Chapter One
Introduction

1-0 Overview:

This study sheds the light on the problems that face Sudanese EFL students in understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations. It also gives a considerable account to the importance of idioms and collocations in foreign language learning, and how colorful the language will be when it is encapsulated with idiomatic expressions and collocations. English language teaching and strategies to promote idiomatic English at undergraduate level. Most studies done in the area of lexis argue that vocabulary should be placed at the centre of language teaching because language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar. Lewis (1993) argued that, the lexical approach is a shift in language teaching from grammar to vocabulary teaching, as ‘language consists not of traditional grammar and vocabulary, but often of multi-word prefabricated chunks’ Lewis (1997). These chunks include idioms, collocations, fixed and semi-fixed expressions. These chunks are also called ‘formulaic language’. Schmitt (2000) argued that ‘Formulaic language occupies a crucial role in facilitating language; it is the key to fluency and motivates the learner’.

1.1 Statement of the study Problem:

Idiomatic expressions and collocations learning has been a matter of wide-ranging debate among educators for some years. Idiomatic expressions usually put non-native speakers in hot water both in written and oral context. On the other hand, material writers and language teachers find it difficult to develop effective materials and teach them effectively so that they relegate idioms to have a subsidiary place in syllabus. Also owing to unconvincing research findings in this area of study and lack of clear answers as to how to teach and learn idioms, addressing the question of whether using computer programs would lead to better retention compared with conventional methods may shed some light on the ambiguities (Collis, 1987). All in all, to resolve, at least partly, the above-cited problems, in the present study the researcher has developed a test consisting of idioms and collocations to have insight into the problems investigated as well as a questionnaire for ELT at different universities who have enough experience to be asked about such problems.
1.2 Study Questions:

This study tries to answer the following questions:

1) To what extent are EFL students capable of understanding and using idiomatic expressions?
2) To what extent are EFL students capable of understanding and using collocations?
3) To what extent do EFL students encounter problems of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations?

1.3 Study Hypotheses:

The study will be conducted upon the following hypotheses:

1- To some extent EFL students are not sufficiently capable of using idiomatic expressions.
2- To some extent EFL students are not sufficiently capable of using collocations.
3- There are some problems that encounter students in understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations.
4- EFL learners’ L1 may affect negatively students’ use of appropriate collocation.
1.4 Objectives of the Study:

This study aims at achieving the following objectives:

1. To investigate the problems that face EFL students when they encounter idiomatic expressions and collocations.
2. To show how to foster students’ proficiency by having them use idioms and collocations
3. To highlight the importance of idiomatic expressions and collocations in the everyday language use

1.5 Significance of the Study

Idiomatic expressions and collocations are, frequently used by languages in the world; mostly have socio-cultural, historical, or political origins. Although many similar expressions can be found across languages, many more do not coincide exactly in their linguistic or semantic meaning and use (Laufer, 2000; Lontas, 2001; Koosha and Zarei, 2003). Idiomatic usage is so common that it can be difficult to speak and write without using idioms (McMordie and Seidl, 1978). Since idioms are frequently utilized in spoken and written English, language learners must make an effort to master idioms, though complete mastery may be nearly impossible (Cooper, 1999; Irujo, 1986; McCarthy and Walsh, 2010). Because English is so highly idiomatic and figurative, idiomatic expressions make up the heart of the language, giving it color, feeling, charm, and precision (Adkins, 1968). Idioms are generally a pervasive feature of many languages and English particularly seems to be rich in such multi-word lexemes (Anglin, 1993; Cornelia, 1999; Goulden and Read, 1990). Therefore, being competent in understanding and using idioms is
in fact paramount to having a good command of the depth of vocabulary (Milton, 2009). Also, knowledge of idioms correlates highly with vocabulary span (McGavigan, 2009). This study investigates the problems of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations that face Sudanese EFL students and how to acquire English idiomatic expressions and collocations proficiently. There are a large number of schools, English institutes, and English laboratories where learners are going to learn English to meet their requirements. Thus, the most remarkable part of their daily conversations depends on English idiomatic expressions and collocations which are mainly used in their exchange of their ideas.
1.6 Methodology of the Study

This study follows the descriptive analytical method. The data will be collected using a test and computer software also there will be a questionnaire. It will be distributed to the learners of English language at Sudan University of Science and Technology (SUST) college of languages. The data will be analyzed statistically by using computer through SPSS.

1.7 Limits of the study

In this study, the study makes some delimitation as follows:

1. The study will take place at Sudan University of Science and Technology, faculty of Education and Faculty of languages English language Dept. (both male and female, 3rd year students - 2nd semester.) to investigate the problems of understanding and using idiomatic expression and collocatations among those students.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the theoretical framework and the second section deals with the previous studies. The theoretical framework section provides a review and discussion of the concepts of idiomatic expressions and collocations, tracing the historical background of the term ‘idiom’ in both western and Arabic studies. It further aims to examine the sources of idiomatic expressions. Attention is also paid to establishing the similarities and differences between idioms and other linguistic structures, including metaphor and metonymy. Also, consideration is given to the literal and figurative meaning of idiomatic expressions.

2.1 Defining the Concept of Idiomatic Expression

An idiom is a phrase or sentence whose meaning is not clear from the meaning of individual words and which must be learnt as a whole unit. (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 1999) In other words, the meaning of an idiomatic expression is not the sum of the individual words. For example, the meaning of bite the dust has little to do with the meaning of bite or dust; similarly the meaning of by and large cannot be understood from the literal meanings of by or large. In the literature, idioms have been defined by many linguists and lexicographers in different ways. Swinney and Cutler (1972, p. 523) define idioms as "a string of two or more words for which meaning is not derived from the meanings of the individual words comprising that string." According to Irujo (1986), an idiom is a conventionalized expression
whose meaning cannot be determined from the meaning of its parts. Similarly, Abel (2003) describes idioms as fixed expressions whose figurative meaning is not clear from the literal meaning of their individual constituents. Grant and Bauers (2004) argue that all the definitions established by the linguists are so general that teachers and learners are faced with a variety of items that are not uniform to be used as a part of teaching/learning task. In other words, the previous definitions can be applied to wide-ranging Multi Word Units (MWU) found in this category. They, therefore, propose a clearer and more restricted definition of the notion of idiom by classifying MWUs into three categories: Core idioms (non-compositional MWUs, the meaning of which cannot be derived from the meanings of their constituents), Figuratives (MWUs with metaphors), and ONCEs (one non-compositional element). Grant and Bauers add that in traditional definitions there are three recurrent themes which are not well defined: Non-compositionality, institutionalization, and frozenness or fixedness among which they conclude that non-compositionality is the key criterion to define an idiom. Zhang (2009), on the other hand, states that "idioms are a type of multiple word units that have both literal and figurative meaning. In most cases, the figurative meaning of an idiom cannot be readily derived from the literal meaning of the individual constituent in the unit."(p. 6)
2.1.2 Idiomatic Expressions and Language:

All languages have structures. When we use a language, we structure it in a way that complies with the structural system peculiar to that language. MSA, for instance, operates according to patterns including nominal and verbal sentences, annexation and similar structures.

Sinclair (1991) argues that there are two models which can be used to explain the meaning of a language text, namely, the Open Choice Principle and the Idiom Principle. The former, which describes language in terms of ‘slot-and-filler’ modes, views language text as the result of a large number of complex open choices made at each point where a unit is completed. The text is viewed, therefore, as a series of slot nodes which can be filled from a lexicon governed by the particular constraints of the language in question. In practice, it has been noticed that the number of possible slots is effectively minimised because the sentences produced by native speakers of a language are not as widely various as might be expected by the Open Choice Principle. The Idiom Principle, on the other hand, states that the choice in slots/the tree structure is not open. Rather, native speakers have a number of pre-constructed phrases (units) formed by single choices. This principle is sustainable because words do not occur at random in a text (Ji and Zhang, 2012:149-150; Liu, 2008:25).

Nicolas (1995:234-235) distinguishes between three semantic patterns constituted from word combinations, namely: 

- free combinations (also known as compositional
sentences), (2) collocations, and (3) idioms. Compositional sentences convey a literal meaning, which is simply the sum of all their constituent elements, i.e. all the words in the sentence or phrase contribute to the meaning of the structure. According to Nicolas (1995), the second pattern, known as collocations, consists of two words, and underlies the free combinations, e.g. ‘fast food’. Collocations have a special feature, namely that their meaning is fixed whenever it is linked with a particular structure. Consequently, they can be viewed as ‘semi-compositional’. The third type of semantic patterns, idioms, bear no compositional relation to their free- composition sense, as can be demonstrated in an English example such as “to kick the bucket” meaning “to die”.

2.1.3 A Historical Overview of Idiomatic Expressions

Although idiomatic expressions are a widespread linguistic phenomenon which has been studied by many scholars (Al-Qassimi, 1979), they did not attract the interest of European linguistic and literary scholars until the second half of the nineteenth century, a trend which was led by Russian linguists (Hussam Al-Din, 1985: 18). This resulted in the production of dictionaries of idiomatic expressions in several European languages (Husam Al-Din, 1985: 16-17).

Idiomatic expressions have also been referred to variously as lexical clusters, semantically exocentric expressions, collocations, formulas, phrases, compound lexical units, and specialized hypermorphemes (Makkai, 1972: 26). Makkai (1972: 26) identifies five definition for idioms, and he tends towards to the fourth of these which is the ideational form in the Oxford English Dictionary: “A
form of expression, grammatical construction, phrase, etc, peculiar to a language, a peculiarity of phraseology approved by usage of language and often having a signification other than its grammatical or logical one” (1972: 23). The same author states that an idiomatic expression can be a phrase or a clause. Moreover, it is a complex unit which has a special function in the sentence, and it is possible to replace this unit by other units; in addition, its meaning is not derived or cannot be predicted from its components.

Fraser (1970: 22) has the same common definition of idioms, which is a constituent or series of constituents whose semantic interpretation does not have a compositional function of the formative elements of which they are composed. In Fraser’s view, there are seven levels of frozenness in idioms: level six (L6) – unrestricted – presents the most extreme level of allowing change operations, whereas level zero (L0) is the extreme level of frozenness. Therefore, he claims that there is no idiomatic expression related to L6. In Davies’ (1983: 68) definition, the idiomatic expression is a phrase or sentence which is used conventionally in a different meaning from its literal meaning. Moreover, he considers that some idioms do not have a literal meaning, and if the phrase has a literal meaning, that will cause ambiguity.

Some western studies look at idioms as dead metaphors, simply because these idioms were once metaphorical but have lost their metaphorical meaning over a long period of use, and have now become equivalent to a simple literal phrase (Gibbs, 1992: 485). Keysar and Bly (1999) state that the idiom “kick the bucket” is the most
common example given in linguistic and psychological textbooks, which reflects the traditional concept of idioms as “frozen forms whose meanings are represented in the mental lexicon as one word”. However, their view of idioms is that “an idiom is an expression whose meaning is not a compositional function of its elements or word” (Keysar and Bly, 1999: 1560). According to Gibbs (1992: 485), idioms are not dead metaphors but have more complex meanings that are motivated by conceptual metaphors linking idiomatic phrases with their figurative interpretations. Moreover, Cacciari and Tabossi (1988: 668) believe that an idiom is characterized as “a string of words whose semantic interpretation cannot be derived compositionally from the interpretation of its parts”. Another definition by Huber-Okrainec et al. (2005: 349) is that idioms are “phrases with figurative meaning that are not directly derived from literal meanings of the words in the phrase”. Similarly, there is another definition given by Cain et al. (2009: 280), who state that idioms have both literal and figurative meaning, depending on the context. Hockett (1958: 172) gives a general definition of idiomatic expression. He claims that any linguistic element whose meaning cannot be predicted from its structures will be an idiom; this includes small units of morphemes, such as /tele/ /phone/ and /class/ /room/, and also includes multi-word units like: “What’s up?”. Moreover, Liu (2008: 4-5) argues that Hockett is the only one who treats individual morphemes as idiomatic expressions. In a different way, Katz and Postal (1963) and Makkai (1972) consider that individual words consisting of polymorphisms, such as greenhouse and telephone should be
classified as idioms.

Katz and Postal (1963: 275) maintain that the linguistic structure of an idiomatic expression includes polymorphemic words whose meaning is not derived or composed from its component parts. They distinguish two kinds of idioms: ‘lexical idioms’, which are constituted by polymorphemic words and ‘phrase idioms’ which are constituted from multiple words. Similarly, Liu (2008:5) gives the example of ‘telephone’ for the first type (lexical idioms). In his view, the meaning of this idiom is that of a device for long distance talk, and the meaning of the idiom does not come from the structural meaning of the idiom elements (tele = far), (phone = sound). For the other type –phrase idioms–, he gives the example ”kick the bucket”.

Nunberg et al. (1994: 497) clarify two kinds of idiomatic expressions, both of which have a conventional meaning. The first is “idiomatically combining expressions” and an example of this type is the idiom “spill the beans” the meaning of which is composed of its literal meaning. The second one is “idiomatic phrases”, and an example of this type is “kick the bucket”, in which the components do not contribute to its idiomatic meaning.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that all definitions revolve around the idea that the actual sense of an idiomatic expression cannot be predicted simply by interpreting the sum of its literal meanings. The other additional ideas are represented by referring to its semantic and structural aspects; an idiom may consist of one word or a group of words, and the meaning of an idiomatic expression is close to the meaning of one word.
Moving to the terminology of idiomatic expressions, its concept and resources in Arabic Studies, it appears to have received little attention prior to the arrival of Al- Qassimi (1979) and Husam Al-Din (1985). However, Husam Al-Din looks at the term for idioms in Arabic Studies, trying to find any term which is semantically close to idiomatic expressions, and identifies several terms used by Arab scholars of rhetoric and linguistics. To begin with, we will identify the term in ancient studies to establish what was written about idiomatic expression or terminology which is semantically close. Following this, the term’s use in modern studies will be clarified by examining how these tackle the terminology of idiomatic expressions.

2.2.1. The importance of idioms in FLL

Apart from difficulties in comprehension and production, idioms are an important aspect in foreign language learning. Using figurative language is one of the main features of native like language and idiomaticity is a nature of proficiency as well as fluency that language learners are expected to achieve.

The importance of idioms has been emphasized by linguists and language teachers in recent years. Bortfeld (2003) believes that the increasing number of idioms in Dictionary of American Idioms (Boatner, Gates, & Makkai, 1975-1995) is indicative of the essential role idioms play in daily language use. In this regard, Moreno (2011) refers to three main reasons why it is so crucial to teach idioms arguing that because of their high frequency, special attention should be paid to idioms and language teachers should not relegate them to a secondary state in the curriculum:
First, frequent use of idioms makes language learners fluent speakers, and figurative competence in a foreign language is a sign of communicative competence. Moreover, idiomatic expressions which give language variety and character help learners penetrate into culture, customs, and lifestyle of the target language. Secondly, cognitive linguistic studies have demonstrated the crucial role of memory in learning fixed expressions such as idioms. Hence, the teachability and learnability of idioms and their pedagogical aspect should be taken into account. Finally, many idioms are constantly changing over time, in order to find out their underlying essence, we have to resort to cultural factors and adopt a diachronic view of the language (such as etymological elaboration).

