

## The Effect of Teaching Idioms from Numbers in English on Iraqi Non Specialists Students' Comprehension

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### Abstract

This research consists of two parts: the theoretical part and the practical part. The first part provides a general description of idioms and idiomatic expressions. The definition of the idiom depending on different points of view and theories, its composition and types according to different standards and criteria, and the relation between the idiom and other linguistic phenomena were given in detail. To give a simplified and complete image about idioms and to pave the way to the second part of the research, which focuses specifically on one type of idioms "idioms from numbers", all aspects regarding the idiom should be clarified in detail. The reason for choosing this kind of idioms is the absence of studies that tackle it well, particularly in Iraq ,and this type represents the core of the second part of present research .This part refers to the importance and role of idioms from numbers in comprehension English at various levels such as syntactic, semantic , vocabulary and context. To achieve the purpose of this research, two tests (pre -test and post- test) have been constructed and presented to a group of specialists to verify their validity and reliability. Then, the two tests were applied to a sample consisting of 40 undergraduate students and a lecture dealing with the subject of research has been delivered to the sample. The results of the two tests have been analyzed statistically and compared with each other in order to show the progress of achievement of the sample at various levels of the language which were mentioned above . In the light of the results of the study, several conclusions were inferred, one of them, the important and effective role played by idioms from the numbers in teaching English as a foreign language for Iraqi students.

**Key words:** idioms, numbers, non-specialist students .

اثر تدريس المصطلحات المشتقة من الارقام في الانكليزية على استيعاب الطلبة غير الاختصاص

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الملخص:

يتألف هذا البحث من محورين: المحور النظري والمحور التطبيقي . يقدم المحور الأول وصفا عاما للمصطلح والمصطلحات التعبيرية. تم تعريف المصطلح اعتمادا على نظريات ووجهات نظر عديدة لبيان شكل تفصيلي أضف إلى تركيبه وأنواعه وفقا لمقاييس ومعايير متعددة. كما تم بيان العلاقة التي تربطه مع مظاهر لغوية أخرى .وتم توضيح كل ما يتعلق بالمصطلح من اجل إعطاء صورة مبسطة وكاملة عنه هذا من جهة ومن جهة أخرى من اجل أن يأخذ البحث مجراه إلى المحور الثاني والذي يركز بصورة دقيقة

على نوع واحد من المصطلحات والذي يعرف بالمصطلحات المأخوذة من الأرقام. ويعود السبب في اختيار هذا النوع إلى عدم وجود الدراسات التي تتطرق إليه بشكل جيد وتعرفه وإيضاحه بصورة وافية وخصوصاً في العراق. أضف إلى أن هذا النوع يمثل الجزء الأساسي للمحور الثاني من هذا البحث. ويمثل هذا المحور الغرض من البحث والذي يشير إلى أهمية ودور المصطلحات المأخوذة من الأرقام في استيعاب اللغة الانكليزية في مختلف المستويات كالقواعد والمفردات والمعاني والسياق. ولغرض تحقيق الغرض من هذا البحث تم بناء اختبارين (اختبار قبلي واختبار بعدي) وتم عرضهما على مجموعة من المختصين لبيان صدقهما وثباتهما. ومن ثم تم تطبيق الاختبارين على عينة البحث والتي تتكون من ٤٠ طالب من طلاب المرحلة الأولى. أضف إلى الاختبارين تم إعطاء محاضرة تفصيلية تعاملت مع موضوع البحث بشكل وافٍ. عولجت النتائج إحصائياً وقورنت فيما بينهما من أجل بيان التطور الحاصل لطلاب العينة في مختلف المستويات المذكورة آنفاً. وتم الوصول إلى نتائج عديدة منها الدور المهم والفعال الذي تلعبه المصطلحات المأخوذة من الأرقام في تعليم الطلاب العراقيين اللغة الانكليزية كلغة أجنبية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** المصطلحات، الأرقام، الطلبة غير الاختصاص.

### 1.1 Introduction:

An idiom is an expression whose meaning cannot be inferred from the meanings of its parts. Idioms exist in all languages. They help the language user to convey a particular message in a figurative way, making the language more vivid and powerful. Numbers besides their primary role of counting things have additional meaning, which might be symbolic or might reveal a particular tradition. Thus, numbers are inseparable from language.

This research focuses on the semantic and symbolism of English idioms containing the cardinal and ordinal numbers. It is significant because no study which would concentrate on semantics and symbolism of such universal and abstract phenomenon as "number" in the English idioms has been done before. Thus, this study is intended to deepen the understanding of idioms from numbers in English.

The research question is: are numbers within idioms playing any role in teaching and comprehending English for Iraqi students?

