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FACULTAD DE FILOSOFÍA, LETRAS Y CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN

CARRERA DE LENGUA Y LITERATURA INGLESA

Fostering the Speaking Skills through the Use of Cartoons to Teach
Idiomatic Expressions Applied in the EFL Classroom with Students of Ninth
Level of Basic Education at “Isabel Moscoso” High School

**Trabajo Investigativo del Curso de
Graduación previo a la obtención del
Título de Licenciados en Ciencias de la
Educación en la Especialización de
Lengua y Literatura Inglesa.**

Tutor: Dr. Ion Ocean Youman Risinger

Autores: Patricio Alexander Chuni Patiño

Mónica Lorena Crespo Loja

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Autores: Patricio Alexander Chuni Patiño
Mónica Lorena Crespo Loja



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Resumen

El objetivo de este proyecto es mejorar las destrezas del el habla a través del uso de dibujos animados que ayuden a los estudiantes a adquirir modismos en el noveno año de educación básica en un aula de clase de enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera. Este proyecto fue llevado a cabo en el Colegio Isabel Moscoso en la ciudad de Cuenca. Los participantes fueron 22 estudiantes cuyas edades promedio fue 13 años de edad. Estos estudiantes participaron activamente utilizando material apropiado acerca de dibujos animados brindados por los investigadores. Este trabajo se llevó a cabo con el fin de poner en práctica las técnicas significativas para enseñar modismos a estudiantes principiantes. Además, este trabajo muestra las diferentes estrategias para enseñar estas expresiones con los dibujos animados y las diferentes actividades que motivan a los estudiantes a hablar y utilizarlos en el aula. Además, este proyecto ha logrado los objetivos que se establecieron porque el uso de imágenes en el aula ha demostrado que los estudiantes puedan asimilar el vocabulario idiomático de una manera fácil y divertida. Por lo tanto, este proyecto muestra que estos recursos ayudan a los estudiantes a adquirir nuevos modismos, ya que todos los datos recogidos fueron analizados y tabulados para obtener evidencia real de que las imágenes animadas trabajan en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje de modismos.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Expresiones idiomáticas, Dibujos animados



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ABSTRACT

The goal of this project is to improve speaking skills through the use of cartoons to help students to acquire idioms in the ninth level of basic education in an EFL classroom. This project was carried out at Isabel Moscoso High School in the city of Cuenca. The participants were 22 students whose average age was 13 years old. These students actively participated using suitable material about cartoons given by researchers. This plan was done in order to implement meaningful techniques to teach idioms to beginning students. Also, this paper shows different strategies to teach these expression using cartoons and different activities that motivate students to speak and use them in the classroom. Furthermore, this project achieved the goals that were initiated because the use of pictures in the classroom demonstrated that students could assimilate idiomatic vocabulary in an easy and fun way. Therefore, this project shows that these resources help students to acquire idioms since all collected data was analyzed and tabulated to get real evidence that cartoons work in the process of teaching and learning idioms.

KEY WORDS

Idiomatic, expressions, Cartoons



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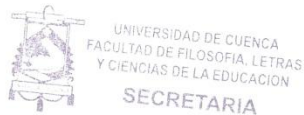
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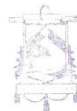
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AUTHORSHIP

The ideas, opinions, and comments specified in this document are the sole responsibility of its authors, Patricio Alexander Chuni and Mónica Lorena Crespo.

Patricio Alexander Chuni Patiño

I.D.0106034556

Mónica Lorena Crespo Loja

I.D. 0105214860



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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my God, Jehovah, who is the almighty being in the universe that has guided my life and has supported development of this work through his wisdom and has allowed me successfully finish my career at the university. Also, it is dedicated to my dear parents, Rosa and Nicolás, because they have helped me with their economic and moral aid in my life. Moreover, this project is dedicated to my brothers, Franklin, Olger, Lizardo and my sisters-in-law, Fanny and María, who have encouraged me during the process of my studies. Finally, it is dedicated to my dear little nephews, David, Nicolás, and Carlos.

Patricio Chuni

I dedicate this thesis to my lovely parents who have always been near me with their unconditional love and whose good examples have taught me to work hard for the things that I aspire to achieve. Also, I dedicate this thesis to my sisters and brothers who supported and encouraged me to reach my dreams and have provided me with a strong love shield that always surrounds me. Besides this I would like to give my infinitive thanks to God and the holy Virgin Mary who takes care of me all the time.

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INTRODUCTION

There are a huge number of idiomatic expressions which are used in the English language. Most types of idiomatic idioms fall into these categories such as slang, proverbs, and phrasal verbs. These kinds of words may be used in formal and informal speech by English speakers. So people can find idioms in whatever media mass and place where people speak English. Moreover, it is not easy to understand and use idiomatic expressions because they have special meanings of their own and they cannot be translated word by word.

In Ecuador, the curriculum system motivates students to learn English as a second language; however, it does not provide students good tools and methods for learning idiomatic expressions. For this fact, Ecuadorian students find it difficult to improve their English knowledge in the classroom. Some of the difficulties that can be found in classrooms are the different types of idiomatic expressions which learners confused. Another reason that students find it difficult to learn idiomatic expressions is that teachers most of the time avoid practicing idioms with English beginning students, hence students get confused and frustrated in the English learning process.

It is important to investigate new methods in which students can learn these different types of words in meaningful ways. Then these methods may help teachers to practice idiomatic expressions with students, and they may make students participate in classes in active ways.

Cartoon characters are a suitable way to reinforce speaking skills in students who are beginning to interact with English because most beginning students are familiar with them through TV or other media mass. Therefore, they can get abstract knowledge and share ideas just looking at pictures among them. Also, cartoons are a good way to engage students to learn idiomatic forms such as phrasal verbs, slang, proverbs, and so on. Finally, teaching idioms using cartoons can help to augment different activities in the classroom, and not



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just to develop speaking skills but cartoons can also help to develop other skills which are listening, reading, and writing.

The beneficiaries of this research are the high school teachers and students because teachers can take advantage of the techniques that this project is going to present, and it will help students to alleviate many of their difficulties in their study of idiomatic expressions and feel confident and comfortable with the language.

Finally, this project is going to have five chapters that support this topic. The first chapter will be about the problem, justification, general and specific objectives, and of course the research question. The second chapter will include the literature review which will have different categories of idioms, cognitive styles, acquisition of vocabulary, common student problems for comprehension of idioms, and strategies for teaching idiomatic expressions. This project will utilize cartoons in order to teach and learn this vocabulary. Lastly, there will be some activities for teaching these expressions in the EFL classroom. The third chapter will be about the methodology used to collect real information to support this work; and will explain the methods and human resources. The fourth chapter will be about the analysis and interpretation of results which are going to be shown through diagrams to facilitate comprehension of them. Lastly, chapter five will contain the conclusion and recommendations for this project. Finally, this paper will contain extra information to help educators to see and analyze the different resources that were used to carry out the project in the educative center; these resources will be in the appendix.



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Chapter I

The problem

1.1 Topic

The topic of this research is “Fostering the Speaking Skills through the Use of Cartoons to Teach Idiomatic Expressions Applied in the EFL Classroom with Students of Ninth Level of Basic Education at “Isabel Moscoso” High School”.

1.2 Description of the Problem

Most English idiomatic expressions might change the whole meaning if they are used in an incorrect way by the speakers. For this reason, students need to know their real meaning and usage to avoid committing mistakes. Furthermore, some students seem to know the spelling and pronunciation of some words, which are idiomatic expressions, but they do not recognize the real meaning of those. It is probably difficult to master about idiomatic expressions in whatever language because it requires a lot of time and effort of listening, speaking, studying, memorizing, and trying to use them according to the context.

1.3 Justification

This topic has been chosen for these reasons: to relate the use of idiomatic expressions to foster speaking skill in students who do not have clear ideas of the usage of those expressions.

As everybody knows English is the language that dominates the world. The most recently information that appears in the human society is written or talked in English first. For this reason, it is important to use resources that can help students to understand idiomatic expressions according to the circumstances, and they can practice them later in daily life. The activities that teacher present must be designed according to students’ needs and interests to make learning meaningful and not momentary. Hence, it seems that a good way for teaching some idiomatic expressions are cartoons because nearly all students are in



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constant interaction with cartoon characters in whatever media mass; therefore, cartoons seem to be a useful educative tool to get students' interest and motivation in order to teach idiomatic expressions.

Another reason is to prevent misunderstanding of the meaning of idiomatic expressions and make beginning students to get confidence with the English language. Therefore, if they learn those expressions, they will be able to communicate their opinions and feelings in a natural way.

1.4 Objectives

❖ General Objective

To determine the importance of acquisition of idiomatic expressions as part of language learning to foster speaking skills through the use of cartoons in an EFL classroom.

❖ Specific Objectives

1. To explore and define English idiomatic expressions.
2. To study different strategies that might enable learners to accurately use idioms in real life context.
3. To select idiomatic expression activities to foster speaking skills.

1.5 Research Question

Does the use of cartoons foster speaking skills and idiomatic expressions in the EFL classroom?



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Chapter II

Literature Review

This Literature Review is from reliable database, and many books were used to develop this important topic “Fostering the Speaking Skills through the Use of Cartoons to Teach Idiomatic Expressions Applied in the EFL Classroom with Students of Ninth Level of Basic Education at “Isabel Moscoso” High School”. Moreover, this research is going to contribute to teaching and to learning English idiomatic expressions in the classroom.

2.1 The importance to develop the speaking skill

Linguist Shastri’s book “ Communicative Approach to Teach English as a Second Language” states that “The objective of teaching the skill of speaking English is to develop the ability to express oneself intelligibly, reasonably accurately and fluently” (71). According to him the goal is to have students express themselves in a natural way. For that reason, it is important that students develop their speaking skills using idiomatic expressions so that the process of communication is more efficient.

In addition, according to this author, it is difficult for learners to develop speaking skills in the classroom for the following reasons. First, it is a limitation of the educational program. It means many educators just focus on certain English topics and skills because they believe that these are more important than others. Second, the lack of time in the classroom to make students practice these skills is a disadvantage that many teachers have. Another reason is that in many educative centers there are big numbers of students in each classroom. So some students lose the opportunity to talk and to participate. The fourth reason is some teachers do not have acceptable knowledge of phonics and



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phonology, which is of great importance to improve teachers' pronunciation. Finally, students' lack of confidence and ability to speak in English may make students feel shy and nervous at the time they speak. Therefore, it is important to emphasize this important skill to establish meaningful knowledge in students for their later use (71).

2.2 Idioms Background

“The ultimate root of the term idiom is the Greek lexeme *idios*, meaning ‘own, private, peculiar’ (OED, v:20-1). The same underlying form can be found in the prefix *idio-*, as well as in *idiot* and its derivatives” (Strässler13). So according to this etymological definition idioms are proper words of a place and language.

Oxford Advanced learner's dictionary defines an idiom as “a phrase or sentence whose meaning is not clear from the meaning of its individual words and which must be learnt as a whole unit” (qtd. In. Tarcaoanu 225). It means that it is very difficult to learn this kind of vocabulary for foreign students because of the complexity of the structures that it has. For that reason, idiomatic vocabulary is an essential part to understanding a language because idioms play such an important role in all aspects of communication; however, they are the most difficult vocabulary for students. Moreover, according to Prof. Dr. Ismail Cakir in his journal “How do learners Percieve Idioms in Efl Classes?” says, “idioms are one of the components that take part in that context and most used in every language” (373). Therefore, students who are beginning to learn English as a second language need to know some idiomatic expressions in order to enrich their vocabulary and have suitable communication.

2.3 Types of Idioms

English has many idiomatic expressions of which some are used more than others by native speakers and other foreigners who know how to speak English. These expressions can be used in formal and informal communication.



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So this project is going to analyze three important categories of idiomatic expressions: slangs, phrasal verbs, and proverbs. Also, this project is going to focus on different idiomatic expressions which are made up from pair of nouns, pair of adjectives, and adverbial forms. All of these forms are very used by students in different contexts. Finally, there are other idioms which come from other context that are going to be analyzed in a brief way.

2.3.1 Slang

The American Heritage College Dictionary defines slang in the following way “A kind of language occurring chiefly in casual and playful speech, made up typically of coinages and figures of speech that are deliberately used in place of standard terms for added raciness, humor, irreverence, or other effect” (“Slang”). So it means that they are words and expressions that are casual and vivid, and they are often short-lived. Also, they are usually considered unsuitable for formal contexts because slang words are used by people who often lack respectability.

