The Effect of a Proposed Program Integrating the REACT Strategy and Drama Activities on Fostering EFL idioms Comprehension and Production among Faculty of Mass Communication Students

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Abstract

The aim of the current study was to develop EFL first year Faculty of Mass communication students' comprehension and production of idiomatic expressions through a proposed program integrating the REACT strategy of the Contextual Learning Approach and the drama activities of miming, dramatized storytelling, role playing, simulation and improvisation. It focused on developing the experimental group students' comprehension and production of ten types of idiomatic expressions. These were color, food, number, body parts, animal, nature, plants, clothes, weather and house parts idioms. The study followed the quasi-experimental pretest- posttest control group/ experimental group design where two intact groups were randomly assigned to the control and experimental groups. The study tools included a pre- /post- idioms comprehension test and a pre-/post- idioms production test. Results indicated that the experimental group students outperformed the control group students on the idioms comprehension and production posttests. Also, there were statistically significant differences between the experimental group students' pre- tests and post- tests scores in favour of the posttests scores. Therefore, it was concluded that the proposed program was effective in developing the experimental group students' comprehension and production of English idioms.

Key Words: The Contextual Learning Approach, REACT strategy, drama activities, idioms comprehension & production, Egyptian EFL university level learners

أثر برنامج مقترح قائم علي التكامل بين إستراتيجية REACT و الأنشطة المسرحية علي تنمية فهم التعبيرات الإصطلاحية و انتاجها لدي طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية بكلية الإعلام

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الملخص:

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى تنمية فهم التعبيرات الإصطلاحية و انتاجها لدي طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية بالفرقة الأولى بكلية الإعلام و ذلك من خلال برنامج مقترح قائم علي التكامل بين إستراتيجية REACT (وهي إحدي استراتيجيات مدخل التعلم السياقي) و الأنشطة المسرحية المتضمنة استخدام لغة الإشارة و سرد القصص بإسلوب مسرحي و لعب الأدوار و المحاكاة و الارتجال. و ركزت الدراسة على تنمية فهم و انتاج عشر أنواع من التعبيرات الإصطلاحية لدي طلاب المجموعة التجريبية و هي تلك التعبيرات الإصطلاحية المتضمنة ألواناً و أطعمة و أرقاماً و أجزاءاً للجسم و حيوانات و عناصراً للطبيعة و نباتات و ملابساً و أحوالاً للطقس وأجزاءاً من المنزل . و قد اتبعت الدراسة المنهج البحثي شبه التجريبي -تصميم الاختبار القبلي/ البعدي للمجموعتين الضابطة و التجريبية. و وفقاً لهذا المنهج تم اختيار مجموعتين من طلاب الفرقة الأولى بكلية الإعلام عشوائياً لتكونا المجموعتين الضابطة و التجريبية. و تضمنت أدوات الدراسة (١) اختبار فهم التعبيرات الإصطلاحية قبلي/ بعدي و (٢) اختبار انتاج التعبيرات الإصطلاحية قبلي/ بعدي. و أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن طلاب المجموعة التجريبية تفوقوا علي طلاب المجموعة الضابطة في الاختبارين البعديين لفهم و انتاج التعبيرات الإصطلاحية. و بمقارنة أداء طلاب المجموعة التجريبية القبلي و البعدي في الإختبارين أظهرت نتائج الدراسة فروقاً ذات دلالة إحصائية لصالح الأداء البعدي. و لذا خلصت هذه الدراسة إلى أن البرنامج المقترح فعال في تنمية فهم و انتاج التعبيرات الإصطلاحية لدى طلاب المجموعة التجريبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مدخل التعلم السياقي ، الأنشطة المسرحية ، فهم و انتاج التعبيرات الإصطلاحية ، طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بالمرحلة الجامعية المصريين

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Introduction

English language is an international language of communication that is increasingly used by varied groups of learners and professionals. As expression of ideas and emotions is becoming much easier nowadays with the varied means of communication including traditional journalism, electronic journalism, social media platforms and varied broadcasting channels, Egyptian EFL Faculty of Mass Communication students need to be equipped with the necessary tools that would enable them to convey thoughts and emotions using expressive, eloquent language. To achieve this target, mastery of EFL vocabulary items is a must for those students if they really wish to advance in their careers and help their messages transcend the local community to the international community. Among the vocabulary items that are frequently used in mass media are idiomatic expressions. To clarify, idioms are often used in radio programs, television shows, newspaper headlines, advertisements and informal modes of written communication (Fotovatnia & Khaki, 2012; Thyab, 2016; O'Dell & McCarthy, 2017; Xie, 2017; Zhenzhen, Akhter & Qureshi, 2020).

Idioms are "expressions that have a meaning that is not obvious from the individual words." (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2002, p.6) In other words, an idiom is "an expression which functions as a single unit and whose meaning cannot be worked out from its separate parts." (Richards, Platt & Platt, 2007, p.322). Thus, idioms are examples of the figurative use of language (Rohani, Ketabi & Tavakoli, 2012; Mousa, 2015), and their meanings should be worked out by listeners and readers at the non-literal level. To elaborate, the intended meaning of the idiomatic expression *'to let the cat out of the bag'* has nothing to do with cats or bags; it simply means to reveal or disclose a secret. Also, the figurative meaning of the idiom *'a hot potato'* has nothing to do with potatoes; if something is described as a hot potato, it means that it is a controversial issue or situation which is awkard to deal with.

As a main type of figurative language, idioms use- whether in informal spoken or written contexts- helps "enrich and enliven human communication." (Xie, 2017, p. 329). Furthermore, idioms acquisition

helps EFL learners speak more fluently and naturally in a native –like manner (Kashiha & Heng, 2013; Alrishan, 2015; Thyab, 2016; Freyn & Gross, 2017; Maisa, 2017; O'Dell & McCarthy, 2017). Also, comprehending idioms enables EFL learners to make meaning of a wide variety of authentic spoken and written texts.

English idioms were classified by different scholars according to varied perspectives. One of these classifications categorized idioms according to their level of familiarity to EFL learners into familiar and unfamiliar idioms. Another way is to classify idioms according to their level of transparency, which is "a measure of the degree to which the literal and figurative meanings of an idiom are related" (Xie, 2017, p.329). Hence, if the literal and figurative meanings are closely related, the idiom is said to be transparent; however, if the figurative and literal meanings of an idiom are unrelated, the idiom is classified as opaque or pure (Xie, 2017; Aydin, 2019). In between, along the continuum of transparency and opaqueness, semi-literal or partially opaque idioms usually have one or more literal constituents and one word that is used figuratively (Fernando, 1996; My & Loi, 2020).

Examples of transparent idioms include *'a drop in the ocean'* (a very small portion of the amount that is needed), *'the calm before the storm'* (a period in which there is relative quietness and peace just before a big problem is about to erupt), *'as cunning as a fox'* (very cunning), *'as strong as an ox'* (very strong) and *'at the crack of dawn'* (very early in the morning). Opaque or pure idioms include *'to kick the bucket'* (to die), *'to put the cat among the pigeons'* (to create a crisis or a problematic situation), *'to steal someone's thunder'* (to take away all the attention from someone on their special day), *'to keep one's shirt on'* (to remain calm and avoid overreaction) and *'to have butterflies in someone's stomach'* (to feel very nervous or anxious about something). Instances of semi- literal or partially opaque idioms include *'to foot the bill'* (to pay the bill), *'a fat chance'* (very little or no possibility), *' a dark horse'* (a person who surprises others by his /her achievements), *'to sail too close to the wind'* (to take the risk) and *'an acid test'* (a method used to prove the truth) (Xie, 2017; Nikulina, 2020).

In addition to the figurative meanings of idioms, they are an area where language and culture overlap (Al-kadi, 2015; Thyab, 2016; Chong & Huang, 2018; Suhodolli, 2019a, 2019b; Badawi, 2021). Therefore, idioms are usually referred to as cultural-specific expressions (Cakir, 2011; Freyn & Gross, 2017; Maisa, 2017), thus placing a great challenge on EFL learners when they attempt to comprehend, use or translate them

into other languages or their native language (Salamah, 2015; Aydin, 2017; Zhenzhen, Akhter & Qureshi, 2020).

Bearing in mind the figurative meanings, cultural origin and recurrent use of idioms in everyday life as well as in mass media, more interest should be given to helping EFL Faculty of Mass Communication students process and use idioms to convey messages and express thoughts. However, idioms are considered a stumbling block and a source of confusion for EFL learners (Eltahir, 2003; Fallatah, 2009; Noor & Fallatah, 2010; Vasiljevic, 2015; Afshar & Esmaeili, 2017; Akhter, Shaheen, Oureshi & Tanveer, 2018; Suhodolli, 2019b) due to several factors. These include idioms unfamiliarity, lack of necessary cultural and historical background to comprehend given idioms, idioms opacity, learners' infrequent exposure to idioms in EFL textbooks and the poor teaching methods adopted that focus on memorizing lists of idioms and their meanings without actually using them in meaningful communicative contexts (Boers, Demecheleer & Eyckmans, 2004; Noor & Fallatah, 2010). Also, many EFL learners often lack the needed skills to make use of contextual clues to infer the figurative meanings of unfamiliar idioms (Boers, Eyckmans & Stengers, 2007; Vasiljevic, 2015).

While previous studies proved that EFL learners found "high-familiar and high-transparent idioms easier to understand" (Xie, 2017; p.330), decontextualized, opaque and unfamiliar idioms were considered the most difficult type to comprehend and use for EFL learners (Aljabri, 2013; Aydin, 2017; Xie, 2017). To elaborate, EFL learners face considerable difficulties when they attempt to recognize, make meaning of and translate unfamiliar opaque idioms (Eltahir, 2003; Salamah, 2015; Zhenzhen, Akhter & Qureshi, 2020). They, also, find it difficult to appropriately use idioms in varied contexts due to the fact that idioms can vary in their level of informality from colloquialism to slang (Levorato, 1993). Such difficulties were confirmed by the studies of Al Aghbari, Al Mahrooqi & Denman (2016), Mousa (2017), Ali & Dawood (2019), Shajrawi & Smadi (2019), Al-Houti & Aldaihani (2020) and Jasim (2020). Findings of these studies revealed that Arab EFL university level learners faced remarkable difficulties when they attempted to comprehend or produce English idioms.

To help EFL university level learners better notice, comprehend, use and retrieve English idioms, numerous studies were conducted such as the studies of Fotovatnia & Khaki (2012), Hanafiyeh & Biria (2014), Aydin (2017), Fryen & Gross (2017), Maisa (2017), Neissari, Ashraf & Ghorbani (2017), Samburskiy (2020), Amos & Abas (2021a) and Zuo

(2021). These studies primarily focused on the instructional strategies, approaches and techniques that can be adopted in that respect. Thus, for a quick overview, these studies investigated the role of pictures, idioms definitions, L1 translation, humorous videos, the dual coding and mental imaging techniques, electronic glosses, the Multimodal Teaching Approach as well as explicit and corpus- based instruction in fostering idiomatic expressions acquisition among their varied groups of participants in different countries including China, Ecuador, India, Iran, Russia, Tanzania and Turkey.

As emphasized by varied scholars and studies, context plays a significant role in helping EFL university level learners guess the meanings of unfamiliar idioms using contextual clues. According to Afshar & Esmaeili (2017), contextualizing idioms is the best way to help EFL learners comprehend and produce them in spoken as well as written contexts. Furthermore, varied studies such as the studies of Asl (2013), Valizadeh & Ahangari (2014), Sanaeifari (2017) and Behtash, Saed & Dehghan (2018) proved that contextualizing idioms in short stories, animation movies and PowerPoint presentations plays a facilitative role in fostering Iranian EFL intermediate, upper intermediate and advanced level teenage as well as adult male and female learners' idioms comprehension, production, acquisition and retention. In addition, Souzaei and Jabbari (2017) proved the positive impact of training EFL intermediate level adult male and female students in the use of contextual clues in fostering their comprehension of English idiomatic expressions.

Contextualization aims at making the EFL learning experience "profound, objective and meaningful through placing the target language in a vivid and realistic situation" (Moghaddas, 2013, p.11). Hence, varied studies proved the positive impact of contextualizing idioms on EFL university level learners' idioms comprehension. Among these were the studies of Hafsaoui & Boulassel (2014), Zaimi (2016), Chong & Huang (2018) and Suhodolli (2019b). However, "much less has been written about the production of idiomatic phrases" (Zhang & Shan, 2020, p.1). Therefore, in their study, Zhang & Shan (2020) investigated EFL Chinese English majors' retrieval of English idioms and found out that the study participants used both the literal and figurative senses to activate and subsequently produce English idioms.

As a result of the proven effective role of contextualizing idioms in fostering their comprehension among EFL university level learning and

the few studies on fostering their idioms' production, the need for adopting the Contextual Learning and Teaching Approach arises. This is due to the fact that this approach can naturally and authentically promote both idioms interpretation and use among EFL university level learners. Contextual learning is a student- centered approach that is based on the constructivism theory of learning where students actively build their knowledge themselves when they feel more responsible for their learning and when they connect their prior knowledge to the newly acquired contextualized information and skills and then apply this new knowledge in meaningful real-life contexts (Özbay & Kayaoglu, 2015).

Application of the Contextual Learning Approach fosters students' self-regulation, motivation, engagement, positive attitudes, active learning, participation, problem solving and autonomy (Crawford, 2001; Boroch et al., 2007; Perin, 2011; Satriani, Emilia and Gunawan, 2012; Hussien, 2017). As far as EFL learning is concerned, Contextual Learning Approach implementation was found to significantly improve EFL (a) vocabulary acquisition as in the studies of Kusumayati (2010), Moghaddas (2013) and Sahara (2015), (b) grammar as in the studies of Moghaddas (2013) and Hussien (2017), (c) writing as in the studies of Satriani, Emilia and Gunawan (2012) and Moghaddas (2013), (d) reading as in the study of Moghaddas (2013) and (e) speaking as in the study of Rambe (2018).

One of the Contextual Learning Approach strategies is the REACT strategy that was first introduced by Crawford (2001) in the fields of science and mathematics and then later adopted in the field of EFL teaching and learning. This strategy is divided into the five phases of relating, experiencing, applying, cooperating and transferring. To briefly describe the five phases, while relating, EFL teachers help learners relate the new topic, skill or language item to be discussed to their prior knowledge and previous experiences. During the experiencing phase, students are involved in varied hands-on experiences where the new knowledge, skill or linguistic items are introduced in written and spoken contexts. As for the applying stage, EFL learners apply their newly acquired knowledge, skills and linguistic items in varied activities such as storytelling and problem solving tasks. To further stress the newly acquired knowledge and skills, EFL students need to cooperate in group work to answer more exercises and do more tasks that enable them to share their points of view and learn from each other. After that, students are involved in a more creative task that enables them to transfer the newly acquired knowledge into a new context such as role playing or

simulation tasks (Rohayati, 2013; Hussien, 2017; Nawas, 2018; Okatfiani, 2021). Moreover, the studies of Rohayati (2013), Hussien (2017), Nawas (2018) and Okatfiani (2021) proved the effectiveness of REACT strategy implementation in fostering EFL learners' vocabulary, grammar, writing, critical thinking as well as speaking fluency and accuracy.

Integrating the REACT strategy with drama activities can enhance idioms comprehension and production among EFL learners. This might be due to the fact that drama activities integrate linguistic and paralinguistic aspects of communication (Alsharidah & Alahmadi, 2020), offer EFL learners the chance of contextual learning and improve their interaction ability (Bellhag & Sopin, 2015; Uysal &Yavuz, 2018). Drama activities are quite varied; they include miming, role playing, dramatized storytelling, skits, script writing, simulation and improvisation (Punsiri, 2011; Dundar, 2013; Eskelinen, 2017; Alshraideh & Alahmadi, 2020; Barekat & Nazemi, 2020).

Drama activities accelerate and enrich the learning process (Robinson, 2015); they, also, enable EFL learners to creatively speak their mind and express their thoughts (Abraham, 2018). Drama activities were found to foster EFL learners' (a) vocabulary acquisition as in the study conducted by Alshraideh & Alahmadi (2020), (b) speaking ability as in Ahmed's (2019) study and comprehension skills as in the study of Nanda & Susanta (2021). Furthermore, the drama activities of role playing and dramatized storytelling were found to foster (i) EFL idioms comprehension in the studies of Kashiha & Heng (2013), Hamidizade & Mohamadi zenouzagh (2018) and Zarei (2020), (ii) idioms acquisition in the studies of Afshar & Esmaeili (2017) and Khonbi & Sadeghi (2017) as well as (iii) idioms production in the study of Zarei (2020).

It is worth noting that during the current study implementation, the drama activities of dramatized storytelling, miming, role playing and simulation were carefully interwoven in the applying, co-operating and transferring stages of the REACT strategy. As for improvisation, it was used to formatively assess the experimental group students' production of EFL idiomatic expressions. To the researcher's best knowledge, no study was conducted integrating the REACT strategy and drama activities to enhance English idioms comprehension and production among Egyptian

EFL Faculty of Mass Communication students. This was viewed as a gap in the literature, so the present study attempts to bridge this gap.

Context of the problem

As the researcher observed some classes of first year Faculty of Mass Communication students at October Modern Sciences and Arts (MSA) University, it was evident that they rarely received any explicit or implicit instruction in the area of English idioms. Most of their classes focused on grammar, reading comprehension, academic writing and research writing skills. Quite a good part of their English classes was devoted to fostering their paraphrasing, summarizing and quoting skills. They received detailed instruction in APA in-text and full citation rules. However, comprehension and production of EFL idiomatic expressions were overlooked despite their abundant use in journalism, broadcasting and advertising.

