

Teaching idioms in a foreign language context: preliminary comments on factors determining Greek idiom instruction

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Abstract

In this paper we focus on the theoretical parameters that should be taken into consideration when Greek idioms are to be taught in a foreign language context. Given the fact that Modern Greek is characterized by a high degree of idiomaticity, it is impossible for the foreign students not to engage in idioms not only in ordinary speech but even in academic texts. Hence, idiom instruction involves decisions about issues such as teaching strategies, frequency of use, register and so on, which are of crucial importance in order to achieve better learning and retention of this kind of vocabulary.

Dieser Aufsatz beschäftigt sich mit theoretischen Parametern, die in Betracht gezogen werden müssen, wenn griechische Redewendungen und Kollokationen in einem fremdsprachlichen Kontext unterrichtet werden. Da sich das Neugriechische durch einen hohen Grad an Idiomatizität auszeichnet, ist es für den Fremdsprachenlerner sowohl in der Alltagssprache, als auch im akademischen Kontext unmöglich auf Redewendungen und Kollokationen zu verzichten. Folglich wirft ihr Unterrichten auch Fragen nach Unterrichtsstrategien, Gebrauchsfrequenz, Registern usw. auf. Um ein besseres Lernen und Verinnerlichen dieser Art von Verbindungen zu erreichen, sind diese Fragen von großer Bedeutung.

1. Introduction

It is a well-established belief among scholars that lexicon is not just a repository of single words but a dynamic system, which includes larger lexical items as well (Read, 2000).

Sinclair (1991), after the examination of the way texts are organized, concluded that there are two principles which govern the speakers' choices to construct a text; the open-choice principle and the idiom principle. The first principle refers to the many options a speaker has in order to produce sentences according to a given language system of rules. In other words, the open-choice principle is related to a user's creativity to fill a text's slots with a wide range of possible and acceptable words. For Sinclair, the open-choice principle reflects the normal way of approaching and describing a language. On the other hand, a speaker has at his/her disposal a large number of semi-preconstructed phrases which constitute single choices. The existence of this principle points at the unrandomness of the combinations speakers resort to so

as to produce a text. In the words of Bolinger (1976: 1) 'language does not expect us to build everything starting with lumber, nails, and blueprint, but provides us with an incredibly large number of prefabs'.

The argument that multi-word combinations are stored and retrieved as wholes is verified by experimental data. In particular, Erman (2007) found that pausing was rare when speakers had to retrieve structures that were taken to be parts of a prefabricated phrase. This finding suggests that larger units are not analyzed into segments in production.

The semi-constructed phrases that can be classified under the idiom principle are a heterogeneous class. Sinclair (1991) includes idioms, proverbs, clichés, technical terms, jargon expressions and phrasal verbs. These lexical items exhibit certain features; they have an indeterminate extent, they allow internal lexical, syntactic and word order variation, many words and phrases show a tendency to strong collocations, to certain grammatical choices and certain semantic environments.

Working from a similar point of view, Moon (1997) argues that the class of the multi-word combinations consists of compounds (e.g. dining-chair), phrasal verbs (e.g. come around), idioms (e.g. kick the bucket), fixed phrases (e.g. how do you do) and prefabs (e.g. I'm a great believer in...). These different categories are not static and close-ended but various overlaps are permitted, since language is a flexible and dynamic system open to many changes.

The most representative type of a prefab structure is idiom. Idioms are not well-defined and for this reason literature abounds in attempts to define the content of this term and establish a unified terminology. To name some of the suggested labels, Carter (1998) uses the term *fixed expressions*, Moon (1997) picks up the term *multi-word items*, Howarth (1998) prompts for the term *phraseology*, whereas McCarthy (1998) prefers the traditional term *idiom* and Gläser (1984) the term *phraseological unit*, according to the eastern European linguistic tradition.

As regards the content, many suggestions have been proposed depending on the adopted theoretical typology and model. Moon (1998) identifies five different approaches, namely the semantic, lexicalist, syntactic, functional, and lexicographical ones. Within these theoretical frameworks a variety of forms have been introduced in order to achieve a detailed and exhaustive

description of this vast category of vocabulary. Some of the most common classifications include compounds, idioms, preverbs, phrasal verbs, proverbs and so on. Nevertheless the ambiguity still exists in the literature making it difficult to reach final decisions in respect of the notion *idiom* and its content. From the above mentioned terms we adopt, throughout this paper, the most traditional and well-known one, namely *idiom*.

