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The Impact of Blogging on the Production of Idioms in Academic EFL Environment

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To my family

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List of Abbreviations

EFL/ESL -English as a Foreign/Second language

TEFL/ TESOL-Teaching English as a Foreign/Second language

EEP- English Enhancement Program

SPSS-Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

CALL-Computer Assistant Language Learning

Abstract

This study investigates the effect of blogging on idiom production in an academic EFL setting. Blog as a motivating and user-friendly writing tool, which provides various options such as uploading pictures and commenting, was considered as a suitable tool for writing assignments aimed at enhancing idiom production. Due to its interactive nature, blogging was assumed to be a proper means for this purpose.

Twenty one participants of the study were the newly enrolled students of the American University of Armenia with TOEFL iBT score mean of 74.5. These students were enrolled conditionally provided they take the EEP course and raise their language proficiency level during the course. Convenient sampling approach was used, i.e. the participants were divided to two groups of morning and evening shifts due to their personal schedules and priorities. Quantitative data were obtained through pre and post tests. The data were analyzed through SPSS software package, via Mann-Whitney U Test and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. The qualitative data were obtained through a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview which were analyzed descriptively. Results obtained from the data analysis indicated that blogging had positive effect on the production of idioms.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief description of the issues related to the present research introducing the problem, significance of the study, research questions and the structure of the study.

The main focus of this study is the production of idioms via blogging. Blog's specifications were assumed to be effective and motivating for producing the newly learned idioms. This study offers a new approach toward idiom teaching and learning specifically the production of idioms.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Research on idiom acquisition reveals that the most neglected area of idiom learning is the production of idioms (Sprenger, 2003). This is mainly because of the low competence of idiom knowledge of EFL teachers and also the limited text books which are well tailored to idiom production (Zyzik, 2009). Idiom is one of the most difficult areas of psycholinguistics and applied linguistics (Sprenger, 2003). Fixedness, level of formality and proper context are those criteria that make idiom learning challenging for non native speakers (Sprenger, 2003). On the other hand, idioms are everywhere and being able to use idioms grammatically correctly, in proper context and level of formality, are some of the important factors which may naturalize the language of EFL learners. Because of a lower level of linguistic competence in the target language, L2 learners are at a distinct disadvantage in understanding of L2 figurative expressions, yet they will meet idioms in all forms of discourse (Cooper, 1999).

Many L2 learners tend to omit idioms from their language to stay on the safe side. On the other hand, native speakers who have experienced breakdown in communications with non-natives tend to purify their language from idioms (Zyzik, 2009). This omission causes a big gap

between speeches of non-native and native. Cooper (1999) believes that although understanding and producing of idioms are difficult areas for EFL/ ESL learners, it is crucial for them to be prepared for the challenges, since idioms occur very frequently in both spoken and written languages. Lack of awareness and conceptual correctness in using idioms are significant even in discourse of the best L2 learners who have a high degree of verbal fluency (Irujo, 1986).

1.2 Significance of the Study

Having reviewed some literature on idiom learning processes and strategies, it becomes apparent that there is limited number of studies and research done in this area. Any available research and empirical studies of about last 20 years was used to shape a solid understanding of the gaps and needs of idiom learning. According to Kellerman (1983) and Irujo (1986) most of the research investigated the acquisition of idioms in L1 setting while L2 idiom learning is either ignored or less studied.

According to Boers et al. (2004) "figurative idioms were neglected before the1990's in EFL curriculum. Language was considered as a dichotomy of grammar rules and individual words. Idioms had no special place in this dichotomy". In addition, Wray (2000) maintains that one important component of successful language learning is the mastery of idiomatic forms of expressions, including idioms (Komur & Cimen, 2009).

However, Sprenger (2003) mentions that the majority of the related studies have been done about the comprehension of idioms, but only few studies have been devoted to the production of idioms. Perceiving and producing idioms are the most difficult areas for L2 learner (Sadeghi, et al. 2010). "Idiomatic expressions are culture-specific" (Qualls & Harris, 1999, p.142; Wu, n.d.) and since they are primary means of expressing positive and negative attitudes (Cermak, 2001, p.13 cited in Philip, 2007) omitting them for both natives and non-natives may cause unnatural interaction. Therefore, for the mastery of L2, comprehension and production of

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daily used idioms are vital. Thus research on the best strategies of acquiring idioms is of a great importance. Idiom is an essential part of knowing a language and, thus, should be systematically incorporated into L2 curricula (Zyzik, 2009).

Since the investigation should be done on the regular bases and also because students might have the need of re-editing and receiving multidimensional comments, writing tasks were linked to blogging. Blogging itself is motivating to encourage students to write on regular basis. Receiving comments on behalf of teacher or/and peers may also add to the level of motivation and joy of creativity (Murray, et al. 2007). Few studies have examined the role of blogs in learning process of EFL students, though Blogs are well tailored for keeping journals and writing production (Ray & Hocutt, 2006).

Thus, the outcome of this study may help EFL teachers and curriculum designers change their approach to idiom teaching and learning process specifically in producing the idioms, and encourage the learners and teachers to integrate idioms via blogging as an attractive writing technology.

1.3 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Is there any difference in the improvement of idiom production when it is practiced through blogging vs. emailing?
2. What are the students' attitudes towards the production of idioms via blogging?

1.4 The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of four more chapters:

Chapter 2: In this chapter the related literature on the theoretical background of variables, i.e.

production of idioms and blogs is discussed.

Chapter 3: In this chapter the methodology of this research, i.e. setting of the study, participants,

materials, instrumentation and the procedure of data collection is described.

Chapter 4: This chapter provides quantitative and qualitative data analysis, collected from data

collection to provide answers to the proposed research questions.

Chapter 5: In this chapter the summary of the findings from the data collection, as well as the

answers for the proposed research questions are discussed. The delimitations, limitations,

pedagogical implications of the study and the recommendations for further research are also

provided.

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

Introduction

The aim of the current literature review is to discuss different viewpoints and arguments about idiom acquisition, particularly the production of idiom, the necessity and challenges of idiom learning in EFL setting. Furthermore, findings, advantages and disadvantages of the related literature about blog are discussed. Based on the review of literature, blog assumed an interactive writing tool, which may help EFL learners improve their production of idiom.

2.1 Idiom

2.1.1 What is an idiom?

Types and functions of idiomatic expressions have a wide range of variety therefore giving a certain and crystal clear definition is not easy. However, almost all researchers who studied idioms agree upon the idea that "an idiom is a figurative expression that usually can be interpreted literally but that takes a non-literal meaning when used in a specific context" (Cain, Oakhill &Lemmon, 2004, p. 66). In addition, idioms are standardized expressions and the general meanings of their components usually do not have tight correspondence with the expression's combined meaning (Philip, 2007).This "semantic anomaly" (Philip, 2007, p.1) is basically the result of the fact that idioms are not built word by word. They exist in the language as a single chunk, and each word of an idiom is not necessarily used for its main and common meaning.

Idioms in every language have social, cultural, historical, political or philosophical foundation and are frequently used in written and spoken languages of native speakers (Sadeghi, et al. 2010).They occur in spoken and written languages very frequently, thus language learners

should be aware of the necessity of learning idioms. However, perfect mastering of all frequent idioms is almost impossible (Hoffman, 1984; Irujo, 1986b cited in Cooper, 1999). On the other hand, McCarthy (cited in Simpson & Mendis, 2003, p.146) maintains that "idioms should be looked at as communicative devices rather than as mere quirks of the language."

A corpus based study by Simpson and Mendis (2003) shows that idioms occur in academic speech very frequently. They argue that "the role of idioms cannot be ignored, since they perform several functions particularly relevant to the unique discourse features of academic speech genre "(Simpson and Mendis, 2003).According to Cermak (cited in Philip2007, p.3) idioms are the primary means of expressing positive and negative attitudes. They make the language colorful and enrich it as icing for a cake does (Boers, et al. 2004).