To further investigate the problem, the researcher administered two diagnostic tests on a random sample of twenty-five first year Faculty of Mass Communication students at MSA University. The first test was a thirty- item multiple choice idioms comprehension test where students were asked to select the correct figurative meanings of underlined idioms in given sentences, and it revealed the students' poor ability to make meaning of English idioms. It was, also, found that opaque unfamiliar idioms were the most difficult ones for them to comprehend. For example, most of them were unable to figure out the non-literal intended meanings of *'feeling under the weather'* (feeling ill)*, ' to be under a cloud'* (to be suspected of doing something wrong or illegal)*, 'pig-headed'* (stubborn)*, 'to have a finger in every pie'* (to be involved in many activities and to have a lot of influence or power)*, ' a stuffed shirt' (*someone who lives by the rules and is very formal)*, 'six feet under'* (dead and buried) and *'to be at sixes and sevens'* (feeling confused).

As for the second test, it was a thirty- item idioms production test consisting of two tasks. For the first fifteen- item task, students were required to use suitable idioms in given situations with the help of keywords given as a clue. For the second fifteen- item task, students were asked to replace the underlined words in given sentences with idiomatic expressions that give nearly the same meanings using the given keywords. Results of the idioms production test were even poorer than the results of students' idiom comprehension test. Thus, results of both diagnostic tests conform with the findings of the studies conducted by Noor & Fallatah (2010), Zyzik (2011), Vasilijevic (2015), My & Loi (2020) and Zarie (2020) indicating that EFL learners need well-planned

instructional interventions to foster both their idioms comprehension and production.

Observing the teaching methods and techniques adopted by EFL university level instructors of first year Faculty of Mass Communication students at Modern Sciences and Arts University enabled the researcher to discover that:

(a) Idiomatic expressions were not contextualized in short stories, sentences or videos to enable these learners to make meaning of them.

(b) The REACT strategy with its five phases of relating, experiencing, applying, cooperating and transferring was not implemented to enhance those EFL learners' ability to naturally comprehend and use idiomatic expressions in authentic written and spoken discourses.

(c) Students were not asked to use idiomatic expressions to write short stories and tell them in a dramatized manner to foster their idioms production.

(d) Students were not asked to use English idioms to write dialogues and act them out in role plays or simulation tasks.

(e) Miming and improvisation were not used to enhance idiomatic expression recognition and production among those learners.

Problem of the study

The study problem was identified in Egyptian first year Faculty of Mass Communication students' poor ability to comprehend and produce idiomatic expressions. This might be partly due to the traditional teaching methods and techniques adopted where students were not encouraged to make meanings of and use idioms in authentic meaningful contexts. It might be, also, due to the overemphasis on developing the students' grammar, reading comprehension, academic and research writing skills at the expense of promoting their ability to interpret and produce idioms in authentic real-life situations or in their field of specialization. Therefore, the current study attempted to develop EFL idioms comprehension and production among Egyptian first year Faculty of Mass Communication students through the use of a proposed program based on integrating the REACT strategy of the Contextual Learning Approach and drama activities. In other words, this study attempted to provide answers to the following main question:

"How far can a proposed program integrating the REACT strategy and drama activities develop Faculty of Mass Communication students' EFL idioms comprehension and production?"

From this main question, the following sub-questions emerged:

1. What are the theoretical bases of a proposed program integrating the REACT strategy and drama activities for developing idioms comprehension and production among Egyptian first year EFL Faculty of Mass Communication students?

2. What are the components of a proposed program integrating the REACT strategy and drama activities to develop idioms comprehension and production among Egyptian first year EFL Faculty of Mass Communication students?

3. How far is the proposed program effective in developing Egyptian first year Faculty of Mass Communication students' overall comprehension and production of EFL idiomatic expressions?

4. How far is the proposed program effective in developing Egyptian first year Faculty of Mass Communication students' comprehension and production of the specified EFL idioms categories?

The study hypotheses

*The study hypotheses were as follows***:**

(a) Hypotheses comparing the experimental and control group mean scores on the post-tests:

1. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group- exposed to the proposed program integrating the REACT strategy of the Contextual Learning Approach and drama activities- and the control group receiving regular instruction on the post-test in overall idioms comprehension in favour of the experimental group.

2. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the post-test in comprehending the specified EFL idioms categories in favour of the experimental group.

3. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group receiving regular instruction on the post-test in overall idioms production in favour of the experimental group.

4. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the post-test in producing the specified EFL idioms categories in favour of the experimental group.

(b) Hypotheses comparing the experimental group mean scores before and after the treatment:

5. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and the post-test in overall EFL idioms comprehension in favour of the post-test.

6. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and the post-test in comprehending the specified EFL idioms categories in favour of the post-test.

7. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and the post-test in overall EFL idioms production in favour of the post-test.

8. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and the post-test in producing the specified EFL idioms categories in favour of the post- test.

Objectives of the study

The main purposes of the current study were:

1. Identifying appropriate techniques for designing a proposed program integrating the REACT strategy of the Contextual Learning Approach and drama activities for developing EFL idioms comprehension and production among Egyptian first year Faculty of Mass Communication students.

2. Constructing a proposed program based on the integration between the REACT strategy and drama activities to develop EFL idioms comprehension and production among Egyptian first year Faculty of Mass Communication students.

3. Measuring the effect of the proposed program on developing EFL idioms comprehension and production among Egyptian first year Faculty of Mass Communication students.

Delimitations of the study

This study was confined to:

1. two intact first year Faculty of Mass Communication classes at October Modern Sciences & Arts University in Giza governorate;

2. a specific duration for conducting the experiment (ten weeks of the fall 2021 semester);

3. eleven sessions for implementing the proposed program; and

4. developing only the experimental group students' comprehension and production of color, food, number, body parts, animal, nature,

plants, clothes, weather and house parts EFL idioms.

Definition of terms

The Contextual Learning Approach is a theoretical framework of language teaching and learning that is based on the constructivism theory and according to which students connect their prior knowledge to the newly acquired contextualized information and skills and then actively apply this new knowledge in meaningful real-life contexts (Crawford, 2001; Boroch et al., 2007; Perin, 2011; Özbay & Kayaoglu, 2015).

It is defined operationally in this study as the framework according to which the current study program is designed and implemented where the experimental group students are involved in varied activities to foster their comprehension and production of English idioms.

The REACT strategy is one of the systematic plans of the Contextual Learning Approach; it is based on the constructivism theory and was initially introduced by Crawford (2001) in the fields of science and mathematics and then adopted in the field of EFL teaching and learning. Following this systematic plan, EFL students go through the five phases of relating, experiencing, applying, cooperating and transferring to foster their acquisition of language skills and items (Rohayati, 2013; Hussien, 2017; Nawas, 2018; Okatfiani, 2021).

It is defined operationally in this study as the systematic plan according to which the current program sessions are designed and implemented where the experimental group students go through the phases of (a) relating English idioms to their previous knowledge and experiences, (b) experiencing contextualized English idioms in given short stories, example sentences and short educational videos, (c) applying the newly acquired idioms in writing short stories and telling them in a dramatized manner, (d) co-operating in varied exercises including miming, MCQs, matching, writing idioms meanings, filling in the blanks to get typical English idioms, replacing underlined words with idiomatic expressions that give nearly the same meanings as well as using suitable idioms in given situations and (e) transferring the newly acquired idioms to a new context of either role playing or simulation tasks to foster their comprehension and production of English idioms.

Drama activities are techniques that integrate the linguistic and paralinguistic aspects of communication in meaningful contexts to help EFL learners convey thoughts and emotions while naturally fostering their varied language skills and maintaining their motivation (Ong, 2011; Bellhag & Sopin, 2015; Lee, Patall, Cawthorn & Steingut, 2015; Uysal &Yavuz, 2018; Alsharidah & Alahmadi, 2020).

They are defined operationally in this study as the dramatized storytelling, miming, role playing, simulation and improvisation activities practised by the experimental group students throughout the current program implementation sessions to foster their comprehension and production of EFL fixed figurative language expressions.

Idioms are "fixed language expressions whose meanings are not discernable from the meaning of their component words alone."(Al Aghbari, Al Mahrooqi & Denman, 2016, p.2) In other words, an idiom is "a combination of two or more words which are usually structurally fixed and semantically opaque, and function as a single unit of meaning." (Chong & Huang, 2018, p.209).

They are defined operationally in this study as the color, food, number, body parts, animal, nature, plants, clothes, weather and house parts fixed non-literal expressions that naturally occur in given short stories, example sentences as well as short educational videos.

Idioms comprehension refers to EFL learners' ability to process, make meaning of and interpret the intended figurative meanings of fixed language expressions whose meanings cannot be made at the literal level. (Fotovatnia & Khaki, 2012; Hanafiyeh & Biria, 2014; Aydin, 2017; Fryen & Gross, 2017; Maisa, 2017; Samburskiy, 2020; Amos & Abas, 2021a)

It is defined operationally in this study as the experimental group students' ability to successfully make meaning of contextualized color, food, number, body parts, animal, nature, plants, clothes, weather and house parts fixed non-literal expressions.

Idioms production is the ability to adequately use fixed non-literal language expressions to convey messages, thoughts and emotions in varied communicative situations (Fotovatnia & Khaki, 2012; Hanafiyeh & Biria, 2014; Neissari, Ashraf & Ghorbani, 2017; Zarei, 2020).

It is defined operationally in this study as the experimental group students' ability to use color, food, number, body parts, animal, nature, plants, clothes, weather and house parts fixed non-literal expressions to speak their mind and convey thoughts as well as emotions in varied activities as well as in the communicative tasks of dramatized storytelling, role playing, simulation and improvisation.

Variables of the study

Independent variable: This refers to the treatment used in the study (the proposed program integrating the REACT strategy and drama activities that was implemented with the experimental group students).

Dependent variable: This refers to the experimental group students' performance in overall EFL idioms comprehension and production as well as in the comprehension and production of the specified ten EFL idioms categories.

Theoretical background

Definitions of idioms

Different scholars have given close definitions of idioms. Among them are Rohani, Ketabi & Tavakoli (2012, p.104) who define an idiom as "a multi-word expression whose components are fixed or semi-fixed and whose meaning is different from the sum of its parts." According to Thyab (2016, p. 107), idioms are "fixed expressions that are typically used in a figurative sense, and they have arbitrary meanings." Similarly, O'Dell & McCarthy (2017, p.6) define idioms as "fixed combinations of words whose meaning is often difficult to guess from the meaning of each individual word". As for Nordquist (2019, para.1), he defines an *idiom* as "a set expression of two or more words that mean something other than the literal meanings of its individual words."

Importance of idioms

Idioms are an important aspect of English vocabulary. According to Amos & Abas (2021b, p.1), "It is estimated that there are at least 25,000 idiomatic expressions in the English language." Idioms are "complex linguistic configurations" (Freyn & Gross, 2017, p.984) that are used in a wide variety of spoken and written discourses (Vasilijevic, 2015). In addition to their previously highlighted frequent use in mass media and every day conversations among native speakers, they are used in movies, songs and varied literary works (Fotovatnia & Khaki, 2012; Thyab, 2016; O'Dell & McCarthy, 2017; Xie, 2017; Zhenzhen, Akhter & Qureshi, 2020).

Idioms are a major way to express ideas in a vivid, colorful and brief manner (Noor & Fallatah, 2010; Vasilijevic, 2015; Nordquist, 2019; My & Loi, 2020). For example, instead of saying that someone is a lazy person who sits in front of the TV most of the day, speakers can simply say, 'He/ She is *a couch potato*.' Also, instead of referring to a certain problem as an obvious controversial problem that everyone is aware of but nobody wants to talk about, speakers can briefly say, 'It is *the elephant in the room*.' Thus, learning idioms enables students to speak and write better whether inside or outside the EFL classroom; it, also, enables EFL students to "understand native speakers easier" (Suhodolli, 2019a, p.509).

Acquiring idioms leads to EFL learners' increased levels of linguistic proficiency and communicative competence (Liu, 2008; De

Caro, 2009; Aljabri, 2013; Thyab, 2016; Maisa, 2017; My & Loi, 2020; Zhenzhen, Akhter & Qureshi, 2020; Badawi, 2021). Thus, as proven by Adam's (2015) study, acquiring English idioms significantly fostered Sudanese English majors' communicative competence. Also, in their study, Fray & McCandless (2020) found out the using American idioms fostered Ecuadorian EFL Faculty of Education students' speaking ability. Furthermore, acquiring idiomatic expressions helps EFL learners become more innovative and creative while using the target language to express their thoughts and feelings (Thyab, 2016).

Idioms & cultural diversity

Many of the idiomatic expressions manifest elements of cultural diversity. For example, the idiomatic expression *'to spill the beans'* goes back to the secret voting process in ancient Greece where white beans were placed in a jar to express support, and black ones to express opposition. Therefore, *"spilling the beans* meant disclosing a secret" (Vasiljevic, 2015, p.5). As for the idiomatic expression *'neck and neck'*, it was taken from the sport of horse racing in England to refer to a situation where there is severe competition that makes it difficult to decide who the winner is (Zhenzhen, Akhter & Qureshi, 2020). Moreover, the idioms *'to show someone the ropes'* and *'to learn the ropes'* (which respectively mean to teach and learn the necessary skills to perform a certain task) stem from the sailing context "where skilled sailors teach a beginner how to sail the boats by handling the ropes" (Zhenzhen, Akhter & Qureshi, 2020, p.286).

Interestingly enough, as idioms are examples of the metaphorical use of language, there are numerous examples where idiomatic expressions differ at the literal level but their intended meanings are the same at the non-literal level. For instance, the idiomatic expressions *'over the moon'*, *'on cloud nine'* and *'in seventh heaven'* are used to describe a person who is very happy. Also, the idiomatic expressions *'in a pickle'*, *'in deep water'*, *'up the tree'* and *'up the creek'* are all used to describe a person who is in trouble or facing some kind of difficulty. Furthermore, the idioms *'to hit the roof/ceiling'*, *'to see red'* and *'hot under the collar'* are used to describe a person who is angry. Besides, when a person is unable to make a certain decision, he or she is usually described as being *'on the fence'* or *'of two minds'*. Moreover, if a speaker or writer wants to describe something as being of high quality or offering the best service, the idiomatic expressions *'second to none'* and *'a perfect ten'* can be both used interchangeably as they have the same non-literal meaning. (Broukal, 1994; McCarthy & O'Dell, 2002; O'Dell & McCarthy, 2017).

Uses of idioms

Idiomatic expressions are widely used for multiple purposes. Among them are emphasizing a given idea, commenting on people's actions or character, commenting on given situations, making anecdotes more interesting and grabbing readers' attention (O'Dell & McCarthy, 2017). For example, the idiom *'sank like a stone'* emphasizes the failure idea indicated in the utterance, "Unfortunately, Emma's new project sank like a stone." Also, the idiom *'a lone wolf'* is used to comment on a person's character as being solitary, unsociable or very independent as in the sentence, "Peter is a lone wolf." Furthermore, the idiom *'back to square one'* is used to comment on a situation where people have to start over the process they began with no progress made as in the sentence "After long hours of negotiations, we are back to square one."

To make an anecdote more interesting, the idiom *'It never rains, but it pours.'* can be used by storytellers to indicate a series of bad events happening one after the other. Moreover, to attract readers' attention, idioms can be used in newspaper headlines and in advertising. Thus, the idiomatic expression *'at the eleventh hour'* in the newspaper headline *'Eleventh- hour agreement reached'* grabs readers' attention to the fact that the agreement was reached at the last minute. In addition, the advertisement that a given ship cruise offers passengers luxury *'beyond their wildest dreams'* is intended to grab their attention by indicating that this cruise will give them more enjoyment and comfort than they could ever imagine (O'Dell & McCarthy, 2017).

Idioms processing hypotheses & strategies

When it comes to English idioms processing, Cooper (1998) highlights three main hypotheses. These are 'the Literal First Hypothesis', 'the Simultaneous Processing Hypothesis' and 'the Direct Access Model'. The 'Literal First hypothesis' indicates that EFL learners usually start with the literal meaning of an idiom, and if it does not fit into the context, they consider its non-literal figurative meaning. As for the 'Simultaneous Processing Hypothesis', it is based on dealing with idioms as chunks; thus, idioms literal and figurative meanings interact at the same time resulting in the best meanings that fit into the contexts where these idioms are used. Coming to 'the Direct Access Model', it instantly considers the figurative meanings of idioms as the literal meanings of idioms are rarely correct.

In an attempt to identify EFL university level learners' processing strategies of unfamiliar idioms, several studies were conducted. Among

them were the studies of Ranong (2014), Rungsripattanaporn & Ranong (2018) and Jasim (2020). In her study, Ranong (2014) found out that highly proficient Thai EFL university level learners used contextual clues to make meaning of English idioms while less proficient students relied on the literal meanings of idioms constituents in an attempt to comprehend idioms figurative meanings. As for Rungsripattanaporn, & Ranong (2018), they found that the most frequently used idioms processing strategies among Thai EFL undergraduates were using background knowledge and analyzing the context where idioms were used. In his study, Jasim (2020) found that using contextual clues to process and interpret unfamiliar idioms was the most frequent strategy used by Iraqi English majors, and this was followed by the strategies of resorting to idioms literal meanings in an attempt to identify their figurative meanings, using learners' background knowledge and thinking of L1 idioms equivalents.

