

**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**  
**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**  
**Larbi Ben M'hidi University-Oum El Bouaghi**



**Faculty of Letters and Languages**  
**Department of English**

**The Effect of Using Think-Pair-Share Strategy on EFL Learners'**  
**Understanding of English Idioms**  
**The Case of Third Year Learners at Mebarek El Mili Secondary**  
**School, Ain Babouche**

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for**  
**the Degree of Master in Language Sciences and Teaching English as**  
**a Foreign Language**

**By: by: Khawla MALKI**

**Supervisor: Mrs. Khadidja ZAIDI**

**Examiner: Mr. Haroun MELGANI**

**2015-2016**

## *Dedication*

*In the name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate*

*This work is dedicated to:*

- *My mother who really provided me with all love and encouragement.*
  - *To the soul of my father may Allah have mercy upon him.*
    - *To my dear brother “Toufik”.*
- *To my lovely sisters: “Samira, Fethia, Chaima, and Wissal” and my nieces: “Malek and Niama”.*
  - *To my dear uncle “Dhieb”.*
- *To my darling friends: Zouweyna, Mounia, Wafa, Sara, Chahra, Wafia, Ahlem, Amira, Samia, Soumia, Bisma, Assia, Youssra, Bouthayna, Chafia, Romeissa, and Afaf.*
  - *To my unforgettable friends “Djihed and Meriem”.*
- *To my teachers: Mrs. Khanfar and her husband Mr. Houess, to Misses: Hamez, Belghoul, and Hafsa*
  - *To all who helped me in this work.*

*Acknowledgements*

*All the praise is to Allah for helping me accomplish this*

*Work.*

*My dear supervisor Mrs. Khadidja Zaidi who really provided me with her special guidance and her assistance. I would like you to know that I like you so much.*

*My deepest thanks to the examiner Mr. Haroun Melgani*

*and all my teachers at Larbi Ben M'Hidi University.*

*My sincere gratitude goes to Mrs.Mouna Khanfar at Mebarek El Mili*

*Secondary School, Ain Babouche and her Third Year Learners who took part*

*in my research.*

## **Abstract**

Learning any foreign language demands acquiring all what a learner needs to communicate effectively in that language. Dealing with both literal and figurative meaning of the target language is quite important to learn this language. Generally, learners do not have problems concerning the literal meaning of language as they face them when it comes to deal with the figurative meaning. The latter can be found in idioms which foreign language learners encounter them frequently and really need help from teachers to understand their meanings. The main objective behind this is to get them involved in the learning process when trying to communicate and interact with their peers. To do so, teachers have to think about effective methods and strategies for simplifying the process of learning. Interestingly, the present study's aim is to investigate the impact of Think-Pair-Share as one cooperative leaning strategy on EFL learners' understanding of English idioms. Therefore, third year secondary school learners at Mebarek El Mili secondary school were chosen to be the target population. The sample was divided into two groups; one of them was the experimental group whereas the other one was the control group. Both groups performed a pre-test in which they were asked to deal with a ten idiomatic expressions' task to give their meanings, and then they passed the whole treatment period working on the designed tasks where the experimental group dealt with those tasks cooperatively since they had been grouped into pair teams in order to exchange ideas concerning the meaning of idioms, while the control group members kept answering them individually. At the end of the treatment period, both groups performed a post-test that included the same idiomatic expressions' task as in the pre-test. The findings of the study showed that using Think-Pair-Share strategy was not effective to improve learners' understanding of English idioms.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

**FL:** Foreign Language

**L2:** Second Language

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**CP:** Cooperative Learning

**TPS:** Think-Pair-Share

**STAD:** Student Teams-Achievement Divisions

**TAPPS:** Think Aloud Problem Solving Pairs

**N:** Number of Students

**Df:** Difference

**Vs:** Versus

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## **General Introduction**

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the process of learning a foreign language, learners are supposed to deal with the literal meaning of its sentences (the meaning of words), as well as, the figurative meaning that cannot be inferred from the sentence' parts as in idioms. Thus, they need to be able to understand all what they read and hear too. Unfortunately, this is not noticed in every foreign language classroom since teachers find it hard to enable their students understand the meaning of English idioms. Starting from the point that classroom discussion benefits learners and gets them involved in the learning process, teachers can rely on one of the cooperative learning strategies such as Think-Pair-Share Strategy to encourage learners' interaction and the exchange of ideas to understand better English idioms' meanings.

### **Aim of the Study**

Teachers play an important role in choosing which strategy to rely on in their foreign language classrooms in order to facilitate their learners' understanding of English idioms. Think-Pair-Share Strategy is one of the cooperative learning strategies that can be used. Thus, this study aims at investigating the effect of using this strategy on helping students grasp the meaning of English idioms.

### **Research Question and Hypothesis**

The research raises the following question:

Does using Think-Pair-Share Strategy have an effect on learners' understanding of English idioms?

To answer this question, it is hypothesized that:

Learners who use Think-Pair-Share Strategy would show a significant improvement in their understanding of English idioms than those who work individually.

### **Means of the Research**

In order to investigate the effect of using Think-Pair-Share Strategy, an experiment was conducted. Thus, two groups of third year learners at Mebarek El Mili Secondary School performed a pre-test at the beginning of this study. They were asked to give the meaning of ten English idioms. Then, only one group (the experimental group) was divided into pair teams during the treatment period following the strategy. Thus, members of each team worked together to give the meanings of idioms. However, the control group members followed the traditional method, i.e., they answered the task individually during the treatment period. Finally, both groups received a post-test at the end of the experiment in order to test the effectiveness of the treatment by comparing their results in both pre- and post-tests.

### **Structure of the Study**

This research embodies two chapters. The first chapter is the theoretical part that is divided into two sections. The first section covers the definition of cooperative learning, and its main and strategies namely Think-Pair-Share Strategy. Moreover, it deals with its procedures, variations, and advantages. The second section is concerned with the meaning of the term ‘idioms’, sources, aspects, classification, explicit teaching of idioms, idioms vs. metaphors vs. proverbs, in addition to grammatical and syntactic restrictions, contextual clues, and importance of learning idioms.

The second chapter is the practical part. It is devoted to the analysis and discussion of the results.

## **Chapter One: Theoretical Background**

### **Section One: Think-Pair-Share Strategy**

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## **Introduction**

In fact, interaction among students in a foreign language (FL) classroom constitutes a very important factor that opens the door for improving their levels and increasing their academic achievement. Many researchers and scholars (Slavin, 1995; Johnson & Johnson, 1989; 1999; Millis, 2010) were interested in investigating appropriate methods of teaching/ learning that help learners have a healthy and effective environment in order to acquire the target language as is expected. So, starting from the point that traditional learning that focuses on working individually does not offer the opportunity for FL learners to be active and take part in the learning process, cooperative learning (CL) seems to be the substitutional solution due to the fact that it provides a wide place for interaction between students. Thus, teachers find it appropriate to rely on one of its strategies such as Think-Pair-Share (TPS) Strategy to promote their learners' language acquisition through interacting with their peers and taking part in dealing with all class tasks.

Importantly, after having a general idea about what is meant by cooperative learning as compared with traditional learning, and covering some of its strategies reaching TPS, this section explains the nature of this term including its procedures, variations, and advantages in a FL classroom.

### **1.1.1. Definition of Cooperative Learning**

The emergence of cooperative learning has changed the fact that the teacher is the only source of knowledge. The former, according to Richards and Rogers (2001), constitutes one from the learner-centred methods related to language teaching/ learning. It has been defined by many researchers and theorists differently. For instance, Jacob (1999) claimed that “cooperative learning is a diverse group of instructional methods in which small groups of students work together and aid each other in completing academic tasks” (p. 13). So, in order to motivate learners and get them involved in the learning process,

teachers are supposed to divide them into small groups where a big chance of interaction and cooperation will take place which helps them reach the defined objective from the task. Moreover, Johnson and Johnson (1999) stated that “Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning. It may be contrasted with competitive and individualistic learning” (p. 5). From this simple definition, it is quite clear that successful teachers are the ones who get their learners improve their own abilities and achievement through working cooperatively. That is to say, the traditional learning, in which learners were studying individually and competitively to achieve the lessons’ objectives and success, approximately lost its ground.

Moreover, in her definition of CL, Millis (2010), focused on its benefits saying that “cooperative learning is highly structured form of groupwork that focuses on the problem solving- when directed by an effective teacher- can lead to deep learning, critical thinking, and genuine paradigm shifts in students’ thinking” (p. 5). Then, CL raises the spirit of responsibility towards the subject matter what leads learners to take topics given to them seriously, so that they will collaboratively discuss them with their team members using their critical thinking in order to solve tasks successfully. In addition, Bentham (2002) believed that “there was a difference between what an individual could achieve by themselves and what they could do with help from a more skilled individual” (p. 10).

So, what can be said about CL is that it is a teaching strategy where students are put in small groups. Members of each group are from different ability’ levels, skills, and personalities. Since interaction constitutes the core of this type of learning, learners in a FL classroom are supposed to cooperate with and help one another in studying and grasping the subject matter as well as making sure that all team mates have learnt and understood it. That is to say, creating an effective environment for better achievement.

### **1.1.2. Cooperative Learning vs. Traditional Learning**

Usually, cooperative learning is categorized under learner-centred methods as opposed to traditional learning which refers to teacher-centred methods. It is related to the well known methods of teaching (such as Audiolingual Method, Grammar Translation Method) in which students, according to Harmer (2005), receive the delivered lectures listening to their teachers without any kind of interaction inside the classroom.

Traditionally, competitive and individualistic learning were dominant in all teaching levels (elementary, secondary, and university teaching) (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). The former indicates, from its name, that there was a competition between students in class which led to evaluating their performance in a given task whereas the latter implies the individual work of each student.

Teachers were the only source of information in the traditional environment. Therefore, their learners were passive, with no participation in the learning process. According to Shor (1992), learners were considered by “the banking system of education”, that is a model of education, as empty buckets waiting to be filled with knowledge, doing what they were asked, memorizing what the teacher gave. So, they were totally passive. Therefore, no improvement in the four skills was noticed especially in large classes. Students working individually are, to a large extent, expected to commit mistakes.

Moreover, Harmer (2001) claimed that “individual students found themselves saying and writing things they might not have come upon with on their own, and groups’ research was broader than an individual’s normally was” (p. 260). In contrast, and based on the clear drawbacks of the traditional environment, cooperative learning seems to have many advantages. One of them is that it encourages interaction. Cross (1995) stated that “cooperative learning is frequently used in large classes because the users of groups

minimize the time and expenses that would otherwise be needed to produce materials for large classes” (p. 29).

Furthermore, in a study published in 1994, Kagan reported that using cooperative learning has a great impact on creating interest and enthusiasm in learners in Literature, in addition to that it increases the motivation in all subjects at all levels. That is to say, cooperative learning can be quite welcome in all educational levels unlike in the past.

Certainly, the role of the teacher has shifted, indeed, from ‘a sage on the stage’ (in the traditional model) to ‘a guide on the side’ (in cooperative learning) (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

### **1.1.3. Cooperative Learning Strategies**

There are many well known strategies and activities of cooperative learning that are frequently used by teachers in their FL classrooms. Some of them include:

#### **1.1.3.1. Student Teams-Achievement Divisions**

According to Arends (1997), in the late ninetenths, Slavin (1995) and his colleagues were among scholars that have been interested in investigating appropriate methods of teaching/ learning for promoting language acquisition in an effective environment. Slavin (1995) was interested in supporting the idea that working in groups plays a great role in creating a better learning environment. Thus, with the help of his colleagues, they had developed this cooperative method that is called Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD), and it constitutes the simplest one that can be used in a FL classrooms.

In 1995, Slavin has reported that STAD brings competition between learners who are divided into groups according to their sex, abilities, and different ethnic or racial groups. He stated that “Students learn in team and take quizzes as individuals. Individual scores contribute to a group score. The points contributed to the group are based on a

student's improvement over previous quiz performance" (Slavin, 1995, p. 9). Concerning its main goal, Slavin (1995) added that it aims "to make sure that their teammates have learned the material" (p. 78). Thus, it is quite clear that via using cooperative strategy, teachers assign a particular task in which they provide their students with different academic materials (about grammar or vocabulary for instance). Learners are supposed to study them collaboratively, and try to make each single information plain for all their team members. Whenever one of them has been called by his/her teacher, the learner is expected to answer the quizzes individually and appropriately without the help of his colleagues. Improving the performance of the group relies on students' making progress over their quizzes evaluation.

