



Beyond Words: Merging Lexical and Contextual Models for Vocabulary Development through Idiom Learning



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Abstract

The mastery of idiomatic expressions is an important criterion determining EFL learners' overall proficiency in English. Henceforth, the current study aims to investigate the possibility of enhancing students' mastery of idiomatic expressions via a lexical-contextual model to extend EFL learners' vocabulary repertoire. It takes the case of first-year students at the Department of Arts and English Language, Frères Mentouri Constantine 1 University. Two main research tools were adopted to achieve the aforementioned aim: an experiment and a delayed test. The pre and post-test findings revealed improved students' mastery of idiomatic expressions. Furthermore, the delayed test results were in favour of the participants' retention of their level in the post-test regarding vocabulary abilities by revealing the proper use of idioms in a variety of contexts in their written productions.

Keywords

lexical model;
contextual model;
idioms;
vocabulary repertoire;
EFL learners.

الكلمات المفتاحية

نموذج معجمي ؛
نموذج سياقي ؛
تنمية مفردات ؛
تعابير اصطلاحية ؛
 المتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة
أجنبية.

ما وراء الكلمات: تكامل النماذج المعجمي والسياسي في تنمية المفردات من خلال تعلم العبارات الاصطلاحية

ملخص

يُعد إيقان التعبيرات الاصطلاحية معياراً مهماً في تحديد الكفاءة اللغوية لمتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. ومن ثُم، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف إمكانية تعزيز إيقان الطلاب للتعبيرات الاصطلاحية من خلال نموذج معجمي سياقي لتوسيع رصيد المفردات لدى المتعلمين. وتنتقل الدراسة حالة طلاب السنة الأولى في قسم الأداب واللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة الإخوة مtentouri قسنطينة 1 حيث تم اعتماد أداتين بحثيتين رئيسيتين لتحقيق الهدف المذكور أعلاه وهما: التجربة والاختبار التأثيري. وكشفت نتائج الاختبارين القبلي والبعدي عن تحسن إيقان الطلاب للتعبيرات الاصطلاحية. كما كانت نتائج الاختبار التأثيري لصالح احتفاظ المشاركين بمستواهم الذي سجلوه في الاختبار البعدي من حيث قدراتهم على الاستخدام الصحيح للعبارات الاصطلاحية في مجموعة متنوعة من السياقات في إنتاجاتهم الكتابية.

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I- Introduction

Achieving a high level of proficiency in English has become a significant goal for many ESL/EFL learners, especially with the rise of English as a lingua franca. Cowie and Makin (1975), as well as other researchers (Ellis, 1997; Liu, 2008; Wray, 2002; Shirazi & Talebinezhad, 2013), asserted that the mastery of idiomatic expressions is a significant marker of native-like language proficiency and communicative abilities since they highly characterise the natural language -be it spoken or written. Although these fixed expressions convey figurative meanings not typically derived from the individual words constructing them, they constitute an integral part of vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 2001; Boers & Lindstromberg, 2008). Henceforth, having command of these expressions not only creates more confidence in the language user and helps him express himself clearly and effectively but also enables him to widen his vocabulary stock and strengthens his understanding of the language as a whole (Liontas, 2002; Schmitt, 2010). If learners cannot understand idiomatic expressions or use them properly, they will certainly not reach a high level of language proficiency (Cakir, 2011). Khonbi and Sadeghi (2017) asserted that idioms should receive special attention and be prioritised in educational curricula due to their frequent occurrence in spoken and written language. Hence, the primary concern of the current study is improving students' vocabulary repertoire by mastering idiomatic expressions following a Lexical-Contextual Model.

I.1 Idiomatic Expressions Defined

Idiomatic expressions received multiple definitions with varying nuances and emphases due to the lack of consensus among scholars. An earlier definition of these structures was advanced by Makkai (1972), who defined an idiom as "a form of expression, grammatical construction, phrase, etc., peculiar to a language; a peculiarity of phraseology approved by the usage of language, often having a significance other than its grammatical or logical one". That is to say, these expressions have their specificity not only in the way they are structured but also in their meaning, which is governed by how native speakers use them.

Webster's Dictionary (1994) further defined an idiom as "an expression whose meaning cannot always be readily derived from the usual meaning of its constituent elements. It is hard to tell from the literal meaning of the individual words." This further illustrates the particularity and uniqueness of the meaning of idiomatic expressions, which cannot be predicted from the individual words that build them.

Being on the same line of thought, Moon (1998) defined the idiom as "an ambiguous term used in conflicting ways," pointing to its difficulty and obscurity of meaning. In his turn, Cooper stated that idioms are part of the figurative language that is difficult to learn and understand. This nonliteral language also includes metaphors, similes, proverbs, and idioms, most commonly used by native speakers since they appear repeatedly in their speech and writing (1998).

Hence, although scholars were not unanimous in their definitions of idiomatic expressions, they all agreed that idioms are fixed phrases that are semantically complex. The meaning of idiomatic expressions is not anticipated from their component parts; it is also determined by language usage conventions.

I.2 Idioms, Language, and Culture

If EFL learners want to excel at learning English, knowing the language rules does not suffice. Language and culture are very intertwined aspects that cannot be separated. If these ties are broken, language and culture will lose significance (Brown, 1994). Jiang (2000) considered language as the 'mirror' that reflects the cultural aspects of a community. He provided different metaphors to describe language and culture interdependence. He symbolised both as an 'iceberg'; the apparent part is language and some cultural aspects, and the hidden part is the deeper cultural features. Jiang's philosophical view of the combination of language and culture was revealed in the image of a living organism where language is 'flesh' and culture is 'blood'. A more communicative view considers communication as 'swimming', language as 'the swimming skill', and culture as 'water'; without language or culture, communication is hampered (Jiang, 2000).

Idioms, being part of the language, are culture-specific because they reflect "the customs, cultural beliefs, specific features, social attitudes, and norms of a society" (Cakir, 2011, p. 373); that is why it is not evident to find their exactly corresponding idioms in other languages. Henceforth, initiating ESL/EFL learners to idiomatic expressions would be an excellent opportunity for them to 'communicate effectively', learn about the native speakers' culture, know more about the pragmatic aspects of the native language, and even feel more confident in using it (Cakir, 2011). Thus, it is not only crucial to know the grammar of the language but also its other cultural aspects, such as idioms, proverbs, and metaphors, because they are very common in authentic language, and native speakers cannot escape including such 'nonliteral expressions' (idioms) in everyday conversations (Cakir, 2011).

