

## Students' and Lecturers' Perceptions of Idioms Teaching and Learning in Speaking Skill for Freshmen at FOE, Thuongmai University

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### ABSTRACT

The situation of teaching and learning idioms in developing speaking skills for freshmen was investigated at the Faculty of English, Thuongmai University in Vietnam – a foreign language context – as well as the difficulties faced by lecturers and students while teaching and learning idioms, and the strategies used while processing the idioms. It also looked at how the idiom teaching method was evaluated in two freshman language classrooms and offered some suggestions for how to improve students' interest and engagement in learning English idioms, particularly in strengthening their speaking skills. Survey questionnaires and in-depth interviews were used to gather information. The study indicated that university lecturers and students were efficient in idioms teaching and learning in certain aspects. Both of them believed that students were motivated, felt calm, confident, and actively engaged in idiomatic learning activities in this foreign language setting. According to the findings, students demonstrated the process of idiom comprehension as well as idiom production via evidence in the comprehension of idiomatic terms. The findings indicated that context significantly influences idiom acquisition and that idiom learning in EFL classes should be prioritized.

#### Keywords:

Perception, idioms' teaching and learning, speaking skill

### 1. Introduction

Wishing that the apprehension of a nation's language thoroughly and master English well when studying it is the desire of many people. While it is like the grease that makes language flow, it also presents an extra obstacle to both students and English teachers. Nowadays, English has been widely used in Vietnam, and it is also a compulsory subject in all schools, colleges and universities. Teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Vietnam has elicited divisive societal reactions when students are accused of being unable to converse properly in English after six or seven years of study (Tran, 2012). Even though some of them have excellent grammar and vocabulary, they are unable to converse in English. They continue to struggle to communicate since what English language speakers really say to them differs from what they

have been familiar with.

On one side, English idiomatic phrases are quite common in everyday English. According to Copper (1998), over the course of a 60-year existence, an English native speaker uses about 20 million idioms. These staggering figures demonstrate the indisputable importance of colloquial words in everyday communication. In fact, Cornell (1999) said that idioms have always been an important part of language studies, whether in linguistics or language acquisition.

Furthermore, teaching methodology, particularly in the context of teaching English in Vietnam, is still restricted. In the past, English teachers concentrated solely on grammar, vocabulary, reading, and writing, but speaking and listening were neglected; as a result, pupils were unable to talk and express themselves in English. English began to be taught using a skill-based technique later in the decade, in the 2000s. As a result, children must acquire four abilities in isolation: speaking, reading, listening, and writing. Despite the benefits of this method, word power, such as set phrases and formulaic expressions, is undervalued, which contributed to the most significant unfavorable aspect. (Tran, 2012).

Fernando (1996), Wray (2000), Schmitt (2000), and Simpson and Mendis (2003), on the other hand, believe that idiom mastery is often associated with native speaker fluency. If communication breaks down, a lack of idiom knowledge can undermine the relationships and impede good intercultural competence (Alhaysony, 2017). In communication, speaking competently considers being the most basic session for a communicator who does it fluently (Tran, 2021). In fact, one of the requirements for IELTS speaking evaluation is idiomatic proficiency. The IELTS speaking band descriptors emphasize the use of idiomatic language and collocation as indicators of lexical resource usage in bands 7, 8, and 9. All of the students, including the first-year students (freshmen) in FOE, are expected to achieve advanced level (C1) in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) or the equivalent after their graduation and speaking is one of the criteria they need to improve if they desire to gain the qualification. They represent the young generation who hoped to have the capacity to use English effectively; as a result, a thorough understanding of idioms will aid students in becoming better communicators, particularly in English instruction. However, in foreign language education circumstances, idiom instruction may not have gotten enough attention, particularly in speaking contexts (Vasiljevic, 2011). Teachers and students in Vietnam avoid employing idiomatic expressions in English, and few are aware of the value of idioms in communication (Tran, 2012). They may have struggled with selecting an acceptable teaching approach, picking idioms, and explaining how to apply an idiom in appropriate circumstances.