Despite the lack of agreement it is a common knowledge that idioms are used in a broad range of everyday situations. This pervasiveness of idioms relates them to second language (hereafter L2) proficiency or at least to higher levels of L2 fluency. Many researchers (e.g. Ellis, 1997a; Yorio, 1989) suggest that adequate knowledge and appropriate use of idioms in an L2 is an important indicator of L2 communicative competence. In the same vein, the notion of *figurative competence* is introduced (Levorato, 1993; Levorato and Cacciari, 1992) to account for the production and comprehension of idioms. This type of competence includes a set of abilities, such as the skill to decode the various (dominant, peripheral, polysemous) meanings of a word, the ability to suspend a literal-referential strategy, to produce novel figurative expressions and to construct a coherent semantic representation related to a given figurative expression.

It is widely accepted that teaching and learning idioms is deemed to be not the easiest part of vocabulary instruction but rather a stumbling block (Laufer, 1997). Marton (1977) argues that idiomaticity affects in a negative manner comprehension at the advanced level. In the same vein, idiomatic expressions are difficult to understand and learn even when the two languages are similar in the use and meaning (Kellerman, 1978; 1986).

Given this analysis, the aim of this study is to address the factors that a teacher of Modern Greek (hereafter MG) as a foreign language should keep in mind before teaching idioms to Greek learners. We believe these theoretical parameters will assist him/her in planning the learning process effectively and consequently will minimize failure of idiom instruction.

2. Fundamental considerations

2.1 Idiom definition

In accordance with the above analysis, the term *idiom* is not well-defined in Greek bibliography either.

In particular, Mitsis (2004) uses the term *idioms* or *hellenisms*, Anastasiadi-Symeonidi and Efthymiou (2006) the term *fixed expressions* and Symeonidis (2000) the term *phraseology*. Regarding the content of idiom, in other words what can be labelled as an idiom, different approaches are adopted by the above researchers. Mitsis (2004) argues that idioms are part of a continuum which starts with *usual collocations*, continues with *stable* or *fixed collocations*, *metaphorical collocations* are following and the continuum ends with *idioms*. On the other hand Anastasiadi-Symeonidi and Efthymiou (2006) believe that among free combinations, one-syllable words and compound nouns/adjectives there is a broad class of word combinations with a gradable dependency of its members. Finally, Symeonidis (2000) distinguishes between a broader sense phraseology and a narrower sense one. The main trait of these classifications, despite their different terminology, is the flexibility they show probably because of the several criteria and approaches suggested in the literature.

In an attempt to offer a tentative idiom classification, we believe that Greek idioms can be categorized under the following headings; figurative idioms, idiomatic expressions based on historical and cultural knowledge in general and finally pure idioms (i.e. non compositional idioms, cf. 2.3.)

2.2 Teaching strategy

The adopted teaching strategy is expected to play a significant role during lesson planning. Mitsis (1998) suggests two potential ways of teaching Greek idioms; either to teach them on the occasion of the unit they can be associated with, or given the fact that Greek idioms are arranged around a small number of verbs (e.g. *kano* 'to do/make', *dino* 'to give', *ime* 'to be' and so on), to teach them whenever foreign learners come up with one of these verbs. Grouping is deemed to be an important factor that assists people in retrieving and organizing vocabulary in a more effective way (Schmitt, 1997).

An alternative method is based on the exploitation of the cognitive linguistic view on idioms. One of the major tenets of cognitive linguistics is that metaphor is pervasive in our everyday life and that our conceptual system is metaphorical in nature (Lakoff and Johnson 1980/2003). Hence, within the cognitive linguistic approach metaphor is not a figure of speech restricted to literature or poetics but is a factor that shapes the way we think, act and interact.

With respect to idiomaticity, the traditional view holds that idioms are arbitrary constructions and independent of each other. Contrary to these beliefs, the cognitive view suggests that the meaning of many idioms is not arbitrary rather motivated by three mechanisms, namely metaphor, metonymy and conventional knowledge (Kövecses, 2002).