I.3 The Necessity of Teaching Idioms to Improve EFL Learners' Lexical Repertoire

Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) emphasised the importance of enriching L2 students' word stock by learning more 'vocabulary', 'phrases' and 'syntactic constructions' to widen their lexical repertoire and be adept at using them in formal as well as informal situations because EFL students are said to be successful learners only if they can effectively use the

language for communicative purposes (Riggenback & Lazaraton, 1991). Palmer's initial findings (1925) showed that memorising the most recurrent 'conversational expressions' was the quickest way to enhance learners' speaking skills.

For Roberto de Caro (2009), idioms should be treated far from textbooks, and teaching them necessitates real-life situations full of authentic and natural language, which is vivid, more creative, and rich in idiomatic expressions. Aijmer (1996) and Nation and Webb (2011) acknowledged the importance of introducing idiomatic formulas to learners at any level. Cowie and Mackin (1975, p vi) stated in the introduction of *the Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English* that having a rich knowledge of idioms and using them appropriately in various contexts is a distinguishing factor of native-like English proficiency. Cakir (2011) stressed that language learners should be encouraged to deal with idioms in different contexts regardless of their difficulty. McPartlan (1981) highlighted the significance of idiomatic expressions in SL/FL settings and emphasised that these expressions should be given more credit in the teaching programmes because they are features of 'real life language'. He also insisted that learners should go beyond the recognition level to reach the production level of idioms. Idiomatic expressions are very common in English, and native speakers can hardly speak or write without using them (Seidl & McMordie, 1978). Hinkel, on his part, (2017) emphasised that learning idioms improves learners' receptive as well as productive skills in various contexts.

Irujo (1986) stressed that idiomatic expressions should be integrated at the early stages of the learning process in ESL/EFL settings. For beginners, idioms could be inserted in the dialogues or stories hand in hand with the vocabulary they are learning or used as synonyms to the learnt vocabulary. Students would be more exposed to idioms through reading or conversations for intermediate levels. They can also stretch their knowledge about idiomatic expressions from other sources like advertisements and comics. For more advanced levels, however, learners can follow special lessons to learn more about idioms; they can even practise recognising and comprehending idioms according to different contexts and situations.

1.4 Difficulties Involved in Learning English Idioms

Without a shadow of a doubt, learning idioms is laborious for EFL beginner learners and more advanced ones because using these expressions correctly and spontaneously burdens them (Cakir, 2011). Cooper (1998) and Irujo (1986) agreed that understanding and using these expressions is complex for students because of the non-literalness or the lack of correspondence between the idiom's figurative meaning and its literal sense. For example, "*he spilt the beans*" (unable to keep a secret) differs from the words 'spilt' and 'beans'. Hence, native speakers know immediately when and how to use it, whereas FL learners need to think about the meaning of these words to figure out the appropriate meaning of the idiom (Irujo, 1986).

The second reason why idioms are challenging for EFL learners, according to Irujo (1986), is mainly attributed to students' lack of exposure to idiomatic expressions, especially that the language addressed to them includes simple everyday vocabulary and idioms are hardly covered (Henzl, 1973; Kellerman, 1977; in Irujo, 1986). Irujo (1986, p. 237) further stated: "Many second-language teaching materials either ignore idioms entirely or relate them to the 'other expressions' section of vocabulary lists, without providing exercises or other aids to learning". According to him, giving less attention or excluding idiomatic expressions from the teaching materials is one of the reasons why students struggle with learning idioms. Although SL/FL learners encounter idioms while watching movies, this does not help since these non-interactive settings do not provide meaningful negotiation, clarification, or feedback (Irujo, 1986).

The third reason has to do with the correct use of idiomatic phrases. Although learners may manage to know a number of them, they may fail to distinguish their degree of formality as being slang (*you got it*), colloquial (*he kicked the bucket*), or more formal (*run the risk*). Furthermore, idioms have grammatical constraints that mislead students since these expressions need to be learnt as wholes, not parts. If learners reword the idiom, alter its word order, or even try to rely on their first language to teach them, they will create 'comical idiomatic expressions' different from the ones native speakers use (Irujo, 1986; Hinkel, 2002).

1.5 Adopting a Lexical-Contextualised Model to Idiom Learning

A lexical-contextual model stresses learning idiomatic expressions in context, making them more accessible and helping learners retain their meanings either in spoken authentic conversations or stories (Cowie, 1998; Lionatas, 2017) by relying on contextual clues (Levorato, Roch, & Nesi, 2007; Ghazal, 2020; Boer, 2021).

Although the lexical-contextualised model acknowledges the role of context in helping learners grasp the meaning of idioms, it also highlights these structures as lexical chunks or fixed expressions. EFL learners should be exposed to them to learn and use them naturally rather than treating them as isolated constructions or focusing solely on grammatical rules or individual vocabulary items (Lewis, 1993). Repeated exposure to these lexical chunks assists students in retaining and using them quickly and producing them correctly (Lewis, 1993). Wray (2002) Elaborated on this, stating that learning idioms by heart could even lead to their automatic use and production as semantic chunks rather than individual linguistic items. This automaticity leads to fluency in speech as well as writing; in this way, learners can extend their vocabulary when handling multi-word expressions rather than single words.

II- Methods and Materials

This section is devoted to the methods and materials, taking into account the research questions and hypothesis, sample, research design, treatment cycles, and data analysis.

II.1 Research Questions and Hypothesis

Before embarking upon the current study, the following research questions have been put forward.

1. To what extent do Algerian students of English at the Department of Arts and English Language, Frères Mentouri Constantine1 University, have a rich knowledge of English idiomatic expressions?
2. To what extent are first-year students likely to enhance their vocabulary repertoire by adopting a Lexical-Contextual Model in teaching idiomatic Expressions?

To answer these questions, we hypothesise that Algerian first-year students of English at the Department of Arts and English Language, Frères Montouri Constantine 1 University, are more likely to extend their vocabulary repertoire by mastering English idiomatic expressions via a lexical-contextualised framework.

II.2 The sample

Thirty-three first-year students of English as a foreign language, including 26 females and 7 males, constitute the current study sample at the Department of Letters and English Language, Frères Mentouri Constantine 1 University. The participants had at least studied English for 7 years in middle and secondary schools.

II.3 Research Design

The researcher carried out an experimental design with twofold aims: First, to check students' knowledge about idiomatic expressions and their difficulties in using them; second, to investigate the possibility of enhancing learners' lexical repertoire by improving their mastery of idiomatic expressions.