In the present study, it is hypothesized that "Iraqi non-specialists students have problems in recognizing and producing idioms from numbers".

The research paper consists of three sections. Section one deals with the theoretical issues related to idioms, such as the problem of defining an idiom, the general features of an Idiom, and the functions of idioms. In Section two the topic of number symbolism in the English is discussed. This chapter also speaks about the Bible as a common source of number symbolism for Christians. The largest part, Section three, is devoted to the practical part of the research. It covers the sample, tests, statistical tool, experiment application, discussion of the results, conclusion and recommendations.

### **1.2 Idiomaticity in Languages: Theoretical Issues**

Theoretical issues related to the discussion of idiomaticity in languages reflect different perspectives taken by researchers towards the phenomenon. Some scholars note that idiomaticity, even though quite spreading in languages, still lacks a more thorough treatment as a research subject. Thus Ginzburg (1979:74) claim that “some linguists collect idioms and classify them according to their style, origin or usage but little progress has been made to investigate them as a separate class of linguistic units”. It is often pointed out in the literature that there is no reliable criterion for distinguishing between word-groups and phrase logical units.

According to Ginzburg (1979:77), “the approaches of idiomaticity can be interlingual and intralingual. The interlingual approach involves a comparison of two different languages, whereas the intralingual approach of idiomaticity is more related with the point of view of native speakers”.

Another important aspect of theoretical discussions of idioms and other fixed expressions is that researchers who deal with this linguistic phenomenon employ different terminology. Moon (1998:2) employs the term *fixed expressions* which encompass frozen collocations, grammatically ill-formed collocations, proverbs, routine formulae, sayings, similes and idioms. While Grant and Bauer (2004:39) use the term *multi-word units* which subsume collocations and idioms.

### **1.3 What is an Idiom**

In general use, an idiom has several meanings. *The Random House Webster's College Dictionary* (1991:707) defines an idiom as:

“ An expression whose meaning is not predictable from the usual meanings of its constituent elements, as *kick the bucket*, *hang one's head*, etc. or from the general grammatical rules of a language, as *the table round for round the table*, and which is not a constituent of a larger expression of like characteristic”. Many linguists define an idiom as an expression which is fixed and cannot be understood literally. Jackson (1988:106) points out that the feature of fixity implies inability of an idiom to undergo any changes; however, at least some grammatical changes are possible. For example, *let the cat out of the bag* can be changed into the passive *the cat has been let out of the bag* (ibid). Like Jackson (1988), Baker (1992:63) defines an idiom as a “frozen pattern of language which allows little or no variation in form and often carries meaning which cannot be deduced from its individual components”. Baker's assumption that fixity is one of the main features of idioms is supported by Fernando (1996:36), who claims that “salient criterion for defining idioms” is “invariance or restricted variation”. Hence, various transformations of idioms on grammatical and lexical levels are not allowed or are possible only in a restricted degree. For Strassler

, on the other hand, an idiom “is a relationship of more than one lexeme whose meaning is not derived from the meanings of its constituents and which does not consist of a verb plus an adverbial particle or preposition” (cited in Fernando 1996:13-14). This definition takes into account meaning as well as a syntactic form of idiom.

### **1.4 General Features of an Idiom**

Idioms are said to be fixed expressions and may be characterized according to their specific features. Different linguists suggest different characteristics of idioms. However, Fernando (1996) states that nearly the majority of linguists agree on the following features of idioms:

(1) *Compositeness*: idioms are commonly accepted as a type of multiword expressions. The less the possibility of replacing the words of an idiom, the stronger its status as a

word-like unit; hence, they need to be described by means of the descriptive procedures common both to the grammar and the vocabulary.

(2) *Institutionalization (conventionality)*: idioms are treated as conventionalized expressions.

(3) *Semantic opacity*: the meaning of the idiom is not the sum of its constituents. The idiom is often non-literal.

(4) *Lexical integrity (syntactic frozenness)*: idiomatic phrases cannot be altered; no other synonymous words can be substituted for any word in the phrase, and the arrangement of the words can rarely be modified.

(5) *Idioms cannot be created by false analogy* (Ball 1962:6). Jackson and Amvela (2001:67) emphasize that no grammatical changes are allowed in idiomatic expressions.

(6) *Figuration*: most idioms contain non-literal metaphorical meaning. According to Jakaitien(1980:98) this feature is often considered essential in distinguishing idioms from other complex terms.

(7) *Ambiguity*: since many idioms may have either literal or idiomatic meaning, they are considered ambiguous. In such cases, it is the context in which the idiom occurs that plays an important role in the reduction of this ambiguity.