#### **1.1.3.2. Jigsaw**

According to Shimo and Apple (2006), this method has been developed by Aronson in 1978. It resembles the activity of Numbered Heads Together in which members of each team (home team) will be given numbers respectively. The teacher is supposed to assign a particular task where each learner will work on a raised question about specific information.

After having enough time to think about the task, students who have the same number will join a new group that is called "expert" or "ad hoc" group to discuss the point. After negotiating and exchanging ideas about the answers among the "expert" group members, students will return to their original group to teach their team mates. According to Slavin (1995), "[Jigsaw] has the benefit of making the experts possessors of unique information, and thus makes the team each member's contribution more highly" (p. 126). Therefore, this activity gives the opportunity to all learners to get involved in the learning process and take part in dealing with different assigned tasks to them. In addition, Jigsaw encourages cooperation and communication between students when playing both roles of

teachers and learners at the same time. In addition, according to Knight and Bohlmeyer (1990), teachers examine their students individually in this method, and based on their performance, grades will be given.

Moreover, there are other models of Jigsaw. One of them is provided by Slavin, and is called Jigsaw II. The latter resembles the original Jigsaw, but at the same time is different from it since according to Slavin (1995), in the original Jigsaw, each learner will have the opportunity to possess the unique information, so that each member in the team is supposed to read a given material that is different from the other peers' ones in order to make his/ her contribution quite clear during the task. For Jigsaw II, the whole team will grasp the different shared concepts easily.

Knight and Bohlmeyer (1990) stated that in this cooperative model, members of each team compete for particular rewards to get them rely on their individual performance in the assigned tasks. That is to say, getting scores is based on performing well.

There is also another model of Jigsaw that is called Jigsaw III. The latter, according to Knight and Bohlmeyer (1990), focuses on activities related to social skills in order to see the nature of interaction between students. So, after grouping the learners and assigning different tasks for them, the teacher is supposed, from time to time, to have walk and look at their progress. At the same time, he/ she should see the way they discuss with each other. Thus, the topics and the activities introduced by the teacher should be interesting and raise enthusiasm in his/ her students, so that they will be led to the core of negotiation and discussion in a good way, listening to each other's opinion under a mutual respect.

Generally, Jigsaw is very beneficial and widely used, because it raises learners' self confidence and gives them opportunities to interact with each other as well as creating the spirit of cooperation among them in that healthy atmosphere.

### **1.1.3.3. Round Table**

According to Kagan (1997), Round Table is another cooperative learning method which has its own variations. The teacher in this strategy divides his/ her students into groups. Then, he/ she asks them a question or set of questions, and each learner is supposed to write down the answer on a sheet of paper and then pass it to another student who is sitting next to him/ her, and so on.

Kagan (1997) added that the student who is expected to answer first on the paper sheet is designated by the teacher in each group and the process finishes when all of them have written down their responses.

After finishing the Round Table, the teacher asks students of each team to exchange their answers and share them with other teams, or even with the whole class (Kagan, 1997).

In addition, according to Kagan (1997), Round Table has two variations; it is called ‘Rally Table’ when the answers of the question (s) that has/ have been posed are written down on the sheet of paper. It is also called ‘Round Robin’ when the students respond to the question (s) orally.

Another cooperative learning strategy, that seems to have a positive effect on increasing learners’ motivation and participation in a FL classroom by providing a healthy environment in which all of them are supposed to share their ideas freely, is called Think-Pair-Share (TPS) strategy.

### **1.1.3.4. Think-Pair-Share**

#### **1.1.3.4.1. Definition of Think-Pair-Share Strategy**

In the traditional classroom, learners were quite passive and only their teacher, who is considered to be knowledgeable, delivered knowledge to them. Thus, on one hand, learners were supposed not to intrude in teacher’s decisions, and raise their fingers only

when they were asked about any question, if not at all. The latter constitutes the core of the problem because many teachers were complaining from the case of having the same active and studious learners who used to participate.

On the other hand, there were other learners who do not even raise their heads looking at their teachers' eyes when there was a question raised. In this case, teachers can interpret it to be some kind of fear, shyness, or even lack of knowledge. Thus, relying on such cooperative method (TPS) in a FL classroom can be very effective and helpful for overcoming these problems and be a suitable solution that can be chosen according to many scholars and researchers (Goodwin, 1999; Nessel & Graham, 2007, etc.).

It should be noted that Think-Pair-Share Strategy (TPS) is a cooperative learning strategy that was first developed by professor Lyman in 1981 at the University of Maryland. In this method, each learner is supposed to think individually about an answer to the question that has been raised by the teacher, then to discuss the response in pairs. According to Ledlow (2001), it is called 'a low-risk strategy' that can be used in a FL classroom by the teacher who wants his/ her learners to be active and participate as well as be involved in the learning process.

#### **1.1.3.4.2. Think-Pair-Share Procedure**

In a study published in 2011, Karge, Phillips, Jessee, and McCab stated that TPS activity increases learners' opportunities to be involved in the educational process and encourages their participation in classrooms. They claimed that TPS strategy has three phases; the first one is called 'think' in which learners think individually about the question(s) that has/ have been raised by the teacher after having dividing them into small groups. The second phase 'pair' means that each pair will discuss and exchange ideas about the topic together trying to convince one another till reaching a logical and appropriate answer. The third phase, as is described by Karge, et al. (2011), is called

‘share’ which comes after having finished from responding the question(s). So, in this step, the teacher will call upon one of the learners to give him/ her the (right) answer. In other words, to share the response with the whole class. Therefore, based on this simple cooperative method, according to Karge, et al. (2011), teachers will make all their students involved in classroom discussion in a very healthy atmosphere and an effective environment. In addition, even introverted learners who are not used to express their points of view openly will show a clear improvement in terms of getting rid of and overcoming their obstacles.

#### **1.1.3.4.3. Think-Pair-Share Variations**

The traditional model of cooperative strategy Think-Pair-Share has many different variations. Those variations are considered to be a positive point and one of the additional benefits that can be put in the bright side of TPS strategy. The main point that is shared by all variations of TPS is that the latter always begins with a question that is to be posed by the teacher and, of course, followed by providing learners with enough time for thinking about the response individually. Some of those variations were summarized by Barragato (2015) as follows:

#### **Think-Pair-Square-Share**

Think-Pair-Square-Share is a TPS’ variation which is described as a technique that allows adding another pair of learners to the original team in order to solve a particular problem that will be posed by the teacher. It means that the complexity of the task is the reason behind adding another pair of learners to the original pair team so that there will be a group of four learners who will require more time for thinking as well as discussing their ideas all together. Then, the teacher will either call on his/ her students randomly or have them volunteers for answering the questions or providing appropriate solutions for the case study being set by their teacher. The latter, of course, is going to evaluate their responses

based on the discussion taking place among the whole class members as well as to enable the learners reach logical conclusions to end up their debate.

### **Think Aloud Problem Solving Pairs**

Another variation that can be drawn from the traditional TPS is Think Aloud Problem Solving Pairs (TAPPS) that indicates, from its name, that there is a problem set by the teacher and learners are supposed to deal with collaboratively.

In this case, each pair of learners will play specific roles in which one of them will be the problem solver who will clarify each step that is important to follow in order to reach the appropriate solution while the other part, the listener, is expected to listen carefully to the peer when giving the instructions. Certainly, the roles of each pair will not remain the same since with posing a new problem, the one who was the problem solver is supposed to be the listener and vice versa. That is to say, they will exchange the roles.

### **Note Checking Pairs**

This variation was described to be covering the way of taking notes and then comparing them with partners in order to wrap the gaps and the information missed by their peers. This, of course, requires a good listening skill and memory that enable pairs to succeed in taking notes from the teacher's passage being read orally. Therefore, the goal that is to be achieved from this technique is to seek the accurate and the deep notes that learners are supposed to take away. Certainly, there is a limited time to be respected for each step in this activity. Besides, it is better for teachers to use this variation during the lecture because at the end of the lesson there would be no enough time for learners to check their missing information as it was expected.

Another TPS' variations were given by Marrero-Colón (2014). Some of them are as follows:

### **Think-Pair-Share-Listen**

This variation resembles the traditional method (TPS strategy), but it requires learners to pay their attention to all what had been said during the limited period of time devoted to discussion. The main reason behind this is due to the fact that the selected member from the pair team is not supposed to express his/ her own ideas concerning the problem being set by the teacher, rather he/ she is going to recapitulate and summarize what his/ her partner was saying. This implies the necessity of improving the listening skill.

### **Think-Write-Pair-Share/ Think-Draw-Pair-Share**

In this technique, the teacher is supposed to give his/ her learners a specific question or topic, in which they are asked to think about it individually trying to write or draw their points of view concerning it. Then, each pair team member is going to discuss his/ her answer with the partner. After a specific period of time, the teacher will ask each pair team to share their ideas with the whole class.

### **Formulate-Share-Listen-Create**

This variation requires each learner to think individually about the question raised by his/ her teacher trying to formulate an appropriate response for it, and then he/ she is supposed to share it with the partner. In this phase, peers will listen carefully to one another discussing their ideas till they find a suitable answer to share with the whole class.

#### **1.1.3.4.4. Think-Pair-Share Advantages**

Think-Pair-Share is considered to be a promoting and a very useful cooperative strategy in any language classroom fitting all levels of education. According to Nessel and Graham (2007), this effective method has many benefits such as enhancing and practising the listening skill in which learners will develop the habit of listening to other team mates when they are discussing a given topic or answer a specific question. In other words, they

will learn how to avoid interrupting others when talking and respecting all their points of view no matter how much they are different and, of course, this leads either to convincing the other classmates or being convinced by their opinions.

Furthermore, TPS strategy provides a quite adequate time to the task that has been given, a point that is supported by McTighe and Lyman (1988), in terms of giving the learners enough time to reflect and think about the question being posed by the teacher. At the same time, pairs are discussing and exchanging their different points of view concerning the topic after thinking about it individually. Therefore, the teacher is supposed to provide them with enough time to evaluate their responses during the period of discussion and comment on them. This implies that this cooperative method is effective in any FL classroom especially for giving the opportunity to learners to be active and feel free in expressing their ideas openly far away from any kind of stress.

Moreover, as Goodwin (1999) noted, TPS strategy raises the spirit of self-esteem in learners which is considered to be a very important factor for increasing their motivation as well as improving their achievement.

### **Conclusion**

To sum up, TPS Strategy, as one of the cooperative learning strategies, can play a great role in a FL classroom. It can keep learners on task and make them involved in the learning process. This can facilitate the way for the teacher to make his/ her classroom a healthy environment that creates enthusiasm and interest in learners.

## **Chapter One: Theoretical Background**

### **Section Two: English Idioms**

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## **Introduction**

Generally, language as a means of communication has two types of meaning. The first one is the literal meaning that can be known based on interpreting the meaning of words in a sentence. The second one is the figurative meaning. The latter characterizes notions such as: metaphors, proverbs, idioms, and so on. Good understanding of idioms can be considered as one of the signals of mastering a foreign language (FL). However, guessing their metaphorical meaning is not an easy task for learners because it cannot be deduced from the sentence' words.

Consequently, this section provides a brief definition of idioms, their sources, aspects, and classification. It also sheds light on the explicit teaching of idioms, the relation between idioms, metaphors, and proverbs, in addition to some grammatical and syntactic restrictions of idioms, idioms and contextual clues, and the importance of idioms in learning a FL.

### **1.2.1. Definition of Idioms**

Despite the fact that the metaphorical meaning of idioms is too difficult to guess, that cannot deny that idioms have, and to a great extent, the opportunity to take place in all types of the everyday language, informal and formal, spoken and written. In addition to that, understanding idioms demonstrates a good mastery of English as a FL.

Many definitions have been given to the concept of idioms. One of them is provided by Langasher (1968) who said that “an idiom is a kind of complex lexical item. It is a phrase whose meaning cannot be predicted from the meanings of the morphemes it comprises” (p. 79). Thus, what characterizes an idiom is its complexity as a lexical item, and its metaphorical meaning cannot be deduced from the literal meaning of words. Similarly, Jarvie (1993) stated that “an idiom is an expression whose meaning cannot be

easily worked out from the words it contains” (p. 148). So, it is quite clear that the meaning that is behind each idiomatic expression is difficult for learners to guess.

In addition, Ball (1968) has defined an idiom to be “the use of familiar words in an unfamiliar sense” (p. 1). This definition shows that idiomatic expressions are made up of known words that the learners are familiar with and are supposed to get their literal meaning easily, but it is hard for them to grasp their figurative meaning.