In addition, in Julia Falk’s Book “Linguistics and Language”, she explains that slang and colloquial utterance are very similar because one combines with the other, and it is not possible to divide the two forms. After a period of time, a word which was slang may become recognized as colloquial, so a new colloquial word may appear. For instance, this happened with the informal word cop instead of police officer. Besides, one feature of slang is that they come to be outdated in a short time but others do not disappear such as the slang word john. This word is used to refer to a toilet and is still used nowadays. On the other hand the word hippie has changed since it appeared. In the 1950s, this word became beatnik, then in the early 1960s it became flower children and finally in the late 1960s it became hippies (66). Hence, it is probable to find another equivalent word that is not a slang word as the following examples (64).



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Slang	Non-slang
Pot	Marihuana
Rip off	Cheat
Smashed	Drunk
Rap	Discuss

(64).

It is interesting to note that some slang words can depend on the context in which they are used by the speakers because they may have just one meaning and function as slang; however, the same words can have other meanings, which may be formal words, and used in other contexts. Specifically, the word pot can be a slang word, but in terms of cooking a pot is a container made of metal or pottery. Therefore, it is a formal word (65).

Moreover, Falk says, “People sometimes claim that slang is more vivid, more colorful, than other types of words” (65). That is to say, people want to express their ideas and get the attention of the listener using these words in order to make the communication more interesting and effective. For many people, the use of slang is identified with a certain group. For example, college students and rock musicians have to use slang that belongs to them in order to be recognized as member of those groups (66). Furthermore, slang comes from Germanic origin because they are derived from Germanic morphemes (67).

Finally, there is another kind of slang that is considered vulgar and obscene; therefore, these words can create a negative reaction among people. Hence, these expressions are used just by a portion of the population (68). One example of this is the word used to indicate the male sexual organ; which is called in formal speech penis, yet using vulgar slang the word is dick or peter (Youman 154).



2.3.2 Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs are a fundamental part in the process of teaching and learning English because students need to be familiarized with these kinds of words and are used in everyday spoken speech, and formal and informal writing. Also, they are the most difficult vocabulary to learn in learning English. Furthermore, nearly all foreign students find it too difficult to learn phrasal verbs because their forms and meanings are too complex. In addition, the English language develops new forms of verbs (Rudska 1).

In Brygida Rudska’s book “World Power Phrasal Verbs and Compounds: A Cognitive Approach” she defines phrasal verbs in the following way “phrasal verbs, also called (idiomatic) multi-words verbs, consist of a verb, an adverb(adverbial particle) and /or preposition some verb are called *prepositional verbs* since they consist of a verb and a preposition" (1).

Besides, Ronald E. Feare’s book classifies phrasal verbs into two categories: “Intransitive verbal idioms” and “transitive verbal idioms” (1, 47). The intransitive verbal idioms are verbs which are not followed by an object, and are composed of particles and preposition or with both at the same time (10). Therefore, they change their meaning if there is a combination of both. For example,

Intransitive verb+ particle	Intransitive verb + preposition	Intransitive verb + particle + preposition
“To come up” “to arise, to be asked”(39) “His suggestion came up in class” (39). “To break down” “ to fail to function, to stop	“To part with” “to separate, to sell”(21) “I had to part with my car because the monthly payments were too high” (21).	“To come up with” ”To suggest, to offer”(39) “He came up with a suggestion in class” (39). “To run around with” “to associate with regularly,



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<p>working properly”(7) “The travelers were delayed because the bus had <u>broken down</u>” (7).</p>	<p>“To take after” “ to resemble, to look like”(21) “In personality, he <u>takes after</u> his mother, not his father” (21).</p>	<p>to hang around with” (32) “High school students <u>run around with</u> classmates after school” (32).</p>
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The transitive verbal idioms are verbs which are followed by a direct object, and they are made up by particles, prepositions, and combination of them (111)

<p>Transitive verb + particles</p>	<p>Transitive verb + preposition</p>	<p>Transitive verb + particles + prepositions</p>
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<p>“To talk over” “to discuss; to consider” (55).</p> <p>“The corporation members talked over the plan for some time” (55).</p> <p>“To make up” “to form, to compose, to constitute” (66).</p> <p>“Five singers make up that rock-and-roll group” (66).</p>	<p>“To confuse with” “to fail to tell apart” (78).</p> <p>“I confused with a similar car mine in the parking lot” (78).</p>	<p>“To get out of” “to gain from, to obtain from” (105).</p> <p>“The participants got out of the conference” (107).</p>
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2.3.3 Nominal, Adjectival, and Adverbial idioms

Lastly, Feare gives types of idioms which are nominal, adjectival, and adverbial forms (119). They are made up of noun, adjectives and adverbs and are divided in different categories. For example,

Nominal forms	Adjectival forms	Various adverbial forms
<p>First case: pairs of nouns</p> <p>“Flesh and blood” “one’s family or blood relatives, kin” (123).</p> <p>“Of course I’m proud of</p>	<p>Pairs of adjectives</p> <p>“Free and easy” “unworried, carefree” (141).</p> <p>“Playboys and the very rich tend to be free and easy about everything”</p>	<p>“Little by little” “gradually” (159).</p> <p>“Little by little, the foreign student improved his English abilities” (159).</p>



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<p>daughter; she's my own <u>flesh and blood.</u>" (123).</p> <p>Second case: adjective + noun combination</p> <p><u>"Big shot"</u> "important person" (132).</p> <p>"The politician knew a lot of <u>big shots</u> in business who donated a great deal of money to his campaign" (132).</p>	<p>(141).</p>	
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2.3.4 Proverbs

These types of words are short phrases that many people know and they are used for different purposes. These expressions contain words of wisdom, truth, or morality. Proverbs are parts of speech and are used in everyday conversation. Also, they may be old and others are new. Moreover, they are passed from generation to generation (Mieder 11).

According to Chicago Dictionary explains that there are thousands of English proverbs, but this chart shows you the most common proverbs used by the folk. For example,

ENGLISH	SPANISH
"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" (251).	Más vale pájaro en mano que ciento volando.



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“ The early bird that catches the worm” (244)	A quien madruga Dios lo ayuda.
“Out of sight, out of mind” (252).	Ojos que no ven, corazón que no siente.
“Like father like son” (247).	De tal palo tal astilla.
“You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear” (245).	Aunque la mona se vista de seda mona se queda.
“Barking dogs seldom bite” (253).	Perro que ladra no muerde.
“For foolish talk, deaf ears” (244).	A palabras necias oídos sordos.

2.3.5 Other common idiomatic expressions

Moreover, in the book of “Idioms and other English Expressions”, it states that there are many idiomatic expressions which come from numbers, body parts, animals, feelings, weather, water, objects, and so on (Rasinski et al. 14). These idioms are used in daily speech by the people who use English as a mother language and people who learn English as a second language. For example, an idiom with numbers can be “give me five”. An idiom with animals can be “cry crocodile tears”. An idiom with body parts can be “a pain in the neck” (14). An idiom with feelings can be “bored stiff”. An idiom with water is “a flood of tears”. An idiom with weather is “as fresh as spring time”. Finally, “couch potato” is a good example of an idiom object (15).

2.4 Cognitive ability, Cognitive Style, and Culture to comprehend idioms

Cognitive ability relates to a students' age in comprehending idiomatic expressions. Ph.D. Dilin Liu's book “Idioms: Description, Comprehension, Acquisition, and Pedagogy” mentions that age is an important factor in teaching



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and learning idioms, since age determines the level of students' comprehension of them. For instance, in a study that was carried out with two groups of students of different ages, some experts showed that very young learners whose average age was seven years old had a limited level of understanding figurative and literal meanings of idioms in context. Meanwhile, students who were over ten years old had better cognitive ability to comprehend idioms in context (85).

Cognitive style is the way in which students can obtain, process, and remember information. According to Ph. D. Liu, there are two kinds of cognitive styles in processing and interpreting idioms. The first one is the "field independent cognitive style". This style is appropriate for native English speakers because they can understand idiomatic vocabulary in a detailed or analytical way. The second one is the "field dependent cognitive style". It means pupils possess a lack of ability in comprehending idioms because they analyze idioms as whole systems. Moreover, this style is closely related to ESL students and this is used by speakers who are learning English as a second language (86).

Another factor in order to understand idioms is culture. That is to say, idioms related with the customs of a country can be very popular in a specific country. However, those idioms may be unknown by the people who dominate the same target language in other countries. For example, Ph. D. Liu gives an example of this. In the USA this expression is very common, "have two strikes against someone". Many people who live in this country understand this expression because this expression is related to baseball. On the other hand, if this expression is used in another country where baseball is an unpopular sport, people might not be able to comprehend this expression (87).

2.5 Vocabulary acquisition

Teaching students vocabulary is the first step in helping comprehension of idiomatic expressions, and it depends on the level and age that students



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have. In order to teach vocabulary, it is necessary to choose appropriate methods to make students feel engaged with vocabulary. In Daniela Pohl's book "The Teaching of Vocabulary in the Primary School Foreign Language Classroom", she mentions that there are two methods for teaching new words: using indirect teaching and direct teaching. First, indirect teaching method includes activities such as reading aloud, sharing reading, and writing experiences. The second one is direct teaching method, which refers to teaching vocabulary according to the students' needs in the classroom (2).

In the book "Teaching English Language Learners K-12", it explains that there is an informal way to teach idiomatic vocabulary to speakers through movies. So students may watch subtitles of movies and learn vocabulary. Another advantage is that they can hear the real pronunciation of the words. However, this practice sometimes does not give students correct translations of subtitles, and it may cause misunderstanding of words and phrases. For example, a student had watched a movie in which an actor said "this party sucks". Then the student read this translation "esta fiesta apesta". So he assumed that sucks means stinks. Later, he came in to his classroom and said "This room sucks" because the floor of the classroom had been cleaned with detergent. This is one of many examples of misunderstandings that movies can produce for non-native learners (Jesness 31).

Moreover, idiomatic expressions are the most difficult words to produce in the moment of teaching and learning vocabulary. This book tells us that idiomatic expressions should be studied as a single concept, to help students avoid wasting their time. For instance, the word "get" is used in many idioms such as: get out, get up, get over, get away with, get after, etc. Each one of these expressions has its own meaning, and there are not any relationships with others meanings (Jesness 33).



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2.6 Common Problems for idiom comprehension by speakers

Belinda Fusté-Herrmann in her journal “Idiom Comprehension In Bilingual And Monolingual Adolescent” states that it is difficult to learn idiomatic vocabulary for these reasons: semantic transparency, familiarity, and context.

The first problem is semantic transparency. It means that some idiomatic expressions have figurative meanings, and others have literal meanings. Literal meaning means that idiom parts are easy to decipher. For example, the expression “a piece of cake” represents a clear mental idea of the correct meaning without wasting a lot of time to decipher it. That is to say, the meaning may be interpreted just by knowing the meaning of its parts. And the figurative meaning means that those expressions do not have literal meaning because they need to be analyzed in an intense way (Fusté-Herrmann 6). For instance, Achilles’ heel is a good example of this (Youman 29). So it is necessary to know the background of this expression to know the real meaning and use of it in a conversation.

The second problem that we find at the moment of comprehending idiomatic expressions is familiarity. Idiomatic occurrence in a language makes the expression more understandable by speakers. Also, others factors that depend on the familiarity of idioms are customs and age. Besides, if an idiom is used constantly in the society, it may be easier to acquire and learn it (7). If students are interested in how to use idioms in a language, teachers should choose expressions which are more related with students’ interests.

The third one is idiomatic context. To comprehend familiar and unfamiliar idioms it is necessary to know the circumstances or events in which they can occur in a language (8). Finally, context sometimes is one of the difficulties in learning idiomatic expressions. Teachers should find suitable situations to teach them in.



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2.7 Strategies to teach idiomatic expressions accurately in EFL classroom.

As this project emphasizes the importance of teaching and learning idioms, it is very useful to know some strategies that help teachers to impart idiomatic knowledge in the EFL classroom. Moreover, by using good strategies students can acquire and comprehend idiomatic expressions and avoid frustration in the classroom. Besides, about these strategies teachers and learners can mix them in order to prevent monotonous techniques in an EFL classroom. According to Ph. D. Liu, there are many strategies such as the following.

The first strategy that this scholar mentions is “raising students’ awareness of and interest in idioms”. If students’ curiosity is high, they can acquire and grasp these expressions easily. For example, this author says, “Some scholars believe that raising students’ sensitivity to idioms is perhaps more effective than giving them lists of idioms to learn” (122). It means students should be conscious and motivated to learn those idioms which are most used by people.

Another strategy that this author mentions is “developing a habit of watching for idioms in daily language use”. It means teachers should prove and expound that idioms are everywhere, but first teachers must prepare students how to identify idioms when they find them. It is a hard task because teachers should work in groups with others pupils who have advanced knowledge and can help their classmates with less English knowledge. Moreover, when students have enough idiomatic training, teachers should persuade them to find them alone in different resources such as musical videos, movies, and so on (122).

“Using idiom corner/bulletin/file/notebook” is another strategy. It means the walls of a class are very useful to post idiomatic expressions which are most used, preferred, and found difficult by students. Therefore, the posted idioms



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may be discussed and analyzed by learners and teachers. In addition, these expressions may be organized according to topics and purpose (123).