This study focused on the situation of idioms teaching and learning in Vietnam, where English is taught as a foreign language; as a result, it was possible to explore the challenges that lecturers and students encounter, as well as suggest some solutions to close a gap in the literature on idioms teaching and learning research. Learning to utilize idiomatic phrases appropriately is also an essential element of mastering international English for students of English as a second or foreign language.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Definition and classification of idioms

Idiomatic expressions are those whose meanings cannot be deduced from the meanings of the words that make up the term. They have, however, hidden meanings (Idiomatic Expression, 2015). "Language is more or less idiomatic in the spectrum of idiomaticity," as Lennon (1998) put it. Other scholars, such as Cooper (1999), focused on "idioms are multi-word units with non-literal meaning." According to Simpson and Mendis, an idiom is a group of words appearing in a more or less fixed phrase whose overall meaning cannot be predicted by analyzing the meaning of its individual parts (Ibid.). Idioms are "indivisible units whose components cannot be altered and can only be modified within specified units," according to Fernando (1996). (p. 30). Gibbs (1987) divided idioms into four categories: syntactically frozen, syntactically flexible, transparent, and opaque idioms.

Idioms have been classified in a variety of ways. Pure idioms, partly literal, and literal idioms are classified by Fernando (1996, p32). Core idioms, figurative idioms, and ONCEs are the three groups that Grant (2007) classifies idioms into.

According to Simpson and Mendis (2003) and Zyzik (2011), an idiom is a group of words that co-occur in a more or less fixed phrase, the metaphorical meaning of which cannot be predicted looking at the meaning of its constituents.

### 2.2. The Importance of Idiomatic Competence in Language Learning

Lundblom and Woods (2012) emphasized the significance of understanding idioms. They were inclined to believe that idioms are clearly given in academic contexts and that inability to grasp idioms might have an impact on academic achievement, written composition, reading comprehension, and vocabulary, especially as students' ages and grades progress. "Idiomatic competence is the capacity to correctly communicate using idioms in the roles of both an addressor and an addressee," according to Buckingham (2006) and Burke (1988). Like other language competencies, Figurative competence refers to the ability to communicate successfully using and interpreting idioms. It enables non-native speakers to properly grasp daily discussions (Burke, 1998, Buckingham, 2006). According to Boers et al. (2006), the value of idiomatic phrases to language learners is that it allows communicators to encode and decode the meaning of a discussion completely. Wray (2000) looks into the units of multi-word like idioms in speaker production and listener comprehension, finding that they help speakers create an efficient process and organize discourse and assist hearers in profoundly understanding the speaker's view and identify the individual identity. Even though many studies have previously been done on various elements of vocabulary acquisition, learning, and usage (e.g., MacArthur, 2010; Randolph, 2017; Wahyuni & Rozani Syafei, 2016; Zou, 2017), the subject of idiomaticity has been mostly ignored. In Vietnam, teaching and learning idioms seem to be frowned upon by both instructors and pupils. Consequently, because of the number of idiomatic expressions they employ in their speech, they have a hard time understanding speakers in the inner circle.

### *2.3. The Relationship between Idioms and Speaking Skill*

Idioms are widely employed in everyday English discourse because they enrich the communication's substance and allow speakers to express themselves effectively (Thyab, 2016). Idioms must be used to achieve greater English expressive levels, especially for EFL learners (Xie, 2017). Speaking clearly and smoothly is essential for successful communication, not just in everyday interactions but also in job interviews (Chau, 2021). These staggering figures demonstrate the indisputable importance of idiomatic expressions in everyday language use, particularly in the ability to interact with others. Idioms are often unavoidable in conversations, making them a must in language programs to improve their communicative skills. When a person learns English idioms, he or she changes the language from its formal written form into a natural form that allows the speaker to use more culturally relevant words. In a similar spirit, Simpson and Mendis (2003) suggested that idiom mastery is frequently linked to native speaker fluency, citing Fernando (1996), Schmitt (2000), and Wray (2000). In actuality, idiomatic competence is one of the IELTS speaking band descriptors' requirements, and using idiomatic vocabulary and collocation are indicated as signals for the use of lexical resources in bands 7, 8, and 9.