Moreover, Jarvie (1993) added that idioms usually create difficulties for FL learners in their process of learning the language. The reason behind this is that the native speakers of that language are supposed to guess the meaning of its idioms easily, in contrast with the non-native speakers who face troubles in recognizing idiomatic expressions meanings and using them.

Accordingly, Swinney and Cutler (1979) defined 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” (p. 523). That is to say, idioms’ meanings cannot be understood based on the sentences’ parts that may consist of.

To sum up, all these definitions share the point that idioms are complex if one wants to guess their metaphorical meaning, taking into consideration that he/ she cannot rely on the literal meaning of the sentence’ words.

### **1.2.2. Sources of Idioms**

According to Maisa and Karunakaran (2013, p. 112), idioms that are frequently used in the everyday language have come from different sources:

1) Many idioms are formed from work and technology. A large number of idioms come from a time when farmer people worked on the land, and there are many idioms which refer to farm animals, for example, the *black sheep of the family*, *take the bull by the horns*, *don’t count your chickens*, etc.

2) Some idioms are formed from rural life, transport, for example, *strike while the iron is hot, put somebody through the mill, eat like a horse, put the cart before the horse*, etc.

3) Many idioms came into existence from science and technology, for example, *she has a short fuse, we are on the same wave length, I need to recharge my batteries*, etc.

4) Every year many idioms enter into the English language from the world of sports and entertainment, for example, *have a good inning, dice with death, behind the scenes, play the second fiddle*, etc.

5) Many idioms have entered English from literature and history, for example, *sour grapes, the goose that laid the golden eggs, the streets are paved with gold*, etc.

6) Idioms came from the Bible, Shakespeare's works, for example, *the salt of the earth, fall by the way side, your pound of flesh, ships that pass in the night*, etc.

7) There are a large number of idioms in which a part of the body represents particular quality or ability, for example, *use your head, the idea never entered my head, she broke his heart, he opened his heart, I speak from the bottom of my heart, the news finally reached her ears, keep your mouth shut*. Etc.

8) Many idioms come from feelings and emotions, for example, *give him a black look, lose your bearings, in seventh heaven, in high spirits, it was love at first sight, come out of your shell*.

### **1.2.3. Aspects of Idioms**

Generally speaking, most idioms have unchangeable aspects even though they can face slight differences in terms of their grammar as well as in their vocabulary. So, what can be varied according to McCarthy and O'Dell (2002) is as follows:

**Table 1.** Aspects of Idioms (McCarthy & O’Dell, 2002, p. 6)

Variation	Example
Occasionally, an idiom in the active voice can be used in the passive.	Government Ministers always <b>pass the buck</b> if they are challenged about poverty [blame somebody else/ refuse to accept responsibility].  The <b>buck has been passed</b> from Minister to Minister. No one seems prepared to accept the responsibility.
Some verb-based idioms also have noun-compound forms.	There is too much <b>buck-passing</b> in government nowadays. No one accepts the blame for anything.
One or more words in the idiom can be varied.	Stop <b>acting the fool/ goat!</b> [stop acting stupidly].

#### 1.2.4. Classification of Idioms

According to Adelnia and Dastjerdi (2011), idioms can be divided into five categories: colloquialisms, proverbs, slang, allusions, and phrasal verbs.

##### 1.2.4.1. Colloquialisms

As Adelnia and Dastjerdi (2011) noted, colloquialisms are expressions that are used in informal speech as well as writing. They are not used in formal situations (such as in a formal conversation). Moreover, Colloquialism or colloquial language is considered to characterize the daily life language or the casual speech. In addition, it is socially as well as geographically determined, i.e. it differs from one geographical area to another.

#### **1.2.4.2. Proverbs**

Adelnia and Dastjerdi (2011) stated that they are expressions used by people who want their speech to be precise and concise. Generally, proverbs add a beauty to one's speech as well as attract others' attention. In addition, they contain sayings about wisdom and facts that are transmitted from generation to another.

#### **1.2.4.3. Slang**

By slang is meant using informal words and expressions that one might consider to be some kind of taboo. Slang cannot be used in formal speech since it is inappropriate in such situations (Adelnia & Dastjerdi, 2011).

#### **1.2.4.4. Allusions**

Adelnia and Dastjerdi (2011) defined an allusion to be a type of speech that is used to refer to different things such as a location, an event, and so on. The reference is either direct or indirect.

#### **1.2.4.5. Phrasal Verbs**

According to Adelnia and Dastjerdi (2011), phrasal verbs can be made of either a verb and a preposition, or a verb with an adverb, or a verb with a preposition and an adverb at the same time. They are used in everyday conversation informally.

Moreover, idioms have been classified into other types. According to Makkai (as cited in Zarei & Rahimi, 2012), two main categories were given:

#### **Idioms of Encoding (Identifiable)**

Makkai (as cited in Zarei & Rahimi, 2012) stated that "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*" (p. 12). This type of idioms can be better recognized through comparing different languages

by the use of prepositions. For instance, the preposition ‘at’ in the English example of ‘*he drove at 70 m.p.h*’ is used instead of the preposition ‘with’ as in French.

### **Idioms of Decoding (Non-Identifiable)**

This type of idioms, according to Makkai (as cited in Zarei & Rahimi, 2012), refers to lexical expressions that are misleading and their interpretations are not clear if one tries to understand them based on learning about the lexical features and conventions of the language only.

Idioms of decoding are categorized into two classes: lexemic and sememic idioms.

#### **Lexemic idioms**

According to Makkai (as cited in Zarei & Rahimi, 2012, p. 12), this type of idioms includes:

- 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.*

#### **Sememic idioms**

For this type of idioms that is related to pragmatic meanings culturally determined, Makkai (as cited in Zarei & Rahimi, 2012, p. 13) mentioned the following:

- a) Proverbs: e.g., *A bird in hand is worth than 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.*

Another classification of idioms that had been given by Moon (1996) was based on ‘the spectrum of idiomaticity’ that plays a quite significant role in the comprehensibility of an idiom. It includes:

### **Transparent- Opaque Idioms**

This type of idioms covers the following:

#### **A- Transparent Idioms**

Transparent idioms are those idioms whose meanings are very simple to be understood based on the literal meaning of the sentence’ parts, e.g. *Fight a losing battle.*

#### **B- Semi- Transparent Idioms**

According to Moon (1996), the meaning of this type of idioms cannot be guessed based on the literal meaning of the sentence’ parts, or at least the latter could not be helpful in comprehending the metaphorical meaning as is expected. This implies that one cannot rely on the common sense when trying to guess the figurative meaning of this type of idioms, e.g. *Break the ice* (to reveal the tension).

#### **C- Semi- Opaque Idioms**

The meaning of this type of idioms as is defined by Moon (1996) cannot be understood by relying on the sentence’ parts. That is to say, the figurative meaning and the literal meaning are totally separated from each other. For example, *to know the rope* (to know how a particular job should be done).

#### **D- Opaque Idioms**

According to Moon (1996), this type of idioms is the most complex when it comes

to guess their figurative meaning, because it is approximately impossible to depend on the meaning of their constituent words to understand them. The reason behind this difficulty is due to the fact that there are items or words whose references are cultural. As an example, *Spill the beans* (to reveal a secret).

Moreover, idioms have been categorized based on the way of combining their words. This implies that a syntactic classification had been made. So, according to McCarthy and O'Dell (2002), this includes:

**Table 2.** Types of idioms (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2002, p. 6)

Form	Example	Meaning
Verb + object/ complement (and/ or adverbial).	<b>Kill two birds with one stone.</b>	Produce two useful results by just doing one action.
Prepositional phrase.	<b>In the blink of an eye.</b>	In an extremely short time.
Compound.	<b>A bone of contention.</b>	Something which people argue and disagree over.
Simile 'simili (as+ adjective + as, or like + noun).	<b>As dry as a bone.</b>	Very dry indeed.
Binomial (word + and + word).	<b>Rough and ready.</b>	Crude and lacking sophistication.
Trinomial (word + word + and + word).	<b>Cool, calm and collected.</b>	Relaxed, in control, not nervous.
Whole clause or sentence.	<b>To cut a long story short.</b>	To tell the main points, but not all the fine details.

Despite the fact that many researchers, who were interested with categorizing idioms, had given different classifications for them, they still share the idea that idiomatic

expressions have distinct levels of idiomaticity to the extent that if one wants to recognize their figurative meaning, he/ she will be obliged to go deeper in learning about the FL culture.

#### **1.2.5. Explicit Teaching of Idioms**

Usually, dealing with idioms is of great importance in the process of learning a FL. The reason behind this is that idioms give FL learners the opportunity of being fluent as well as to comprehend the FL as it is expected.

It is well known that teaching vocabulary to FL learners constitutes the main step to be taken in the process of learning the language, but that is still dealing with the literal meaning of the TL rather than its figurative meaning that plays a great role in opening the door for learners to integrate and communicate with native speakers of that language effectively. Talking about the figurative meaning includes, of course, idioms that really seem to be quite beneficial to FL learners. Thus, according to Nation (2001), it is very preferable and suggested that idioms should be considered as part of vocabulary to be taught to learners. In other words, teachers are supposed to deal with them the way they used to do when teaching vocabulary with the same amount of focus and attention due to the fact that they occur frequently in the language.

There are some researchers who were interested in comparing explicit and incidental learning as two approaches to vocabulary acquisition, one of them is Schmitt (2000).

Thus, the explicit learning approach, as Schmitt (2000) noted, facilitates the way for acquiring the information by providing a great deal of attention to it when it is learned. So, it is very beneficial when teaching idioms to FL learners. This does not belittle the role of the incidental approach however it is observed by Schmitt (2000) that “it is slower and more gradual, lacking the focused attention of explicit learning” (p. 102).

### **1.2.6. Idioms vs. Proverbs vs. Metaphors**

Generally, the figurative meaning of language can be found in idioms, proverbs, metaphors, and other forms of language. Despite the fact that it is not an easy task to make a distinction between these forms because of the similarity that is found between them, there are some different points that can be helpful in recognizing each one from the other.

In fact, an idiom is “a group of two or more words which are chosen together in order to produce a specific meaning or effect in speech or writing” (Sinclair, 1991, p. 172). In other words, idiomatic expressions are a result of combining specific words to give particular meanings. They can be found frequently in newspapers, magazines, TV shows, and movies. In addition, idioms are used by people in their everyday language. Thus, understanding their meaning requires going deeper in ones’ own culture.

Moreover, Ghazala (1995) stated that they “are special, fixed, unchanged phrases which have special, fixed, unchanged meanings” (p. 142). This means that they resemble idioms to some extent, however, that cannot deny that they are different in terms of clarity, i.e. proverbs are usually understandable and easy to be got, in addition to the fact that they reflect the shared cultural values.

Figurative meaning can be also found in metaphors. The latter are widely used in everyday language. They are defined, according to King (2000), as the depiction of something by using a relationship of resemblance or equivalence with another thing that differs totally from the former. So, it is quite clear that metaphors are devices for making comparison between several things (objects, situations, and people). Therefore, they usually add an allure and a beauty to language by simplifying ambiguous things and making them clearer.

### **1.2.7. Grammatical and Syntactic Restrictions of Idioms**

According to Baker (1992, p. 63), the figurativeness of idioms and the degree of

idiomaticity of lexical items are threatened by some grammatical as well as syntactic obstacles. The latter include:

**a. Addition:** Adding any word to an idiomatic expression would alter its meaning, or remove its idiomatic sense. Thus, adding the adverb ‘very’ to the adjective ‘red’ in ‘red herring’ (\*very red herring) affects the figurativeness of its meaning completely.

**b. Deletion:** Deleting the adjective ‘sweet’ and the article ‘the’ from the expressions ‘have a sweet tooth’ and ‘spill the beans’ would change totally their meanings. Hence, (\*have a tooth) and (\*spill beans) have no idiomatic sense.

**c. Substitution:** Idioms accept no replacement of words even if those words are synonyms. For example, ‘the long and short of it’ means the basic facts of a situation. The adjective ‘long’ cannot be substituted by another adjective, like tall despite they have nearly the same meaning.

**d. Modification:** Any changing in the grammatical structure of an idiom leads to the destruction of the idiom’s meaning. For instance, the expression (\*stock and barrel lock) is no more idiomatic because of the altered order of the items in the expression ‘lock, stock and barrel’ completely.

**e. Comparative:** Adding the comparative form ‘er’ to the adjective ‘hot’ in the expression ‘be in hot water’ changes the conventional sense of the idiom which has the meaning of ‘be in trouble’.