Another strategy is “exploring idioms in cartoons, comic strips, and other media”. According to this professor, it generates great benefit for students because cartoon characters, comic strips, and TV help to get the students’ attention. Also, through these resources students can discuss them in a fun and interactive way (123).

Another strategy is “learning to organize idioms in a variety of ways to promote idiom acquisition”. These expressions can be arranged in different ways according to the students’ needs. So in order to organize them, teachers should consider these following criteria (124).

- Students’ needs: This is based on the immediate action of using idiomatic vocabulary by students in whatever task. Also, it is determined by the kind of people who learn them, students’ future plans, and students’ preferences (108).
- Usefulness/Frequency: Some idiomatic expressions may not be taught to avoid wasting time because students cannot use them, and some idioms are out of date. In addition, it depends on the social life and purposes of learners. For example, if pilots want to learn idioms, they should learn idiomatic vocabulary related to their employment (108).
- Appropriateness: It means teachers may choose suitable idioms according to the age and level of education. Also, some scholars mention that teachers should avoid vulgar idiomatic expressions; however, others say that these expressions are good for students in order to enrich learners’ vocabulary. Finally, it depends on “students learning needs” too. (111)



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“Incorporating idiom learning into the entire curriculum” is another useful strategy to use in the EFL classroom. It means teacher must include idiomatic expressions as much as possible in their educational programs because most of the curricula in many countries do not allow teaching these expressions alone. Also, it is important because it helps to vary the process of teaching and learning with different activities and situations which are guided to foster meaningful learning for students (124).

Finally, “Using idiom dictionaries” is another strategy. In this one, students have to look for a good dictionary that helps them to know the multiple and correct meanings of idioms (164). Also, for students who are learning idioms, this author recommends that they use a bilingual dictionary, since a dictionary in the target language may become difficult to understand in the terms that those dictionaries use (165). In addition, the dictionary should be chosen according to the types of idioms that students want to learn, since British idioms are not the same as American idioms (166).

2.7.1 Pictures in the EFL classroom

Pictures play an important role in the process of students’ learning since they help learners develop some abilities in the classroom. For this reason, it is necessary to have enough resources to motivate and to encourage them in the process of learning. According to Andrew Wright’s book “Pictures for Language Learning”, he states “Things we see play an enormous part in affecting us and in giving us information. We predict, deduce and infer, not only from what we heard and read but from what we see around us and from what we remember having seen” (2). That is to say, images that we see every day help us to keep information that we consider most important and necessary for daily life.

Moreover, Tarcaoanu in her journal “Teaching and Learning Idioms in English (Theoretical and Practical Considerations)” says, “More recent materials illustrate figurative usages with cartoons, group them under topics (e.g. weather,



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food, colours, etc.)” (225). This means cartoons are a new way of teaching idiomatic expressions because students will be motivated with agreeable pictures to attract students’ interest. In Bowkett and Hitchman’s book “USING COMIC ART to Improve SPEAKING, READING, and WRITING”, they say that pictures are the main source to teach students because the students get an idea of what the teacher is trying to teach them (10).

Andrew Wright explain that pictures should be used according to vocabulary, functions, situations, and skill level of what teachers are going to teach (5). Also, some pictures are used to ask personal answers, and others are used to give objective descriptions of them (6). With the use of different pictures, pupils may have more opportunities and challenges to develop the language (7). If teachers want to give more opportunities to learners, they should use pictures in a context of confidence and free from pressure (8).

Moreover, this writer mentions that pictures are powerful tools to develop speaking and writing skills for the following reason. First, using images, teachers can get students’ attention and interest about any topic. Second, pictures give chances to observe situations which are close to reality. Third, they provide different ways to understand situations. Fourth, pictures can help students to give mechanical answers. Finally, pictures provide preliminary information of whatever topic that is going to be developed later by the teacher.

2.7.2 Cartoons to enhance the idiomatic usage

The American Heritage Dictionary defines the word cartoon as “a drawing depicting a humorous situation, often accompanied by a caption” (“cartoon”). So cartoons are simple pictures which are designed to entertain an audience in a visual way and are related to different topics taken from fictitious and real situations.

The article “The Use of Cartoon in the Learning of EFL” mentions that it is important to use enjoyable material in order to get students interest and



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encourage them to learn a new language. Also, some activities that teachers give students are considered boring for learners; therefore, some teachers try to change this situation, but others do not care (“The Use of Cartoon in the Learning of EFL” par. 4). Moreover, this article states that “Cartoons are especially useful because they are stimulating, varied and often humorous. Comprehension of the language is facilitated by the pictorial situation” (“The Use of Cartoon in the Learning of EFL” par. 6). That is to say, they are used to motivate students to understand the language in a visible way. Furthermore, because students are familiar with those attractive pictures, they will be able to recognize the meaning and the usage of the teachers’ content (“The Use of Cartoon in the Learning of EFL” par. 6).

Moreover, this article explains that if teachers mix both oral and visual characteristics of a language, they will help teachers make more interesting presentations, and students will retain information for a longer period of time (“The Use of Cartoon in the Learning of EFL” par 7). Also, cartoons are suitable material because they can amuse students, and they are easy to get since many teachers can find and download them from the internet, magazines, and newspapers (“The Use of Cartoon in the Learning of EFL” par 9). Lastly, cartoons help students to be conscious in whatever read or spoken activity that they are immersed.

Finally, Clare Lavery of the British Council in her article, “Using cartoons and comic strip” argues that “cartoons and comic strips can be used from beginner level to advanced level for a variety of language and discussion activities”. This material may be applied according to students and teachers’ needs depending on students’ level.

“Cartoons are powerful teaching tools and can

- Tell a complex story in a few images



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- Provide comment and provoke thought on events and issues in the news
- Give an example of vocabulary related to current trends and fads
- Provide easily identifiable characters to form the basis for sketches
- Show culture in action with the ways that men or women are behaving and are expected to behave” (Lavery, “Using cartoons and comic strip”).

2.8 Different activities to teach idiomatic expressions in the EFL classroom

To teach idiomatic expression it is very important to take into account that teachers may need to use different activities based on the multiple intelligences that students require to make learning meaningful (133). According to the scholar Dilin Liu, there are many activities to teach idiomatic expression, but teachers must choose the most appropriate exercises depending on the level, age, and type of idiomatic expression that teachers want to teach. The most useful for students are the following:

“Reading and discussing passages with idioms highlighted” is the first one. In this activity the teacher chooses readings which have idioms. Teachers must put a mark or highlight the idiomatic vocabulary so students can read and recognize the idiom. After that, students and teachers can debate the different meanings of each expression. This activity may be carried out in groups or the entire class (140).

“Identifying idioms in a passage” is another activity to teach idioms. This one is almost the same as the activity below, but the unique difference is that in this exercise teachers do not have to put a mark on any idiom. The task for students is to look for the idiomatic words and highlight them. The author recommends choosing easy readings to facilitate the comprehension of those words. It can be done with a partner or with more students with the objective that they can help each other and develop the second language among them (141).



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“Telling what the idiom is by using the definition or explanation given”. For this activity it is necessary to have previous understanding of the idioms that they’re going to use. Students have to match the correct definition of each idiom (153). For example,

“Definitions	Matching idioms
Be attentive	be all ears
Lost an opportunity for achieving something	miss the boat
Be in trouble	be in hot weather” (153).

“Filling in blanks with appropriate idioms” is another exercise. It is an activity very easy for students because teacher must use just a part of a sentence or a paragraph. Students have to complete the missing part with idioms(153).

“Playing idiom games” is a fun way to learn idioms because they attract students’ attention. This project presents just one meaningful game to learn idioms, but there are many games which can be found in different educative resources. For example, this author mentions this game called “one operation”. So he mentions “In operations, students perform a series of actions to complete a task by either following the teacher’s commands or miming with the teacher the actions the latter describes verbally” (156). For example, “I want to **call up** my friend. First, I **look up** the phone number. Then I **write** it **down**. I **pick up** the receiver and punch in the number. The number is busy. I **hang up** and decide to **call back** later” (156).

“Telling Stories Based on Pictures” is another good activity for pupils. In this activity, teachers show the sequence of a story with pictures and ask for the events that happen in each picture. In addition, teachers must include all types of idioms that were taught in the class (159). With this activity, teachers develop speaking skills.



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“Notebook and flashcards” is another alternative activity. In this one, students have to create a notebook or short cards with the most important idioms for them. Then, when they have the necessity to use them in writing or speaking activities, they can consult their own lists. This activity is very simple, but it helps students a lot because it helps them to remember idiomatic vocabulary (160).

Just the most relevant and meaningful activities of Ph. D. Dilin Liu have been chosen. All of these resources are based on teaching and learning idiomatic expressions in the EFL classroom. Besides, these exercises can be easy or hard for students because they are based on the multiple intelligences that students have.

In conclusion, for the literature review, the researchers of this project have enriched their knowledge about idiomatic expressions to apply them in an EFL classroom. In addition, according to the research there are many idioms, strategies, and activities that can be used in the classroom, but this project has chosen just the most relevant information that the researches considered necessary to teach with the best methodologies that will be analyzed in chapter three.



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Chapter III

Methodology

3.1 Basic methodology

This project uses the qualitative method because some of the data collected is explained in the form of words. According to Michael Grady, “In qualitative research investigators are more interested in understanding the way of a situation”(5). This project will explain the findings of this study and is based on students’ interests. Also, this project uses the Quantitative method because it collects, tabulates, describes, and analyzes the results obtained from the survey and tests applied at Isabel Moscoso High School. To make the results clear, the results are shown by using statistical graphics. Dimitra Hartas in her book says that “Quantitative research is typically defined along the notion that data are presented in a numerical form that is suitable for mathematical analyses” (qtd. in Dimitra Hartas 66). So quantitative research is based on numerical techniques. This means that analyzing tests is appropriate for use of method. Moreover, the action research method was put into action because it is important to know how the project influenced the students to learn idiomatic expressions through cartoons in the classroom.

This work has a triangulation of action research, which is credibility, transferability, and dependability. The principle of credibility means that all the theories analyzed were written by expert authors. The second means this project can be applied any place with beginning students who are learning English because this project provides scientific theory, techniques, and activities to teach and learn idiomatic expressions. Also, this methodology can be transferred for use in others places to teach idiomatic expressions using cartoons. Lastly, the principle of dependability describes the different stages in which the application is carried out in the classroom. If teachers want to use this



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methodology, they must analyze their own material and decide what kind of cartoons would be best shown in an EFL classroom.

3.2 Human resources

This project was applied at the Isabel Moscoso High School which is located in the city of Cuenca. The participants were 22 students of ninth level of basic education of which the average age was 13 years. This class was chosen because they were beginning students who did not have previous knowledge of idiomatic expressions; however, they knew simple grammatical structures to help acquire the learning of idioms in the EFL classroom. These students were assigned by the principal of this high school because they were a small group. The idiomatic expression course was applied to students for six hours for forty minute periods during one week. Many of the students, especially the girls, were very interested in learning this vocabulary, but a few students did not want to pay attention.

3.3 Instrument for Data Collection

To further develop this issue, the following resources were used in order to obtain the necessary information to prove that this project can work with beginning students. This project is based on interviews, surveys, a pretest and posttest in order to clarify this topic more. In addition, the resources that the researchers use are reliable because the information was written by experts.

3.3.1 Interviews

This project has two interviews which were given to two experts who gave this project very important contributions by adding more knowledge about idiomatic expressions. Those questions were open because they talked about their experiences as English teachers teaching different topics, including idioms, for many years. The Interviews were arranged in advance and took place at the University of Cuenca where the two experts teach. The interviewees were asked questions related to their knowledge about idiomatic expressions, and these



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questions are included at the end of this project (See appendix 1). There were nine questions which were written and asked in English. The responses were recorded on tape to be transcribed for later analysis (see appendix 2).

3.3.2 Survey

Data was collected to know students' preferences and interests about this issue. This survey was applied to find out if students were interested in learning idiomatic expressions, and notice if they agreed to learn idioms with the methodology established by the researchers. The survey has seven questions and these questions were written in English, but at the moment students answered the survey all questions were translated into Spanish to help students understand each question. All of the questions were multiple choices so that the exact results could be tabulated (See appendix 3).

3.3.3 Pretest and posttest

This study is carried out through two tests, a pretest and a posttest. The pretest was applied at the beginning of the application. This test was conducted to know how much students already know about idiomatic expressions. The posttest was applied at the end of the application in order to measure the students' knowledge obtained during the application of idioms and see if this methodology had contributed in their learning acquisition. All the evaluated questions were in English; however, during the tests researchers needed to translate them into Spanish to clarify any students' doubts. There were 7 questions about idiomatic expressions, and those tests were taken in an anonymous manner; students just wrote their ages on them. Furthermore, the pretest and the posttest were designed to be the same. The sections in the tests were multiple choice, fill in the blanks, matching, and underlining (See appendix 4). The pretest and posttest applied were graded over twenty five points, and the main purpose of these tests was to know if students could learn the idioms.



