

**An Integrated Approach to Idiomatic Expressions Teaching: The
Case of the Literature Classroom**

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Abstract

It has been recognised that culture is one of the prominent skills to teach a language, especially a second or foreign language. Next to the traditional basic four skills; reading, writing, speaking, and listening; culture awareness enhances the students' language proficiency and provides them with a native-like atmosphere in EFL classroom. One commonly neglected feature of acquiring native-like knowledge of the language has been idiomatic expression mastery. In literature classroom, the experience is worse. Although a part of the figurative and stylistic aesthetics of literary texts, idioms are rarely dealt with. This study, hence, aims at suggesting an integrated approach, following Oxford (2001) model of integrated skills, to teach idioms within the literary classroom. The approach targets both lexical and cultural mastery of the foreign language. It provides teachers with a list of activities which foster language communication in and outside the classroom.

Key Words: Culture- Idioms- EFL Classroom- Literature- Integrated Skills.

ملخص

يتفق معلمو اللغة على أن الثقافة هي إحدى المهارات البارزة لتعليم اللغة ، خاصة لغة ثانية أو لغة أجنبية. بجانب المهارات الأساسية التقليدية الأربع ؛ القراءة والكتابة والتحدث والاستماع ؛ يعزز الوعي الثقافي من إتقان الطلاب للغة ويزودهم بأجواء شبيهة بأجواء اللغة الأم في فصل اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. إحدى السمات التي يتم تجاهلها بشكل شائع لاكتساب معرفة اللغة الأصلية هي التمكن من التعبير الاصطلاحي. في فصل الأدب ، يعتبر تدريس التعبيرات الاصطلاحية أقل أهمية. على الرغم من كونها جزءًا من الجماليات التصويرية والأسلوبية للنصوص الأدبية ، إلا أنه نادرًا ما يتم التعامل معها. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى اقتراح نهج متكامل ، يتبع نموذج أكسفورد (2001) للمهارات المتكاملة ، لتعليم المصطلحات داخل الفصل الأدبي. يستهدف النهج كلاً من التمكن المعجمي والثقافي للغة الأجنبية كما يزود المدرسين بقائمة من الأنشطة التي تعزز التواصل اللغوي داخل وخارج الفصل الدراسي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الثقافة - التعبيرات الاصطلاحية - فصل اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية - الأدب - المهارات المتكاملة

1. Introduction

Teaching and learning English as a foreign language have always been a challenge to Arabic native speakers, especially those who have no prior contact with the language like the Algerians. Unlike the Egyptians who had been colonised by the British, and hence, have a history of language contact between English and Arabic; the Algerians had an alternative experience but with French. English, therefore, has been introduced to the Algerian educational system only as a foreign language. Its use, unlike French which is used in everyday communication, has been limited and reserved to classroom use. By the first two decades of the twenty-first century; however, English started to take a recognisable stand within the Algerian linguistic arena. Being an international language and a tool to political, economic, and educational interaction; English started to matter. Algerians nowadays are more open to learning it and acquire communicative skills which allow them to enter the different life domains.

Language learning has become more open today than ever. In the case of Algeria, not only different educational syllabi from middle, secondary, to university levels provide knowledge about learning skills but also different social media and the internet. Learners have become interested in concentrated courses that provide speaking, listening, writing, or reading skills; each according to his/her needs. Reading in the foreign language has become the fashion among teenagers and university students to the extent that a native-like accent and mastery of vocabulary became the differentiating feature to those who seek professionalism. Among these are idioms. As Cowie et al. (1983) argue, “the accurate and appropriate use of English expressions which are in the broadest sense idiomatic is one distinguishing mark of a native command of the language and a reliable measure of the proficiency of foreign learners” (p. x).

Language learning, however, does not only require mastery of the four skills; especially if separately provided. There exists actually a fifth skill; meaning culture, which has been recognised as one of the pillars to language learning. If neglected, the foreign language learner can never achieve complete mastery of communicative skills. Culture, as it will be further explained, refers to the different features that differentiate one community from the other including traditions, customs, conventional attitudes and behaviours. Among these are language features which only native speakers master their meanings and use, like idiomatic expressions. If the learners of a foreign language objective is to get proficiency then one of the different ways to achieve it the mastery of natural communication; for example mastery of idioms’ meanings and use.