### *2.4. Issues in Teaching Idioms*

There have been claims that teaching and learning idioms have been difficult (e.g., Chen & Lai, 2013). It is apparent that the teachers may find it challenging to motivate pupils to learn (or apply) idioms outside of the classrooms (Al-Kadi, 2015) because the possibility of such extension may appear remotely. Many instructors and students in Vietnam say that learning idioms are one of the most challenging aspects of learning a foreign language. In reality, idioms are "notoriously complex" (Celce-Murcia & Larsen Freeman, 1999, p. 39), as later academics have pointed out (Liu, 2003, Zyzik, 2011). Idioms have traditionally been taught as part of vocabulary instruction. Idioms were formerly addressed separately and independent of context. However, a growing number of techniques and tactics are being used to teach idioms. Copper (1999) looked at the usage of idiom comprehension methods. The most frequent techniques are guessing from context and employing literal meaning. Many scholars, including Liu (2003), have stated that instructors in a foreign language setting have found it difficult to aid students in learning idioms. Idiom selection is another contentious topic when it comes to teaching idioms. Which idioms, from the many in the dictionary, should be taught? Should we teach idioms in individual lessons or as part of a larger curriculum? Or, more specifically, what activities may be utilized to teach idioms? It has been argued that idioms look to users of other languages to be unduly complex (Liu, 2003, McLellan, 2010). Despite Lontas' (2017) claim that language programs should emphasize idioms, idioms are often avoided by both pupils and teachers in Vietnam. With the aid of a teacher's deliberate effort, students in a foreign language context, such as Vietnam, can effectively comprehend and produce idioms in their linked speech. Furthermore, students' opinions about idioms appearing in real language are likely to alter.

## Research Questions

This research examines the case of teaching idioms to freshmen at FOE, TMU, using an integrated method. The responses to the following research questions are addressed.

1. What is the current situation of idioms teaching and learning at FOE, TMU?
2. What are the lecturers' and students' perceptions of their teaching and learning of idioms?

## 3. Methods

### *3.1. Pedagogical Setting & Participants*

This research focused on the teaching and learning of idioms in Vietnam, where English is taught as a second language. For learners studying this language as a second or foreign language, mastering the use of colloquial phrases is critical.

A group of 100 freshmen at FOE, TMU who had learned English for four to ten years in school and were deemed to be at a pre-intermediate level of English were used as informants. These students were expected to obtain a C1 or equivalent in the CEFR, and it has since become a required certificate prior to graduation.

Being a current lecturer at FOE, TMU, the researcher has a favorable opportunity to get to know about the freshmen because they were expected to achieve C1, and speaking was one of the criteria they need to improve if they desired to gain the qualification. They represented the young generation who were required to have the capacity to use English under the oriented communication at competitive job market; therefore, a strong knowledge of idioms would help them to become better speakers in communication.

The supportive participation of 10 lecturers who were in charge of teaching speaking skills at FOE, TMU were indispensable in this study. They had experience teaching English language skills from about 5 to 20 years. They all had Master's degrees in English language teaching and obtained C1 certificates. These lecturers were selected because the author desired to compare the lecturers' and students' perceptions of idioms teaching and learning.

### *3.2. Design of the Study*

The questionnaires for students were written in English and were translated into Vietnamese to ensure that they could understand the researcher's requirements and study purposes thoroughly. It contains 13 questions that investigate the situation of teaching and learning idioms and student self-evaluation of their idioms teaching and learning efficacy. The purpose of the study necessitates the gathering of lecturers' opinions, which the questionnaire accomplishes. Similar to the survey questionnaire for students, the survey questionnaire for lecturers also consists of 13 questions with the same content to help the researcher compare lecturers' and students' opinions about idioms teaching and learning.

The interview used in this study is a semi-structured interview. While it is anticipated that this kind covers every topic in the protocol, the researcher has some leeway to go further into participant replies by seeking clarification or more information. Furthermore, interviewers have

the flexibility to be friendlier and more social. Semi-structured questions were created in particular to allow the researcher to have a thorough grasp of the idiom's teaching and learning of interest, which is required for the development of relevant and meaningful semi-structured questions.

After collecting and analyzing data from the questionnaire, five lecturers and ten students who provided rich information and showed their interest were invited for an in-depth interview. Then the researcher notified the participants about the time and place that the interview was conducted. The researcher has made sure that the interviewees felt comfortable at this interview venue and time. Similar to the questionnaires, the interview questions for students were translated into Vietnamese so that they were able to express their ideas freely. The interview, including six questions related to idioms, teaching and learning, was designed.

