that learners tended to have similar judgments of how closely each expression's literal and non-literal meanings were related. These results provide evidence to the suggestion that transparency was a relatively fixed property of idioms (Nippold & Taylor, 1995).

The third objective of this research was to assess how the inherent features of an idiom influence their comprehension. This research found out that inherent factors such as ambiguity, transparency, and compositeness of idioms influenced the comprehension of English idioms. A significant distinction is located within the opaque idioms in the mode of tasks and the presentations. However, no statistical significance was found in the high-familiarity idioms in the task and presentation mode. A statistical significance was discovered among the transparent idioms in both task and the presentation mode. These findings support Yoshikawa’s (2008) research findings. Yoshikawa (2008) investigated the idiom comprehension of 175 Japanese university students. The students were expected to note down the comparable meaning of English idioms in Japanese. The results were classified into four group classifications of idioms based on semantic transparency, group A, B, C1, and C2.The results suggested that English idioms will be more comprehensible when the similarity between the two languages is available. Even though Yoshikawa used a different methodology to collect and analyze his data, his findings are in line with this current research on university students in Unguja, i.e., the more transparent an idiom is, the easier it is to comprehend it.

These research findings are also in line with Irujo's (1986a&b) studies. Irujo (1986a & b) examined whether or not the advanced students of English depended on knowledge of L1 (Spanish) to understand and generate L2 (English) idioms. The findings suggested that identical idioms were the least challenge to understand and generate in both first and second language. Similar idioms in L1 and L2 were slightly more complicated. Idioms that were entirely diverse both, in L1 and L2, demonstrated to be highly challenging for the students to understand and generate. The disparity between opaque and transparent idioms performance, as it can be deduced from Table 4.4 and Table 4.5 supports Irujo’s findings. That is, transparent idioms were performed better than opaque idioms.

In conclusion, the findings of the present study suggested that idioms in a supportive context are the most practical to increase idiom comprehension. Consequently, to increase comprehension, idioms should be introduced along with supportive contexts. In teaching idioms to non-native speakers, teachers should select familiar idioms. Naturally, the students will become more familiar with the idioms depending on the exposure to such idioms. Moreover, students can be trained in semantic transparency and the relationship between literal and non-literal meanings of idioms. The findings of the current study illustrated that the non-native speaker of English might require particular proficiency of English language skills prior to being given idiom tests. Idiom comprehension might not be the first language option in teaching English to non-native speakers. However, before teaching idioms, students should have a well-established vocabulary and syntax.

# 4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents, analyses, and discusses data. The analysis is organized as per research objectives. The first objective was to examine the comprehension of idioms among university students in Unguja. The findings revealed that the respondents’ performance in idiom comprehension was below average. On this first objective, the results revealed that students performed better in idioms presented with an enabling context than those presented in isolation, i.e., without a context. The second objective was to assess the factors that affect idioms' comprehension among university students in Unguja. The findings revealed that the context, exposure to the English language, the familiarity of given idioms, and mass media are all contributing factors in the comprehension of idioms. The third objective was to investigate the way the inherent features of an idiom influence their comprehension. This research found out that inherent factors such as ambiguity, transparency, and compositeness of idioms influenced the comprehension of English idioms.

# CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY

# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

# 5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the significant findings, conclusion, and recommendations and suggests possible areas for further research. The purpose of this study was to assess the comprehension of English idioms among university students in Unguja, suggesting possible solutions to challenges identified by the study. The objectives that guided this research study were:

1. To examine the comprehension of English idioms among university students in Unguja.
2. Measure the factors which affect the comprehension of idioms among university students in Unguja.
3. To examine whether inherent features of an idiom affect its comprehension among university students in Unguja.

# 5.2. Summary of the Findings

This study assessed English idiom comprehension among university students from the three universities in Zanzibar. The three universities are The State University of Zanzibar, Sumait University, and Zanzibar University. The roles of the three factors (context, idiom familiarity, and idiom transparency) were assessed to ascertain their influence in idiom comprehension. The results indicated that there was a correlation between idiom characteristics in idiom comprehension. This was captured by the results obtained from the cloze test I and cloze test II. Items in cloze test III captured objective number three, which was to examine whether inherent features of an idiom influence its comprehension among University students in Unguja. The results indicated that there was a correlation between the context of a given idiom and also that of an individual in idiom comprehension. The materials that students got exposed to, the people they interacted with, and the language they normally used in their daily activities impacted idiom comprehension. However, the degree to which these factors influenced a given idiom (either transparent or opaque) was not clear.

The learners’ errors on multiple-choice tasks in isolation and in context were also subjected to further examination. No response was the least frequent error type among the first-year English students, while incorrect idiomatic (plausible within context) was by far the most frequent error they made, regardless of the context conditions. The Incorrect idiomatic responses were chosen more frequently than literal responses in context. However, when the context was not provided, the participants chose incorrect literal responses more often than the incorrect idiomatic (not plausible within context) ones.

This study found that the students most benefit from a supportive context in idiom comprehension. It implies that a supportive context should complement tested idioms to acquire a better understanding of idioms. The students should be familiar with and interested to learn the selected idioms. The students will become more familiar with such idioms that they were exposed to. Moreover, students can be trained in semantic transparency and the relationship between literal and non-literal meanings of idioms. This study also described that the EFL students might require a higher level of English language skills before being given idiom tests. Idiom comprehension might not be the first language option in teaching English to non-native speakers. However, before teaching idioms, students should have a well-established vocabulary and syntax. Future studies are needed to compare the performance of idiom comprehension based on the vocabulary scores or some measure of overall language competency.

# 5.3 Implications of the Findings

The findings from this research have several implications to the students, lecturers, syllabus designers, material developers, and researchers in the following ways; since idioms pose a challenge for learners, and yet they are intrinsically part of the language, they should be given more emphasis in classroom instruction (Cooper, 1999). Liontas (2002) advises second language teachers to introduce idioms to their students more regularly and systematically. He argues that extensive exposure to and systematic practice with idioms may enhance idiom comprehension. In addition, since many English language materials ignore idioms and/or introduce them in vocabulary lists (Irujo, 1986a), materials developers should provide sections and exercises focused on idioms independently. These exercises should motivate learners to apply various effective language learning strategies.

Since most language learners are not well aware of the effectiveness of language learning that will aid them in the comprehension of English idioms, teachers should familiarize them with language learning strategies and incorporate strategy training into teaching programs as supported by O’Malley and Chamot(1995). Research has shown the effectiveness of explicit instruction of language learning strategies, and syllabus designers should provide an opportunity to integrate strategy training with the language class. O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner‐Manzanares, Russo, and Küpper (1985) found that strategy training was successful in a natural teaching environment with second language listening and speaking tasks. This implies that teachers can facilitate learning if they integrate specific strategy training with classroom instructions.

Learners should be given ample opportunities to practise, transfer, and evaluate a strategy. Chamot (2005) avows that explicit language learning strategies instruction is more effective than asking students to use one or more strategies. She also suggests that this instruction be integrated with the regular language class. Since the focus has shifted from teacher-centered classes to learner-centered classes, material developers should develop materials which:

1. Teach different categories of language learning strategies to learners,
2. Specify which language learning strategies may be more effective in doing a particular task,
3. Provide tasks and exercises which allow learners to make use of different language learning strategies,
4. Give freedom to learners and teachers to use their own preferred language learning strategies.

# 5.4 Conclusions

The present study assessed factors that influence the comprehension of idioms among university students in Unguja. The general objective of the study was to investigate the factors that affected the interactions between familiarity, transparency, and contextual. The results showed that familiarity and context promote better idiom comprehension among the students. Familiar idioms presented with contextual information to the students will be less challenging to explain the figurative meanings of such idioms.