This article first aim is to discuss idiomatic expression use in EFL classroom, specifically literature classroom. To achieve that, a connection between language and culture will be provided. Then, an explanation of idioms and their different uses will be offered. The third step will be a clarification of teaching methods to idioms and their efficacy in the EFL situation, giving examples from different studies. Among the methods, one suggests Oxford (2001) Integrated Method to teach EFL skills. The focus will be on how to apply the integrated method to idiom teaching within the literature classroom. Finally, one will insert some activities for support.

2. Culture and Language

Culture is a very broad and difficult concept to define. It encompasses other concepts which can only be dealt with separately if a definition is at hand. This includes language, traditions, customs, attitudes, and behaviours of a given community. It also entails these communities' artistic outcomes like literature, music, and dance. There are two references to culture; culture with small 'c' and Culture with capital 'C'. The latter is known as objective culture enclosing the different forms of Arts and literature. Culture with small 'c' refers to “subjective culture or day-to-day features that define a group of people. This type of culture is psychological in nature, involving peoples' attitudes, beliefs, and values...[It] also refers to such distinguishing elements as choice of discourse, style of dress, in-group/out-group networks, and the norms of interactions” (DeCapua and Wintergerst p.18). Language, hence, is an important tool via which culture is shared and transmitted.

When combined with language, the native speaker of a given culture is the most important variable from which the rules and acts of what is accepted/unaccepted and what is appropriate/inappropriate in language interactions stem from. S/he is the source from which a phenomenon like idiomatic expression use can be better understood. In the case of speakers of a language as second or foreign language; the native speaker is a reference since s/he is consciously/unconsciously aware of both objective and subjective culture.

Culture awareness, therefore, is eminent to language learning as much as any other skill is, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It enhances the learners' proficiency and provides a native-like atmosphere in the classroom. Known today in the field of ESL and EFL as the fifth skill, culture constitutes the missing strand of the tapestry which in case of its presence fulfils the language adeptness. According to Kramsch (1993) any communicative proficiency of a language as second or foreign language fails if it does not consider culture as core skill, “If language is viewed as social skill, then culture should become the core of language teaching to the extent that cultural awareness should be viewed as enabling language proficiency” (qtd. in Vernier p. 268).

3. The Nature of Idioms in Language Use

An idiom is a part of day-to-day conversations and interactions which constitutes known words but that are not used for their literal meaning. The Online Cambridge dictionary defines an idiom as, “a group of words in a fixed order that have a particular meaning that is different from the meanings of each word on its own”. The definition implies a list of features that characterise an idiom from regular part of speech. First, as a multiword an idiom is rarely deduced from the meaning of words that combine it, for example the expression “it's raining cats and dogs” relates to the act of raining but has nothing to do with cats or dogs. Second, an idiom always applies to a given order that was attributed to it by the native speakers of a given language; one cannot change the former example to “dogs and cats are raining”. Not only it will look odd but it violates the regulations of idiomatic expression use, although grammatically it is a correct expression.

Third, the meaning attached to an idiom has been culturally and conventionally constructed by a given group of people; if misused, the communicative purpose of language interaction becomes misbalanced.

According to Strässler (1982) there are four basic features to idiomatic expressions. First, speakers of a language have no right to alter the order of words of an idiom. Also, no analogy is accepted for the formation of an idiom. Speakers cannot just alter a word by its synonym or antonym. Moreover, an idiom is a conventional construction, once established it becomes related to the context it has been emerged from. It, hence, means the same for everybody. Regularly, a meaning of an idiom cannot be guessed from its composing parts except for few cases where the expression's meaning is obvious. Moreover, they are opaque expressions which are not clear from their references.