Prior to the treatment, the participants underwent a pre-test to investigate their knowledge of idiomatic expressions. It included 20 idiomatic phrases pertinent to different topics: 'happiness and sadness', 'health', 'anger', 'success and failure', 'having problems', and 'efforts'. These topics have been selected because they are common and recurring daily. The same participants were also assigned a post-test to check how much their knowledge of idiomatic phrases had improved. The post-test was similar to the pre-test concerning the length, topics involved, and type of exercises.

II.4 Treatment Cycles

During the treatment, the subjects were instructed in various idioms related to the aforementioned topics following a lexical-contextualised model. They were initiated into six lessons, each about a set of idiomatic expressions related to one of the selected topics. Each lesson is divided into the following stages.

Warm-up Activity: Noticing Lexical Chunks (Lexical Model)

It consisted of presenting the set of idioms to be learnt. In this activity, the researcher started by writing the lesson's topic on the board and asking the students to give him some of the idioms they knew about the topic at hand (eliciting students' background knowledge about the idioms to be dealt with). The researcher then wrote the set of idioms—the lesson's target—on the board and asked the students to guess the meaning of the written idiomatic expressions.

Explanation

All the presented idiomatic expressions are to be explained to the learners to clarify their meanings and the context where they should appear. Examples and emphasis on using idioms as chunks rather than sets of individual words are to be provided.

Contextualised Exposure the Idioms (Contextual Model)

A few exercises are presented to the students where idioms are used in mini-stories, anecdotes, or dialogues to rehearse the idioms' structures, meanings, and context where they should appear.

Guided Practice: Lexical Rehearsal (Lexical Approach)

Providing the learners with sentences and requiring them to fill in the gaps with the appropriate idiom to practise using idioms as chunks in fitting contexts.

Follow up: Storytelling/ dialogue Writing (Contextual Approach)

For the follow-up activity, the students worked in small groups. They were required to write mini-stories or dialogues, including the idioms presented in the lesson. These dialogues served as transcripts of natural situations that the teacher selected.

Balancing the lexical and contextualised approaches encourages learners to notice and recognise idioms as prefabricated expressions that should be used in appropriate contexts. Then, they are gradually engaged in guided practice to produce these ready-made expressions in their own written dialogues.

III- Results and discussion

This section is concerned with reporting the data and analysing the results obtained in the pre-and post-tests and the delayed test.

III.1 Analysis of the pre-test

The pre-test included four exercises. The first tested students' recognition of some idiomatic expressions and their fixed structures. The second activity checked students' knowledge of idiomatic phrases out of context. The third exercise involved the learners in determining the meaning of idioms according to the context of a sentence. The last one required them to fill the gaps with appropriate idiomatic expressions.

Table 1: Pre-test and Post-test Means

Participants	Pre-test	Post-test
N	33	33
Mean	8.30	16.96

Table one illustrates that the sample achieved a mean of 8.30 in terms of students' ability to recognise idioms' fixed structure and meanings out of context and in context, meaning that the participants are of below-average level. The learners outperformed in the post-test, reaching a mean score of 16.96 (double the mean achieved in the pre-test)

Table 2: Learners' Categories in the Pre-test

Mark	N	%
Struggling - Below 5	8	24.24
Below average (6-9)	12	36.36
Average (10)	3	9.09
Above average(11-12)	4	12.12
Good (13-15)	6	18.18

A thorough analysis of the scores obtained in the pre-test revealed that the participants belonged to one of the following five categories, as illustrated in table 2 above:

- Struggling students who could recognise five idioms or less constitute 24.24% of the sample.
- Learners of below-average abilities formed 36.36% of the sample. They could know seven to nine of the twenty idiomatic phrases given to them.
- Students of average abilities comprised 9.09% of the sample and recognised 10 of 20 idioms.
- 4 learners (12.12%) answered 11-12 idiomatic expressions revealing an above-average level.
- 6 students (18.18%) scored well since they answered correctly to 13-16 of the 20 assigned idioms.

Consequently, 60.60% of the sample faced difficulties in recognising idiomatic expressions out of context and understanding them within context.

Exercise One: Match the Two Parts of the Idiom

The participants were given five idioms divided into two halves. They had to match one part on the left and another on the right to form the full idiomatic expression. This exercise tested students' knowledge of the idioms' fixed structure.

Table 3: Global Analysis of Learners Scores in Constructing Idioms

Score/5	Right Answers	
	N	%
5	2	6.06
4	3	9.09
3	8	24.24
1-2	15	45.45
0	5	15.15

Glancing at Table 1 above, one can easily notice that only two students (6.06%) could provide correct answers for the five idiomatic expressions in the first exercise. Three students (9.09%) were able to provide four correct answers, 8 (24.24%) gave three correct answers, while nearly half of the sample (45.45%) gave only one or two correct answers. 5 learners (15.15%) answered the five idioms wrongly. The table above illustrates that 60.6% of the sample face difficulties with idiomatic expressions since they did not succeed in matching the two parts of the idioms to form their fixed structure; 15.15% of the participants proved this ability.

Table 4: Detailed Analysis of Learners' Scores in Constructing Idioms in the Pre-test

Idioms	Right Answers		Wrong Answers		No answers	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Feeling like death warmed up	21	63.63	12	36.36	0	0
Driving somebody up the wall	15	45.45	18	54.54	0	0
Against a break wall	17	51.51	16	48.48	0	0
Down in the dumps	7	21.21	24	72.72	2	6.06
Given up the ghost	8	24.24	25	75.75	0	0

The results showed that almost all the participants provided answers to the first exercise, which required them to match the two parts of idiomatic expressions, except for two participants (6.06%) who did not answer the idiom 'down the dumps'. The idiomatic expression 'feeling like death warmed up' was the one that was correctly answered by 63.63% of the sample against 36.36% of wrong answers. The two idioms 'driving somebody up the wall' and 'against a break wall' were correctly constructed by nearly half of the sample and received 45.45% correct answers against 54.54% wrong answers and 51.51% correct answers against 48.48% wrong answers, respectively. The last two idiomatic phrases, 'down the dumps' and 'given up the ghost', were the least recognised ones since 21.21% of the subjects managed to match the two parts of the former while 72.72% did not, and 24.24% easily constructed the latter while 75.75 did not.

Exercise Two: Recognising Idioms out of Context

The learners were given five idioms out of context and were required to determine their meaning. This exercise aimed to assess students' ability to recognise the meaning of idioms out of context.