(8) *Informality*: idioms are generally considered informal and rarely appear in formal contexts. However, Cowie (1996:xxxix) claims that idioms differ along the scale from formal to informal. In this respect, formal idioms, which reflect a distant relationship and are more associated with an official setting, are said to suggest a serious or elevated tone. Informal idioms, however, reflecting intimate relationship and domestic setting, tend to convey an easy and relaxed attitude.

The features surveyed above are usually seen as essential in distinguishing between idioms and non-idioms. However, most linguists agree that these features are not true of all idioms. In addition, not all idiomatic expressions are metaphorical, informal or completely fixed.

### **1.5 Functions of Idioms:**

Newmark (1988:104) states that:

An idiom is a kind of 'extended' metaphor and the purpose of metaphor is basically twofold: referential and pragmatic. The referential purpose is to describe a mental process or state, a concept, a person, an object, a quality or an action more comprehensively and concisely than is possible in literal or physical language.

The pragmatic purpose, on the other hand, is to "appeal to the senses, to interest, to please, to delight, to surprise. The first purpose is cognitive, whereas the second is aesthetic" (ibid.). The expressive function is considered to be the most important function of idioms.

In his research, Fernando (1996:15) points out that "Strassler's study is treated as the first major work to appear on the functions of idioms, where he took into consideration a number of socially significant factors such as social status, age, education, and profession". However, Fernando makes a strong claim that the three language functions identified by Halliday (1996) and their relation to idiomaticity are more accurate than Strassler's description. A brief survey of Halliday's distinction between interpersonal, relational and ideational idiomatic expressions is presented below.

#### ***(1) Interpersonal idiomatic expressions***

According to Halliday, "interpersonal idioms fulfill an interactional function" (cited in Fernando 1996:73). Consider the following examples:

- Literal idioms: *Believe (you) me. I would not worry.*
- Semi-literal idioms: *Are you deaf? Are you blind?*

· Pure idioms: *Has the cat got your tongue? It's raining cats and dogs.*

According to Halliday, "such expressions are discourse oriented as they imply preceding context even as citation items.

Interpersonal idiomatic expressions fulfill two functions: either interactional through expressing greetings and farewells (*good morning*), directives (*let's face it*), agreement (*you are telling me*), eliciting opinions (*what do you think*), and rejections (*come off it*), or they characterize the message; as such, they have very important pragmatic functions in a language.

## (2) Relational idiomatic expressions

The main function of relational idiomatic expressions is the connective one; they are helpful in achieving both cohesion and coherence within a given text.

### (3) Ideational idiomatic expressions

According to Fernando (1996:74), ideational idioms signify the content of the message which includes

- actions (*mess about with*),
- events (*have blood on one's hand*),
- situations (*be in a pickle*), people and things (*a man about town*),
- attributes (*as green as grass*),
- evaluations (*turn back the clock*) and
- emotions (*green with envy*).

## 2. NUMBER SYMBOLISM

### 2.1. The Bible as a common source of number symbolism for Christians

Numbers are in the things. Numbers are objective properties of the things, what it means that they are the secret essence of all things. Only the names of numbers and their symbols are created (Bischoff, 2002, 11). According to Mossison (2003, 169), the most popular numbers in the world are two, three, and five. The reasons for the choice of one or another number lie in the deepest cultural layers of the nation. Besides, a favourite number influences people's daily lives (Morrison, 2003, 169). "To the ancients, as well to many moderns of a mystical bent, numbers had meanings beyond their mathematical characteristics" (Ferber, 2007, 142). In Europe the number symbolisms flourished in the Middle Ages. Medieval number symbolism emerged from two sources. First source is antiquity, especially an ancient Greek culture, where the exploration of the meaning of numbers was especially significant and number mysticism was associated with the development of mathematics (Lempiainen, 2001, 26). A whole cosmology was developed by the Pythagoreans. "Both the Hebrews and the Greeks used their alphabet as their written numeral system, with the result that words acquired numerical values" (Ferber, 2007, 142). The second important source of the concept of symbolic meaning for Europe was the Middle East and especially the Bible, which was the base for the views of Christianity teachers while adapting them to the ancient interpretations (Lempiainen, 2001, 26). Thus, in many cultures numbers are associated with the Bible and can be regarded as common universal symbols for Christians, so for the English people. In the following paragraphs of this section numbers from one to ten are going to be described in connection with the Bible.

**Number one.** One expresses something what happens only once. It can also represent diminishing of something or lack of something (Lempiainen, 2001, 38).

According to the Bible, God created the world on the first day. Therefore, one is the number of creation. Its most important features are creativeness and care for the world (2001, 39). In the Indo-European languages the numeral characterizing number one also

describes the features of the object to be as an integrated whole. Indo-European concept of God is Pantheistic, there is one and only deity that embraces everything and it is the explanation of its ability to represent abundance of Gods, the worlds and living beings, its reflections..