**f. Passive:** The passive form ‘some beans were spilled’ has a different meaning from its active form ‘they spilled the beans’ meaning ‘they reveal a surprise’.

Thus, in order not to alter the adequate meaning behind each idiomatic expression, one should take into account that he/ she cannot bring any kind of modification to its structure even if it is slight.

### **1.2.8. Idioms and Contextual Clues**

According to Dunmore (1989), contextual clues are quite useful tools that one can use when trying to guess the meaning behind any word that is new and ambiguous for learners. Moreover, this strategy is considered to be effective in understanding idioms and the opaque idioms in particular, because they seem to be characterized by the fact that their meaning cannot be deduced from the sentence's parts.

Swinney and Cutler (1979) stated that idioms are obscure in terms of their figurative meaning even though they are grammatically well formed. They believed that all of words, sentences, and idioms are alike in the sense that they are to be stored in the same place which is 'a mental lexicon'. According to Bobrow and Bell (1973), the contextual clues have an impact on interpreting the ambiguity of sentences' meaning, so that they constitute the key to get rid of the obscurity of idioms.

Studies that have been devoted to depending on the context in understanding L2 idioms had demonstrated its efficacy as a strategy to be used in guessing the figurative meaning of the idiomatic expressions. One of the researchers who were interested in this field was Cooper (as cited in Zarei and Rahimi, 2012) who investigated which is the most effective strategy that is to be used by learners in order to comprehend L2 idiomatic expressions. So, to do this, the researcher used think-aloud research method, which is a technique that gives the participants the opportunity to say all what they have in their mind freely as they finish their tasks. After conducting his experiment, the researcher had found that using a context is the most frequently used and helpful strategy on which L2 learners rely in order to comprehend and guess the meaning of the ambiguous idiomatic expressions that are not familiar with. This was based on the results achieved by the learners in which they had shown that their answers were approximately correct when they

relied on using context to facilitate the way for them to understand the meaning of L2 idioms.

In addition, Cain, Towse, and Knight (2009), had conducted a study concerning using context in order to help children (between 7 and 10 years old) as compared to adults grasp the meaning of L2 idioms. So, this experiment included multiple choice tasks in which some of them involved story context as a tool that enables learners to infer the meaning of idiomatic expressions whereas others did not. At the end of this experiment, the results had shown that children were depending to a great extent on context as an effective strategy leading them to get the figurative meaning of idioms. This means that they did not develop their skills that were needed to understand the meanings of idiomatic expressions yet.

Thus, choosing a context as a strategy to be used by L2 learners when trying to guess the meaning of the idiomatic expressions seems to be quite effective and useful in order to enable them reach the objective stated.

### **1.2.9. Importance of Learning Idioms**

In any FL classroom, teaching idioms is a very important activity that teachers are supposed to take into consideration. This can be explained via the following arguments:

**A-** Generally, the nonnative speakers face inevitable troubles and obstacles in understanding the FL they are learning. The reason behind this is that learning a FL requires taking into consideration all its forms (written, spoken, standard, and non standard language). The latter includes slang as well as idioms in order to get the required proficiency in that language. This is supported by Burke (1998) as he stated that “knowledge of slang and idioms is fundamental to nonnative speakers’ understanding of the language that native speakers actually use” (p. 5).

- B-** Due to the fact that idioms create difficulty when learners are in the process of learning a FL, it is quite important that they should recognize them as a significant part of that language to deal with. This means that teachers are supposed to involve them as a vital element in their teaching curriculums (Bromley, 1984).
- C-** In addition, idioms are considered to be as a main factor for adding special beauty and taste to language. According to Bromley (1984), despite the fact that idioms constitute the source of confusion and difficulty in language learners, the former still have the benefit of adding decoration and spice to language and making it colourful.
- D-** Furthermore, idioms are quite crucial in making FL learners fluent and able to communicate and integrate with native speakers effectively. In this regard, Burke (1998) stated that there is “absolutely no way a nonnative speaker of English could fully understand an American movie, TV show, news broadcast, or even a typical conversation without help because our language is loaded with nonstandard English, i.e., slang and idioms” (p. 1). So, FL learners need to learn idioms and familiarize themselves to use them effectively to prove their proficiency as well as their fluency in the target language.
- E-** Moreover, Cooper (1998) agrees that “sooner or later, imprecise idiomatic usage will cause difficulties even for a student with an excellent knowledge of grammar and a high level of vocabulary attainment” (p. 259). Consequently, the case of being proficient in terms of vocabulary and the grammatical knowledge of the FL is not enough to enable the learner understand it completely. That is to say, trying to learn about idioms is quite necessary in the learning process of that language.
- F-** Additionally, teachers are expected to familiarize their learners to learn idioms in order to avoid any kind of misunderstanding that can take place in case they did not deal with them inside the FL classroom and face them outside (Burke, 1998).

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, idioms, as an aspect of the figurative meaning of the language, are quite complex in terms of their ambiguity when FL learners are given the task to guess their meaning. Thus, in order to facilitate the way for them to understand their figurative meaning, teachers are supposed to provide their learners with a clear idea about all what is related to the term 'idiom'. In addition, working collaboratively as in TPS strategy can be useful for them to deal with idioms better.

Therefore, the present study investigates the effectiveness of following TPS strategy in helping learners grasp the meaning of some English idioms.

## **Chapter Two: The Practical Framework**

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## **Introduction**

In the theoretical chapter, the focus was on the effectiveness of the cooperative strategy TPS in EFL classrooms due to the fact that it provides a healthy atmosphere for interaction in the learning process, in addition to the great role that idioms play for a better learning of the FL.

Therefore, this chapter covers the main elements that are needed for accomplishing the study starting by talking about the methodology that had been followed, in addition to the population and the sample. Then, a general idea about the process of collecting data and the analysis of the findings is given.

### **2.1. Choice of the Method**

The present study aims at investigating the effect of using TPS strategy on EFL learners' understanding of English idioms. A quasi-experimental design was chosen to achieve this aim. According to Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2006), a quasi-experimental study "involves random assignment of whole groups to treatments" (p. 185). So, this design is suitable because learners of the sample were not assigned randomly since it is the administration that divided them into groups and the researcher had chosen randomly two groups from the target population.

### **2.2. The Sample**

The target population is 150 EFL third year learners at Mebarek El Mili Secondary School, for the academic year 2015/2016. The study includes a sample that consists of two groups. In other words, from the total number of learners, 60 learners were chosen randomly and were divided into two groups: one experimental and another control group. The researcher had selected third year learners because they studied English at least 6 years, in addition to the fact that they study idioms as part of the syllabus this year.

### 2.3. Research Design

This research follows a quasi-experimental design including two groups. The first group is the experimental one which received a TPS strategy as a treatment to guess the meaning of idiomatic expressions (during the treatment period) whereas the other group is the control group which did not receive TPS as a strategy to be followed, since learners were answering idiomatic expressions' tasks individually to guess their figurative meaning.

In order to measure the effect of using TPS strategy, the following question had been posed:

Does using TPS strategy have an effect on learners' understanding of English idioms?

Two tests were performed to investigate the proposed hypothesis given in respect of the research question posed. Thus, statistically speaking, this question can be reformulated in the following way:

Is there a significant difference in understanding English idioms between learners who work collaboratively in pair teams based on TPS strategy and those who work individually?

Therefore, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

1. The Alternative Hypothesis:

(H1): There would be a significant difference in understanding the meaning of English idioms between the learners who work collaboratively and those who do not.

2. The Null Hypothesis:

(H0): There would be no significant difference in understanding the meaning of English idioms between learners who are taught idioms through TPS strategy and those who do not.

## **2.4. Procedures**

### **2.4.1. Pre-testing**

This study started by pre-testing both groups for the purpose of finding out to what extent they are familiarized with English idioms and can understand their figurative meaning. Furthermore, the test took half an hour (thirty minutes). At the beginning of the pre-test, learners were convinced that they can face those idioms in their Baccalaureate exam so that they will take benefit from preparing themselves to have an attempt to guess the figurative meaning of the idiomatic expressions. Therefore, they worked on them individually.

### **2.4.2. Treatment**

Both experimental and control groups received two thirty minutes (30) sessions per week throughout the period of the study that was four sessions. The experimental and the control group were given the treatment by the researcher with the aid of the instructor who made the tasks as part of the original lessons. Thus, the experimental group worked on tasks collaboratively via applying TPS strategy in which they were asked to cooperate and interact with one another to guess the figurative meaning of the idiomatic expressions. However, the control group kept adopting the traditional method of instruction with the teacher; the tasks were performed individually.

#### **2.4.2.1. Experimental Group Instruction**

The experimental group was given some exercises about English idioms in accordance to their level, in which the learners were asked to guess the figurative meaning of five idiomatic expressions that were given within their different contexts each session. The idioms that had been chosen were simple to facilitate the way for learners to succeed in understanding their figurative meaning. In each session, learners formed in pair teams

following TPS strategy have to deal with the task that was designed for them and that contains five English idioms in a limited period of time (half an hour).

The idiomatic expressions that had been selected were about different topics such as: feelings, personality and character, time, and understanding. Therefore, all the four sessions were devoted to ask learners to guess the figurative meaning of the different English idioms that had been selected for them.

During the four sessions of the treatment period, learners were sitting in pair teams following TPS strategy (Think-Write-Pair-Share strategy) in order to interact with one another and discuss the different possible meanings that they can think about concerning each idiomatic expression. So, the main objective was giving them the chance to take part in answering all the tasks cooperatively by exchanging their ideas freely and sharing one another's output concerning the meanings of English idioms.

For the English idioms that had been selected during the whole treatment period, learners were asked to guess the figurative meaning of twenty idiomatic expressions, i.e., they tackled five idiomatic expressions per session. Each task was in the form of a short paragraph highlighting the five idiomatic expressions that were written in bold.

Learners were told that each pair team is supposed to work on the task cooperatively and that they were not permitted to consult the other teams during answering the tasks in order not to interrupt the ordinary progress of the treatment.

#### **2.4.2.2. Control Group Instruction**

Learners in the control group were taught using the traditional method of learning. Therefore, they answered the designed tasks individually as they used to do.

Concerning the tasks to be answered, they were the same as those provided to the experimental group in order to compare the results of both groups.

### **2.4.3. Post-testing**

The post-test was the last step in the study after the treatment. The aim behind administering it was to see the effectiveness of the treatment period. The tasks were the same as those of the pre-test to find out whether learners have learnt how to guess the figurative meaning of idiomatic expressions following TPS strategy, or the latter was not effective enough to enable them to overcome idioms' difficulty of meaning which implies showing no progress in the classroom.

Therefore, both tests (pre- and post-tests) were corrected in order to analyze and compare the results in the part of findings. The purpose behind that is to either confirm or reject one of the research' hypothesis.

## **2.5. Instruments**

### **2.5.1. Test Used in Pre-testing and Post-testing**

Based on the question that had been raised, and the necessity of confirming or disconfirming one of the research hypotheses, the test used in pre-testing and post-testing (Appendix A) was handed to learners in order to find out whether they benefited from working in pair teams following TPS strategy or not.

## **2.6. Scoring**

The idiomatic expressions' task that was given in the test included ten English idioms, and it was out of twenty points. This implies that two points were devoted to each idiom. Thus, they were given to learners who gave correct answers i.e., they received the complete mark whereas those who did not perform well and gave wrong responses, they got zero.

Giving marks was only based on shedding light on the main idea concerning the figurative meaning of the five English idiomatic expressions. That is to say, in the process

of correcting the papers, the focus was not on the grammatical and spelling mistakes that have been committed by the learners.

### **2.7. Statistical Analysis**

Two tests were given in order to confirm or reject one of the research hypotheses. One of these tests is called the paired-samples t-test. The main aim behind it is to check whether TPS strategy has an impact on learners' understanding of English idioms, or not after the treatment period, by calculating the difference and making a comparison between the results of both pre- and post-test for the experimental and control groups.

The second test is called the independent samples t-test. It aims at comparing the post-test scores of both groups (the experimental and the control group) after receiving the treatment.

### **2.8. Results**

This section tackles the statistical analysis of the findings. It provides and discusses the results of the pre-test and the post-test that consist of only one task about guessing the meaning of ten English idiomatic expressions. Then, it presents an analysis of the findings of the experiment.