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3.4 Data gathering

This project did a preliminary survey to get students' knowledge about idiomatic expressions. Later, the obtained data confirms that the project can be applied in that high school. Next, we chose the easiest idiomatic expressions to teach them. After that, we started to teach these idioms during six hours using different cartoon character pictures such as the Simpsons, Looney Tunes, and so on. To reinforce students with idiomatic expressions different activities were used during the classes. The activities were information gap, role playing, and other games (see appendix 5). Finally, the assumptions as well as the findings and tabulated scores are stated in chapter four.



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Chapter IV

Results: Analysis and Interpretation

After collecting data from Isabel Moscoso High School, it is necessary to analyze it meticulously to obtain genuine results. This chapter has three parts: the interpretation of the interview, the survey, and the tests that were pretests and posttests. These tests were taken by students from educative institutions. After the respective application, this project got the following results. Consequently, the following diagrams exhibit the results of each question which were asked of twenty-two ninth grade students of basic education.

4.1 Interpretation of the interviews

The interview was an important step in carrying out this project because the experts gave researchers clear ideas about idioms. In the first question, the two experts agreed that Ecuadorian English learners do not dominate idioms because students do not live in a country where English is the mother tongue. In the second question, they mentioned that teachers should give students good material to facilitate the acquisition of Idioms. In the third question, they state that American idioms are the best for teaching and learning idioms because interviewees are Americans, and it depends on the nationality of the teacher. In the fourth question expert one says that it is a good manner to teach and learn idioms in context using different activities related with the four skills, and expert two mentioned that students should have a book or dictionary of idioms to learn, since idioms are many. In question five, both of them affirmed that the most common problem is misunderstanding, because their elements do not relate with the real meaning of the idiom. In question six experts mentioned their experience in teaching idioms. Those experiences were favorable for the experts because students enjoyed them a lot and feel that it was unique and special. In question seven experts gave us the expressions that are most used by them and these are related with vivid experiences. Question eight confirmed

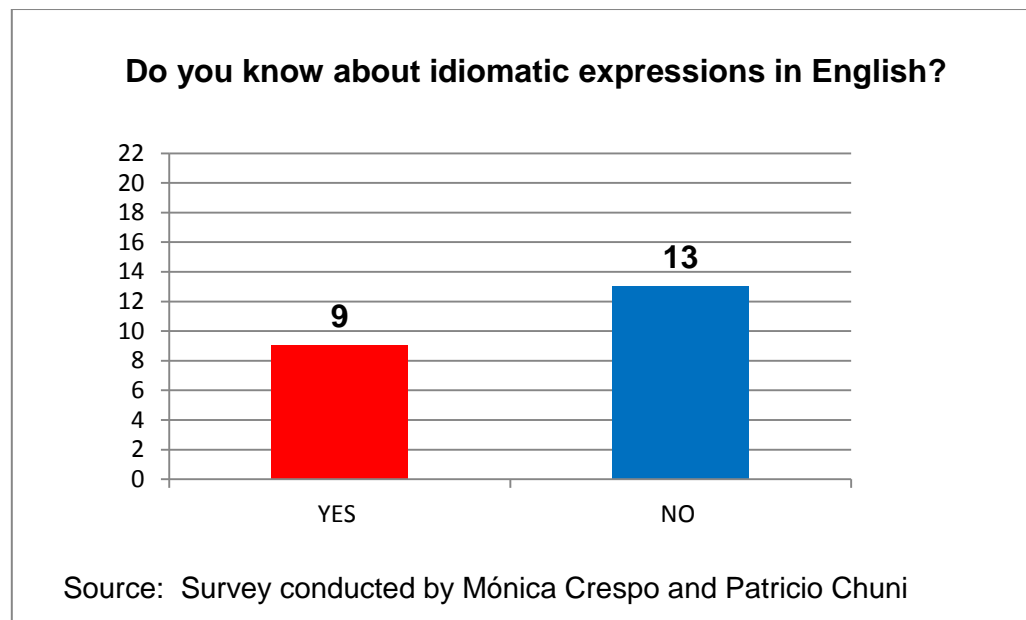


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to researchers that it is a good idea to teach idioms with cartoons because they are similar to reality. Finally, in question nine the interviewees mention that the best students' period of life to acquire idioms is when students are teenagers because they use this kind of vocabulary serves more to express themselves.

4.2 Survey analysis

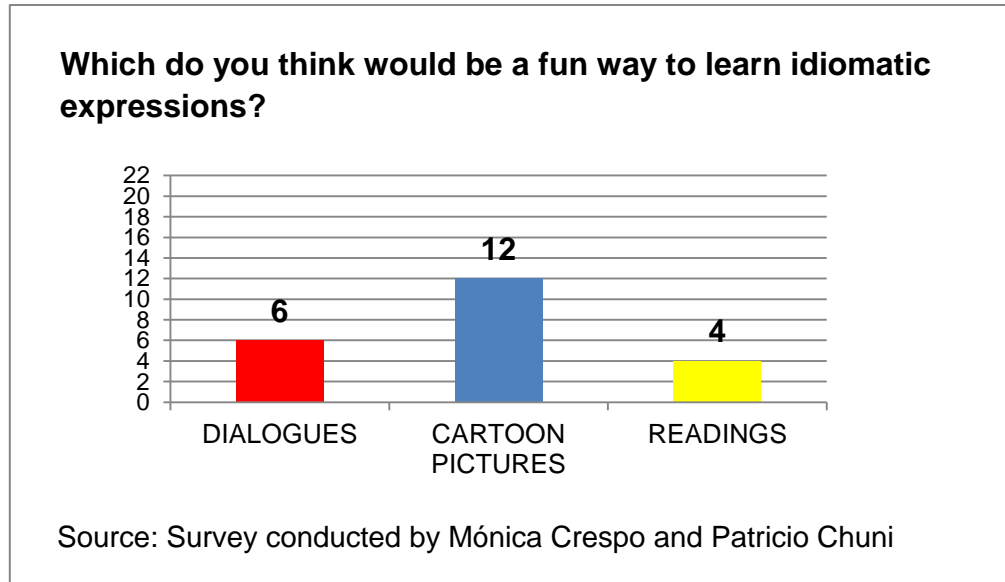
Graph 1: Students' knowledge of Idiomatic Expressions



Graph one shows that nine out of twenty two students believe that they know about idiomatic expressions, but thirteen learners do not know about idiomatic expressions.



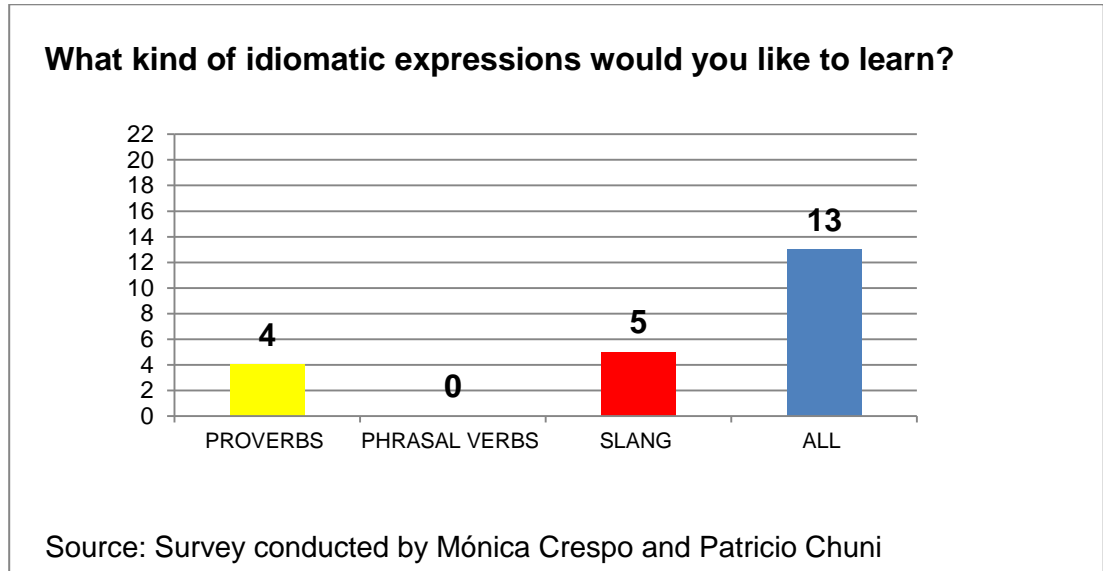
Graph 2: Activities for teaching idiomatic expressions



This graph shows that there are six students who desire to learn idiomatic vocabulary through dialogs. However, the students' higher percentage is to learn with cartoons because twelve students want to learn through cartoons. Finally, just four students want to learn through readings.



Graph 3: Students' preferences in idiomatic expressions

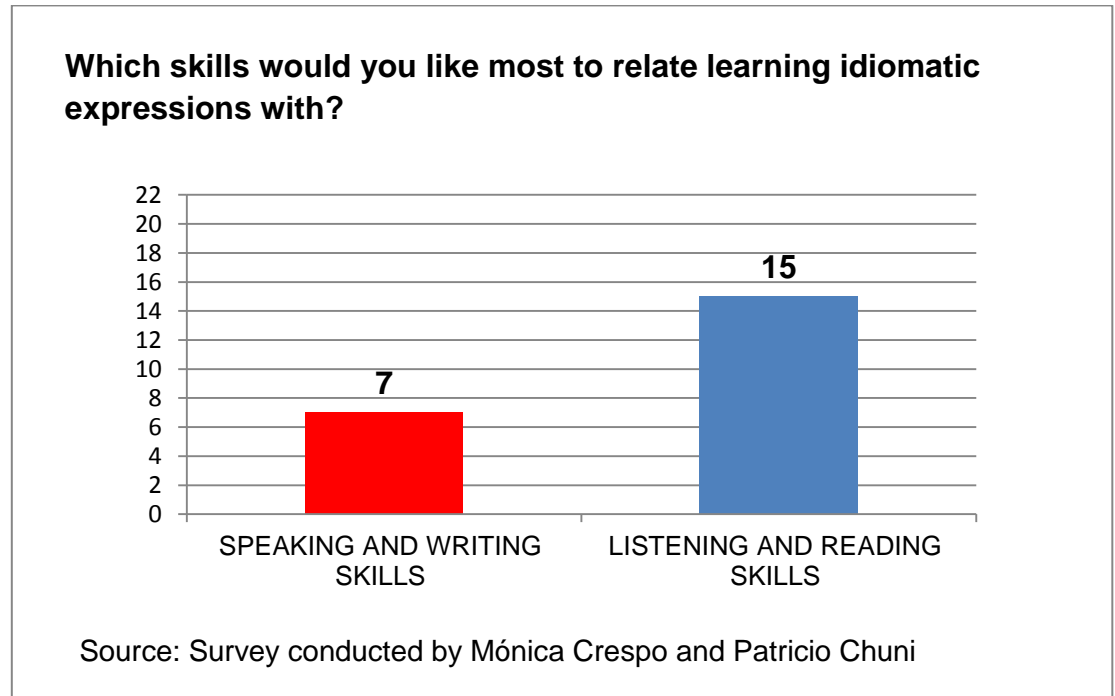


In graph three the question has four choices for the students. First, four students want to learn proverbs. Second, not one student wants to learn phrasal verbs in the EFL classroom. Third, five students are interested in learning slang words. Finally, thirteen students wish to learn all kinds of idiomatic expressions.