The study contributes to the learning of a foreign language. To enhance the L2 learners’ idiomatic skills, it is essential to increase the students’ experience with idioms. Researchers and teachers of the same areas of interest should take into consideration to include more idiomatic expressions in the textbooks or practice books. More activities should be created in listening or speaking skills for the teaching of idioms in meaningful contexts. During class time, the teachers should give a detailed and practical explanation of the construction of idioms and their figurative meanings.

This research used a multiple-choice task, which does not necessarily tap meaning generation processes. The respondents may have performed the task by checking the response options against the meaning of the text rather than by first deriving the meaning of the phrase. The advantage of the multiple-choice task is that students are not required to produce a verbal explanation, which might prejudice students with weaker language skills (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012). The use of this task, together with the explanation task used by Cain et al. (2005), provides evidence of Idiom comprehension and reading difficulties, task validity, and converging evidence of poor comprehenders’ specific difficulties with using context to guide text comprehension.

In line with the current study, several studies (e.g., Giora 2002; Griffin & Harley, 1996; Schneider, Eschman, & Zuccolotto, 2002) investigated the process of learners' L2 idiom comprehension. Schneider et al. (2002) found that the context supported participant’s comprehension of idioms up to 75%. A rich context necessitated learners towards arriving at the correct option from the test administered.

# 5.5. Recommendations

This section suggests recommendations based on the findings of this research and the objectives of this research.

## 5.5.1 Recommendations for Action

In this section, the researcher gives some recommendations that may assist in ensuring that students can comprehend idioms and idiomatic expressions since they form part and parcel of a major component in any language. Without doubt, if one wants to become fluent in the English language, comprehension of idiomatic expression is paramount. The findings showed that familiarity and context contribute to English idiom comprehension. When the students are presented with contextual idioms, it becomes less challenging for them to guess and understand the figurative meaning of such idioms.

In line with the first objective of this study, the researcher recommends that there is a need for designing course materials and providing enough exposure to idioms in a step-by-step mode of delivery, which can gradually build up learners’ idiomatic competence. This means that the learners should be explicitly introduced to the linguistic characteristics of idioms and their classification and interpretation of both familiar and unfamiliar ones. This recommendation is based on Liu (2008), who proposed four main strategies learners can use to understand idioms. These are the use of contextual knowledge, use of the first language, use of pragmatic knowledge or knowledge of the world, and use of cultural knowledge in the first language. Liu (2008) also stated that teachers should assist students in understanding idioms by giving their definitions, elaboration, and paraphrasing activities.

Based on the findings of this research, the researcher recommends that language teachers should pay attention to idiomatic competence as an inevitable and inseparable part of the learner’s overall competence in the language and resolve to deal with idioms in their classes. The researchers suggest that teachers try new technologies for teaching idioms. Compared to more traditional strategies like literal translation and finding idiom equivalents, new technologies offer learners an authentic context in which to comprehend the meaning and grasp the gist of the expressions. To improve language learners’ idiomatic knowledge, it is extremely important to follow English medium instruction with specific reference to idiomaticity and to increase learners’ opportunities for exposure to foreign language idioms.

When compiling textbooks or exercise books, language teachers and researchers should consider incorporating more idiomatic expressions. They may also resolve to create innovative idiom-based listening-speaking activities and teach and explain more idioms in authentic contexts, thereby increasing learners’ exposure to this kind of figurative language within meaningful constructs. During instruction, language teachers may purposefully explain in detail the formation of idioms and their figurative meanings and suggest projects that offer language learners ample opportunities to comprehend and use idioms in real-life situations.

In conclusion, the researcher recommends that:

1. It is highly recommended that EFL students increase their contact with idioms to improve their idiomatic knowledge.
2. Language researchers and teachers should consider include more idiomatic expressions in textbooks or exercise books.
3. Teachers should design more activities on listening or speaking, for the teaching of idioms to increase the students’ meaningful exposure.
4. During teaching, teachers should explain idiom formations and figurative meanings through well-designed activities that promote meaningful contexts and a better understanding of idioms.

Language is closely connected to culture. A culture transfers the values, beliefs, concepts, customs, and social norms and habits through language. It implies that a language, to a certain extent, is a symbolic illustration of a particular culture. Languages in the world differ from culture to culture. The difference can be seen in the symbols, diversities of structure, grammatical rules, and the way the languages are appropriately used in communication. Knowledge, values, and beliefs signify the culture that is translated and conveyed in the language. Therefore, it is of immense importance for language learners to study the linguistic information of the target language and consider improving cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competence in their study.

## 5.5.2 Areas for Further Research

The researcher wishes to call upon further researches on the following areas:

1. Additional studies on the age at which students start to comprehend idiomatic expressions are worth being undertaken. It will be fascinating to find out the age at which students start to acquire, comprehend and use English idioms in foreign language contexts
2. This research was limited to university students. Research on factors that influence idiom comprehension in upper secondary school or middle-class pupils could also be undertaken.
3. The researcher used a sample of 180 respondents from three universities in Unguja. Research with larger than 180 respondents is also possible.
4. This study used a questionnaire to collect data from participants with regard to idiom comprehension. Other studies might be conducted using other methods of data collection, like observations and interviews.

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**APPENDICES**

# APPENDIX I

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON EXPOSURE ON IDIOM COMPREHENSION**

**Introduction**

My name is Ngoge Tabley Amos; I am a PhD candidate from the Open University of Tanzania. I am carrying out research on English idiom comprehension. This questionnaire is used for collecting data for research on idiom comprehension purposes. Your response in this questionnaire will be used in determining the level of comprehension of English idioms**.**

**Instructions**

You are required to respond to each and every item in this questionnaire. There is no right or wrong response. Each response will be used in the analysis. Feel free to respond as instructed in each section. It is anticipated that within a period of 40 minutes, you will finish. However, strict adherence to time will not apply as this is not an examination.

**Part A. Profile of the Respondent**

Random number picked \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Gender (circle): M F

Age: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Year of undergraduate study (circle): 1. 2. 3.

Age at which you started learning English: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Part B. The Questionnaire**

Instruction: Circle the appropriate answer.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Question | A | B | C |
| 1 | Have you ever been or lived in an English speaking country | Yes | No |  |
| 2 | While in secondary school, did you belong to an English club | Yes | No | Other |
| 3 | Please estimate how much time per week you spend watching television in English per week | 1-4 hrs | 10-15 hrs |  |
| 4 | What types of newspaper do you like reading? | Daily monitor | Mwana  sport | Other |
| 5 | What radio station do you love listening to in your free time | ZBC | BBC | Other |
| 6 | Have you ever participated in any English competition outside your country? | Yes | No |  |
| 7 | Do you like reading novels and plays written in English language? | Yes | No |  |
| 8 | How much time per week do you spend listening to music that has lyrics in English so that you pay attention and actively listen to the lyrics? | 1-3 | 10-15 |  |
| 9 | Do you have friends whom you do communicate on the daily basis whose first language is English? | Yes | No |  |
| 10 | What type of television do you like to watch at your free time? | ZBC | BBC | Others |

# APPENDIX II

**IDIOM CLOZE TEST (CONTEXT ENABLED)**

**Introduction**

My name is Ngoge Tabley Amos; I am a PhD candidate from the Open University of Tanzania. I am carrying out research on English idiom comprehension.This cloze test is used for collecting data for research on idiom comprehension purposes. Your responses in this cloze test items will be used for analysis in determining the level of comprehension of English idioms. There is no right or wrong response. Each response will be used for analysis. Feel free to respond appropriately.

**Part A. Profile of Respondent**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Random number picked |  |
| Gender (circle): (M) (F) | Year of undergraduate study (circle): (1) (2) (3) |
| Age: | Age at which you started learning English: |

**Part B. Cloze Test**

**Instructions**

1. You are presented with 20 English expressions in this cloze test. Respond to each item as instructed by circling the appropriate option from the four (alternatives) given. The first one has been done for you as an example.
2. It is anticipated that within 40 minutes, you will finish. However, strict adherence to time will not apply as this is not an examination.