2.2.2 Difficulty of Idioms; Comprehension and Usage

No doubt, L2 learners encounter difficulties during the acquisition of the English language. Understanding idioms is one of these difficulties. According to Cooper (2012), L2 learners would encounter idioms in all kind of discourse; news, lectures, movies, books and daily conversations. Furthermore, Chuang (2013) denoted in her research study that mastering these multiword units or language chunks is not easy for language learners since the meanings of these texts cannot be determined through the analysis of their individual word meanings. Therefore, idioms represent a hindrance in the linguistic development of L2 learners. Because of the difficulty of understanding idioms, this section looks into reading processes to see how idioms are comprehended. Generally, language receptive organs transmit data to the brain to be processed and the brain performs what is known as comprehension. Data, in this context, refers to language in either form written or heard.
Therefore, comprehension is defined as the process of understanding that requires mental operations. These operations are divided into two levels; the low-level and high-level and they take place simultaneously. Two well-known models depict reading processes: the text model and the situational model. For details about reading comprehension processing, check Grabe (2009).

With regard to idiom comprehension, Holsinger and Kaiser (2013) stated that it is less clear how comprehenders arrive at the idiomatic interpretation. They wondered whether literal processing is necessary to reach the idiomatic interpretation. They found that context clues have an essential role to play during reading processes. The results of their research study revealed that when readers expect a literal interpretation in a situation where the sentence turns out to be idiomatic, real-time processing is disrupted more than if comprehenders are expecting an idiomatic interpretation and the sentence turns out to be literal. Their study revealed that idiomatic texts consume more time be comprehended than literal ones.

### 2.2.3 Grammatical and syntactic restrictions of idioms

In addition to the above inherent features, Baker (1992, p. 163) notes that the following grammatical and syntactic restrictions of idioms should be taken into account since they may affect the degree of idiomaticity of lexical items and remove the figurativeness of idiomatic expressions, which is the
most important feature of idioms.

a) **Addition**: adding the adverb *very* to the adjective *red* in *red herring* affects its figurative meaning. *(Very red herring)*

b) **Deletion**: deleting any word from an idiomatic expression would alter its meaning or idiomatic sense. For example, deleting the adjective *sweet* from the expression *have a sweet tooth* would change the meaning.

c) **Substitution**: we cannot replace any words in idioms even if those words are synonyms. For example, in *the long and short of it* the adjective *long* cannot be substituted by adjective *tall* despite the fact that they have nearly the same meaning.

d) **Modification**: any change in the grammatical structure of an idiom will alter its meaning. For instance, the expression *stock, barrel, and lock* is not idiomatic because the order of the items in the expression *lock, stock, and barrel* has been altered.

e) **Comparative**: adding the comparative suffix 'er' to the adjectives in idiomatic expressions such as *be in hot water* changes the conventional sense of the idiom (be in trouble).

f) **Passive**: changing the passive form into active will damage the figurative meaning of many idioms. The expression *they spilled the beans* is idiomatic while its passive form *some beans were spilled* has a completely different meaning.

2.2.4 **Classifications of idioms**

Idioms have been classified from different points of view, syntactically or semantically. Makkai (1972) divides idioms into two categories:
1. **Idioms of Encoding (identifiable)** idioms of encoding are those idiosyncratic lexical combinations that have transparent meaning involving collocational preferences and restrictions, exemplified by *at* in *he drove at 70 m.p.h.*

2. **Idioms of decoding (non-identifiable)** idioms of decoding refer to those non-identifiable and misleading lexical expressions whose interpretations could not be comprehended on the basis of only learned linguistic conventions. In other words, the meaning of decoding idioms is not predicatable. Expressions such as *beat about the bush* and *fly off the handle* are examples of this type of idioms. Idioms of decoding are classified into lexemic and sememic idioms. (Makkai, 1972, p. 135-179)

A. **Lexemic idioms**

   a) Phrasal verbs: e.g., *to come up with, to take part in*

   b) Tournures (turns of phrase): e.g., *fly off the handle, kick the bucket*

   c) Irreversible binomials: e.g., *paper and salt, coffee and cream*

   d) Phrasal compounds: e.g., *black ice, black board*

   e) Incorporating verbs: e.g., *man-handle*
f) Pseudo-idioms: e.g., *spick and span, kit and kin*

**B. Sememic idioms**

Usually convey pragmatic meanings related to a particular culture. They include:

a) Proverbs: e.g., *A bird in hand is worth two in the bush.*

b) Familiar quotations: e.g., *Not a mouse stirring.*

c) 'First base 'idioms: associated with a national game like baseball, e.g., *have two strikes against one, never to get to first base.*

d) Idioms of 'institutionalized politeness': such as *may I ........?*

e) Idioms of 'institutionalized greeting': e.g., *How do you do? , So long.*

f) Idioms of 'institutionalized understatement': e.g., *I wasn't too crazy about him.*

g) Idioms of 'institutionalized hyperbole': e.g., *He won't even lift a finger.*

The degree of 'idiomaticity' that an idiom carries is the most important feature based on which different scholars and linguists have classified idioms. Moon (1996) classifies idioms based on 'the spectrum of idiomaticity':

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Transparent- opaque idioms

1. Transparent idioms:

Transparent idioms are those idioms which are easy to comprehend and translate and their meaning can be derived from the meanings of their constituent parts. E.g.1. *Back and forth* 2. *Fight a losing battle*.

2. semi- transparent idioms:

Idioms that usually have metaphorical meaning and their constituent parts have a little role in comprehending the whole meaning of the expression.

   e.g. *Break the ice* (to reveal the tension)

3. semi- opaque idioms:

The group of idioms whose figurative meaning is not related to the meanings of their constituent words. In other words, the idiomatic expression is separated in two parts; a part with literal meaning, and the other part with a figurative meaning.

   e.g. *To know the rope* (to know how a particular job should be done)
4. Opaque idioms:

Opaque idioms are the most difficult type of idioms, because the literal meanings of their parts have little to do with the actual sense of idioms; that is, the meaning of an opaque idiom cannot be derived from the meanings of its individual parts because there are items which have cultural references.

E.g., 1. *To burn one's boat* (to make retreat impossible)

2. *Spill the beans* (to reveal a secret)

McCarty and O'Dell (2003) made a syntactic classification of English idioms according to their possible combination:

a) **verb+ object / complement**: (and or adverbial) e.g., *kill two birds with one stone*

(achieve two aims with a single action or at the same time)

b) **Prepositional phrase**: e.g., *in the blink of an eye* (in an extremely short time)

c) **Compound**: e.g., *a bone of contention* (a subject about which there is disagreement)

d) **Smile** (as + adjective + as or like + a noun): e.g., *as dry as a bone* (very dry indeed)

e) **Binominal** (word + and + word): e.g., *rough and ready*, (crude and
lacking sophistication)

f) Trinomial (word + word + and +word): e.g., cool, calm and collected
(relaxed, in

control, not nervous)

g) Whole clause or sentence: e.g., to cut a long story short (to get to the
point of what one is saying quickly) (p.6)

2.2.5 Idiom Processing and comprehension

Research on idiom processing and comprehension in English has resulted
in the emergence of different idiom processing models, which have been
summarized as five models (Bobrow & Bell, 1973; Gibbs, 1984; Gibbs &
Gonzales, 1985; Gibbs, Nayak, & Catting, 1989; Swinney & Cutler, 1979;
Titon & Connie, 1999) This section will review these models briefly.

The first model of idiom processing, which was proposed by Bobrow and
Bell (1973), is idiom list hypothesis. According to this model, idiomatic
expressions are accessed from a 'mental idiom word dictionary' called idiom
list that is not part of the person's normal mental lexicon and access from this
list takes place through what has been called idiom mode. Bobrow and Bell
believe that such processing strategy is different from the processing of
literal expressions and normal sentences. When a person first encounters an
idiom he/she would attempt to analyze it literally. If the literal analysis fails, the person will access the mental idiom list and then will interpret the idiom non-literally. In other words, the figurative meaning of the idiom will be activated. This model was criticized by later studies in that the essence of this model implied serial processing of idioms, and therefore, could not measure on-line or real time language processing. Swinney and Cutler (1979) argue the research supporting this model has relied on post-perceptual measures of idiom comprehension processes: "post- perceptual tasks are not necessarily capable of supporting inferences about perceptual processes; any task which measures effects only after they are over runs the risk of reflecting merely the final, conscious, result of such processing by which that final processing was achieved" (P. 526).

The second model of idiom processing is lexical representation hypothesis, which was supported by Swinney and Cutler's study (1979). The main principle of this model is that idioms are simply complex long words that are stored in the mental lexicon just like all other words and are processed in the same way as ambiguous words (e.g. *bug* which has multiple meanings). This assumption was supported by Titon and Connine (1999), whose study showed that depending on the degree of familiarity with a particular expression, idioms like other lexical entries are readily accessible. According to this model, during idiom comprehension both literal and figurative interpretation of idiomatic expressions take place simultaneously and in parallel not serial manner; then, in a horse race model only one interpretation will be available using the related context.
The third hypothesis is *direct access hypothesis* (Gibbs, 1984), which maintains

that non literal interpretation of idioms takes place before literal meaning. Gibbs (1984) argues that when a native speaker encounters a familiar idiomatic expression, s/he will access its figurative sense directly without any reference to literal meaning and will not process the idiom literally before comprehending its intended non-literal meaning.

The three mentioned models of idiom processing are subsumed under the *direct look up* class as all of them share a common assumption that figurative meaning of idiomatic expressions are comprehended through *direct memory retrieval* (Glucksberg, 1993). These models treat idioms as words-with-spaces that are arbitrarily learned mapping between syntactic form and meaning (like words) and whose meanings are retrieved as a whole during the comprehension process. That is to say, the models rely on the idea that idioms are non-compositional strings whose figurative meanings are quite arbitrary. This assumption was later rejected by the compositional view of idiom comprehension in that the relation between figurative and literal meanings of an idiom is not always arbitrary and the meanings of individual constituents of idioms contribute to their figurative sense (compositional view).

The fourth model of idiom processing is *the compositional analysis* proposed by Gibbs, Nayak, and Cutting (1989). Their study revealed that subjects process decomposable idioms faster than non-decomposable idioms. Decomposable idioms are idioms whose figurative meanings are related to literal meanings (e.g. *pop the question*) while in non-decomposable idioms
the figurative meaning cannot be derived from literal meaning (e.g. *kick the bucket*). According to compositional analysis model, during idiom processing people analyze the meanings of individual words of the idioms and then come up with their overall meaning as any phrase or sentence.

Finally, the *Hybrid model* (Titon & Connine, 1999) gained insight from all earlier models. It has been suggested in this model that the 'direct look up' model as well as the 'compositional model' are involved in idiom processing. Titon and Connine argue that none of the above approaches alone is adequate for idiom processing, and that compositional and non-compositional (direct look up) approaches are complementary and essential for idiom comprehension. The hybrid model is based on the belief that during idiom comprehension both literal and figurative meanings are activated. In addition, processing decomposable idioms is faster than non-decomposable idioms because it takes longer to integrate the correct sense into intended meaning and idiomatic context. This model was supported by Abel (2003) in that it posed both literal and figurative meanings and controls for the decomposable idioms. He extended the model and introduced the *dual idiom representation* model. The idea behind this model was that non-decomposable idioms are accessed from an idiom entry while decomposable idioms are represented via their constituent entries, which can develop an idiom entry if they are encountered more frequently. According to this model, frequency is an important aspect in language processing and should be part of every model of idiom comprehension. On the other hand, idiom entry should be regarded as additional information about
frequently accruing linguistic entities (Abel, 2003).

All the proposed models which were discussed are known to be more relevant to

L₁ (monolingual) language learners; the few studies on L₂ idiom comprehension have not proposed specific idiom processing models. Therefore, discovering how idiomatic expressions are represented in the mental lexicon of L₂ learners and whether or not the processes involved in idiom comprehension are equal in L₁ and L₂ learners, are important subjects of research in applied linguistics. Therefore, instead of processing models, a number of strategies are used to facilitate the comprehension of L₂ idioms such as etymological elaboration, the use of contextual clues, and the use of L₁ in L₂ (Zhang, 2009).

2.2.6 Production of idioms

Using figurative language in everyday speech makes it productive and colorful; idiomaticity helps EFL learners to achieve the expected level of proficiency. Apart from comprehension of idiomatic expressions, idiom production has been of much interest in SLA.

Levelt and Meyer (2000) proposed a model of idiom production (Super lemma model) based on Levelt’s speech production model (1989). Speech production model includes four autonomous components: conceptualizer which is responsible for deciding the notion or utterance meaning on the conceptual level, formulator which is responsible for translating the created
message into syntactic form, articulator which
is responsible for articulating phonological structures, and self-monitoring
system which helps the speaker monitor his/ her speech for errors. According
to superlemma theory (Levelt & Meyer, 2000), idiomatic expressions are
activated as superlemmas; then a superlemma activates its constituent single
lemmas. Therefore, in idiomatic expressions, the lemma selection stage in
formulator involves two stages which make the retrieval process and the
production of figurative language more complex than normal non-figurative
expressions. For example, the concept die activates the superlemma kick
the bucket and then this superlemma activates the lemmas kick, the, and
bucket.

2.2.7 Teaching figurative idioms

2.2.7.1. The Traditional and Cognitive approaches to idioms in
SLA

According to Boers, Demecheleer, and Eyckmans (2004, p.375), before
1990s, figurative idioms were neglected in EFL literature because of three
assumptions:
1. Language was conceived as a dichotomy of 'grammar rules' and
lists of individual words', and MWUs such as idioms were not put in this
dichotomy.
2. Idioms were considered to be ornamental; hence they could be relevant
only to very advanced learners as a way of making their message colorful.
3. It was believed that idioms are quite arbitrary and cannot be taught
in any systematic way. In other words, the meaning of an idiom cannot be
predicted on the basis of the meanings of its constituent parts (Non-
compositional view).

These misconceptions were the main insights of the traditional view, which considered figurative expressions as 'dead metaphors' that could be learned only through blind memorization (Boers, 2001). Meanwhile, cognitive semantics shed new lights on the teaching and learning of idioms. The most salient belief in cognitive linguistics is that the meaning of most figurative idioms is not merely arbitrary. Boers et al., (2004, p. 376) enumerate the main considerations of cognitive semantics which oppose the traditional approach to idioms in EFL as follows:

1. Language is conceived as a continuum from simple to more complex units and not as grammar/ lexis dichotomy. Multiple word expressions occupy a central position in this continuum.
2. Figurative expressions are not optional ornament but omnipresent in everyday language and they must be used whenever discourse is involved in non- concrete subjects, and idioms are an inherent part of linguistic system. Therefore language learners should build a large repertoire of idioms in order to use them actively and speak fluently.
3. In cognitive semantics, it has been taken for granted that many figurative expressions such as idioms are motivated rather than arbitrary. In other words, while their figurative meaning cannot be completely predictable from literal meanings of their parts, the connection between their figurative and literal meanings may be possible (compositional view). This can be done by the general conceptual metaphor behind them. For example, the idiomatic expression 'I was boiling with anger' can be
motivated by the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS HEAT. In addition, the meaning of idioms can be motivated by referring to their source domain (origin) in which they were used in a literal meaning. For instance, *to come up trumps* can be traced back to the source domain of card game.