Motivation is not a peripheral phenomenon and according to researchers working within the cognitive linguistic enterprise, it is not equal to prediction (Kövecses *ibid.*). Furthermore, it refers to those structures which are neither arbitrary nor fully predictable (Lakoff, 1987). In the same vein, it is implied that it is easier to learn and recall something that is motivated than something which is presented as arbitrary (Lakoff *ibid.*).

The notion of motivation is central to cognitive linguistics and stems from the fact that a great proportion of idiomatic expressions are closely related to people's general knowledge of the surrounding world plus embodied experience. Embodiment refers to the way the human body affects and directs everyday understanding and cognition (Gibbs, 2006). By way of illustration, the existence of the English idiom *spit fire* is based on the fact that when an English native speaker expresses his or her anger, unconsciously treats his or her body as a container full of emotions (in our case anger) ready to explode. Given this analysis, idioms are taken to be conceptual and secondarily a property of language (Kövecses, 2002).

For Lakoff and Johnson (1999) metaphorical idioms are of great importance for five major reasons. First, they exhibit that words can describe and give access to portions of conventional images. Second, these conventional images do not vary among people but are shared by a large proportion of language communities. Third, a part of cultural knowledge is closely related to the nature of these conventional images. Fourth, lexical differences among the various languages may be attributed to differences in conventional imagery.

Finally, metaphorical idioms show that their overall meaning is not the sum of their constituent parts. Instead, the relationships among idiomatic expressions' parts prove to be complex.

In order to test the assumption that metaphor-oriented instruction would improve idiom performance in a foreign language context, Kövecses and Szabó (1996) conducted an informal experiment which showed that Hungarian learners of English performed 25% better in an idiom learning task. Since then a huge body of experimental data (e.g. Beréndi, Csábi and Kövecses, 2008; Boers, 1999, 2000; Guo, 2007; Hashemian and Nezhad, 2006; Herrera and White, 2000; Velasco Sacristán, 2005) offers support to the encouraging findings reported by Kövecses and Szabó (*ibid.*).

Adopting the same methodology with a few modifications, Andreou and Galantomos (2007) carried out a similar survey in order to verify the effectiveness of this method in Greek idiom instruction. Our findings showed that Greek learners who had received idiom instruction based on the cognitive linguistic approach performed statistically better than their peers who were taught the target vocabulary according to a thematic section.

However, it should be stressed that the cognitive linguistic technique should be seen as a complementary means of instruction and not as the sole approach to teach figurative language (Boers, 1999).

In a short scale survey throughout Babiniotis' dictionary (2002) we came across a number of Greek idioms that are motivated by the above mentioned mechanisms, which suggests that cognitive linguistic view on idioms provides us a fruitful background for better and effective teaching strategies since it reveals the hidden relationships among many Greek idioms.

2.3 Level

The issue of students' level is closely related to the adopted teaching strategy. If the teacher decides to apply the traditional methods of memorization through various activities or their arrangement around general themes (e.g. education, work and so on), it seems that every level is suitable for idiom instruction.

On the contrary, if the cognitive linguistic approach is to be applied, then intermediate learners are the most promising group (Boers, 2004). Given the

theoretical framework of cognitive linguistic view, elementary students might come up with problems concerning the used vocabulary and the nature of the given instructions. On the other hand, advanced learners may hesitate about the acceptability of certain idioms in L2 (in our case MG) and therefore they may be less willing to jeopardize efforts and predictions (Boers *ibid.*).

Moreover, a necessary condition before applying the cognitive linguistic methodology is that students should be instructed in an explicit way about the most important aspects of this approach (Kövecses, 2001) in order to use it effectively, discover new ways in learning idioms and achieve long-term retention of them.

2.4 Age

Another issue closely related to the adopted teaching methodology is age. If the instructor decides to follow the traditional teaching approaches then any age seems appropriate for idiom teaching.

On the other hand, the major traits of the cognitive linguistic approach seem more applicable to older learners who have developed the necessary mental skills to think and reason figuratively. However, recent findings (Piquer Píriz, 2008) suggest that the cognitive linguistic approach is applicable to children from a very early age. The ability to think in figurative terms develops during childhood and it is suggested that teachers should teach children figurative language related to the knowledge of the world they have acquired (Vosniadou, 1989; Winner, 1988). Adjusting idiom instruction to the kinds of knowledge children bring into class will eliminate any misunderstandings and will make idiom learning a flexible and enjoyable process (Piquer Píriz, 2008).