**Example:** The young man had been stealing for quite a long time. Every time he is suspected, he vehemently denies it. This time he was *caught red handed.*

What does it mean to be*“caught red-handed”?*

1. To leave traces after a crime
2. To be a murderer
3. To be seen doing something illegal or private
4. To turn red when lying
5. The three-party principles had been planning on how to overthrow the government for five years. But when the day finally came, they got *cold feet* and chose not to attempt after realizing the implication of their attempt if it fails. What is the meaning of the expression *“cold feet”?*
   1. That your feet are freezing
   2. To become nervous about doing something
   3. To change your mind completely
   4. To ignore what is going on
6. Quarrels, beatings, and abuses were the order of the day in her marriage. But she endured all, hoping that one day her husband will change. The *last straw* came when he came home with a packet of condoms in his pocket.

What is the meaning of the expression *“last straw”?*

1. The last in a series of unpleasant events which finally makes you feel that you cannot continue to accept a bad situation
2. The last word said by someone who is harassing you verbally
3. Emotional breakdown
4. When you have to drink your Coke without a straw because of the new boss
5. After political intrigues in Kenya that lead to massive loss of lives between the ruling party and opposition there was need from the international community to have a discussion to solve the crisis. After discussing the matter back and forth for one month, the parties could finally announce that they *see eye to eye* and that they had found a solution. What does it mean to *“see eye to eye”?*
   1. To find a compromise
   2. To be an eyewitness
   3. To agree about something with someone else
   4. To be able to look at each other, even if you do not agree with that person or persons
6. He was quite certain that he would not be in trouble when the police came. He had done everything *by the book.* What is the meaning of the expression *“by the**book”?*
   1. To do all your work by the book shelf
   2. To follow the rules exactly
   3. To do exactly what your employer has told you to do
   4. When a movie is based on a book
7. Standard six pupils were warned by the teacher on duty not to indulge in noise making activities. They never listened to the warning. When they were summoned to the deputy Head teacher’s office, they *faced the music.* What does it mean to *“face the music”?*
   1. To accept the unpleasant results of one's actions
   2. To take responsibility
   3. To say sorry
   4. To face the orchestra or band during a concert
8. “Why such a *long face”?* “My grandma died yesterday”. “I’m so sorry for your loss”. What does it mean to have a *“long face”?*
   1. To look serious
   2. To look tired
   3. To have a swollen face
   4. To look sad
9. I’m afraid my parents will *hit the roof* when I tell them that I crashed their car. What does it mean to *“hit the roof”?*
   1. To suddenly become very angry
   2. To become extremely disappointed
   3. To get hurt and sad
   4. To celebrate
10. How Mr. Juma managed to be employed as a chief accountant in the office of the governor with his poor qualification did not come as a surprise to many. As an individual I was not surprised. After all, we do live in a world where *money talks.* What is the meaning of the expression *“money talks”?*
    1. There is no hope for the average
    2. Money gives one power and influence to get one's own way
    3. Injustice rules
    4. Price is more important than variation
11. During the holy month of Ramadan in Zanzibar, many businessmen and business women *take advantage of* their customers by overpricing some goods. What does it mean to *“take advantage of”?*
12. To exploit
13. To disrespect
14. To do what seems best to do for the company
15. To improve a situation

10. A number of shops had to close down after a multinational retail corporation offered to pay a significantly higher price for the lease on the building. I was not surprised. After all, we do live in a world where *money talks.* What is the meaning of the expression *“money talks”?*

1. There is no hope for the average
2. Money gives one power and influence to get one's own way
3. Injustice rules
4. Price is more important than variation

11. Fatma asked Asha if she had plans for the night. Asha answered that she didn’t have anything special planned. “Then we can hang out tonight,” Fatma said. What does it mean to “hang out”?

1. To exercise by hanging upside down in a tree doing crunches
2. To spend time aimlessly
3. To be with your friends outside
4. To chat with your friends on Google+

12. “We believe these numbers of sexual harassment are the tip of the iceberg, Mr. Ngoge says.” There may be thousands or millions of incidents that go unreported. Some estimates suggest that only 5% to 15% of those who feel they experienced sexual harassment file complaints. Tip of the iceberg means:

1. A small evident aspect of something largely hidden
2. A problem that has no solution
3. Go to the authorities and report sexual harassment
4. I don’t know

13. I wouldn’t say that you’re 100% correct, but you are definitely on the right track. What does it mean to be “on the right track”?

1. A nice way to say that someone is wrong
2. To tell someone what they want to hear
3. That you have finally found the right song on a CD
4. To follow the right set of assumptions

14. When the owner of the bar found out that a 14- year- old was in his bar he told the kid to beat it. What is the meaning of the expression “beat it”?

1. To go to bed
2. To sit down
3. To go away immediately
4. To hit the table so that someone would come and serve him

15. It crossed my mind when I read the article about the fireman who rescued five people – my purpose in life is to be a fireman. What is the meaning of the expression to “cross someone’s mind”?

1. To suddenly think of something
2. To think about something for a short time
3. To feel like God has marked you and given you a calling
4. To wish you were brave

16. She was a cold-hearted old lady. At least that was what the neighborhood kids thought after she killed Aisha’s cat with a shovel. One could think that the cat had been hit by a car. What does it mean to be “cold-hearted”?

1. To be devoid of feeling
2. To be mean
3. To be crazy
4. To be angry at life

17. She told her parents that she was pregnant, but she was only pulling their leg. What does it mean to “pull someone’s leg”?

1. To pull somebody by the leg to attract their attention
2. To trick someone
3. To lie to someone
4. To see how far one can go with jokes before it is not acceptable

18. Harambee Stars thought that after eliminating Uganda Cranes in the semi final, playing Zanzibar heroes would be a piece of cake, but they were shocked to conceal three goals in a span of ten minutes. They couldn’t believe. What is the meaning of the expression “piece of cake”?

1. To be satisfactory
2. The reward you get for winning
3. To be easy to do
4. To think that the victory is won before the match has started

19. As Omondi made his way to the stage co-actors and actresses quietly told him to break a leg. What does it mean to “break a leg”?

1. Good luck
2. You’ll do great
3. To give a performance the audience will not forget
4. To express that you are jealous for not getting the lead role

20. He is always complaining about the expensive gas in this country, but as drivers, we’re all in the same boat. What does it mean to be “in the same boat”?

1. To have to pay the same price
2. To accept having to rely on expensive gas
3. To agree but not complaining
4. To be in the same situation as other people

# APPENDIX III

**CLOZE TEST ON IDIOM IN ISOLATION**

**Introduction**

My name is Ngoge Tabley Amos; I am a PhD candidate from the Open University of Tanzania. I am carrying out research on English idiom comprehension.The aim of this study is to investigate your knowledge of English idiom comprehension. You have been selected to take part in this research as my respondent. Feel free and give out your opinion to the best of your knowledge. Your answers will be used for research only. If you may want to ascertain the sincerity of this exercise, feel free to see me after the exercise.

**Part A. Profile of Respondent**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Random number picked |  |
| Gender (circle): (M) (F) | Year of undergraduate study (circle): (1) (2) (3) |
| Age: | Age at which you started learning English: |

**Part B. Cloze Test**

**Instructions**

1. You are presented with 20 English expressions in this cloze test. Respond to each item as instructed by circling the appropriate option from the four (alternatives) given. The first one has been done for you as an example.
2. It is anticipated that within 40 minutes, you will finish. However, strict adherence to time will not apply as this is not an examination.