Idioms classifications

Classifying idiomatic expressions is an interesting area to different scholars. In addition to the previously highlighted classifications of idioms according to their levels of familiarity and transparency, McCarthy & O'Dell (2002, p.6) categorized English idioms into seven types according to their grammatical structure. These are composed of (1) a verb+ object/ complement (and/ or adverbial) as in *'to kill two birds with one stone'*, *'to have two left feet'*, *'to pass the buck'*, (2) a prepositional phrase as in *'out of the blue'*, *'in the red'* and *'in the blink of an eye'*, (3) a compound as in *'a bone of contention'*, *'well-to-do'*, (4) a simile as in *'as dry as a bone'*, *'as busy as a bee'* and *'like a fish out of water'*, (5) a binomial as in *'rough and ready'*, *'pros and cons'*, *'by and large'*, *'odds and ends'* and *'back and forth'*, (6) a trinomial as in *'cool, calm and collected'*, *'blood, sweat and tears'*, *'here, there and everywhere'* and *' hop, skip and jump'* and (7) a whole clause or sentence as in *'to cut a long story short'*, *'to give someone a free hand'*, *'The sky is the limit.'* and *'to drive someone down the garden path'*.

Idioms can be, also, classified according to theme or topic they talk about. Thus, there are idioms that talk about health, happiness, sadness, anger, money, work, human relationships, success, failure, power, social status, danger, problems as well as crime and punishment. Furthermore, idiomatic expressions can be classified according to the key words they include. Hence, there are colour, food, number, weather, clothes, body parts, house parts, animal, nature and plants idioms (Broukal, 1994; McCarthy & O'Dell, 2002; O'Dell & McCarthy, 2017). It is worth noting

that the current study adopted the idioms classification according to the key words they include due to its ease of categorizing idioms for achieving the purposes of the present study.

Idioms comprehension & production difficulties for ESL/ EFL learners

ESL/ EFL learners face varied difficulties when they attempt to make meaning of English idioms or use them in communicative situations. Even some highly proficient second language learners are either unable to use L2 idioms adequately or avoid using them completely in their informal spoken or written discourses (Liontas, 2002). Furthermore, the fact that most idiomatic expressions are fixed, unpredictable and many of them violate grammatical and logical rules adds to EFL learners' difficulties when they attempt to comprehend or use idioms to speak their mind (Colin, 2006; De Caro, 2009; Thyab, 2016). Such a difficulty was highlighted in the studies of Kriengphan (2017) and Orfan (2020). Thus, in his study, Kriengphan (2017) reached the conclusion that Thai EFL graduate learners faced considerable difficulties when they attempted to comprehend English idioms due to the lack of cultural background concerning English idioms, the insufficient contextual clues and the inadequate teaching methods and techniques implemented in their EFL classes. He, also, found that unfamiliar opaque idioms were the most difficult type to comprehend for Thai EFL adult learners. As for Orfan (2020), he found out that Afghan EFL undergraduates faced the difficulties of "lack of cultural knowledge behind idioms, lack of analogues for English idioms in their first language, and lack of context"(p.1) while understanding and learning these idioms. Therefore, he recommended that EFL instructors should exert more efforts to include idioms in their teaching activities to help their learners better comprehend and produce them in oral and written contexts.

As for Arab EFL learners, in addition to the aforementioned sources of difficulties, mother tongue interference can hinder their attempts to comprehend or produce English idioms (Mahmoud, 2002; Aldoubi, 2003; Noor & Fallatah, 2010; Thyab, 2016), and this often leads to "misunderstanding and miscommunication" (Noor & Fallatah, 2010, p.148). Such a considerable difficulty was highlighted in several studies including the studies of Al Aghbari, Al Mahrooqi & Denman (2016), Mousa (2017), Ali & Dawood (2019), Shajrawi & Smadi (2019), Al-Houti & Aldaihani (2020) and Jasim (2020). Thus, in their study, Al Aghbari, Al

Mahrooqi & Denman (2016) found out that Omani EFL university level "struggled to understand the meanings of idioms and that context alone is not sufficient as a cue for idiom recognition and interpretation." (p.1). Likewise, Mousa (2017) found out the Sudanese EFL university level students faced remarkable difficulties in their attempt to make meaning of English idioms due to their lack of English cultural background, the inadequate techniques adopted by some teachers to teach idioms in class and some students' attempt to resort to literal translation of idioms to interpret these idioms. He, also, found that the study participants better made meaning of idioms in context, and recommended conducting more research on the impact of context on idioms teaching and learning processes.

Ali & Dawood (2019) and Jasim (2020) found out that Iraqi third year English department students faced considerable difficulties while comprehending and producing English idioms. In addition, Shajrawi & Smadi (2019) found that Jordanian university level students majoring in applied English displayed limited idiomatic competence; therefore, they recommended that the contextualized teaching and learning of idioms should be adopted to help EFL university level learners become better able to comprehend and use English idioms in communicative situations. Moreover, Al-Houti & Aldaihani (2020) found that Kuwaiti EFL female students enrolled in the College of Basic Education had considerable difficulties in comprehending and producing English idioms; therefore, they called for the incorporation of effective instructional interventions in EFL educational programs to foster university level students' idiomatic knowledge.

Techniques fostering idioms acquisition among EFL learners

To enhance EFL idioms acquisition, De Caro (2009) recommends engaging EFL university level learners in dialogue writing activities and role plays. As for Vasiljevic (2015), he proposes encouraging students to use idioms in conversations as well as discussion questions; he, also, recommends that EFL learners should be trained in guessing the meanings of unfamiliar idioms using contextual clues. Moreover, he suggests that EFL students compare L1 and L2 idioms, make or tell stories using idiomatic expressions and play card-game activities where they match L1 idioms with L2 idioms in either their verbal or pictorial forms. He, also, postulates dramatizing idioms where EFL students work in teams to act out idioms using gestures as well as body movements and ask the opposing teams to guess the idioms that were acted out. In

addition, to overcome EFL Vietnamese learners' limited knowledge of English idioms, My & Loi (2020) recommended that these learners should be increasingly exposed to idioms in their educational programs and that both explicit and implicit idiom instruction strategies should be adopted to foster their ability to comprehend and use idioms in communicative situations.

On her turn, to foster Arab EFL learners' comprehension and use of idioms, Thyab (2016) recommends that instructors should teach frequently occurring idioms in the context of TV shows, radio programs, films, newspapers, magazines, songs and books. She, also, recommends the use of specialized idioms dictionaries, role plays and interactive activities to foster EFL students' acquisition of idiomatic expressions. Moreover, she suggests that EFL students should try to use these idioms in varied spoken discourses and become more acquainted with idioms historical as well as cultural origins to better remember and understand them.

Definitions of contextual learning

As contextualization is "an attempt to create a real environment based on learners' experiences or their real lives situation" (Rohayati, 2013; p.116), several scholars have given close definitions of contextual learning. Among them is Sears (2002) who defines contextual learning as an approach to learning that enables students to see the connection between knowledge and its application in real life situations. Thus, contextual learning can be, also, defined as an approach to learning where the target skill or area is presented in the context of a topic to be discussed, a story to be read or listened to, a problem to be solved, a video to be watched, a game to be played or an activity to be practised (Bilgin, Yŭrŭkel & Yiğit, 2017).

Benefits of contextual learning

Contextual learning has several benefits at the cognitive and affective levels. First, at the cognitive level, it activates EFL learners' prior knowledge as well as helps them explore and apply linguistic items in meaningful contexts through hands on experiences; it, also, enables EFL learners to transfer acquired knowledge and skills to a new context and enhances their information retention. Second, at the affective level, contextual learning is an effective approach that fosters EFL learners' intrinsic motivation and positive attitudes as they are actively involved in meaningful contexts and activities to foster their language acquisition (Crawford, 2001; Boroch et al., 2007; Hussien, 2017).

From a pedagogical point of view, contextual learning fosters EFL learners' increased self- regulation and sense of responsibility as they actively construct their own learning. In addition, it makes EFL learners more engaged as they apply the new knowledge in real- life situations or transfer it to a new interesting, communicative context (Perin, 2011).

Kusumayati's (2010) study revealed the positive impact of contextual teaching and learning on promoting Indonesian EFL third graders' vocabulary acquisition. Also, Sahara (2015) reported the significant growth in Indonesian EFL eighth graders' vocabulary as a result of contextual teaching and learning implementation. In addition, in his study, Moghaddas (2013) proved that contextualization significantly improved Iranian EFL intermediate level male and female learners' grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing. Likewise, Manangkari's (2018) study proved that contextual teaching and learning enhances Indonesian EFL seventh graders' acquisition of vocabulary and fosters their motivation. Also, Rambe (2018) found that the implementation of contextual teaching and learning activities significantly fostered Indonesian senior high school students' EFL speaking ability.

The REACT strategy of contextual learning and teaching

One way to implement contextual learning in the EFL classroom is through the REACT strategy. As highlighted earlier, this strategy was first introduced by Crawford (2001) and used in the fields of teaching science and mathematics as in the studies of Coştu (2009), Űltay, Durukan, & Űltay (2015) and Bilgin, Yǔrǔkel & Yiğit (2017). As the strategy proved its effectiveness in fostering students' knowledge and skills in the mathematical and scientific fields, a growing interest became more evident in applying this strategy to foster EFL learners' language skills.

The REACT strategy has five stages, and these are the relating, experiencing, applying, co-operating and transferring stages. To clarify, during the relating stage, EFL teachers help their students relate the new learning situation to their previous knowledge and real life experiences. As for the experiencing phase, it aims at helping learners go through hands on experiences to introduce them to new knowledge and skills in meaningful written or spoken contexts. After that, students apply the newly acquired knowledge and skills in varied activities and/ or problem-solving tasks. To foster the students' acquisition of the language skills and

items, they cooperate afterwards in group work where the linguistic items and skills are further practised as they share their opinions and learn together. Finally, students transfer the newly acquired skills, knowledge and linguistic items to a new context that further stresses their creativity, fosters their motivation and helps them see the connection between what they have learnt and real- life situations (Rohayati, 2013; Hussien, 2017; Nawas, 2018; Okatfiani, 2021)

As the students go through the five stages of the REACT strategy, they are involved in challenging fun activities that foster their EFL acquisition, motivation, engagement and active participation while the instructor functions as a guide and a facilitator who offers help only when needed (Rohayati, 2013; Hussien, 2017). It is worth mentioning that the REACT strategy was applied in developing a thematic textbook for Indonesian fourth grade elementary school pupils and a study by Susilawati, Gunarhadi & Hartono (2020) proved the high quality and appropriateness of this book.

Definitions of drama activities

These are "situational and instructional settings that allow learners to be themselves or someone else using their emotional content to understand and practice the language meaningfully" (Punsiri, 2011, p.6). They can, also, be defined as classroom techniques that naturally integrate language skills, foster students' creativity, participation, spontaneity, collaboration, self-confidence and autonomy (Kobayashi, 2012). Thus, they can be viewed as a collection of techniques that foster students' engagement with and involvement in the content they are attempting to learn (Ong, 2011; Lee, Patall, Cawthorn & Steingut, 2015; Uysal & Yavuz, 2018). During drama activities, EFL teachers encourage learners to take the risk and use their facial expressions, gestures as well as body movements to communicate their thoughts and feelings (Uysal & Yavuz, 2018).

Types of drama activities

There are varied types of drama activities. These include role plays, miming, improvisation, dramatized storytelling, simulation, skits, scriptwriting and reader's theatre (Punsiri, 2011; Dundar, 2013; Eskelinen, 2017; Alshraideh & Alahmadi, 2020; Barekat & Nazemi, 2020). Role plays are speaking activities where EFL learners either put themselves into someone else's shoes, or where they stay in their own shoes but put themselves in imaginary situations or contexts (Punsiri, 2011; Dundar, 2013). Thus, role plays help EFL students express their

emotions, communicate varied ideas and acquire a growing wealth of vocabulary. They create a safe engaging relaxed learning environment where students are creative and innovative (Magos & Politi, 2008, p.101-102). In addition, as highlighted by Kashiha & Heng (2013, p.1), "Role play has distinct advantages in promoting naturalness and creativity leading to fun in learning, which translates to better retention and recall of idiomatic expressions."

During miming, EFL learners are not allowed to speak. Thus, miming involves the use of paralinguistic features such as facial expressions, gestures and body movements to convey an idea, a concept, an attitude or an emotion. Therefore, EFL learners need to make sure that their non-verbal communication is as expressive as possible to help their classmates figure out the thoughts or feelings they wish to convey while miming (Punsiri, 2011; Dundar, 2013; Eskelinen, 2017; Alshraideh & Alahmadi, 2020; Barekat & Nazemi, 2020). One main advantage of miming is that it can involve students who are shy or who are not skilled enough at oral communication in the target language (Hillova, 2008).

Improvisation refers to EFL students' acting of a scene with minimal or no preparation. It is an unscripted spontaneous drama activity where EFL students are involved in given situations entailing their use of both linguistic and paralinguistic features to express varied thoughts and emotions (Zyoud, 2010; Chukueggu, 2012). Therefore, improvisation fosters EFL learners' self-confidence (Maples, 2007) as well as their pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar (Dundar, 2013). Furthermore, improvisation enhances EFL learners' speaking ability (Fauzan, 2014).

While dramatized storytelling refers to the act of narrating a series of events using varied voice tones, facial expressions, gestures and body movements (Zarei, 2020), simulation can be defined as the act of mimicking a real- life situation within a defined setting where students try to find out a solution to a specific problem. Thus, simulation is more like a case study where EFL students have specific roles and perform varied speech acts including expressing opinions, convincing others and arguing for or against a given idea (Chukueggu, 2012; Dundar, 2013; Uysal & Yavuz, 2018; Barekat & Nazemi, 2020).

Skits can be of varied lengths; they can range from acting out a single scene to acting out a whole play. Skits implementation fosters EFL learners' cooperation, motivation, engagement, creativity, communication skills and purposeful language practice. In addition, skits enable EFL

learners to become better acquainted with the cultural aspect of the target language in a relaxed atmosphere that reduces their anxiety (Dundar, 2013; Patmasari, 2020).

During script writing, students write down scenes and then act them out; they not only write the words uttered by participants in the scenes, but they also write other scene elements including the time and place of the scenes as well as the paralinguistic features employed by the scene participants. EFL learners' script writing can be carried out individually, in pairs or in groups. Script writing is an interesting activity that integrates language skills, develops EFL learners' grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, cultivates their imagination and enhances their creativity (Chukueggu, 2012; Dundar, 2013).

As for the reader's theatre activity, it is based on the idea that EFL learners start with reading a given story or text and then they transform it into a script. After that, they act out this script to an intended audience. By so doing, EFL learners' reading comprehension, fluency, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary are naturally developed (Drew & Pedersen, 2010; Dundar, 2013).

The role of drama activities in the EFL classroom

Drama activities, when adequately implemented, can foster EFL acquisition. As indicated by Baldwin & Fleming (2003), drama activities can enhance learners' literacy skills. They can foster EFL learners' writing ability (Cremin, Gouch, Blakemore, Goff & Macdonald, 2006). Furthermore, they can enhance vocabulary acquisition as highlighted by Demircioglu (2010) and proved in the study conducted by Alshraideh & Alahmadi (2020) in Saudi EFL prep stage classes.

Drama activities integrate EFL language skills in meaningful situations (Maley & Duff, 2001; Kobayashi, 2012; Kondal, 2016). In addition, they can promote EFL learners' engagement in classroom activities and enhance their comprehension skills (Nanda & Susanto, 2021). Furthermore, using drama activities in the EFL classroom fosters students' communicative competence and self-confidence (Park & Won, 2003; Chauhan, 2004; Desiatova, 2009). Drama activities foster EFL learners' self-esteem, imagination and motivation (Maley & Duff, 2001; Zahid & Rohi, 2019). Moreover, they accelerate and enrich the learning process (Robinson, 2015); they, also, enable EFL learners to creatively speak their mind and express their thoughts (Abraham, 2018).

Drama activities, also, offer EFL learners the chance to become more acquainted with the culture of native English speakers (Uysal &Yavuz, 2018; Zahid & Rohi, 2019). They are learner- centered activities that encourage EFL students' cooperation, familiarize them with

grammatical patterns and promote their critical thinking skills (Zahid & Rohi, 2019). In addition, drama creates a relaxed classroom atmosphere that lowers students' affective filter and maximizes their learning opportunities (Gorjian, Moosavinia & Jabripour, 2010). Therefore, it was proved in a study conducted by Punsiri (2011) that drama activities can reduce EFL Thai learners' anxiety. Drama activities offer EFL learners the chance of contextual learning and improves their interaction ability (Bellhag & Sopin, 2015; Uysal &Yavuz, 2018). In a study by Ahmed (2019), it was proved that drama activities developed Egyptian EFL secondary stage students' speaking skills and reduced their anxiety levels.

Related studies

This section is divided into four sub-sections. These are as follows:

I. **Studies highlighting varied interventions to foster EFL/ESL university level students' idioms comprehension and production**

Fotovatnia & Khaki (2012) compared the effectiveness of using pictures, definitions and L1 (Persian) translation on fostering Iranian TEFL majors' comprehension and production of twenty unfamiliar English idioms. The study, also, focused on the participants' acquisition of idioms form and meaning. Participants were sixty-eight students divided into three groups: the picture, the L1 (Persian) translation and the definition groups. Students in each group studied the twenty idioms in three sessions and revised them in the fourth session according to the specified methods they followed. The study tools included two multiple choice idioms comprehension tests and two fill in the blanks idioms production tests. In addition, delayed post-tests were administered in the following two sessions, starting with measuring idioms production and then assessing idioms recognition and comprehension. Results indicated that the picture group outperformed the translation and the definition groups whether in idioms comprehension or production posttests. Therefore, it was concluded that using pictures can facilitate EFL university level learners' comprehension and production of unfamiliar English idioms.