Idioms fulfil many communicative purposes. They can easily achieve some communicative objectives which cannot be achieved through literal language. Although used most of the time within informal speech act; we can find them within formal situations, for example idiomatic expressions like “on the right track” or “down the line” are found in academic research regularly used vocabulary (Zyzik 2009, p. 4). Moreover, idioms are more complex than their paraphrased equations. In other words, their figurative referencing and the absence of compliance to grammatical rules give them an exotic yet powerful stand within language use. For second and foreign language learners, learning idiomatic expressions enhances their vocabulary and writing competence. It enriches their culture understanding. Idioms belong to natural speech for that reason they are easily memorable and interesting especially for those who like to achieve a native-like utterance. It also increases the learners' lexical and etymological knowledge as it gives them the opportunity to learn the vocabulary of the native speaker from the perception of this later as it was produced at first in a given historical context.

4. Teaching Methods for Idioms in EFL Classroom

Methods to teach idioms in the ESL or EFL classroom vary according to purpose and context. In many cases explicit interpretation is elicited especially that the metaphoric nature of many idioms makes it difficult to deduce explicitly their meaning. Translation; however, facilitates word explanation but does not guarantee meaning attainment. Direct comparisons between idioms from the second or foreign language to the native language seem an effective working plan (Lakoff 1986, Kövecses 2001). The difficulty lies in the fact that not all idioms have equivalents within two different languages.

Teaching idioms according to systematic classification has been adopted by teachers. Researchers (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, Lakoff 1986 for example) suggest a systematic plan to teach idioms according to the common shared aspects they exemplify (idioms which share the same concept, for example food-related or anger-related idioms- also known as metaphoric mappings). From these, learners start making connections between the repeated concept and the representation it applies. For example, the two expressions *fan the flames*

and *slow burn* suggest a relation with the concept of *fire* implying an act of *anger*. However, not all burn idioms refer to anger. An idiom like *to burn the midnight oil* has nothing to do with anger; it rather refers to the act of working hard for job or exam requirements.

Some prefer to teach idioms for etymological purposes and benefits. Generating the historical and cultural context in which the idiomatic expression has been produced and the purpose for which it has been used for relates foreign and second language learners with the cultural spirit of the community it emerged from. Liontas (2017) argues that teaching idioms helps second and foreign language learners to trace the language development over time, it gives them insights of the society and the culture where these expressions developed, and relates them with a history of human thoughts. This enhances the learners' life perception as they encounter “different cultural realities through the eyes of the people who create and use these turns of phrase” (p. 9).

With the spread of technology, the internet, and visual equipments; researchers turned towards more effective methods that relate reading with sensory perception. Nowadays, instructors stress the importance of illustration as an effective tool to learn a language. When provided together, a word and a picture elicit generative memory and help learners recall easily the text (and even context) if the material is well selected (Scarcella & Oxford 1992, Mayer 1999). This also fosters group work as learners share what they induce from illustrations; it guides them toward collaborative learning strategy (Klingner & Vaughn 2000).

These methods; among many others, have been useful for teaching idioms in EFL contexts. However, since the aim of teaching/learning idioms has been often targeting language proficiency; the cultural aspect has been regularly neglected. As it has been already claimed in the first part of this article, no language proficiency can be achieved if culture, as fifth skill, is ignored. For that reason, the theoretical part of this paper aims first at discussing the benefits of Integrated Approach (Oxford 2001) to learning a foreign language; and second, to offer ways to apply it in a rarely applicable domain, that of literature classroom. Among the many studies targeting idiom teaching, learning, and analysis; (Irujo (1986), Fillmore et al. (1988), McGlone et al. (1994), Watkins (1995), Cutting & Bock (1997), Lennon (1998), Nippold & Duthie (2003), Katsaron (2011), Liontas (2002-2017), few have been dedicated to idiomatic history, use, and analysis in literature.

5. Actual Situation to Teaching Idioms in Literature Classroom

Teaching English literature in the EFL classroom has always been a challenge to teachers and instructors. This is first due to the richness of the field. When teaching English literature all literature written in English is under scrutiny, and being an international language makes it wider area and diverse in terms of the language varieties

learners will be in contact with. Teaching idioms within the literature course; hence, opens doors to a variety of options, American idiom, British idioms, Australian idioms...etc.