**Example:** What does it mean to be **“caught red-handed”**?

1. To leave traces after a crime
2. To be a murderer
3. To be seen doing something illegal or private
4. To turn red when lying

1. What is the meaning of the expression “slippery slope”?

* 1. A question that requires a decision
  2. A hill that is icy
  3. A path that is likely to lead to failure or serious trouble
  4. A personal issue

2. What does it mean to be **“**on a roll”?

* 1. To live up to the expectations in order to stay on the company’s payroll
  2. To eat spring rolls while working
  3. To be in the midst of a series of successes
  4. To be a workaholic

3. What does it mean to be a “couch potato”?

* 1. A person who is unemployed and has nothing to do
  2. A person who spends much time sitting or lying down, usually watching television
  3. A person who likes to eat his dinner while he or she watches television
  4. A person who has to eat chips while watching television

4. What does it mean to “throw in the towel”?

* 1. To quit
  2. To dislike your job
  3. To stop throwing sweaty towels to fans
  4. To make a drastic change

5. What does it mean to “give someone a hand”?

* 1. To be a gentleman
  2. To be a hand donor
  3. To help someone
  4. To reach for things placed high

6. What is the meaning of the expression “at the top of one’s lungs"?

* 1. To breathe in a controlled matter
  2. As out of tune as possible
  3. To give a performance the audience will not forget
  4. To express that you are jealous for not getting the lead role

7. What does it mean to have something “at one’s fingertips”?

* 1. To have something in your hand
  2. A few coins that you grab between your fingertips
  3. To have quick access
  4. To be well prepared and in control

8. What does it mean to “keep someone at one’s toes”?

* 1. To respect the things that might be dangerous
  2. To stay calm and careful
  3. When a girl stands on her father’s feet while dancing
  4. Readily available

9. What is the meaning of the expression “over my dead body”?

* + 1. That someone will do everything they can to prevent the plan or action suggested
    2. That it will be painful to see someone waste their talent
    3. That you have to be aware of the sacrifices a decision requires before you make a choice
    4. To follow your heart

10. What does it mean to “turn the tables”?

* 1. To change a situation so that someone's position is the opposite of what it was
  2. To plan revenge
  3. To turn all the tables in a friend’s house as a joke
  4. To redecorate

11. What is the meaning of the expression “rule of thumb”?

* 1. A general principle developed by experience
  2. An answer to how to deal with a problem
  3. To act cautiously in order to protect sensitive information and your computer
  4. To measure something using your thumbs as a ruler

12. What does it mean to “get a head-start”?

* 1. To get top grades because you are well prepared
  2. To get the idea that you are better than others
  3. To get an early start on something
  4. To give someone a soft transition from one stage of life to another

13. What does it mean to “take charge”?

* 1. To make someone pay for something
  2. To reload one’s batteries
  3. To take control over something
  4. To be responsible

14. What does it mean to “beat about the bush”?

1. To give up
2. To run away into the bush in order to avoid facing the challenges of life
3. To avoid talking about a difficult subject because you are worried about upsetting the person/s you are talking to
4. To get angry at oneself when one has done something that does not meet the expectation of others

15. What is the meaning of the expression “talk of the devil”?

1. Something that you say when a person you are talking about arrives unexpectedly
2. What you say to express frustration and anger
3. A mild form for swearing
4. Something you say when someone you don’t want to meet shows up

16. What does it mean to “make up one’s mind”?

1. To end a relationship
2. To choose the direction of a play
3. To paint one’s face
4. To come to a decision

17. What does it mean to “roll up one’s sleeves”?

1. To call for the big bucks to roll in
2. To be cheap
3. To prepare for hard work
4. To use less money on ourselves in order to give some more to the less fortunate

18. What does it mean to “break somebody’s heart”?

1. To have a cardiac arrest
2. To feel a strong pain in the chest
3. To be broke
4. To experience great emotional pain

19. What is the meaning of the expression “icing on the cake”?

1. An extra enhancement
2. More than is actually necessary
3. A surprise
4. An intimidating thought

20. What is the meaning of the phrase “not my cup of tea”?

1. Something you do not like
2. Something you enjoy or like
3. A type of tea you do not like
4. A borrowed cup used for drinking tea

# APPENDIX IV

**ANSWERS TO CONTEXT ENABLED IDIOMS CLOZE TEST**

1. The three-party principles had been planning on how to overthrow the government for five years. But when the day finally came, they got cold feet and chose not to attempt after realizing the implication of their attempt if it fails. What is the meaning of the expression “cold feet”?

1. That your feet are freezing
2. To become nervous about doing something
3. *To change your mind completely*
4. To ignore what is going on

2. Quarrels, beatings, and abuses were the order of the day in her marriage. But she endured all, hoping that one day her husband will change. The last straw came when he came home with a packet of condoms in his pocket. What is the meaning of the expression *“last straw”?*

* + - * 1. *The last in a series of unpleasant events which finally makes you feel that you cannot continue to accept a bad situation*
        2. The last word said by someone who is harassing you verbally
        3. Emotional breakdown
        4. When you have to drink your Coke without a straw because of the new boss
    1. After political intrigues in Kenya that lead to massive loss of lives between the ruling party and opposition there was need from the international community to have a discussion to solve the crisis. After discussing the matter back and forth for one month, the parties could finally announce that they see eye to eye and that they had found a solution. What does it mean to “see eye to eye”?
  1. *To find a compromise*
  2. To be an eyewitness
  3. To agree about something with someone else
  4. To be able to look at each other, even if you do not agree with that person or persons
     1. He was quite certain that he would not be in trouble when the police came. He had done everything by the book. What is the meaning of the expression “by the book”?
     2. To do all your work by the book shelf
     3. *To follow the rules exactly*
     4. To do exactly what your employer has told you to do
     5. When a movie is based on a book
     6. Standard six pupils were warned by the teacher on duty not to indulge in noise making activities. They never listened to the warning. When they were summoned to the deputy Head teacher’s office, they faced the music. What does it mean to “face the music”?
     7. *To accept the unpleasant results of one's actions*
     8. To take responsibility
     9. To say sorry
     10. To face the orchestra or band during a concert
     11. “Why such a long face”? “My grandma died yesterday”. “I’m so sorry for your loss”. What does it mean to have a “long face”?

1. To look serious
2. To look tired
3. To have a swollen face
4. *To look sad*
   * 1. I’m afraid my parents will hit the roof when I tell them that I crashed their car. What does it mean to “hit the roof”?
5. *To suddenly become very angry*
6. To become extremely disappointed
7. To get hurt and sad
8. To celebrate
   * 1. How Mr. Juma managed to be employed as a chief accountant in the office of the governor with his poor qualification did not come as a surprise to many. As an individual I was not surprised. After all, we do live in a world where money talks. What is the meaning of the expression “money talks”?
9. There is no hope for the average
10. *Money gives one power and influence to get one's own way*
11. Injustice rules
12. Price is more important than variation
    * 1. During the holy month of Ramadan in Zanzibar, many businessmen and business women take advantage of their customers by overpricing some goods. What does it mean to “take advantage of”?
13. *To exploit*
14. To disrespect
15. To do what seems best to do for the company
16. To improve a situation

10. A number of shops had to close down after a multinational retail corporation offered to pay a significantly higher price for the lease on the building. I was not surprised. After all, we do live in a world where money talks. What is the meaning of the expression “money talks”?

1. There is no hope for the average
2. *Money gives one power and influence to get one's own way*
3. Injustice rules
4. Price is more important than variation

11. Fatma asked Asha if she had plans for the night. Asha answered that she didn’t have anything special planned. “Then we can hang out tonight,” Fatma said. What does it mean to “hang out”?