### *3.3. Data collection & analysis*

The study has used mixed methods, including quantitative and qualitative, to clarify the issues. The data gathering method was broken down into three parts.

Stage 1: The participants, including lecturers and freshmen in FOE, TMU who were invited and were introduced with researcher's study contents and purposes.

Stage 2: The questionnaire with 13 questions provides careful instructions and explanations to shed light on two research questions. It focuses on criteria for selecting idioms for teaching, teaching approaches, lecturers and student's opinions on teaching methods, idiom-related activities in lessons, sources and teaching material for idioms, etc. Next, the questionnaire was administered to the ten selected lecturers, and 100 first-year students were then collected for analyzing process. The collected data were analyzed through content-based that the results of content analysis were numbers and percentages. In particular, each question was analyzed with the number and percentage of participants' responses to the various aspects related to the teaching and learning idioms, especially in speaking skills, to clarify lecturers' and students' evaluations of the situation. If the data show that it is not adequately concerned, the author can conclude that the limitation and difficulty exist.

Stage 3: Five lecturers and ten students who provided rich information and showed interest were invited for an in-depth interview after collecting and analyzing data from the questionnaire. A semi-structured interview consisting of six questions about the topic studied was conducted in 30 minutes. All the data collected were taken into the analysis process. Additional comments from interviews to clarify the questionnaire's data were discussed and compared in detail to find the similarities and differences. Perceptions of teachers and students towards teaching and learning idioms were made clearer. Therefore, the two research questions were answered, and solutions to tackling the difficulty encountered while teaching and learning English and to improve the student motivations and involvement in learning idioms were then suggested.

## 4. Findings and discussion

### 4.1. The situation of teaching and learning idioms

In terms of the real context, the research focused on lecturers' factors when choosing idioms, teaching techniques, and idiom-related activities.

**Table 1. Criteria for Selecting Idioms for Teaching**

Criteria	Students		Lecturers	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Relevance to the contents of the lessons	38	38%	7	70%
Frequency in use	25	25%	4	40%
Cultural suitability	11	11%	2	20%
Being up to date	0	0%	0	0%
Fitting students' language level	27	27%	10	100%
Others	0	0%	0	0%

Despite a minor variation in priority among the criteria, lecturers and students both regard relevance to the contents of the courses (70 percent and 38 percent, respectively), suiting students' language level (27 percent for students and 100 percent for professors), and frequency in usage (25 percent and 40 percent). Lecturers were concerned about their students' English levels (100 percent) and relevance to the topic of the courses (70 percent), and students who were more engaged in two criteria were similarly concerned. Some of the students concerned about cultural suitability for choosing idioms for teaching (11%) while more lecturers bear in mind about it (20%). This information was also used to support Vygotsky's (1978) idea of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which states that knowing a student's English level or identifying their specific ZPD will recommend appropriate learning aid. Zizek also advised paying attention to the most common idioms (2009). Zyzik suggested that idioms be chosen based on their frequency of use or familiarity (2009). These criteria help instructors include numerous commonly used idioms while excluding those that are rarely used. When choosing idioms for their pupils, lecturers and students might refer to Liu's (2003) and Grant (2007)'s study on idiom frequency of occurrence.

In terms of an idioms-related teaching method, idioms were taught and presented in either hearing or reading activities, according to the question, "How did you/your lecturers teach idioms?" Idioms were taught through integrated-skill exercises that included listening and reading skills as well as in speaking activities.

**Table 2. Teaching approaches**

Approaches	Students		Lecturers	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Idioms were taught separately in idiom-focus activities	6	6%	0	0%
Idioms were taught integrated with listening activities	4	4%	2	20%
Idioms were taught integrated with reading activities	38	38%	6	60%
Idioms were taught integrated with speaking activities	15	15%	4	40%
Idioms were taught in integrated-skill activities	50	50%	8	80%

Table 2 shows that reading activities were used to teach and learn idioms (38 percent for students and 60 percent for lecturers), which was the receptive skill (Harmer, 2001). Furthermore, the findings revealed that idioms were also taught through listening exercises (4 percent for students and 20 percent for teachers). These exercises served as a source of linguistic input for the pupils. Lecturers are likely to have helped pupils develop productive abilities such as speaking and writing. The terms "knowledge of a language" and "skill at using it" are not interchangeable (Bygate, 1987, p. 3). As a result, if idioms are exclusively taught through listening and reading activities, students will have little opportunity to practice their newly learned idioms. As a result, teaching idioms through speaking exercises was critical for the development of speaking skills, particularly in communication. However, the results revealed that 15% of students and 40% of lecturers agreed that idioms were taught in conjunction with speaking exercises (less than reading activities).