Fernando (1996), McCarthy (1998) and Moon (1998), noted that idiom is a multiword expression, which is categorized in three criteria: fixedness, institutionalization, and semantic opacity (O'keeffe and Farr, 2003). According to O'keeffe and Farr (2003), the first criterion refers to the fixedness of the idiomatic expressions and their proportions that usually cannot be easily replaced. Institutionalization of idioms as the second criterion refers to the conventional meaning of the idiom that is comprehendible in different places. Semantic opacity of an idiom as the third criterion indicates how much the literal meanings of the constituent parts are far from the overall figurative meaning. These criteria make idiom comprehension a challenging task for EFL/ESL setting (O'keeffe and Farr, 2003). However, there are multiple factors that mark idioms as one of the most difficult areas of psycholinguistics and applied linguistics.

2.1.2 Main challenges of learning idioms in EFL

Comprehending and producing idioms are the most difficult areas for L2 learners (Sadeghi, et al. 2010). In addition, Cooper (1999) argues that although understanding and producing of idioms are difficult areas for EFL/ ESL learners, it is crucial for them to be

prepared for the challenge since idioms occur very frequently in both spoken and written languages.

Challenges of the comprehension of idioms are mainly connected with the loose relation of their literal and figurative meanings (Sadeghi, et al. 2010). Idioms are expressions that do not necessarily meet their components' literal meanings, and this provides a major difficulty in learning idioms. Johnson-Laird (Ifill, 2002) perfectly illustrates the problem as follows: "If natural language had been designed by a logician, idioms would not exist". The farther the literal meaning is from the figurative meaning (opacity), the harder it is to comprehend the figurative meaning (Sadeghi, et al. 2010). This fact makes the comprehension of idioms a challenging task for the L2 learners.

However, opacity or transparency of idioms is not effective on production of the idioms (Angel, 2008). The main challenge in production of idioms is the formality of the idioms and lack of awareness of EFL/ESL learners is an obstacle which discourages them from using idioms. Idioms are register-specific linguistic features (O'keeffe and Farr, 2003). Lack of awareness and conceptual correctness in using idioms are significant even in discourse of the best L2 learners who have high degree of verbal fluency (Irujo, 1986). She believes that even if EFL learners master the usage of idioms there is always a problem of identifying the right place and right time to use idioms. Formality of idioms varies from the most informal slangs (you got it), collocations and phrasal verbs to the most formal phrases (run the risk) (Irujo, 1986).

Providing context is vital for learning meanings of idioms, however, their socio-pragmatic and interactional features are also very critical to be aware of. In other words, learners should learn when it is appropriate to use a particular idiom (Simpson and Mendis, 2003). Designing motivating and useful activities for idiom comprehension and use is another challenge for teachers who urge teaching idioms (Zyzik, 2009).

2.1.3 Learning process of idioms

According to the *direct access hypothesis* (Gibbs1980, 1984; Schweigert, 1986 cited in Cooper, 1999), native speakers of English rarely think about the literal meaning of an idiom, but they infer and process its figurative meaning directly. Furthermore, Gibbs (1980) and Cooper (1999) claim that native speakers do not need to interpret the literal meaning of idiomatic expressions before their figurative meaning. However, this natural approach is not practical in EFL setting.

For EFL/ESL learners Zyzik (2009) suggests that idioms are best learned through exposure to authentic language, and teachers may take advantage of using natural language sources like TV, newspapers and even corpus search. She believes searching for proper examples may facilitate exposure to correct use of idioms and enhance comprehension. Some of the psychologists suggest that idioms are "long words" (Gibbs, 1994, 2002cited in Philip, 1999) therefore, they suggest the same process of vocabulary learning, i.e. exposure, comprehension, retention and production for idioms. In contrast, McCarthy (1998cited in Simpson & Mendis, 2003, p. 146) maintains that "idioms should be looked at as communicative devices rather than as mere quirks of the language. Therefore, in addition to vocabulary learning processes, interactive nature of idioms should be taken into consideration. On the other hand, Wray (1999, cited in Simpson & Mendis, 2003, p.421) state that "formulaic language benefits both comprehension and production, in part because such expressions appear to be stored and retrieved as holistic, unanalyzed chunks and thus contribute to economy of expression."

2.1.4 Comprehension and production of idioms

Idioms are basically non-literal and have syntactic constraints which cause anomaly in comprehension and production (Sprenger, et al. 2004). Comprehension and production of L2 idioms are difficult tasks for EFL learners, though they are very important and impossible to

ignore. Since idioms are in all forms of discourse, i.e. in daily conversations, movies, TV programs and news sources and any other sources that involve language, comprehension and production of idioms are challenging for EFL/ESL learners (Cooper, 1999).

As was argued by so many scholars a few decades ago, (Searle 1969 cited in Ortony, et al. 1978) "contribution of the context to infer the meaning of an idiomatic expression is usually essential". Therefore, in order to use idioms efficiently, high level of language proficiency is required for EFL/ESL learners (Boers, et al. 2004)

According to Cain, et al. (2004), familiarity, transparency, and context are three basic factors which play an important role in idiom comprehension. Research evidence reveals a strong association between text comprehension level and comprehension of transparent idiomatic expressions. However, researchers found that this is not the case for opaque idioms (Cain et al. 2004).

Results from the experiments carried out by Cacciari and Levorato (1999) illustrate the significant role of context and word meaning as two independent but interactive factors in idiom comprehension. According to the afore mentioned experiment, those idioms which are at least partly transparent are easier to comprehend than opaque idioms, because learners can use the meanings of components of the expression and infer the overall idiomatic meaning (Cacciari and Levorato, 1999).

Convincing results of various experiments done in different EFL environments with various L1 learners are almost the same, i.e. L1 plays a significant role in acquisition of identical idioms in L2, i.e. English (Yun & Youmei, 2006). "Acceptance, avoidance, or proper use of the second language idioms can sometimes depend on how close the idiom is to learners' native language" (Irujo, 1986a; Kellerman, 2000; Hare 2010,p.34). In contrast, Cooper (1999) argues

that referring to L1 idioms may not influence the comprehension of L2 idioms to EFL learners or it is dependent on their levels of foreign language proficiency.

When exposed to an expression, the hearer must first process the context to figure out the literal or figurative nature of the expression. Cooper (1999), Irujo (1986) and Ifill (2002) agree upon the idea that idioms are divided into two types transparent idioms, the syntactic structure of which is close to its literal meaning, and opaque idioms, the structure of which is disjoint from that of their literal meaning. However,the concepts of transparency or opacity of the idioms are personal and strongly depend on the learner's world knowledge and cultural background (Philip 2004). "Transparent idioms (e.g. "to give somebody the green light") are figurative expressions the meanings of which can be effortlessly derivable due to the crystalline connection between the literal meanings of the expressions and their idiomatic interpretations" (Boers & Demecheleer, 2001 cited in Doroodi and Hashemian, 2011).

Semantic transparency of an idiom facilitates comprehending and recalling of the idiom. If an idiom's components represent a real life situation and it is semantically close to the figurative meaning (make one's blood boil) comprehending and learning become much easier than in unreal situations (Philip 2007). According to the results of a study done by Cain et al. (2004) in a native English speaking elementary school, there is a tendency to recognize and comprehend the transparent idioms more often than opaque idioms. Furthermore, opaque idioms are difficult to comprehend from the context even if the students reported hearing those idioms before. These results may be relatively poorer in an EFL environment (Doroodi & Hashemian, 2011). On the other hand, in some of the most frequent idiomatic expressions the level of agreement is minor which makes the comprehension harder (Cooper, 1999).