Hanafiyeh & Biria (2014) examined the effectiveness of corpus-based instruction in fostering Iranian EFL university level students' idioms comprehension and production. To achieve the study aim, a sample of sixty students majoring in English translation at Islamic Azad University was randomly assigned into a control group and an experimental group of thirty students each. While the control group students studied the idioms using a reference book titled '*Every Day*

Idioms for Reference and Practice' by Ronald E. Fear, the experimental group students studied the same idioms using the online British National Corpus. The study tools included a pre-post idioms comprehension test consisting of thirty multiple choice items and a pre-post idioms production test consisting of thirty fill in the blanks items. Analysis of the post-test results proved the positive impact of corpus- based instruction on fostering the experimental group students' idioms comprehension and production as compared to their control group counterparts.

Aydin (2017) conducted a study to investigate the impact of the mental imaging technique on Turkish third year English majors' comprehension of fifty idiomatic expressions. The study participants were 84 female students and 71 male students, and they were divided into three groups. The first group was taught the idioms and their dictionary definitions without any contextual support. The second group was taught these idioms as they were contextualized in sentences, and their definitions were, also, given to the students. As for the third group students, they were taught the same idioms according to the mental imaging technique; they were provided with images representing the literal meanings of these idioms accompanying these idioms definitions and contextualized use in sentences. Thus, the third group followed the Dual Coding Approach. Results indicated the positive impact of the mental imaging technique on participants' comprehension and recall of English idioms. It was concluded that the mental imaging technique created a link between idioms literal and figurative senses, thus facilitating their learning and recall among EFL university level learners.

Fryen & Gross (2017) explored the effect of teaching twenty idioms using a Multimodal Approach on idioms comprehension among EFL university level students in Ecuador. The study participants were eighty- one upper intermediate level students aged between eighteen to twenty-five years old and majoring in business, mechatronics, engineering, biology, diplomacy or tourism. They were divided into a control group and an experimental group. While the control group studied the selected twenty idioms according to the traditional method, the experimental group students studied the same idioms according to the Multimodal Approach. Thus, the experimental groups watched YouTube videos of idioms in movies and TV shows. They also watched comics about some of the study idioms, and were asked to make meaning of these idioms based on the audio-visual clues in these comics. They were then asked to individually produce digital collages to represent the meanings of chosen idioms. Afterwards, they were involved in multimodal projects as they worked in pairs or groups of three students to

create digital videos of role plays using selected English idioms. The study tool was a twenty- item multiple choice pre-/ post- idioms comprehension test. Results indicated the effectiveness of the Multimodal Teaching Approach in fostering idioms comprehension among the experimental group students as compared to their control group counterparts. Based on the study findings, it was recommended the EFL teachers should use more multimodal activities such as digital storytelling, hyperlinked texts, audio recordings, virtual gaming and writing wikis to foster idioms comprehension among university level students.

Maisa (2017) examined the impact of explicit instruction activities on fostering Indian undergraduate students' ability to comprehend English idioms. The study participants were one hundred and twenty students at Osmania University in Hyderabad, India. They were enrolled in three different colleges and were randomly assigned into an experimental and a control group of sixty students each. The experimental group students studied English idioms through explicit instruction that focused on contextualizing idioms, helping learners notice them and guess their meanings using contextual clues, matching idioms with their meanings, choosing the correct meanings of given idioms and writing the meanings of underlined idioms. As for the control group students, they received regular instruction that focused on grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension. The study tool was a pre-post idiomatic knowledge test that measured participants' ability to make meaning of idioms. The study intervention lasted for five weeks. Analysis of the post-test results revealed that the experimental group students scored significantly higher than the control group students, thus proving the positive impact of explicit instruction on fostering university level learners' comprehension of English idioms.

Neissari, Ashraf & Ghorbani (2017) investigated the effect of using humorous videos on Iranian EFL university level students' production of English idioms. The study followed the quasi-experimental pre-test/ posttest design. The study participants were EFL undergraduates attending general English programs at the University of Bojnord. They were randomly assigned into a control group of twenty- eight students and an experimental group of thirty- three students. While the experimental group students were taught English idioms using forty short humorous videos from the English series *'The Teacher'* published on the BBC Learning English website, students in the control group followed the regular method. The experiment was conducted during the fall

semester of the academic year 2015-2016. The study tools included a pre-post fill in the blanks idiom production test and a questionnaire. Results revealed that the experimental group students significantly outperformed the control group students in the idioms production test. Analysis of the questionnaire results proved that the experimental group students had positive attitudes towards the use of humorous videos to foster their productive knowledge of English idiomatic expressions. Therefore, it was recommended to use humorous videos to help EFL university level learners acquire idioms in an enjoyable fun classroom environment.

Samburskiy (2020) conducted a study to compare the effectiveness of employing the dual coding technique in facilitating idioms comprehension among EFL and ESL university level learners. The study sample consisted of fifty- seven EFL Russian learners studying in Russia and fifty-eight ESL learners studying in the USA. The study participants were either intermediate or advanced English language learners, and they were further divided into four groups according to their performance in an idiomatic competence assessment task. Thus, the low-level idiomatic competence groups consisted of 37 ESL learners and 42 EFL learners while the high-level idiomatic competence groups comprised 21 ESL learners and 15 EFL learners. Students in the four groups were presented with idioms and asked to interpret them in an idioms interpretation pre-test. Then, according to the dual coding technique, they were shown images combining aspects of the specified idioms literal and figurative meanings and asked to make meaning of these idioms in an idioms interpretation post-test. Results indicated the facilitative effect of the dual coding technique on fostering idioms comprehension among students in the four groups. However, it was found that low-level idiomatic competence groups were more likely to literally interpret idioms as compared to high-level idiomatic competence groups. It was concluded that the visualization aspect included in the dual coding technique helps both ESL and EFL university level learners figure out the non-literal meanings of English idioms.

Amos & Abas (2021a) examined the impact of the Multimodal Teaching Approach implementation on fostering idioms comprehension among Tanzanian third- year English majors at Zanzibar University. The study sample consisted of one hundred and twenty students who were randomly assigned into a control group and an experimental group of sixty students each. Participants' age ranged from twenty to thirty years old. While the control group students studied a list of twenty idioms according to the traditional method, the experimental group students practised varied multimodal activities to foster their comprehension of the

same idioms. The study tool consisted of a twenty multiple choice pre-post idioms comprehension test. Results proved the significant improvement in the experimental group students' comprehension of English idioms in comparison to the control group students' performance on the post-test. Therefore, it was recommended to use multimodal activities to enhance EFL university level students' comprehension of English idiomatic expressions.

II. <u>Studies exploring the impact of context on EFL university level students' idioms processing strategies & comprehension</u>

Rohani, Ketabi and Tavakoli (2012) conducted a study to investigate the role of context on Iranian EFL university level students' idioms processing strategies. To achieve the study purpose, an initial sample of ten intermediate level English majors was divided into two groups of five students each. While the first group watched an animated cartoon containing twenty-three unfamiliar idioms, the second group read the written script of that cartoon. Both groups attended a think- aloud session where they were asked to identify the strategies they used to process and make meaning of the unfamiliar idioms. Based on this session, a list of eight idiom processing strategies was prepared. Then, a larger sample of sixty intermediate level EFL students majoring in either English literature or translation was divided into two groups. The first group watched the animated cartoon *'Symphony in Slang'* and was asked to answer a questionnaire identifying the strategies used to identify the meanings of unknown idioms. As for the second group students, they read the cartoon script and highlighted the strategies they followed while attempting to make meaning of the same unknown idioms. Results revealed that students used different processing strategies according to the context where unfamiliar idioms were used. Thus, students who were exposed to unknown idioms in the context of an animated cartoon mainly resorted to the strategies of focusing on the animated picture, focusing on keywords and referring to the context On the other hand, students who read the script of the animated cartoon mainly applied the strategies of focusing on keywords, referring to the context where the idioms were used, referring to their background knowledge and visualization.

Hafsaoui & Boulassel (2014) examined the effect of contextualizing unfamiliar English idioms in tutorial videos on Algerian EFL English majors' comprehension of these idioms. To achieve the study target, a group of fifty- six second year English Department students at Jijel University were randomly assigned into a control group

and an experimental group of twenty-eight students each. While the experimental group students studied the English idioms in the context of educational videos for one month, the control group students were taught the same idioms by highlighting their definitions only. The study instruments included an idioms comprehension pre-test, an idioms comprehension post-test and an EFL instructors' questionnaire. Results proved that the experimental group students outperformed the control group students in the idioms comprehension post-test, thus indicating the effectiveness of tutorial videos in that respect. Also, analysis of EFL university level instructors' questionnaire highlighted their positive attitude towards using tutorial videos for contextualizing and teaching English idioms to their students.

Zaimi (2016) investigated the impact of teaching Algerian EFL first year English majors unfamiliar idioms in the context of authentic videos extracted from films, TV shows as well as TV series on their comprehension of these idioms. The study sample consisted of sixty students who were randomly assigned into an experimental group and a control group of thirty students each. While the experimental group students were exposed to unfamiliar English idioms in the context of videos, the control group students were taught the same idioms by highlighting their definitions only. Results of the idioms comprehension pre-posttest revealed the positive impact of contextualizing idioms in authentic videos on the experimental group students' post- test comprehension of English idioms. Therefore, it was concluded that contextualizing idioms in authentic videos enhances their comprehension among EFL university level students.

Chong & Huang (2018) examined the effect of linguistic contexts on fostering Chinese EFL Faculty of Engineering students' comprehension of English idioms. The study sample studied at Lanzhou City University and consisted of two groups comprising thirty students each. The first group included first year students while the third group included third year students. Both groups were exposed to 30 unfamiliar opaque idioms that were decontextualized first and then contextualized in sentences. First, they were asked to guess the non-literal meanings of given idioms without being offered any contextual clues. Then, they were given the same idioms contextualized in given sentences. In addition to the study two idioms comprehension tests, a questionnaire was administered to identify the students' perceptions of linguistic contexts role in facilitating their comprehension of idiomatic expressions. Results revealed that participants' comprehension rate of decontextualized idioms is less than 50%. Also, it was found that participants' comprehension of

non- literal idioms improved significantly when the linguistic contexts were offered. Therefore, it was concluded that idioms should be taught in context to significantly enhance EFL learners' ability to make meaning of them. In addition, it was recommended that EFL university level students should be trained in the use of contextual clues to foster their comprehension of opaque idioms.

Suhodolli (2019b) conducted a study to explore the role of context in facilitating idioms comprehension among Albanian English majors in Kosovo. The study participants were forty first year students and forty second year students. To achieve the study target, students in both groups took an idiom comprehension pre-test where they were asked to make meaning of decontextualized English idioms. Then, an idiom comprehension post-test- where idioms were contextualized- was administered on both groups. The study tools, also, included interviews, focus groups discussions and classroom observations. Results revealed that both first and second year English majors scored significantly higher on the idioms comprehension post-test, thus proving the facilitative impact of context during students' attempts to make making of unfamiliar idiomatic expressions. Therefore, it was concluded that effective EFL idioms instruction entails contextualizing them for EFL learners.

III. <u>Studies implementing the REACT strategy to develop varied EFL skills</u>

Rohayati (2013) investigated the impact of implementing the REACT strategy on Indonesian EFL fifth graders' vocabulary mastery. To achieve the study goals, sixty elementary school students were randomly assigned into two groups of thirty pupils each. While the experimental group students were taught EFL vocabulary according to the REACT strategy, the control group students followed the grammar translation method. Analysis of the students' performance on the vocabulary post-test proved that the experimental group students significantly outperformed the control group students in their vocabulary mastery test. Therefore, it was concluded that the REACT strategy of the Contextual Learning Approach was effective in fostering EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition. Based on the study findings, it was recommended that EFL teachers should choose suitable engaging contexts that are relevant to their students' lives to ensure their effectiveness in fostering EFL vocabulary acquisition.

Hussien (2017) conducted a study to examine the effect of using the REACT strategy of the Contextual Learning Approach on Egyptian first year secondary male students' grammar achievement and motivation.

The study, also, aimed at investigating the transfer of learning grammar through the REACT strategy on the participants' oral performance. Therefore, two intact groups from Ismail Al Kabany Secondray School for boys were randomly assigned into a control group and an experimental group. Each group had thirty-five students. While the experimental group studied the grammar lessons in the students' prescribed book according to the REACT strategy, the control group students followed the regular method to study the same grammar lessons. The study instruments were a grammar achievement test, a motivation questionnaire and a test measuring the students' oral performance. The study experiment was implemented during the first term of the academic year 2017- 2018. Results confirmed the positive effect of the REACT strategy on experimental group students' grammar achievement, motivation and oral performance. Therefore, it was recommended that EFL teachers should be trained in planning lessons according to the REACT strategy to foster their students' language skills.

Nawas (2018) explored the effectiveness of implementing the REACT strategy in fostering Indonesian EFL senior high school students' writing and critical thinking skills. The study sample consisted of forty students who were equally divided into a control group and an experimental group of twenty students each. While the control group practised critical thinking and writing skills according to the conventional method, the experimental group students practised these skills according to the REACT strategy. The study tool included a pre-posttest and a rubric. Results proved the effectiveness of the REACT strategy in promoting the experimental group students' writing and critical thinking skills as compared to their control group counterparts. Therefore, it was recommended that the REACT strategy should be adopted to develop students' critical thinking and writing skills. Moreover, it was recommended to conduct further studies examining the role of the REACT strategies in fostering students' other language skills.

Okatfiani (2021) conducted a classroom action research to explore the effect of employing the REACT strategy on fostering EFL speaking accuracy and fluency among Indonesian senior high school students. The study participants were thirty-six students, and they practised speaking activities through the REACT strategy implementation throughout the first term of the school year 2019/ 2020. Throughout the action research, students were involved in two cycles of planning, action, observation and reflection. The study tools included an observation checklist and a speaking test. Results proved the positive impact of the REACT strategy on fostering the participants' speaking fluency and accuracy. Therefore, it

was recommended that the REACT strategy should be adopted to enhance EFL learners' speaking proficiency among EFL senior high school students.

IV. Studies on the role of drama activities in enhancing EFL idioms acquisition

Despite the wide variety of drama activities, studies aiming at fostering EFL learners' idioms acquisition focusing mainly on investigating the impact of role plays and dramatized storytelling in that respect. These were as follows:

Kashiha & Heng (2013) investigated the effect of role plays on promoting idioms comprehension, recall and retention among Iranian EFL pre-intermediate level learners in a language institute. The study sample consisted of eighty male and female students aged between seventeen to twenty-five years old. Participants were divided into four groups according to their gender and the treatment they received. The first experimental group (male students only) and the second experimental group (female students only) were taught English idioms as they practised acting out role plays that contextualized eighty idioms. The first control group (male students only) and the second control group (female students only) learned the same idioms through definitions and memorization. The experiment lasted for one month. The study instruments included a placement test, a multiple choice idioms post-test and a translation test. Two weeks after the first administration of the posttest, it was administered again on the study participants. Results of the delayed posttest administration proved that both the experimental groups outperformed the control groups in idioms comprehension, recall and retention. Therefore, it was concluded that role plays were effective in fostering EFL male and female learners' idioms acquisition and retention.

Afshar & Esmaeili (2017) conducted a study to compare the impact of practising role plays and paragraph writing on fostering idioms knowledge and acquisition among Iranian EFL translation majors at Islamic Azad University. The study followed the quasi experimental method. Participants' age ranged from nineteen to twenty-five years old, and they were divided into three groups. The first experimental group practised using English idioms in role plays while the second experimental group practised using the same idioms in paragraph writing tasks. As for the control group students, they practised the specified idioms in matching and gap filling exercises. The experiment lasted for a whole semester. The study tools included an idiom pre-posttest, a

questionnaire, in-depth interviews and analysis of students' reflective writing samples. Results proved that the two experimental groups outperformed the control group on the idiom post-test. Moreover, it was found that practicing role plays had a more significant impact on participants' idioms knowledge and acquisition than using these idioms in paragraph writing tasks. Therefore, it was recommended to contextualize idioms in role plays to foster their acquisition among EFL university level learners.

Khonbi & Sadeghi (2017) compared the effect of role plays, contextualizing idioms in short movie clips, using idioms in sentences and providing idioms definitions on promoting Iranian EFL learners' idiomatic competence. The study followed the quasi-experimental pre-test/ posttest design. The study sample consisted of forty seven students aged between fifteen to twenty-two years old, and they were studying English at two language institutes. The sample comprised eighteen male and twenty-nine female EFL learners. The study focused on the acquisition of selected one-hundred idioms. To achieve the study aim, participants were divided into four groups. The first group included ten participants who studied the idioms as they were contextualized in short movie clips on YouTube. The second group consisted of fifteen participants who were instructed to use the same idioms in sentences. The third group included twelve students who were taught idioms through displaying their definitions on PowerPoint slides. As for the fourth group, it consisted of ten participants who were taught the specified idioms through role plays. The experiment lasted for one month. The study tool was a multiple choice pre-posttest comprising 45 items. Results proved that the mode of teaching English idioms significantly affected EFL learners' idiomatic competence. It was found that role play was the most effective technique for fostering learners' idioms acquisition. This was followed by contextualizing idioms in short movie clips and then came using idioms in sentences. The least effective technique was displaying idioms definitions on PowerPoint slides. Therefore, it was concluded that role plays attracted EFL learners' attention, aroused their interest and helped them better interpret idioms figurative meanings.