However, teachers should keep in mind that children demonstrate a preference for thinking in metonymic terms before they think metaphorically (Winner, 1988).

2.5 Compositionality

According to the compositionality principle, the whole meaning of a complex lexical construction is based on the meaning of its constituent parts. In other words, we can figure out the meaning of an expression by combining the meaning of the elements (i.e. words) that make it up (Cruse, 2006).

However, this principle does not apply to all expressions. In that case, we talk about non compositionality or semantic opacity. Traditionally idioms are taken to be a representative example of this category. Therefore, mainstream definitions hold that idioms “are restricted collocations which cannot normally be understood from the literal meaning of the words which make them up” (Carter, 1998: 65).

This definition is partially correct since the structure of many Greek idioms can assist foreign learners in guessing their overall meaning. For example, the meaning of the words that make up the Greek idiom *ton efage to homa* ‘to die’¹ potentially can lead foreign learner to guess its meaning. However, other Greek idioms do not offer the necessary cues, e.g. *ta pezo* ‘to get confused’. In this case, form seems to determine the attempt to figure out the meaning of an idiom. That is, the more opaque an idiom is the more difficulties a Greek learner will face with its interpretation.

2.6 Register

Not all idioms are appropriate and suitable for every speech level. Many contextual constraints apply to the occurrence of certain idioms in either the spoken or written language. For example Babiniotis (2002) associates the idiom *ta perno sto kranio* ‘to get angry/mad with slang language. Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (1999) and Liu (2003) notice that idioms are more common in informal communicative situations than in more formal registers. On the other hand, Moon (1998) states that pure idioms are more likely to appear in written speech. Unfortunately in MG there is a lack in detailed and extensive appropriateness characterization of idioms and that’s why teachers should rely on their language instinct, as native speakers, to make clear to their students the way idioms function in different contexts.

2.7 Frequency

As regards the matter of frequency Irujo (1986) suggests that idioms of high occurrence should be taught first. Since there are no surveys concerning the frequency rate of Greek idioms teachers’ picking up depends on their experience, views and subjective judgement.

¹ The English meaning of the Greek idiom is the closest literal one.

2.8 Special treatment or not

A related issue is whether teachers should treat idioms in a special way or not. We believe the second answer reflects the existing situation more closely. MG presents a high degree of idiomaticity not only in ordinary speech but even in academic contexts. Giving idioms a special treatment would lead foreign learners to believe that they (i.e. idioms) lie outside everyday life and are not an intrinsic and necessary element of ordinary speaking and writing style. That's why idioms should be an integral part of vocabulary instruction; otherwise omission of them will influence learners' communicative ability as a whole.

2.9 First language influence

Learners' first language is believed to play a key-role in idiom instruction and in second language learning in general. Different languages organize world in different ways. Swan (1997) lists ten patterns of word relationships among different languages (exact fit, same conceptualization-different linguistic label, different lexical and conceptual organization, different classification of abstract concepts, differences in the way words are assigned to part-of-speech categories, different/same cognates, existence of false friends in terms of permissible grammatical context or collocation, formality and style issues, vocabulary organization in discourse and finally different approaches to the definition of a word). The above mentioned patterns of differences were thought to be the main source of difficulty for learners of a second language. The attempt to predict potential areas of difficulty gave rise to the Contrastive Analysis (Mackey, 2006). Moreover, the notion of transfer was introduced in order to describe the influence of a learners' first language over the second one (Ellis, 1997b). There is an enormous body of evidence which suggests that transfer is likely to take place when two languages are taken to be closely related rather than distantly related (Cenoz, 2001, 2003; Cenoz and Valencia, 1994; Dewaele, 1998). When the idioms of the target language are perceived to be similar to those of the mother tongue in both form and meaning, then little difficulty arises (Abdullah and Jackson, 1998). However, close similarity is not always a facilitating factor in idiom comprehension. Studies (Hulstijn and Marchena, 1989; Jordens, 1977; Kellerman, 1977; Laufer, 2000) have shown that

such idioms' identicalness makes learners hesitant and sceptical about the transferability of first language's idioms to the foreign one.