Therefore, cognitive semantics offers systematic and insightful ways of teaching and learning idioms (Boers, 2001).

### 2.2.7.2 Etymological elaboration: an effective strategy in teaching idioms

Ilson (1983) has defined etymology in a narrow and a broad conception. When etymology is used in learner's dictionaries, it means the search for 'etyma' and cognates in order to find its source in earlier stages of the same language or other languages. The broader conception of etymology includes the search for sources and parallels, and information about how a word, phrase, or sense has come to be as it is. The significant role of etymology in L2 vocabulary learning has long been embraced by researchers in the literature. Zolfagharkhani and Ghorbani Moghadam (2011) conducted a study with Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners in order to show the impact of etymological instruction on vocabulary learning. The results of their study revealed that the participants receiving treatment (introducing prefixes, suffixes, roots, and origin of the words) in the experimental group outperformed those in the control group, which followed its normal education.
Returning to idioms, associating idioms with information about their origin and source domains is called etymological elaboration. As it was mentioned earlier, in cognitive linguistics, it is maintained that the meaning of many idioms is somehow motivated by their literal, original usage. So, by the advent of cognitive linguistics, etymological elaboration has received special attention in the area of second language idioms learning based on the belief that etymology can enhance idiom comprehension.

2.2.7.2.1 Theories underlying etymological elaboration

There are several theories that have been used by specialists to explain the effectiveness of etymological elaboration in the comprehension of idiomatic expressions, among which conceptual metaphor theory and dual coding theory seem to be the most significant (Boers, 2001; Boers, Eyckman, & Strenger, 2007; Moreno, 2001). They will be reviewed in this section.

A. Conceptual Metaphor Theory

An essential aspect in cognitive science is the idea that metaphor is not just an aspect of language, but constitutes a significant part of conceptual system (Gibbs, 1994; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Murphy (1996) confirms this claim, arguing that mental representation is in part metaphoric and not
completely a linguistic phenomenon and metaphors are a mode of representation and thought. Many aspects of our knowledge are abstract and difficult for people to represent (e.g. anger, mind); therefore, they are represented via the metaphorical mapping of familiar source domain on to less familiar target domain. In other words, a metaphor relates the abstract concepts to concrete ones that are more understandable. For example, the concept LOVE is often conceptualized through making relationship between the 'physical journey' and 'love': LOVE IS A JOURNEY (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

The conceptual metaphor theory, which is based on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) work, seems to contribute to idioms comprehension in that in extended conceptual metaphor theory, it is believed that metaphors have changed over time and have lost their metaphoricity and now exist within our mental lexicon as frozen idioms, not as separate semantic units in the lexicon. (Gibbs, Bogdanovich, Sykes, & Barr, 1997)

Therefore, many idioms can be traced back to a common conceptual metaphor.

For example, based on the conceptual metaphors: BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS and ANGER IS HEAT, the following idiomatic expressions have been generated:

*She was fuming.*
*I was boiling with anger*

*She flipped her lid*
He exploded

He blew up at me

She was breathing fire

That remark added fuel to the fire (Boers, 2001, p. 35)

As a result, many idioms are motivated by original conceptual metaphors behind them. So, these metaphors can be introduced to L2 learners in any language as etymological information, which is likely to enhance L2 idioms comprehension.

B. Dual Coding Theory

The dual coding theory (Paivio, 1991) claims that cognition involves the activity of both verbal and nonverbal systems. The verbal system deals directly with language and nonverbal system deals with non-linguistic objects and events. Based on dual coding theory, both verbal and non-verbal decoding are involved in language phenomena. Verbal code includes spoken and written language, and non-verbal code deals with the imagery representation of non-verbal objects. The meanings of words can be better recalled if learners associate their imagery representations with their verbal code simultaneously. Concreteness has a strong effect on recalling word meaning since with abstract concepts non-verbal
decoding is not possible. Etymological elaboration helps learners to build up a mental image by original usage of idioms; therefore, verbal information of an idiom on the one hand, and a mental image of it on the other hand, help learners to comprehend and recall its meaning more successfully (Zhang, 2009).

### 2.2.7.3 Idioms and Contextual clues

Physical and discourse environments constrain the possible interpretations of phrases or sentences and the referent of their constituents. Using contextual clues to infer the meaning of unknown words is an effective strategy which helps learners acquire skills and aids vocabulary learning (Dunmore, 1989). In addition, using contextual pragmatic clues seems to have a considerable effect on L2 idiom comprehension particularly in understanding opaque idioms whose meaning cannot be inferred from the individual word meanings.

As Swinney and Cutler (1979) state, most idioms have the feature of ambiguity. This means that idioms which are grammatically well formed have an acceptable literal meaning as well as figurative meaning. So, the comprehension of such idioms will be problematic. Swinney and Cutler (1979) believe that idioms are stored and processed in a mental lexicon like other words and sentences, and their literal and non-literal processing take place simultaneously (lexical representation hypothesis). In the case of normal phrases and sentences, this ambiguity seems to be
resolved through prior context. In other words, contextual clues can influence the interpretation of an ambiguous sentence with literal and non-literal meanings (Bobrow & Bell, 1973). Hence, contextual clues can account for ambiguous idioms too.

Studies on using contextual clues in L2 idiom comprehension have found that guessing from context is an effective strategy and is recurrently used in L2 idiom comprehension. Cooper (1999) used the think-aloud research method to investigate the kind of strategies L2 learners employ in the comprehension of unfamiliar idioms. The result showed that a number of strategies were used to comprehend idioms: guessing from context (28%), discussing and analyzing the idiom (24%), using the literal meaning (19%), repeating or paraphrasing the idiom (7%), using background knowledge (7%), referring to an L1 idiom (5%), others (2%). The overall results of Cooper's study revealed that the most frequently used strategy, which was the most successful one, was guessing from context as it led to correct answers 75% of the time.

In a similar vein, Cain, Towes, and Knight (2009) investigated the contribution of inference from context to young children's understanding of idiomatic sentences. They compared 7-8 and 9-10 year-old learner's abilities to adults in using the strategy of inferencing from context to comprehend idioms. Multiple choice tasks with and without a supportive story context were used in this experiment as an instrument. Children's performance was compared to adults' performance after the treatment. Results showed that very young children were sensitive
to meanings in context and could process language at the phrasal and discourse level while these processing skills, which help idiom comprehension, were not fully developed in 11-12 year-olds.

2.2.7.4 Lexical knowledge and idiom learning

Lexical knowledge involves not only knowing the literal meaning of a word, but also having knowledge about its different connotations, morphological aspects, and syntactic structure. Williams (1994, p. 8) defines lexical knowledge as "knowledge of complex abstract structures (such as idioms and paradigms) that cannot be arrived at through parameter settings and which must be learned from the data in a strong sense."

Research in the area of SLA has demonstrated the crucial role of word knowledge in learners' level of proficiency in receptive and productive knowledge of English. Auguest, Carol, Dressler, and Snow (2005) examined the critical role of vocabulary development for English language learners. Their study showed that students with low vocabulary knowledge performed poorly in comprehending English texts. The importance of effective vocabulary instruction in oral and written language comprehension was most emphasized in this study.

Apart from the significant role which lexical knowledge has in comprehending normal sentences and expressions, it seems to facilitate idiom comprehension and production. As it was mentioned in previous sections, contrary to the traditional view that the meaning of most idioms is quite arbitrary and that the meanings of individual words in idiomatic expressions do not contribute to their overall interpretation, the compositional approach to idioms refers to internal semantic structure and the
literal processing of idioms as well as non-literal interpretation of them. The compositional view is based on the notion that the meaning of an idiom is built out of literal word meanings and the special interpretation of word meanings in a particular context, much like other literal and figurative aspects of language (Titon & Connine, 1999, P 1661). Titon and Connine (1999) attempted to prove this claim through the standard example *Kick the bucket* arguing that although the words *kick*, *the*, and *bucket* do not directly mean *to die*, *John kicked the bucket in a car accident* is more plausible statement for the listener than *John lay kicking the bucket due to his chronic illness* because the verb *kick* denotes a sudden action; hence, its reference to a sudden event is more plausible than an event that reveals gradually.

Cieslicka (2006) addressed the question of how the literal meanings of the constituents of idioms contribute to their comprehension over the figurative interpretation of them in a literal - salience model. The literal assumption model is a model whose major assumption is that understanding L2 idioms entails computation of the literal meanings of their constituent words even if the idioms are used in a figurative context and figurative interpretation is known to L2 learners. The experiment was conducted with advanced Polish learners of English in an on-line technique and its results supported the priority of literal meanings of constituent words of idioms in the course of L2 idioms. In the same vein, Zyzik (2011) examined the acquisition of Spanish idioms in the classroom setting that was supplemented with explicit instruction over a 10 week period. The results of his study indicated the significant effect of prior
lexical knowledge in the comprehension of Spanish idioms.

2.3 Defining the Concept of Collocation

Despite different definitions of collocation provided by different scholars, it seems to be still some disagreement over its definition. One of the regular definitions of collocation is the strong propensity of one word to co-occur with another word in a particular context (Aghbar 1990; Al-Zahrani 1998; Gitsaki 1999; Nation 2001; Nesselhauf, 2003). According to Sinclair (1991), a collocation is “either a recurring combination of words that is often arbitrary, or just a recurring combination of a few words without emphasizing its arbitrariness” (p. 123). Jacquemin (2001) argued that collocation is “recurrent combinations of words that co-occur more frequently than it would be expected just by chance and that correspond to arbitrary word usage” (p. 58). Cruse (1986) defined collocation as “sequences of lexical items which habitually co-occur.” (p. 40). According to Aghbar (1990), “a collocation refers to two words or more that recurrently co-occur together in the memory of native speakers and are used together with some frequency in both written and spoken discourse. For example, in the sentence “His album come out in the spring”, “noun”, “album” recurrently co-occurs with the verb “comes out”. Crystal (1997) stated, “They are a type of syntagmatic relation that is predictable to a greater or lesser extent (e.g., the bond between spick and span is stronger than that between letter and pill-box)”.
2.3.1 Classification of Collocations

Many scholars have acknowledged the importance of collocations in TEFL and SLA. However, each one of them has divided collocations according to different aspects. Therefore, there are different categories. The most common types are discussed below:

2.3.1.1 Idiomatic Combinations:

Idiomatic combinations are also known as fixed combinations or frozen expressions. They are a group of words whose meaning is not predictable from the individual parts. They have fixed patterning. For example, the idiom “kick the bucket” means to die, which has no relation to the meanings of the words “kick” or “the bucket”.

2.3.1.2 Non-idiomatic Combinations:

Non-idiomatic combinations are classified to free and restricted combinations. According to Aisenstadt (1981), “Free collocations are combinations of two or more words with free commutability within the grammatical and semantic framework of the language. They are the vast majority of collocations in the language” (p. 59). Free collocations are known as “the least cohesive type of word combinations. The noun ‘murder’, for example, can be used with many verbs to analyze, condemn, and discuss (etc.) a murder.” (Bahns and Eldaw 1993, P. 102). Restricted collocations are the second type of non-idiomatic combinations. They are expressions whose meanings can be predicted from the meanings of the individual words. “They are used frequently, spring to mind readily, and
are psychologically salient (as opposed to free combinations)” (Bahns and Eldaw 1993, P. 102).

Benson et al. (1986) arranged restricted collocation into two major classes, lexical collocation and grammatical collocation. Grammatical collocation consists of a noun, an adjective, or a verb plus a preposition or a grammatical structure such as an infinitive or a clause. Lexical collocations consist of nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs.

2.4 Collocation: Lexis as a level

Collocation is a term used to describe a group of words which occur repeatedly in a language. These patterns of co-occurrence can be grammatical in that they result primarily from syntactic dependencies or they can be lexical in that, although syntactic relationships are involved, the patterns result from the fact that in a given linguistic environment certain lexical items will co-occur. Studies of collocation in English have tended to be within two distinct traditions: one oriented towards specifically grammatical and one towards specifically lexical patterning. The former has tended to result in studies which have been of distinct value to language learners and have to an extent emerged from the demands of particular pedagogic projects. Work in this tradition is examined in Section 3.5. We shall begin by examining notions of collocatability which are lexical in that they also presuppose the operation of lexis as an independent linguistic level. Such work aims to describe the lexical
patterning of texts and has considerable potential for future computerized lexical research. But separate discussion of these two traditions should not be taken to imply that collocation of lexical items can be neatly subdivided nor that there can or should not be any categorical overlap in the kinds of analysis produced.

Linguists working in the tradition of lexical collocation have produced seminal studies which have contributed substantially to our understanding of lexis. Such work has often been within a broad tradition of systemic linguistics (see Berry, 1977 on ‘levels’ and ‘links’). For example, Halliday (1966), Sinclair (1966), Sinclair et al. (1970), Sinclair and Jones (1974) and, more recently, Hasan (1987) have been interested in describing ‘lexis as most delicate grammar’. Their starting point is to seek to study lexis in the same way as grammar, that is, with reference to patterns of chain (syntagmatic axis) and choice (paradigmatic axis). But the relation to grammar is an analogical one; the aim is to examine lexis as a linguistic level in parallel with and overlapping grammar but as a level which is separate and independent.

### 2.5 Sets and fields

Analysts in the tradition of systemic linguistics such as Halliday and Sinclair represent the general view of those interested specifically in what we have termed lexical collocation: that we choose lexical items from lexical sets rather as we choose types of grammatical items from grammatical systems to build up grammatical structures (see Table 3.1). Words are grouped into lexical sets as a series of semantically related options from which a
coherent text can be constructed. Thus, stag, geometry and innocence would be unlikely to co-occur in a lexical set whereas thirst, drink, beer would be more likely to. The existence of lexical sets enables us to see the structure of the lexicon as consisting of clusterings into patterns of reference usually related to a single topic. Such patterns are obviously not of such an exclusive character that an item can belong to one set and one set only. Sets overlap and intersect with each other in such a way that one and the same item may occur in different axes of meaning. The notion of lexical set is best illustrated and examined with particular reference to a specific field.

By field (or field of discourse) is meant the particular activity, cultural feature, social institution or topic for which a particular set of ideation-ally related lexical items is often evolved or adapted. Air transport, for example, constitutes a field with special items such as flight, take-off, runway, check in, etc. Each field usually has a specialized, topic-related vocabulary (for preliminary discussion see Section 2.1.9) some items of which may turn up in other fields with different meanings (and often in different grammatical collocations—see Section 3.5): for example, wings in air transport and in theatrical parlance; lock in the field of river or canal transport and in the language of security. The lexicon of fields consists of:

1 nouns labeling technical features—artefacts, equipment, structures, etc.
2 verbs identifying and distinguishing between processes, types of event, methods, etc.
3 adjectives and adverbs indicating conventional properties of an artefact, process, structure, etc. (e.g. in cookery, good pastry is said to be light; a very full tablespoon is a heaped tablespoon; stock is left to simmer
4 phrases and conventional collocations that may expand, modify or combine any of the above functions (e.g. boil over, bring to the boil)

It is common (and indeed in the nature of language) for figurative extensions and transfers of meaning to be made from familiar fields of discourse into the general stock of usage. This results partly in common metaphors (e.g. ‘I sat and seethed’, ‘I was in a seething temper’, ‘My temper boiled over’, ‘I couldn’t keep the lid on my temper’) and partly in the development of clichés, idioms and proverbs (e.g. ‘A watched pot never boils’).