Table 5: Learners' Recognition of Idioms' Out of Context in the Pre-test

Score/5	Right Answers	
	N	%
5	1	3.03
4	0	0
3	4	12.12
2	9	27.27
1	6	18.18
0	13	39.39

Concerning meaning identification of idiomatic phrases out of context, it is indicated in Table 4 above that only 1 participant (3.03%) could guess the meaning of the five idioms. No student was able to provide 4 correct answers, 4 (12.12) guessed the meaning of 3 idioms, 9 (27.27%) knew the meaning of two idioms only, 6 (18.18%) recognised one idiom, and 13 (39.39%) did not recognise any one of the five provided idioms. 84.84% of the sample found it laborious to identify idioms out of context, which revealed that idiomatic expressions were a major hindrance for the students.

Table 6: Detailed analysis of Students' Recognition of Idioms Out of Context in the Pre-test

Idioms	Right Answers		Wrong Answers		No Answers	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
To tighten the belt	7	21.21	17	51.51	9	27.27
To dig into a hole	11	33.33	13	39.39	9	27.27
Ruffling anyone's feathers	5	15.15	7	21.21	21	63.63
Off-colour	11	33.33	18	54.54	4	12.12
Holding the baby	2	6.06	21	63.63	10	30.30

The students found it challenging to determine the meaning of idiomatic expressions out of context, as revealed in the table above. A few participants provided the right answers, others gave wrong responses, and a considerable portion of the sample did not provide answers. The two idioms ‘*to dig into a hole*’ and ‘*Off-colour*’ were correctly answered by 33.33% of the sample, but the former received 39.39% wrong answers and 27.27% no answers, while the latter witnessed 54.54% wrong answers and 12.12 no answers.

More than half of the sample were unable to guess the meanings of ‘*to tighten the belt*’ and ‘*holding the baby*’ since 51.51% and 63.63% of the participants, respectively, provided wrong answers, and 27.27% and 30.30% did not give an answer. ‘*Ruffling anyone’s feathers*’ was the most difficult idiom for the students to know; 63.63% of the learners did not answer it, 21.21% provided wrong answers, and 15.15% answered it correctly.

We can assume that the recognition of the meaning of the aforementioned idiomatic phrases was a major hindrance for learners not only because of their specific meaning, which is culture-dependent, but also because they were out of context; this made the mission of the learners to determine their meaning even more difficult.

Exercise Three: Recognising Idioms in Context

In this activity, learners were given five idiomatic expressions supplied by context. They were required to read the sentences and determine the idiom's meaning. The aim was to check whether the context helped the participants understand the idioms and enabled them to explain their meaning.

Table 7: Global Scores of Idioms' Recognition in Context in the Pre-test

Score/5	Right Answers	
	N	%
5	2	6.06
4	3	9.09
3	7	21.21
2	12	36.36
1	6	18.18
0	3	9.09

Table 7 indicated that only two participants (6.06%) successfully explained the five idiomatic phrases correctly, and 3 subjects (9.09%) managed to explain four out of the five idioms. 7 learners (21.21%) explained three, 12 students (36.36%) provided the meaning of 3 idioms, 6 (18.18%) explicated one idiom, and 3 students (9.09%) failed to give their correct meaning. Hence, the table above shows that 15.15% of the sample were successful in defining the five assigned idioms or four out of them relying on the context of the sentences; however, the context was not helpful for more than half of the sample as 63.63% of the participants either failed or managed to recognise the meaning of only one or two idioms.

Table 8: Detailed Analysis of Students' Recognition of Idioms in Context in the Pre-test

Idioms	Right Answers		Wrong Answers		No Answer	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Down the dumps	12	36.36	20	60.60	1	3.03
To tighten your belt	3	9.09	21	63.63	9	27.27
Dig yourself into a hole	22	66.66	9	27.27	2	6.06
Worked like magic	17	51.51	12	36.36	4	12.12
Rub her father up the wrong way	19	57.57	7	21.21	7	21.21

Relying on the context, more than half of the sample understood the meaning and succeeded in defining the idioms ‘*dig yourself into a hole*’ (66.66%), ‘*worked like magic*’ (51.51%), ‘*rub her father up the wrong way*’ (57.57%). However, considerable portions of students provided wrong answers to these idioms, 27.27%, 36.36%, and 21.21%, respectively, and others did not provide any answer, 6.06%, 12.12%, and 21.21%, in the same order.

More than half of the sample failed to comprehend the meaning of ‘*down the dumps*’ (60.60% against 36.36% who managed to understand and explain it and 3.03% who did not provide answers). 63.63% were not successful in defining ‘*to tighten your belt*’ while 9.09% managed to understand and explain it, and 27.27% did not answer.

The context was not 100% helpful for learners to understand and guess the meaning of idiomatic expressions. This is justified by the fact that the special meaning of idioms does not correspond to the meaning of the separate words that make them. Hence, to understand idiomatic expressions well, learners should master their meaning in relation to specific contexts and situations that are exactly similar to the native culture.

Exercise Four: Understanding Idioms in Context

Students were provided with five idiomatic expressions and required to fill in the gaps with the appropriate one. This activity aimed to check whether the context assists the learners in understanding the meaning of idioms.

Table 9: Global Scores of Idioms' Cognition in Context in the Pre-test

Score/5	Right Answers	
	N	%
5	9	27.27
4	1	3.03
3	5	15.15
2	7	21.21
1	5	15.15
0	6	18.18

Glancing at Table 8, one may notice that 27.27% of the sample answered the five provided idioms correctly. In comparison, 3.03% gave correct answers to 4 idioms, 15.15% responded positively to 3 idioms, 21.21% to two items, 15.15% to one idiom only, and 18.18% did not answer. This clearly illustrates that the context assisted 30.30% in placing the provided idioms in their correct places, whereas more than half of the sample (54.54%) either failed or struggled to provide one or two correct answers.

Table 10: Detailed Analysis of Students' Recognition of Idioms in Context in the Pre-test

Idioms	Right Answers		Wrong Answers		No Answers	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Floating on air	14	42.42	17	51.51	2	6.06
Off-colour	22	66.66	9	27.27	2	6.06
Holding the baby	12	36.36	19	57.57	2	6.06
Ruffling anyone's feathers	18	54.54	12	36.36	3	9.09
A blessing in disguise	19	57.57	11	33.33	3	9.09

According to the table above, only a small portion of the sample did not provide answers to the assigned idiomatic expressions; this portion varied between 6.06% and 9.09%. 'Off-colour', 'A blessing in disguise' and 'Ruffling anyone's feathers' were the most recognisable idioms for more than half of the sample (66.66%, 57.57%, 54.54%, respectively). In this order, these idioms were unknown to 27.27%, 33.33%, and 36.36%. Once again, we may assume that the context could assist the learners to a certain extent in recognising the precise meaning of idioms. This is apparent with the idioms used by the learners with similar equivalents in similar situations in their mother language: 'floating on the air', 'off-colour', 'worked like magic' and 'dig yourself into a hole'.