Teaching idioms within literary text and contexts in the Algerian EFL classroom have been neglected for many reasons. First, since the language is not a second but a foreign language, learners are more foreign to its basic structures which make instructors most of the time obliged to focus on the basic skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening). A history of collected works on idioms and teaching methods within the Algerian academia reveals that teachers focus more on communicative skill proficiency achievement (Zaimi (2016; focus on video games use), Achour & Kouraba (2016; focus on conceptual metaphor), Debabi & Guerroudj (2018; focus on writing skill), and Bouzenoun (2018, focus film application); other studies' target has been culture awareness accomplishment (Bouherar (2017), and Menaoui (2019).

When it comes to literature courses, I find no trace for idiom teaching/learning concerns. The main objective has been always to provide knowledge of a long history of literature written in English. This requires knowledge about historical events, economy, politics, and philosophy because they offer context to the literary text. When it comes to aesthetics and stylistic features a text possesses; poetry takes a great part of its study but the analysis has always been related to the genre's basic characteristics: rhyme, rhythm, metaphoric language...etc. We rarely see teachers speak of idioms within literary text analysis although idioms make an interesting path to teach both a distinctive linguistic variety; meaning the idiom, and the culture it belongs to.

6. Suggesting an Appropriate Approach to Teach Idioms in Literature Classroom

According to Oxford (2001) teaching ESL/EFL is like a tapestry. Just the way strands are woven to make up a tapestry, so are different features of ESL/EFL. This includes the teacher, the learner, the setting, and the relevant language(s). Among the characteristics is the setting which compiles “available resources, institutional values, and cultural background” (p. 5). Within this atmosphere different approaches can be adopted according to each situation; in this case the literature classroom.

6.1. The Turn towards an Integrated Approach

Oxford believes that the four skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) next to the associated skills that accompany them (syntax and vocabulary) cannot be taught separately. Otherwise the tapestry loses its interwoven feature which gives it strength and integration. In order to keep the tapestry interwoven, Oxford suggests what she refers to as *integrated approach*. According to her, teaching second/foreign language should not follow a language-based approach (segregated skill approach) in which language itself is the core objective of the teaching/learning process. Within this approach, language is separated from content while the language skills are isolated for instructional purposes (for example

teaching/learning the speaking skill for the purpose of job interview requirements). Language, hence, is presented to learners in a series of strategies which focus on one or two skills separately neglecting the fact that language skills complete each other. As she puts it, “ it can be confusing or misleading to believe that a given strategy is associated with only one specific language skill...Common strategies help weave the language skills together” (p. 8).

By proposing the integrated skills approach, Oxford emphasises its benefits. First, language within the integrated approach is used in normal communicative settings. Second, instead of focusing on separated skill(s), the teaching/learning strategies help weave the language skills together. Even segregated teaching strategies imply (unconsciously) integrated skill approach since no writing teaching/learning can be attained without oral communication practices between the teacher and the learner. The listening skill is at work as well.

Oxford proposes two forms of integrated-skill instruction: the Content-based language instruction and the Task-based language instruction. In the former, content is learned through language where all the skills are practiced while learning the content. It includes at least three models: Theme-based Model in which the theme regulates the study process; Adjunct Model in which content is separated from language but both are in coordination; and Sheltered Model in which the subject is adapted according to the learners' level. In the Task-based instruction, tasks are the core objective. The activities serve communicative purposes consisting of group and pair work where collaboration and interaction is enhanced.

The integrated approach, according to Oxford, holds a list of advantages. First, language practice takes place in naturalistic atmosphere. Language, hence, becomes means of interaction and communication. It also gives teachers the opportunity to assess the learners' progress of the language skills combined not separated. It also motivates learners from different backgrounds and ages. In the case of idiom teaching, “many scholars have argued in favour of an integrated approach, which involves incorporating idioms into regular lessons that focus on any of the four skills” (Zyzik, p. 5).