Here is one field of discourse—that of cookery—and a few items of its vocabulary. These items are grouped according to: (1) names of artefacts, etc., (2) names of processes, events, etc., (3) indications of characteristics, qualities or properties, (4) common phrases and collocations, (5) figurative extensions. Note, however, that these groupings are intuitive and await more statistically significant measurement in a computational study.

COOKERY

1 Artefacts, etc.
   pot, stock-pot, kettle, pan, frying pan, skillet, saucepan, dish, jug, bowl, ladle, (carving/bread) knife, (carving) fork, steel, spoon, fish- slice, rolling pin, bread board, cooker.

2 Processes, etc.
   boil, roast, bake, brew, stew, braise, simmer, poach, grill, seal, glaze, prick,
brown. cut, dice, slice, chop, carve, shred, peel, skin, portion, mix, stir, beat, whip, fold, pour, strain.

3 Properties, etc.

tender (meat)/tough, stringy; fresh (fish, bread, butter, cheese, milk)/stale (fish, bread, cheese); rancid (butter); sour (milk, cream); curdled (milk); off (meat, fish, butter, cheese, milk); turned (milk); light (pastry, bread, cake)/heavy, soggy, doughy, leathery; crisp (toast, biscuits)/soggy, chewy; flaky (pastry); welldone, underdone, rare (steak); hard-boiled, soft-boiled (eggs).

4 Phrases, Collocations, etc.

boil over, on the boil, off the boil, come (bring) to the boil, brew tea (beer, cider, etc.), let the tea brew (draw), the tea is stewed, carve a joint (chicken, turkey, etc.), bake bread, bake a cake, fry fish, boil eggs, toast bread, dice carrots (and other ‘solid’ vegetables), chop onions (parsley, all vegetables or foodstuffs with suitably resistant texture), slice meat, bread, tomatoes (and other ‘softish’ sub-stances), shred cabbage, skin onions, shell nuts (also peas), peel and portion fruit, ladle out, spoon out, strain off, leave to set, leave to simmer (liquids).

5 Figurative Extensions

(a) Proverbs, common sayings, idioms: out of the frying pan into the fire, what’s sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, the pot calling the kettle black, to stew in one’s own juice, take it with a pinch of salt, neither fish, flesh, nor fowl, too many cooks spoil the broth, hunger is the best sauce, in the soup, a pinch of salt, a taste of one’s own gruel.
(b) Metaphor and slang: ‘I was boiling/seething’, ‘She told me to simmer down’, ‘He came off the boil after a while’ (= relapse into a calmer temper), ‘Jack likes to stir things up’ (= make trouble), ‘There’s trouble brewing’ (= in the process of being made), ‘This place is an oven’ (= very hot), ‘They grilled him for several hours’ (= interrogated very closely), ‘My boss roasted me/gave me a roasting’ (= reprimanded severely), ‘C’s speech was a large helping of rhetoric with a tiny pinch of common sense’ (= helping and pinch = large and small quantities of anything), ‘I went through a gruelling time in hospital’ (= physically painful, taxing or exhausting). Gruel, a kind of thin porridge, was the traditional diet of prisoners. In present-day criminal slang, porridge = prison, a prison sentence, cf. to do one’s porridge, to serve prison = to serve a prison sentence; earlier to stir one’s porridge, whence stir (= prison), in stir (in prison).

A more detailed version of a cookery field is worked out in Lehrer (1974b).

2.6 Patterns, ranges and restrictions

Linguists studying grammatical relations in language are concerned primarily with the establishment and description of allowed patterns and with the rejection of whatever falls outside these patterns. In the case of lexis, however, as McIntosh (1966) points out, the underlying patterns which are relevant are of a quite different order from grammatical patterning. For this phenomenon McIntosh suggests that the term ‘range’ is more applicable. Certainly it is clear that some words have different ranges
from others: for example, items to do with the inferior qualities of food have restrictive ranges. Putrid, rotten, rancid and addled are all virtually synonymous but putrid collocates with fish, rancid with butter, oil, lard, etc., addledes confined only to eggs, while rotten can collocate with fish and eggs but also specifically with fruit. Friendly and amicable are synonyms (though the latter is more formal) but only amicable is acceptable in the sentence The divorce was an amicable one. On the other hand, some evaluative adjectives have a much wider range and, compared with putrid, rotten, etc., are more generally interchangeable: for example, gruesome food, party, weather, etc.; awful dress, weather, performance, film, etc.; exciting team, food, film, etc. Lying between such groupings are words which can collocate widely but which are normally restricted to certain partners and thus in certain lexical contexts cannot be readily substituted: for example, soft, mild and gentle can all collocate with voice, breeze, rebuke or soap but each word has exclusive collocations: soft water, soft ground, soft drink; mild beer, mild steel; gentle slope, etc. (see also Mitchell, 1971, pp. 154–5). ¹

The description of restrictions on the range of collocatability of particular items can provide a way of differentiating words from each other. The study of combinational or selection restrictions is not new. Within lexical semantics the theory of componential analysis (see Section 1.9) developed the analysis of word meanings into sets of semantic features or components such as ANIMATE, NON-HUMAN, FEMALE, QUADRUPED and provided a way of distinguishing semantic incompatibility. For example, the stream danced contains a combination of features which are not normally allowed: that is, a verb which normally takes an animate subject is assigned a non-animate one. But the limited number of
semantic components made available by analysts and the arbitrary combination of items in some contexts make such an account of selection restrictions a not altogether satisfactory one. For example, there appears to be no semantic explanation for the collocation of green (as opposed to yellow or blue) with envy, or of mild (as opposed to soft or gentle) with steel. We should also note that not all semantically related lexical items have the same ranges. Consider the following generally synonymous words: obese, fat, plump stout. If we take the most familiar of these fat it will appear that it can enter into quite a wide range of collocations: for example, fat man, fat woman, fat belly, fat baby, fat chicken, fat salary, fat wad of notes, fat book. Moving to plump, we find the same range of collocations will admit plump man, plump woman, plump belly, plump baby and plump chicken, but not plump salary, plump wad of notes and plump book. Stout permits stout man and stout woman, but not stout baby, stout chicken, stout wad of notes or stout book; stout belly is doubtful. On the other hand, there are certain collocations, for example stout construction, stout defence, stout fellow (= ‘reliable man’ not ‘fat man’), which will not admit fat or plump. Finally, obese is restricted to man, woman and belly, and will not admit babies, chickens, salaries, books, etc. On the showing of our example, therefore, obese appears to be rather restricted in range while the range of fat is much wider. As we have seen in Section 2.1.1 these properties of fat mean that by this criterion it is a core word and, by contrast, plump, stout and obese are less core. We should also note that synonymic relations between words can be usefully distinguished with reference to the different collocational ranges of the synonyms involved.

It is important, too, to note that collocational ranges are not fixed to the
same degree as grammatical patterns; for example, there are what McIntosh terms ‘range-extending tendencies’ in which new collocates can be formed because one word lends itself to such formation (e.g. the lexical item key which has recently considerably extended its range: key move, component, policy, book, etc., or fun which follows the pattern of key in fun size, fun book, fun relationship, etc.).

The examination of collocational ranges of items begins where semantic analysis of selection restrictions leaves off. Although accurate description (especially indication of relative strengths and weaknesses of combination) depends on extensive text-processing, and although many such patterns are grammatically as well as lexically determined, this aspect of collocation is a valuable and revealing one and, as we shall see below in Sections 3.10 and 7.12, is one of particular relevance to vocabulary in language teaching.

2.7 Collocation and style

McIntosh (1966, p. 193), in his article ‘Patterns and ranges’ referred to above, offers the following framework for the determination of style in language:

There is the possibility of four obviously distinct stylistic modes: normal collocations and normal grammar, unusual collocations and normal grammar, normal collocations and unusual grammar, unusual collocations and unusual grammar.

As McIntosh admits, such classification is rather crude but it does supply us with a useful framework. At either end of the scale it is self-
evident that we run the risk of producing language which is too familiar and thus banal (normal collocations and normal grammar, e.g. This is guaranteed to meet your special requirements) or which is unfamiliar and thus indecipherable (unusual collocations and unusual grammar. e.g. The ants with and swore the bald-headed carpet-sweeper). Between these two extremes is a dimension in which more individual or creative effects can be produced. But no two people share the same experience or set of associations so there must be a continual appeal to a shared norm of one sort or another or communication becomes impossible. Hence lexical associations which are too private or too individual often fail to meet this code of generality. Although ‘norms’ will vary from one context to another and will allow the generation of in-group languages or ‘anti-languages’ (Halliday, 1978) (see also Section 4.10) we are talking here of standard language norms of the kind which might, for example, be described in a dictionary. Of course, in such cases of styles of collocation, questions of acceptability are much more difficult to determine than the decision over what is grammatical or ungrammatical. Collocational acceptability can be analysed using techniques of informant analysis in which the intersubjective intuitions of groups of native-language speakers are statistically measured and a line drawn between what can be generally allowed and what cannot. As demonstrated in Chapters 8 and 9, these techniques can be useful for the analysis and interpretation of collocational relations in a context such as that of poetry or that of describing the style values of lexical items for lexicographic purposes.
2.8 Collocation and grammar

Not all linguists believe that the study of collocation can be made largely without reference to syntactic function. The second main tradition in the study of collocation is that which views lexical and syntactic patterning as distinct but interrelated levels of structure. The study of lexical collocations, based on an attempt to establish lexis as an independent and separate linguistic level, has tended to concentrate on linear, syntagmatic co-occurrence of items and has not included the syntactic and semantic statements that are often essential in a treatment of collocations. A number of examples can be cited in support of this position. One of them is given by Greenbaum (1970, p. 11):

As Mitchell (1971) also puts it: ‘Lexical particularities are considered to derive their formal meaning not only from contextual extension of a lexical kind but also from the generalised grammatical patterns within which they appear.’

The term given to the specifically grammatical relations along the syntagm is colligation. Take the example of the word consent. In explaining the way this word is used in English we would need to supply not only information concerning its lexical collocates (e.g. mutual, common), lexicogrammatical information (e.g. that it occurs in adverbial phrases headed by the preposition by: by mutual consent; that it collocates with and is a direct object for certain verbs: give consent, offer consent), but also that it is a member of a class of verbs which is followed by the preposition to and
another verbal or nominal group (e.g. ‘they gave their consent to their daughter’s marriage’; ‘he finally consented to go’). Similarly, in its syntactic role as a noun then the same preposition and string follows. The verb consent can thus be said to be in colligation with a complement construction to + infinitive and thus cannot co-occur with the construction + -ing form of a verb (e.g. *He consented going). Clearly, these different syntagmatic relations are interdependent but the meaning of a ‘word’ cannot really be adequately given without the fullest possible information concerning the place the word occupies and the contrasts it develops within a network of differential relations which includes patterns and ranges and the syntactic patterns which operate within particular ranges.

Of course, grammatical collocations can involve a range of different syntactic patterns. Benson (1985) defines grammatical collocation as a recurrent combination of a dominant word (verb, noun, adjective) followed by a ‘grammatical’ word, typically a preposition: e.g. abide by (verb and preposition); abstain from (verb and preposition); admiration for (noun and preposition); adjacent to (adjective and preposition); aghast at (adjective and preposition). Benson also uses the term ‘lexical collocation’ in a different sense to its use above; that is, to refer to a partnership of ‘two “equal” lexical components’: for example, adjective and noun combinations; noun and verb combinations. At the same time he argues for more extensive representation in dictionaries of such collocations and points to pioneering lexicographic work in this area by East European linguists and lexicographers such as Apresyan et al. (1969).

It is important, too, that lexical sets be differentiated with reference to the
different syntactic behavior of their constituent items. For example, if we take the item needle and examine its collocational relationships in terms of other lexical items we might find that the cluster of needle includes items such as cotton, thread, cloth, material, eye, sew and pin; also dentist, injection and anaesthetic. Further work would probably show that needle, cotton, thread, cloth, material, eye, sew, pin and certain others form a lexical set, and that needle, dentist, injection, anaesthetic, etc. form another set. We could then postulate the existence of two lexical items, needle\(^1\) and needle\(^2\). We might also find, however, that needle collocates with pin, pain, arm, leg and rub, and that in such collocations there is a regular association of needle and pin in the form of pins and needles. We should then be justified in suggesting that pins and needles is one single lexical item, whose cluster is different from the cluster of the separate lexical items pin and needle. But we must also note the danger in bringing items together in a set without due recognition of their syntactic patterning. For example, needle and thread are syntagmatically related in a fixed pattern in a way that cloth and material are not. And pins and needles would be a striking item in any corpus by virtue of its grammatical oddness (non-reversible; always plural) and its constant collocability with the verbs get and have.

This last example also illustrates the important point that a lexical item need not show a one-to-one correspondence with any particular grammatical unit, although we can say that the most usual situation is for the lexical item to be co-extensive with the orthographic word. In the following utterances, each of the italicized parts could be considered a single lexical item, on the basis of its distinctive collocational
properties:

(1) This horse has won the Derby three times.

(2) Mr Bennett is a dark horse.

(3) They are putting the cart before the horse in trying to control wages rather than prices.

In (1) the lexical item horse is co-extensive with a grammatical word, in (2) a dark horse is co-extensive with a group, and in (3) putting the cart before the horse is not co-extensive with any grammatical unit, being more than a group but less than a clause but allowing inflectional marking of the verb put.

Finally, pedagogical treatments of collocations, at least, would be seriously lacking if grammatical patterning were not included alongside lexical patterning and if such elementary distinctions were not made between them. A main difficulty in this interaction between lexis and grammar is, as we have seen, one of precisely and systematically accounting for the different degrees of fixity in the patterning. Some items enter into tight grammatical patterns and into relatively narrow collocational ranges; others into looser configurations. It is the aim of the next three sections to try to account for such relations. It is an area of some complexity for the language learner and for the mediating role occupied by the applied linguist between linguistic analysis and pedagogical presentation.
2.9 Idioms galore: Fixed expressions and language structure

In this section attention is given to those fixed expressions which can most obviously cause difficulties for non-native learners of a language. We shall begin with idioms. These present particular difficulties because they are restricted collocations which cannot normally be understood from the literal meaning of the words which make them up. Thus, to have/get/give cold feet (= to be/to make afraid) cannot be modified to ‘frozen feet’ or ‘chilly feet’ without changing the meaning. And in its idiomatic meaning cold feet is ‘semantically opaque’ in so far as the meaning of the whole is not obvious from the individual meaning of the constituent parts. Similarly, to let the cat out of the bag (= to reveal a secret) cannot be decoded if only the meanings of let, cat, bag and out are known as separate items. However, not all idioms are quite as fixed as this; in the case of an item such as to drop a brick (= to make a mistake) transformations are possible and insertions allowed in certain positions. For example:

He’s dropped a really enormous brick this time. A brick has been dropped.

where the paraphrase relations (he made a really serious mistake this time; a mistake has been made) form a basis for possible structural changes to the form of the idiom. Even more structurally flexible are items such as she broke my heart, which undergoes a particularly wide range of morphological, and other, transformations, producing, for example, heart-breaking, heart-broken, heart-breaker, etc. By contrast, however, an idiom such
as it’s raining cats and dogs is more immutable.
It cannot be passivized, does not normally allow of insertions, is in a fixed
syntactic and morphological order (*it’s raining cat and dog/*dogs and cats)
and is a whole unit (it’s *thundering/*pouring cats and dogs). In a related way
we can take/have/manage forty winks (= have a short sleep) but not *sleep
forty winks, *take thirty winks or *have fifty winks. However, in both these
examples the phrases are not so petrified as to prevent substitution by past
and future tenses. Idioms might thus be tentatively defined as (1) non-
substitutable or fixed collocations, (2) usually more than single word
units,3 (3) semantically opaque. But the different degrees of possible fixity
or ‘frozenness’, both syntactic and semantic, should be noted. The hold-all
term which will be used in this book to describe such a phenomenon is fixed
expressions.