III.2 Post-test Analysis

After the treatment, the post-test results were analysed and summarised in the following table:

Table 11: Learners' Categories in the Post-test

Mark	N	%
Above average	2	6.06
Good	4	12.12
Very Good	18	54.54
Excellent	9	27.27
Total Number	33	100

Table 10 above illustrates that the three categories of struggling students (scoring 0-5), poor achievers (scoring 6-9), and average achievers (scoring 10), which were present in the pre-test, did not appear in the post-test. Furthermore, two new categories representing the outstanding achievers and the excellent ones occurred in the post-test; this justified the progress that the participants witnessed after receiving training in idiomatic expressions via the lexical-contextualised model. The participants were grouped under four main categories:

- A small portion (6.06%) represented the learners whose level was above average (scoring 11-12).
- 12.12% of the sample contained good achievers (scoring 13-15).
- More than half of the sample (54.54%) included very good achievers (scoring 16-18).
- 27.27% of the subjects proved to be excellent achievers (scoring 19-20).

Notably, the vast majority of the participants (93.93%) were competent in recognising the meaning of idiomatic phrases and using them in appropriate contexts; Only 6.06% of the learners were less competent.

Exercise One: Matching the Two Parts of the Idiom

The participants were given five idioms divided into two halves. The students had to match one part on the left to the other on the right to form the full idiomatic expression. This exercise tested students' knowledge of the idioms' fixed structure.

Table 12: Global Analysis of Learners Scores in Constructing Idioms in the Post-test

Score/5	Right Answers	
	N	%
5	33	100

As Table 12 indicates, all the participants (100%) were successful in matching the two halves to construct five correct idiomatic expressions. This shows that they performed far better in the post-test than they did in the pre-test, where only 15.15% managed to build four or five correct idiomatic phrases, whereas 60.60 % either failed to know the fixed structure of the idioms at hand (15.15%) or managed to recognise one or two idioms only (45.45%).

Exercise Two: Learners' Recognition of Idiom Out of Context in the Post-test

The learners were given the meanings of the five idioms they constructed in activity one and were required to assign each idiom its appropriate meaning. This exercise aimed at checking students' ability to recognise the meaning of idioms out of context.

Table 13: Global Scores of Learners' Recognition of Idioms' Out of Context in the Post-test

Score/5	Right Answers	
	N	%
5	30	90.90
4	3	9.09

Taking a glance at Table 13 above, it is easily noticeable that the vast majority of the sample (90.90%) succeeded in matching the five idiomatic expressions which were given to them out of context to their appropriate meaning, and 9.09% managed to know the meaning of four idioms. This illustrated that the participants outperformed in the post-test in comparison to the pre-test, where only 3.03% were able to recognise the meaning of 5 idioms off context, no student managed to know four idioms, and 84.84% proved either unable to identify their meaning (39.39%) or they were able to recognise only one or two idioms (45.45%).

Table 14: Detailed Analysis of Learner Scores in Constructing Idioms in the Post-test

Idioms	Right Answers		Wrong Answers	
	N	%	N	%
Ruffling anyone's feathers	33	100	0	0
Down in the dumps	32	96.96	1	3.03
Against a break wall	33	100	0	0
As fit as a fiddle	33	100	0	0
Thrilled to bits	30	90.90	3	9.09

The table above shows clearly that all the participants (100%) recognised the meaning of the idioms 'ruffling anyone's feathers', 'against a break wall', and 'as fit as a fiddle' apart from 'down in the dumps' and 'thrilled to bits' which were correctly identified by (96.96% against 3.03%) and (90.90% against 9.09%), respectively. This illustrated that the subjects performed far better in the post-test than in the pre-test, in which many students found it laborious to determine the meaning of the idioms out of context. Some instances from the pre-test can be discussed here. The idiomatic phrase 'down in the dumps' received 51.51% positive responses against 48.48% negative ones, 'against a brick wall' witnessed 21.21% right answers against 72.72% wrong answers, and 'ruffling anyone's feathers' was only recognised by 15.15%, while 63.63% provided wrong answers, and 33.63% did not answer at all.

Exercise Three: Learners' Recognition of Idioms in Context

In this activity, learners were provided with six questions in a dialogue and six idiomatic expressions. They were required to answer the questions of the dialogue using the given idioms according to the appropriate context. The aim was to check students' ability to diversify the use of idioms according to different contexts.

Table 15: Global Scores of Learners' Recognition of Idioms in Context in the Post-test

Score/5	Right Answers	
	N	%
6	6	18.18
5	11	33.33
4	8	24.24
3	6	18.18
2	1	3.03
1	1	3.03

With regard to using idioms in specific contexts, students' results were better than the ones reached in the pre-test. Nearly half of the sample (51.51%) had a good command of varying idiomatic expressions according to different contexts; they responded positively to all or five of the six idioms provided to them. 42.42% managed to use 3 or 4 idiomatic expressions correctly, while 6.06 % answered correctly to 1 or 2 idioms only.

By comparing these results to those obtained in the pre-test, it was revealed that 63.63% provided wrong answers or responded correctly to only one or two idioms, whereas 15.15% showed the ability to understand idioms in context.

Exercise Four: Idioms and Context Appropriateness

Students were given four idiomatic expressions and asked to include them in their own sentences. This activity aimed to assess their ability to use idiomatic expressions in suitable contexts.

Table 16: Global Scores of Learners' Recognition of Idioms' in Context in the Post-test

Score/5	Right Answers	
	N	%
4	8	24.24
3	15	45.45
2	4	12.12
1	6	18.18

Concerning students' ability to use idioms in appropriate contexts, Table 16 above showed that 24.24% succeeded in writing sentences that provided suitable contexts. 45.45% produced three sentences serving proper contexts, 12.12% produced two sentences, and 18.18% wrote only one sentence.