**Number two.** Two embodies antipode of the first (Bischoff, 2002, 32). Indo-European concept of one splits into two. Uniformity blends with the opposition as “I” and “not-I” (inside and outside) are opposed. This is reflected in the Indo-European numeral two: root dv (or tv), which is the basis of all of its forms and means separation and confrontation. Besides, the root which sounds the same is used to form second person pronouns: du, tu etc (2002, 31). This number may have positive and negative meaning. It can be considered as evil number because it destroys the unity and goodness which is based on this unity. In the Biblical story of the Fall opposites are shown which arise from the destruction of the unity. Opposite of good is evil, man and woman relationship becomes a quarrel, death becomes opposite to life.

**Number three.** Human life has three stages: birth, life, and death. A family consists of father, mother and a child. The popular example is the Christian triad of Joseph, Mary and Jesus. In the Christian countries three is known as the number of perfection. God is expressed in trinity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Christ resurrected on the third day, and three women came to his grave. In Christian worship some phrases are repeated three times. A person is immersed in water or water is poured three times. These replications can be regarded as the symbol of the Holy Trinity.

**Number four.** Four is the smallest number that can be divided into pairs. It is also the first to raise the number of degrees (2x2) (Lempiainen, 2001, 91). A square and a cross and the cube associated with it symbolise not only perfection, but also peace, strength and stability. In a number of cultures a square and rectangular cross represented four parts of the world as well as the world and the universe. In the Bible “four heavenly fires” and “four parts of the world” represent all four directions.

**Number five.** It is the symbol of a human being. The line connecting the head with a human figure with outstretched arms and legs form the icon (Bruce-Mitford, 1999, 102). The numeral system starts from five: there are five fingers on the one hand, and when we count the fingers of both hands, we obtain the sacred number ten (Lempiainen, 2001, 114). Number five is considered the number of marriage. Jesus’ saying about the ten girls, five of which have been wise, and five silly, represents the wedding symbol as well. In the New Testament, number five is mentioned in the parable about servants who were entrusted money, one of which received five talents and he is the one who performs the task best of all.

**Number six.** In the Old Testament the number six is connected with creation. Man was created on the sixth day, but the number six also meant the power of God which is greater than human’s power. When God looked at his created world God saw that all is well. Thus, six is considered the number of perfection and harmony. At the wedding Jesus while turning water into wine used six stone vessels, which were intended for washing. Jesus also mentions six works of mercy, as foundation for life assessment. The six works include: to feed a hungry, to give water to a thirsty, to shelter a homeless, to dress a naked and to visit patients and prisoners (2001, 139).

**Number seven.** The seven most frequently used number of both Christian and non-Christian cultures. It is possible to write a thick book only about this number. The number seven expresses perfection. In the Old Testament we can find this number 255 times. For example, the God completes the work of creation on the seventh day of the week. Also, the number seven in the Old Testament relates to humility and apology.

When Jacob met his brother Esau, he knelt in front of him and bowed to the ground seven times.

**Number eight.** Eight in Christianity is considered as the number of fulfilment, resurrection and the coming. The eighth "day of the week" as Christ's Resurrection Day became the symbol of Eternal Life or the beginning of peacefulness, but it also was identified with the Last Judgment. Therefore, eight, as the number of eternity, covered the opposite meaning: those who committed serious crimes suffer in the flames of eighth circle of Hell (2001, 197). Eight, as the number of rebirth and new life, was established in the Old Testament's story about the flood. Eight people survived with the help of Noah's Ark (Lempiainen, 2001, 207).

**Number nine.** Nine symbolises the end, fulfilment and becoming perfect. In Christianity this number is best known as cosmic number of angels. There are mentioned nine angels' choirs, and in the church art angels are usually divided into groups of three (2001, 217). The number nine is an image of the three worlds (earth, heaven and hell). For Christians, it is a sacred figure obtained by three repeated three times. In proverbs, comparison is often strengthened by comparing the numbers one and nine. We can compare using these numbers vice-versa. For example, ugliness is evident when nine bad things are opposed to one..

**Number ten.** According to the decimal system the number ten symbolises a return to the unit, the new beginning of number sequence (Adomonis, 2008). Ten is the number of perfection. This interpretation was established because of the fact that ten is the sum of world's (four) and human being's (six) numbers. It is also the sum of number three (representing divine and Holy Trinity) and number seven (a human's number), and it is formed using the first and last characters of the counting system (1 and 0). Besides, the number ten is associated with the Ten Commandments (Lempiainen, 2001, 229).