In the case of MG the notion of transfer is crucial due to the existence of the Balkan convergence area (Sprachbund) which refers to the development of identical phonetics, phonological systems and very similar grammar systems in the Balkans (Anttila, 1989). For example, Turkish, *şaka kaldırmamak*, MG, *δεν σηκώνω αστεία*, Bulgarian, *ne posnajam šegi* 'I do not take jokes' (Symeonidis, 1991). In the same vein, Lloshi (1992) provides a useful list of Greek-Albanian idioms that manifest the close relations that exist among the Balkan languages. Hence, when teaching learners from Balkan countries, it is useful to bear in mind these similarities in order to facilitate idiom instruction.

2.10 Cultural background

Idiom learning and figurative language in general encodes customs, cultural beliefs, specific features of a language, social attitudes and norms. Idioms, metaphors, metonymies and other types of figurative vocabulary enable a learner to immerse in the way speakers of the target language express inner thoughts, views, ideas and emotions. Therefore, learning idioms provides learners with a good opportunity to acquire information about a language's culture (Agar, 1991; Glucksberg, 2001).

Liu (2002) explored the metaphorical concepts that serve as a basis for idioms in American English and Chinese. The goal of her study was to examine the effect different values and beliefs have on the metaphorical conceptualization of many idioms. Her findings suggest that the domains of sports, business and driving have played an important role in American society and gave rise to many figurative idioms, whereas eating, the family and the Chinese opera have influenced Chinese culture.

Deignan, Gabryś and Solska (1997) applying the cognitive linguistic methodology compared English and Polish metaphors and identified four types of cultural variation. First, same conceptual metaphor and equivalent linguistic. Second, same conceptual metaphor but different linguistic expression, Third, different conceptual metaphors used and finally words and expressions with similar literal meanings but different metaphorical meanings. The recognition of figurative language variation patterns has further

pedagogical applications. Charteris-Black (2002) in a comparative study of English and Malay figurative vocabulary drew the conclusion that figurative items with an equivalent linguistic and an equivalent conceptual basis were the easiest to be acquired. On the other hand, figurative units with an equivalent linguistic form but a different conceptual basis were the most difficult.

2.11 Cognitive style

The notion of cognitive style refers to an individual's way of thinking, that is the preferred way of perceiving, conceptualizing, structuring and recalling information (Saville-Troike, 2006). A difference in cognitive style is expected to exert an influence on learning a foreign language (Cook, 2001). According to Saville-Troike (2006) the exact relationship between cognitive style and progress made in learning a second language is not yet clear. What is known, however, is that cognitive style interacts with certain social and learning environments in foreign language instruction. The most well-studied pairs of cognitive styles are the following: field dependent/field independent, global/analytical, holistic/analytical, deductive/inductive and focus on meaning/focus on form (Saville-Troike, 2006). Johnson (1989) and Johnson and Rosano (1993) looked at the connection between idiom comprehension and cognitive style and concluded that learners with a field-dependent style performed better at idiom interpretation.

2.12 Proficiency in the target language

Another aspect that a language instructor should bear in mind when teaching idioms is the level of proficiency in the target language (MG in our case). The experimental data in this field are contradictory. In particular, Trosborg (1985) found that the learners' ability to figure out the meaning of unknown metaphorical idioms was correlated with their proficiency in the target language. On the other hand, Johnson (1989, 1991) and Johnson and Rosano (1993) concluded that language proficiency did not affect idiom comprehension.

2.13 Raising learners' metaphorical awareness

The presence of conceptual metaphors in mind is not sufficient condition for students to use them actively in idiom instruction (Kövecses and Szabó, 1996). Boers (2000) claims that if learners are sensitized about the metaphorical aspects of normal communication, then figurative vocabulary learning will be enhanced and this knowledge will be retained longer in their memory.

Littlemore (2002) agrees that helping students to work out the meaning of unknown idioms and metaphors based on metaphorical vocabulary guessing strategies comes with certain benefits, since it has been proven that learners' metaphorical awareness was raised significantly.

According to Littlemore (2004), there are three types of metaphor-based vocabulary guessing strategies, namely, associative fluency, analogical reasoning and image formation. The first process refers to the ability to make a broad range of connection when presented with a stimulus. This strategy is likely to be employed during novel metaphor comprehension, Analogical reasoning refers to the observation of similarities between concepts in order to gain access to one of the two concepts. Finally, image formation is likely to assist individuals in engaging in both associative fluency and analogical reasoning.

2.14 Teaching materials and teaching tips

Finally, we address the issue of teaching materials and how idiom activities are embedded in their structure. Moreover, we offer an overview of tentative teaching tips, which can serve as a useful basis for further elaboration and/or modification.