Table 17: Detailed Analysis of Students' Recognition of Idioms in Context in the Post-test

Idioms	Right Answers		Wrong Answers		No Answers	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Dig into a hole	18	54.54	11	33.33	4	12.12
Floating on air	31	93.93	0	0	2	6.06
To face the music	23	36.36	8	24.24	2	6.06
Come against a stumbling block	13	39.39	15	45.45	5	15.15

Table 17 provides detailed information about the students' progress in recognising idiomatic expressions in context during the post-test. It is shown that performance varied among learners depending on idioms, difficulty, and familiarity. The idiom "*floating on air*", for instance, was the most accurately used by 93.93% of students, selecting its appropriate sense. No incorrect answers were recorded, and only 6.06% of participants left the item unanswered. This suggests that learners' knowledge about this idiom and its meaning assisted them in using it correctly in sentences of their own.

The idioms "*dig into a hole*" and "*come against a stumbling block*" proved more challenging. For "*dig into a hole*," only 54.54% of students answered correctly, while 33.33% provided wrong responses, and 12.12% left the item unanswered. Similarly, "*come against a stumbling block*" was correctly recognised by 39.39% of students, whereas 45.45% provided incorrect answers and 15.15% failed to respond. These results indicate that students still struggle with interpreting less familiar idiomatic structures.

Learners inserted the "to face the music" idiom more or less correctly in their sentences, with 36.36% correct responses, 24.24% incorrect responses, and 6.06% non-responses. Despite being a relatively common idiom, the moderate success rate may reflect a gap in students' familiarity with culturally embedded expressions.

Overall, these results highlight that easy recognition of certain idioms, especially more transparent or familiar ones, helped the learners to use them correctly and in appropriate contexts. However, it did not entirely eliminate difficulties with expressions that were less transparent or less frequently encountered. These findings highlight the significance of sustained and intentional instruction of idioms, stressing both exposure to authentic usage and explicit teaching of meaning.

Calculating the Means

To make the results more transparent and reliable, some descriptive statistics are deemed necessary; these involve calculating the means, central tendency, and dispersion of the scores in the pre-and post-tests. Central tendency is revealed in three parameters: mean (the average resulting from the division of all the scores by the number of participants), mode (the mark with maximum frequency) and median (the middle points of scores above and below which there are half of the scores). Dispersion is shown in the lowest and highest scores with their respective frequencies (Fr.). The results of the calculations are displayed in the table below:

Table 18: The participants' overall behaviours during the pre and post-tests

	Central Tendency			Dispersion			
	Mode	Mean	median	Low	Fr.	High	Fr.
Pre-test	6	8.30	7	3	1	16	1
Posttest	16	16.96	17	12	2	20	3

Glancing at Table 18 above, it is easily noticeable that the mean obtained in the post-test (16.96) is double the mean obtained in the pre-test (8.30), which clearly shows that the participants outperformed themselves in the post-test. Furthermore, as the mode reveals, the most frequent score was 6 in the pre-test and jumped to reach 16 in the post-test (nearly triple the mode of the pre-test). Passing to the dispersion indicators, they confirm that the participants performed better in the post-test. The lowest score in the pre-test was 3 and was obtained by one participant, while the lowest score on the post-test was 12 (4 times better) and was obtained by 2 subjects. The highest score, on the other hand, equalled 16 in the pre-test. At the same time, it reached 20 in the post-test, meaning that the top participant in the pre-test successfully recognised and determined the meaning of 16 idiomatic expressions. In contrast, the 3 best students in the post-test succeeded in knowing the meaning of all 20 idioms at hand and could use them in different contexts.

Hence, we can assume that the comparison of the means, central tendency, and dispersion yielded positive results, which were in favour of our hypothesis that speculates that participants would perform better in the post-test. In fact, the learners improved their level and became more competent in recognising the fixed structures of idiomatic phrases and determining their meaning out of context. They were also swift in using them in different contexts.

III.3 The Delayed Test

One month after the experiment, the participants were required to take a test to check their mastery of the idiomatic expressions they dealt with in the experiment. The more correct and diverse idioms they use, the richer their vocabulary repertoire will be. The students were asked to form small groups, four students each and were assigned an exhaustive list of the idiomatic expressions they learnt in the experiment. They were required to select 8 to 10 idioms from the list, decide on an authentic situation, and write the dialogue or a short story. The groups were given 30 minutes to write the dialogues. Learners' vocabulary abilities were tracked, including the appropriate use of idiomatic expressions and the diversity of contexts they selected in their written productions.

Topics

The participants were required to narrate an event or write a dialogue about a particular situation using 8 to 10 idioms in the list provided to them. The learners were required to think about a situation/ event and give it a title. The titles chosen by learners for their written productions are illustrated in the following table:

Table 19: Topics and Idioms Involved in the Delayed Test

Dialogue Title	Topics Included	Idioms Used
Dont count your chickens before they hatch	Happiness Sadness Anger Problems Failure Food Animals	Over the moon Jumping from joy Under the weather Down in the dumps At my wits' end Holding the baby Dig into a whole It's not the end of the world To face the music Come up against a brick wall Life is just a bowl of cherries Spread oneself too thin Don't count your eggs before they hatch Let the cat out of the bag
Support is the key to success	Food Success and failure anger Happiness Efforts Intelligence Animals	A couch potato Not the end of the world Just grin and bear it Floating on air Give something your all blood, sweat, and tears A dark horse Butterflies in a stomach
Birthday party	Happiness	Thrilled to bits

	Anger Illness Food success	Go spare Out for blood Getting up to the back teeth Pale as a ghost Make my mouth water By hook or by crook
My baccalaureate exam	Health Problem efforts Anger Success and failure Sadness Intelligence	Pale as a ghost Dig into a hole Pull my weight Give something your all By hook or by crook Just grin and bear it Slow and steady to win the race When there is a will, there is a way Not the end of the world Under the weather A dark horse
The Champion League final	Anger Happiness Success and failure Sadness	Just grin and bear it Floating on air Easy as taking candy from a baby It is not the end of the world to face the music under the weather
Vacation	Happiness Efforts anger food	Floating on air Thrilled to bits In the seventh heaven Over the moon Put all my weight By hook or by crook Have a fit Have an egg on his face
Our friend is not feeling well	Health Animals Anger Problems Efforts food	As fit as a fiddle Feeling under the weather I went to the dogs Have a fit Dig into a hole Holding the baby The law of the jungle When there is a will, there is a way It leaves a sour taste in my mouth Having an egg on the face
Jonny's murder	Anger Efforts Animals Food Health	Go after someone's blood. When there is a will, there is a way Give My all Blood, sweat, and tears It would never hurt a fly Life isn't just a bowl of cherries Having a frog in the throat

Table 19 above illustrates that learners managed to choose authentic situations that could really happen in everyday life. Students successfully put themselves in the shoes of a detective, a father, a mother, a team supporter, a friend, etc. These situations involved them expressing feelings of happiness, sadness, support, stress, loyalty, etc.