Opaque idioms must be learned as a whole chunk, since the figurative meaning of the idiom cannot be inferred from its individual components. ''To be wet behind the ears'' has an

idiomatic meaning beyond the literal meanings of its components (''to be young and inexperienced''), example of a transparent idiom is ''to get away with murder.'' Its figurative meaning (''to escape punishment for something serious'') is inferable from the literal interpretation of the components (Doroodi and Hashemian, 2011).

When the learners do semantic analysis or derive meanings from context they comprehend the unfamiliar and unknown expressions easier. Thus, there is a relationship between reading or listening comprehension and the comprehension of the transparent idiomatic expressions. Cain, et al. (2004) in their study revealed that learners are not able to provide definitions for all of these items in isolation.

However, opacity minimizes the effectiveness of the context because the figurative meaning of an opaque idiom has nothing to do with its literal meaning, therefore, a context cannot provide the necessary hint for guessing the meaning. The information of opaque idioms might not be immediately apparent from the words in the phrases (e.g., ''to go to pot,'' ''to carry a torch'') and might not be sufficient to interpret the idioms accurately when presented alone. However, a supportive context might activate this knowledge. (Cain, et al. 2004)

According to Cain, et al. (2004), reading comprehension has a significant role in comprehending real transparent idioms while the same comprehension strategy has no effect on real opaque idioms in a native English speaking class. This fact may support the idea that opaque idioms are better to be learned differently from transparent idioms (Elkilic, 2008).The best way is learning them as a whole chunk or as a new vocabulary item, i.e. through introducing the figurative meaning and practicing it within the context, the idiom processing stages maybe activated in the learners' lexicon (Cain, et al. 2004). Bulut's (2004) maintains that "the type of idiom (formal, conversational, or slang) does not affect the comprehension of the idiom."

Comprehension as the building block of production is important to be taken into account. However, the level of transparency of idioms has no effect on ease or difficulty of their production. The process of producing idioms starts with the conceptual message and ends with an utterance of the idiomatic phrase that contains non-literal context. The listener may think and decide about the interpretation of the expression, whereas the speaker has an exact message which transfers to the listener within the idiomatic expression (Sprenger, et al.2004). ''Idioms may be special in their relationships to nonlinguistic concepts, but they are not special in the way they are produced in normal language use" (Sprenger, et al. 2004). Thus, Cacciari and Tabossi's (Sprenger et al. 2004) view on idiom comprehension (Configuration Hypothesis) is mirrored in speech production. If there is no interaction or negotiation of meaning the learners do not have enough opportunity of using idioms.

Problems with production are various but basically relate to limited exposure to L2. Production is the continuation of comprehension and retention which may be achieved through proper exercises. According to Cutting and Bock (1997) and (Sprenger, et al. 2004), idioms are stored as a whole on some level of processing.

Sprenger et al. (2004) argue that idioms are part of average native speakers' active knowledge and daily interaction. Idioms have special linguistic features but their processing is just like processing taking place in every single word. According to Sprenger et al. (2004), idioms have hardly been addressed in language production. Jackendoff (1995) and later Sprenger et al. (2004) believe that idioms are stored in the mental lexicon. In order to add an idiom to the mental lexicon, several processes take place. Storage, access and processing of idiomatic expressions are the stages of expanding idioms in mental lexicon (Sprenger et al. 2004). A component can serve a hint for processing the idiomatic expression. E.g. when the speaker remembers "bucket" may connect it to the lemma of bucket in the "kick the bucket" and as a

result the whole phrase "kick the bucket " may appear in mind and then in speech (Sprenger et al.2004).

A study carried out by Cooper (1999 cited in Bulut, 2004) reveals that production of idioms is related to their internal syntactic structure and their figurative meaning. Idioms are not used as frozen phrases moreover, they are syntactically analyzed. His study also reveals that idioms with similar figurative meanings tend to interfere with each other. The next result of this study is that during the production phase, the more transparent idioms are, the more likely they are to be taken literally and vice versa: the more opaque idioms are, the less is the risk of confusion with the literal meaning.

Bulut (2004, p. 115) maintains that "L2 learners seem to apply a heuristic model. Even when there is a match between L1 and L2, they encounter meaning first, treating similar idioms as false friends." While an idiom is activated, both figurative and lexical meanings are encountered at the same time, i.e. when the lexical presentation is available the figurative meaning might be recalled. Bulut's (2004, p.115) experiment revealed that "while processing the idiom, the participants seem to make use of the contextual clues more often than any other clues."

2.1.5 Idiom teaching materials in EFL classrooms

According to Cooper (1999), since incidental vocabulary acquisition has the same process of idiom acquisition, L2 idioms should be taught through contexts. Proper context may provide learners with guessing the meaning. Irujo 1986 (cited in Cooper, 1999) argues that factors that may affect the level of difficulty of an idiom are frequency of exposure and ease of production which are the most effective factors in processing of idioms. Cooper's (1999) study also reveals that most of the participants mentioned about ease of learning those specific idioms to which they had been exposed during their stay in the U.S.

Atai et al. (2004) defines idioms as subcategory of vocabulary and suggests that incidental vocabulary learning, i.e. acquisition of vocabulary via an indirect activity is proper for idiom learning. Sentence writing task is one of the activities that the research carried out by Atai et al. (2004) proved its effectiveness for retention and acquisition of idioms. In addition, Cacciari (cited in Cain et al. 2005) maintains that using contextual information is one of the crucial factors in children's acquisition of idiomatic meanings. In addition, "idioms should be presented in authentic contexts rather than in the contrived ones often found in textbooks or thought up by teachers" (O'keeffee, 2003,p. 438).

Before designing a task for idioms, the educator has to decide about "which level of proficiency is proper for idiom in their language?" and "which idioms to teach?"
In order to use idioms efficiently, high level of language proficiency is required for EFL/ESL learners (Boers, et al. 2004). Zyzik (2009) also supports this idea that learners should have good level of English proficiency to be able to comprehend and produce the selected idioms. Irujo (1986) suggests that to teach idiom, one should be determined to select the most useful idioms for the students. Some criteria for this purpose are: frequency, transparency, appropriateness, simplicity of form and vocabulary, similarity to first language idioms. However, frequency is only one of the main criteria when choosing idioms for many teachers (Liu, 2003cited in Zyzik, 2009). On the other hand, Zyzik (2009) argues that although this approach is very common for those teachers who are interested in teaching idioms, it can't be the best approach. She believes that usefulness of the selected idioms must also be taken into consideration. According to Liu's corpus analysis, some less frequent idioms such as "call it a day", used to mark the end of a class or meeting, are not classified in the most frequent idiom lists (Liu, 2003 cited in Zyzik, 2009) though they are very useful. Zyzik (2009) suggests that the student-generated idiom list might be also very useful to meet the students' needs and interests.

According to Irujo (1986), learning idioms is a difficult task, and also most of the materials and activities in EFL setting are inadequate. Most of the EFL teachers do not teach idioms and those who teach some idioms use materials or exercises that are not sufficient to enable the learners use the learned idioms (2009, Zyzik). About three decades ago Irujo (1986) mentioned that most of the ESL/EFL materials are limited to fill in the blanks or multiple choice activities which are not useful for active use of the idioms. Zyzik (2009) reports same problem in the current EFL/ESL materials. Zyzik (2009) suggests that teachers can rest assured that most vocabulary teaching strategies will be applicable to idioms as well. Zyzik (2009) believes that if the students keep the new learned idiom in their note books or journal, later they can share their examples and ask questions about their appropriate setting and usage. She also maintains that the best learning results are expected from those activities which facilitate comprehension and production simultaneously. Many productive activities in a systematic and repeated manner are required to convert unknown idioms to known. Lack of interest and motivation may distract learners from continuum learning.