Hamidizade & Mohamadi-zenouzagh (2018) compared the effectiveness of storytelling and reconstructing texts on Iranian EFL intermediate level learners' comprehension of idiomatic expressions. The study participants were ninety students who were randomly assigned into three groups. The first experimental group students studied the idiomatic expressions in storytelling activities. The second experimental group students were offered texts contextualizing the same English idioms and

were asked to reconstruct these texts. As for the control group students, they followed the regular method of instruction. The study used a pre-post idioms comprehension test as its tool. Analysis of the idioms comprehension posttest results proved that both the experimental groups significantly outperformed the control group students. It was, also, found that the storytelling group achieved tangible improvement in their comprehension of EFL idiomatic expressions as compared to the text reconstruction group. Therefore, it was concluded that storytelling is an effective technique that enables EFL learners to better interpret the non-literal meanings of idiomatic expressions.

Zarei (2020) conducted a study to compare the effectiveness of dramatized storytelling, visualization, lexical awareness and game techniques in promoting Iranian EFL intermediate level female learners' idioms comprehension and production. The study focused on one hundred and fifty English idioms, and participants consisted of eighty students aged between eighteen to twenty-three years old. They were attending a conversational English course at a language institute, and they were randomly assigned into four groups of twenty students each. Each group received instruction in idioms comprehension and production via one of the four techniques: storytelling, visualization, lexical awareness and games. The storytelling group was told stories contextualizing idioms in a dramatized manner using gestures, facial expressions, miming and body movements by the instructor first, and then students were asked to retell the stories in four sub-groups. The visualization group was asked to guess the meanings of idioms contextualized in animation clips. The game group played Emoji games and word puzzles where students were asked to guess idioms using given pictures as well as solve word puzzles to find specified idioms. As for the lexical awareness group, students were explicitly taught the constituents of idiomatic expressions, and then they combined these constituents to make English idioms. The study tools included a one hundred and fifty item idiom pre-test, a thirty item multiple choice idioms comprehension posttest and a thirty item fill in the blanks idioms production posttest. Results revealed that the four techniques varied significantly in terms of their effectiveness in fostering participants' ability to comprehend and produce English idioms. It was found that dramatized storytelling was more effective than game and lexical awareness techniques in fostering participants' idioms comprehension and production. Also, it was found that visualization enhanced participants' idioms comprehension more than lexical awareness and game techniques did. Finally, it was concluded that lexical

awareness was more effective than games in promoting participants' idioms comprehension.

Methodology of the study

In conducting the current study, the researcher made use of both the Descriptive Method and the Quasi- experimental Method. The Descriptive Method was used while reviewing pertinent literature and specifying the techniques and activities to be used in the current program based on integrating the REACT strategy of the Contextual Learning Approach and drama activities to foster first year Faculty of Mass Communication students' EFL idioms comprehension and production. It was, also, employed while identifying the general design of the proposed program as well as the idioms comprehension and production tests. The Quasi- experimental Method was used while conducting the experiment, administering the tests, analyzing the data and interpreting the results.

The study participants

A group of sixty- four first year Faculty of Mass Communication students at October Modern Sciences and Arts University were randomly selected in the fall semester of the academic year 2021-2022 (thirty- two students in the experimental group and thirty- two students in the control group). Random assignment of individual students was not possible, so two intact classes were randomly selected and then randomly assigned to a control and an experimental group. Students' age in both groups ranged from eighteen to twenty years old.

The experimental group students were taught by the researcher throughout the implementation of the study experiment for two months and a half (three hours per week). However, while the experimental group received training through a proposed program based on the integration between the REACT strategy of the Contextual Learning Approach and drama activities for developing their EFL idioms comprehension and production, students in the control group received regular instruction by the regular classroom instructor; this regular instruction focused mainly on giving the students lists of categorized English idioms and their non-literal intended meanings.

A comparison between the control and the experimental groups on the pre- test was conducted using t-tests for independent samples to examine if there were any statistically significant differences between the two groups before implementing the proposed program. Results of these t-tests indicated that that there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups on the pre-test whether in overall English idioms comprehension and production or in their comprehension and production of the specified idioms categories. This means that the two groups were

approximately at the same level of idioms comprehension and production at the beginning of the experiment. It was, also, noticed that the mean scores of both groups were low on both tests.

Research design

The present study is mainly experimental. The quasi-experimental design called the non -equivalent group design was employed. This design is identical to the pretest- posttest control group/ experimental group design in all aspects except that intact groups rather than randomly assigned ones are used, thus creating a control problem in terms of selection bias. This makes the use of a pre-test essential for this particular research design.

Tools of the study

The present study made use of two main tools:

❖ A pre- /post- idioms comprehension test to measure the control and experimental group students' overall comprehension of English idioms as well as their comprehension of the specified idioms categories; and

❖ A pre-/ post- idioms production test to measure the control and experimental group students' overall production of English idioms as well as their production of the specified idioms categories.

These tools can be explained as follows:

A. The pre-/ post- idioms comprehension test

This test was constructed and administered on both the experimental and control groups by the researcher. It was used prior to the program implementation to assess the experimental and control group students' overall comprehension of English idioms as well as their comprehension of the specified idioms categories before starting the experiment. As a post-test, it was used to investigate the effect of the proposed program integrating the REACT strategy and drama activities on developing the experimental group students' overall comprehension of English idioms in addition to their comprehension of the specified idioms categories.

To measure the test content validity**,** the first version of the test was given to a panel of jury consisting of six TEFL professors, assistant professors and lecturers. They were asked to evaluate the test as a whole in terms of the number and the variety of the test questions and their suitability to the linguistic level of EFL first year Faculty of Mass Communication students.

The panel of jury highlighted the validity of the test as it measured what it was intended to measure in most cases. To enhance the test validity, they added, modified and omitted some of the test questions. One major remark highlighted by the panel of jury was to replace the idioms that can fall in two categories with other idioms that belong to one category only. Therefore, as the idiom *'the apple of one's eye'* can be classified as a food or a body part idiom, it was replaced by the idiomatic expression *'a hot potato'*, which is classified as a food idiom only. Also, as the idiom *'on cloud nine'* can be categorized as a number and a weather idiom, it was replaced by the idiom *'ten to one'*, which is a number idiom only.

The final form of the test consisted of sixty items that measured students' comprehension of 60 idioms. These sixty items equally assessed the students' comprehension of the ten specified idioms categories with six idioms for each category throughout the test. This test was divided into three main sections. Section (A) of the test included thirty multiple choice questions where the students were asked to read given sentences and select the appropriate figurative meanings of the underlined idioms in these sentences from the given three options. Section (B) included fifteen items where students were asked to match the underlined idioms in given sentences with their non-literal meanings. As for section (C), it consisted of fifteen items where the students were asked to read the given sentences carefully and write down the intended meanings of the underlined idioms in these sentences.

The time allocated for the test was one hour, including giving the students clear instructions on how to do the test. The test was marked by the researcher herself out of sixty as each test item carried one mark only. Zero was given to wrong or left or double answers. For the third section of the test, students' capitalization, spelling and grammatical errors were ignored as long as the students were able to give the correct figurative meanings of the underlined idioms in the given sentences.

● **Piloting the test**

Before administering the test on the study sample, it was piloted with the aim of timing it and determining its suitability. Therefore, twenty-five students were selected for the pilot study. These students were randomly selected from one EFL first year Faculty of Mass Communication classes at October Modern Sciences and Arts University. Results of the pilot study indicated that a period of one hour would provide the students with ample time to comfortably answer the test items. The pilot study, also, indicated that the test questions were suitable

for the students as they had no difficulty understanding them. Students of the pilot study were excluded from the whole experiment.

In order to establish the reliability of the idioms comprehension test designed for the current study, it was administered on a randomly selected group of twenty-five students. After two weeks, the test was administered one more time on the same twenty- five students. Then, the Pearson correlation coefficient between the test/ re-test results was calculated. The reliability coefficient was 0.82, which is relatively high. Therefore, the test could be considered a reliable one for the purpose of the present study.

B. The pre-/ post- idioms production test

This test was, also, constructed and administered on both the experimental and control groups by the researcher. It was used prior to the program implementation to assess the experimental and control group students' overall ability to produce English idioms as well as their ability to produce the specified idioms categories before starting the experiment. As a post-test, it was used to investigate the effect of the proposed program integrating the REACT strategy and drama activities on developing the experimental group students' overall production of English idioms in addition to their production of the selected idioms categories.

To measure the test content validity**,** the first version of the test was given to a panel of jury consisting of six TEFL professors, assistant professors and lecturers. They were asked to evaluate the test as a whole in terms of the number and the variety of the test questions and their suitability to the linguistic level of EFL first year Faculty of Mass Communication students.

The panel of jury indicated that test proved to be a valid one as it measured what it was intended to measure. To foster the test validity, they added, modified and omitted some of the test questions. Again, as in the idioms comprehension test, members of the panel of jury highlighted the need to replace the idioms that can fall in two categories with other idioms that belong to one category only. Therefore, as the idiom *'to have butterflies in one's stomach'* can be classified as an animal or a body part idiom, it was replaced by the idiomatic expression *'to work like a dog'*, which is classified as an animal idiom only. Also, as the idiom *'born with a silver spoon in one's mouth'* can be categorized as a colour and a body

part idiom, it was replaced by the idiom *'in the black'*, which is a colour idiom only.

The final form of the test consisted of sixty items that measured students' production of 60 idioms. The idioms used in the idioms production test were different from the idioms used in the idioms comprehension test, but they, also, equally assessed the students' production of the ten specified idioms categories with six idioms for each category throughout the test. This test was divided into three main sections of twenty items each. In section (A), students were asked to read the given sentences and replace the underlined words with idioms that give nearly the same meanings using the given words between brackets. In section (B), students were asked to read the given situations and then use the given keywords to produce idiomatic expressions expressing their thoughts and feelings in these situations. In section (C), students were requested to fill in the blanks to get typical English idioms with the help of italicized words offered as clues in each sentence.

The time allocated for the test was one hour and a half, including giving the students clear instructions on how to do the test. The test was marked by the researcher herself out of sixty as each test item carried one mark only. Zero was given to wrong or left answers. In addition, students' spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors were ignored as long as the students were able to produce the correct idioms with the help of the given clues.

● **Piloting the test**

Before administering the test on the study sample, it was piloted with the aim of timing it and determining its suitability. Therefore, twenty- five students were selected for the pilot study. These students were randomly selected from one EFL first year Faculty of Mass Communication classes at October Modern Sciences and Arts University. Results of the pilot study indicated that a period of one hour and a half would provide the students with ample time to comfortably answer the test items. The pilot study, also, indicated that the test questions were suitable for the students as they had no difficulty understanding them. Students of the pilot study were excluded from the whole experiment.

In order to establish the reliability of the idioms production test designed for the current study, it was administered on a randomly selected group of twenty-five students. After two weeks, the test was administered one more time on the same twenty-five students. Then, the

Pearson correlation coefficient between the test/ re-test results was calculated. The reliability coefficient was 0.80, which is relatively high. Therefore, the test could be considered a reliable one for the purpose of the current study.

Treatment

After the experimental group students completed their idioms comprehension and production pre- tests, they received the current study treatment through a proposed program integrating the REACT strategy of the Contextual Learning Approach and drama activities to develop their overall idioms comprehension and production abilities as well as their comprehension and production of the specified ten idioms categories. The following is a description of the steps the researcher went through to design this program.

Aim of the program

This program aimed at fostering EFL idioms comprehension and production among first year Faculty of Mass Communication students. This was achieved through involving the experimental group students in the classroom activities integrating the REACT strategy of the Contextual Learning Approach and drama techniques throughout the program implementation.

Assumptions of the program

This program was based on the following assumptions:

1. Idioms are expressions that consist of two or more words whose meanings cannot be figured out at the literal level; they are necessary for achieving native–like fluency and communicative competence. In addition, idiomatic expressions acquisition helps EFL learners better comprehend native speakers in real- life communicative situations.

2. Contextualizing idioms enhances EFL learners' ability to comprehend and produce them in authentic spoken and written discourses.

3. Application of the teaching strategies based on the Contextual Learning Approach activates EFL learners' prior knowledge and helps them see the connection between the newly learned information and real- life situations.

4. Implementation of the strategies based on The Contextual Learning Approach fosters EFL learners' motivation, self-regulation, participation and autonomy.

5. The REACT strategy is a main strategy of the Contextual Learning

Approach, and it helps EFL learners become more engaged in classroom activities. In addition, implementation of this strategy in EFL classes arouses learners' interest and fosters their language acquisition as they go through the relating, experiencing, applying, co-operating and transferring stages of the strategy.

6. While the relating phase of the REACT strategy helps EFL learners relate their previous experience and knowledge to the new learning situation, the experiencing phase enables them to get varied hands on experiences to promote their acquisition of language skills and items.

7. The applying stage of the REACT strategy helps EFL learners apply new knowledge and skills in varied activities such as storytelling and problem-solving tasks.

8. While the cooperating phase of the REACT strategy enables EFL learners to work together and share their points of view in given activities, the transferring phase helps them transfer the acquired knowledge and skills to a new context, thus fostering the students' creativity, motivation and classroom participation.

9. Drama activities such as miming, dramatized storytelling, role plays, simulation and improvisation enhance EFL acquisition while maintaining students' interest and engagement.

10. Drama activities foster students' imagination and creativity as they use the newly learned linguistic items to convey ideas and emotions in meaningful communicative situations.

Learning objectives of the program

By the end of this program, students were expected to develop their overall comprehension and production of English idioms as well as their comprehension and production of the specified ten idioms categories.

Content of the program

The content of this program consisted of ten short stories and ten short educational You Tube videos. In each short story, six to eight idioms belonging to a certain category were naturally contextualized to foster students' comprehension and production of these idioms. The stories were carefully selected by the researcher to suit the EFL first year Faculty of Mass Communication students' linguistic proficiency level. They were, also, selected after ensuring that their readability level is suitable for first year upper intermediate level university students. The readability scores of the ten short stories ranged from 9.0 to 9.9 according to Dale & Chall formula (1995).

While selecting the program short stories and videos, the researcher made sure that they would be motivating, engaging and appealing to the students. It was, also, important to check their appropriateness to the learners' cultural values and background. In each video, five to twelve idioms belonging to a given category were contextualized in sentences by native English speakers and their intended non-literal meanings were clearly explained. Duration of the videos did not exceed ten minutes so as to help learners benefit from the contextualized instruction of the idiomatic expressions without boring them or placing any unnecessary cognitive overload on them. The researcher made sure that the speakers' pronunciation in the selected videos was clear enough and their speech pace was moderate to help the learners acquire the English idioms and their figurative meanings in context. This can be further explained in the following tables:

Table (1)
Titles of the program short stories & their idiomatic expressions focus

Session No.	Title of the program short stories	Session Focus
1.	In the Red	Color idioms
2.	A Real Lemon	Food idioms
3.	Of Two Minds	Number idioms
4.	What a Group!	Body parts idioms
5.	Two Brothers	Animal idioms
6.	A Down-to-Earth Town	Nature idioms
7.	Undecided	Plants idioms
8.	In the Boss's Shoes	Clothes idioms
9.	A Breeze	Weather idioms
10.	Bringing down the House	House parts idioms

As indicated in table (1), the program short stories were varied to

keep the experimental group students motivated. They were carefully chosen to make sure that several examples of the specified idioms categories were naturally contextualized. These stories were read by the students during the experiencing phase of the REACT strategy to facilitate their use of contextual clues to interpret idioms non-literal meanings. Also, as the experimental group students noticed the use of the contextualized idioms in each story, they were able to identify how these idioms were naturally used to convey authors' emotions and feelings; this, in turn, helped them naturally produce idioms later on as they were asked to do a dramatized storytelling activity during the applying stage of the REACT strategy.

Table (2)
Titles and URLs of the YouTube videos watched throughout the program sessions

Session No.	Session Focus	Title of the You Tube video	Video URL
One	Color idioms	"Ten Colour Idioms in English with Meanings and Examples"	https://youtu.be/2qY8G1CDUs8
Two	Food idioms	"How to Use English Idioms- Food Idioms"	https://youtu.be/v3Kw51WO6ps
Three	Number idioms	"English Idioms with Numbers + Exercise"	https://youtu.be/4xvzUtuj-3E
Four	Body parts idioms	"Body Idioms: Improve your English Fluency with 10 Common Idioms Based on Body Parts!"	https://youtu.be/VMyw_oo5trQ
Five	Animal idioms	"Fun Animal Idioms to Improve Your English"	https://youtu.be/xaUrIX57C6o
Six	Nature idioms	"Nature Idioms & Expressions for Everyday Conversations"	https://youtu.be/Nl1tkEZxlbg
Seven	Plants idioms	"Let's learn English Idioms on the Farm: A Fun Way to Learn English Idioms"	https://youtu.be/qX9pr_mZGZ4
Eight	Clothes idioms	"Talking about Clothes in English: Idioms- Vocabulary Lesson"	https://youtu.be/9qOVTc9DFKE
Nine	Weather idioms	"10 English Weather Idioms and Expressions"	https://youtu.be/VvQBBgG5tYc
Ten	House parts idioms	"House and Home Idioms- Part 3"	https://youtu.be/Vdh2UGa38Ac

As shown in table (2), the above mentioned educational YouTube videos were watched and discussed by the experimental group students during the experiencing phase of each session. They helped these students naturally acquire and use contextualized English idioms related to each session focus. They, also, highlighted the figurative non-literal meanings of idiomatic expressions in a simple, clear language. This, in turn, facilitated the students' comprehension and acquisition of these idioms.