### 2.8.1. Results of the Idiomatic Expressions' Task

**Table 3.** The Experimental and Control Groups' Frequency of Scores on both Pre- and Post-Tests

Score	Pre-test C	Pre-test E	Post-test C	Post-test E
4	2	-	-	-
4.5	-	-	1	-
5.5	-	1	-	-
6	3	3	2	2
6.5	-	3	1	-
7	1	1	-	1
7.5	-	1	1	1
8	1	4	3	4
8.5	-	2	-	4
9	-	4	2	2
9.5	3	2	1	2
10	6	2	4	1
10.5	1	1	-	4
11	2	-	3	-
11.5	2	1	1	-
12	2	1	4	1
12.5	1	1	1	4
13	-	-	2	-
13.5	2	-	-	2
14	3	1	2	-
15	-	2	-	-
15.5	1	-	1	-
16	-	-	1	1
17	-	-	-	1
N	30	30	30	30

#### 2.8.1.1. Control Group versus Experimental Group Scores on the Pre-test

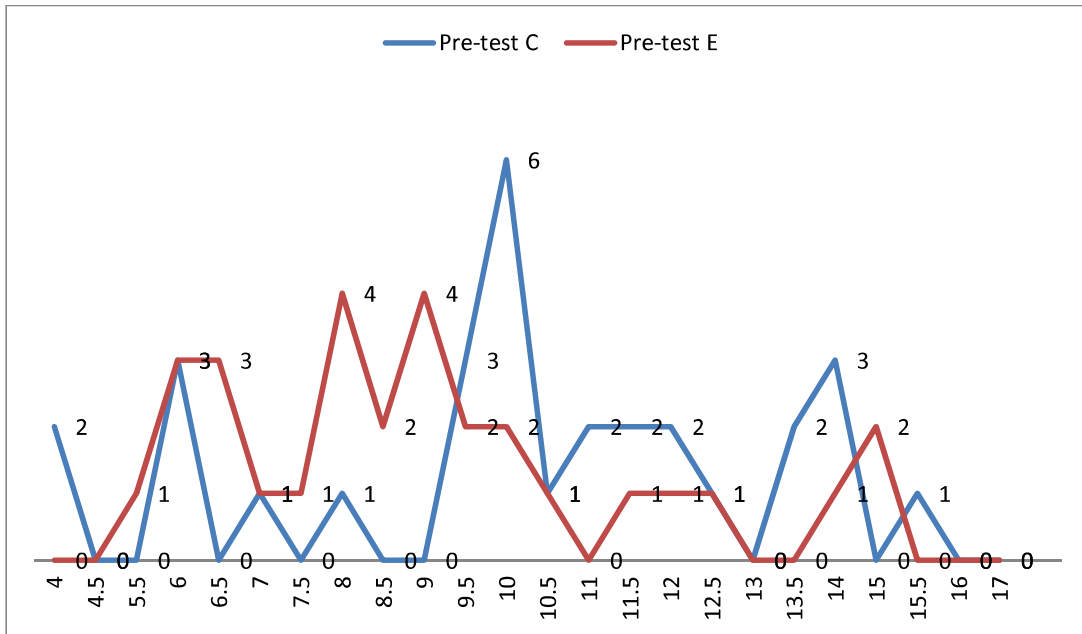
Table 3 shows the results of both groups in the idiomatic expressions' task that they performed before and after the treatment period.

Concerning the pre-test, the mean of the experimental group was  $\bar{X}_E = 9.06$  whereas the mean of the control group was  $\bar{X}_C = 10.20$ .

For a total number of 30 scores in each group, we can notice that:

**Control group:**       $20 \geq 10$        $\longrightarrow$        $66.66\% \geq 10$   
                                   $10 < 10$        $\longrightarrow$        $33.33\% < 10$

**Experimental group:**  $9 \geq 10$        $\longrightarrow$        $30\% \geq 10$   
 $21 < 10$        $\longrightarrow$        $70\% < 10$



**Frequency Polygon 1.** Control Group and Experimental Group Scores of the Idiomatic Expressions' Task in the Pre-test

From the above frequency polygon, it can be noticed that the control group scores begin at 4 (the lowest score) and finish at 15.5 (the highest score), with the most frequently achieved mark of 10. However, the experimental group scoring starts at 5.5 as the lowest score with the highest mark of 15 and 8 and 9 as the most frequent scores.

As it is noticed, there is a quite clear difference between the means of both groups. Thus, to find out whether this is related to their level' differences, or to chance, an independent samples t-test can be used (Park, 2009). The results will confirm whether both groups have the same level of performance or not. To do so, the calculated t is to be compared with the critical t. If the calculated t is lower than the one in the table at the probability of  $p=0.01$ , both groups will be alike in terms of their level of performance.

$$t_{N_1+N_2-2} = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 \sqrt{(N_1+N_2-2)N_1N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1S_1^2 + N_2S_2^2)(N_1+N_2)}}$$

$X_x$  = individual score.  $\bar{X}_n$  = the calculated mean.  $X_x^2$  = square score.  $N_x$  = number of individuals.  $\sum X_x$  = sum of scores.  $\sum X_x^2$  = sum of square scores.  $S_x^2$  = sample variance.

**Control group**

$$\sum X_2 = 306 ; \quad \sum X_2^2 = 3377.5 ; \quad \bar{X}_2 = \frac{306}{30} = 10.2.$$

**Experimental group**

$$\sum X_1 = 272 ; \quad \sum X_1^2 = 2664 ; \quad \bar{X}_1 = \frac{272}{30} = 9.06.$$

**Sample variance**

**Control group**

$$S_2^2 = \frac{\sum X_2^2}{N_2} - \bar{X}_2^2 = \frac{3377.5}{30} - 10.2^2$$

$$= 112.58 - 104.04$$

$$S_2^2 = 8.54$$

**Experimental group**

$$S_1^2 = \frac{\sum X_1^2}{N_1} - \bar{X}_1^2 = \frac{2664}{30} - 9.06^2$$

$$= 88.8 - 82.08$$

$$S_1^2 = 6.72$$

**Table 4.** Square Pre-test Scores of Both Groups on the Idiomatic Expression' Task

Individual learner	Pre-test Control X2	Control square scores	Pre-test Experimental X1	Experimental square scores
01	4	16	8	64
02	6	36	10	100
03	6	36	6	36
04	10	100	15	225
05	7	49	9.5	90.25
06	13.5	182.25	9.5	90.25
07	10	100	9	81
08	10	100	12	144
09	10	100	8	64
10	14	196	14	196
11	9.5	90.25	12.5	156.25
12	10	100	6.5	42.25
13	8	64	10.5	110.25
14	11.5	132.25	8	64
15	11.5	132.25	6.5	42.25
16	4	16	9	81
17	11	121	7.5	56.25
18	12	144	9	81
19	12	144	5.5	30.25
20	15.5	240.25	15	225
21	9.5	90.25	9	81
22	10	100	8	64
23	9.5	90.25	6.5	42.25
24	12.5	156.25	8.5	72.25
25	14	196	11.5	132.25
26	10.5	110.25	7	49
27	13.5	182.25	6	36
28	11	121	8.5	72.25
29	14	196	10	100
30	6	36	6	36
<b>Σ</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>3377.5</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>2664</b>

**The t value**

$$t_{N_1+N_2-2} = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 \sqrt{(N_1+N_2-2)N_1N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1S_1^2 + N_2S_2^2)(N_1+N_2)}}$$

$$t_{30+30-2} = \frac{9.06 - 10.2 \sqrt{(30+30-2)30*30}}{\sqrt{(30*6.72 + 30*8.54)(30+30)}}$$

$$t_{58} = \frac{-1.14\sqrt{(58)900}}{\sqrt{(201.6+256.2)60}}$$

$$t_{58} = \frac{1.14\sqrt{52200}}{\sqrt{27468}}$$

$$t_{58} = \frac{260.45}{165.73}$$

$$t_{58} = 1.57$$

For the total number of the participants (60), 30 in the experimental group and 30 in the control group, and the degree of freedom (**df = N-2**) that is 58 at 0.01 as a level of significance, the t-table value is 2.6633

From comparing the t-value to the observed t-value, it is clear that the observed t is lower than the critical t-value.

$$t_{calcul} \mathbf{1.57} < t_{crit} \mathbf{2.6633}$$

Thus, it can be concluded that both groups have the same level, and the difference in the scores' means of both groups on the pre-test was as a result of chance alone.

### **2.8.1.2. Control Group Pre-test/ Post-test Scores**

As table 3 displays, the main frequent score of the control group's participants in the pre-test is 10 achieved by 6 learners. 15.5 is the highest mark that had been scored by only one learner. In the post-test, 10 and 12 constitute the most frequent scores that were obtained by 4 learners in this group. The highest mark was 16 and was scored only by one learner. Furthermore, twenty learners, in the pre-test, scored equal or above the average (from 10 to 15.5). For the post-test, the number was reduced to be 19 learners who scored equal or above the average (from 10 to 16).

From 30 scores, we notice:

#### **Pre-test:**

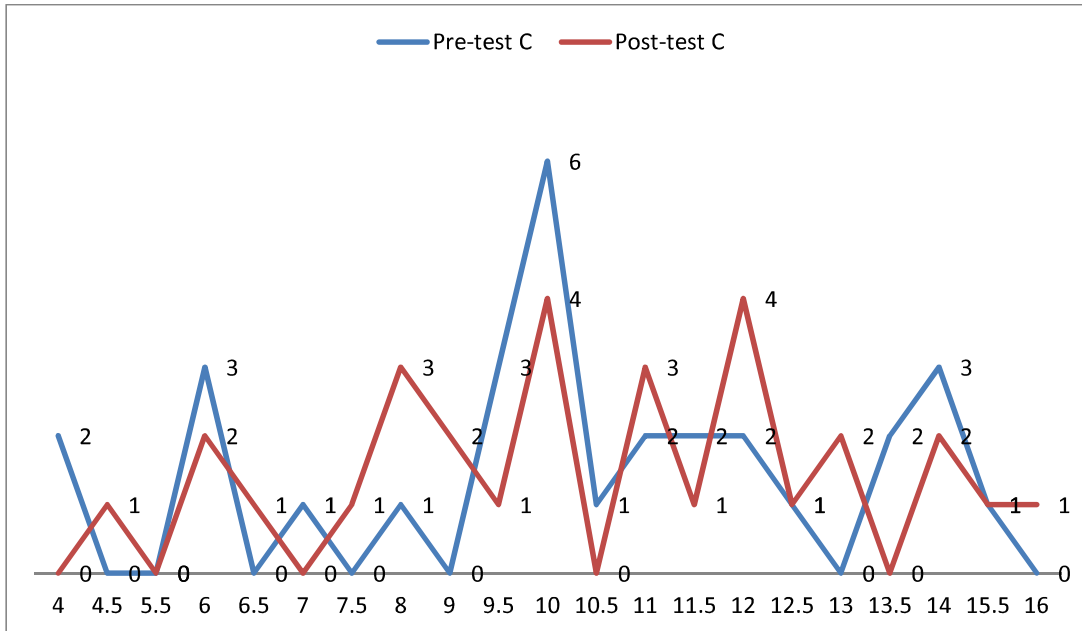
$$20 \geq 10 \quad \longrightarrow \quad 66.66 \% \geq 10$$

$$10 < 10 \quad \longrightarrow \quad 33.33 \% < 10$$

**Post-test:**

19 ≥ 10    →    63.33 % ≥ 10

11 < 10    →    36.66 % < 10



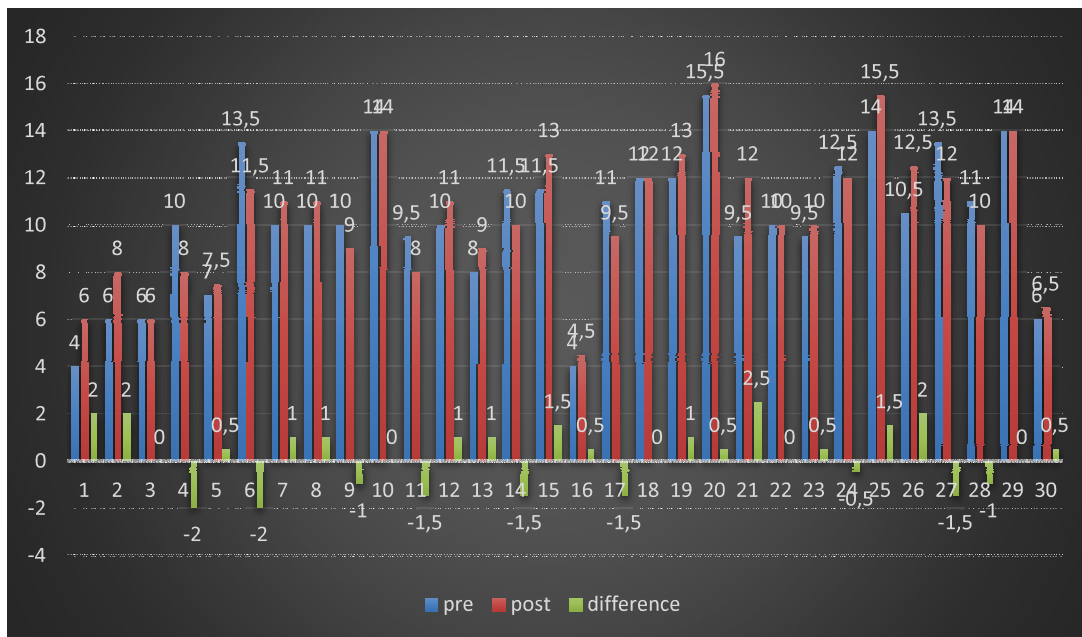
**Frequency Polygon 2.** Control Group Scores on the Idiomatic Expression' Task

The pre-test mean for the control group is  $\bar{X}_{pre} = 10.20$  which is lower than the calculated post-test mean  $\bar{X}_{post} = 10.41$ . In order to see whether there is any improvement in the post-test concerning the control group, the difference between the two means ( $\bar{X}_{pre}$  and  $\bar{X}_{post}$ ) of both tests is calculated  $\bar{d} = +0.21$ . Thus, there has been a kind of improvement for the participants' scores in the pre-test and the post-test.