Furthermore, *"rather than explaining the meaning of idioms, it is necessary to focus more on speaking and writing with idioms."* according to several informants (Oanh and Thuy, informants). *"More role plays are needed to inject idioms into our speech. It's not enough to know idioms. It is much better if we get the opportunity to talk and utilize idioms in a communicative context after learning their meaning in reading or listening tasks."*, some students added. The majority of them agreed that idioms should be taught in a mixed-methods approach with a high level of interaction between teachers and students.

According to the results of the survey, lecturers (80%) and students (50%) said they learned idioms through integrated skill exercises. The integrated skill method (Oxford, 2001), in which all language abilities are taught in theme-based models or task-based instruction centered on communicative objectives to assist students in communicating in English, has recently aroused their interest. It is beneficial for students by "practicing all language skills in an integrated, natural, conversational style, even if one skill is the primary focus of a given volume" (Oxford, 2001, p. 18).

A number of instructional activities were imaginatively created and executed to assist students in understanding idioms better, as shown in tables 3 and 4. According to 50% of instructors and



29% of students, the textbook almost determined the idiomatic exercises. Hang (a teacher) claims that she generally changes textbook exercises to match the learning styles of her pupils and her teaching objectives.

**Table 3. Lecturers' opinion on teaching methods**

Statements	Lecturers				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Idioms were presented in a variety of ways	20%	50%	20%	10%	0%
2. Idioms activities were almost determined by the textbook	20%	30%	0%	50%	0%
3. Different teaching aids were used to help ease the idioms learning process	40%	20%	30%	10%	0%

**Table 4. Students' opinion on teaching methods**

Statements	Students				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Idioms were presented in a variety of ways	18%	33%	41%	8%	0%
2. Idioms activities were almost determined by the textbook	0%	31%	40%	29%	0%
3. Different teaching aids were used to help ease the idioms learning process	20%	41%	37%	2%	0%

Table 5 shows the inventiveness with which idiom-related tasks were designed. The lecturers used a variety of exercises, including matching, idiom sharing, flash-card games, and role-playing. The most common activities are idiom matching, idiom sharing, and role-playing with idioms. Students were enthralled by the idioms sharing since they were easier to memorize and use than the other idioms in the book. In the research, the lecturers used a variety of approaches and skills in teaching vocabulary to cope with idioms. In particular, idiom-related activities were effective in promoting the development of speaking skills through teaching idioms. Many studies, including Cooper, 1998, Lennon, 1998, and Zyzik, 2009, believed that teaching idioms should be contextualized and separated into two steps: students' idiom awareness and students' use and practice of idioms. The first stage can occur during reading or listening activities, while the second is more likely to occur during speaking and writing activities.

However, board games, quizzes, word clouds, and video watching are not commonly used, according to the data. Many students believe that lecturers might teach idioms more effectively if they utilize actual recordings. In order to learn idioms, students desired to play activities such as board games, quizzes, and word clouds. The majority of them shared the same ideas that they

desire to be taught idioms through mixed methods such as storytelling, games, context with high interaction between lecturers and students. They also thought that when they were the learner center, idioms teaching and learning was more effective, motivating, and fun.