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Graph 4: Students' skills for learning idiomatic vocabulary

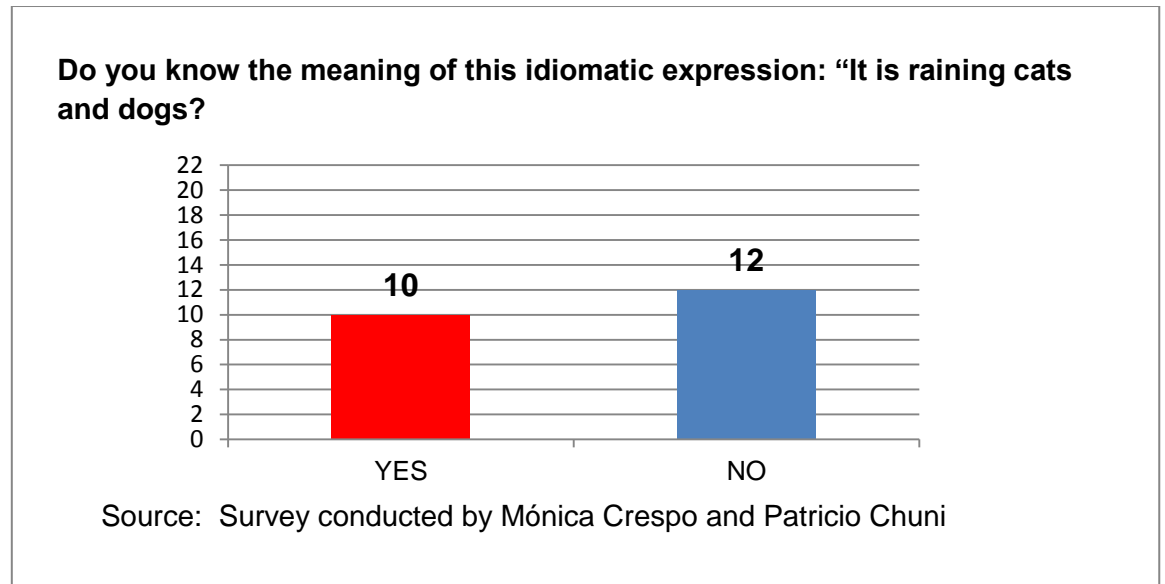


Graph four shows that seven students want to practice idiomatic expressions with speaking and writing skills, but fifteen students desire to learn with listening and reading skills.



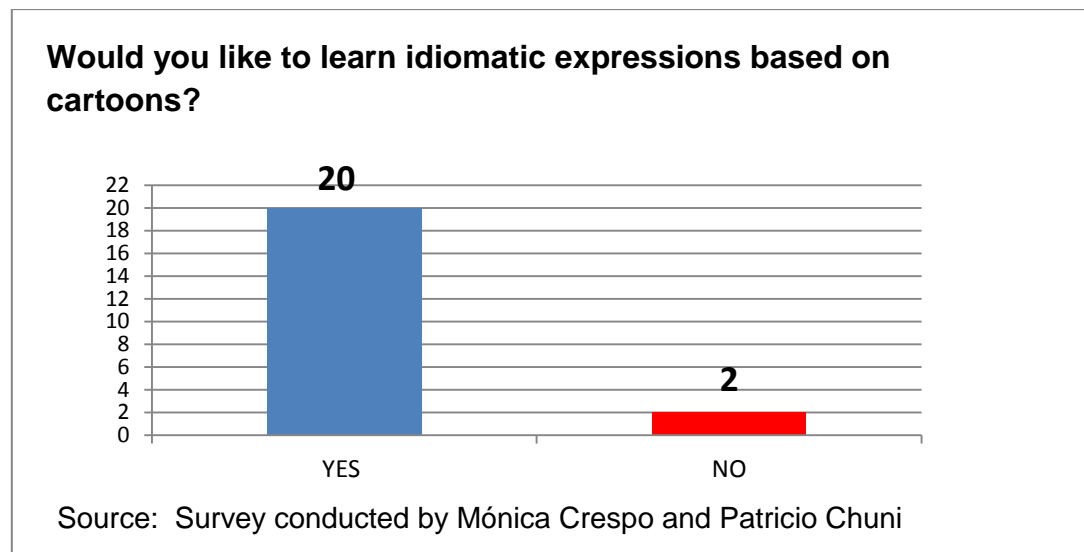
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Graph 5: Students' comprehension "It is raining cats and dogs"



Graph five shows how many students supposedly know about the right meaning of this expression. So ten students answered yes, but twelve students answered no

Graph 6: Students' agreement with cartoons

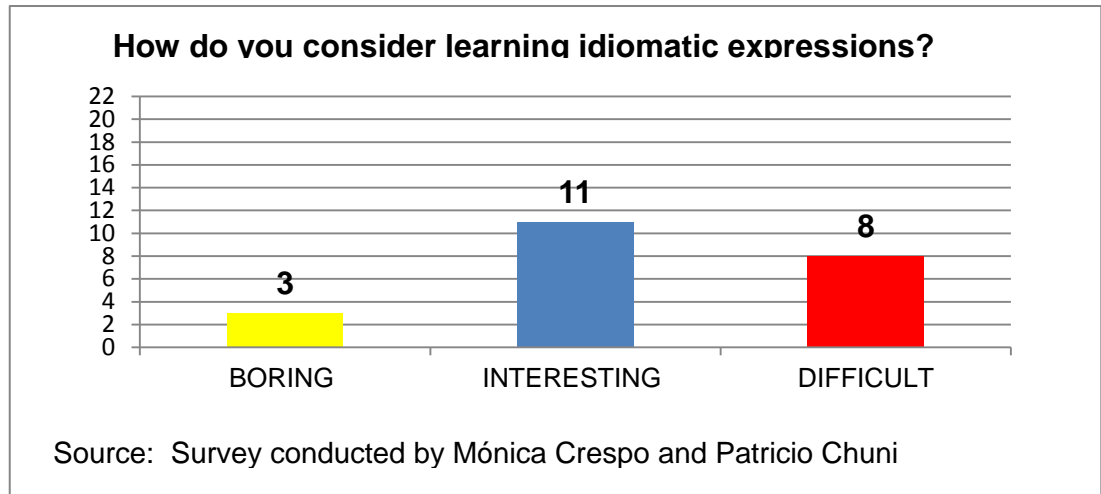




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Graph six shows that twenty students want to learn idiomatic expressions through cartoons. On the other hand, just two students are not interested in learning those expressions with this technique.

Graph 7: Students' perceptions of idioms



In the last graph of the survey, the students show their opinions about learning idiomatic expressions. Three students believe that learning idioms is boring. In contrast, eleven students think that learning idiomatic vocabulary is interesting. Last, eight students believe that it is difficult.

4.2.1 Interpretation of the survey

According to the information gathered in the survey, almost half of the students did not have a clear idea what an idiomatic expression was because they did not study idioms before. Some of those students believed they knew some idiomatic expression, but they did not really know them. Besides, most of the students preferred to learn idioms with cartoons instead of other activities such as readings and dialogues because the other activities for some students are boring. So for the researchers, it indicated that students would be motivated to learn idioms by cartoon characters. Furthermore, some students wanted to learn all the most used idiomatic expressions in an EFL classroom, but others



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students would like to learn just one kind of idioms. For example, those were slang and proverbs, but not one student wanted to learn phrasal verbs in isolation. Also, it seemed that students did not like to produce the language. For this reason, they wanted to relate idiomatic learning with receptive skills. So this was an advantage for the researchers because they wanted to motivate students to speak in the classroom.

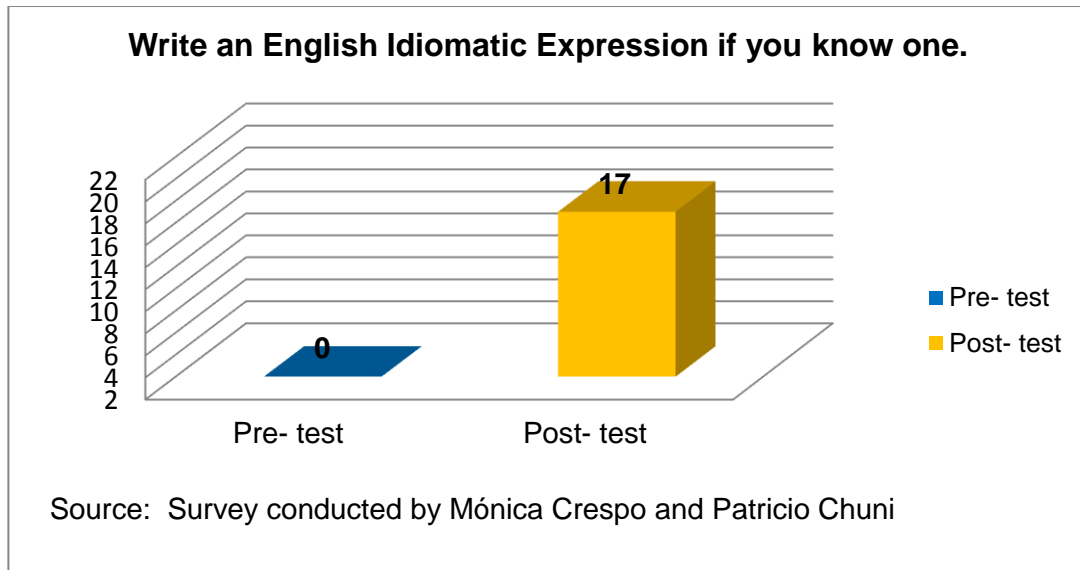
Indeed, students thought that all idioms have literal meaning. For instance, the students who answered yes in the survey wrote a literal meaning of the expression “it’s raining cats and dogs”. Students’ translations were “peleando como perros y gatos” and “lloviendo perros y gatos”. They wrote these because they thought in literal meaning. In addition, for students to learn idiomatic expressions was an interesting topic, but other students thought that idioms would be difficult to learn. Last, a few students stated that it was a boring topic since they thought it was related to grammatical points.

4.3 Pretest and posttest analysis

To prove if this strategy works on beginning students in the process of teaching and learning idiomatic expressions, this project has two tests. The first test was the pretest whose results are shown with the color blue. On the other hand, the second one was the posttest whose results are presented with the color yellow.

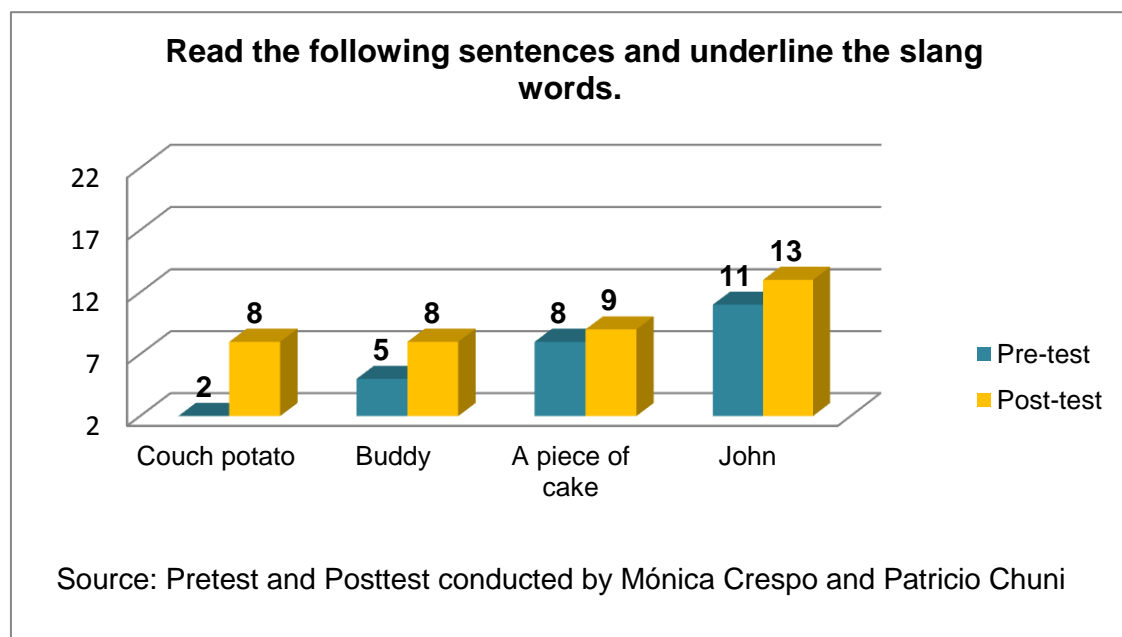


Graph 8: Students' idiomatic knowledge



Graph eight shows that in the pretest nobody wrote any idiom. However, in the posttest, there is a high increment of answers. Seventeen students could remember some expressions.