To start with the teaching materials, Littlemore and Low (2006) compared a broad range of English books and concluded that these are based on three major approaches concerning the teaching of figurative language, which includes, among others, idioms and metaphors.

The first kind of materials presents figurative language (idioms included) as something special, the second exploits the cognitive linguistic view and the third integrates figurative language throughout the various units.

The first approach is problematic because it marginalizes the fact that figurative language is pervasive in everyday communication; the produced

materials based on cognitive linguistics face certain deficits due to the use of an artificial language, which sounds unnatural. Furthermore they skirt around the phraseological aspects of figurative language (Littlemore and Low *ibid.*). According to our opinion this criticism of the cognitive linguistic approach arises from the way the English authors, whose books were examined, constructed the structure of their materials and not from the nature of this approach itself. To overcome such problems it will be beneficial not only to create learning materials around conceptual metaphors and/or metonymies but also to embed in their units grammar and communicative information, which apply to their internal structure and govern their distribution respectively. This is what Danesi (1995) calls a conceptual syllabus. We believe this kind of concept-oriented books that contain all the necessary information regarding morphosyntactic aspects and appropriateness cues plus authentic language (i.e. figurative language used by native speakers of MG to talk about certain concepts) is a convenient solution to deal with criticism, like the one expressed by Littlemore and Low (2006).

The third attempt to produce learning materials where figurative language is an integral part of the learning process as a whole is an ideal and challenging way to show that this kind of vocabulary is in the heart of any foreign language instruction.

As regards the first approach, in Greek literature, the book by Demiri-Prodromidou, Nikolaidou-Nestora and Trifona-Antonopoulou (1983) is a representative example. This material conveys the traditional view that idioms should be taught in alphabetical lists and as something separate. We are not aware of Greek materials that adopt either the cognitive linguistic view or to contain, throughout their structure, not only lists of idioms but various activities and useful information to reinforce their knowledge as well. Some attempts have been made (e.g. Panagopoulou and Chatzipanagiotidi, 1997) but, as we realised, they introduce idiom lists relevant to each unit they deal with without any comments on their distribution, internal structure and restrictions that may apply.

From the above it seems apparent that the alternatives for the teachers of MG as a foreign language are limited and he or she should improvise and rely heavily on his or her previous experience.

Moving on to the second issue of this section, literature abounds in theoretical contributions and teaching tips that will make learners aware of the pervasiveness of metaphor in everyday language use. To name a few, Boers (1999), Deignan, Gabryś and Solska (1997) Lazar (1996) and Liu (2008) offer sample activities (e.g. gap-filling exercises, metaphoric themes recognition, activities applicable to both monolingual and multilingual groups, making sentences using idioms, telling stories based on pictures, retelling and add-on stories, idiom notebooks and flashcards, association of idioms with mental images, hypothesizing and learning the origin of idioms, using idiom dictionaries, playing idiom games, replacing marked expressions with idioms, completing a story or a paragraph), which aim at raising metaphoric awareness and give students the opportunity to make cross-linguistic comparisons and express themselves in metaphorical terms. However, it should be stressed that the cognitive linguistic technique should be seen as a complementary means of instruction and not as the sole approach to teach figurative language (Boers, 1999).

3. Conclusions

To sum up, in this article we looked at the major factors that are expected to determine Greek idiom instruction in a foreign language context. Our goal was to glance at the most indicative dimensions that arise when idiom instruction is to take place. Nevertheless, in our view the adoption of a concept-oriented textbook arranged around universal and culture-specific metaphors and/or metonymies accompanied by the necessary morphosyntactic cues and information on potential constraints on use will assist Greek learners in becoming aware of the ubiquity of idioms in everyday language use.

In particular, we addressed issues such as the content of the term idiom, possible teaching methods, the notions of compositionality, register and frequency, the special character of idioms or not, the suitable learners' level for teaching and finally the way idiom instruction is dealt with in Greek literature.

The above mentioned aspects are of crucial importance because lack of idiom knowledge will have an impact on the learners' overall performance. Hence, it is essential for both teachers and students to deal with idioms in a well-defined environment, where topics such as idiom definition or teaching

methodology are solved. This is the only way the educational process as a whole will be beneficial to its participants.

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