There are other fixed expressions which are not idioms but in some of their
features behave almost as if they were. With reference to the above recognition
criteria some are more fixed than idioms though most exhibit generally lesser
degrees of structural fixity. Such units have been widely
discussed within lexicological theory and have obtained various
designations. These include: ‘prefabricated routines’ or ‘prefabrication’
(prefabs) (Bolinger, 1976); ‘patterned lexical phrases’ and ‘frozen forms’
(Nattinger, 1980; Nattinger and DeCarrico, 1992); ‘routine formulae’
(Coulmas, 1979); ‘conventionalized language forms’ (Yorio, 1980);
‘lexicalized sentence stems’ (Pawley and Syder, 1983); more generally, they
are known as ‘stable collocations, routinized or patterned speech, fixed
expressions, lexical stereotypes, gambits’ (Keller and Warner, 1977) and so on.
(For helpful overviews see Alexander, 1978, 1984a; Fernando and Flavell,
1981; Fernando, 1996; Moon, 1998.) The recognition of fixed expressions owes much to psycholinguistic work on the phrasal lexicon (Becker, 1975) which suggests that language production consists of piecing together such ready-made ‘prefabricated’ units appropriate to a situation, and that lexical acquisition may involve the learning of complete collocational chunks of language. In any case, the designations refer to units which come in various shapes and sizes with varying degrees of fixity and opacity. They facilitate essentially non-creative, stereotyped formulaic expression which (1) serves a maintaining, stabilizing role within communication but which (2) allows both for larger grammatical units to be built from their base, and for internal and external modification as more creative and cognitively richer speech is generated.

Some examples of fixed expressions are: as a matter of fact, to smell a rat, as old as the hills, honesty is the best policy, further to my letter of the ___th inst., spick and span, for good, if I were you, bottoms up, a watched pot never boils, a good time was had by all, light years ago, how do you do?, as far as I know, no way, you can say that again, in no uncertain terms, down with the Liberal Democrats, a stitch in time saves nine, I thought you’d never ask, by and large, like it or lump it. Such expressions as these are syntactically, semantically and discoursally varied, and classification necessarily involves some structural overlap. The tentative classification in Table 3.2 might, however, give an idea of the range of fixed expressions in the modern English lexicon as well as prepare some ground for the more formal recognition criteria suggested in the next section.
The list contains fixed expressions which are generally known as **clichés** and **proverbs**. Proverbs have formal and semantic characteristics in common. For example they convey some kind of aphoristic truth, are usually in the simple present tense and are normally neither syntactically divisible nor substitutable (though this is not to say that creative mutations or distortions are not possible; see particularly Mackin, 1978 for a range of examples). On the other hand, the proverbs (1) honesty is the best policy, (2) a watched pot never boils and (3) a stitch in time saves nine display different degrees of semantic opacity. (1) can be derived from a knowledge of the individual constituent items, (2) is less transparent and requires a metaphoric-analogical interpretive process and (3) is semantically opaque, the meaning not being as openly recoverable. Clichés are like idioms in that they are fixed expressions but are unlike idioms in two important respects. They are more fixed than idioms in terms of syntactic, morphological and semantic commutability. Their meaning is usually derivable from the semantic sum of the individual constituent parts. When it is not derivable then features of the linguistic or social context will aid interpretation. For example, it is probable that ‘social’ clichés (social formulae/clichés at VII (i) in Table 3.2) like how do you do? (transparent) and bottoms up (opaque) will only occur in specific situations and will be accompanied by clarifying gestural and paralinguistic expression. Examples such as this illustrate the important point that fixed expressions cut across spoken- and written-language use and that they can vary in relation to contexts of discourse.
2.10 Fixing fixed expressions

As far as the relative fixedness of fixed expressions is concerned, it will be seen then that all the above expressions are in some way fixed but that some are more fixed than others. This section brings together discussion of such units in the preceding sections by positing the usefulness of clines of lexical relations. A cline is able to capture essential features of this kind of lexical phenomena by seeing lexical items as distributed along continua of relative fixity.

Fixed expressions such as in no uncertain terms or further to my letter of...are quite transparent semantically, are not normally commutable in structure, and are collocationally restricted in terms of component parts. A good time was had by all, however, does allow of greater creative transmutation (e.g. a good time was had by none or a bad time was had by all) and it is again transparent in meaning. Alternatively, as Nattinger (1980) points out, some expressions are fixed by virtue of a closed syntactic structure into which a variety of lexical insertions are possible. Nattinger gives the example of ADV + with + NP which can produce a range of structures such as: down with the Tories/politicians/war/petrol taxes/the king, etc. On the other hand, the lexical item for good (e.g. He’s going away for good, meaning ‘for ever’) would be ‘fixed’ according to all criteria. That is, it is semantically opaque (its meaning cannot be derived from a knowledge of for or good), syntactic-structural insertions or substitutions are not permitted (e.g. *for very good, *for goods, *for good and good), and it is a restricted collocation with both elements restricted in relation to each other.

However, no fixed expression is able to collocate with any other item; and
nothing is completely closed and cut off from anything else. For example, further to my letter is domain-restricted; that is, it is likely to occur largely within a field of discourse of business correspondence. Similarly, in no uncertain terms is likely to occur only with performative verbs of saying or telling (e.g. I told/warned him in no uncertain terms). And the unit for good enters into clausal environments in which it is usually dependent on verbs with a meaning of ‘removal or detachment from’:

He’s leaving for good.

She’s giving up smoking for good.

*I’ll love you for good.

And, as we have already observed, some seemingly opaque units such as bottoms up, here’s to…(accompanied by raising of drinks) and see you (good-bye) are largely socially formulaic and can normally be so deciphered in most spoken and written contexts. This does leave some proverbs, however, such as a stitch in time saves nine or he knows which side his bread’s buttered on as more intractably closed than other units along the cline(s). They are collocationally restricted, noncommutable, semantically opaque and unlikely to be immediately decipherable by reference to contextual factors. Lastly, it is necessary to draw attention to a set of units which may need to be separately categorized. These are fixed expressions which can be understood figuratively but the process of analogizing is direct rather than oblique because such expressions do not have the semantic opacity characteristic of idioms. Examples would be kick off in The meeting kicks off at 9 o’clock or dead drunk where the figurative specialization occurs in one part of the expression and not in the whole. These are related to ‘semi-idioms’ but it is possible for them also to
be linked to ‘idiomatic similes’, which are separately categorized in Table 3.2 on account of their fixed structural patterning.

2.11 A summary of Lexical patterns:

We have seen from the preceding two sections that the following criteria are relevant in determining how fixed particular lexical patterns are: 5 collocational restriction; syntactic structure; semantic opacity. This section focuses on more strictly formal matters and discusses the lexical units of fixed expressions with reference to formal linguistic recognition criteria. It will be argued that the notion of the cline can continue to help us to range these units in terms of sets of continua with fixed points but several intermediate categories.

This section is also designed to serve as a summary of discussion so far concerning the lexicality of fixed expressions.

2.12 Collocational restriction

(a) Unrestricted collocation: This describes the capacity of particular lexical items to be open to partnership with a wide range of items. Most core words fall into such a category (e.g. fat, bright, head) as do structures with core verbs such as have or take in the structures: take a look/a holiday/a rest/a letter/ time/notice/a walk. Another example would be the verb run, which in its sense of ‘manage’ or ‘operate’ collocates relatively unrestrictedly with a range of animate and inanimate, concrete and abstract entities: e.g. run a business/football
team/car/shop/ scheme and so on.

(b) **Semi-restricted collocation:** This category embraces lexical patterns in which the number of items which can be substituted in different syntactic slots is more determined. Examples here would be harbour doubt/grudges/uncertainty/suspicion or fan (in the sense of ‘incite’, ‘encourage’), e.g. fan a riot/discontent/disturbance/hooliganism (see also Aisenstadt, 1979).

(c) **Familiar collocation:** Combinations here are between words which keep regular company with each other. There are obvious overlaps here with types of fixed expression categorized above as stock phrase and metaphoric usage (e.g. vicious circle): innocent bystander/unrequited love/unmitigated disaster/ readily admit/lukewarm reception/pregnant with possibilities/ amicable divorce.

(d) **Restricted collocation:** Partnerships in this category are gener- ally more fixed and closed: e.g. stark naked/pitch black. A range of syntactic patterns are involved, however: e.g. consider seriously/lean meat/soft water/gin and tonic/accept defeat. Also included here are irreversible binomials such as cash and carry/ ups and downs/hit and miss/assault and battery/swings and roundabouts.

The cline in collocational restriction runs from: (a) less fixed to (d) more fixed.

We can conclude that there are no unequivocally clear clines of fixity
whatever the main categories involved. It is necessary to separate the clines but it is also clear that there are points of intersection and overlap between the clines which allow us to define the most fixed expression as those which are ‘closed’ in more than one category. Thus, an expression such as:

Fat chance you’ve got.

which is relatively closed syntactically, semantically and collocationsally, might be defined as one of the more intractable of fixed expressions (though an additional difficulty for foreign learners of the language would be the otherwise relatively unrestricted collocability of the adjective fat). Alternatively, take a chance, which is likewise a fixed expression, is less fixed semantically, syntactically and as a collocation and would thus be more readily comprehensible.6

A focus on the intelligibility of lexical patterns can be closely linked with assessing the degrees of difficulty involved in learning and encoding fixed expressions. In the next section this focus is intensified by a consideration of the kinds of potential and actual lexical errors made by learners of English as a foreign language. As can sometimes be the case with a focus on the learner’s production this section will enable some main strands of the discussion in this chapter so far to be summarized.
2.13 Previous Related Studies

This part discusses some up-to-date empirical studies related to the present study particularly targeting EFL/ESL learners’ knowledge of collocations and idiomatic expressions.

Mounya (2010) conducted a study to find the role of teaching collocations in raising foreign language writing proficiency. The sample was composed of two groups, which were chosen randomly. It consisted of forty-eight students whose native language was Arabic and their second Language was French. The experimental group received the treatment while the control group did not. The researcher administered a pre-test to examine students' use of collocations. It indicated that participants had a limited knowledge of collocations and a wide range of “mis-collocations”. Analysis which was conducted after treatment showed that the participants’ writing proficiency was raised significantly through a clear instruction of collocation. The findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between using collocation and writing proficiency.

Alsakran (2011) explores the productive and receptive knowledge of lexical and grammatical collocations among advanced Arabic-speaking learners of English. Furthermore, he investigates whether the language environment (ESL or EFL) has an influence on the acquisition of collocations. He also explores whether there is a significant difference between participants’ performances on verb- noun, adjective-noun, and verb-preposition collocations. The participants of the study were 38 Saudi students at the Institute of Public Administration in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and 30 Arab students in the Intensive English program at Colorado State University. Three
gap-filling tests were used to measure the participants’ productive collocational knowledge. In order to measure their receptive collocational knowledge, Alsakran used an appropriateness judgment test. Statistical analysis indicated that participants’ learning environment has a strong effect on the acquisition of L2 collocations. The ESL learners had significantly higher scores than the EFL learners. Furthermore, the study revealed a significant difference between the participants’ productive and receptive knowledge of collocations.

The participants’ productive knowledge of collocations lagged far behind their receptive collocational knowledge. The results also showed a statistically significant difference between the three types of collocation. The participants performed better on the verb-noun collocations test than on the adjective- noun and verb-preposition collocations tests. Finally, the findings revealed that Arabic-speaking learners of English demonstrated poor knowledge of collocations on all four tests.

In another study, Rahimi and Momeni (2012) investigated the effect of teaching collocations on English language proficiency. The participants of the study were sixty Iranian pre-university students, who were majored in the field of mathematic. Convenient sampling was used to choose the groups from six classes in pre-university centers in a small town in the west of Iran. The researcher divided the participants into control and experimental groups arbitrarily including 30 students in each group. Pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design was applied in this study. The researchers taught the words of the reading comprehension passages of a book during 16 weeks to experiment group through using concordances and corpus-based activities. A traditional instruction of new words such as translation,
explanation and definition of the new words was given to control group. The findings of the study revealed that the experimental group had a better performance than the control group. Finally, it was reported that teaching collocations has a positive effect on students’ language proficiency.

Namvar (2012) investigated Iranian male and female postgraduate students’ use of collocations by analyzing the learners’ written work based on multiple-choice tests and a writing task. The samples’ first language was Persian and their foreign language was English. Their level of proficiency was identified as intermediate and above. The researcher used a multiple-choice test of collocation, which consisted of 50 items selected from the Oxford Collocation Dictionary. The test included both lexical and grammatical collocations. The findings of the study revealed that since L1 transfer had a strong effect on the participants’ collocation production, learners had problem with both lexical and grammatical collocations in their writing. Finally, the researcher found a significant correlation between the participants’ language proficiency and their knowledge of collocation.

Another study conducted by Movahediyan Attar and Allami (2013) examines the relationship between teaching collocations and speaking proficiency of EFL Iranian Learners, the relationship between the subjects’ knowledge of collocations and their use of collocate, and students’ attitude towards teaching collocations. A total 80 intermediate students took part in this study. They were divided into experimental and control group. A collocation test including 30 items and a collocation interview was administered to all participants as a pretest and posttest. Then, Collocation in Use was treated to
the experimental group. A collocation posttest and interview revealed that the experimental groups’ speaking proficiency developed in the posttest. The results also showed that the experimental group had a better performance in interview after the instruction of collocation. Furthermore, the students had positive attitudes towards explicit instruction of collocations.

**Kiaee, Moghaddam, & Hosseini (2013)**, conducted a quasi-experimental study to examine the effects of collocation instruction on enhancing Iranian EFL learners’ reading comprehension. Two intact classes were randomly selected as the experimental group and two other classes were selected as the control group. 30 collocations selected from each reading text were taught to the students in the experimental group. Results of paired-sample t-test indicated that the students in the experimental group performed better than the control group in reading comprehension. In fact, teaching collocations could play a significant role in enhancing EFL learners’ reading comprehension.