Graph 9: Slang word recognition

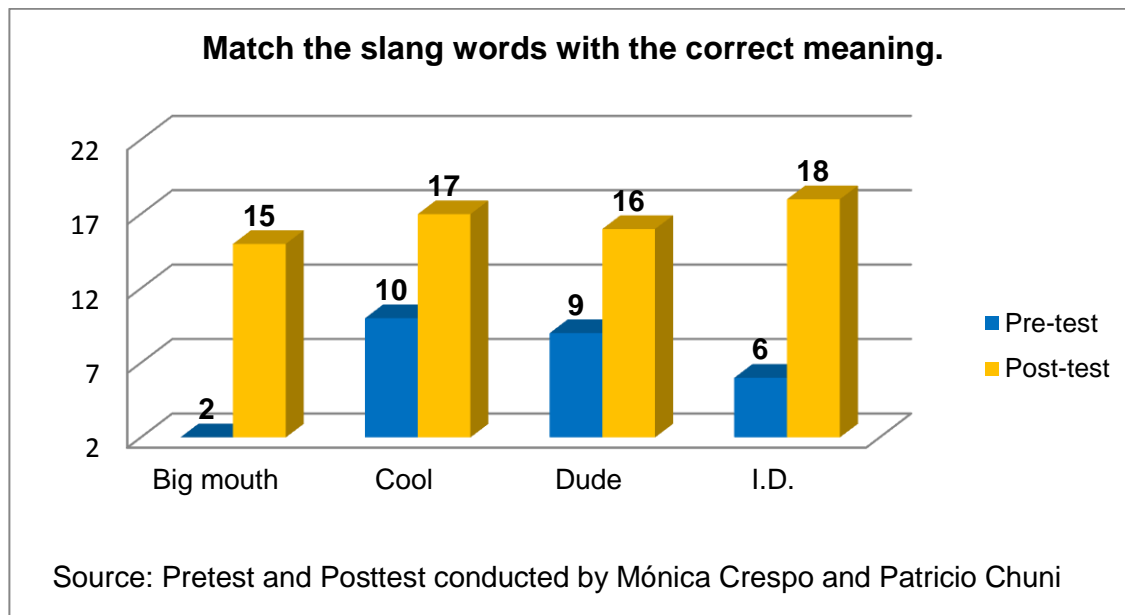




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Graph nine shows how many students could recognize slang words in some sentences. For instance, in the pretest just two students know that couch potato is slang, but in posttest eight students could remember that slang word. Also, five students could identify the word buddy; however, in posttest eight learners could remember this word. Besides, eight students recognized the expression “a piece of cake” in the pretest. In contrast, nine students noticed it in the posttest. Finally, eleven students comprehend that “john” was slang in the pretest. In contrast, thirteen students could identify it in the posttest.

Graph 10: Recognizing the slang meaning



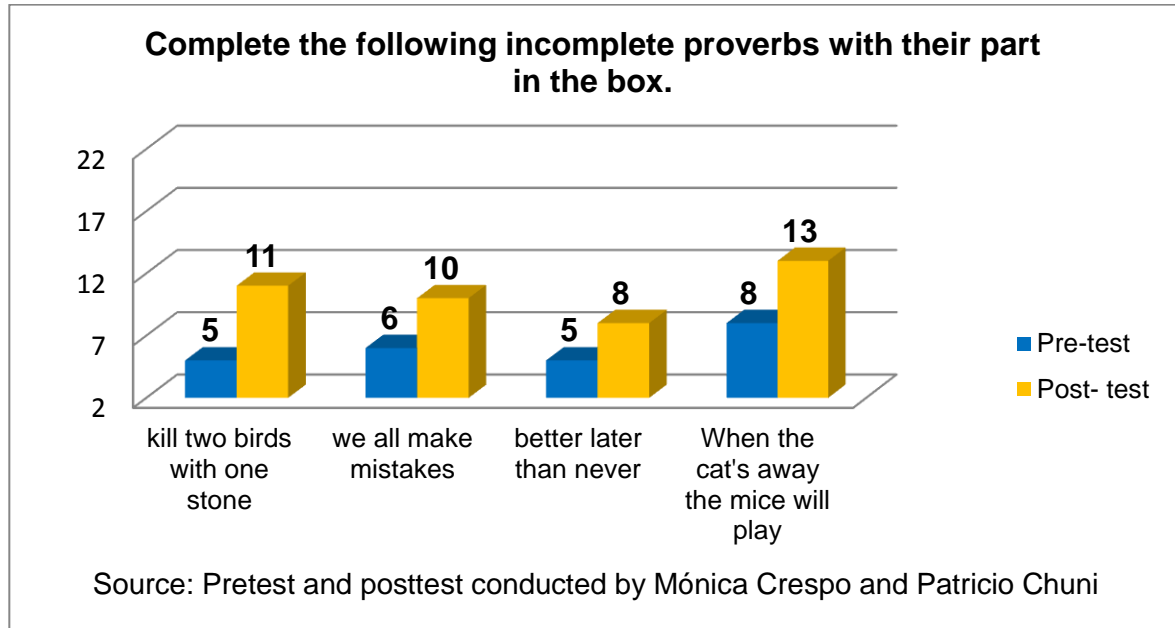
Graph ten shows how much students know about the meaning of each slang word. First, in the pretest only two students matched the slang word with the meaning, but there are fifteen students who matched it with the correct meaning in the posttest. Second, the slang word, cool, was recognized by ten students in the pretest; however, in the posttest seventeen students could connect it with the correct meaning. Third, the expression dude was matched with the precise meaning by nine students in the pretest. In contrast, sixteen students matched it with the right definition in the posttest. Finally, six students



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connected it with the true meaning, yet eighteen students identified the right meaning in the posttest.

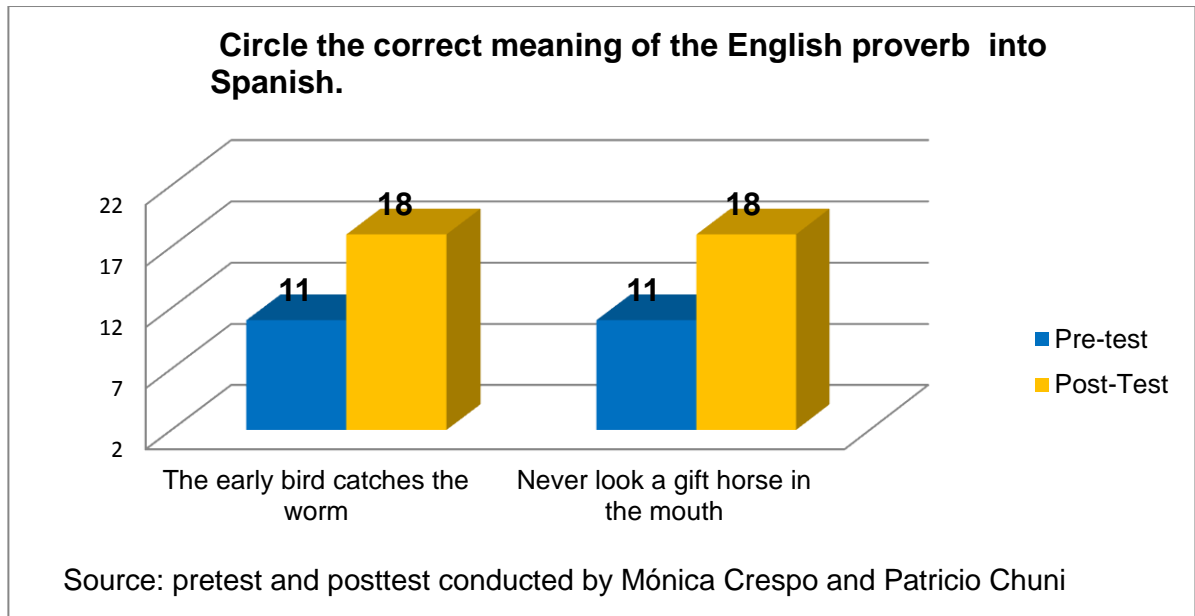
Graph 11: English proverbs



This graph visualizes the comprehension of proverbs by beginning students. For example, the first proverb was completed by just five of twenty-two students in the pretest, but the same test was completed by eleven students in the posttest. Also, the second proverb was completed correctly by six students in the pretest; however, ten students correctly completed it in the posttest. Moreover, five students completed the third proverb in the pretest. On the contrary, eight students wrote the complete proverb in the posttest. Finally, eight learners could correctly complete with the right part in the pretest. On the other hand, thirteen students did it correctly in the posttest.

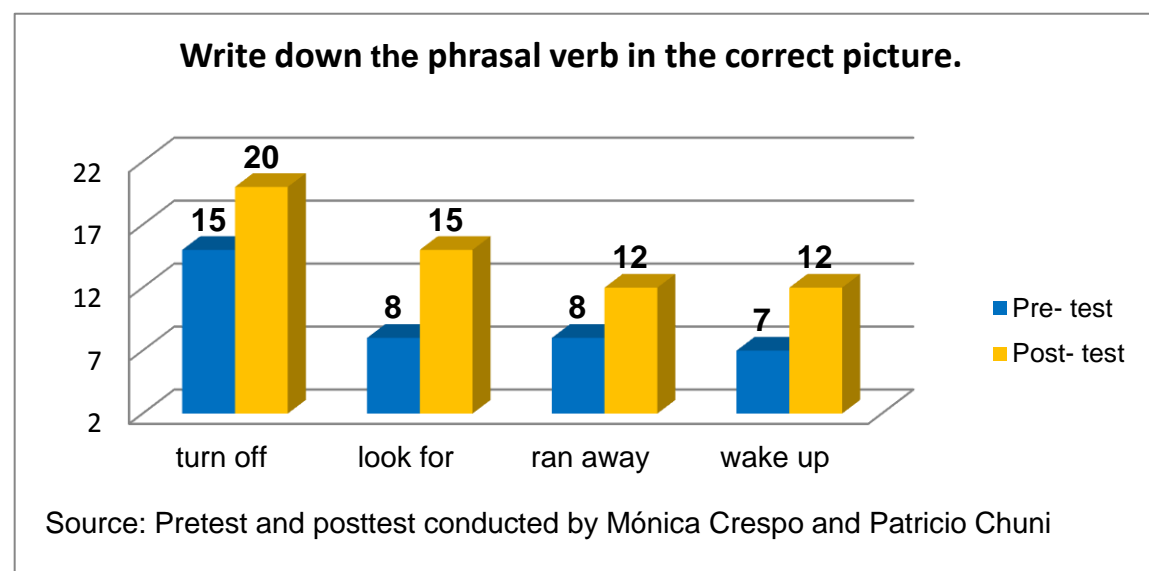


Graph 12: English proverbs vs. Spanish equivalents



Graph twelve shows how students mentally translated the meaning of English proverbs into Spanish. To illustrate, both proverbs were guessed by eleven students in the pretest. On the other hand, the same proverbs were understood by eighteen students in the posttest.

Graph 13: Phrasal verb identification

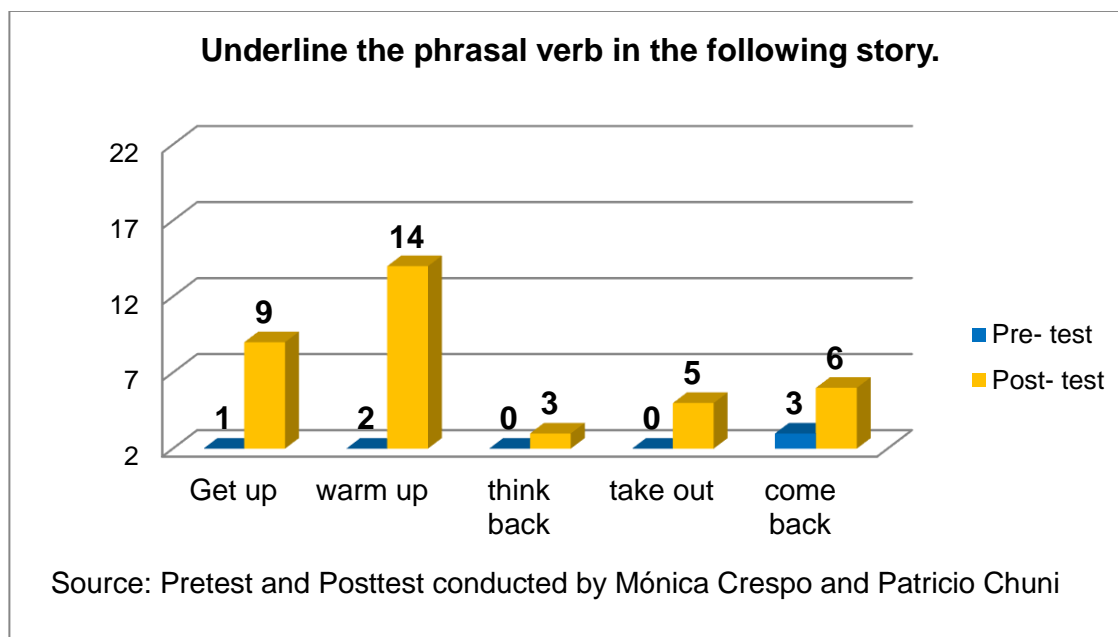




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Graph thirteen demonstrates that fifteen of twenty-two students write the correct verb turn off in the pretest, but in the posttest this verb was written by twenty students in the correct picture. Also, the phrasal verb “look for” was placed in the right picture by eight students in the pretest, yet fifteen students wrote down the same verb in the posttest. Moreover, eight students guessed the phrasal verb “run away” in the pretest; however, twelve students transcribe the correct verb in the posttest. Finally, the phrasal verb “wake up” was put in the picture by seven students in the pretest. In contrast, twelve students connect the exact picture with the verb in the posttest.