According to Nippold & Martin, (1989 cited in Wu, 2008, p.5) "linguistic contextual information enhances adolescents' interpretation of idioms". Furthermore, "context-reduced language will be hard for readers to tolerate" (Brown, 2001 cited in Wu, 2008, p.5). Therefore, effective of learning the meaning of idioms and realizing their proper use for EFL students is to get exposed to meaningful contexts rather than learn them in isolation through memorization and drilling (Wu, 2008). According to Folse (2006), some educators were concerned that asking students to do superficial types of exercises such as filling in the blank exercises (multiple choices, true-false, or matching) comparing to writing original sentences would limit their level of knowledge. Through exercises like drilling, matching and fill in the blanks the learners would not be able to use their acquired idioms efficiently. "Hulstijn and Laufer (2001) would say that

fill-in-the-blank exercises induce less involvement than writing original sentences" (Folse 2006, p.286).

As mentioned above, sentence writing task is considered as a proper way for learning vocabulary and idioms thus, motivating the learners to use their language in writing becomes a fundamental factor for enhancing learning. Furthermore, Oxfort and Nyikos (1989) found that motivational level had the most powerful influence on reported use of language learning strategies (Rahimi et al.2004). Some researchers believe that reading activities accompanied by visuals will be more comprehensible (Wu, 2008) and according to some other researchers, sentence writing is proper to foster production of the idioms.

After comprehending idioms students should recall them in order to use them in proper time. Pictures are helpful specifically in recalling the idioms (Mayer cited in Wu, 2008). Furthermore, Wu (2008) believes that visuals should be stimulating and interesting and motivating to foster comprehension and retention of reading.

"Research suggests that forming a mental image of an idiom is a powerful tool for learning and further retention" (Zyzik, 2009, p.6). According to her, students can write dialogues using idioms or tell stories based on related pictures in order to promote output and creative language use. For this purpose students or their teacher can provide an image associated with each idiom. Zyzik (2009) suggests that images/pictures are more than simple entertainment for your students and finds images particularly effective for lower-proficiency learners or for idioms that have image-evoking potential. The author suggests that after exposure to the new idioms through context and helping the students infer their meanings, teachers should provide relevant exercises to facilitate retention of the learned idioms.

"Idioms can be taught from a discourse perspective rather than as isolated lexical items" (Simpson & Mendis, 2003, p.438). O'keeffee (2003) argues that the socio-pragmatic and interactional features of idioms should be emphasized rather than concentrated only on the immediate context. In addition, McCarthy (1998, p. 146 cited in O'keeffee, 2003, p. 421) believes that idioms are not used randomly or without motivation and argue that "they should be looked at as communicative devices rather than as mere quirks of the language". Lack of motivation and enthusiasm toward learning challenging concepts, such as idioms, might be amended by using modern and motivating teaching tools.

Computer-assisted language learning offers many user-friendly and motivating tools. EFL learners may develop their productive and receptive skills via technology since, from psychological point of view motivation may help to overcome the stress. Fishman (1984) maintains that "a crucial factor in motivation to learn a second language is its "socio-functional" validity" (Chastain, 1988, p.173). According to him, when the use of a language doesn't happen in "out of class" environment, learning the language loses its significance for the learners (Chastain, 1988).

2.2 Blogging

2.2.1 What is a blog?

According to Williams (2004,p.2) "blogs have emerged from early email lists and instant messaging communities as a means of informing a dedicated reader base about items of interest to the authors, news, and personal information." Blogs have more potential than e-mails because of their openness and interactive nature. Compared to e-mailing system blogs can reach out a wider audience and attract some comments (Williams, 2004).

"One can think of a blog as a Web based, multi-media publishing system, that is very low cost (often free), very easy to use, customizable in terms of look and feel, content, target

audience and hyperlinked to other content spread across the Internet" (Cameron, & Anderson, 2006).

2.2.2 Blogging as a tool for teaching

In the past few years, with the increasing use of computer technologies and internet all around the world, blog has become a popular online communicating environment (Fellner & Apple 2006; Yang, 2009 cited in Murray & Hourigan 2008). Murray, Hourigan & Jeanneau (2007) believe that blogging causes motivation which is an important issue. It may attract many learners and independent writers as well as TEFL/ TESOL experts.

"Blogging" as a modern and user friendly writing tool which provides online access to the written product is suitable to enhance creative writing and raise learners' enthusiasm. Blog writing compared to traditional writing tools like writing on paper or e-mailing the assignments has some privileges. It is a good tool for raising awareness about the product. It offers facilities such as drafting, generating ideas, structuring, micro and macro editing which make blogging a flexible writing tool. These specifications may have positive effect on writing (Carpenter & Slater, 2000; Murray, et al. 2007). Using spell-check, grammatical check and thesaurus are easier while blogging (Carpenter & Slater, 2000; Murray, et al. 2007).

According to Murray, et al. (2007) blogging provides easy access to learners' or their peers' pages which is an advantage in the learning process. This may provide some comments not only from teacher but also from the classmates or any anonymous blogger. This may raise the awareness about social nature of blogs and increase the sense of responsibility toward the product and enhance its quality. Furthermore, bloggers may revise their old entries to enhance the quality and this may cause more exposure to the language, self error correction which is constructive for the learning process.

2.2.3 Blog's social nature and its impact on learning

According to Jacobs (Williams, 2004, p. 233) "perhaps, the publication of one's personal thoughts for the public consumption of such a vast audience can be an uplifting and sometimes cathartic experience". Interactive and social nature of the blogs may encourage students to write more carefully. Freedom, creativity and less pressure in handing writing or ordinary e-mailing assignments without any controlling (Folse, 2006) are the most effective reasons that make blogging suitable to improve writing as a productive skill.

Arslan & Shahin-Kizil (2010) believe that blog writing raises students' awareness of having a real audience. Consequently, the learners are motivated to create a better product. By utilizing blogs students will take much more responsibility for their learning (Hsu, Wang, & Comac, 2008; Arslan & Shahin-Kizil, 2010) and develop a sense of autonomous learning, which, research has shown, increases success in writing (Sun, 2009; Arslan & Shahin-Kizil, 2010). All these possible opportunities related to feedback through blog use are supported by research (Dippold, 2009; Liou & Peng, 2009; Arslan & Shahin-Kizil, 2010).

According to Wang (2009, p.30) "weblogs, a thriving information sharing mechanism, have particularly stood out among asynchronous communication platforms in recent years. Weblogs (also called web logs or blogs) can be defined as a news- and journal-sharing platform, on which bloggers freely share their postings with readers from around the world".

2.2.4 Why blogging?

Integrating blogging in education has some advantages. Richardson (2010, p.8) defines Weblogs as "easily created, easily updateable web site that allows an author to publish instantly to the Internet from any internet connection". Blogs are easy to demonstrate inside or outside the class due to its user friendliness. "Blogs provide teachers with an efficient and cost-effective tool

which, if employed appropriately, present learners with an alternative means of self-expression in the online medium" (Murray & Hourigan, 2008, p.95). Richardson (2010) argues that blog writing can promote critical, associational and analogical thinking and also can encourage creative writing. He also believes that blog writing fosters social interaction. The author also believes that blog is proper for using newly-learned vocabulary and idioms, writing comments, opinions, or questions on daily news items or issues of interest.

"The findings of the study demonstrated that the students using blog software in their writing courses outperformed those who received only in-class writing instruction in such specific areas of writing as content and organization. Such a finding may empirically support the theoretical assumption that blogging enhances writing performance." (Campbell, 2003; Kennedy, 2003 cited in Arslan & Shahin-Kizil, 2010,p.194).