Although not tackled among the list of skills targeted in the integrated approach to teaching ESL/EFL classroom, one proposes to take into consideration the fifth skill; meaning culture, for better results. By taking into consideration the fifth skill, one ensures to integrate students to the subjective and objective forms of culture (culture with capital C and small c).

6.2. Activities for Idiom Learning within the Literature Classroom

At the level of first year licence degree, students studying English as foreign language at the Algerian University has a module entitled *Initiation to Literary Texts*. In this module, they are introduced to different literary concepts, genres, and movements. It, hence, seems to be an opportunity to teach different items to language and culture, including idioms. The

process requires an attentively selective program throughout which students acquire the targeted skills to literature (concepts, genres, and literary movements) and implicitly obtain communicational idiomatic skills. The teaching material has to follow what Kuang (2007) calls the five principles: interrelated, appropriate, practical, scientific, and flexible. In other words, the culture teaching material must be interrelated to the text and content, it has to be appropriate to the language learning objectives, it must be practical in use for different situations, it has to be taught correctly, completely and objectively, and finally it has to suit the changes the world witnesses at the current age (p. 77).

Among the easiest prose genres to start with while teaching literature is fantasy. Fantasy literature seizes the young generation readers' attention, especially that many have been adapted to cinema and movies. Among these are *Harry Potter* (J. K. Rowling 1997-2007 the whole collection), *Peter Pan* (J. M. Barrie 1911), and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Lewis Carroll (1865)).

6.2.1. Characters and Setting through Idioms

A list of extracts from different literary texts is selected to the study of characterisation. Characters, learners will discover, are “extended verbal representations of human beings” (qtd. in Hughs and Patin 2005, p.7). As such, they have to be studied according to the direct and indirect indicators provided by the writer and which lead to the character's representational traits such as: the character's name/title, physical appearance and clothing, actions, and speech. To bring both characterisation and idiomatic expressions together, the teacher focuses on the characters' actions and speech. The analysis depends on selection of the character's speech: does s/he use complex/simple sentences? Is his/her language interpellative/ assertive? Is the sum of the used vocabulary limited/varied, concrete/abstract, familiar/pretentious? Moreover, taking the characters' actions into consideration gives the teacher the opportunity to relate their representation into the idiomatic language attached and used in the target everyday language. At this basis, and since we are dealing with teaching idiomatic expression and literature analysis at the same time, within a fantasy text is suitable for exploration.

As a start, the title of Lewis Carroll's novel is in itself an idiomatic expression. Used to refer to ‘unusual unreal things especially when things do not go the way they should have’ (for example in elections), *Alice in Wonderland* started to appear for use from the time the book has been published. As far as characterisation is concerned, both the *cat* and *Hatter* are referred to for the idiomatic expressions *Grin like a Cheshire Cat* and *as mad as a hatter*. The first is the same cat in Alice's adventure who easily disappears but when he appears it is with a foolish grin where all its teeth show; the second is another character in the novel whose strangeness characterises him as silly, irresponsible, and eccentric. Through the cat and Hatter students will discover the static or what we call as flat character. This is the type which does not change through time even if there are series to the basic story. The cat and the Hatter stay the same in all *Alice in Wonderland* series.

Another idiomatic expression used in the novel is *jam tomorrow* a synonym of *pie in the sky* meaning promise of good things to happen on the future. The phrase got its fame in a political war between the socialists who ridiculed the capitalists' empty promises; a quotation accredited to the labour politician Tony Benn in 1969 was "Some of the jam we thought was for tomorrow, we've already eaten".

The novels of Charles Dickens can provide teachers with a sum of idiomatic expressions for character study. The famous expression *scrooge* comes from Dickens fantasy novel *Christmas Carol* (1843). The character of the old man has given the expression a representation to all men who hate both spending money and keep people's company. By studying the character's actions, speech, and physical appearance, students acquire about dynamic characters. A dynamic character is the one who changes over time, usually according to certain conflicts or crisis, which is the case of *scrooge*.