Graph 14: Recognizing phrasal verbs in a reading



The last graph shows that just one student recognized the verb “get up” in the pretest, whereas the same phrasal verb was identified by nine students in the posttest. The phrasal verb “warm up” was understood by two students in the pretest, yet in the posttest fourteen students found it. Furthermore, not one student could recognize the phrasal verb “think back” in the pretest; however, three students did it correctly with the same verb in the posttest. Similarly, this happened with the phrasal verb take out. Not one student noticed it in the



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pretest, but five students could do it in the posttest. Finally, the phrasal verb “come back” was identified by three students in the pretest; in the posttest six students understood this expression.

4.3.1 Interpretation of the pretest and posttest

To know how much students know about idiomatic expressions, the researchers applied two tests which were the pretest and posttest. In the pretest students answered questions according to their own knowledge of this issue. The posttest was applied to measure the students’ previous knowledge after learning through cartoons. Besides, in the pretest not one student could write an idiomatic expression because they did not know what idioms are, but in the posttest with the previous learning almost all students could write at least three idiomatic expressions for each student. Another fact is that in the pretest just a few students could recognize the slang word in a sentence. The slang words that were easy for students to identify were “john” and “a piece of cake”, but they could only recognize them because the researcher gave these words as examples previous to the test. On the other hand, the number of students increases a little bit in the posttest.

Additionally, many students did not know the meaning of the slang words in the pretest. The most difficult slang word for them was “big mouth” and the easiest was “cool”. So, in the first one the students did not hear it, but the second one is very common in the mother tongue. Another difficult topic for the students was the proverbs. Due to the level of difficulty of the proverbs many students in the pretest failed their answers; however, in the posttest half of the students completed the proverb with the right part. Another example of this topic was the question where students had to choose the Spanish equivalent of the proverbs. Most of the students’ answers were guessed in the pretest, but in the second test students chose the correct answer in a conscious way.



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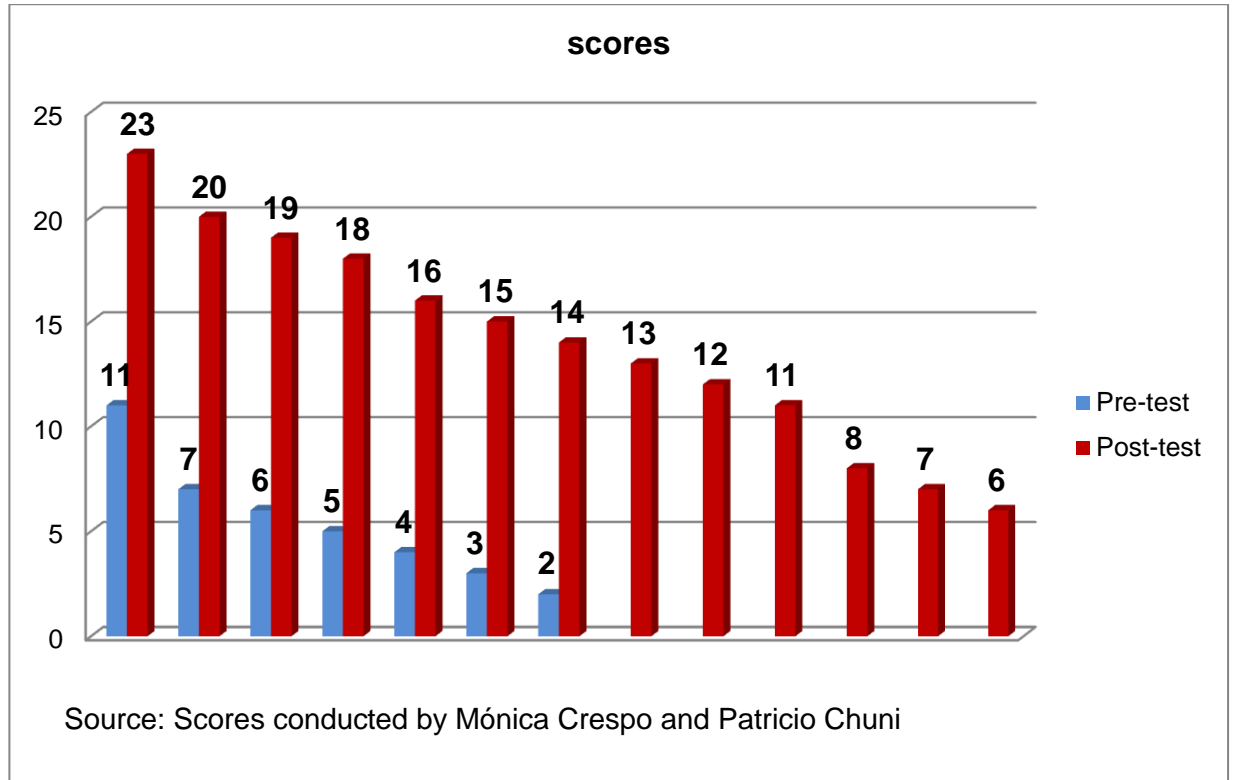
Another topic of the test was the phrasal verbs whose results were not too bad in spite of the fact that they do not like to memorize verbs. For instance, the results of the pretest show that few students could write down the correct phrasal verb in a picture. For students the most difficult phrasal verb to identify was “wake up”, and the easiest was “turn off” because they had been familiarized with it. In the posttest the numbers of students who recognized the phrasal verb increased notably because they had learnt with cartoons.

Finally, many students could recognize the phrasal verb in a short story. Apparently, in the first test few students identified the phrasal verb; however, in the posttest there were a considerable amount of students who found the phrasal verbs. The phrasal verb which was the easiest for students was “warm up” in the posttest, whereas the most difficult expressions were “think back” and “take out” because these verbs are not commonly used in their English classes.



4.4 Test scores

Graph 15: Test scores



Finally, the results in this graph show the scores that students got in the pretest and posttest. The lowest and highest grades in the pretest were two and eleven out of twenty five points, whereas in the posttest the grades were better than in the pretest. The lowest grade was six and the highest grade was twenty-three over twenty-five. The rest of the grades were more considerably higher than the pretest grades.



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Chapter V

Recommendations and Conclusions

5.1 Conclusions

In conclusion, researchers affirm that the usage of idioms is a big challenge for teachers and students since there are unlimited numbers of idioms in English and teachers cannot teach them in one class period. Moreover, the researchers have analyzed a lot of information related to idioms to find the best methods for teaching and learning them. All the information gathered has contributed to the development and to application of this project at the mentioned educative center.

Furthermore, didactic material is a really important fact in teaching idioms. For example, this project has chosen pictures such as cartoons to teach idioms and improve the speaking skills of the students. In addition, researchers can prove that this technique is suitable because it works for beginning students who can understand idioms in an easy and funny manner. Besides, when using these materials students feel motivated and less stressed in class. Cartoons are helpful not only for kids but for teenagers also since they are in constant interaction with mass media such as television.

Also, strategies play an important role in teaching and learning idiomatic expressions in order to avoid boring classwork. Moreover, the period of time is an important factor since it determines if teachers can use one or more techniques in the classwork. Researchers realized that teachers have to relate the four skills in idiomatic acquisition so that successful learning occurs for pupils.

Besides, the activities that were selected in the literature review are based on the multiple intelligences because students perceive knowledge in different ways. The activities depend on the kind of students that teachers have



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in the classroom. For example, at Isabel Moscoso High school, the researcher found that beginning students should use just easy activities according to their level of knowledge in English.

Finally, researchers noticed that idiomatic expressions should be included in all teaching programs because they cannot be taught separately from other topics, since it will keep students familiar with this kind of vocabulary and they can understand dialogs and readings in a natural context.

5.2 Recommendations

- Teachers should include a lot of idiomatic expressions, as much as possible, not only with beginning students but with all English levels, without importance of their level of knowledge in English.
- Teachers should motivate students through good material first to get their attention and interest, since idiomatic vocabulary is very hard to learn.
- Teachers should integrate idiomatic expressions in the entire curriculum so that students can acquire idioms unconsciously.
- Teachers should use a lot of phrasal verbs with all kind of learners in order to familiarize students with them, since students need to be in contact with this vocabulary because phrasal verbs are very constantly used.
- If teachers want to teach idiomatic expressions, they should study different kinds of idioms in order to explain the usages of them correctly.
- For students who are learning English as a second Language, the researcher recommends starting to learn idiomatic expression from eleven years old onward.



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- There are a lot of resources to work with idioms, but the researchers recommend teachers look for new idiomatic expressions on the internet, since some of the idioms in the books are outdated.



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Appendices



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Appendix 1: Questions for the interviews



Universidad de Cuenca

Facultad de Filosofía, Letras, y Ciencias de la Educación

Questions of the Survey

The following interview intends to collect information related to Fostering speaking skills through the use of cartoons to teach idiomatic expression applied in an EFL classroom.

Questions for the Expert

- 1) What is your opinion about Ecuadorian students' knowledge in English idiomatic expressions according to your experience as an English teacher?
- 2) How far do you think that beginning students can learn idiomatic expressions in EFL classroom?
- 3) What variety of English idiomatic expressions do you think that it is more important to teach in an EFL classroom American or British idiomatic expressions?
- 4) What sort of activities should a teacher prepare for teaching idiomatic expression?
- 5) What disadvantages can idiomatic expressions cause in an EFL classroom?
- 6) Did you have any experience teaching idiomatic expressions? What were the reactions of your students?
- 7) What is the most used English idiomatic expression for you?
- 8) Do you think that is a good idea to start teaching idiomatic expression with cartoon characters?
- 9) What do you think is the most appropriate students' age to teach idiomatic expressions in an EFL classroom?



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Appendix 2: Transcript Interview

Catherine Youman's Interview

1) What is your opinion about Ecuadorian students' knowledge in English idiomatic expressions according to your experience as an English teacher?

Well, I think many of them do know many of the idiomatic expressions, not all of them, but many of them are familiar with them and they also use them.

2) How far do you think that beginner students can learn idiomatic expressions in EFL classroom?

Well, I think during a certain period of time they can learn a lot of them if the teacher presents them as material for the classwork for them to memorize, understand, and use them in context. They can learn a quite few of them.

3) What variety of English idiomatic expressions do you think that it is more important to teach in an EFL classroom: American or British idiomatic expressions?

Well for me, of course, I would say American because I am from the United States but a British citizen might say the opposite so depends on the nationality of the teacher.

4) What sort of activities should a teacher prepare for teaching idiomatic expression?

Well, I think using them in dialogues in context or in stories in context is the best way and having them practice them in the classroom that would be an ideal way. If it's possible to have a video of people using idiomatic expressions that will be excellent but at least with something written that students can see and see the idioms in context.



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5) What disadvantages can idiomatic expressions cause in an EFL classroom?

The disadvantages? Well of course, they of course could be misunderstood by people who do not know what they mean and that could be a big problem, sure...

6) Did you have any experience teaching idiomatic expressions? What were the reactions of your students?

Um yeah.. I guess in my first years of teaching when I used to teach general English and I used to teach idiomatic expressions and they used to be in the dictionary, the Spanish English dictionaries used to have, I do not know if students still do, they used to have a very good list of idiomatic expressions in English and their translation into Spanish. So um, the students used to enjoy them very much I remembered they used to like them.

7) What is the most used English idiomatic expression for you?

The most used one? mmm... it is a hard question. I do not.... Give me some examples. What's one that you heard a very common? It's a piece of cake yeah. That is very common. It's a piece of cake yeah that's very common. Now they are using just letters like L.O.L. laugh out loud or O.M.G oh my God. They doing now you know like they are not necessary idiomatic expressions but they are using those more than idiomatic expressions nowadays. That's more of a computer phenomenon or new phenomenon on the computer age. I think but yeah sure people still say a piece of cake. That's very common.

8) Do you think that is a good idea to start teaching idiomatic expression with cartoon characters?

Um yeah... I don't think young learners. In my experience when I used to teach in the Escuela Bilingüe I do not think they were that interested in idiomatic expressions because they're just learning simple vocabulary and I think a person has to be at least intermediate to advance to really



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grasp the idea of an idiomatic expression. So young learners not so much I do not know if that's a common answer or not. In my experience the young ones are not interested.

9) What do you think is the most appropriate students' age to teach idiomatic expressions in an EFL classroom?

Yeah! Sure with not so young like you need like maybe sexto de básica o séptimo de básica you know like what used to be sixth grade sixth grade those kids will be okay with that but really young learners I do not think so they just learn things like cat, dog, house. I do not think they will be interested in idiomatic expressions. The best age for teaching I would say like around eleven or twelve years. That's the youngest age to start. Yeah that's all. You're welcome. Thank you.

Thanks for your cooperation



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Transcript interview

Ion Youman's Interview

1) What is your opinion about Ecuadorian students' knowledge in English idiomatic expressions according to your experience as an English teacher?

Well, um... Ecuadorian students don't know very much about idiomatic expressions because they are Ecuadorian. To know about idiomatic expressions you have to live in the country where those expressions are used, uh.... That's why they are so difficult because idiomatic expressions, they have to be learned individually and to do that you have to live in the place where they are used.