Richardson (2010) argues that blogs are effective educational tools because they are constructivist. Furthermore, a blog is an updateable Website that allows the writer to publish instantly and free of any charges. Encouraging the language learners to take the risk and employ newly learned aspects in their writing is not always promising with more traditional writing tools (Smith, 2008) such as papers or e-mails. A more motivating tool is needed to encourage the learners**.** "Blogging promotes critical literacy skills, including reading, writing, self-expression, reflection, and creativity" (Huffaker (2004); Ray & Hocutt, 2006, p.11).

Blogs are highly democratic forums for writing (Nelson and Fernheimer 3; Bloch and Crosby; Smith, 2008) and they encourage interactive communication and engagement with their audience (Ferdig and Trammel, 2000; Smith, 2008). For those learners who often feel uncomfortable with writing in academic setting, blogs provide a flexible and familiar platform because they may write and edit their writing at home using internet (Smith, 2008). "The open-forum quality of blogs defines them as especially democratic, connecting authors with larger

audiences engaged in vibrant, ongoing conversations" (Smith, 2008, p.40). Smith (2008) believes that blogs are not only suitable for writing and keeping journals, but are very convenient for interaction through conversation with teachers and classmates.

2.2.5 Blogs for educational purposes

Cameron & Anderson (2006) believe that "the lifelong learning potential inherent in blogs makes them attractive to education professionals." Richardson (2010) believes that blogs are proper for educational purposes because broad range of activities can be done in blogs. Different blog types, i.e. journal-type blog, class blog, shared blog, or students' individual blog according to him, are appropriate to use for academic purposes.

Findings of a research done by Arslan & Shahin-Kizil (2010,p.192) reveals that "blog integrated writing instruction is more effective than in-class writing instruction in that students in the experimental group improved their writing performance significantly more than those in the control group."

Blog links users together. Students can comment on a peer's posts or even work online to solve a common problem (Lohnes, 2003; Piontek, 2004; Ray & Hocutt, 2006). The EFL participants involved in a study, done by Zuwati (2009; Krish, 2011), managed to increase the level of confidence in using English in interaction through online forums. Especially those students who suffered from high stress level in a face-to-face communications demonstrate a much better performance using online forums. This is because online forums, including blogs, unlike face-to-face communication, reduce their level of anxiety along with enhancing as well as the language. The learners also confess that their consciousness in making mistakes is not as great as it is when they are involved in face-to-face communication using English (Zuwati, 2009; Krish, 2011).

However, commenting might be risky for teaching purposes. Wu (2006) believes that students may receive criticism for their written products that is an unproductive, harmful or even offensive consequence of blogging (Wu, 2006). A case study on blogging activities on thirty undergraduate Taiwanese students reveals that comments given by peers might be unbalanced and not constructive. This study suggests that the students are better to receive treatment on commenting otherwise as the findings reveals that the negative comments could be de-motivating for the learners (Wang, 2009).

2.3 Summary of the literature

Idioms are difficult areas of psycholinguistics and applied linguistics. An idiom is a figurative expression that usually can be interpreted literally but that takes a non-literal meaning when used in a specific context (Cain, Oakhill, Lemmon, 2004). Philip (2007) maintains that idioms are multi-word units and their learning process is similar to words. Idioms are mainly learned, recycled and used as grammatically independent phrases.

According to Zyzik (2009) most of the educators who want to integrate idioms in their classes are interested in selecting the most common or useful idiom. They design separate section in their lesson plans and do not integrate idiom learning and using in other class activities which is not the best way of teaching idioms. Therefore, while selecting the proper idioms, usefulness a long with frequency should be taken to account.

Opacity and transparency of the idioms play a significant role in the comprehension of idioms though they have no impact on the production of the idioms (Angel, 2008).Opaque idioms must be learned as a whole chunk, since the figurative meaning of the idiom cannot be inferred from its individual words' meanings of the expressions and their idiomatic interpretations (Doroodi and Hashemian, 2011).

Some challenges like formality and grammatical fixedness of the idioms may discourage the EFL learners of using idioms. However, motivation is an important factor in encouraging the learners to learn challenging items like idioms. Experts ensure about the high level of motivation that CALL provides inside and outside of classroom (Murray, Hourigan and Jeanneau, 2007).

Blog as one of the most user-friendly tools of CALL is suitable and attractive for students and teachers which facilitates writing, attaching pictures and commenting (Murray, Hourigan and Jeanneau, 2007). Its social nature also raises the awareness of the blog writers. According to the reviewed   literature blog writing compared to traditional writing tools like writing on paper or e-mailing the assignments has some privileges. Blog is a good tool for raising awareness about the product and is able to link the learners together (Cameron, & Anderson, 2006).

Review of the literature reveals that there is a gap in production of idioms in EFL settings and the main reason, as many researchers mention, is the lack of proper and well tailored exercises for this purpose (Zyzik, 2009). The social nature of the blogs may raise the awareness of the users in an environment that editing of the mistakes for several times is possible. Recalling idioms via picture was studied and proved its effectiveness for learning idioms in previous research (Zyzik, 2009) and blogs facilitate this function as well. The aim of this study was to suggest an interactive tool, i.e. blogging as a proper and motivating way of practicing the production of idioms.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter presents the method of conducting this research, identifying the participants of the study, description of the instruments for data collection and the procedures conducted for data collection and analysis. Detailed description of the methodology applied in the current study, i.e. the educational framework of the study, the participants of the study, the materials, and the instruments used for data collection as well as data analysis and the research procedure are provided in this chapter.

3.1 Restatement of the Research Questions

The research questions of the study, based on the problems stated in the literature review, are as follows:

1. Is there any difference in the improvement of idiom production when it is practiced through blogging vs. emailing?
2. What are the students' attitudes towards the production of idioms via blogging?

As the current review of the literature doesn't provide any information on how blogging or any similar technology improves idiom acquisition, particularly idiom production, the following null hypothesis is proposed:

➢ There is no difference in the improvement of idiom production when it is practiced through blogging vs. emailing.

In order to answer the second research question of the study answers to the attitudinal questionnaire and interview were analyzed. Two types of data, i.e. quantitative and qualitative were collected.

3.2 Setting

This research was carried out in the Enhancement English Program (EEP) organized by the Department of English Programs (DEP) at the American University of Armenia (AUA). The duration of the EEP courses is 6 weeks, designed to enhance the proficiency level of the conditionally enrolled students of AUA, which is an English medium graduate school. However, due to some technical disarrangement the experiment started from the second week. Hence, the current experiment lasted 5 weeks. The classes took place three times a week, three hours per session. The experiment took about 20 min of each session.

3.3 Participants

Twenty one Armenian participants of this study were the newly enrolled students of various faculties of the American University of Armenia, an English mediate MA level institute. They were participating in EEP a course organized by the Department of English Programs of AUA, in order to improve their English language proficiency. The main goal of this course is to enhance general academic skills. The level of English language proficiency of the participants was determined based on TOEFL iBT test scores varied from of 69 to 79.They were split to two groups of experimental and comparison according to the students' convenience. They were from different backgrounds. The participants were of both genders, their age ranged from 21 to 45.

All of the students participated in the pre test and post test. Only the students of the experimental group were given the questionnaire. Four participants of the experimental group were interviewed on voluntary basis.

Table1: *Summary of the Participants of the Research*

Group	N	Age		iBT test score	
		mean	St. d	mean	St. d
Experimental	11	24.6	2.7	73.8	3.9
Comparison	10	26.1	7.0	75.2	3.7

The instructor of both experimental and comparison groups was the same. The researcher was observing the treatment period and was responsible to introduce the necessary tools and sources and solve possible technological issues in both groups. During the treatment period the participants were receiving feedback on regular bases. Due to some technical limitations and also time restriction, the experimental group was receiving feedback from the researcher, i.e. as comments on their blog posts, while the comparison group was receiving feedback from the main instructor by e-mail.