Idioms comprehension & production activities

Throughout the proposed program, the experimental group students were required to practise varied activities integrating the REACT strategy of the Contextual Learning Approach and drama activities to promote their EFL idioms comprehension and production. These activities were carried out individually, in pairs as well as in groups and then shared with the whole class.

Throughout the program sessions, students practiced discussing relevant pictures and short stories that were directly related to the idiomatic expressions focus of the program sessions. At first, during the relating phase of the REACT strategy, classroom discussions focused on relating the pictures introduced to the students' previous knowledge and expressions. Then, discussions during the experiencing phase focused on comprehending the ideas and content of the short stories read where idiomatic expressions were naturally contextualized. After that, special attention was paid to the figuring out the meanings of the idiomatic expressions in the short stories with the help of guiding questions. Later, students were involved in a hands-on activity where they were asked to read ten to eleven sentences where more contextualized idioms related to the sessions focus were introduced. As the students read these sentences they were asked to identify and match the given figurative meanings with the highlighted idiomatic expressions. They were, also, asked to identify in a table the contextual clues in each example sentence that helped them interpret the idioms non-literal intended meanings.

After that, during the experiencing phase, more idiomatic expressions were introduced in short educational YouTube videos. As students attentively watched these videos, they were asked to locate the idiomatic expressions related to the sessions focus that they had encountered earlier during reading the short stories or reading the example sentences. They were, also, asked to identify the newly introduced idiomatic expressions, their figurative meanings and example sentences based on the videos they watched. As the students went through the varied hands-on experiences of reading contextualized idioms in short

stories and example sentences as well as listening to contextualized idioms in short educational videos, they practised making meaning of English idioms and noticed their natural use in authentic contexts.

During the applying phase of the REACT strategy, students were asked to work in pairs to write short stories using at least three idiomatic expressions that were discussed earlier in the relating and experiencing phases. Then, they were asked to come to the front of the class and tell these stories in a dramatized manner using facial expressions, gestures, body movements and varying voice tones to convey their thoughts and ideas. This activity of writing short stories and telling them in a dramatized manner aimed at fostering students' acquisition and production of English idioms.

During the co-operating phase of the REACT strategy, students worked in groups of four and practised varied activities to foster their comprehension and production of English idioms. First, they were divided into eight groups, and a representative of each group was given a card where an idiom related to the session focus was written. This representative was asked to practise miming as he/ she acted out the figurative meaning of the idiom written on the card using facial expressions, body movements and gestures without uttering a single word, and the rest of the group members were asked to guess the idiom that was acted out. Then, to foster the students' comprehension of English idioms, students practised the activities of (a) answering MCQs requesting them to choose the most appropriate meanings of the underlined idioms in given sentences, (b) matching the underlined idioms in given sentences with their figurative meanings and (c) writing down the non-literal meanings of underlined idioms in given sentences.

To enhance students' production of English idioms during the co-operating phase of the REACT strategy, they practised the activities of (i) using suitable idioms to express their thoughts and feelings in given situations with the help of given key words, (ii) filling in the blanks with two or three words in given sentences to get typical English idioms with the help of the italicized words in each sentence offered as clues for them and (iii) replacing the underlined words in given sentences with idioms that give nearly the same meanings using given keywords. It is worth noting that students' cooperative work during this phase of the REACT strategy was intended to help them learn from each other and share their points of view in a motivating relaxed classroom atmosphere.

During the transferring phase of the REACT strategy, students were offered the chance to transfer their newly acquired idioms to a new context when they used them in role-playing activities or simulation tasks

according to the instructions given by their teacher. These role plays and simulation tasks aimed at fostering the students' production of English idioms in engaging real-life communicative situations.

Duration of the treatment

After designing the proposed program and its teaching strategy, it was presented to a panel of jury and modified according to their suggestions. Then, the researcher randomly selected twenty-five first year EFL Faculty of Mass Communication students and implemented two selected sessions with them. Based on this pilot study of the proposed program, it was indicated that the program content, activities, teaching strategy and instructional aids were appropriate for the students' linguistic proficiency level, age and background knowledge.

The pilot study students stated that they found the materials and activities of both sessions quite interesting and motivating. They liked the short stories they read as well as the educational videos they watched during the experiencing phase because they introduced idiomatic expressions in meaningful contexts. They enjoyed the dramatized storytelling, miming, role playing and simulation tasks, and they maintained that these activities were fun and creative. They found the short story and conversation writing tasks quite engaging and thought provoking. However, they stated that the exercises of (a) filling in the blanks with two or three words to get typical idioms and (b) replacing underlined words with idioms that give nearly the same meanings were sometimes challenging and demanding. They, also, liked the spontaneous improvisation task used for formatively assessing the students' ability to produce English idioms at the end of each session, and they maintained that this task fostered their self-confidence to use idioms to express their thoughts and emotions.

Through the pilot study, it was, also, evident that each session required 180 minutes (three hours) to enable the students to adequately carry out the session idioms comprehension and production activities. In addition to the introductory session- where students were introduced to the program objectives, materials and activities-, the implementation of the proposed program lasted for ten sessions of two months and a half during the fall semester of the 2021- 2022 academic year. The experimentation started on October 16th., 2021 and ended on January, 6th. 2022.

The proposed teaching strategy followed throughout the program sessions

The researcher followed a proposed teaching strategy throughout

the program implementation with the experimental group students. As highlighted earlier, this strategy was based on the integration between the REACT strategy of the Contextual Learning Approach and drama activities to foster the experimental group students' comprehension and production of English idioms.

According to this teaching strategy, each session was divided into five phases. *These phases were as follows:*
  I. **Relating phase**
  II. **Experiencing phase**
  III. **Applying phase**
  IV. **Co-operating phase**
  V. **Transferring phase**

These phases could be explained as follows:
  I. **Relating phase**

a. This phase aimed at relating English idioms to students' prior knowledge and real life experiences with the help of images and photos displayed on the data show.

b. For example, in session three where the focus was on number idioms, the teacher displayed an image of a happy smiling young lady on the data show and asked the students, **"**When was the last time you felt really happy? What happened at that time and made you feel happy? Do you know any number idiom to describe your happiness?" As the students started answering the teacher's questions, some students said that they felt really happy when they passed their final exams last year while others stated that the last time they felt really happy was when they went out with their friends on a picnic. When asked about an idiom that can be used to describe people who are happy, one student highlighted the idiom, *'on cloud nine'*, and said it is used in a context like, "After winning the Noble Prize in medicine, he must be *on cloud nine*."

c. Also, in session five where the focus was on animal idioms, the teacher displayed an image of a young man eating a huge burger sandwich on the data show and asked the students, **"**As you look at this photo, tell me if you eat a lot or if you try to adopt a healthy life style. What usually happens to people when they consume too much food? Do you know any animal idiom that is used to describe people who eat a lot?" As the students started answering the teacher's questions, most of them said that they ate a lot only when

they were hungry or when they were served a delicious meal; they, also, said that they tried hard to adopt a healthy life style as people who eat a lot soon suffer from heart problems, diabetes, hypertension and obesity. Some students sated that they liked to eat a lot; they simply could not control themselves if they were offered some chocolate, pizza or pastry. When asked about an idiom that can be used to describe people who eat a lot, one student mentioned the idiomatic expression *'to eat like a horse'*, and stated that it is used in a context like, "John simply cannot remain in shape as long as he is *eating like a horse*".

d. After relating the specified idioms category to the students' prior knowledge and previous experiences at the beginning of each session, the teacher told that students that they would explore more idioms that are related to the session focus in varied contexts as they (a) read a short story, (b) watched a short educational video and (c) read example sentences where idioms were used.

II. Experiencing phase

a. This phase aimed at helping the students identify and notice varied contextualized idioms related to the sessions focus. It, also, aimed at fostering the students' comprehension of these idioms as they experienced examining their contextualized use in given short stories, sentences and YouTube educational videos.

b. For example, in session one where the focus was on color idioms, students were first asked to read carefully and silently a short story titled *'In the Red'.* Before reading the story, students were asked to predict from the title *'In the Red'* what the story would be about. Some students guessed that it would be about love as red is the colour of love. Other students predicted that it would be about anger and its consequences. Few students predicted that it would be about fashion and wearing red clothes. Afterwards, the teacher asked the students to look at the given pictures to help them get a better clue of the story main ideas before silently reading it. After examining the photos that were displayed one by one on the data show, some students predicted that the story was about a woman who lost her purse and needed to go to the bank to get some money. Other students guessed that it would be about a

letter sent by the bank clerks discussing matters related to that woman's account. As the teacher listened to the students' predictions, she maintained that students would come to know whether their predictions were right or wrong after reading the short story.

c. Then, students were asked to read aloud and preview the given comprehension questions for two minutes and try to find answers to them as they read the story silently for five minutes. These comprehension questions aimed at ensuring the students' comprehension of the story main idea and specific details before they started examining the contextualized idioms in the short story.

d. Thus, in session one, as the students read the story, they realized that the prediction that it would be about a letter sent by a bank discussing matters related to the woman's account was confirmed.

e. Students were asked to discuss their answers to the story comprehension questions in pairs for five minutes before discussing them with the whole class.

f. After the teacher ensured the students' comprehension of the given stories, she asked them to go back to the texts, circle the idiomatic expressions used in the stories, and try to figure out their meanings with the help of given guiding questions. For instance, in session two, the food idioms comprehension guiding questions included the following:

- If something is *'a piece of cake'*, will it be easy or hard to do? Name some activities that are a piece of cake for you to do.
- When someone *'goes bananas'*, what happens to that person?
- If someone sells you a dress or a shirt *'for peanuts'*, is it expensive or cheap?

g. After that, students were asked to check their answers to the idioms comprehension guiding questions in pairs first. In case of doubt or confusion, they were encouraged to use the available printed versions of *Longman Idioms Dictionary* as well as *Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* or their online versions with the help of their smartphones. They were guided to look up the meanings of unknown idioms to make sure that their answers to the idioms

comprehension questions were correct before sharing them with the rest of the class.

h. Thus, in session two, as the students discussed the answers to the above questions with the rest of the class, they agreed that:
- *'a piece of cake'* means **'**something that is very easy to do**',**
- *'to go bananas'* means 'to become irrational or crazy' and
- *'for peanuts'* means **'** for a very small amount of money'.

i. Then, to explore more contextualized idioms, students were asked to read ten or eleven example sentences. As each example sentence had a different idiom, students were asked to individually try for five minutes to figure out the meanings of the underlined idioms using the available contextual clues.

j. After that, students were asked to work in competing groups of three to four students, read carefully the given idioms definitions and write each of the highlighted idioms in the example sentences next to its meaning. The time limit of this speed competition was five minutes. The winning group was the fastest group to give all the correct answers.

k. Then, correct answers to the exercise were discussed by the teacher with the whole class highlighting the contextual clues in each example that helped the students figure out the meanings of the underlined idioms. These answers and clues were displayed in a table on the data show.

l. For the sake of enhancing students' comprehension of more contextualized idioms as well as recycling some newly learned idioms, students were asked to watch YouTube educational videos where idioms belonging to the specified categories were contextualized and their figurative meanings were explained by native English speakers.

m. Before watching the videos, students were instructed to watch them carefully. They were told that some of these idioms were encountered earlier in the stories they read and the sentences they discussed in the previous activity while some more idioms would be new to them. Therefore, they were asked to work in pairs and distinguish between them as they wrote them down in the following table:

Previously Encountered Idioms	Newly Introduced Idioms

n. Then, students were, also, asked to pay special attention to the video newly introduced idioms as they filled in the following table with their meanings and example sentences:

Newly Introduced Idioms	Meanings	Example Sentences

o. As the students watched the videos, they worked in pairs and filled in the above two tables. Then, they discussed the videos newly introduced idioms with their teacher and the rest of the class to make sure that they were able to comprehend the non-literal meanings of these idioms.

p. Thus in session five where the focus was on animal idioms, as a result of this classroom discussion, the final form of the two filled in tables was as follows:

Previously Encountered Animal Idioms	Newly Introduced Animal Idioms
' a busy bee ', 'hold your horses, 'to quit something cold turkey', 'the elephant in the room' , 'pig-headed' and *'get your ducks in a row'*	*'open a can of worms', 'wild goose chase', ' one-trick pony'* and *'to weasel out of something'*

Newly Introduced Animal idiom	Meaning	Example Sentence
1. 'Open a can of worms'	To create trouble or cause a situation that is unpleasant	I told her I did not like her outfit, and that really <u>opened up a can of worms</u>.
2. 'Wild goose search'	A long and chaotic search for something that is difficult to find often because it does not exist	We went on a <u>wild goose chase</u> to find the new iPhone.
3. 'One-trick pony'	Someone or something that has only one talent or only one area of expertise	He can shoot the basketball, but he cannot do anything else. He is a <u>one-trick pony</u>.
4. 'To weasel out of somethin	To avoid doing something by being dishonest or tricky or by persuading someone in a clever	Whenever I asked him if he did his homework, he tried <u>to weasel out of</u> answering my question.

g'	way	

III. Applying Phase

a. This phase aimed at helping the students produce the idioms they encountered earlier in the relating and experiencing phases in an authentic communicative context. Therefore, they were asked to individually write down short stories using at least three idioms that were encountered in each session. They were given a time limit of fifteen minutes to do the story writing task.

b. Then, randomly selected five students were asked to come and tell their stories to the rest of the class in a dramatized manner. While students told their stories, they were required to use varying voice tones, facial expressions, gestures and body movements to better convey their thoughts and emotions to the rest of the students who listened attentively and wrote down the idioms used by the story tellers.

c. For example, in session one, students were asked to use color idioms to write and dramatically tell short stories about happy, sad or embarrassing situations that happened to them lately. In session three, students used number idioms to write and dramatically tell short stories about married couples who faced some difficulties but succeeded to overcome them using number idioms. In session five, students used animal idioms to write and dramatically tell short stories about a time when they either quit something cold turkey, weaseled out of something or went on a wild goose chase. In session seven, students used plant idioms to write down and dramatically tell short stories about a time when they went shopping and went back home really bushed. In session nine, students used weather idioms to write down and dramatically tell short stories about people whom they considered close friends but later discovered that these people were fair- weather friends.

IV. Cooperating phase

a. This phase aimed at enhancing the experimental group students' comprehension and production of the previously encountered contextualized idioms as they cooperatively did varied activities in groups of four students. Each group was required to nominate a leader, a writer or a recorder, a time keeper and a reporter.

b. Thus, to foster the students' comprehension of the newly acquired idioms, the teacher asked the students to work together in groups as they practised miming, answered MCQs, matched underlined idioms in given sentences with their figurative meanings and wrote down the meanings of underlined idioms in given sentences.

c. During miming, the class was divided into eight groups of four students each. Every group was asked to choose a representative who was given a card. On each card, there was a certain idiom related to the session focus. The representative was requested to use gestures, body movements and facial expressions to help the group members identify the idiom; he/ she was not allowed to speak a single word while miming. Also, he/ she was told to act out the idioms figurative meanings to help his/ her classmates make meaning of them. The rest of the group were required to focus on the representative's gestures, body movements and facial expressions and try hard to comprehend as well as recognize the idiom that was acted out. In each group, the student who was able to identify the idiom first was announced as the winner and received the group members' applause.

d. Thus, in session four where the focus was on body parts idioms, the eight body part idioms used for this miming activity were *'I'm in over my head'*, *'have an eye for something'*, *'Break a leg!'*, *'nosey'*, *' a big mouth'*, *'let your hair down'*, *'to foot the bill'* and *'to shoulder the blame'*. In session eight where the focus was on clothes idioms, the eight clothes idioms used for this drama activity were *'dressed up to the nines'*, *'a feather in one's cap'*, *'to be tied to someone's apron'*, *'to live on a shoestring'*, *'to keep something up your sleeve'*, *'to talk through someone's hat'*, *'to step in someone's shoes'* and *'to give someone the boot'*.

e. During MCQs, students were asked to choose the most appropriate meanings of the underlined idioms in given sentences from either (a), (b) or (c).

f. During matching exercises, students were asked to read the given sentences and match the underlined idiom in each sentence in column (A) with its intended non-literal meaning in column (B).

g. As the students did the idioms meanings writing exercise, they were asked to read the given sentences carefully. Then, they were required to write down the meanings of the underlined idioms in the spaces given below.

h. Then, to foster the students' production and use of the newly acquired idioms, they were required to work together in groups of four as they read given situations and used given key words to produce suitable idioms that express their thoughts or feelings in each of the given situations. In addition, they were asked to fill in the blanks in given sentences using two or three words to get typical English idioms with the help of the italicized words offered as clues for them in each sentence. Furthermore, they were requested to replace the underlined words in each of the given sentences with English idioms that give nearly the same meanings using the given key words between brackets.