## **2.2 Number symbolism in English culture**

Osipova states that preconditions of the formation of symbolic meanings of numbers in modern cultures, and as a result, languages are most clearly shown in Celtic civilization (Ocnнова, 2007, 275). Studying the most important works of Celtic literature and taking into account the data of contemporaries and description of preserved religious sites Osipova found that the numbers two, three, four, five, six, seven, and nine in the outlook of the Celts were endowed with one or more non-quantitative meanings. For example, the number six had a positive magical symbolism in Celtic culture. This conclusion was based on the description of the sacred rite of gathering mistletoe. The rite was happening on the sixth day of the lunar cycle (Ocnнова, 2007, 275). Although Morrison (2003, 169) mentions that the number three is the most popular among English people, there is an evidence that the English prefer the number seven more. According to Ferber (2007, 142) seven is extremely important number in western sense. seven is the number of days in the Hebrew week, there are seven visible planets: the Mercury, Moon, , the Sun, Mars, Venus , Jupiter, and Saturn. Thus, being at the heart of cosmological ideas (the seven planets, seven days of a week), the number seven is associated with perfection and versatility. That is why, in the Celtic mythological texts the number seven most frequently found in the description of space and time calculations. Besides, in the Celtic legends there are usually seven heroes. It also should be noted that the number seven in these situations usually has magic sense. An important proof of magical power of the number seven among the Celts is the presence of this number in the descriptions of Ireland. Ireland is considered the center of culture and science of the Druids - the most powerful and revered class of Celtic society. We know from the legends that the most significant, the divine wave of conquerors of

Ireland created seven lakes in the country. The magic power of the number seven is confirmed by the repeated use of the number in the timing of a significant or a magical event. According to the laws of Celtic mythology, a king, even if there were other legitimate candidates, could remain on the throne for seven years.

### **3- Methodology**

In consequence of the significance of linking the theory with practice, the study stretches the theoretical limits into workable ones by comprising this practical part.

#### **3.1 Selection of the sample**

This research is restricted to 40 students, females and males, from the first year department of laser engineering..The sample is EFL's learner. All learners are of age(19).These features will help to confirm the results of the study.

#### **The instruments**

##### **3.2 the place of the tests**

The administration of the tests was done in University of Technology, department of laser engineering.

##### **3.3 Test application**

The tests were administered two times on two days because it has 2 stages.

##### **3.4 Test Reliability and Validity**

The pre-test and the post-test were handed to experts in linguistics and ELT to confirm its reliability and validity. The specialist' approval is attached.

##### **3.5 Test of the research**

This test deals with idioms that are derived from numbers. Many idioms pertaining to the topic of the study have been meticulously chosen and taught to the sample students. The test was constructed to determine the capability of the sample syntactically, semantically and contextually. The total mark for test is 100. The questions are gap filling, complete sentence and multiple choices. This test was performed in two stages, namely: the pre-teaching test stage and the post teaching test stage.

##### **3.6 Statistical tool**

The subsequent statistical formula have been used in analyzing the results of the study

$\frac{\text{Partial number of students}}{\text{Total number of students}} \times 100$

##### **3.7 Experiment application**

The experiment started on March 16 and lasted for three weeks (one day a week).At the first day ,the pre- test was applied suddenly .The questions were handed over to the learners ,the researcher is explained the general information about the test, then the task for the learners was to answer the questions. At last the answer papers were gathered and scored to get the results. At the second week the researcher gave the students a comprehensive lesson about the subject .It begins with reading comprehension, the learners read a passage which is full of idioms from numbers. The researcher explained carefully all details, their meaning, their using and the relation of idioms and texts. After discussing the text, the students were asked some reading comprehension questions about the text, they were asked to find the idioms from the text and to give example or a sentence containing idioms from numbers of their own. The students were well prepared for the post-test. At the last week, the post- test papers were delivered to the students. The idioms used in this test are different from those used in the previous one. The answer sheets were collected and corrected to get results.

### **3.8 Discussion of the result**

The statistical analysis of the results shows that the students' achievement in the post-test (75% passed and 25% failed) is better than their achievement in the pre-test (85% failed and 15% passed). The results also indicate that this experiment turns to demonstrate significantly more learning effects for teaching idioms and training the students to acquire those expressions. The results show that the sample's failure of the pre-test because it has no clue about the subject, furthermore, the students tried to interpret idioms literally and depend on meaning of parts of idioms.

The sample of the post-test has to know the meaning of the idioms first and then looking for its equivalents in a particular context. The essence of their treatment didn't allow them to neglect the target idioms from numbers were presented. The factors that led to the result obtained from the present study are: firstly the learning style used in teaching idioms is useful in learning and remembering these idioms, secondly, training and practice in idioms demand the students to think and communicate and to exploit their stock of knowledge and experience, thirdly, the teacher could also be an influencing factor. The teacher's interest in idioms and knowledge of second language could be motivating. The results of pre-test and post-test are in following tables and charts.