The difference between the two tests scores (pre-test and post-test) for the control group has been shown in frequency polygon 2 above. Moreover, the participants' improvement or decline in the two tests scores is to be shown in table 5, followed by figure 1 to demonstrate the difference between the two tests scores for each participant.

**Table 5.** Control Group Pre- and Post-test Scores with Differences on the Idiomatic Expressions' Task

<b>Individual learner</b>	<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Post-test</b>	<b>Difference</b>
01	4	6	+2
02	6	8	+2
03	6	6	0
04	10	8	-2
05	7	7.5	+0.5
06	13.5	11.5	-2
07	10	11	+1
08	10	11	+1
09	10	9	-1
10	14	14	0
11	9.5	8	-1.5
12	10	11	+1
13	8	9	+1
14	11.5	10	-1.5
15	11.5	13	+1.5
16	4	4.5	+0.5
17	11	9.5	-1.5
18	12	12	0
19	12	13	+1
20	15.5	16	+0.5
21	9.5	12	+2.5
22	10	10	0
23	9.5	10	+0.5
24	12.5	12	-0.5
25	14	15.5	+1.5
26	10.5	12.5	+2
27	13.5	12	-1.5
28	11	10	-1
29	14	14	0
30	6	6.5	+0.5
	$\bar{X} = 10.2$	$\bar{X} = 10.41$	$\bar{d} = +0.21$



**Figure 1.** Control Group Scores in the Pre- and Post-test with their Differences

In order to find out whether the noticed improvement was really due to following the traditional method of instruction with the control group as the post-test scores indicated, a paired samples t-test is carried out.

### The Paired Samples T-Test

According to De Coster (2006), the paired samples *t*-test is called ‘dependent samples *t*-test’. It is related to the case of having a group of targeted subjects of study that had been tested twice i.e., the participants have passed two tests (pre-test and post-test).

### Procedures for Carrying Out a Paired-Samples T-Test

In order to apply the paired samples *t*-test, De Coster (2006) gave six (6) steps to be followed:

1. Calculate the difference between pre- and post-test, after that calculate the mean difference (this is the average of the paired differences).
2. Calculate the standard deviation and the standard error  $SE(\bar{d}) = \frac{S_d}{\sqrt{N}}$ .

3. Calculate t-statistic which is the value used to produce the  $p$ -value (Probability level) based on the  $t$  distribution. The formula for the T-Statistic is:  $t = \frac{\bar{d}}{SE(\bar{d})}$ .
4. Define the degrees of freedom of the  $t$  distribution upon which the probability values are based. The formula for the degrees of freedom is the number of pairs minus one:  $df=N-1$ .
5. Choose the probability level, also known as the  $p$ -value or significance level. After that give the critical t-value.
6. If the  $t$ -value is higher than the critical t-value, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. Otherwise, there is not sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

#### **The Mean Difference**

$$\bar{d} = \frac{\sum d}{N}$$

$\bar{d}$  = the mean,  $d$  = difference scores,  $N$  = number of subjects, and  $\sum$  = the total sum.

$$\bar{d} = \frac{6.5}{30}$$

$$\bar{d} = 0.21$$

#### **The Standard Deviation of the Differences**

$$S_d = \sqrt{S^2} = \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{N} - \bar{d}^2}$$

$S$  = the variance, and  $\sum d^2$  = the sum of the square difference scores.

$$S_d = \sqrt{\frac{48.25}{30} - 0.21^2} = \sqrt{1.60 - 0.04} = \sqrt{1.56}$$

$$S_d = 1.24$$

**Table 6.** The Control Group's Square Difference Scores on the Idiomatic Expressions'

Task

Individual learner	Difference scores $\bar{d}$	Square difference scores $d^2$
01	+2	4
02	+2	4
03	0	0
04	-2	4
05	+0.5	0.25
06	-2	4
07	+1	1
08	+1	1
09	-1	1
10	0	0
11	-1.5	2.25
12	+1	1
13	+1	1
14	-1.5	2.25
15	+1.5	2.25
16	+0.5	0.25
17	-1.5	2.25
18	0	0
19	+1	1
20	+0.5	0.25
21	+2.5	6.25
22	0	0
23	+0.5	0.25
24	-0.5	0.25
25	+1.5	2.25
26	+2	4
27	-1.5	2.25
28	-1	1
29	0	0
30	+0.5	0.25
	$\sum d = 6.5$	$\sum \bar{d}^2 = 48.25$

**The Standard Error of the Mean Difference**

$$SE(\bar{d}) = \frac{S_d}{\sqrt{N}} \quad , \quad SE(\bar{d}) = \frac{1.24}{\sqrt{30}} = \frac{1.24}{5.47} \quad ; \quad SE(\bar{d}) = \boxed{0.22}$$

**The T-Statistic**

$$t_{N-1} = \frac{\bar{d}}{SE(\bar{d})} \quad , \quad t_{30-1} = \frac{0.21}{0.22}$$

$$t_{29} = 0.95$$

In order to see whether the traditional method of instruction (tasks to be answered individually) had an effect on learners in the control group, the calculated t is compared with the one in the t table, with a degree of freedom  $df = 29$  ( $df = 30-1$ ), and a probability level of 0.01.

$$t_{obs} < t_{crit} (0.95 < 2.75)$$

As it can be noticed, the calculated t is lower than the t-critical which means that the ordinary method of instruction was not effective for learners of the control group concerning understanding the figurative meaning of English idiomatic expressions. This implies that the difference that the post-test scores have shown was only due to chance.

### 2.8.1.3. Experimental Group Pre-test/ Post-test Scores

From table 3, the experimental group main frequent marks in the pre-test are 8 and 9 scored by 4 learners. 15 is the highest mark that had been scored by two learners. For the post-test, 8; 8.5; 10.5; 12.5 constitute the most frequent scores that were achieved by 4 learners. In this test, the highest mark was 17 and was scored by one learner only. Furthermore, there were 9 learners who got equal or above the average in the pre-test (scores from 10 to 15). For the post-test, the number had improved to 14 learners who scored equal or above the average i.e., from 10 to 17.

For the total scores of participants, we have:

#### Pre-test:

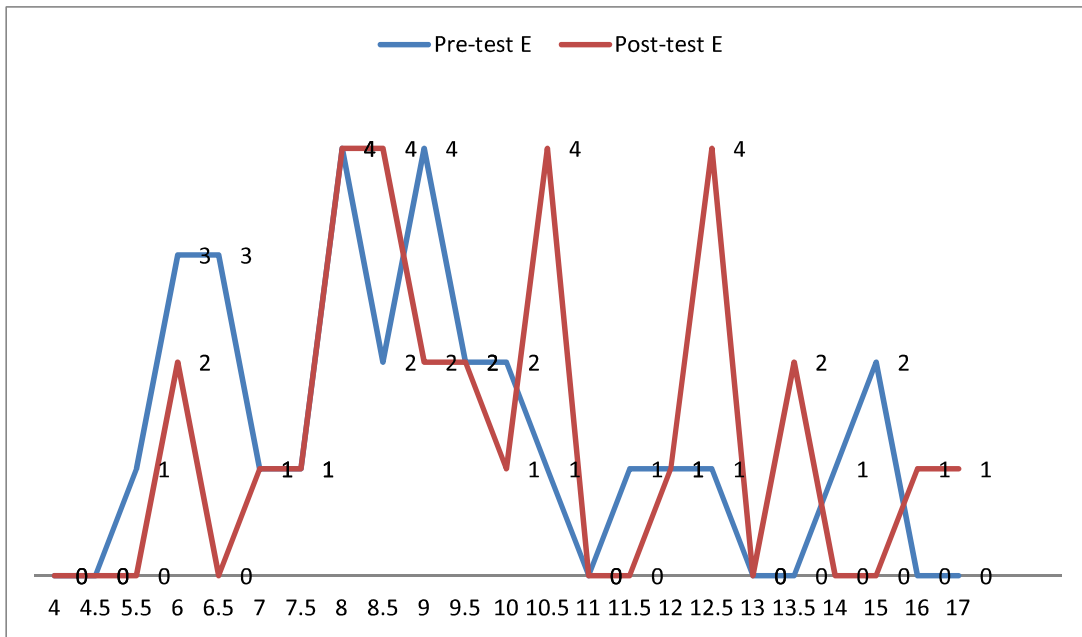
$$9 \geq 10 \quad \longrightarrow \quad 30 \% \geq 10$$

$$21 < 10 \quad \longrightarrow \quad 70 \% < 10$$

#### Post-test:

$$14 \geq 10 \quad \longrightarrow \quad 46.66 \% \geq 10$$

$$16 < 10 \quad \longrightarrow \quad 53.33 \% < 10$$



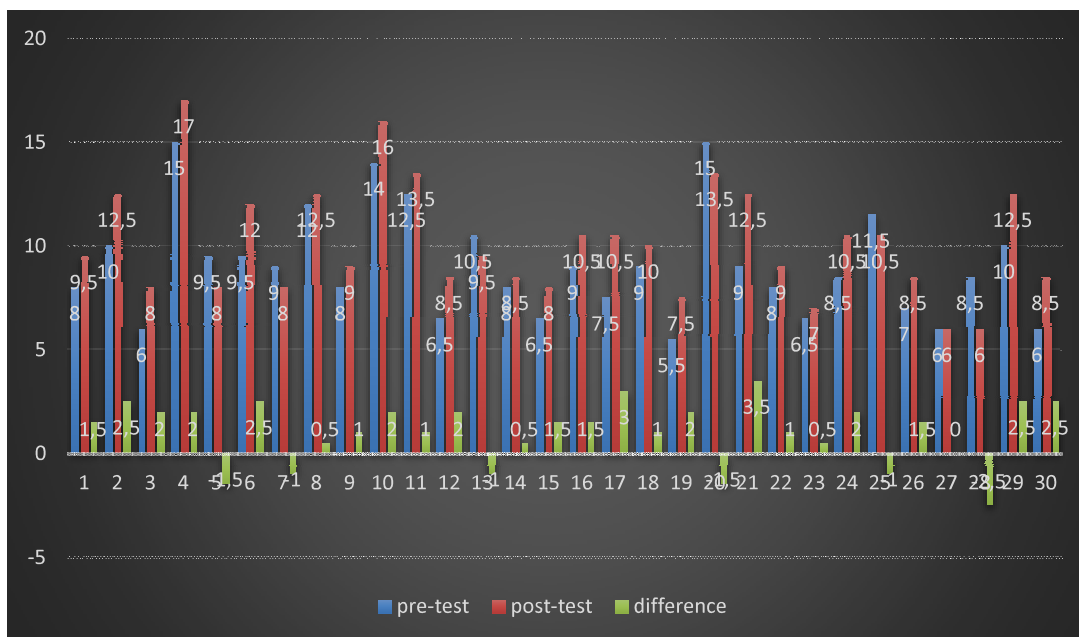
**Frequency Polygon 3.** Experimental Group Scores on the Idiomatic Expressions' Task

The calculated pre-test mean  $\bar{X}_{pre} = 9.06$  which is lower than the actual calculated post-test mean which is  $\bar{X}_{post} = 10.11$ . To see whether there is any improvement in the post-test concerning the experimental group, the difference between the two means ( $\bar{X}_{pre}$  and  $\bar{X}_{post}$ ) on both tests is calculated  $\bar{d} = +1.05$ . Thus, there has been an improvement between the participants' scores in the pre-test and the post-test.