2) How far do you think that beginner students can learn idiomatic expressions in EFL classroom?

Well, that depends on what the teacher wants if the teacher wants them to learn a lot of idiomatic expressions then the teacher will give a book of idiomatic expressions and the teacher will spend a lot of time in idiomatic expressions but usually a teacher of English does teach some idiomatic expressions but not a lot.

3) What variety of English idiomatic expressions do you think that it is more important to teach in an EFL classroom American or British idiomatic expressions?

Well, American ones of course because our culture here in Ecuador is very much more... it is very much closer to American culture and language than to British culture and language and that includes idiomatic expressions.

4) What sort of activities should a teacher prepare for teaching idiomatic expression?



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Well, the best kind of activity of course is to provide the students with some kind of dictionary or some kind of book that has a lot of idiomatic expressions. Otherwise the amount, the number of idiomatic expressions that the students can learn is going to be very limited.

5) What disadvantages can idiomatic expressions cause in an EFL classroom?

Well, I think about idiomatic expressions is that they do not their meaning is not related to their elements. For example, one idiomatic expression that we had recently in phonetic class phonology class was “cut it out” if a person thinks according to its elements it would be “cortale fuera” but that’s not means at all. It means “deje”. It means “no haga eso”. Cut it out so that the thing that about idiomatic expression. Their meaning is not related with their elements.

6) Did you have any experience teaching idiomatic expressions? What were the reactions of your students?

Yes, of course. Because I teach literature; and literature is going to include idiomatic expressions. The reactions of the students were very favorable because when the students learnt idiomatic expressions they feel like they've learned something special, something that is not usually taught and it's something is very different in very unique and they feel fell happy that they have acquired these special expressions.

7) What is the most used English idiomatic expression for you?

Well, I would say normal everyday events like for example throw up it means vomit and vomit is a verb that we use fairly commonly and if a person can say threw up instead of vomit it feels good.

8) Do you think that is a good idea to start teaching idiomatic expression with cartoon characters?

That's a good idea, yeah, because cartoon characters represents normal everyday people and those are the ones that we use idiomatic



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expressions if we have a more formal context than idiomatic expressions would not be so natural but with cartoon characters they are natural.

9) What do you think is the most appropriate students' age to teach idiomatic expressions in an EFL classroom?

I think the most appropriate age is teenager because teenagers are the ones that use most idiomatic expressions because they like to think that they have their own special language that only they can use and understand and so they are especially eager to acquire and use idiomatic expressions.

Thanks for your cooperation



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Appendix 3: Survey



Universidad de Cuenca

Facultad de Filosofía, Letras, y Ciencias de la Educación

Questions of the Survey

Age.....

Course.....

The following survey intends to collect information related to Fostering speaking skills through the use of cartoons to teach idiomatic expression applied in an EFL classroom.

Circle your answer

1. Do you know about idiomatic expressions in English?

- a) Yes b) No

2. Which do you think would be a fun way to learn idiomatic expressions?

- a) Dialogs b) Cartoons c) Readings

3. What kind of idiomatic expressions would you like to learn?

- a) Proverbs b) Phrasal verbs c) Slang d) All

4. Which skills would you like most to relate learning idiomatic expressions with?

- a) Speaking and Writing b) Reading and Listening

6) Do you know the meaning of this idiomatic expression: “It is raining cats and dogs”?

- a) Yes b) No

If you answered “yes” what is the meaning?_____

7) Would you like to learn idiomatic expression based on cartoons?



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a) Yes b) No

8) How do you consider learning idiomatic expressions?

a) Boring b) Difficult c) Interesting



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Appendix 4: Pre-test and Post-test



The following survey intends to collect information related to Fostering speaking skills through the use of cartoons to teach idiomatic expression applied in an EFL classroom.

Age.....

1) Write English idiomatic expression if you know one (2).

2) Read the following sentences and underline the slang words (4).

He is a couch potato.

My buddy helps me with my homework.

My test was a piece of cake.

Can I go to the john?

3) Match the slang words with the correct meaning (4).

Big mouth

a fashionable man

Cool

identity card

Dude

talk too much

I.D.

good

4) Complete the following proverbs with the parts in the box (4).

1) Than never. 2) kill two birds 3) We all 4) the mice will play.



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- a.with one stone.
- b.make mistakes.
- c. Better later
- d. When the cat's away.....

5) Circle the correct meaning of the proverb in Spanish (2).

The early bird catches the worm.

- a) Más vale tarde que nunca.
- b) Aunque la mona se vista de seda mona se queda.
- c) Al que madruga Dios le ayuda.

Never look a gift horse in the mouth.

- a. Camarón que se duerme se lo lleva la corriente.
- b. A caballo regalado no se le mira el diente.
- c. Un buen amigo es un tesoro.

6) Write down the phrasal verb in the correct picture (4).

- a) Wake up
- b) Turn off
- c) Look for
- d) Ran away

 <p>.....</p>	 <p>.....</p>
 <p>.....</p>	 <p>.....</p>



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7) Underline the phrasal verbs in the following story (5).

I always get up at 6:00 AM, and I warm up to do exercise for 30 minutes, after I take a shower, while I think back to what I am going to wear today. After that, I take out the trash. Then I come back to my house and listen to music. Finally, I go to school.



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Appendix 5: Lesson plans for teaching idiomatic expressions

Lesson Plan 1

Age: 12-13 years

Aim: at the end of the lesson, the students will be able to talk using different slangs in order to communicate with their friends.

Function: To know different slang words.

Structure: the present to be: yes/no questions

Am I? Yes, I am. No I am not

Are you, we, they? Yes, you, we, they are. No, you, we, they are not.

Is he, she, it? Yes, he, she, it is. No, he, she, it is not.

Warm up

Simon says

The teacher says a number of simple commands, such as, 'Put your hands on your head', 'Stand on one leg' or 'Start humming', and the students have to do what you say – but only if you have prefaced the command with 'Simon says...' If you don't say 'Simon says...' and the student follows the command, they are out, and the game resumes until there is a winner.

Vocabulary:

Couch potato, big mouth, bucks, chicken, cool, cop, I.D, big deal, dude, piece of cake, john.

Situation

The teacher asks students if they have listen some slang words in Cuenca. Next, the teacher takes out some cartoon pictures to show common slang words used by people.



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The teacher writes some sentences on the whiteboard to explain their structure.

Verb to be	Subject	Complement (slang word)	Answers Affirmative/negative
Is	Homer	A couch potato?	Yes, he is. No, he is not.


Mechanical practice

The teacher asks students to repeat sentences using which are written on the whiteboard.

Communicative activities (Meaningful practice)

To reinforce the speaking skills teacher do an activity called “find someone who?”

For this activity, the teacher gives students cards in which have a picture of a cartoon and in another there is a question. So students who have the card with the question have to find the student who has the correct picture related with the question. Finally, when everybody has found his partner, they have to exchange their roles.

Student A	Student B
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: auto;"> <p>Is Lisa’s quiz a piece of cake?</p> </div>



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Lesson plan 2

Age: 12-13 years

Aim: at the end of the lesson, the students will be able to use proverbs in their daily speech to give a truth or an advice.

Function: giving a truth or an advice

Structure: proverbs

Warm up

Fruit basket

Teachers ask students to sit in a circle. Then the teacher assigns each student a word. Start with only two or three words which are pear, apple, and banana. Then the teacher stands in the middle and calls out one of the words such as banana. All the students with that word get up and run to exchange places in the circle. At the same time, the teacher runs to take a seat, so that one student is left standing. Then that student stands in the middle, calls out one of the words and tries to take a seat as the other students run to change places. Once in a while, the person in the middle calls out Fruit basket! Then everyone in the circle runs to change places.

Situation and vocabulary

Teacher asks students if their parents and grandparents usually say proverbs to express something. Later, teacher says students that imagine that Abraham Simpson is our grandfather and he gave us some sayings to be successful in our lives. So the teacher takes out a cartoon character picture which has a proverb and the teacher asks students to describe what they see in picture and to guess the proverb.

Kill two birds with one stone.

When the cat's away the mice will play.

Never look a gift horse in the mouth.

We all make mistakes.



The early birds catch the worm.

Autores: Patricio Alexander Chuni Patiño
Mónica Lorena Crespo Loja



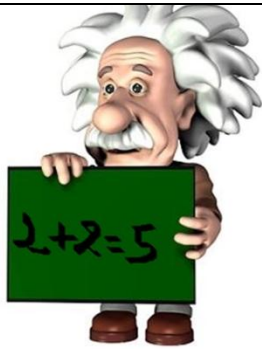


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Better late than never.

Picture	Proverb
	Kill two birds with one stone.
 <p>© abcteach.com</p>	When the cat's away the mice will play.
	Never look a gift horse in the mouth.



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	We all make mistakes.
	The early bird catches the worm.
	Better late than never.

Mechanical practice

Teacher posts the proverbs with the pictures on the whiteboard and ask students to repeat each proverb and students have to write proverbs in their notebooks.

Communicative activities

Roll play



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Students have to work in pairs. One student is going to be the student A (Homer) and the another one is going to be the student B(Bart). Both of them are going to perform one character.



Broken telephone

Teacher divides the class in two teams and gives two words of the proverb which the student must memorize and pass on the words to the next person, by whispering. The next person will pass the words to the next and so on until it finally gets to the last person in the group. That person in the group will then have to stand up and say what the proverbs is.

Group one	Group two
We all make mistakes. The early bird catches the worm.	Better late than never. Kill two birds with one stone.



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Lesson plan 3

Age: 12-13 years

Aim: at the end of the lesson, the students will be able to talk about their daily routines using some phrasal verbs

Function: describing the daily routine

Structure: the simple present

Warm up

Arrange the following unscramble verbs.

Teg_____ ktea_____ nrtu_____

ookl_____

Vocabulary

Miming explanation

Turn off, look for, run away, think back, come back, take out, get up, and warm up.

Situation









Teacher presents a picture of Box Bunny and asks students to imagine what the rabbit do every day. So students have to use the phrasal verbs given in the vocabulary.



Teacher presents some cartoon pictures to explain more the vocabulary.



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 <p>Turn off</p>	 <p>Look for</p>	 <p>Run away</p>	 <p>Think back</p>
 <p>Come back</p>	 <p>Take out</p>	 <p>Get up</p>	 <p>Warm up</p>

Students' opinions might be something like this

Subject	Verb	Complement
Box Bunny	Gets up Warms up Takes out Turns off Looks for Runs away Comes back Thinks back	At 6:00 O'clock. Before to do exercise every day. His rubbish every day. His radio after doing exercise. Carrots in the field. From his Hunter. His home after classes. His girlfriend, Lola.



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Mechanical practice

Students have to repeat each sentence which is wrote down on the white board.

Communicative activities

Find someone who	Name
<p>gets up at 7:00 Am.</p> <p>warms up before doing exercises.</p> <p>turns off your cellphone in classes.</p> <p>takes out the trash every week</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

Dice game

Teacher gives each pair of students two dice. Next, teacher Chooses 6 pronouns to match the numbers on the dice. For example –

Pronoun	Phrasal verb
<p>1 - I</p> <p>2 - you</p> <p>3 - he</p> <p>4 - she</p> <p>5 - we</p> <p>6 - they</p>	<p>1 – get up</p> <p>2 – warm up</p> <p>3 – look for</p> <p>4 – come back</p> <p>5 – think back</p> <p>6 – take out</p>



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Students roll the dice and have to make a sentence based on the numbers they roll. For example, if a student gets 3 and 5, he or she could make the sentence he gets up at 8:00 o'clock.



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Appendix 6: Principal's certificate

ESCUELA BÁSICA
"ISABEL MOSCOSO DÁVILA"



LAS ORQUÍDEAS

TELEF. 899044

Cuenca, 12 de Junio de 2013

Prof. María del Pilar Ruiz en uso de mis atribuciones y en calidad de Directora del establecimiento.

CERTIFICO

Que los estudiantes Mónica Crespo y Patricio Chuni estudiantes de la Facultad de Filosofía, Letras y Ciencias de Educación Escuela de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa realizaron la Aplicación del Proyecto de Graduación con el tema "FOSTERING THE SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH THE USE OF CARTOONS TO TEACH IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS APPLIED IN THE THE EFL" Con los estudiantes del Noveno Año de Educación Básica paralelo "A" con una duración de seis horas en los días Martes 4, Miércoles 5, Jueves 6, Viernes 7 y Lunes 10 de Junio realizando actividades con los estudiantes dentro del aula tales como expresiones idiomáticas en inglés para fomentar las actividades comunicativas en el aula.

Esperando una favorable acogida, suscribimos con sentimientos de gratitud y estima.

ATENTAMENTE.

Prof. María del Pilar Ruiz
DIRECTORA





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Appendix 7: Class Photos