V. Transferring phase

a. This phase aimed at transferring the newly acquired idioms throughout the current program sessions into a new context. This target was achieved in each session as the experimental group students used these idioms in authentic communicative situations as they did the drama activity of either simulation or role playing.

b. As an example of a simulation task, in session three on number idioms, students were asked to work in groups of three students to resolve a real life problem within a defined setting. They were asked to put themselves in the shoes of a husband and a wife whose used car broke down frequently, caused them a lot of trouble and, therefore, they decided to buy a new car. Hence, they went to a nearby famous car agency to buy a brand new car; however, they found it quite difficult to decide which car brand was the best to suit their needs and budget. Therefore, the salesperson was trying to help them find the best choice for them within their budget. Students were asked to write down the simulation task conversation between the husband, wife and salesperson using at least three number idioms and act it out in front of the class. The conversation writing task duration was ten minutes. After groups of students finished writing down their

simulation task conversations, they were invited to act them out in front of the whole class.

    c. As an example of a role play, in session seven where the focus was on plants idioms, students were asked to work in pairs and write down a dialogue between a site engineer and a lazy worker who is causing a lot of trouble using at least three newly learned plants idioms and act these dialogues out in front of the class*.* The dialogue writing task duration was ten minutes. After pairs of students finished writing down their dialogues, they were invited to act them out in front of the whole class.

    d. In each session, five randomly selected pairs or groups- according to requirements of the simulation tasks or role plays in the program sessions- came to the front of the class and acted out their simulation tasks conversations or role plays. The pair or group that acted out their created dialogues or conversations the best- through using expressive facial expressions, gestures and body movements well and varying voice tones to convey their thoughts and feelings effectively to the audience- received the class applause and was announced to be the winning pair or group.

Instructional aids and equipment

The following aids were used during the implementation of the current program sessions:

1. The images used in the relating phase to relate the specified English idioms to the students' prior knowledge and real life experiences;
2. The images and short stories used in the experiencing stage to introduce the students to contextualized English idioms and help the students make meaning of them;
3. The YouTube short educational videos used in the experiencing stage to recycle the previously encountered idioms and introduce some more contextualized idioms, thus helping the students recognize their meanings;
4. The task sheets where students were asked to figure out the meanings of idioms in given sentences and identify the helping contextual clues during the experiencing stage;
5. The printed and online versions of *Longman Idioms Dictionary* as well as *Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* used by learners to look up the meanings of some unknown English idioms in given

short stories;

6. The task sheets including the short stories writing task during the applying stage;

7. The handouts including varied exercises focusing on fostering the students' comprehension and production of the specified English idioms during the co-operating phase;

8. The task sheets including the dialogues or conversations writing tasks to be acted out in role plays or simulation tasks during the transferring stage;

9. The task sheets including the varied activities used to formatively assess the students' comprehension and production of the newly acquired idioms at the end of each session; and

10. The data show used to display the sessions videos, short stories, images and varied exercises.

Evaluation

Formative evaluation took place throughout the proposed program implementation sessions as follows:

I. ***To formatively assess the students' comprehension of English idioms at the end of each session,*** they were asked to work in groups of four or five and answer each of the given ten idioms comprehension questions with either yes or no. Then, they were requested to explain their answers by giving evidence to support them. Examples of the idioms comprehension questions given for formative assessment during session four on body parts idioms included:

a. Anna and Alex are always fighting over life expenses. Do they *see eye to eye*?

b. Eman likes to eat pickles, olives and salty spicy food. Does she have *a sweet tooth*?

c. Parking cars in the city center is becoming incredibly difficult; there are no parking lots, and it takes more than half an hour to find a spot to park your car. Is parking cars in the city center *a pain in the neck*?

d. I got this beautiful shirt for fifty pounds only. Did it *cost me an arm and a leg*?

e. Tony thinks that Mary is the most beautiful young lady. He is always thinking about her, and he admires her a lot. Is he *head over heels in love*?

II. ***To formatively assess the students' production of English idioms,*** first, students were asked either to fill in the blanks with two or three words in given sentences to get typical English idioms with the help of the italicized words offered as clues for them or to replace the underlined words in given sentences with idioms that give nearly the same meanings using the given keywords between brackets. Then, they were asked to do a spontaneous improvisation activity according to which each student was given a flash card where a certain idiom and a given situation were written. Then, each student was asked to improvise a short talk in front of the class where he/ she would use the given idiom to convey thoughts and feelings in the given situation. Students were given one minute only to prepare themselves. Then, randomly selected students came and improvised their short talk in front of the class who listened attentively to their classmates' spontaneous improvised speech. For example, at the end of session eight on clothes idioms, some of the flash cards given to students for this spontaneous improvisation task included:

Flash Card No.	Given Idiom	Given Situation
Flash Card 1	*'to pull your socks up'*	You are the company manager and in the monthly meeting you order your staff members to try to work harder next month.
Flash Card 2	*'to give you the shirt off his /her back'*	You would like to describe your cousin who is so generous and is always helping poor people.
Flash Card 3	*'to have ants in your pants'*	You want to describe your younger brother who seems restless and cannot sit still as he is waiting for the final exam results to be publicly announced.
Flash Card 4	*'to take your hat off to someone'*	You would like to say that you admire the honest hotel worker who found a bag of two million dollars and gave it back to its owner.
Flash Card 5	*'to air your dirty linen in public'*	You blame your spouse for discussing your private problems in front of others.

At the end of the treatment, summative evaluation took place when the experimental group students took the idioms comprehension and production tests. The aim of this summative evaluation was to measure

the effect of the proposed program on developing the experimental group students' overall comprehension and production of English idioms. It, also, aimed at identifying the effect of the proposed program on fostering the experimental group students' ability to comprehend and produce the specified ten idioms categories as compared to their pre-test performance and as compared to the post-test performance of the control group students.

Statistical analysis of test results

After the pre-/ post-administration of the idioms comprehension and production tests on both the control and experimental group students, the researcher used independent as well as paired- samples t-tests in order to examine the validity of the study eight hypotheses. Moreover, to measure the effect of the proposed program on promoting the experimental group students' idioms comprehension and production, its effect size values were calculated according to Dunlap's (1994) formula.

Results

Results related to the study hypotheses were as follows:

Hypothesis One: There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group exposed to the proposed program integrating the REACT strategy of the Contextual Learning Approach and drama activities and the control group receiving regular instruction on the post-test in overall idioms comprehension in favour of the experimental group.

To determine the relative extent of change fostered by the implementation of the proposed program for the experimental group as compared to the control group performance on the idiom comprehension post- test, an independent sample t-test was used. See table (3).

Table (3)
T-test results comparing the post-test means for the experimental and control groups in overall idioms comprehension

Group	N	M	S.D.	D.F.	t value	Significance Level	Effect Size
Experimental	32	46.13	2.27	62	40.94	Significant at 0.01 Level	10.40
Control	32	25.31	1.77				Large

Table (3) indicates that there was a statistically significant difference at 0.01 level in overall English idioms comprehension between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on the post-test in favor of the experimental group since the estimated t- value was (40.94). Thus, it can be safely said that the t-test result proved to be statistically consistent with the hypothesis. Therefore, the first hypothesis was

confirmed. In addition, the calculated effect size value (10.40) indicated that the program had a large effect on the experimental group students' overall idioms comprehension as compared to the control group students' overall idioms comprehension on the post-test.

The following figure illustrates the experimental group students' significant growth in overall idioms comprehension after the proposed program application as compared to the control group students' overall idioms comprehension on the post- test:
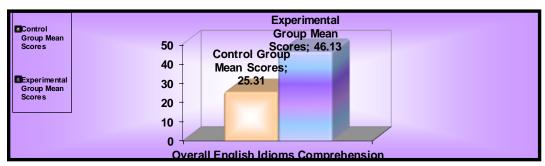

Figure (1)

Comparison of the experimental and control groups overall idioms comprehension means on the post-test

Hypothesis Two: There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the post-test in comprehending the specified EFL idioms categories in favour of the experimental group.

In order to verify the validity of the second hypothesis, independent samples t- tests were used. The t-test results proved that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on the post-test in comprehending the specified EFL idioms categories in favour of the experimental group. In other words, results of the t-tests proved to be statistically consistent with the stated hypothesis. Therefore, the second hypothesis was confirmed.

The following table shows this statistical significance at 0.01 level. In addition, the calculated effect size values proved that the proposed program had a large effect on the experimental group students' comprehension of the specified categories of EFL idiomatic expressions as compared to their counterparts of the control group students.

It should be, also, noted that the proposed program had large effect size values of (3.67), (3.22), (4.22), (2.93), (3.81), (4.76), (2.45), (2.54), (3.55) and (3.69) on the experimental group students' comprehension of color, food, number, body parts, animal, nature, plants, clothes, weather and house parts idioms respectively. This, in turn, proves that activities

based on the integration between the REACT strategy and drama activities can significantly foster EFL Faculty of Mass Communication students' ability to make meaning of English idiomatic expressions. Moreover, it should be highlighted that the aforementioned effect size values revealed that the implemented program had its largest effect on the experimental group students' comprehension of nature idioms, and then comes in a descending order its large effect on their ability to comprehend number, house parts, animal, color, weather, food, body parts, clothes and plants idioms.

Table (4)
T-test results comparing the experimental and control group students' post-test means in comprehending the specified English idioms categories

English idioms categories	Group	N	M	S.D.	D.F.	t value	Significance Level	Effect Size
Color Idioms	Experimental	32	4.97	0.78	62	14.45	Significant at 0.01 Level	3.67
	Control	32	2.50	0.57				Large
Food Idioms	Experimental	32	4.47	0.51	62	12.68	Significant at 0.01 Level	3.22
	Control	32	2.59	0.67				Large
Number Idioms	Experimental	32	4.63	0.61	62	16.61	Significant at 0.01 Level	4.22
	Control	32	2.34	0.84				Large
Body Parts Idioms	Experimental	32	4.63	0.75	62	11.52	Significant at 0.01 Level	2.93
	Control	32	2.84	0.45				Large
Animal Idioms	Experimental	32	4.38	0.49	62	15.00	Significant at 0.01 Level	3.81
	Control	32	2.50	0.51				Large
Nature Idioms	Experimental	32	4.63	0.49	62	18.73	Significant at 0.01 Level	4.76
	Control	32	2.34	0.48				Large
Plants Idioms	Experimental	32	4.50	1.05	62	9.65	Significant at 0.01 Level	2.45
	Control	32	2.47	0.57				Large
Clothes Idioms	Experimental	32	4.56	0.91	62	9.98	Significant at 0.01 Level	2.54
	Control	32	2.63	0.61				Large
Weather Idioms	Experimental	32	4.72	0.81	62	13.96	Significant at 0.01 Level	3.55
	Control	32	2.38	0.49				Large
House Parts Idioms	Experimental	32	4.66	0.60	62	14.51	Significant at 0.01 Level	3.69
	Control	32	2.72	.457				Large

Hypothesis Three: There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group receiving regular instruction on the post-test in overall idioms production in favour of the experimental group.

Table (5)
T-test results comparing the post-test means for the experimental and control groups in overall idioms production

Group	N	M	S.D.	D.F.	t value	Significance Level	Effect Size
Experimental	32	45.41	2.01	62	43.502	Significant at	11.05

Control	32	25.50	1.63			0.01 Level	Large

As shown in table (5), the t-test value proved that there was a significant difference between the post-test mean scores of both the experimental and control group students' overall production of English idioms in favour of the experimental group. Hence, the third hypothesis was accepted. In addition, the above effect size value of (11.05) indicated that the implemented program had a strong impact on the experimental group students' overall production of idiomatic expressions.

The following figure illustrates the experimental group students' significant growth in overall idioms production after the proposed program application as compared to the control group students' overall idioms production on the post-test:
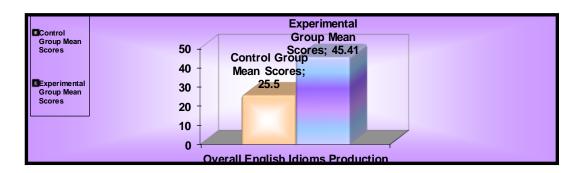

Figure (2)
Comparison of the experimental and control groups overall idioms production means on the post-test

Hypothesis Four: There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the post-test in producing the specified EFL idioms categories in favour of the experimental group.

Table (6)
T-test results comparing the experimental and control group students' post-test means in producing the specified English idioms categories

English idioms categories	Group	N	M	S.D.	D.F.	t value	Significance Level	Effect Size
Color Idioms	Experimental	32	4.94	0.76	62	14.54	Significant at 0.01 Level	3.70
	Control	32	2.50	0.57				Large
Food Idioms	Experimental	32	5.00	0.23	62	24.43	Significant at 0.01	6.21
	Control	32	2.56	0.56				Large

								Level	
Number Idioms	**Experimental**	32	4.56	0.56	62			Significant at 0.01 Level	4.20
	Control	32	2.38	0.49		16.53			Large
Body Parts Idioms	**Experimental**	32	4.50	0.62	62			Significant at 0.01 Level	3.29
	Control	32	2.81	0.40		12.94			Large
Animal Idioms	**Experimental**	32	4.34	0.48	62			Significant at 0.01 Level	3.78
	Control	32	2.50	0.51		14.89			Large
Nature Idioms	**Experimental**	32	4.63	0.49	62			Significant at 0.01 Level	4.65
	Control	32	2.38	0.48		18.30			Large
Plants Idioms	**Experimental**	32	4.59	0.76	62			Significant at 0.01 Level	3.21
	Control	32	2.56	0.50		12.65			Large
Clothes Idioms	**Experimental**	32	4.38	0.66	62			Significant at 0.01 Level	2.89
	Control	32	2.66	0.55		11.36			Large
Weather Idioms	**Experimental**	32	4.47	0.57	62			Significant at 0.01 Level	4.01
	Control	32	2.38	0.49		15.78			Large
House Parts Idioms	**Experimental**	32	4.56	0.56	62			Significant at 0.01 Level	3.64
	Control	32	2.78	0.42		14.32			Large

In order to verify the validity of the fourth hypothesis, independent samples t-tests were used. The t-test results proved that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on the post-test in producing EFL idioms categories in favour of the experimental group. The above table shows this statistical significance at 0.01 level. In other words, results of the t-tests proved to be statistically consistent with the stated hypothesis. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis was accepted.

The calculated effect size values, also, proved that the proposed program had a large effect on the experimental group students' production of the specified categories of EFL idiomatic expressions as compared to their counterparts of the control group students. It should be, also, noted that the proposed program had large effect size values of (3.70), (6.21), (4.20), (3.29), (3.78), (4.65), (3.21), (2.89), (4.01) and (3.64) on the experimental group students' production of color, food, number, body parts, animal, nature, plants, clothes, weather and house parts idioms respectively. This, in turn, proves that activities based on the integration between the REACT strategy of the Contextual Learning Approach and drama activities can significantly foster EFL Faculty of Mass

Communication students' ability to produce of English idiomatic expressions. Moreover, it should be highlighted that the aforementioned effect size values revealed that the implemented program had its largest effect on the experimental group students' production of food idioms, and then comes in a descending order its large effect on their ability to produce nature, number, weather, animal, color, house parts, body parts, plants and clothes idioms.

Hypothesis Five: There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and the post-test in overall EFL idioms comprehension in favour of the post- test.

To examine the validity of the above hypothesis, a paired sample t-test was conducted to compare the experimental group students' overall English idioms comprehension mean scores prior to and after the program application. Table (7) shows that the proposed program had a significant impact on the experimental group students' overall idioms comprehension. This was reflected in their significant growth after the program implementation. The calculated t-value (36.33) and effect size value (13.04) provide evidence that confirms the fifth hypothesis.

Table (7)

T-test results comparing the experimental group students' pre-posttest mean scores in overall English idioms comprehension

Test	N	M	S.D.	D.F.	t value	Significance Level	Effect Size
Pre-test	32	23.88	2.71	31	36.33	Significant at 0.01 Level	13.04
Post-test	32	46.13	2.27				Large

The following figure illustrates the experimental group students' significant growth in overall idioms comprehension on the post-test as compared to their overall idioms comprehension on the pre-test:
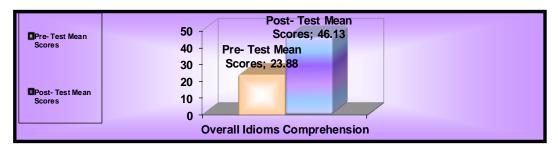

Figure (3)

Comparison of the experimental group students' pre- posttest means in overall English idioms comprehension

Hypothesis Six: There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and the post-test in comprehending the specified EFL idioms categories in favour of the post-test.

To verify the sixth hypothesis, paired samples t-tests were conducted to compare the pre-posttests mean scores of the experimental group students' comprehension of the specified idioms categories. As displayed in table (8) below, results of the t-tests indicated the experimental group students' substantial growth in comprehending all the specified idioms categories. In addition, the t-test values provided enough evidence to support and accept the sixth hypothesis.

It is worth mentioning that the effect size values of (5.23), (5.42), (6.38), (4.07), (5.47), (5.48), (3.31), (2.72), (4.31) and (4.27) for color, food, number, body parts, animal, nature, plants, clothes, weather and house parts idioms respectively proved that the implemented program had a large effect on the experimental group students' comprehension of the specified idioms categories. In addition, it should be noted that the previously highlighted effect size values revealed that the implemented program had its largest effect on the experimental group students' comprehension of number idioms, and then comes in a descending order its large effect on their ability to comprehend nature, animal, food, color, weather, house parts, body parts, plants and clothes idioms.