Variety of Idioms

Table 19 shows that the participants used a variety of idiomatic expressions in their **dialogues and narrations**. 72.41 % of the idioms handed to them were used, except for 27.58%, which were not used at all, as shown in Table 20 below. This means that learners could use most of the idioms they learnt during the experiment.

Table20: Variety of Idioms

Idiomatic Expressions	Use		Not used	
	N	%	N	%
N=58	42	72.41	16	27.58

Variety of Contexts

It is worth mentioning that the students did not restrict themselves to the idioms related to the title of the dialogue/narration. However, they included various topics related to the situation they chose. They also coloured their writings with various idiomatic expressions selected to meet every specific context. For instance, if we consider the situation of "the birthday party" in Table 19, we can think that all the idioms provided would be related to "happiness" since it is a happy occasion; however, the learners were more flexible and creative in varying the choice and the context of the idioms in every situation.

Another instance is the situation "our friend is not feeling well", where idioms of health and illness could be the only ones students choose. However, learners were very careful and swift in choosing idioms related to health, anger, problems, efforts, animals, and food. The situation "Joney's murder", for instance, required idioms about anger and problems. However, learners also included other idiomatic expressions related in one way or another to this context, such as efforts, food, health, and animals. In fact, the reason behind all this variety in the use of idioms in the different dialogues/narrations is to create different contexts and make their writings more vivid and enjoyable, comic at times and tragic at other times.

Correctness and Precision

Not only were the learners able to address varying topics and use idioms in different contexts, but they were also cautious in using each idiom with precision by respecting its structure and corresponding context. Only two cases of idiom misuse were spotted in all the written productions. The first case was related to "*to face the music*", which was used instead of "*just grin and bear it*" since the context required the latter to mean 'you have to accept the failure' not the former, meaning 'you have to accept the criticism'. Another case is related to "*have a fit*", which means 'to be very angry', which did not correspond to the context of 'fear'. We may safely conclude that the participants understood the meaning of idioms and rehearsed them in exercises and the scripts they wrote, and this assisted them in using them effortlessly in different contexts and situations with correctness and precision.

Creativity

Creativity was a distinctive factor in the dialogues written by learners, and this was exhibited by learners' efforts to make the situation as authentic as possible. This was a joyful background for collaborative work; all the students interacted.

III.5 Summary of the Results

The results obtained from the current study were thoroughly analysed and summarised as follows:

- The pre-test results showed that the learners did not have a rich knowledge of idiomatic expressions. They revealed a below-average level in recognising and using idioms, obtaining the mean (8.30). However, they performed far better in the post-test, reaching the mean (16.96).
- While the participants were grouped into five main categories in the pre-test (struggling, poor, average above-average, and good achievers), the struggling and poor achievers categories disappeared in the post-test, and a new category of excellent achievers was also noticeable.
- In the pre-test, 60.6% of the students failed to match the two parts to form the whole idiomatic expressions. In contrast, all the students (100%) showed the ability to recognise the fixed structure of idioms and construct them correctly in the post-test.
- (84.84%) of the participants showed difficulties in determining the meaning of idioms out of context, but (90.90%) managed to do so in the post-test.

- Supplying the idiomatic expressions with context did not help students much in defining their meaning; only 15.15% were successful in doing so in the pre-test, while a large portion of the sample proved the opposite (63.63%) in the post-test.
- Students responded positively to idiomatic expressions that have similar equivalents used in the same way or context in their mother language, such as 'floating on air' (42.42%), 'off-colour'(66.66%), 'worked like magic' (66.66%), and 'dig yourself into a hole' (51.51%).
- In the post-test, 69.69% of the learners mastered idiomatic phrases and used them in different situations. This was manifested in the dialogues/ narrations they wrote, where they used an array of idiomatic expressions and were swift in manipulating them in various contexts.

III.6 Pedagogical Implications

Based on the current study findings, implications are drawn, touching upon the instruction of idiomatic expressions for extending learners' vocabulary repertoire. Some recommendations are also directed to teachers and stakeholders to support effective teaching practices. These pedagogical implications are summarised as follows:

1. The Need for Scaffolded Instruction to Master Idiomatic Expressions for Deeper Vocabulary Engagement

Before the experiment, a poor understanding of idioms and a restricted capacity to match the two parts of an idiomatic structure were noticed among learners. However, a noticeable improvement was remarked after the intervention, even in using idiomatic expressions in different contexts. The participants produced their own examples with different structures. This hints at the fact that teachers should proceed gradually in their lessons by providing basic foundations about idiomatic expressions (structure, meaning and recognition), then moving on to more complex uses (varying contexts and production). Moving gradually from the surface-level understanding to deeper lexical competence, learners can enrich their vocabulary repertoire by encountering a variety of fixed structures and more high-frequency vocabulary, leading to easier retention and natural use by gradually incorporating idioms into their active vocabulary.

2. The Effectiveness of Form-Focused Instruction for Idioms Mastery and Lexical Patterns Enrichment

After the intervention, learners witnessed improvement in recognising idioms and correctly constructing them. Thus, focusing on rehearsing the structure is essential for mastering these fixed expressions. Teachers may integrate activities that require learners to match the two halves of an idiom or complete its missing part, which can serve this purpose. By doing this, teachers draw their learners' attention to collocational patterns and how words occur together in these fixed multi-word structures. Practising the aforementioned activities facilitates retention and easy retrieval of these expressions.

3. The Role of Explicit Instruction in Contextual Guessing for Developing Learners' Autonomy in Dealing with Unfamiliar Vocabulary

The pre-test findings showed that learners struggled to figure out the meaning of idioms, and even the context did not help much. This reveals that learners could benefit from explicit instruction to help them rely on contextual clues and the surrounding words to understand these fixed expressions. This assists them in learning appropriate strategies, such as relying on syntactic and semantic clues to handle unfamiliar words in general, which boosts vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. A remedy to this issue resides in providing learners with more practice with contextual clues or modelling.