The Pre and the post-test (pass)

No.	The pre test	The post test
1.	60	80
2.	25	65
3.	10	45
4.	35	60
5.	40	65
6.	60	80
7.	35	65
8.	20	60
9.	40	70
10.	70	85
11.	40	60
12.	45	75
13.	40	65
14.	30	60
15.	25	75
16.	55	80
17.	40	65
18.	25	70
19.	30	65
20.	70	85
21.	35	75
22.	15	40
23.	30	60
24.	35	75
25.	25	60
26.	20	40
27.	20	70

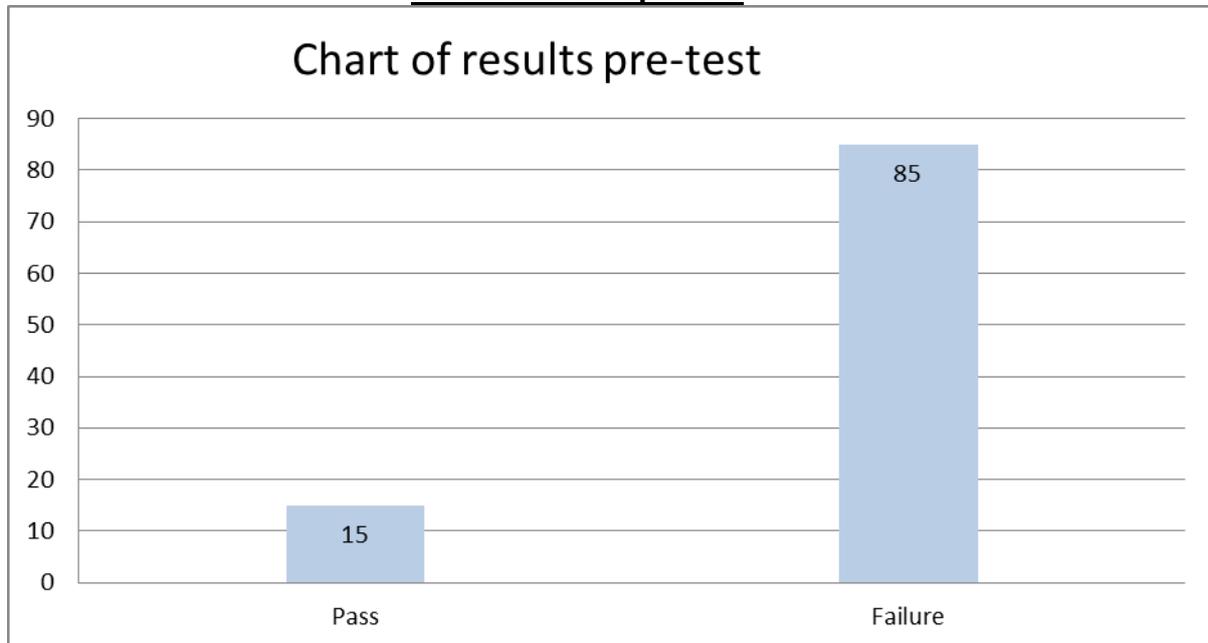
28.	15	45
29.	20	45
30.	45	70
31.	15	40
32.	35	60
33.	25	65
34.	20	40
35.	55	80
36.	15	45
37.	30	65
38.	25	45
39.	45	65
40.	20	45
Total: 40	6	34