The difference between the two tests scores for each participant is to be shown in table 7 and figure 2. The latter demonstrates the improvement of the experimental group from the pre-test to the post-test.

**Table 7.** Experimental Group Pre- and Post-test Scores with Differences on the Idiomatic Expressions' Task

<b>Individual learner</b>	<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Post-test</b>	<b>Difference</b>
01	8	9.5	+1.5
02	10	12.5	+2.5
03	6	8	+2
04	15	17	+2
05	9.5	8	-1.5
06	9.5	12	+2.5
07	9	8	-1
08	12	12.5	+0.5
09	8	9	+1
10	14	16	+2
11	12.5	13.5	+1
12	6.5	8.5	+2
13	10.5	9.5	-1
14	8	8.5	+0.5
15	6.5	8	+1.5
16	9	10.5	+1.5
17	7.5	10.5	+3
18	9	10	+1
19	5.5	7.5	+2
20	15	13.5	-1.5
21	9	12.5	+3.5
22	8	9	+1
23	6.5	7	+0.5
24	8.5	10.5	+2
25	11.5	10.5	-1
26	7	8.5	+1.5
27	6	6	0
28	8.5	6	-2.5
29	10	12.5	+2.5
30	6	8.5	+2.5
	$\bar{X} = 9.06$	$\bar{X} = 10.11$	$\bar{d} = +1.05$



**Figure 2.** Experimental Group Scores in the Pre- and Post-test with their Differences

Interestingly, it can be noticed that the treatment affected the learners when they were working on answering tasks in pair teams following TPS strategy. In other words, they did benefit from interacting with their team member.

In order to find out that the use of TPS strategy in the FL classroom was really effective as the post-test scores indicate, and that the difference between the two tests was the result of applying this strategy, not by chance, a paired samples t-test was carried out i.e., based on the calculated t-statistics as it will be compared with the t-critical, one of the research hypotheses will be confirmed. Thus, if the results showed that the calculated t-statistics was higher than the t-critical, the research hypothesis is to be confirmed so that TPS strategy is effective for understanding English idioms.

#### The Mean Difference

$$\bar{d} = \frac{31,5}{30}, \bar{d} = 1,05$$

#### The Standard Deviation of the Differences

$$S_d = \sqrt{\frac{97,75}{30} - 1,05^2} = \sqrt{3,25 - 1,10} = \sqrt{2,15}, S_d = 1,46$$

**Table 8.** The Experimental Group’s Square Difference Scores on the Idiomatic Expressions’ Task

Individual learner	Difference scores $\bar{d}$	Square difference scores $d^2$
01	+1.5	2.25
02	+2.5	6.25
03	+2	4
04	+2	4
05	-1.5	2.25
06	+2.5	6.25
07	-1	1
08	+0.5	0.25
09	+1	1
10	+2	4
11	+1	1
12	+2	4
13	-1	1
14	+0.5	0.25
15	+1.5	2.25
16	+1.5	2.25
17	+3	9
18	+1	1
19	+2	4
20	-1.5	2.25
21	+3.5	12.25
22	+1	1
23	+0.5	0.25
24	+2	4
25	-1	1
26	+1.5	2.25
27	0	0
28	-2.5	6.25
29	+2.5	6.25
30	+2.5	6.25
	$\sum d = 31.5$	$\sum d^2 = 97.75$

**The Standard Error of the Mean Difference**

$$SE(\bar{d}) = \frac{1.46}{\sqrt{30}} = \frac{1.46}{5.47}$$

$$SE(\bar{d}) = 0.26$$

**The T-Statistic**

$$t_{30-1} = \frac{1.05}{0.26}$$

$$t_{29} = 4.03$$

When comparing the t-statistic and the t-critical in the table of distribution to see which one exceeded the other, it can be said that the improvement that occurred in the experimental group performance was as a result of applying TPS strategy during the treatment period.

The degree of freedom is  $df = 29$ , for the reason that the experimental group consisted of 30 learners. Thus, the t-critical is 2.7564 at  $p = 0.01$  as the level of probability. Under these conditions, the calculated t-statistics is higher than the t-critical.

$$t_{obs} > t_{crit} (4.03 > 2.75)$$

Statistically speaking, there is an improvement in the experimental group participants' understanding of English idioms.

#### 2.8.1.4. Experimental Group vs. Control Group in the Post-test

From table 5 and table 7, it is quite clear that in the post-test, the control group scores exceeded the experimental group scores since the post-test control group mean is higher than the one of the experimental group. This implies that the problem may be in TPS strategy itself.

$$\bar{X}_c = 10.41 > \bar{X}_E = 10.11$$

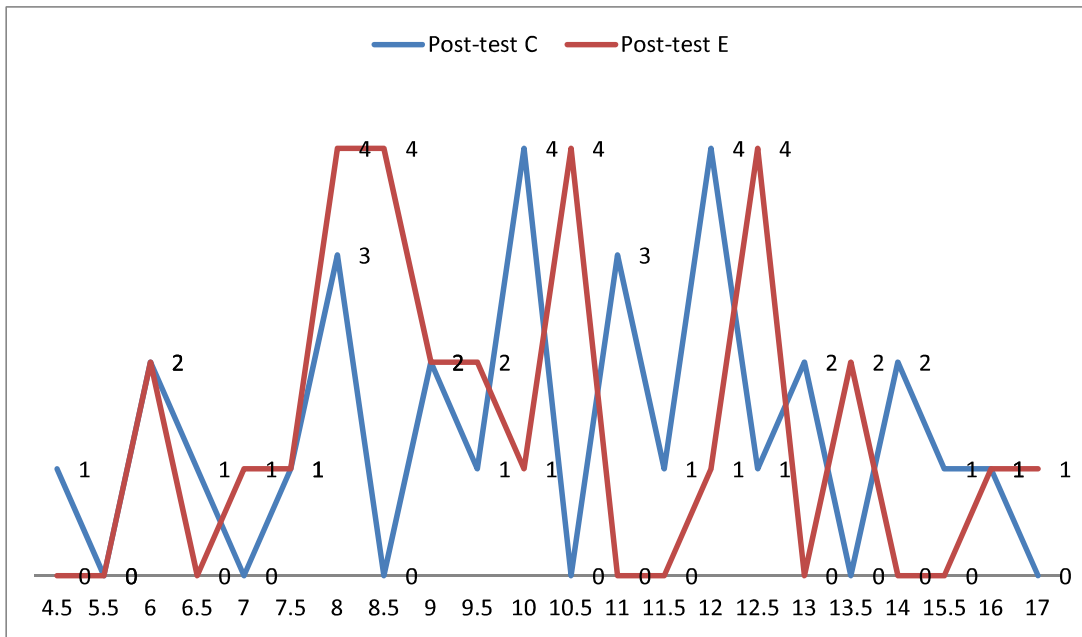
For the total number of 30 scores in both groups, it can be noticed that:

##### Control Group

$$19 \geq 10 \quad \longrightarrow \quad 63.33 \% \geq 10$$

##### Experimental Group

$$14 \geq 10 \quad \longrightarrow \quad 46.66 \% \geq 10$$



**Frequency Polygon 4.** The Control and Experimental Group's Scores on the Post-test

From the above frequency polygon, it can be noticed that the control group scores begin at 4.5 (the lowest score) and finish at 16 (the highest mark), with 10 and 12 as the most frequently scored marks that have been obtained by 4 learners. Besides, the experimental group scoring starts at 6 as the lowest mark with the highest score of 17, and 8; 8.5; 10.5, and 12.5 as the most frequent scores achieved by 4 learners.

Since there was a difference between the control and the experimental groups concerning the post-test scores' means, the independent-samples t-test is used to examine this difference.

**Pos-test**

**Control group**

$$\sum X_2 = 312.5 ; \sum X_2^2 = 3488.75 ; \bar{X}_2 = \frac{312.5}{30} = 10.41$$

### Experimental group

$$\sum X_1 = 303.5 ; \sum X_1^2 = 3284.25 ; \bar{X}_1 = \frac{303.5}{30} = 10.11$$

### Sample variance

#### Control group

$$S_2^2 = \frac{\sum X_2^2}{N_2} - \bar{X}_2^2 = \frac{3488.75}{30} - 10.41^2$$

$$= 116.29 - 108.36$$

$$S_2^2 = 7.93$$

#### Experimental group

$$S_1^2 = \frac{\sum X_1^2}{N_1} - \bar{X}_1^2 = \frac{3284.25}{30} - 10.11^2$$

$$= 109.47 - 102.21$$

$$S_1^2 = 7.26$$

**Table 9. Square Post-test Scores of Both Groups on the Idiomatic Expressions' Task**

Individual learner	Experimental group' scores $X_1$	Square scores $X_1^2$	Control group' scores $X_2$	Square scores $X_2^2$
01	9.5	90.25	6	36
02	12.5	156.25	8	64
03	8	64	6	36
04	17	289	8	64
05	8	64	7.5	56.25
06	12	144	11.5	132.25
07	8	64	11	121
08	12.5	156.25	11	121
09	9	81	9	81
10	16	256	14	196
11	13.5	182.25	8	64
12	8.5	72.25	11	121
13	9.5	90.25	9	81
14	8.5	72.25	10	100
15	8	64	13	169
16	10.5	110.25	4.5	20.25
17	10.5	110.25	9.5	90.25
18	10	100	12	144
19	7.5	56.25	13	169
20	13.5	182.25	16	256
21	12.5	156.25	12	144
22	9	81	10	100
23	7	49	10	100
24	10.5	110.25	12	144
25	10.5	110.25	15.5	240.25
26	8.5	72.25	12.5	156.25
27	6	36	12	144
28	6	36	10	100
29	12.5	156.25	14	196
30	8.5	72.25	6.5	42.25
$\Sigma$	303.5	3284.25	312.5	3488.75

**The t-value**

$$t_{N_1+N_2-2} = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2 \sqrt{(N_1+N_2-2)N_1N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1S_1^2 + N_2S_2^2)(N_1+N_2)}}$$

$$t_{30+30-2} = \frac{10.11 - 10.41 \sqrt{(30+30-2)30*30}}{\sqrt{(30*7.26 + 30*7.93)(30+30)}}$$

$$t_{58} = \frac{-0.3 \sqrt{(58)900}}{\sqrt{(217.8 + 237.9)60}}$$

$$t_{58} = \frac{0.3\sqrt{52200}}{\sqrt{27342}}$$

$$t_{58} = \frac{68.54}{165.35}$$

$$t_{58} = 0.41$$

For the total number of the participants (60), 30 in each group, the degree of freedom (**df = N-2**) at 0.01 as a level of significance, the t-table value is 2.6633.

So, based on the comparison made between the critical t-value and the calculated t-value, it is clear that the former (the critical t-value) exceeded the observed t-value.

$$t_{obs} < t_{crit} (0.41 < 2.66)$$

Therefore, from the results above, it can be said that even though there has been some improvement in the post-test concerning the experimental group, what can imply that this would be due to applying TPS strategy and not to chance, this is not enough for the research hypothesis to be confirmed. Thus, based on comparing the post-test scores' means of the experimental group and the control group, the result was that the latter (control group scores' mean) exceeded the former (the experimental group scores' mean), in addition to the t-table value that is lower than the critical t-value. That is to say, the null hypothesis, saying that there would be no significant difference in understanding the meaning of English idioms between learners who are taught idioms through TPS strategy and those who are not, is accepted whereas the research hypothesis is rejected because of the possibility of having a problem in TPS strategy itself.

#### **2.8.1.4.1. General Discussion**

This study aimed at investigating the effect of applying TPS as a cooperative learning strategy in the EFL classrooms on helping learners guess the exact figurative meaning of English idiomatic expressions.

Based on the aim of the research, the following question was posed: does using TPS strategy have an effect on learners' understanding of English idioms?

On this basis, it was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference in understanding the meaning of English idioms between the learners who work collaboratively using TPS strategy and those who work individually.

After conducting the experiment, the results of both groups (experimental and control groups) were not satisfactory indicating that the treatment was not effective for learners to show a significant progress. In other words, TPS strategy did not have a remarkable effect on learners' grasping of the figurative meaning of English idioms what leads the researcher to reject the research hypothesis, so the null hypothesis was accepted.