Table (8)
T-test results comparing the experimental group students' pre-post-test means in comprehending the specified English idioms categories

English idioms categories	Test	N	M	S.D.	D.F.	t value	Significance Level	Effect Size
Color Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.44	0.50	31	14.56	Significant at 0.01 Level	5.23
	Post-Test	32	4.97	0.78				Large
Food Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.31	0.86	31	15.10	Significant at 0.01 Level	5.42
	Post-Test	32	4.47	0.51				Large
Number Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.41	0.50	31	17.77	Significant at 0.01 Level	6.38
	Post-Test	32	4.63	0.61				Large
Body Parts Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.78	0.42	31	11.34	Significant at 0.01 Level	4.07
	Post-Test	32	4.63	0.75				Large
Animal Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.28	0.63	31	15.24	Significant at 0.01 Level	5.47
	Post-Test	32	4.38	0.49				Large
Nature Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.16	0.57	31	15.26	Significant at 0.01 Level	5.48
	Post-Test	32	4.63	0.49				Large
Plants Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.28	0.63	31	9.22	Significant at 0.01 Level	3.31
	Post-Test	32	4.50	1.05				Large

Clothes Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.41	0.95	31	7.58	Significant at 0.01 Level	2.72
	Post-Test	32	4.56	0.91				Large
Weather Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.25	0.67	31	12.00	Significant at 0.01 Level	4.31
	Post-Test	32	4.72	0.81				Large
House Parts Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.56	0.62	31	11.90	Significant at 0.01 Level	4.27
	Post-Test	32	4.66	0.60				Large

Hypothesis Seven: There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and the post-test in overall EFL idioms production in favour of the post- test.

Table (9)

T-test results comparing the experimental group students' pre-post-test means of overall EFL idioms production

Test	N	M	S.D.	D.F.	t value	Significance Level	Effect Size
Pre-Test	32	23.31	2.29	31	41.39	Significant at 0.01 Level	14.9
Post-Test	32	45.41	2.01				Large

As illustrated in table (9), results of paired samples t-test provided support to the seventh hypothesis since the t- value of (41.39) comparing the experimental group students' pre- post-test means for overall EFL idioms production was significant at 0.01 level. In addition, the calculated effect size value of (14.9) indicated that the implemented program had a substantial positive impact on the experimental group students' overall production of English idioms on the post- test as compared to their overall production of these idioms before the program application.

The following figure illustrates the experimental group students' significant growth in overall idioms production on the post-test as compared to their overall idioms production on the pre- test:
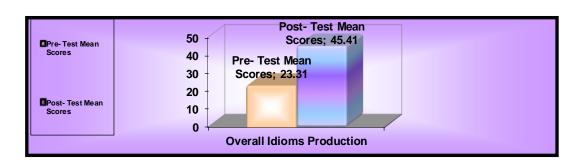

Figure (4)

Comparison of the experimental group students' pre- posttest means in overall English idioms production

Hypothesis Eight: There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre-test and the post-test in producing the specified EFL idioms categories in favour of the post-test.

Table (10)

T-test results comparing the experimental group students' pre-post-test means in producing the specified English idioms categories

English idioms categories	Test	N	M	S.D.	D.F.	t value	Significance Level	Effect Size
Color Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.44	0.50	31	14.38	Significant at 0.01 Level	5.16
	Post-Test	32	4.94	0.76				Large
Food Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.19	0.69	31	22.97	Significant at 0.01 Level	8.25
	Post-Test	32	5.00	0.23				Large
Number Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.41	0.50	31	16.86	Significant at 0.01 Level	6.05
	Post-Test	32	4.56	0.56				Large
Body Parts Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.63	0.55	31	14.12	Significant at 0.01 Level	5.07
	Post-Test	32	4.50	0.62				Large
Animal Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.28	0.63	31	15.37	Significant at 0.01 Level	5.57
	Post-Test	32	4.34	0.48				Large
Nature Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.16	0.57	31	16.59	Significant at 0.01 Level	5.96
	Post-Test	32	4.63	0.49				Large
Plants Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.28	0.63	31	11.68	Significant at 0.01 Level	4.19
	Post-Test	32	4.59	0.76				Large
Clothes Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.13	0.71	31	10.45	Significant at 0.01 Level	3.75
	Post-Test	32	4.38	0.66				Large
Weather Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.25	0.67	31	12.87	Significant at 0.01 Level	4.62
	Post-Test	32	4.47	0.57				Large
House Parts Idioms	Pre-Test	32	2.56	0.62	31	12.86	Significant at 0.01 Level	4.62
	Post-Test	32	4.56	0.56				Large

To validate the eighth hypothesis, paired samples t-tests were conducted to compare the pre-posttests mean scores of the experimental group students' production of the specified idioms categories. As shown in table (10), results of the t-tests indicated the experimental group students' significant growth in producing all the specified idioms categories. In addition, the t- test values provided enough evidence to support and accept the eighth hypothesis.

It should be highlighted that the effect size values of (5.16), (8.25), (6.05), (5.07), (5.57), (5.96), (4.19), (3.75), (4.62) and (4.62) for color, food, number, body parts, animal, nature, plants, clothes, weather and house parts idioms respectively proved that the implemented program had a large effect on the experimental group students' production of the selected idioms categories. In addition, it should be noted that the

previously highlighted effect size values revealed that the implemented program had its largest effect on the experimental group students' production of food idioms, and then comes in a descending order its large effect on their ability to produce number, nature, animal, color, body parts, weather as well as house parts, plants and clothes idioms. It should be noted that the implemented program had an equal large effect size value of 4.62 on the experimental group students' production of both weather and house parts idioms.

To sum up, support was gained for the study eight hypotheses. The experimental group students achieved tangible progress in their overall comprehension and production of idiomatic expressions as well as in their comprehension and production of the specified ten idioms categories after the implementation of the proposed program as compared to their performance before the program application. Also, the experimental group students outperformed the control group students on the idioms comprehension and production post-tests.

Discussion

The post-test results revealed that the implemented program integrating the REACT strategy and drama activities was effective in developing the experimental group students' overall idioms comprehension and production. They, also, revealed that this program was effective in developing the experimental group students' comprehension and production of the specified ten idioms categories. Such results are consistent with the findings of the studies conducted by Rohani, Ketabi and Tavakoli (2012), Hafsaoui & Boulassel (2014), Zaimi (2016), Chong & Huang (2018) and Suhodolli (2019b) proving that contextualizing English idioms in written and spoken texts fosters their acquisition among EFL university level learners. In addition, the current study findings go in line with Rohayati's (2013) study findings highlighting that implementing the REACT strategy can significantly enhance EFL vocabulary acquisition.

The present study results further emphasize the idea highlighted by De Caro (2009) and Thyab (2016) that role plays can have a positive impact on EFL learners' idioms acquisition. They support Vasiljevic's (2015) recommendation to dramatize idioms to facilitate their acquisition and are consistent with the findings of Kashiha & Heng (2013), Afshar & Esmaeili (2017), Khonbi & Sadeghi (2017), Hamidizade & Mohamadi zenouzagh (2018) and Zarei (2020) indicating that role plays and storytelling enhance EFL learners' comprehension and production of idiomatic expressions. They, also, provide more support to the idea that drama activities can enhance vocabulary acquisition as highlighted by

Demircioglu (2010) and proved in the study of Alshraideh & Alahmadi (2020).

The current study results, also, go in line with the idea highlighted by De Caro (2009) that engaging students in dialogue writing tasks promotes their production of English idioms in authentic communicative situations. Furthermore, the present study findings are consistent with the findings of Kusumayati (2010), Moghaddas (2013), Sahara (2015) and Manangkari (2018) proving that contextual learning fosters EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition. In addition, the present study results provide substantial support to Rizk's (2015) and My's & Loi's (2020) recommendation that both explicit and implicit idiom instruction strategies should be adopted to foster EFL learners' ability to comprehend and produce idioms in communicative situations.

Throughout the program implementation, several factors have led to the experimental group students' significant growth in overall idioms comprehension and production as well as their substantial improvement in comprehending and producing the specified ten idioms categories. Among them was the use of interesting images and pictures during the relating and experiencing phases of the REACT strategy implementation. In fact, these images and pictures aroused the students' interest, motivated them to relate the idiomatic expressions to their previous experiences and knowledge; they, also, paved the way for the students' contextualized examination of EFL idioms during the experiencing stage of each session.

As the experimental group students were involved in varied hands-on experiences of examining and making meaning of idiomatic expressions (that were purposefully contextualized in interesting short stories, given sentences and short educational videos) during the experiencing phase of each session, their natural acquisition of these idioms and active interpretation of their figurative meanings were substantially promoted. Following the recommendation of Ranong (2014), Vasiljevic (2015) and Chong & Huang (2018), encouraging the experimental group students to use contextual clues to make meaning of unfamiliar idioms in given short stories and example sentences had its significant impact on developing their ability to comprehend idiomatic expressions. Furthermore, the fact that the speakers in all the educational videos were native English speakers helped the students become better acquainted of the authentic contexts where idiomatic expressions are used

and enabled them to better comprehend their intended non-literal meanings.

The applying phase of the REACT strategy implementation enabled the experimental group students to use at least three of the newly learned idioms in each session to write and dramatically tell short stories about given topics, thus fostering their purposeful production of English idioms in an authentic communicative context. In addition, this dramatized storytelling maintained the students' engagement, motivation and active participation.

The varied activities practised during the cooperating phase of the REACT strategy fostered the experimental group students' comprehension and production of English idioms. These included miming, MCQs, matching idioms in given sentences with their figurative meanings and writing down the intended meanings of idioms in given sentences. They, also, included using idioms in given situations to convey thoughts and feelings, replacing underlined words with idiomatic expressions that give nearly the same meanings, filling in the blanks in given sentences to get typical idioms. It is worth noting that all these activities contextualized idioms in a way that enabled the students recognize the communicative value of using idioms to convey ideas and emotions.

During the transferring phase, the experimental group students were able to actively use the newly learned idioms in the creative thought- provoking dialogue and conversation writing as well as in the drama activities of using these written dialogues or conversations for role playing or simulation tasks. Such drama activities helped the experimental group students naturally produce English idioms in authentic situations to convey thoughts and feelings. They, also, enhanced the students' self-regulation, autonomous learning, creativity, interest and engagement. Furthermore, they helped the experimental group students see the connection between the idioms they learned and real-life situations. Simulation tasks in particular were quite motivating as they put the students in problematic situations to which they needed to find out feasible applicable solutions using English idioms.

The formative assessment activities practised by the experimental group students at the end of each session enabled them to recycle and revisit the newly acquired idiomatic expressions, thus making these idioms an integral part of the students' active vocabulary. Thus, to formatively assess the students' comprehension of English idioms at the end of each session, they were asked to work in groups of four or five and answer each of the given ten idioms comprehension questions with either

yes or no. Then, they were requested to explain their answers by giving evidence to support them. To formatively assess the students' production of English idioms, students were involved in either filling in the blanks with two or three words to get typical English idioms or replacing the underlined words in given sentences with idioms that give nearly the same meaning using the given keywords between brackets. In addition, the spontaneous improvisation tasks practised at the end of each session to formatively assess the students' production of English idioms fostered their authentic production of these idioms in given situations to speak their mind as well as to convey varied thoughts and feelings.

The classroom atmosphere was quite relaxed and motivating throughout the program sessions implementation in a way that lowered the students' affective filter and fostered their motivation to take part in the classroom activities and tasks. In addition, drama activities added the fun factor to the learning situation, thus fostering students' engagement and motivation. Furthermore, throughout the program sessions, the teacher was a facilitator and a guide who helped the students only when they needed her support or advice; she, also, encouraged the students' active participation in the sessions varied idioms comprehension and production activities. In addition, students' errors in idioms comprehension and production were seen as a natural part of the learning process in a way that fostered the students' self-confidence and engagement. In case of errors, students were encouraged to correct themselves first. If the student who made the error was unable to correct himself/ herself, then peers were invited to offer help. The teacher corrected the students' errors only when self- or peer- correction attempts were not effective or successful.

Finally, the use of offline and online copies of *Longman Idioms Dictionary* as well as *Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* helped the experimental group students check their comprehension of English idioms figurative meanings; it, also, made them more confident when they used these idioms in the story and dialogue writing tasks during the applying and transferring phases of each session to promote their production of English idioms in meaningful communicative contexts.

As far as **idioms comprehension** is concerned, the experimental group students achieved tangible progress in this aspect as result of their engagement in varied activities that focused on promoting their ability to identify and interpret idiomatic expressions. Thus, during the experiencing phase of each session, they were encouraged to make meaning of varied idioms that were purposefully contextualized in short

stories, example sentences and educational short videos. During the co-operating phase of each session, they practised varied activities that fostered idioms comprehension throughout the program sessions implementation. These were (1) miming the figurative meanings of given idioms, (2) answering MCQs asking them to choose the intended non-literal meanings of the underlined idioms in given sentences, (3) matching the underlined idioms in given sentences with their figurative meanings and (4) writing down the figurative meanings of underlined idioms in given sentences.

To foster the experimental group students' **idioms production**, during the applying phase of each session, they wrote and told short stories in a dramatized manner using at least three of the newly acquired idioms. During the co-operating phase of each session, they, also, practised the activities of (i) using suitable idioms to express their thoughts and feelings in given situations with the help of given key words, (ii) filling in the blanks in given sentences to get typical English idioms with the help of the italicized words in each sentence offered as clues for them and (iii) replacing the underlined words in given sentences with idioms that give nearly the same meanings using given keywords. Furthermore, during the transferring phase of each session, the dialogue writing, role playing and simulation tasks- where the experimental group students used at least three of the newly learned idiomatic expressions- promoted their idioms production.

Conclusions
Based on the results of the current study, the following conclusions can be made:

1. The current study provided evidence for the positive impact of the proposed program integrating between the REACT strategy and drama activities on promoting EFL first year Faculty of Mass Communication students' idioms comprehension and production.
2. Contextualizing idiomatic expressions in interesting meaningful written and spoken texts fosters EFL university level learners' natural acquisition of these idioms.
3. Encouraging EFL university level learners to use contextual clues helps them figure out the non-literal intended meanings of English idioms.
4. Involving EFL university level learners in story and conversation writing activities helps them use newly acquired idioms to convey thoughts and feelings. Also, by so doing, these idioms become part of the students' active vocabulary that they can easily retrieve in upcoming authentic communicative situations.

5. Implementation of the REACT strategy fosters EFL university level students' cooperation, autonomy and self-regulation. It, also, enables them to transfer the newly acquired idioms to a new context that enhances their creativity and provokes their thoughts.

6. Drama activities enhance EFL university level learners' idioms comprehension and production and foster their imagination as well as their creative thinking.

7. Drama activities add the fun factor that engages EFL students in a relaxed classroom atmosphere, thus fostering their natural acquisition of the idiomatic expressions.

8. This study provided enough evidence that incorporating varied activities- like reading short stories and given sentences as well as watching videos where idioms are naturally contextualized, matching underlined idioms in given sentences with their intended meanings, writing down idioms intended meanings in given sentences using contextual clues, MCQs and miming- enhances EFL university level students' idioms comprehension.

9. This study, also, provided tangible support to the notion that gap filling, replacing underlined words with idioms that give nearly the same meanings, asking students to use suitable idioms in given situations, dramatized storytelling, simulation tasks, role plays and improvisation can promote EFL learners' ability to produce idioms.

10. Recycling and revisiting EFL idiomatic expressions in varied motivating activities enhances EFL learners' comprehension, production and acquisition of these idioms.

Recommendations

In the light of the present study significant results, the following recommendations are made:

1. More time and efforts should be dedicated to fostering EFL Faculty of Mass Communication students' idioms comprehension and production.

2. EFL idiomatic expressions should be naturally contextualized and presented to university level students in carefully chosen written and spoken texts.

3. The drama activities of dramatized storytelling, miming, role plays, simulation tasks and improvisation should be carefully interwoven within the REACT strategy to enhance EFL university level students' comprehension and production of idiomatic expressions while maintaining their engagement and motivation.

4. EFL university level instructors should exert more efforts to plan well-designed lessons integrating the REACT strategy with drama activities to promote their students' idioms acquisition and creativity.

5. EFL learners should be encouraged to use newly acquired idiomatic expressions in story and dialogue writing activities so as to make these expressions part and parcel of their active vocabulary.

6. EFL students should be offered further opportunities to practise using English idioms to speak their mind in a supportive, anxiety-free learning environment.

7. Videos, cartoons, songs, movies, talk shows, radio programs, commercials as well as newspaper and magazine articles should be used as effective tools to help EFL Faculty of Mass Communication students notice and interpret naturally occurring idioms, thus fostering their comprehension and acquisition of these idioms.

8. More attention should be paid to enhancing EFL university level students' ability to make meaning of and use opaque unfamiliar idioms.

9. Teachers' role as guides and facilitators should be further stressed in EFL idioms acquisition classes.

10. EFL university level students' attention should be further drawn to the differences between transparent, partially opaque and opaque idioms to enhance their ability to comprehend their figurative meanings.

11. EFL university level students should be directed to pay more attention to the cultural and historical origins of idioms so as to improve their ability to comprehend their non-literal meanings.

12. EFL university level learners should be encouraged to use idioms on a daily basis to achieve native- like fluency and communicative competence.

Suggestions for further studies

1. Further research is needed to investigate the impact of similar programs based on integrating the REACT strategy and drama activities in fostering EFL university level students' acquisition of collocations and phrasal verbs.

2. More studies can be conducted to measure the effectiveness of other programs and units based on integrating the REACT strategy and drama activities in developing EFL university level and secondary stage students' speaking fluency and accuracy.

3. Since the current study focused on the role of dramatized storytelling, miming, role playing, simulation and improvisation in enhancing EFL

university level learners' idioms comprehension and production, more studies are needed to investigate the effectiveness of other drama activities such as script writing and skits in promoting EFL university level learners' acquisition of binomials and trinomials.

4. Further studies are needed to investigate the impact of contextualizing idiomatic expressions in podcasts and animated cartoons on developing EFL prep and secondary stage students' idiomatic competence.

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