In his *David Copperfield*, Dickens brings a character's fall through the characteristic of obsession. He creates Mr Dick's (Richard Babley real name) obsession with writing his autobiography to represent a historical King Charles I (1600-49) who was executed by having his head off. From then, the idiom *King Charles' head* is a reference to irrational obsession. Throughout this novel, students will learn about stock characters. A stock character is the one who becomes through time a conventional or what we call stereotypical persona in literary texts. Some examples of obsession character are Jay Gatsby from *The Great Gatsby* and Captain Ahab from *Moby-Dick*.

A reference to the main character in the book *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson conveys another type of character into the literature classroom. The book is gothic novel that became a reference in everyday language as *Jekyll and Hyde* to people who has got dual personalities partly good but chokingly evil. Students will learn how the pronunciation of the two names takes part in the representational play of their performance as *Je /kil/* and */haid/*. This type of character is known in horror writings as the disturbed genre who show some internal struggles.

An example of controlling character can be traced in George Orwell's famous novel 1948. *Big Brother* is an idiomatic expression that refers to someone who controls his surroundings as dictator. In Orwell's novel, Big Brother is a controlling character who does not actually take part in the story but who is feared by everyone. Another example, this time of a playing character, can be found in Nabokov's novel *Lolita*. *Humbert Humbert* expression has been use since the novel's publication to refer to men's sexual obsession with girls younger than them. Humbert is the protagonist of the novel who is obsessed with his landlady's 12 years daughter known by nickname as Lolita.

As far as the setting is concerned, Sometimes capitalised; others hyphenated, the expression *Never-Never land* refers to a fictional or imaginary place where everything is perfect and everyone is happy. Although less important than the plot or the characters, the setting in J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* or *The Boy who wouldn't Grow Up* story can be

studied as an agent that affects the characters' actions and behaviours, it contribute to the story's atmosphere relating them to the plot. By studying the importance of never-never land to the existence and survival of the famous Peter Pan, students will discover how there are situations a *never-never land* would be a resolution to our problems.

6.2.2. Literal and Opaque Language: A Practice through Idioms

Another piece of literature famous among young and adult learners of English is the *Harry Potter* series. The Rowling books became a reference to fantasy in our age not only due to her writing style but thanks to the fabulous movie adaptation. Among the series, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* is an interesting piece of literature to study vocabulary, characters' speech, and culture all combined. One of the ways the EFL culture awareness is enhanced is through idiomatic expression involvement in the learners' everyday language. Idioms, however, may have literal or figurative meanings. For that reason, the teacher asks learners to collect idioms from the text and regroup them according to their clear or opaque use and make the difference between the two. This would lead eventually to separate literal from figurative language. Here is a list of quotes for analysis:

- 1- ...He's a boisterous little boy, but he *wouldn't hurt a fly!*" Aunt Petunia had said tearfully (29)
- 2- ...however; they had come *face-to-face* with Wormtail only the previous year...
- 3- The moment he had got wind of the fact that he was expected to survive the summer on *carrot and sticks* (30)
- 4- *Quick as a flash* while his mother was occupied with the kettle, Dudley stole the rest of Uncle Vernon's grapefruit (31)
- 5- They knew where Harry's bedroom was, having once rescued him from it in *the dead of night...* (44)
- 6- ...“Ah, right,” said Mr. Weasley. “Better *get cracking* then.”... Before any of them could say anything else, there was a faint popping noise, and Mr. Weasley appeared *out of thin air* at George's shoulder. (50)
- 7- ...“Oh and I've been wanting a word with you too, Arthur,” said Mr. Crouch, his sharp eyes falling upon Mr. Weasley. “Ali Bashir's *on the warpath*. (83)
- 8- ...“Why?” said Harry, *taken aback*. “What's wrong with him?”...“Well, it's about time he had a bit of fun,” said Harry. (90)
- 9- “You know, house-elves get a very *raw deal!*” said Hermione (112)
- 10- ...“Hermione, a wizard in Mr. Crouch's position can't afford a house-elf who's going to *run amok* with a wand!” said Percy pompously, recovering himself. “She didn't *run amok!*” shouted Hermione. “She just picked it up off the ground!”... (126)
- 11- ... “Mr. Crouch will need all *hands on deck*...(132)
- 12- “— It's a real *stroke of luck* I heard about it,” said Mr. Diggory's head... (142)