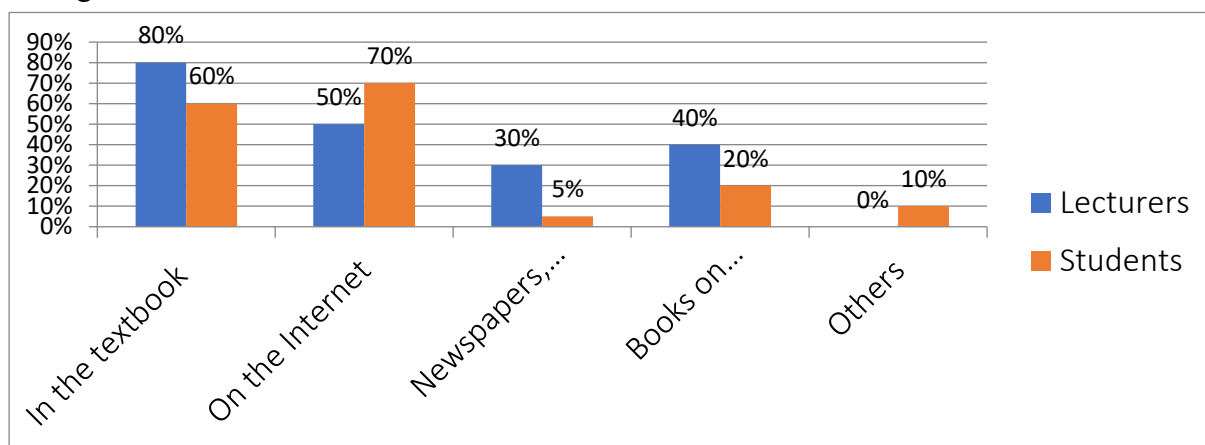
Matching, exchanging idioms, and role-playing with idioms are the most popular activities, although theatrical performing was also popular. *“At first, it was really tough for us, but after we realized that we could communicate our views and feelings through idioms, we were very encouraged to participate in these activities,”* Long added (a student). Furthermore, *“students are more likely to utilize idioms naturally.”* Nhung observed, *“Students are driven to have dialogues with roles in certain circumstances”* (a lecturer). *“I occasionally tell the students a tale using idioms. Although my students are aware of the story's premise, I employ idioms in the story. They are enthralled by it and are more likely to recall the set words. The idioms can then be used in a similar scenario.”*, Lan (a professor) revealed as another contextual method. Therefore, it can be said that using the idiom-related activities contributed significantly to the effectiveness of teaching idioms.

**Table 5. Idiom-related activities (Lecturers' opinions)**

Activities (times)	Teachers					Students				
	>10	7-9	4-6	1-3	Not used	>10	7-9	4-6	1-3	Not used
1. Story telling	0	0	1	6	3	0	0	4	28	50
2. Quizzes	0	1	0	2	7	0	2	8	62	22
3. Board games	0	0	0	1	9	0	0	0	22	74
4. Matching (idioms and meaning)	1	1	6	3	0	0	2	12	68	20
5. Word clouds	0	1	2	2	5	0	0	4	54	40
6. Dominos	0	0	0	2	8	0	0	0	28	76
7. Idiom sharing	0	4	2	3	1	0	8	42	32	14
8. Role play	0	1	6	2	1	0	20	20	56	10
9. Video watching	0	0	1	3	6	0	0	8	12	84
10. Flash card activities	1	0	3	4	2	0	0	10	56	32
11. Theatre playing with idioms	0	0	2	3	5	0	0	10	26	62
12. Dialogue writing	0	0	0	2	8	0	0	0	12	86
13. Discussion	1	1	2	6	0	0	2	20	74	4
14. Idiom glossary	1	4	2	3	0	0	16	28	48	4
15. Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	84

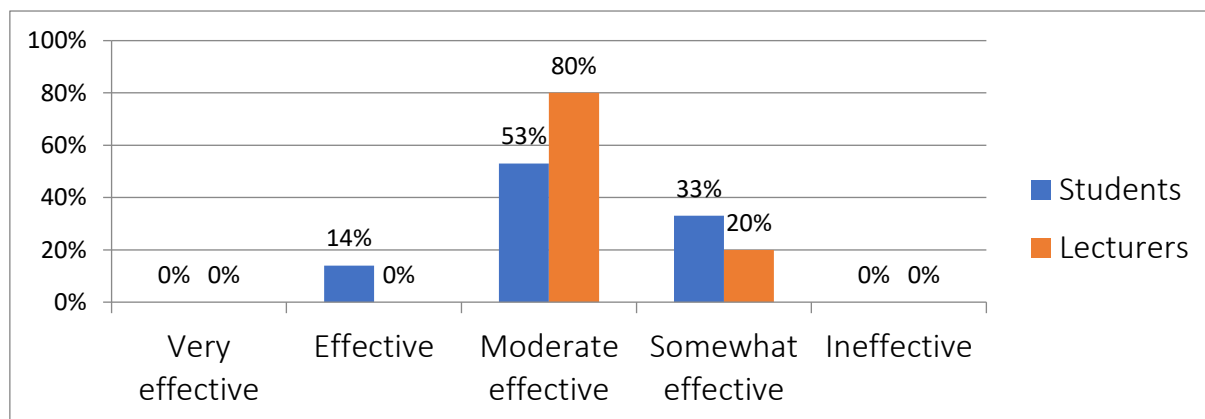
The majority of the teaching and learning resources came from the textbook, the Internet, and idiom reference books. Students utilized other sources to seek idioms such as their instructors, movies, music, and TV shows, whereas lecturers concentrated solely on these three referential sources. These were also great idiom sources that they might think about using in their classes. Because of the use of idioms in the final test at FOE, the majority of lecturers and students utilized idioms from the textbook to teach or study idioms. Another interesting statistic was that