In sum, as the above review indicated, collocation plays an important role in the process of language learning and teaching. It is very important for EFL learners to improve their fluency, and enhance their communicative competence. Knowing the importance of collocation in all four language skills is advantageous in finding new ways and strategies to improve the student’s language proficiency. As shown above, much research has been conducted on the impact of collocation on EFL/ESL learners’ language learning; some of them are conducted to find common collocaional errors that language learners make; some other studies have been conducted to focus on the relationship between collocations and language proficiency; however, to the best of the researchers’ knowledge little empirical research has been conducted on its contribution to four language skills.
Previous Related Studies

Application of etymological elaboration to L2 idiom comprehension has long been of particular interest in second language acquisition research and its pedagogical role has been examined by many scholars. Boers, et al., (2001-2007) conducted a series of studies to prove the effectiveness of this technique on idiom acquisition.

Boers (2001) performed an experiment with two parallel groups of upper-intermediate Dutch students studying English as a second language. The participants were given a list of figurative idioms and their task was to explain their meaning by consulting an English Dictionary. Apart from this, they were asked to do another task that was different for two groups: the control group would process idioms by the use of the context in which they were used. The experimental group was asked to supply a possible origin of the idioms by looking up the literal sense of the unknown words which would help them hypothesize about the origin of the expressions (imagery processing). The result of follow up tasks showed that relating figurative idioms with a concrete image had a positive effect on the retention of idiomatic phrases.

In another study (Boers, et al., 2004), two groups of on-line participants received two types of exercise for three series of idioms, identify – the – source and then identify- the- meaning exercises, while this order was
reversed for the control group. The high performance of the experimental group over the control group confirmed the significant role of etymology in idioms acquisition.

Boers, et al., (2007) examined how source domain of idioms motivates their figurative meanings with regard to cross-cultural variations. The logic of their study was the assumption that source domain of many idioms are cultural dependent. So, cross-cultural variations would be a significant variable in the comprehension of idiomatic expressions as it seemed to influence the opacity of idioms. The study was accomplished through an idiom teacher exercise (A self – study technique consisting of 1200 on-line exercises on 400 idioms). The exercises included matching to source task for the experimental group and matching to definition task for the control group followed by a gap filling task for both groups as a post test. This experiment was performed in two phases; the first one in a context of learner autonomy and the second one in a context of explicit guidance by the teacher. Results revealed that etymological elaboration could help learners effectively comprehend and recall figurative idioms. In the learner autonomy context, etymological elaboration seemed to be more effective to only transparent idioms with familiar source domain while with explicit teacher guidance, the technique was beneficial for even opaque idioms. Parallel to this study (Boers, et al, 2007), two other studies were conducted with Chinese and Iranian EFL learners on the effectiveness of etymological elaboration. Zhang (2009) designed a web-based learning experiment with Chinese students in order to estimate the actual effect of etymology on receptive and productive knowledge of target idioms in an on-line environment. The participants were given on-line learning units that were
designed in different forms for two groups. In the learning unit of the experimental group, each idiom was associated with information about their origin, but the control group lacked such information, and received only brief explanations about figurative meaning of idioms. The results of this study were in part compatible with the previous study; they showed that while etymological information did not have more influence on L2 idiom acquisition than traditional rote learning, it was effective on the retention and productive knowledge of target idioms.

In the same vein, Bagheri and Fazel (2010) explored the role of the mentioned technique in Iranian learners' comprehension and retention of idioms on the basis of dual coding theory. The same treatment as Boers et al's work (2007) was given to 50 advanced EFL learners in experimental and control groups. The results of this study were in line with the previous studies and confirmed that etymological elaboration enhanced idiom learning.

2-14 Summary of the Chapter:

In this chapter, the researcher has reviewed the literature related to idiomatic expressions and collocations which is the subject of the study at hand.

The first half of this chapter tried to provide a theoretical framework of the study. It dealt with definitions and classifications of both idioms and collocations each of them in details.

The second half of the chapter concentrated on some of the literature related to the present study. It reviewed references, previous works and recent researches that dealt with idioms and collocations.
As it can be seen in the previous review of the literature that little research dealt with the problems of understanding and using of idiomatic expressions and collocations and much less dealt with EFL students’ understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations properly.
Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3-1 Introduction

This chapter describes research methodology. It gives a full description of the research steps followed in conducting the tools which were used to collect data beside the population and the procedure that was followed. A questionnaire for EFL teachers and a test for EFL students were the tools that chosen to collect data.

The research data was obtained from the responses of a test designed for EFL Sudanese students majoring in English language in faculties of languages and education at Sudan university of science and technology, the data were also obtained from a questionnaire distributed to the teachers of English language.

The researcher followed the analytical descriptive method in this study. The quantitative data were analyzed through the Statistical Packages of the Social Sciences (SPSS), descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation were calculated to examine the variability of the scores of the participants as seen in the results. Other statistical means like the one-way method and the ANOVA (analysis of variance) were computed to compare the significant statistical differences regarding the obtained answers.
3.2 Population of the study:

For carrying out this study two groups were identified:

a. The population of English language teachers at Sudanese universities who carry out the task of teaching.

b. The population of students who are the target of teaching, understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations.

The first population group consisted of ELT teachers at faculty of education and faculty of languages at Sudan university of science and technology. The second population group consisted of all 3rd year students majoring in English language at the above mentioned faculties.

3.2.1 The teachers’ sample of the study:

The first population of this study consisted of English language teachers at Sudanese universities and was represented by a sample group consisting of 40 ELT teachers.

3.2.2 The Students’ sample of the Study:

The second population of the study was represented by a sample group consisting of 150 students distributed in two faculties, faculty of languages and faculty of education at Sudan University of science and technology. The subject were 3rd year students at majoring in English language at the above mentioned faculties. Most of them had studied English language as a compulsory subject for 10 years from the same school language
curriculum approved by the Sudanese ministry of education and ministry of higher education and scientific research. They have the same cultural and language background, with Arabic language as their first language.

The two types of faculties introduce two different language programs and this may show considerable variables in teaching and learning of language.

The table below illustrates the distribution of this sample.

Table No 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Languages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sudan University of Science and Technology</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 Instrumentation:

The instruments that the researcher used for conducting this study are:

- A questionnaire for ELT teachers.
- A test on idiomatic expressions and collocations for EFL university students majoring in English language.

3.3.1 The questionnaire:

The aim of the questionnaire used in this research was to find out about the teachers’ views regarding teaching and learning of idiomatic expressions and collocations, and it is also relevant directly to the questions and hypothesis of the study. It was administered to a total sample of 40 ELT teachers at some Sudanese universities. It consisted of two parts the first part contained personal information about the participant. The second part contained 15 statements related to teachers’ views about idiomatic expressions and collocations, problems of understanding and using them,

The scale used in the questionnaire was five-point Likert scale to show the expected responses from participants, five codes were given to the statement as follows:

1=Strongly Agree,
2=Agree,
3=Neutral,
4=Disagree
5=Strongly Disagree,
3.3.2 Students’ Test:

Of the two research instruments, the test of idioms and collocations was given more emphasis because the students were the major target of the study and the investigation of their knowledge, problems of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations were the vocal objectives of the present study. The researcher adapted for this purpose, a 50 item test in which 25 items on idiomatic expressions and 25 items on collocations.

The test was widely selected to assess the student’s knowledge of idiomatic expressions and collocation. The questions were meant to cover the different levels of English idioms and collocations such as lexical, semantic and syntactic levels. Some of the tests’ questions try to trace the impact of the students’ native idiomatic expressions on their understanding of the English idiomatic expressions. The test was given in a form of multiple choice questions. It consisted of two questions. The first question was 25 items (idiomatic expressions) multiple choice questions with one correct answer and two other distracters supplied for each given sentence, students were asked about the meaning of each idiomatic expression. The second question consisted of two parts. Part one consisted of 18 gap filling questions where students were asked to collocate some of the most common verbs (Miss-Get-Do-Make) that goes with other words. The second part of question two was a multiple choice question consisted of 7 items, students were asked for completing the sentence provided through choosing the best answer.

The test was administered to a total of 120 students. Participants were 3rd year English language majors at Sudan University of Science and Technology, faculties of languages and education. The rational for selecting senior students
as a sample was that, with regard to the stage they have reached in their study, they should have accumulated a considerable knowledge about language, idiomatic expressions and collocations. They should also have good language analyzability skills that enable them to deal with the linguistic irregularities of idiomatic expressions and collocations.

3.4 Validity of the research tools:

Validating a research tool is determining whether it is accurate and determining “whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. In other words,….to express that in some kind of idiomatic English…” does the research instrument allow you to hit “the bull’s eye “ of your research object? “ {Golafshani 2003-599}.

To ensure the validity of the research tools, the researcher consulted 3 ELT experts’ referees. He distributed copies of the students’ test and the ELT teachers’ questionnaire to the experts so as to give their opinions, judgment and recommendations about these instruments with regard to their suitability, clarity and relevance.

The experts were all PhD holders working at faculties of Education, Languages and Arts at Sudanese Universities. In addition to their experience in the field of ELT, they were and are engaged in the supervision of ELT researches for PhD, MA and MED degrees. Each of these experts were given a copy of both instruments (the students’ test and the teachers’ questionnaire) which were used to investigate the problems of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations that encounter Sudanese EFL university students.
The suggestions, opinions and recommendations of the experts about the construction and content of both instruments were taken into an immediate consideration and were incorporated in the final version of the instruments.

3.5 Reliability of the research tools:

Test-reliability refers to the test’s consistency and to “the notion that consistency with which questionnaire (test) items are answered or individual’s scores remain relatively the same can be determined through the test-retest method at two different times.” [ibid 598-599]. That means the test should give the same or similar results if it is given to the same group of subjects on at least two separate circumstances. It should be expected that the relationship between the first and the second administration would be a high positive correlation.

3.5.1 Reliability of the test:

Regarding the study at hand the researcher used the test-retest method to verify the reliability of the test. It was first administered to 15 students, and then administered once again to the same group a week later. The following formula for the pearson correlation coefficient [  ]

To evaluate the data of the study, different techniques were used in the analysis. These techniques were: Statistical Package for Social Studies (SPSS), Alpha Cornbach and Pearson Coefficient Factor.
Cranach’s alpha method:

Where reliability was calculated using Cranach’s alpha equation shown below:

\[
\text{Reliability coefficient} = \frac{n}{N-1} \times \frac{1 - \text{Total variations questions}}{\text{variation college grades}}
\]

Cranach alpha coefficient = (0.77), a reliability coefficient is high and it indicates the stability of the scale and the validity of the study.

Validity coefficient is the square of the islands so reliability coefficient is (0.88), and this shows that there is a high sincerity of the scale and that the benefit of the study.

*  

Cranach’s alpha method: 

Where reliability was calculated using Cranach’s alpha equation shown below:

\[
\text{Reliability coefficient} = \frac{n}{N-1} \times \frac{1 - \text{Total variations questions}}{\text{variation college grades}}
\]
Cranach alpha coefficient = (0.85), a reliability coefficient is high and it indicates the stability of the scale and the validity of the study

Validity coefficient is the square of the islands so reliability coefficient is (0.92), and this shows that there is a high sincerity of the scale and that the benefit of the study.

3-6 Procedure

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the respondents in hand to look over the items and make up their minds, then gave them enough time to fill it. After that the researcher collected the questionnaire to be ready for analysis and discussion.

3-7 Summary of the Chapter:

This chapter has provided description of the research tools and their procedures; the collected data will be statistically analyzed and discussed in the next chapter.
4.1 Introduction:

In this chapter, the data of the study were analyzed and the results obtained from the analysis were tabulated and discussed. The instruments used to collect data of the study were two instruments: a test for 3rd year students majoring in English language at Sudan University of Science and Technology faculty of languages and faculty of education; as well as a questionnaire for English language teachers.

4.2 Results of the Test:

The test was the first tool used to collect data of the study. The tests was constructed; validated and piloted to investigate the problems of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations that encounter 3rd Year Students at Sudan University of Islamic University.

Students’ test

Part One: Question One: Choose the correct meaning for the following idioms written in bold

1. Q1.1 To add fuel to the fire means:
   a) To try to stay warm.
   b) To intensify situation.
   c) To try to complete a task.
The table and figure below show the frequency and percentage for Q1.1

**Table 4.1 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that 56.3% succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of *To add fuel to the fire* while 43.8% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are aware of this idiom because of its equivalent Arabic idiom (Zad Altein Ballah) and this supports the notion that mentioned in the questionnaire regarding L1 may affect the understanding and using of idioms as shown in Graph No 4.1 below

**Graph No 4.1**
Q1.2 A piece of cake means

a) An easy task.
b) A part of a process.
c) A small amount of something.

Table 4.2 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>61.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that 31 students out of 80 38.8% succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of A piece of cake, while 49 out of 80 61.3% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.2
Q 1.3 To pull someone’s leg means

a) To take one’s leg and pull it strongly

b) To cause someone to make an error

c) The say something untrue as a joke

Table 4.3 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that 31 students out of 80 38.8% succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of To pull someone’s leg while 49 out of 80 61.3% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are very
poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.3

**Graph No 4.3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td>31.30%</td>
<td>68.80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q1.4 Curiosity killed the cat** means

* a) *Being curious can get you into trouble.*

* b) *Cat lead dangerous life.*

* c) *The cat is a curious animal.*
Table 4.4 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that 71.3% succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of **Curiosity killed the cat** while 28.8% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are aware of this idiom because of its equivalent Arabic idiom (Hob Alistitlah Alkatal Alkadeesah) and this supports the notion that mentioned in the questionnaire regarding L1 may affect the understanding and using of idioms as shown in Graph No 4.4 below

**Graph No 4.4**
Q1.5 A deer in the headlights means

a) When something becomes obvious because it is brightly lit.

b) When one is confused and needs to make a decision but cannot react quickly.

c) A driver who is scared of deer crossing the road.
Table 4.5 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that only 31.3% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of **A deer in the headlights** while, the majority of the respondents 68.8% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.5

**Graph No 4.5**
**Q1.6 Start from scratch** means

a) To start from the very beginning.

b) To try to do impossible things.

c) You do a favor for me and I do a favor for you.

**Table 4.6 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that 45 students out of 80 56.3% succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of **To Start from scratch** while 35 out of 80 43.8% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.6
**Q1.7 To give someone the evil eye means**

a) *To have eyes similar to devil’s eyes.*

b) *To need to wear glasses.*

c) *To look at someone in an angry and unpleasant way.*

**Table 4.7 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table illustrates that 76.3% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of *To give someone the evil eye* while, 23.8% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are aware of this idiom because of its equivalent Arabic idiom (yadi Alain Alhamraa) and this supports the notion that mentioned in the questionnaire regarding L1 may affect the understanding and using of idioms as shown in graph No 4.7

**Graph No 4.7**
Q1.8 To get up on the wrong side of the bed means

   a) To be in a bad mood and easily annoyed.
   b) To have pain on one side of the body.
   c) To have difficulty waking up.