1. To exercise by hanging upside down in a tree doing crunches
2. *To spend time aimlessly*
3. To be with your friends outside
4. To chat with your friends on Google+

12. “We believe these numbers of sexual harassment are the tip of the iceberg, Mr. Ngoge says.” There may be thousands or millions of incidents that go unreported. Some estimates suggest that only 5% to 15% of those who feel they experienced sexual harassment file complaints. Tip of the iceberg means:

1. *A small evident aspect of something largely hidden*
2. A problem that has no solution
3. Go to the authorities and report sexual harassment
4. I don’t know

13. I wouldn’t say that you’re 100% correct, but you are definitely on the right track. What does it mean to be “on the right track”?

1. A nice way to say that someone is wrong
2. To tell someone what they want to hear
3. That you have finally found the right song on a CD
4. *To follow the right set of assumptions*

14. When the owner of the bar found out that a 14- year- old was in his bar he told the kid to beat it. What is the meaning of the expression *“beat it”?*

1. To go to bed
2. To sit down
3. *To go away immediately*
4. To hit the table so that someone would come and serve him

15. It crossed my mind when I read the article about the fireman who rescued five people – my purpose in life is to be a fireman. What is the meaning of the expression to “cross someone’s mind”?

1. *To suddenly think of something*
2. To think about something for a short time
3. To feel like God has marked you and given you a calling
4. To wish you were brave

16. She was a *cold-hearted* old lady. At least that was what the neighborhood kids thought after she killed Aisha’s cat with a shovel. One could think that the cat had been hit by a car. What does it mean to be *“cold-hearted”?*

1. *To be devoid of feeling*
2. To be mean
3. To be crazy
4. To be angry at life

17. She told her parents that she was pregnant, but she was only pulling their leg. What does it mean to “pull someone’s leg”?

1. To pull somebody by the leg to attract their attention
2. *To trick someone*
3. To lie to someone
4. To see how far one can go with jokes before it is not acceptable

18.Harambee Stars thought that after eliminating Uganda Cranes in the semi final, playing Zanzibar heroes would be *a piece of cake,* but they were shocked to conceal three goals in a span of ten minutes. They couldn’t believe. What is the meaning of the expression *“piece of cake”?*

1. To be satisfactory
2. The reward you get for winning
3. *To be easy to do*
4. To think that the victory is won before the match has started

19. As Omondi made his way to the stage co-actors and actresses quietly told him to break a leg. What does it mean to “break a leg”?

1. Good luck
2. You’ll do great
3. *To give a performance the audience will not forget*
4. To express that you are jealous for not getting the lead role

20. He is always complaining about the expensive gas in this country, but as drivers, we’re all in the same boat. What does it mean to be “in the same boat”?

1. To have to pay the same price
2. To accept having to rely on expensive gas
3. To agree but not complaining
4. *To be in the same situation as other people*

# APPENDIX V

**ANSWERS TO CLOZE TEST ON IDIOMS IN ISOLATION**

1. What is the meaning of the expression “slippery slope”?

A). A question that requires a decision

B). A hill that is icy

*C). A path that is likely to lead to failure or serious trouble*

D). A personal issue

2. What does it mean to be “on a roll”?

A). To live up to the expectations in order to stay on the company’s payroll

B). To eat spring rolls while working

*C). To be in the midst of a series of successes*

D). To be a workaholic

3. What does it mean to be a “couch potato”?

A). A person who is employed and has nothing to do

*B). A person who spends much time sitting or lying down, usually watching television*

C). A person who likes to eat his dinner while he or she watches television

D). A person who has to eat chips while watching television

4. What does it mean to “throw in the towel”?

*A) To quit*

B). To dislike your job

C). To stop throwing sweaty towels to fans

D). To make a drastic change

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A). To be a gentleman

B). To be a hand donor

*C). To help someone*

D). To reach for things placed high

6. What is the meaning of the expression “at the top of one’s lungs"?

*A).To produce the loudest sound ever*

B). To breathe in a controlled matter

C). As out of tune as possible

D) To express that you are jealous for not getting the lead role

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1. To have something in your hand
2. A few coins that you grab between your fingertips
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1. To respect the things that might be dangerous
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3. When a girl stands on her father’s feet while dancing
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1. *A general principle developed by experience*
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1. To have a cardiac arrest
2. To feel a strong pain in the chest
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1. *An extra enhancement*
2. More than is actually necessary
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1. *Something you do not like*
2. Something you enjoy or like
3. A type of tea you do not like
4. A borrowed cup used for drinking tea

# APPENDIX VI

**PRE - IDIOM COMPREHENSION TEST**

**Introduction**

My name is Ngoge Tabley Amos; I am a PhD candidate from the Open University of Tanzania. I am carrying out research on English idiom comprehension.This cloze test is used for collecting data for research on idiom comprehension purpose. Your responses in this cloze test items will be used for analysis in determining the level of comprehension of English idioms. There is no right or wrong response. Each response will be used for analysis. Feel free to respond appropriately.

**Instructions.**

1. You are presented with 30 English expressions in this cloze test. Respond to each item as instructed by selecting the appropriate answer from the alternatives given.
2. It is anticipated that within a period of 40 minutes you will finish. However strict adherence to time will not apply as this is not an examination.
3. Chose the Correct Meaning of the Underlined Expression. Circle Your Answer.

**SECTION A**

**IDIOMS IN THE CONTEXT**

**Chose the Correct Meaning of the Underlined Expression**

1. The death of the chief was so cruel. The government promised that proper investigation will be done. *No stone will be left unturned* to bring the culprits to book.

1. Every possible effort will be made
2. Every stone will be rolled
3. Everybody will be spared
4. Not everybody will be arrested

2. You *hit the nail on the head* when you said that James was lazy.

1. Lie about something
2. Say something that is exactly right about something
3. Use a hummer to drive the nail on wood
4. Stress on something

3. John earned *a feather in his cap* by getting an A in physics.

1. Something that contribute to one's death
2. Elaborately attired
3. A distinctive achievement
4. fine clothes

4. Finally, I realized we had been *at cross purposes*.

1. Too many activities at once
2. With goals that conflict each other
3. Virtually the same
4. indirectly

5. Stop pestering me with all your advice. Nobody likes *a backseat driver.*

1. A person who interferes in affairs without having knowledge
2. A person who has hidden advantage or resource
3. A person who is at a distance
4. A person who helps driver

6. I know I am going to fail this exam, *I can feel it in my bones.*

1. Fail to predict
2. Having intuition about something
3. Showing extreme modesty
4. Be sad or depressed

7. I will solve the problem *by hook or crook*. Even if it means to stay overnight.

1. By all means
2. Without necessary effort
3. Doing something using a hook
4. By cheating

8. We have a small amount of money saved, hardly enough to *keep the wolf from the door*.

1. Go bankrupt
2. Expose someone's deception
3. Prevent starvation or financial ruin
4. Manage a household

9. We had to move everything out of the house, *lock, stock, and barrel*.

1. quickly
2. entirely
3. rarely
4. slowly

10. They waited until *the coast was clear* before loading the stolen goods in to the van.

1. One can proceed safely
2. In an uncertain situation
3. In a state of friendliness
4. In a difficult situation

11. *Batten down the hatches*; congress is in session again.