just 5% of students learned idioms through newspapers and magazines, despite the fact that these publications constituted real dialogue. This might be due to a lack of exposure to English-language periodicals and publications among Vietnamese pupils. Rather, they were more familiar with online video snippets, news, and broadcasts. As a consequence, 70% of students and 50% of lecturers stated that they used the Internet to find teaching and learning resources on idioms. These numbers appear to represent the trend of teaching and learning English through the Internet's innovation.



**Figure 1. Sources and teaching/ learning materials for idioms**

*4.2. Self-evaluations of lecturers and students on the efficacy of their idioms teaching and learning*



**Figure 2. Lecturers' and students' general evaluation of idiom teaching and learning**

From the students' and lecturers' perspectives, there were differing views on their teaching and learning efficacy. When 14 percent of the participants thought idiom teaching and learning was successful, 53 percent thought it was somewhat effective, and 33 percent thought it was somewhat effective, it appeared that pupils were more optimistic. On the other hand, Lecturers only chose moderately successful (80%) and slightly effective (20%) teaching methods. The majority of the participants in the interview thought that their idioms, teaching and learning were moderately effective. Thanh, a student, explained that reading text and glossary were relatively effective for reviewing idioms in specific contexts. However, students did not have

the opportunity to be trained in many different skills. As Mai gave her estimations why she thought idioms teaching was efficient: *“In my opinion, the course's most beneficial aspect is that it assists my students in recognizing the existence of idiomatic phrases in real sources. They can focus on idiomatic words in their future study after they grasp and feel the value of these phrases. In the past, we've overlooked this important aspect of language.”* She said that students' awareness of the importance and comprehension of idioms was a success of the course. Thus, the ways for students to practice and use idioms in speaking need a long time to teaching more closely.

**Table 6. Lecturers' and students' evaluation of idioms teaching and learning in detail**

Statements	Lecturers					Students				
	SA	A	N	D	SD	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. The idiom- related activities matched your students' level	0%	30%	50%	20%	0%	6%	54%	36%	4%	0%
2. The idiom-related activities were successful	0%	40%	40%	20%	0%	0%	51%	43%	6%	0%
3. You felt confident and relaxed when teaching/learning idioms	0%	30%	60%	10%	0%	20%	41%	37%	2%	0%
4. Your students/You have demonstrated the progress in idiom comprehension	20%	40%	40%	0%	0%	0%	44%	52%	4%	0%
5. Your students/You have demonstrated the progress in using idiomatic expressions	0%	20%	50%	30%	0%	0%	33%	61%	2%	4%
6. Your students/You enjoyed the idioms learning activities	10%	60%	30%	0%	0%	14%	35%	35%	14%	2%
7. Your students /You were motivated to learn idioms	0%	70%	30%	0%	0%	0%	40%	47%	11%	2%
8. Your students/You actively participated in the learning process	0%	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%	42%	37%	17%	4%