Convenient sampling approach was used, i.e. the participants were divided to two groups of morning and evening due to their personal schedules and priorities. In the very last session the students were asked to sign up for the interview with the researcher if they were interested. Six of them wrote their names but due to the late time two of them left. Four of the volunteers were interviewed in face to face bases.

3.4 Materials

The six-week English course is designed to raise the students' general English language proficiency in all four skills: reading, writing, listening, speaking as well as basic study skills for effective functioning in Masters-level programs at AUA. With a primary emphasis on the skills,

this course aims at providing the students with essential vocabulary, grammar, text organization issues, reading and listening strategies, peer and team work both inside and outside the classroom and introduce skills for autonomous learner development. Idioms were the additional part to the materials of EEP for the purposes of the current study.

The idioms used in both groups (comparison and experimental) were selected based upon the agreement of the whole faculty members of the English department of AUA and were tailored to the academic needs of the participants as an additional section. The definitions of the idioms and the examples were collected from internet and checked with the instructor before emailing to the participants in terms of reliability.

To make sure that the selected idioms are new for the participants, piloting tests were given to various students including the second year students of AUA and the alumni. The most unknown and frequent idioms were short listed during several steps of piloting. According to the literature review, semantic transparency of an idiom facilitates comprehending and recalling the idiom, therefore idioms with high transparency were excluded from the pre and post tests during the piloting tests. Furthermore, the results of various experiments done in different EFL environments with various L1 learners ensure that L1 plays a significant role in acquiring identical idioms in L2, i.e. English. Therefore, to prevent any interference of Armenian, Russian and Persian (the participants had good command of one or two of the mentioned languages) in English idiom learning process, similar idioms (realized during the piloting test) were removed from the idiom list. The selected 25 idioms and 20 idioms used in the pre and post tests are available in Appendix A.

3.5 Research design

The design of the current research is mixed method, using both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. The first research question was answered through the analysis of

quantitative data. Due to the non-random division of the participants into the experimental and

comparison groups and also the small size of the sample its design is quasi-experimental.

3.6 Instrumentation

For the purposes of this research, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected.

The quantitative data were collected through:

- Pre tests and Post tests (consisted of two parts;10 fill in the gaps and 10 sentence

  making tasks)

- Questionnaire

The qualitative data were collected through:

- Questionnaire's follow up open ended questions

- Semi-structured interview

- Researcher's comparative notes of students' blog writing assignments

3.6.1. Pre and post tests

To answer the first research question two writing tests specifically designed for this study

were administered before and after the treatment of the course. The students of both

experimental and comparison groups were given the same pre and post tests. Twenty idioms

were included. Both pre and post test (Appendixes B & C) had the same format but different

contexts.

The tests consisted of two parts:

Part A-10 fill in blanks: In this section 10 sentences containing incomplete idioms were given.

Eleven words were given at the beginning of the section, and the participants were asked to use

10 of them to complete the sentences. They had to add words or change the grammatical form

(plural/singular, past/ present, etc.) to write the correct form of the related idiom.

Part B-10 sentence making tasks: in this section the participants were given 10 idioms and asked to use each one in a proper sentence.

Each part was scored using a related rubric (Appendix F) and because of the open ended nature of the second section the tests were corrected by two raters. To check the internal consistency of the scores the inter-rater reliability was calculated. (See table 2)

3.6.2 Questionnaire

A questionnaire (Appendix D) consisted of 12 close ended statements and 3 open ended follow up questions were developed to collect information about the attitudes of the participants of the experimental group toward blogging and idiom production. The data obtained by the close ended part of the questionnaire were analyzed descriptively. The follow up questions' answers were analyzed qualitatively.

3.6.3 Interview

At the end of the last session of the EEP course four participants of the experimental group were interviewed on voluntary bases. The volunteers were interviewed separately and were audio-recorded. The interviews (appendix E) were held by the researcher. Having collected all the interview data, the content analysis was done.

3.7 Treatment

The researcher did the following activities in the experimental group to introduce blog writing. The participants of the experimental group were exposed to blogging for the first time. The researcher helped the participants set up their own blogs after the first session and guided them how to use their blogs efficiently during the 5 weeks of the experiment.

3.7.1Tutorial session for the experimental (blogging) group:

- Introducing the blog's nature and functions at the first session.

- How to search in "picture search engines" such as "Flicker.com" to find proper pictures and upload them in their blogs.

- Sending two relevant tutorial YouTube files on researcher's blog to encourage and help the participants of the experimental group to start blogging.

- Describing how to give comments on each others' blogs and posting some professional blog writers' blog addresses in various themes and fields.

3.7.2 Tutorial session for the comparison (emailing) group:

- Introducing the emailing assignment at the first session.

- How to search in "picture search engines" such as "Flicker.com" to find proper pictures and copy-paste them in the word document or attach them directly on their e-mails.

Throughout the course, students of both groups were assigned five writing tasks. The participants were asked to have at least one blog/e-mail using 5 idioms in proper contexts per week.

The assignments designed for the production of idioms were not the only writing activities the participants were assigned during the course. However, idioms were not involved in other assignments to avoid any confusion in the results of the study. All of the assignments were the same for both experimental and comparison groups. The only difference was the way of submitting the assignments, i.e. posting on blogs vs. e-mailing.

To provide retention, after introducing and providing the definitions and samples of 10 and 15 idioms, two matching exercises were given to both groups as classroom activities. Chain

story making task was also conducted once to practice 25 learned idioms in the last week of the experiment in each class. These classroom tasks were done in both groups equally.

The participants of both groups were receiving definitions and context of five new idioms per week via their e-mails and they were asked to learn those idioms and write a proper context for each one. They were allowed to search in the internet to find good examples but were asked to write their own examples. They were also encouraged to find and attach proper pictures for each idiom. The students of the blogging (experimental) group were tought how to give comments on their peers' blogs and upload pictures on their blog posts but these were not required task. The students of emailing (comparison) group were free to copy pictures on the word document along with the context or attach them to their e-mails.

3.8 Data analysis procedure

The data for the present study was both quantitative, from the questionnaire, pre test and the post test and qualitative, from the interview. The results of the pre and post tests were correspondingly analyzed and compared via SPSS software package.

All of the close ended questions of the questionnaire were analyzed via descriptive analysis. Three follow up open-ended items in the questionnaire and all interview questions were summed up and described qualitatively in order to shed light on the participants' behavioral patterns.

Data collected from the pre and post tests were analyzed using Mann-Whitney U Test, which is used to make comparison between groups. The second test used for the analysis of the pre and posttests was Wilcoxon Test, which was used to do comparison within group.
In the next chapter, data analysis procedures and the results will be discussed in details. This investigation, which included the pre and post tests as well as questionnaires and interviews, provided rich data to address the research questions.

Chapter 4: Results and discussions

Introduction

The main goal of the study was to investigate the impact of blogging on the improvement of idiom production of EFL learners. Furthermore, the learners' attitudes towards blogging for the production of idioms were investigated. For the current study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected via pre and post achievement tests, questionnaire and semi-structured interview. This chapter presents the results and discussions of both quantitative and qualitative data analysis in accordance with the research questions addressed in the scope of the current study.

4.1 Analysis of the results for the first research question

4.1.1 Pre and post tests

Because of the small sample sizes of the study (21 participants), Mann-Whitney U Test and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test were applied to determine if there were significant differences between and within groups of participants at the alpha level of 0.05. Also Wilcoxon's effect sizes of both tests were calculated to demonstrate the degree of effectiveness of the treatments.