Table 4.8 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that only 37.5% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of To get up on the wrong side of the bed while, the majority of the respondents 62.5% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.8
Q1.9 **A time and a place for everything** means

a) *Different things are appropriate on different occasions.*

b) *Think before you do something.*

c) *Live each day and don’t worry about the future.*

**Table 4.9 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.9**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>83.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that only 16.3% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of **A time and a**
place for everything while, the majority of the respondents  83.8% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.9

Graph No 4.9
Q1.10 **Kick the bucket** means

a) *To die.*

b) *To score a goal.*

c) *To shoot the bucket.*

**Table 4.10 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that only 23.8% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of **Kick the bucket** while, the majority of the respondents 76.3% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.10
Q1.11 *Over my dead body* means

a) *Think that something you have just heard is silly and will never happen.*

b) *Think that something will happen only far in the future.*

c) *Let someone do something only after your death.*

**Table 4.11 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.11**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that only 21.3% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of *Over my dead body* while, the majority of the respondents 78.8% failed to
answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.11

Graph No 4.11

Q1.12 Lose your head means

a) Be unable to remember things correctly.
b) Lose control of yourself.
c) Be responsible for your actions.

Table 4.12 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table illustrates that only 47.5% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of **Lose your head** while, the majority of the respondents 52.5% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.12

**Graph No 4.12**

Q1.13 **A big fish** means

- **a)** A person who has committed a serious crime and is arrested.
- **b)** A selfish person who cares only for one’s pleasure.
- **c)** A person who is important and powerful.
Table 4.13 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that only 56.3% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of A big fish while, 43.8% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.13

Graph No 4.13
Q1.14 Bite your tongue means

*a*) Keep something secret.

*b*) Remain silent, even though you want to say something.

*c*) Be immediately sorry for what you have said.

Table 4.14 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that only 28.8% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of Bite your tongue while, the majority of the respondents 71.3% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.14.
Q1.15 *Bite off more than you can chew* means

a) Accept a difficult or unpleasant situation.

b) Try to do something that is far too difficult.

c) Try to do too much.

**Table 4.15 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.15**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>66.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that only 33.8% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of *Bite off more than you can chew* while, the majority of the respondents 66.3%
failed to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.15

**Graph No 4.15**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q1.16 Not worth the candle** means

a) Not worth buying because of poor quality.

b) Not worth the trouble or effort needed in order to achieve something.

c) Not worth doing something, completely useless.

**Table 4.16 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.16**
The above table illustrates that only 30% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of **Not worth the candle** while, the majority of the respondents 70% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.16

**Graph No 4.16**
Q1.17 Make your blood boil means

   a) Make you very angry.
   b) Make you passionate.
   c) Make you feel distress or fear.

Table 4.17 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>61.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that only 61.3% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of Make your blood boil while, the majority of the respondents 38.8% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are aware of this idiom because of its equivalent Arabic idiom (Fawar Dammi) and this supports the notion that mentioned in the questionnaire regarding L1 may affect the understanding and using of idioms as shown in graph No 4.17
Q1.18 Tighten your belt means

   a) Lose weight.
   b) Run very fast.
   c) To spend less money

Table 4.18 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that only 36.3% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of Tighten your
while, the majority of the respondents 63.8% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.18

**Graph No 4.18**

![](image)

**Q1.19 Open your heart** means

- *a) Fall in love with someone.*
- *b) Tell someone your most private thoughts or feelings.*
- *c) To be completely honest and sincere.*
Table 4.19 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that only 41.3% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of *Open your heart* while, the majority of the respondents 58.8% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.19

**Graph No 4.19**
Q1.20 *At your fingertips* means

   a) *Know thoroughly facts and information and be able to refer to them quickly.*

   b) *Have something readily available for you to use or reach.*

   c) *Be responsible for someone or something.*

Table 4.20 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that only 45% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of *At your fingertips* while, the majority of the respondents 55% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.20
Q1.21 The early bird catches the worm means

a) A person who starts to do something as soon as possible will be successful.

b) A person who is very fast and effective will be successful.

c) A person who doesn’t worry about the little things in life will be successful.

Table 4.21 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table illustrates that only 41.3% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of *The early bird catches the worm* while, the majority of the respondents 58.8% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.21

**Graph No 4.21**

**Q1.22 The upper hand means**

* a) *Have the freedom to make your own decisions.*
* b) *Have a chance to win.*
* c) *Have more power than someone and control things.*
Table 4.22 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>66.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that only 33.8% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of *The upper hand* while, the majority of the respondents 66.3% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.22

**Graph No 4.22**

![Bar chart showing frequency and percentage of true and false responses]
Q1.23 Cut the bone means

a) Offend a person deeply.

b) Reduce resources or costs as much as possible.

c) Attack someone physically, hit many times.

Table 4.23 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that only 23.8% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of Cut the bone while, the majority of the respondents 76.3% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.23
Graph No 4.23

Q1.24 Go into the red means

a) Become very angry.

b) Become red in the face because you are ashamed.

c) Owe money to the bank.

Table 4.24 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.24

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that only 18.8% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of Go into the red while, the majority of the respondents 81.3% failed to answer the
question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.24

**Graph No 4.24**

![Bar chart showing percentages of True and False responses](chart.png)

**Q1.25 Have blood in your hands** means

- *a*) *Be involved in something unfair or dishonest.*
- *b*) *Work very hard to achieve something important.*
- *c*) *Be responsible for someone’s death.*

**Table 4.25 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q1.25**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table illustrates that only 32.5% of the respondents succeeded to answer the question about the meaning of *Have blood in your hands* while, the majority of the respondents 67.5% failed to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.25

**Graph No 4.25**
Part Two: Collocations: Q2 Choose which one of the following verbs (Miss, Get, Do and Make) goes well with the expressions below:

Q2.1 .................. a goal

Table 4.26 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>66.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that only 33.8% of the respondent succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while the majority of them 66.3% failed to collocate and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.26
Q2.2__________ Peace

Table 4.27 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q2.2

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that only 35% of the respondent succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while the majority of them 65% failed to collocate and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.27
Q2.3  _________  Lost

Table 4.28 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q2.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that only 45% of the respondent succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while the majority of them 55% failed to collocate and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.28
Q2.4 is a home

Table 4.29 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q2.4

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<td>31</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>61.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that only 38.8% of the respondents succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while the majority of them 61.3% failed to collocate and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.29.
Q2.5________ an appointment

Table 4.30 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q2.5

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<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>32.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that only 32.5% of the respondent succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while the majority of them 67.5% failed to collocate and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.30
**Q2.6** a lesson

**Table 4.31 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q2.6**

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<td>26.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>73.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that only 26.3% of the respondent succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while the majority of them 73.8% failed to collocate and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.31
Q2.7 Homework

Table 4.32 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q2.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>49</td>
<td>61.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that 61.3% succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while 38.8% failed to collocate and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 32.
Q2.8 the cooking

Table 4.3 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q2.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>66.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that only 33.8% of the respondent succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while the majority of them 66.3% failed to collocate and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.33
Table 4.34 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q2.9

<table>
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<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>48</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that only 60% of the respondent succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while 40% failed to collocate and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are aware of the above mentioned collocation as shown in graph No 4.34.
Graph No 4.34

![Graph](image)

Q2.10 Progress

Table 4.35 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q2.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that 52.5% of the respondent succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while the 47.5% failed to collocate and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.35.
**Q2.11** someone’s help

**Table 4.36 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q2.11**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q2.12_________ Nothing

Table 4.37 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q2.12

<table>
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<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that 53.8% of the respondent succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while 46.3% failed to collocate and unable to answer the question which indicates the collocation of *do nothing* is very common and widely used by students as shown in graph No 4.37.
Graph No 4.37

Table 4.38 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q2.13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that only 45% of the respondent succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while the majority of them 55% failed to collocate and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.38
Graph No 4.38

![Graph](image)

Q2.14 one’s best

Table 4.39 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q2.14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
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<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that only 25% of the respondent succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while the majority of them 75% failed to collocate and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.39
Graph No 4.39

Table 4.40 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q2.15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that only 23.8% of the respondent succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while the majority of them 76.3% failed to collocate and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.40.
Q2.16 the shopping

Table 4.41 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q2.16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
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<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that only 25% of the respondents succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while the majority 75% failed to collocate and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.41
Graph No 4.1

Table 4.42 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q2.17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that only 32.8% succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while the majority of the respondents 67.5% failed to collocate and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.42
Q2.18  ------- someone a favour

Table 4.43 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q2.18

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>25</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that only 31.3% succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while the majority 68.8% failed to collocate and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.43.
Q3. Decide which word or phrase completes the sentence

Q3.1 He didn't know anything about business, so starting his own business was…………..

a) a leap into the cloud
b) a leap in the dark
c) a leap into the whole

Table 4.44 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
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<td>48.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table indicates that only 48.8% of the respondents chose correct alternative succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while 51.3% failed to choose the correct alternative and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.44

**Graph No 4.44**

![Graph showing True and False percentages](image)

**Q3.2** I hate the way he criticizes everybody. It really rattles ........

a) my back  
b) my bones  
c) my cage
Table 4.45 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>61.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that only 38.8% of the respondents chose the correct alternative succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while the majority of the respondents 61.3% failed to choose the correct alternative and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.45

Graph No 4.45
Q3.3 When her business crashed, she had to pick up-------- and start again.

a) the fragments  
b) the pieces  
c) the stones

Table 4.46 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q3.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>66.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that only 33.8% of the respondents chose correct alternative succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while the majority of the respondents 66.3% failed to choose the correct alternative and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.46
She felt sad when she realized that she had lost her watch. It wasn't expensive but it had sentimental --------

a) expense  
 b) price  
 c) value

Table 4.47 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q3.4

<table>
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<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>43.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that only 43.8% of the respondents chose correct alternative succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while the majority of the respondents 56.3% failed to
choose the correct alternative and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.47

**Graph No 4.47**

Q3.5 I used to go to church under Failed_____. I never wanted to go but my mother made me.

a) agreements
b) feelings
c) pretences
Table 4.48 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q3.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that only 21.3% of the respondents chose correct alternative succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while the majority of the respondents 78.8% failed to choose the correct alternative and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.48

Graph No 4.48
Q3.6 One minute they were just talking and then all hell broke…… and everybody started screaming and shouting.

a) free  
b) loose  
c) over  

Table 4.49 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q3.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>77.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that only 22.5% of the respondents chose correct alternative succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly; while the majority of the respondents 77.5% failed to choose the correct alternative and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No 4.49
Q3.7 He never cheats or tricks anybody when he plays. He always goes by the .................

a) book
b) instructions
c) principles

Table 4.50 frequency and percentage for the answers to Q3.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Succeeded</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>85.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that only 15% of the respondents chose correct alternative succeeded to collocate and answer the question correctly ;while the majority of the respondents 85% failed to choose
the correct alternative and unable to answer the question which indicates that students are very poor in terms of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as shown in graph No (4.50)

**Graph No 4.50**
4.3 Results and Analysis of the English Language Teachers' Questionnaire:

The questionnaire was the second tool that used to support data of the study. The aim of this questionnaire was to find out views of English language teachers about the problems that face students understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations.

Likert 5-point scale was used to show responses of the participants. It consisted of 15 statements (see appendix no: 2).

Table No (4.51) Teachers’ Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5 year</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 10 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We note from table ( ) above that most of sample’s respondents have 1-5 years of experience and they represent 65% of the respondents, and 17.5% of them have 5-10 years of experience, while 17.5% have more than 10 years experience. That means the teachers have the enough experience dealing with student, teaching and knowing about their problems. As it is shown in graph no 4.51 below
Table No (4.52) below shows the frequencies of the responses towards

Idioms are important for EFL learners in communication context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>%67.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>%20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>%10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>%2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>%0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table No (4.52) above has shown that about 67.5% of the participants strongly agreed that idioms are important for EFL learners in communication context, meanwhile 20% of them agreed, and 1% of the respondents were disagreed as it shown in graph no(4.2) below:

**Graph No 4.52**
Table No (4.53) below shows the frequencies of the responses towards Grammatical and syntactical restrictions of idioms may affect the degree of idiomaticity of lexical items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>%37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>%55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>%5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>%2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>%0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No (4.53) above has shown that about 37.5% of the participants strongly agreed that grammatical and syntactical restrictions of idioms may affect the degree of idiomaticity of lexical items, meanwhile 55% of them agreed, and 1% of the respondents were disagreed as it shown in graph no(4.53) below:
Table No (4.54) below shows the frequencies of the responses towards using idiomatic expressions helps EFL learners to achieve the expected level of proficiency in English language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>%52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>%30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>%12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>%2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>%2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>%100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No (4.54) above has shown that about 52.5% of the participants strongly agreed that using idiomatic expressions helps EFL learners to achieve the expected level of proficiency in English language.
, meanwhile 30% of them agreed, and 1% of the respondents were disagreed as it shown and 1% strongly disagreed in graph no(4.4) below:

**Graph No 4.54**

![Graph showing percentages](chart.png)

**Table No (4.55)** below shows the frequencies of the responses towards EFL students are not aware of using contextual pragmatic clues to understand idioms whose meaning can’t be inferred from the individual word meaning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>%40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>%37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>%15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>%7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>%0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No (4.55) above shows that about 52.5% of the participants strongly agreed that EFL students are not aware of using contextual pragmatic
clues to understand idioms whose meaning can’t be inferred from the individual word meaning., meanwhile 30% of them agreed, and 1% of the respondents were disagreed as it shown and 1% strongly disagreed in graph no(4.55) below:

**Graph No 4.55**
Table No (4.56) below shows the frequencies of the responses towards Idioms knowledge has crucial role in EFL students’ level of proficiency in receptive and productive skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No (4.56) above shows that about 55% of the participants strongly agreed Idioms knowledge has crucial role in EFL students’ level of proficiency in receptive and productive skills. Meanwhile 27.5% of them agreed, and 5% of the respondents were neutral and 4% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed as it shown in graph no(4.6) below:

**Graph No 4.56**
Table No (4.57) below shows the frequencies of the responses towards Idioms are difficult to understand because of the lack of the cultural background behind the idiom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No (4.57) above shows that about 67.5% of the participants strongly agreed Idioms are difficult to understand because of the lack of the cultural background behind the idiom, meanwhile 27.5% of them agreed, and 2% of the respondents were neutral and 1% strongly disagreed as it shown in graph no(4.57) below:
Graph No 6.57

Table No (4.58) below shows the frequencies of the responses towards Using and understanding idioms are difficult for EFL learners at university level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No (4.58) above shows that about 40% of the participants strongly agreed that Using and understanding idioms are difficult for EFL learners at university level. Meanwhile 45% of them agreed, and 5% of the respondents
were neutral, 7.5% disagreed and only 1% strongly disagreed as it shown in graph no (4.8) below:

**Graph No 4.58**

![Graph showing distribution of responses](image)

**Table No (4.59)** below shows the frequencies of the responses towards Idioms are difficult because they are not well taught in classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>%40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>%45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>%7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>%5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>%2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>%100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table No (4.59) above shows that about 40% of the participants strongly agreed that Idioms are difficult because they are not well taught in classes. Meanwhile 45% of them agreed, and 7.5% of the respondents were neutral, 5% disagreed and only 2.5% strongly disagreed as it shown in graph no (4.59) below:

**Graph No 4.59**
Table No (4.60) below shows the frequencies of the responses towards Collocations play an important role in the process of language learning and teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No (4.60) above shows that about 50% of the participants strongly agreed that Collocations play an important role in the process of language learning and teaching. Meanwhile 40 % of them agreed, and 10% of the respondents were neutral, 5% disagreed and only 2.5% strongly disagreed as it shown in graph no (4.10) below:
Table No (4.61) below shows the frequencies of the responses towards Collocations help improving EFL learners’ fluency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No (4.61) above shows that about 37.5% of the participants strongly agreed that Collocations help improving EFL learners’ fluency.
meanwhile 50% of them agreed, and 5% of the respondents were neutral, and 7.5% disagreed as it shown in graph no(4.11) below:

**Graph No 4.61**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>%50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>%32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>%12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>%5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>%0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table No (4.62) above shows that about 37.5% of the participants strongly agreed that having knowledge about collocations is very important for EFL learners. Meanwhile 50% of them agreed, and 5% of the respondents were neutral, and 7.5% disagreed as it shown in graph no (4.12) below:

**Graph No 4.62**
Table No (4.63) below shows the frequencies of the responses towards EFL learners’ L1 may affect students’ use of appropriate collocation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>%45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>%32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>%22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>%0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>%0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No (4.63) above shows that about 45% of the participants strongly agreed that EFL learners’ L1 may affect students’ use of appropriate collocation., meanwhile 32.5% of them agreed, and 22.5% as it shown in graph no(4.13) below:
Graph No 4.63

Table No (4.64) below shows the frequencies of the responses towards only teachers who have a clear understanding of different kinds of collocation can help learners understand and use collocations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>%30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>%50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>%20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>%0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>%0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table No (4.64) above shows that about 30% of the participants strongly agreed that only teachers who have a clear understanding of different kinds of collocation can help learners understand and use collocations., meanwhile 50% of them agreed, and 20% as it shown in graph no(4.64) below:

Graph No 4.64

Table No (4.65) below shows the frequencies of the responses towards EFL learners should be equipped with skills that enable them to develop their collocation knowledge independently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>%42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>%45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>%10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>%2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>%0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table No (4.65) above shows that about 42% of the participants strongly agreed that EFL learners should be equipped with skills that enable them to develop their collocation knowledge independently, meanwhile 45 % of them agreed, and 10% and 2% disagreed as it shown in graph no(4.15) below:

Graph No 4.65
Table No (4.66) below shows the frequencies of the responses towards collocations are effective in improving EFL students’ multi-cultural competence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>%55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>%32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>%12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>%0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>%0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No (4.66) above shows that about 55% of the participants strongly agreed that collocations are effective in improving EFL students’ multi-cultural competence. Meanwhile 32.5% of them agreed, and 12.5% of the respondents were neutral as it shown in graph no (4.16) below:

Graph No 4.66
Table (4.67) illustrates chi-square test results for respondents’ answers about the statements

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<td>Idioms are important for EFL learners in communication context.</td>
<td>41.000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-</td>
<td>Grammatical and syntactical restrictions of idioms may affect the degree of idiomaticity of lexical items.</td>
<td>31.400</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-</td>
<td>Using idiomatic expressions helps EFL learners to achieve the expected level of proficiency in English language.</td>
<td>36.500</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-</td>
<td>EFL students are not aware of using contextual pragmatic clues to understand idioms whose meaning can’t be inferred from the individual word meaning.</td>
<td>12.600</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>agree</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>95% CI</td>
<td>p Value</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
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<td>5-</td>
<td>Idioms knowledge has crucial role in EFL students’ level of proficiency in receptive and productive skills.</td>
<td>38.250</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
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<td>6-</td>
<td>Idioms are difficult to understand because of the lack of the cultural background behind the idiom.</td>
<td>45.200</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
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<td>7-</td>
<td>Using and understanding idioms are difficult for EFL learners at university level.</td>
<td>34.250</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>8-</td>
<td>Idioms are difficult because they are not well taught in classes.</td>
<td>34.250</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>agree</td>
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<td>9-</td>
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<td>23.800</td>
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<td>0.000</td>
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<td>agree</td>
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<td>11-</td>
<td>Having knowledge about collocations is very important for EFL learners.</td>
<td>19.800</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-</td>
<td>EFL learners’ L1 may affect students’ use of appropriate collocation.</td>
<td>13.050</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of table (4.67) above were interpreted as follows:

1. The value of chi – square calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the statement Idioms are important for EFL learners in communication context was (41.000) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%). These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

2. The value of chi – square calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the statement Grammatical and syntactical restrictions of idioms may affect the degree of idiomaticity of lexical items was (31.400) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the
level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

3. The value of chi–square calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the statement Using idiomatic expressions helps EFL learners to achieve the expected level of proficiency in English language was (36.500) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

4. The value of chi–square calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the statement EFL students are not aware of using contextual pragmatic clues to understand idioms whose meaning can’t be inferred from the individual word meaning was (12.600) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

5. The value of chi–square calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the statement Idioms knowledge has crucial role in EFL students’ level of proficiency in receptive and productive skills was (38.250) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

6. The value of chi–square calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the statement Idioms are difficult to understand because of the lack of the cultural background behind the idiom was (45.200) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.
7. The value of chi–square calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the statement Using and understanding idioms are difficult for EFL learners at university level was (34.250) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

8. The value of chi–square calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the statement Idioms are difficult because they are not well taught in classes was (34.250) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

9. The value of chi–square calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the statement Collocations play an important role in the process of language learning and teaching was (10.400) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

10. The value of chi–square calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the statement Collocations help improving EFL learners’ fluency was (23.800) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

11. The value of chi–square calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the statement Having knowledge about collocations is very important for EFL learners was (19.800) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.
12. The value of chi–square calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the statement EFL learners’ L1 may affect students’ use of appropriate collocation was (13.050) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

13. The value of chi–square calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the statement Only teachers who have a clear understanding of different kinds of collocation can help learners understand and use collocations was (15.600) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

14. The value of chi–square calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the statement EFL learners should be equipped with skills that enable them to develop their collocation knowledge independently was (23.000) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

15. The value of chi–square calculated to signify the differences between the numbers of individuals of the study for the statement Collocations are effective in improving EFL students’ multi-cultural competence was (10.850) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.
4.4 Verification of the Study Hypotheses:

From the analysis of the tools, it was found that the first hypothesis which was: (Short stories will result in developing intercultural awareness communicative competence.) was confirmed by the results of the first dimension of the two tests (pre-test and post-test) and which has been enhanced by the questionnaire. The frequency and percentage of the second dimension of the test and the questionnaire proved and confirmed validity of the second hypothesis which was (There is a significant statistical correlation between short story and development of intercultural awareness.)

As for the third hypothesis which was (There is a significant statistical correlation between short story and development of communicative competence.) was confirmed by the analysis of the third dimension of the test and which has been enhanced by the last dimension of the questionnaire.

4.5 Summary of the Chapter:

In this chapter, two instruments were used in data collection. The first one was A test for Sudan University of Science and Technology 3rd year Students. In addition to a questionnaire for English teachers. Both of the instruments were statistically analyzed and discussed. Different statistical methods were used in the analysis. The results of these instruments were presented in terms of the means, standard deviations, P values and T values.

The second instrument was the questionnaire which was conducted to fine out views of EFL teachers about the problems that face Sudanese EFL
university students understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations as well as it asks about the importance of such expressions
Chapter Five

Summary of the study, Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Studies

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the whole study; Conclusions for its results and findings will also be presented. Recommendations stem out from the findings will be made. This chapter also will also provide suggestions for further studies.

5.2 Summary of the study:

This study aimed at investigating the problems of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations among EFL university students majoring in English language. Chapter One outlined the research questions and the methodology used in this study. The literature review followed in Chapter Two and covered various topics related to idiomatic expressions and collocations including definitions, historical background of them and their importance in foreign language learning (FLL). In Chapter Three, a full description of the methodology used in the research is given, the research steps followed in conducting the tools which were used to collect data beside the population and the procedure that was followed. A questionnaire for EFL teachers and a test for EFL students were the tools that chosen to collect data. The analytical descriptive method was used in this study. The quantitative data were analyzed through the Statistical Packages of the
Social Sciences (SPSS), descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation were calculated to examine the variability of the scores of the participants as seen in the results. Other statistical means like the one-way method and the ANOVA (analysis of variance) were computed to compare the significant statistical differences regarding the obtained answers. **Chapter Four** concentrated on the data collected and its analysis as well as the results obtained from the analysis concluding chapter **Chapter Five** presented the principal findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies of this study in relation to the research questions posed in Chapter one, namely:

1- To what extent are EFL students capable of understanding and using idiomatic expressions?
2- To what extent are EFL students capable of understanding and using collocations?
3- To what extent do EFL students encounter problems of understanding and using idiomatic expressions and collocations?
5.3 Conclusions

From the primary and secondary sources of the study the researcher concludes to the following findings:

5.4 Findings

1. Many students are not aware of using collocations.
2. Students have serious problems regarding understanding and using collocations.
3. Collocations can play a vital role in improving students’ communicative skills.

5.5 Recommendations

The researcher recommends the following:

1. Teachers should use different techniques for teaching collocations.
2. Language vocabulary specifically idiomatic expressions should be given good care when teaching English.
3. Necessity of concentrating on the importance of collocations and developing students’ abilities to be able to collocate.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Studies

The following are some suggestions for further studies:

1. Further studies are required to investigate the best ways of teaching and learning figurative language.
2. Extra Studies need to be done on the importance of idiomatic expressions and collocations to foreign language learners.
Bibliography


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Appendices

Appendix 1:

**Teachers’ Questionnaire:**

Dear participant,

This questionnaire is prepared for the purposes of PhD thesis. Please be assured that, the information elicited will only be used for academic purposes, and will be highly confidential.

This questionnaire has been planned and designed to collect data about the problems of understanding and using Idiomatic Expressions and Collocations among EFL University Students”.

I would be most grateful if you could just spare some of your valuable time to fill out this questionnaire.

Thank you for your cooperation

Elmontasirbillah Rabie Hassan Badawi

PhD candidate

College of languages

College of Graduate Studies

Sudan University of Science and Technology
1. **Participant's Information**

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<th>Name</th>
<th>...........................................................(Optional)</th>
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<td>Experience</td>
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**Statements:**

Please tick (√) in the box which represents your opinion:

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</table>
Appendix 2:

Students' Test

Part One: Idioms

Choose the correct meaning for the following idioms written in bold

4- **To add fuel to the fire** means:
   d) To try to stay warm.
   e) To intensify situation.
   f) To try to complete a task.

5- **A piece of cake** means:
   d) An easy task.
   e) A part of a process.
   f) A small amount of something.

6- **To pull someone’s leg** means:
   d) To take one’s leg and pull it strongly
   e) To cause someone to make an error
   f) The say something untrue as a joke

7- **Curiosity killed the cat** means:
   d) Being curious can get you into trouble.
   e) Cat lead dangerous life.
   f) The cat is a curious animal.

8- **A deer in the headlights** means:
   d) When something becomes obvious because it is brightly lit.
   e) When one is confused and needs to makes a decision but cannot react quickly.
f) A driver who is scared of deer crossing the road.

9- **Start from scratch** means:

d) To start from the very beginning.

e) To try to do impossible things.

f) You do a favor for me and I do a favor for you.

10- **To give someone the evil eye** means:

d) To have eyes similar to devil’s eyes.

e) To need to wear glasses.

f) To look at someone in an angry and unpleasant way.

11- **To get up on the wrong side of the bed** means:

d) To be in a bad mood and easily annoyed.

e) To have pain on one side of the body.

f) To have difficulty waking up.

12- **A time and a place for everything** means:

d) Different things are appropriate on different occasions.

e) Think before you do something.

f) Live each day and don’t worry about the future.

13- **Kick the bucket** means:

d) To die.

f) To shoot the bucket.

14- **Over my dead body** means:

d) Think that something you have just heard is silly and will never happen.

e) Think that something will happen only far in the future.

f) Let someone do something only after your death.

15- **Lose your head** means:
d) Be unable to remember things correctly.
e) Lose control of yourself.
f) Be responsible for your actions.

16- **A big fish** means:

d) A person who has committed a serious crime and is arrested.
e) A selfish person who cares only for one’s pleasure.
f) A person who is important and powerful.

17- **Bite your tongue** means:

d) Keep something secret.
e) Remain silent, even though you want to say something.
f) Be immediately sorry for what you have said.

18- **Bite off more than you can chew means:**

d) Accept a difficult or unpleasant situation.
e) Try to do something that is far too difficult.
f) Try to do too much.

19- **Not worth the candle** means:

d) Not worth buying because of poor quality.
e) Not worth the trouble or effort needed in order to achieve something.
f) Not worth doing something, completely useless.

20- **Make your blood boil** means:

d) Make you very angry.
e) Make you passionate.
f) Make you feel distress or fear.

21- **Tighten your belt** means:

d) Lose weight.
e) Run very fast.
f) To spend less money

22- Open your heart means:

d) Fall in love with someone.
e) Tell someone your most private thoughts or feelings.
f) To be completely honest and sincere.

23- At your fingertips means:

d) Know thoroughly facts and information and be able to refer to them quickly.
e) Have something readily available for you to use or reach.
f) Be responsible for someone or something.

24- The early bird catches the worm means:

d) A person who starts to do something as soon as possible will be successful.
e) A person who is very fast and effective will be successful.
f) A person who doesn’t worry about the little things in life will be successful.

25- The upper hand means:

d) Have the freedom to make your own decisions.
e) Have a chance to win.
f) Have more power than someone and control things.

26- Cut the bone means:

d) Offend a person deeply.
e) Reduce resources or costs as much as possible.
f) Attack someone physically, hit many times.

27- Go into the red means:

d) Become very angry.
e) Become red in the face because you are ashamed.
f) Owe money to the bank.

28- **Have blood in your hands** means:
d) Be involved in something unfair or dishonest.
e) Work very hard to achieve something important.
f) Be responsible for someone’s death.

**Part Two: Collocations**

1. Choose which one of the following verbs *(Miss, Get, Do and Make)* goes well with the expressions below:

   a) __________ a goal  
   b) __________ peace  
   c) __________ lost  
   d) __________ a home  
   e) __________ an appointment  
   f) __________ a lesson  
   g) __________ homework  
   h) __________ the cooking  
   i) __________ ready  
   j) __________ progress  
   k) __________ someone’s help  
   l) __________ nothing  
   m) __________ an effort  
   n) __________ one’s best  
   o) __________ furniture  
   p) __________ the shopping  
   q) __________ trouble  
   r) __________ someone a favour

2. Decide which word or phrase completes the sentence.

1. He didn’t know anything about business, so starting his own business was ________.
   a) a leap into the cloud  
   b) a leap in the dark  
   c) a leap into the whole

2. I hate the way he criticizes everybody. It really rattles ________
   a) my back  
   b) my bones  
   c) my cage

3. When her business crashed, she had to pick up ________ and start again.
   a) the fragments  
   b) the pieces  
   c) the stones
4. She felt sad when she realized that she had lost her watch. It wasn't expensive but it had sentimental ______.
   a) expense
   b) price
   c) value
5. I used to go to church under false _____. I never wanted to go but my mother made me.
   a) agreement
   b) feelings
   c) pretences
6. One minute they were just talking and then all hell broke ______ and everybody started screaming and shouting.
   a) free
   b) looses
   c) over
7. He never cheats or tricks anybody when he plays. He always goes by the ______.
   a) book
   b) instruction
   c) principles

Thank you very much for your cooperation