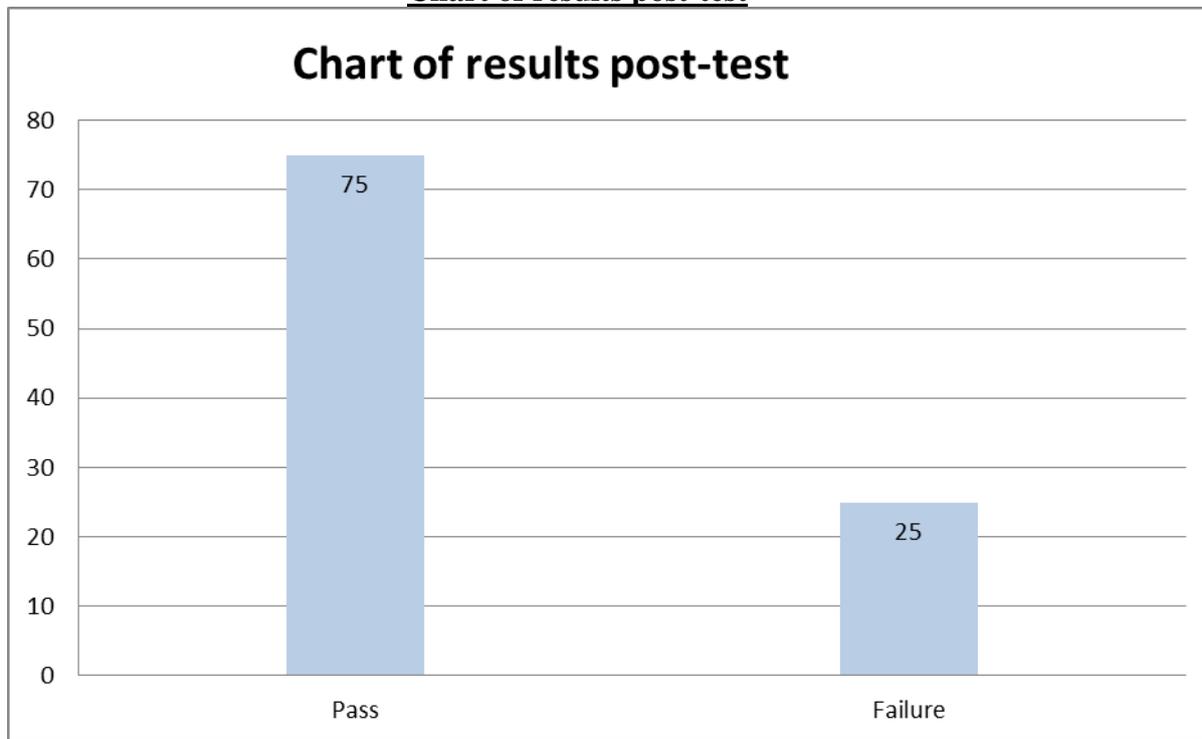
The Pre and the Post-test (failure)

No.	The pre test	The post test
1.	60	80
2.	15	60
3.	10	40
4.	40	60
5.	40	65
6.	60	80
7.	35	65
8.	20	60
9.	45	70
10.	70	85
11.	45	65
12.	45	75
13.	40	65
14.	30	60
15.	25	75
16.	55	80
17.	40	65
18.	25	70
19.	30	65
20.	70	85
21.	35	75
22.	15	40
23.	30	60
24.	35	75
25.	25	60
26.	20	40
27.	20	70
28.	15	45
29.	20	45
30.	45	70

31.	15	40
32.	35	60
33.	25	65
34.	20	40
35.	55	80
36.	15	45
37.	30	65
38.	25	45
39.	45	65
40.	20	45
Total: 40	30	10

**Chart of results-pre-test**



**Chart of results post-test**

### **3.9 Conclusions**

The conclusions obtained in the light of the results gained by this study are:

- 1- At semantical, syntactical and vocabulary level of language, Idioms from numbers play a vital role in the process of teaching English for students, moreover, linguistic skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are highly developed through practicing these idioms in the lecture.
- 2- Students weakness in recognizing and producing idioms from numbers mainly could be attributed to their limited and insufficient awareness of using experience in this one and to the inadequate attention that has been given in the universities.
- 3- The students' performance in recognizing idioms from numbers is better than their performance in producing them.
- 4- As for teaching English, the task of the teacher is easier due to the fact that the lecture involving this type of idioms is pleasant and motivating.
- 5- The students start to understand the importance of the context and its major role in the process of learning the language.

### **3.10 Recommendations**

According to what is mentioned in the previous section, the following recommendations are put forward:

- 1- Teachers and learners are recommended to practice how to use idioms in general and idioms from numbers in real situations, whether interviews, dialogues and any cultural activities since these activities encourage the learners to express themselves in all different communicative situations.
- 2- Idioms in general including idioms from numbers should be included within materials designed.
- 3- As a result for what is mentioned previously, teachers should not strict themselves to teach the text material only, they will be appreciated if they involve the learners in various kind of interactional classroom activities.

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Appendix I  
Pre-test Question Sample

Name.....

score.....

Assessing Students abilities in understanding the meanings of idioms from numbers  
Have you ever received test about Idioms from numbers?

- Yes
- No

*I appreciate your response. I am seeking to know your understanding of idioms from numbers. Thank you for agreeing to take this survey. The survey is being done by A.L. Yasien M. Taher . The purpose of the survey is to collect data .All of the answers you provide in this survey will be kept confidential. No identifying information will be provided to the department of Laser Engineering. The survey data will be reported in a summary only and will not identify any individual person.*

This survey will take about 30 minutes to complete. Try this quiz to check your understanding of English idioms from numbers.