1. Reveal ones thought
2. Prepare for trouble
3. Waste efforts
4. remain alert and attentive

12. Bill is always *at sixes and sevens* when he is home by himself.

1. Confused and disorganized
2. depressed
3. grouchy
4. in danger

13. She's just joined the department; it'll take her to *know the rope*.

1. Be informed about the details of a task
2. Recognize someone or something by appearance
3. Be certain about what one want
4. Know all the answers

14. I've got to get to work if I'm going to *bring home the bacon*

1. Make happy
2. Provide the necessities of life
3. Give birth to something
4. Get to the heart of a matter

15. The politician kept *cool as a cucumber* throughout the interview.

1. Crazy and foolish
2. Curious
3. Calm and self possessed
4. Careless

**SECTION B**

**IDIOMS IN ISOLATION**

**Answer all questions provided**

16 What does the expression *at the switch* mean?

1. Inattentive
2. Secretive
3. Very ill
4. Angry

17 What does the expression to *drop the ball* mean?

1. Become very pleased
2. Look foolish
3. Miss an opportunity
4. Show extreme modesty

18. What does the expression *to be the Dean's in the doldrums* mean?

1. Very serious
2. Depressed
3. active
4. Composed

19. What does the expression *carry your own cross* mean?

1. To make the wrong choice
2. To solve your own problems
3. To pay for someone’s challenges
4. To follow Jesus

20. What does the expression *beating about the bush* mean?.

1. To do something before a deadline
2. To try very hard to do something
3. To waste time
4. To have many ideas

21. What does the expression *make a contribution* mean?

1. Interfere in the affairs
2. Overcome difficulties
3. To contribute money to a pool
4. Annoy or anger someone

22. What does the expression *sit on the fence* Mean?

1. Be uncertain about the choice to be made
2. Being lazy.
3. To relax on the fence
4. To buy something in any possible way

23. What does the expression *another nail in your coffin* Mean?

1. A heavy burden
2. Something that helps to prepare for trouble
3. Something that contributes to one's health
4. Something that hasten one's death

24. What does the expression *to down the tools* mean?

1. To stop working
2. To put down the tools after work
3. The price of tools has decreased
4. To start working

25. What does the expression to *pull someone’s legs* mean?

1. Make someone speak
2. Play a joke on
3. Discontinue
4. Removes all support

26. What does the expression to *put a buy on ones ear* mean?

1. Cause to be understood
2. Discourage
3. Allow one to use
4. Give someone a hint about something.

27. What does the expression *to put a red herring* mean?

1. Something that draws attention away from a central issue.
2. Something that causes hostility
3. Something that is in good condition
4. Something that causes embarrassment

28. What does the expression *rock the boat* mean?

1. Annoy someone
2. Disturb a stable situation
3. Prepare to work
4. Seek to discover something

29. What does the expression to be *wet behind the ear* Mean?

1. Bored
2. Angry
3. Inexperienced
4. Excited

30. What does the expression the *give a cold shoulder* mean?

1. Ignore ones presence
2. Assist someone
3. Welcome someone
4. Fight someone

# APPENDIX VII

**ANSWERS TO A PRE-IDIOM COMPREHENSION TEST**

**SECTION A**

**IDIOMS IN THE CONTEXT**

1. The death of the chief was so cruel. The government promised that proper investigation will be done. *No stone will be left unturned* to bring the culprits to book.

1. *Every possible effort will be made*
2. Every stone will be rolled
3. Everybody will be spared
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2. You *hit the nail on the head* when you said that James was lazy.

1. Lie about something
2. *Say something that is exactly right about something*
3. Use a hummer to drive the nail on wood
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3. John earned *a feather in his cap* by getting an A in physics.

1. Something that contribute to one's death
2. Elaborately attired
3. *A distinctive achievement*
4. fine clothes

4. Finally, I realized we had been *at cross purposes*.

1. Too many activities at once
2. *With goals that conflict each other*
3. Virtually the same
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5. Stop pestering me with all your advice. Nobody likes *a backseat driver.*

1. A person who interferes in affairs without having knowledge
2. A person who has hidden advantage or resource
3. *A person who is at a distance*
4. A person who helps driver

6. I know I am going to fail this exam, *I can feel it in my bones.*

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1. Go bankrupt
2. Expose someone's deception
3. *Prevent starvation or financial ruin*
4. Manage a household

9. We had to move everything out of the house, *lock, stock, and barrel*.

1. *Quickly*
2. Entirely
3. Rarely
4. Slowly

10. They waited until *the coast was clear* before loading the stolen goods in to the van.

1. One can proceed safely
2. In an uncertain situation
3. *In a state of friendliness*
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11. *Batten down the hatches*; congress is in session again.

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1. Crazy and foolish
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**SECTION B**

**IDIOMS IN ISOLATION**

Answer all questions provided

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1. Inattentive
2. Secretive
3. *On time*
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1. Become very pleased
2. Look foolish
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1. Very serious
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4. Annoy or anger someone

22. What does the expression *sit on the fence*Mean?

1. *Be uncertain about the choice to be made*
2. Being lazy.
3. To relax on the fence
4. To buy something in any possible way

23. What does the expression *another nail in your coffin* Mean?

1. A heavy burden
2. Something that helps to prepare for trouble
3. *Something that contributes to one's health*
4. Something that hasten one's death

24. What does the expression *to down the tools* mean?

1. *To stop working*
2. To put down the tools after work
3. The price of tools has decreased
4. To start working

25. What does the expression to *pull someone legs* mean?

1. Make someone speak
2. *Play a joke on*
3. Discontinue
4. Removes all support

26. What does the expression to *put a buy on ones ear* mean?

1. Cause to be understood
2. *Discourage*
3. Allow one to use
4. Give someone a hint about something.

27. What does the expression *to put a red herring* mean?

1. *Something that draws attention away from a central issue*.
2. Something that causes hostility
3. Something that is in good condition
4. Something that causes embarrassment

28. What does the expression *rock the boat*mean?

1. Annoy someone
2. *Disturb a stable situation*
3. Prepare to work
4. Seek to discover something

29. What does the expression to be *wet behind the ear* Mean?

1. Bored
2. Angry
3. *Inexperienced*
4. Excited

30. What does the expression the *give a cold shoulder*mean?

1. *Ignore ones presence*
2. Assist someone
3. Welcome someone
4. Fight someone

# APPENDIX VIII

**AMBIGUITY TESTING CLOZE TEST**

**Introduction**

My name is Ngoge Tabley Amos; I am a PhD candidate from the Open University of Tanzania. I am carrying out research on English idiom comprehension. The aim of this study is to investigate your knowledge of English idiom comprehension. You have been selected to take part in this research as my respondent. Feel free and give out your opinion to the best of your knowledge. Your answers will be used for research only. If you may want to ascertain the sincerity of this exercise, feel free to see me after the exercise.

**Part A. Profile of Respondent**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Random number picked |  |
| Gender (circle): (M) (F) | Year of undergraduate study (circle): (1) (2) (3) |
| Age: | Age at which you started learning English: |

**Part B. Cloze Test**

**Instructions**

Answer all the questions provided in this questionnaire according to the instruction provided in each question.

1. He is always complaining about the expensive gas in this country, but as drivers, we’re all in *the same boat*. What does it mean to be “in the same boat”?

1. To have to pay the same price
2. To be in the same situation as other people

2. They all thought the match would be a piece of cake but they were wrong. The other team was faster. What is the meaning of the expression “piece of cake”?

1. The best part of the cake to eat
2. Something which is easy

3. I knew that my parents would come to the graduation ceremony, but that my grandparents would come was the *icing on the* cake. What is the meaning of the expression *“Icing on the cake”?*

1. An extra enhancement
2. More than necessary

4. It was complete chaos after the accident. People were either running around creating more panic or just standing there watching. Luckily, a nurse arrived and *took charge*. What is the meaning of the expression *“take charge”?*

1. To take control over something
2. To reload one's batteries

5. Some people love skiing, but *it's not my cup of tea*. What is the meaning of the expression "not my cup of tea"?

1. Something you don't like
2. A borrowed cup used for drinking tea

6. What is the meaning of the expression “slippery slope”? The question of assisted death is a slippery slope in terms of moral and legal considerations.