As the second part of the pre and post tests were open ended writing tasks, they were graded by two raters (the researcher and an alumni of AUA-MA TEFL) to guarantee the internal consistency of the scores. Rating was done based on a holistic rubric developed for the pre and post tests. All of the errors in spelling and punctuation were ignored. Grammatical errors, having no effect on the idiomatic phrase, were also ignored. For this purpose, statistical analysis was conducted using Cronbach's reliability scale.

For pre tests of both raters, the Cronbach Alpha value was 0.999, which is close to 1. In the post tests, Cronbach Alpha value was 0.998, which is close to 1, suggesting high internal consistency (See table 1).

Table 2: Reliability Statistic

Cronbach's Alpha	Pre tests	Post tests
	0.999	0.998

In order to provide an answer to the first research question of the study, i.e. whether there is any difference in the participants' idiom production depending on whether they write and submit their assignments via blogs or e-mails, the pre test and post test results were analyzed quantitatively through the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS version 16). Two sets of scores were obtained from each group to compare the results of pre and post tests in terms of idiom learning to evaluate and compare both groups' performances.

Table 3: Means

Descriptive statistics						
	Experimental (Blogging)			Comparison (Emailing)		
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.
Pre test	11	2.63	1.62	10	6.75	3.74
Post test	11	16.59	10.83	10	15.27	5.86

Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations of the pre test results for both comparison and experimental groups.

Table 4: Mean Ranks

Ranks	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Pre test	Experimental (Blogging)	11	7.18	79.00
	Comparison (Emailing)	10	15.20	152.00
	Total	21		
Post test	Experimental (Blogging)	11	11.50	126.50
	Comparison (Emailing)	10	10.45	104.50
	Total	21		

According to the data illustrated in *Table 4*, the comparison group has higher scores in the production of idioms in the pre test compared with the Experimental group.

4.1.1.1 Between Group Comparisons

To find out whether the performances of the experimental and comparison groups were similar before the treatments, the Mann Whitney U Test was conducted between the scores of both groups (pre test) on the production of idioms. (Table 5)

Table 5: Mann Whitney U Test for between Group Comparisons

	Pre test	Post test
Mann-Whitney U	13.000	49.000
Z	-2.981	-0.388
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003	0.698

Table 5 presents the results of Mann-Whitney U Tests of the pre test results for both experimental and comparison groups. The results of Mann-Whitney U Test reveal that the asymptotic significance level of *p* in the pre tests is 0.003, i.e. less than 0.05. This means there is a *significant difference* on average in performances of both groups during the pre test in favor of the comparison group.

The comparison of the post tests reveals that the asymptotic significance level of *p* in the post tests is 0.698, i.e. more than 0.05 which means *there is no significant difference* on average in performances of both groups during the post tests.

To sum up, the results indicate that the differences between pre test results of the experimental and the comparison groups are significantly different in favor of the comparison group, however the performances in the post tests were not significantly different.

To make sure that the results of Mann-Whitney U Tests are not by chance and the differences of the pre and post tests are the result of the treatment, within group comparison is necessary.

4.1.1.2 Within Group Comparisons

In order to obtain statistical inferences for within group comparison of pre and post tests for the experimental group, as well as of pre and post tests for the comparison group, non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Tests have been applied, since the sample sizes are small, i.e. less than 30 (See Table 6).

Table 6: Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Tests

Experimental group (Blogging)					
Ranks				**Test Statistics**	
	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
post - pre Negative Ranks	0	0.00	0.00	-2.936	0.003
Positive Ranks	11	6.00	66.00		
Total	11				

Comparison group(Emailing)					
Ranks				**Test Statistics**	
N			Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
post - pre	Negative Ranks	0	0.00	0.00	-2.803	0.005
	Positive Ranks	10	5.50	55.00		
	Total	10				

Table 6 presents the results of Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Tests of the pre and post test results of the experimental and comparison groups.

Because both probabilities, i.e. 0.005 and 0.003(*table 6*) are less than 0.05, it can be assumed that there is a significant difference between pre and post tests of the experimental group as well as between pre and post tests of the comparison group.

"What the probability values do not tell us is the degree to which the two variables are associated with one another" (Pallant, 2007, p.207). Thus, one of the ways to evaluate the importance of the findings is to calculate the effect size. The effect size "is a set of statistics that indicates the relative magnitude of the differences between means" (Tabachnick & Fidell in Pallant, 2007, pp. 207-208).The effect size for this test to be calculated is as follows: we should divide the z value by the square root of N (*r = Z/square root of N, where N is the total number of the participants*).

The effect size of Wilcoxon Test performed for the experimental group is as follows:

$$r = Z = 2.\frac{936}{\sqrt{22}} = 0.62$$

The effect size of Wilcoxon Test performed for the comparison group is as follows:

$$r = Z = 2.\frac{801}{\sqrt{21}} = 0.65$$

According to Cohen's criteria (1998), r=0.1means small effect, r=0.3 means medium

effect and r=0.5 means large effect. Here we see that *r* values are 0.65 and 0.62 for the

comparison and experimental groups, respectively. Therefore, as we see for both groups, the

effect sizes are large.

To sum up, the following conclusions can be drawn: the comparison of the pre test

results of the experimental and comparison groups showed that participants of the comparison

group demonstrated better results than the experimental group. However, after 5 weeks of

treatment, the experimental group showed almost the same results as the comparison group on

the post test. Taking all these factors into account, it can be concluded that the treatment

conducted in the experimental group during the 5-week period had a positive effect on the idiom

production of the experimental group. Thus, the null hypothesis suggested above is rejected, as

the analysis of the data showed that blogging had a positive effect on the idiom production.

4.2 Analysis of the results for the second research question

4.2.1 Questionnaire

Table 7: Students' attitudes towards the production of idiom via blog writing

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q1	30%	0%	10%	20%	40%
Q2	20%	10%	20%	10%	40%
Q3	30%	10%	20%	0%	40%
Q4	0%	0%	40%	40%	20%

Q5	20%	0%	30%	20%	30%
Q6	20%	0%	20%	20%	40%
Q7	20%	0%	30%	20%	30%
Q8	20%	20%	10%	40%	10%
Q9	10%	30%	30%	20%	10%
Q10	20%	0%	20%	10%	50%
Q11	20%	20%	30%	0%	30%
Q12	10%	0%	30%	30%	30%

Statements;

Q1.I liked blogging assignments during my English Enhancement classes.

Q2. I generally feel that my production of idioms has been improved after blogging.

Q3.I generally feel I use idioms more efficiently after blogging.

Q4. I'm interested to continue blogging after EEP classes.

Q5.Blogging was a time consuming assignment.

Q6.Blogging was a good tool for learning idioms.

Q7. Blog writing is motivating for language learning.

Q 8.The fact that my blog post could be read by others made me work harder.

Q9.Blogging was stressful because it could be read by others.

Q10. Uploading picture in blog was a good idea for learning idioms.

Q11.I had technical problems while blogging.

Q12.Technical problems were easy to solve when blogging.

Usefulness of blog writing for idiom learning was targeted in Q2, Q3 and Q6 with

different wordings and the results reveal that about 60% to 50% of the participants agreed with

the statements and only 30% to 20% strongly disagreed. Twenty percent had no specific idea concerning this issue. Thus, the majority found the treatment relevant and useful.

According to Q1, 60% of the participants liked blogging assignments while 30% of them disliked. Motivation was discussed in statement Q7 concerning which 50% of the participants found blogging motivating, while 30% had no specific idea and 20% didn't see any motivating factor in blogging. Q4 targeted the issue of future use of blogging. Sixty percent agreed that they may continue blogging after the EEP but 40% had no specific idea. However, no one disliked this idea and this can be assumed that the students found blogging interesting and worth paying attention to but perhaps they didn't like the idea of utilizing blogging (mentioned in Q1) as one of their EEP course assignments.