4. Cross-Linguistic Comparison for Idiom Comprehension, Retention, and Vocabulary improvement

Idioms with equivalent phrases used in similar contexts in the mother tongue (Arabic) or whose meanings can be inferred from a word-for-word translation proved to be easier for learners to understand and remember. This was evident in the study with expressions like *floating on air*, *off-colour*, *working like magic*, and *digging yourself into a hole*. Therefore, teachers can strengthen associative memory and build cultural connections by encouraging learners to link the foreign language and their mother language. This activation of background knowledge helps the learners bridge known words to the unknown ones, helping them learn vocabulary and making unfamiliar ones more meaningful and unforgettable.

5. Idioms as Windows into Culture and Means of Vocabulary Knowledge

Language and culture are intertwined; learners can be exposed to this connection through idiomatic expressions. Instead of introducing these structures as linguistic elements, teachers can present them as a means to stretch learners' cultural horizons about the culture of the foreign language.

6. Integrating Idioms in Communicative Tasks to Foster Fluency

Learners proved their abilities and creativity in producing idioms in varying contexts by writing dialogues/narratives requiring different situations. This fosters retention and boosts the natural use of these expressions orally and in writing. Engaging learners in authentic situations improves fluency, which requires knowledge about idioms. To ensure long-term communicative competence, teachers and syllabus designers are recommended to integrate idioms in teaching the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

7. Collaborative Learning Fosters Engagement and Creativity

Collaborative learning assists learners in learning from each other, being more motivated, and thinking creatively. Teachers should engage learners in activities like writing dialogues, role-playing, simulations, and the like to improve their fluency and self-confidence.

IV- Conclusion

This study investigated the impact of adopting a lexical-contextualised model on vocabulary development via idiom learning. The results revealed that this combined model had positive effects, which were shown in the improvement the learners witnessed in their ability to recognise, grasp, and use idiomatic expressions. Although learners showed difficulties constructing and understanding idioms prior to the treatment, an intervention directed to teaching idioms as multi-word lexical chunks, using contextual clues, and using communicative use proved effective. Learners outperformed in the post-test, showing remarkable improvement in identifying idioms, constructing them correctly, understanding them, and using them appropriately in various contexts. Consequently, idioms are significant for vocabulary development because by learning idioms, learners will stretch their vocabulary repertoire by learning multi-word structures. Therefore, by mastering idioms, learners can communicate naturally and more fluently. Teachers are recommended not to treat idioms as individual structures but rather consider them as meaningful stretches of language that must be handled in a context. Teachers should also consider idiomatic expressions as gateways into culture and use them as a vehicle to learn a language and understand its culture.

Appendices

Pre-test

Exercise One: Match the two parts of each idiomatic expression

• Feeling like death	
• Against	warmed up
• Driving somebody	the dump
	a brick Wall
• Down	the goast
• Given up	up the wall

Exercise Two: Guess the meaning of each of the following idioms and write it in the blank

- To tighten the belt.....
- Dig into a hole.....
- Ruffling anyone's feathers.....
- Off-colour.....
- Holding the baby.....

Exercise Three: Read each idiom and determine the meaning.

1. My son was ***down the dumps*** because he didn't like his teacher this year.

2. You have ***to tighten your belt*** because you have another mouth to feed.

3. You'd better stop talking, or you will ***dig yourself into a hole***.

4. Your plan to persuade Lala to join the committee ***worked like magic***.

5. Jill always says something that ***rubs her father up the wrong way***.

Exercise four: Fill in the gaps with the appropriate idiomatic expression from the list below:

Floating on hair, off-colour, holding the baby, ruffling anyone's feathers, a blessing in disguise

1. Dad is a bit today; I hope he will be OK tomorrow.
2. I felt as if I was as I ran down the hill into his arms.
3. Jo says what she thinks without worrying about whether she might be.....
4. After the party had finished, all his friends ran away, and he was left.....
5. The flood ruined our old kitchen, but it because the insurance company paid for a completely new one.

The Posttst**1. Match the two parts of each idiomatic expression.**

• Driving somebody	the wrong way
• Against	the dump
• Rub someone up	a brick Wall
• Down	the ghost
• Given up	up the wall

2. Put each of the above idiomatic expressions with its appropriate meaning.

- Being very ill =
- Annoy =.....
- Unable to make progress.....
- Unhappy=.....
- Stop doing something=

3. Complete the following dialogue by putting each of the following idiomatic expressions in your own sentence.

- Tighten the belt
- holding the baby,
- ruffling anyone's feathers,
- under the weather
- pull the weight

A. You don't look well today, are you OK?
 B.
 A. Are you doing all the housework alone?
 B.
 A. Why didn't your sisters help you?
 B.
 A. Why was Bill misbehaving with the neighbours? They were all complaining about that?
 B.
 A. Why was Bill misbehaving with the neighbours? They were all complaining about what he did.
 B.
 A. You know what your father will do when he knows about it
 B.

4. Put each of the following expressions in a sentence of your own

- Dig into a hole
- Floating on hair.....
- Face the music.....
- come against a stumbling block.....

Delayd Test**Dialogue Production**

Read the following list of idiomatic expressions carefully; then choose 8-10 idioms to write a dialogue or a narration. Choose a situation and give it a title.

1. In seventh heaven	2. Down in the dumps
3. Just grin and bear it	4. Over the moon
5. Floating on air	6. Thrilled to bits
7. Under the weather	8. As fit as a fiddle
9. Having a fog in the throat	10. Pale as a ghost
11. Green around the gills	12. At my wit's end
13. Have a fit	14. Go spare

15. Get up to the back teeth	16. After someone's blood
17. Out for blood	18. Give up the ghost
19. To face the music	20. Dig oneself in a hole
21. Come against a stumbling block	22. Come against a brick wall
23. To come off with flying colours	24. Blood, sweat, and tears
25. Never fish a losing battle	26. You will have a foot on the door
27. Holding the baby	28. When there is a will, there is a way
29. Give something your all	30. To pull your weight
31. As easy as taking a candy from a baby	32. By hook or by crook
33. Wouldn't hurt a fly	34. Fly on the wall
35. Dark horse	36. Cold fish
37. Goes to the dogs	38. The law of the jungle
39. Running around like a headless chicken	40. Let the cat out of the bag
41. Can of worms	42. Enough room to swing a cat
43. Flavour of the month	44. Make my mouth water
45. Have an egg in his face	46. Whet my appetite
47. Leave a sour taste in my mouth	48. Butterflies in my stomach
49. Couch potato	50. Life is just a bowl of cherries
51. Costs an arm and leg	52. Saving for a rainy day
53. A penny saved is a penny earned	54. Slow and steady wins the race

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