1. A path which is likely to lead to failure or serious trouble
2. An icy hill

7. It “*crossed my mind*” when I read the article about the fireman who rescued five people – my purpose in life is to be a fireman. What is the meaning of the expression *“cross someone’s mind”?*

1. To suddenly forget something quickly
2. To think about something for a short time

8. After reading George Orwell’s novel “1984” I feared our politicians were *putting wool over our eyes*. I really hope they’re not playing us around. What is the meaning of the expression *“put wool over people’s eyes”?*

1. To impose ignorance on people by hiding the truth behind less important matters
2. To advertise for clothes on TV and radio

9. She has the book *at her fingertips*. If you wonder where to find the information she would be the one to ask. What is the meaning of the expression *“at one’s fingertips”?*

1. To have something in your hand
2. To have quick access

10. I woke up this morning to my neighbour singing “My heart will go on” *at the top of his lungs*. What is the meaning of the expression *“at the top of one’s lungs”?*

1. To breathe in a controlled manner
2. As loudly as one's voice will allow

11. The three party principles had been planning on how to overthrow the government for five years but when the day finally came they *got cold feet* and chose not to attempt after realizing the implication of their attempt if it fails. What is the meaning of the expression *“cold feet”?*

* 1. That your feet are freezing
  2. To become nervous about doing something

12. Quarrels, beatings and abuses were the order of the day in her marriage. But she endured all hoping that one day her husband will change. The last straw came when he came home with a packet of condoms in his pocket. What is the meaning of the expression “last straw”.

1. The last in a series of unpleasant events which finally makes you feel that you cannot continue to accept a bad situation
2. When you have to drink your Coke without a straw because of the new boss

13. After political intrigues in Kenya that lead to massive loss of lives between the ruling party and opposition there was need from the international community to have a discussion to solve the crisis. After discussing the matter back and forth for one month the parties could finally announce that they see eye to eye and that they had found a solution. What does it mean to “see eye to eye”?

1. To find a compromise
2. To be able to look at each other, even if you do not agree with that person or persons

14. Standard six pupils were warned by the teacher on duty not to indulge in noise making activities. They never listened to the warning. When they were summoned to the deputy Head teacher’s office, they faced the music. What does it mean to *“face the music*”?

* 1. To accept the unpleasant results of one's actions
  2. To face the orchestra or band during a concert

15. “Why such a long face”? “My grandma died yesterday”. “I’m so sorry for your loss”. What does it mean to have a “long face”

* 1. To have a swollen face
  2. To look sad

16. I’m afraid my parents will hit the roof when I tell them that I crashed their car. What does it mean to “hit the roof”?

* 1. To suddenly become very angry
  2. To become extremely disappointed

17. How Mr. Juma managed to be employed as a chief accountant in the office of the governor with his poor qualification did not come as a surprise to many. As an individual I was not surprised. After all, we do live in a world where money talks. What is the meaning of the expression “money talks”?

1. Money gives one power and influence to get one's own way
2. Price is more important than variation

18. During the holy month of Ramadan in Zanzibar, many businessmen and business women take advantage of their customers by over pricing some goods. What does it mean to “take advantage of”?

1. To exploit
2. To do what seems best to do for the company

19. “We believe these numbers of sexual harassment are the *tip of the iceberg*, Mr. Ngoge says.” There may be thousands or millions of incidents that go unreported. Some estimates suggest that only 5% to 15% of those who feel they experienced sexual harassment file complaints. *Tip of the iceberg* means:

1. A small evident aspect of something largely hidden
2. A problem that has no solution

20. Fatma asked Asha if she had plans for the night. Asha answered that she didn’t have anything special planned. “Then we can hang out tonight,” Fatma said. What does it mean to “hang out”?

1. To spend time aimlessly
2. To be with your friends outside

**APPENDIX IX**

**Further Test of Effect of Context Cloze Test**

**Introduction**

My name is Ngoge Tabley Amos; I am a PhD candidate from the Open University of Tanzania. I am carrying out research on English idiom comprehension. This study aims to investigate your knowledge of English idiom comprehension. You have been selected to take part in this research as my respondent. Feel free and give out your opinion to the best of your knowledge. Your answers will be used for research only. If you feel that you may want to ascertain the sincerity of this exercise, feel free to see me after the exercise.

**Part A. Profile of Respondent**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Random number picked |  |
| Gender (circle): (M) (F) | Year of undergraduate study (circle): (1) (2) (3) |
| Age: | Age at which you started learning English: |

**Part B. Cloze Test**

**Instructions**

Answer all the questions provided in this cloze test according to the instruction provided in each question.

1. After Othman got that new job he has been such a pain in the ass! All of a sudden he acts like he is better than us. What does it mean to be “a pain in the ass”?

1. To cause trouble
2. A suppository pill
3. To have constipation
4. To be able to sit in a McDonalds chair for more than 40 minutes

2. Life is very difficult. Wake up and start working. Stop giving lame excuse. What does it mean to “give a lame excuse”?

1. Strong excuse
2. Sick excuse
3. Convincing excuse
4. Weak and unconvincing excuse.

3. After denying every accusation over the theft of millions of money, the evidence was overwhelming to him. He finally had *to eat a humble pie* in that investigating panel. What does the expression “to eat a humble pie” mean?

1. To consume a pie
2. To reject vehemently the accusation
3. To become rude and loud
4. To submit or apologize humbly.

4. Mary tarmacked for nine good years from the time she completed her bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering. Finally she got employed in a multibillion company. She now *feels at cloud nine.* What does the expression feeling at cloud nine mean?

1. Feeling very happy and joyful
2. Feeling frustrated
3. Going to the moon
4. Feeling anxious and envious

5. After the vice president thought that he job will be a bed of roses. Unfortunately things went wrong as expected. What does the expression *“a bed of roses mean”?*

1. A pleasant and enjoyable situation
2. Rose flower placed on the bed
3. A situation with a lot of set backs
4. A job with more money

6. I refuse to resign. No matter how many false accusations are labeled against me. I shall ride the storm, no matter how long it lasts. What is the meaning of the expression “ride the storm”

1. Climb over the storm
2. Confront a crisis resolutely
3. Negatively argue vehemently
4. Apologize and withdraw

7. The thieves had planned on how to steal from that poor man. However their plans hit the rock when the police were notified in time. Three of the thieves were shot on the spot. What is the meaning of the expression “hit the rock”?

A) Kick the hard rock

B) Fail an attempt terribly

C) Succeed in a plan

D) Get frustrated in a plan

8. If the USA wins the case against cigarettes manufacturers, it will open the floodgates for other countries to do so. What does the expression “open the floodgates” mean?

1. The start of more challenges to come
2. To open the gates after floods
3. The start of more gains
4. Enjoyment moments

9. We had done all that we were directed to do by our chemistry teacher. That made the final examination to be like a walk in the park. Nothing was new in the paper. What does the expression “a walk in the park” mean?

1. Very simple
2. Very difficult
3. To see wild animals
4. Complicated.

10. The relationship between James and Annet is not working well. James to Annet is like a cradle-snatcher. What does the expression “a cradle snatcher” means?

1. Someone who snatches women
2. A woman who snatches men
3. A woman who is older than a man in a relationship
4. A man who beats her woman in a relationship

**APPENDIX X**

**Answers to the Test on the Effect of Context Cloze Test**

1. After Othman got that new job he has been such a pain in the ass! All of a sudden he acts like he is better than us. What does it mean to be “a pain in the ass”?

1. *To cause trouble*
2. A suppository pill
3. To have constipation
4. To be able to sit in a McDonalds chair for more than 40 minutes

2. Life is very difficult. Wake up and start working. Stop giving lame excuse. What does it mean to “give a lame excuse”?

1. Strong excuse
2. Sick excuse
3. Convincing excuse
4. *Weak and unconvincing excuse.*

3. After denying every accusation over the theft of millions of money, the evidence was overwhelming to him. He finally had *to eat a humble pie* in that investigating panel. What does the expression “to eat a humble pie” mean?