#### **• The Control Group Improvement in Performance**

Learners in the control group followed the traditional method of instruction. Consequently, based on the results obtained (the pre- and post-test scores), it can be noticed that the casual methodology had brought some effect on their development in terms of understanding English idiomatic expressions since the scored mean of the idiomatic expressions' task in the pre-test was  $\bar{X}_{pre} = 10.20$  whereas in the post-test it was  $\bar{X}_{post} = 10.41$ , in which the difference between the two was  $\bar{d}=0.21$ . On this basis, it can be concluded that the improvement that had been shown in the control group performance can be due to the habit that the group' members developed via working with the traditional method of teaching during the treatment period what helped them in grasping the figurative

meaning of English idiomatic expressions, but this still does not imply that the ordinary method of instruction was effective for them.

#### • **The Non-Satisfactory Performance of the Experimental Group**

Learners in the experimental group were divided into small groups during the treatment period. They were given the opportunity to interact with their team members as well as exchange their points of view concerning the possible figurative meanings that the idiomatic expressions included in the tasks can have. However, the scores obtained from both tests indicated that learners did not benefit from the strategy (TPS strategy). This does not deny the fact that they have shown some progress since there was a clear difference between the pre-test and post-test scores' means. For the former, it was  $\bar{X}_{pre} = 9.06$  whereas in the post-test, it was  $\bar{X}_{post} = 10.11$ , and  $\bar{d} = 1.05$  as a difference. Still, these findings were not satisfactory what implies that TPS strategy was not really effective to help learners in the experimental group develop their level of understanding of English idiomatic expressions.

#### **2.8.1.4.3. Pedagogical Implications**

From the research, some pedagogical recommendations can be set as follows:

1. TPS strategy can be more beneficial if teachers apply it for other aspects of EFL such as written expression, on the basis that it gives learners the opportunity to think critically when interacting and negotiating with their team members using the TL in addition to enrich their vocabulary.
2. TPS strategy guaranteed an interaction inside the classroom, what led them to bring more focus on their tasks of EFL (discussing their views concerning the figurative meaning of English idiomatic expressions); yet, it did not improve their level of understanding them as it was expected.

3. Even though TPS strategy was not effective for minimizing learners' lack of grasping the figurative meaning of English idiomatic expressions, its efficacy in involving EFL learners in the learning process as well as keeping their engagement and interaction inside the FL classroom as it was remarked in the treatment period with the experimental group cannot be denied.

#### **2.8.1.4.4. General Conclusion**

The present study proved the unsatisfactory performance of third year secondary school learners when applying TPS strategy to understand the figurative meaning of English idiomatic expressions.

Importantly, in this investigation, there had been an attempt to shed light on the importance of putting learners into pair team in order to enhance their level of understanding of English idioms. However, the statistical findings showed that the targeted strategy was not of great significance in fulfilling the main objective of this study.

Furthermore, the manipulated variable (TPS strategy) played an important role in raising the learners' involvement during the treatment period, yet it did not have a sufficient impact on helping most of them develop their understanding of the figurative meaning of English idiomatic expressions.

#### **2.8.1.4.5. Limitations of the Study**

The problem of time constraints was the main one among the problems that were faced during the whole period of the experiment since only four sessions were devoted for the treatment period.

#### **2.8.1.4.6. Suggestions for Further Research**

From the research, there are some suggestions that can be given:

1. Four sessions that were devoted to the treatment period were not sufficient for both the experimental group and the control group. Therefore, it would be better for further researches to provide more time to participants in order to gain better findings.
2. TPS strategy fits more written expression tasks since it raises learners' engagement during answering the designed tasks. Thus, learners can benefit more if they were exchanging their points of view while interacting with their team members.
3. TPS strategy was applied for exchanging learners' ideas concerning the possible meanings that the given English idiomatic expressions can have. Thus, further studies can use this strategy to see its efficacy on improving learners' performance when translating these idioms by relating them to their mother tongue culture.
4. Perhaps using TPS strategy with pre- or intermediate level learners may not be suitable for them, so that it would be better for further researches to apply it with advanced levels particularly if the topic is related to idioms.

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## **Appendices**

**Appendix A:** The tests used in Pre-testing and Post-testing

**Appendix B:** The tasks distributed to the participants in experimental and control groups

**Appendix A: The tests used in Pre-testing and Post-testing**

**First name:** .....

**Family name:** .....

**Exercise:** Read carefully the following idiomatic expressions. Then, try to guess the meaning behind each idiom.

1- Once in a blue moon

.....  
.....

2- Play with fire

.....  
.....

3- Cry for the moon

.....  
.....

4- Be born under an unlucky star

.....  
.....

5- Over the moon

.....  
.....

6- To Jump to Conclusions

.....  
.....

7- See stars

.....  
.....

8- In the blink of an eye

.....  
.....

9- Moon over

.....  
.....

10- Thank one's lucky star

.....  
.....

## **Appendix B: The tasks distributed to the participants in experimental and control groups**

### **Session 1:**

Read carefully the following idiomatic expressions. Then, try to guess the meaning behind each idiom.

#### **Understanding**

**Eric:** What are you doing?

**Ellen:** I'm trying to **get my head around (1)** this assignment. I can't seem to make heads or tails out of it. I have just read it for the tenth time, but I'm **none the wiser (2)**.

**Eric:** What's the problem? Didn't your teacher explain it in class?

**Ellen:** Well, she did, but I was half asleep and kept **losing the thread (3)**.

**Eric:** Let me see it. I took that class last year. Maybe I can **get a handle on it (4)**... Ok, I think I **get the picture (5)**. You're supposed to talk to four different people and ask them these questions.

### **Session 2:**

Read carefully the following idiomatic expressions. Then, try to guess the meaning behind each idiom.

#### **Feelings**

Yesterday, I **got up on the wrong side of the bed (1)**. I had been feeling down in the dumps since I quit my job.

At first, I enjoyed advertising. I worked hard and I loved it. Then I changed companies.

My new boss began to **drive me up the wall (2)**. She was always **blowing hot and cold (3)** about my project proposals. One minute she was positive. The next minute

she wasn't interested. I was **on edge (4)** all the time. It was time for something new. My heart just wasn't in it anymore. So, I quit and applied to work overseas as a volunteer.

After breakfast I went to check the mail. There was a big envelope on the floor. That was a sight for sore eyes! I opened it.

I got a job in Africa! I'm going to teach in Africa for two years! Suddenly, I was **walking on air! (5)**

### **Session 3:**

Read carefully the following idiomatic expressions. Then, try to guess the meaning behind each idiom.

#### **Personality and Character**

**Lori:** I met your friend John last night. He's got a chip on his shoulder, hasn't he?

**Julia:** No, he **comes across (1)** like that at first, but then you realize he's shy. Actually, he is the **salt of the earth (2)**.

**Lori:** Really? He didn't seem very nice at all.

**Julia:** Believe me, John **has a heart of gold (3)**, and he's as kind as they come.

**Lori:** He barely talked to anybody and stood there looking angry.

**Julia:** He's a **man of few words (4)**, that's true. But he doesn't **have a nasty bone in his body (5)**.

### **Session 4:**

Read carefully the following idiomatic expressions. Then, try to guess the meaning behind each idiom.

#### **Time**

**Beth:** What are you doing **at the moment? (1)**

**Wendy:** I'm trying to finish my paper. I didn't do any work during the vacation, so I'm trying to **make up for lost time (2)** now.

**Beth:** How about seeing a movie?

**Wendy:** I can't. I'm working **day and night (3)** trying to finish this thing.

**Beth:** You need to take a break **every now and then (4)**.

**Wendy:** Thursday is the **drop-dead date (5)**. I have to finish it.

## Résumé

Apprendre toutes les exigences en langues étrangères qui acquièrent tout ce que l'apprenant peut avoir besoin de communiquer efficacement dans cette langue. Faire face à la fois sens littéral et figuré de la langue. Idiomes sont classés sous l'égide de la langue au sens figurés pour que les apprenants en langues étrangères sont censées les rencontrer fréquemment, ce qui vraiment besoin de les aider à apprendre à propos de la difficulté de comprendre leur signification. L'anglais comme une langue étrangère constitue l'une des langues les plus fréquemment utilisées dans le monde. Ainsi, les enseignants dans toute classe de langue étrangère, travaillent dur pour aider leurs apprenants à acquérir cette langue comme il est prévu. Le principal objectif est de les impliquer dans le processus d'apprentissage en essayant de communiquer et d'interagir avec leurs pairs. Pour ce faire, les enseignants doivent réfléchir à des méthodes et des stratégies efficaces pour simplifier le processus. Fait intéressant, l'objectif de la présente étude a été enquête sur l'impact du TPS en tant que stratégie de penchant coopérative à suivre dans une salle de classe de langue étrangère. Par conséquent, la troisième année les apprenants du secondaire à Mebarek El Mili école secondaire ont été considérés comme la population cible. Notre échantillon était composé de soixante sur cent cinquante élèves, ou il y avait deux groupes ; l'un d'entre eux était le groupe expérimental tandis que l'autre était le groupe témoin à-dire, chaque groupe était composé de trente apprenants. Les deux groupes ont reçu un pré-test et passé toute la période de traitement de travail sur les tâches conçues, dans lequel le groupe expérimental a traité avec ces tâches en collaboration, car ils avaient été regroupés dans d'autres groupes de deux personnes, tandis que les membres du groupe de contrôle tenus d'y répondre individuellement. A la fin de la période de traitement, les deux groupes ont reçu un post-test comprenant la tâche des mêmes expressions idiomatiques que dans le pré-test. Malheureusement, les résultats n'étaient pas satisfaisants.

## ملخص

تعلم اللغة الاجنبية يتطلب عامة اكتساب كل ما ينبغي اكتسابه لتحصيل الزاد الكافي للمحادثة و التواصل عن طريق هذه اللغة. كل لغة تتميز بوجود معنى لغوي لها بالاضافة الى المعنى المجازي الذي قد تحتويه عباراتها اللغوية. لذلك فان حصد المعلومات حول كليهما له اثر كبير في اتقان هذه اللغة الاجنبية و احسان المحادثة عن طريقها. تعتبر العبارات الاصطلاحية من ضمن ما يمكن ادراجه تحت جناح المعنى المجازي ولهذا السبب فانه يتطلب من المتعلمين ان يطرقوا بابها ليجيدوا كيفية التعامل معها اذا ما صادفوها في محادثاتهم اليومية لكونها صعبة الفهم من المعنى اللغوي الذي يمكن ان تضمه كلماتها. تعد اللغة الانجليزية من اللغات المشهورة التي يكثر استعمالها و شيوعها في العالم.ولهذا نجد الاساتذة والمعلمين المتخصصين في تعليمها للطلاب و التلاميذ يعملون بكد جاهد ين ان يلتقوا المتعلمين كل ما يمكن ان يحتاجوه لاكتسابها واستعمالها كما يجب في حياتهم اليومية وذلك بتطبيق احدى الاستراتيجيات التي تضمن تفاعلهم و نشاطهم داخل الاقسام. وعلى هذا الاساس فان الهدف المنشود من دراستنا هذه يكمن في مناقشة اذا ما كان للاستراتيجية الجماعية (فكر/زوج/شارك) أي تأثير على تفاعل المتعلمين داخل الاقسام اثناء محاولتهم ايجاد المعاني المجازية التي يمكن ان تتضمنها العبارات الاصطلاحية. لذلك فان المجموعة التي تم اختيارها لهذه الدراسة هي تلاميذ ثانوية مبارك الملي للمستوى النهائي(ثالثة ثانوي). حيث اخترنا ستين (60) فردا من ضمن مئة و خمسين (150) تلميذا.وقد قسمناهم الى قسمين متساويين في كل منهما ثلاثون (30) فردا.المجموعة الاولى هي المجموعة التجريبية اما الثانية فهي المجموعة الضابطة. لقد استلم كل منهما فحصا وبعدها فترة من الدراسة حيث ان افراد المجموعة التجريبية قد عملوا ابانها في مجموعات صغيرة متكونة من فردين اما المجموعة الثانية فيقيت تتبع المنهجية التقليدية. اما في نهاية فترة الدراسة فقد استلم كلا الفريقين نفس الفحص السابق. لكن لسوء الحظ لم تنفع هذه الاستراتيجية افراد المجموعة التجريبية لانها لم تطور مستواهم ليفهموا جيدا المعاني المجازية للعبارات الاصطلاحية للغة الانجليزية كما قد كان متوقعا منهم.