The appropriateness of idioms and the pupils' English proficiency are contentious topics. Thirty percent of lecturers felt that the learning activities were appropriate for their students' levels, while the remaining twenty percent (20%) did not. More than half of the students, on the other hand, thought that their English level corresponded to the idiom-related activities (6 percent strongly agree, 54 percent agree). When it came to the success of the idiom exercises, both lecturers and students had similar sentiments, with 40% and 51% agreeing and fully agreeing with statement 2. Lecturers did not appear to be confident or relaxed when teaching idioms. On assertion 3, the majority of them were undecided (60 percent neutral). This can be explained by the fact that teachers did not feel comfortable using idioms in their interactions. Not only did the lecturers agree that utilizing idioms in their discussions is difficult, but the students also believed that idioms were too difficult to learn since their meanings were not literal, and they

were unlikely to be encouraged to use and understand idioms in practice. Furthermore, they were probably not taught idioms in a methodical manner so that they could completely comprehend the meaning, usage, and context of each phrase and their laziness while studying at home. Table 6 shows indications of growth in employing idioms in student language development outcomes, but the proportion was not that convincing. Only 20% of instructors and 33% of students believed that their idiomatic competence had improved. The majority of them remained unconcerned about this assertion (50% and 61%, respectively). The majority of lecturers, like the students, feel that idiom-learning activities are enjoyable and that students are driven to acquire idioms (10% and 60% for both strongly agree and agree on choices, respectively) (14% and 35% for both agree and agree on options, respectively).

This discovery indicated students' positive views about idiom learning. Besides, the students also gave some suggestions to minimize the difficulties and make teaching and learning idioms in speaking skills more effective. Some students recommended that teachers could organize more exciting games (with prizes) and idioms-related activities such as flash-card, mind-map, storytelling, video watching, outdoor activities, contextualization activities, to help students learn and apply them in speaking skills more easily. Lecturers should give students some idioms each lesson and require them to repeat or make conversations with them regularly to remember the meaning and use. Some others thought that students themselves had to spend more time learning idioms at home and communicating with native speakers to help them improve their speaking skills.

## 5. Conclusion

This research explores the situation and students' and lecturers' perceptions of idioms teaching and learning in light of the speaking skills approach for freshmen of English at TMU in Vietnam. Firstly, the research shows the situation that idioms have been taught to the first-year students of FOE, yet it mainly in reading skills and very restricted on other skills, particularly in speaking. Both instructors and students in this foreign language environment agree that pupils are motivated, calm, and confident and actively participate in idiomatic learning activities. According to the findings, students have demonstrated the process of idiom awareness and understanding via evidence in the evaluation of idioms education. These positive idiom learning results are the result of the creative utilization of idiom-related instructional activities designed for reading skill tasks, but no such activities exist for speaking skill tasks. Because learners utilize various techniques to understand the meaning of idioms, they should be given the opportunity to learn and practice various abilities.

Second, the research shows that university lecturers and students were moderately efficient in idiom learning, with students being able to grasp and retain a few fundamental idioms. Despite their awareness of the importance of idioms and their acquisition in the process of learning English in EFL contexts, the majority of students seldom studied at home and rarely used idioms in their conversations. Their lack of idiomatic language exposure in their learning programs, the insufficiency of teachers' help in learning and using idioms, and an insufficient habit of accumulating idioms as phrases and chunks all contributed to their poor idiomatic competence.

The study reveals that idiom is a difficult part of teaching English. From the actual situation and the awareness of lecturers and students, idioms teaching might not be received sufficient attention at FOE yet. As a result, the study concluded that rather than an avoidable attitude in EFL classes, idioms should be given more emphasis in language classes to help students learn English in a foreign language setting. This material may aid freshmen at FOE and EFL learners, in general, to deepen their understanding of the target language and then communicate intentionally in English.

Within the limited time and restricted scope of research, certain shortcomings are inevitable. Firstly, this study was conducted on a relatively small sample of participants, so the results collected are not representative and cannot be generalized. Secondly, it is remarkable that the time for the data collection procedure is rather short, whereas the effect of teaching idioms needs studying for a long time, and the researcher does not have much time to investigate it in a long-term process.

During the implementation of the study, a number of questions for future research have been raised. Future studies should explore more about how to enhance students in learning idioms to upgrade their ability to use idioms in communication. Furthermore, it was necessary to focus on how much knowledge of the culture (in which the target language exists) learners need in order to acquire specific idioms. In addition, research on how learners comprehend idioms needs to be expanded and used to create instructional materials and teaching procedures with regard to idioms teaching and learning in speaking skills.

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## Biodata

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