1. To consume a pie
2. To reject vehemently the accusation
3. To become rude and loud
4. *To submit or apologize humbly.*

4. Mary tarmacked for nine good years from the time she completed her bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering. Finally she got employed in a multibillion company. She now *feels at cloud nine.* What does the expression feeling at cloud nine mean?

1. *Feeling very happy and joyful*
2. Feeling frustrated
3. Going to the moon
4. Feeling anxious and envious

5. After the Vice President thought that he job will be a bed of roses. Unfortunately things went wrong as expected. What does the expression *“a bed of roses mean”?*

1. *A pleasant and enjoyable situation*
2. Rose flower placed on the bed
3. A situation with a lot of set backs
4. A job with more money

6. I refuse to resign. No matter how many false accusations are labeled against me. I shall ride the storm, no matter how long it lasts. What is the meaning of the expression “ride the storm”?

1. Climb over the storm
2. *Confront a crisis resolutely*
3. Negatively argue vehemently
4. Apologize and withdraw

7. The thieves had planned on how to steal from that poor man. However their plans hit the rock when the police were notified in time. Three of the thieves were shot on the spot. What is the meaning of the expression “hit the rock”?

1. Kick the hard rock
2. *Fail an attempt terribly*
3. Succeed in a plan
4. Get frustrated in a plan

8. If the USA wins the case against cigarettes manufacturers, it will open the floodgates for other countries to do so. What does the expression “open the floodgates” mean?

1. *The start of more challenges to come*
2. To open the gates after floods
3. The start of more gains
4. Enjoyment moments

9. We had done all that we were directed to do by our Chemistry teacher. That made the final examination to be like a walk in the park. Nothing was new in the paper. What does the expression “a walk in the park” mean?

1. *Very simple*
2. Very difficult
3. To see wild animals
4. Complicated.

10. The relationship between James and Annet is not working well. James to Annet is like a cradle-snatcher. What does the expression “a cradle snatcher” means?

1. Someone who snatches women
2. A woman who snatches men
3. *A woman who is older than a man in a relationship*
4. A man who beats her woman in a relationship

**APPENDIX XI**

**VOCABULARY LEVEL TEST**

**Introduction**

My name is Ngoge Tabley Amos; I am a PhD candidate from the Open University of Tanzania. I am carrying out research on English idiom comprehension. The present vocabulary test is designed to gather information about your general English background. You are kindly requested to answer the following questions as per the instructions given. Your answers will be treated in strict confidence and used only for research purposes. Thank you very much for your cooperation!

**Part A. Profile of Respondent**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Random number picked |  |
| Gender (circle): (M) (F) | Year of undergraduate study (circle): (1) (2) (3) |
| Age: | Age at which you started learning English: |

**Part B. Vocabulary Test**

**Instructions**

This is a vocabulary test. Choose the right word from the six options provided that match with each meaning given. Write the number of that word next to its meaning. Here is an example.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1. Business  2. Clock  3. Horse  4. Pencil  5. Shoe  6. Wall | part of a house **6**  animal with four legs **3**  something used for writing **4** |

**Now complete the following statements by filling in the correct number which is best suited with the explanation given in the blank spaces provided. Follow the example above.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| i. | 1. Area  2. Contract  3. Definition  4. Evidence  5. Method  6. Role | \_\_\_\_written agreement.  \_\_\_\_way of doing something.  \_\_\_\_reason for believing something is or is not true. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ii. | 1. Construction  2. Feature  3. Impact  4. Institute  5. Region  6. Security | \_\_\_\_safety  \_\_\_\_noticeable part of something  \_\_\_\_organization which has special purpose |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| iii. | 1. Debate  2. Exposure  3. Integration  4. Option  5. Scheme  6. Stability | \_\_\_\_plan.  \_\_\_\_choice  \_\_\_\_joining something into a whole |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| iv. | 1. Alter  2. Coincide  3. Deny  4. Devote  5. Release  6. Specify | \_\_\_\_change  \_\_\_\_say something is not true  \_\_\_\_describe clearly and exactly |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| v. | 1. Bond  2. Channel  3. Estimate  4. Identify  5. Mediate  6. Minimize | \_\_\_\_make smaller  \_\_\_\_guess the number or size of something  \_\_\_\_recognizing and naming a person or thing |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| vi. | 1. Analogous  2. Objective  3. Potential  4. Predominant  5. Reluctant  6. Subsequent | \_\_\_\_happening after  \_\_\_\_most important  \_\_\_\_not influenced by personal opinions |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| vii. | 1. Abstract  2. Adjacent  3. Controversial  4. Global  5. Neutral  6. Supplementary | \_\_\_\_next to  \_\_\_\_added to  \_\_\_\_concerning the whole world |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| viii. | 1. Adult  2. Exploitation  3. Infrastructure  4. Schedule  5. Termination  6. Vehicle | \_\_\_\_end  \_\_\_\_machine to move people or goods  \_\_\_\_list of things to do at certain times |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ix. | 1. Explicit  2. Final  3. Negative  4. Professional  5. Rigid  6. Sole | \_\_\_\_last  \_\_\_\_stiff  \_\_\_\_meaning “no” or “not” |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| x. | 1. Accumulation  2. Edition  3. Guarantee  4. Media  5. Motivation  6. Phenomenon | \_\_\_\_collecting things over  \_\_\_\_promise to repair a broken product  \_\_\_\_feeling a strong reason or need to do something |

# **APPENDIX** XII

**Informed Consent Letter for the Students**

Dear Participants,

I am a doctoral student at the Open University of Tanzania, conducting a study in English idiom comprehension. The purpose of this study is to assess English idioms comprehension among university students in Unguja. My study will involve questionnaires and idiom cloze tests.

In order to conduct this research, I would need your help in the following ways:

1. Allow me to distribute my questionnaire to you and explain any relevant questions.
2. Allow me to distribute the idiom cloze tests to you and answer any relevant questions.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide when not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with me, your lecturers, and your department. In that case, you need to inform me directly by email, sms or phone. Upon your written request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence. Information obtained from this study may be published in academic journals or presented at conferences, but your identity will be kept strictly confidential. If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this form below. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Ngoge Amos Tabley, PhD candidate

Open University of Tanzania

Email: amostabley@yahoo.com

Phone: 0768-561-845

# APPENDIX XIII

**Locating the Study Area Map**

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# APPENDIX XIV

**Voluntary Consent Form**

I have read and understood the information on the form, and I consent to volunteer to participate in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received a copy of this informed consent form to keep in my possession.

Random number picked\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Days and time to meet: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose of this research and the potential benefits and possible risks of participating in this research. I have answered questions that have been raised and have witnessed the above signature.

Signature of the Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX XV

**Sumait University Clearance Form**

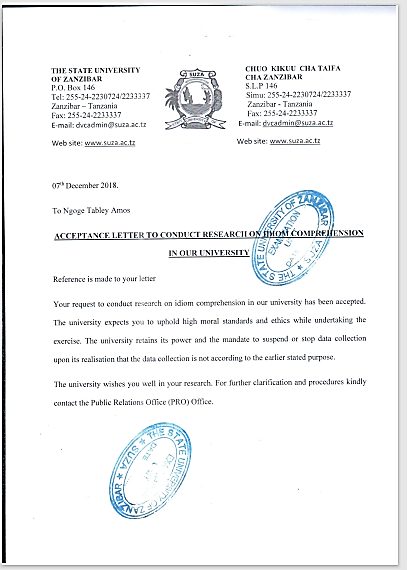
**APPENDIX XVI**

# APPENDIX XVI

**Zanzibar University Clearance Form**

**APPENDIX XVII**

# APPENDIX XVII

**State University Clearance Form**