13- “Yeah, well, Dad collects plugs, doesn’t he?” said Fred quietly as Mrs. Weasley left the room. “*Birds of a feather . . .*” (144)

14- ... “I just hope he’s in Gryffindor! *Keep your fingers crossed*, eh, Harry?”(154)

15- He *looked up and down* the staff table. There was definitely no new face there (154)

16- Sirius escape right *under* Snape’s overlarge nose — (155)

17-....Recently *under fire* for its poor... (179)

18- “Your father got me out of a very *tight corner* a few days ago. . . .(187)

19- They usually liked to be in *the thick of things* and the noisy center of attention (196)

20- ‘I didn’t dare tell Mum what he’s got to do for the first task, she’s already *having kittens about* him ...’ (288)

21- Then he’s hoping you’ll help him find out what his egg means! I suppose you’ve been *putting your heads together* during those cosy little library sessions –’ (367)

The Idiom	Literal	Opaque
<i>wouldn’t hurt a fly!</i>	Meaning how inoffensive and harmless a person is. The expression meaning can be guessed from the combination of words.	
<i>face-to-face</i>	Meaning literally to be at the opposite of the other person	
<i>carrot and sticks</i>		-Meaning to reward or threat someone if they do/do not what they are asked. -The meaning has nothing to do with the used words.
<i>Quick as a flash</i>	Meaning a fast reaction to something. It is a simile.	
<i>the dead of night</i>	Meaning the darkest time of the night	
<i>get cracking</i>		Meaning acting quickly and decisively. Both words do not refer directly to the meaning.
<i>out of thin air</i>		Meaning coming out from nowhere. The words thin air do not relate directly to the meaning.
<i>on the warpath</i>	Meaning ready to fight and confront the	

	enemy. The compound word supports the literal meaning.	
<i>taken aback</i>	Being surprised or chocked by something. The two words combined lead to the meaning.	
<i>raw deal!</i>	Meaning unfair treatment. The words direct the listener/reader to the meaning.	
<i>run amok</i>		Sometimes known as <i>amok</i> only the idiom means acting disruptively and uncontrollably. The words do not give hit of the referred meaning.
<i>hands on deck</i>		Meaning ready and available to act. The two words are far from being understood as their meaning suggests.
<i>stroke of luck</i>	Fortunate opportunity. Combined, the word direct to the literal meaning.	
<i>Birds of a feather</i>		Means people who are alike tend to do thing together. The two words, however, do not lead to the literal meaning.
<i>Keep your fingers crossed</i>	Meaning hope for good luck. It is a Christian belief that by crossing fingers people associate with Christ's cross and hence brings luck.	
<i>looked up and down</i>	To scrutinise things quickly. It refers directly to the meaning.	

<i>under Snape's overlarge nose</i>		Or <i>under someone's nose</i> , this means being unable to notice something although it is clear.
<i>under fire</i>		Meaning being rigorously criticised. The words do not connect directly with the literal meaning.
<i>tight corner</i>		Or to be on a tight corner means to be in difficult or tough situation. Although the expression may give a hint but the word corner diverges the meaning.
<i>the thick of things</i>		Meaning to take a central role in a situation. The words, however, do not refer directly to the meaning.
<i>having kittens about</i>		Meaning being upset about something or of someone. The word kittens diverges the meaning to some other meanings, cuteness or love for example.
<i>putting your heads together</i>	Meaning working on a plan together. The words direct to the literal meaning.	

7. Conclusion

As EFL teachers who have an unlimited online data to teach the foreign language still have limited opportunities to be exposed to everyday native communication, we are supposed to create our own ways to combine language teaching to culture awareness. This paper's aim was to bring idiom expression into the literature classroom for the purpose of making students explore the world of idioms within the literary genres they study.

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