**Q1/ Read the following passage carefully, then find the meaning of the words written in bold.**

**To Go Fishing, Or Not to Go Fishing**

For some people, fishing is so enjoyable that it puts them **in seventh heaven**. For others, fishing is a good time to relax and catch **forty winks**. I'm **of two minds** about it .**At first sight**, fishing seems like fun. But, **on second thought**, I just don't like to handle a fish when I catch it .To many people who like fishing, it's **second nature** to look at a river or a lake and know where the fish are. They have a **sixth sense** that helps them do this .soon they're catching fish, while I'm still trying to put the small worm on the hook.

**in seventh heaven =**

**forty winks =**

**of two minds =**

**At first sight =**

**on second thought =**

**Q2/ Circle the word or phrase that helps explain the meaning of the idiom in each sentence.**

1.If something is **second to none**, it's

a. the worst

b.only second best

c.the best

2. if you take **forty winks**, you

a. have a short sleep

b.go out for lunch

c. go out for an hour

3.if you're **of two minds** about something, you're

a. very pleased

b. unsure

c. very sure

4. if Helen's **in seventh heaven**, she's

- a. feeling very sick                      b. very happy                      c. un happy

5. Mark was **on cloud nine**.

- a. he was sleeping                      b. he got the lottery                      c. he was sad

6. Liza has a **sixth sense** for directions.

- a. trouble                      b. special feeling                      c. bad feeling

7. Learning to golf is **second nature** to some people.

- a. very pleased                      b. difficult                      c. very easy

8. The commander told the officers that the **zero hour** for the attack was at 0400.

- a. the sleeping time                      b. the lunch time                      c. the critical time

9. Be careful of Marten. He's **two-faced** and will tell people your secrets.

- a. trustworthy                      b. disloyal                      c. helpful

10. Exactly why that decision was made is the **sixty-four thousand dollar question**.

- a. very pleased                      b. difficult                      c. very easy

### Appendix (II)

#### Post- test question Sample

Name:..... score .....

**Q1/ Complete each sentence with an idiom from the box.**

<b>At first sight</b>	<b>on second thought</b>
<b>forty winks</b>	<b>Second nature</b>
<b>in seventh heaven</b>	<b>second to none</b>
<b>of two minds</b>	<b>sixth sense</b>
<b>on cloud nine</b>	<b>six of one, half a dozen of other</b>
	<b>to put two and two together</b>

1. \_\_\_\_\_, I thought the price was a bargain, but now I'm not sure.

2. Arthur never needed piano lessons. For him, playing was just \_\_\_\_\_.

3. American jeans are the best in the world. They're \_\_\_\_\_.

4. Hiroshi is \_\_\_\_\_ about whether he wants to continue school or get a job.
5. \_\_\_\_\_, I've changed my mind, and I don't want the extra cheese .
6. Bert finally \_\_\_\_\_. He had forgotten to plug in the computer.
7. Avril has been \_\_\_\_\_ since she passed her exam.
8. Lin needed a short rest, so she took \_\_\_\_\_.
9. My \_\_\_\_\_ tells me that it's going to rain and that I'll need my umbrella today.
10. For me ,it's \_\_\_\_\_. We can go either for Chinese food or for Italian food.

**Q1/ Choose the most appropriate answer.**

1. Mr Bill is the only one in this office who \_\_\_\_\_ dip. He retired from the Army and then come to work with us.  
 a. second      b. third      c. double      d. twice
2. She wasn't prepared to answer the judge, so she felt behind the \_\_\_ ball.  
 a. seven      b. eight      c. one      d. nine
3. We think she got that new shirt through the \_\_\_\_\_-finger discount.  
 a. two      b. ten      c. five      d. four
4. The committee was angry at John because he gave his \_\_\_\_\_-baked ideas.  
 a. second      b. third      c. double      d. half
5. Army mission is to \_\_\_\_\_ in on enemy artillery positions.  
 a. three      b. zero      c. one      d. six
6. During the crisis last year, this factory was in operation \_\_\_\_\_-four seven.  
 a. seven      b. eight      c. twenty      d. nine
7. We don't need his \_\_\_\_\_-twenty hindsight now .  
 a. twenty      b. seven      c. one      d. thirty
8. If your computer is giving you problems, that makes \_\_\_\_\_ of us.  
 a. four      b. eight      c. two      d. ten
9. I didn't want the meeting to end until I'd put in my \_\_\_\_\_ cents worth.  
 a. three      b. two      c. one      d. nine
10. The manager says, " I want the report on my desk now " Subordinate says, " \_\_\_\_\_-four that, Sir."  
 a. seven      b. zero      c. one      d. ten

We,undersigned,have taken knowledge of question paper of pre-test and post-test which is being made and submitted to us by A.L Yasien M.Taher,consequently,we certify their validity and reliability to be used as test for measuring student skills in language regarding the topic of the study" idioms from numbers".