Concerning Q8, 50% of the participants thought that the social nature of blogs had effect on their attitudes and they worked harder and paid more attention to their language mistakes. On the other hand, 40% of the participants disagreed with this idea. This contradiction might be related to the level of stress that is targeted in Q9. Interestingly, 30% answered that the stress level was high because others could read and see their mistakes. Though 30% had neutral idea and 40% disagreed with stressfulness of blogging. Therefore, it can be assumed that those who were motivated with the social nature of blogging were able to overcome the stress or didn't experience a high level of stress.

Uploading pictures, targeted in Q10, was useful for idiom learning for 60% of the participants. Twenty percent had no specific idea and 20% "strongly disagreed". Disagreements might be related to poor searching skills and/or the time restriction that that the participants had during the EEP course.

 Challenges with blogging were targeted in statements Q5, Q11and Q12. According to the majority of the participants, i.e. 60% blogging was a time consuming assignment (Q5). Only

20% thought that it wasn't time consuming. Frothy percent had a moderate opinion on this issue. Consequently, it was time assuming for many and this might be related to editing of the mistakes, not blogging action itself.

Frothy percent of the participants had no specific challenges with blogging (Q11), while 30% faced some challenges. Thirty percent had no specific idea. It's interesting to see that in Q12 60% of the participants mentioned that technical challenges were easy to solve, while only 10% faced serious challenges. The rest of the participants, i.e.30% didn't find the challenges too easy or had no serious complains. Comparison of the results of Q1 and Q2 reveals that blogging was a user-friendly tool for the majority of the participants and they were able to solve the technical problems.

4.2.2 Open ended questions of the questionnaire

Only 4 students answered the following open-ended questions. The answers are summed up.

13. Do you think the time limitation you had affected your blog writing task?

Answers varied from a little bit to not at all, but overall impression was that the participants were able to overcome their time limitation because of motivating factor of blogging.

14. What do you like the best about learning idioms through blogging?

The participants mentioned that they liked comments, the general idea of e-learning, using pictures for idioms, sentence writing in blog posts and reading each others' blogs.

15. What would you like to change about learning idioms through blogging?

Most of the answers were "Nothing". One of the participants mentioned that she prefers uploading pictures without any writing assignments.

4.2.3 Interview

1. Students' learning behavior while blogging

   a. **I'm interested in how you blogged in terms of time you spent on;**
   Publishing, editing, re-reading, reading other's blogs, commenting, solving the challenges.

All the four interviewees mentioned that little time was spent on posting each blog, but after making posts, most of the participants noticed some mistakes and edited them after publishing the blog post. Only two of the participants found reading others' blogs interesting and also stated that they gave comments to them. In addition, three of the participants mentioned that they were editing the posts for several times because after posting they could see the mistakes better. One of the participants mentioned that she never edited because she is used to check her written work carefully in the word document before submitting. One of the participants mentioned that she didn't understand the meaning and purpose of reading other's blogs, as well as writing comments. In terms of technical challenges no one had serious complaints.

  B. What's your opinion about the social nature of blogs? Does this fact have any effect on your stress level and/or motivation?

  a. *Stress*: In terms of the stress level that blogging had on participants, two of the interviewees answered that it wasn't stressful at all. However, one of the interviewees mentioned: "others' judgment is always stressful and we were purposefully letting others to read and judge us". One of the interviewees mentioned that although she was aware of the social nature of blog, she didn't think that others would pay attention to her blog posts. Thus, it wasn't stressful for her.

b. *Motivation*: for all of the participants blogging was a new activity which was highly motivating and interesting.

2. Learning idioms while blogging;

A. I want to know your opinion about the role of blogging on learning idioms in your group;

o *Pictures:* all of the interviews believed that searching and uploading pictures are very useful to recall the idioms but these are time consuming tasks.

o *Search in the internet:* all of the interviewees mentioned that searching in the internet in order to find proper context was very useful and even some of the participants found interesting songs, news and movie critics related to the idioms.

o To the question *"Do you find idioms useful as an EFL student?"* Almost all of the interviewees answered that idioms are very useful because they will be able to understand native speakers and speak like them.

o To the question *"Do you think that blog writing assignments were suitable for idiom learning?"* various answers were given. Two of the participants said yes, with no description. One of the interviewees said "no" and described that she doesn't see any reason to do blogging for idiom learning. She mentioned that blogs are not good for educational purposes.

B. Now I'm interested to know what do you like the most and what you didn't like in blogging.

To the above mentioned question the interviewees gave the following answers. The answers are ordered from the most to the least commonly mentioned answers.

1. Three interviewees said: "I liked publishing my ideas and discussing them with others". Two of them added; "I felt uncomfortable while publishing, because I was worried about many language mistakes."

2. Two of the interviewees mentioned: "I liked blogging overall and later I'll publish my view points in my blog."

3. One of the interviewees mentioned: "I don't see blogging as an educational tool."

4. 3 Conclusion

To sum up, the following conclusions can be drawn: the comparison of the pre test results of the experimental and comparison groups reveals that participants of the comparison group demonstrated better results than the experimental group. However, the evaluation of the results reveals that after 5 weeks of treatment, members of the experimental group, who were posting their assignments in their blogs, showed almost the same post test results as participants of the comparison group who were sending their assignments via e-mail. The comparison of the pre and post test results within each group reveals that both groups improved their production of idioms as the result of the treatment. However the experimental group showed significantly better improvement in test scores from pre test to post test. The effect sizes of both groups are large.

Taking all these factors into account, it can be concluded that the treatment carried out in the experimental group had a positive effect on the idiom production of participants of the experimental group. Thus, the null hypothesis of this study, i.e. there is no relation between blogging and idiom production is rejected.

Quantitative and qualitative data analysis results answered to the second research question, i.e. students' attitudes toward blogging for the production of idioms. These data reveals

that the majority of the participants hesitated about the properness of blogging task for production of idioms. However, most of them were enthusiastic towards blogging. Furthermore, some of the participants mentioned that they will continue blogging for their professional needs.

The stress level was high in the blogging group and based on the inferential data obtained from the interview this was directly connected to the social nature of blogs. However, some of the students mentioned that the fact that they have a potential target audience forced them to work harder to enhance their final product and demonstrate the best version of their product to the audience. For this purpose they did several editing and consequently spent most of their time on this stage. This factor may have some influence on their language learning process, namely production of the learned idioms. Most of the participants were able to overcome the technical challenges of blogging which is due to user-friendliness of blogs.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to summarize the findings of the conducted research in order to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there any difference in the improvement of idiom production when it is practiced through blogging vs. emailing?

2. What are the students' attitudes towards the production of idioms via blogging?

The underlying assumption was that there is no difference in the improvement of idiom production when it is practiced through blogging or emailing.

This chapter also discusses the pedagogical implications and immerged limitations while conducting the current study and offers some suggestions for further research.

5.1 Discussion of findings of the first research question

Comparison of the pre and post test results between the two groups of experimental and comparison reveals that although the comparison (emailing) group demonstrated significantly better results than the experimental (blogging) group in their pre tests, in the post test the experimental group's performance was equal to the comparison group. On the other hand, within group comparisons reveal that there is a significant progress in the production of idioms in both groups during 5 weeks of treatments. The effect sizes of both groups were large, i.e. the effect of the treatments in both groups was high. Hence, it is noteworthy that in the improvement of idiom production the blogging treatment was more effective than emailing.

5.2 Discussion of findings of the second research question

In order to find out what are those specifications that make blogging different from emailing the attitudinal research question was proposed. The experimental (blogging) group was the target of this question.

To answer this question, qualitative data were obtained from a close ended questionnaire with 12 statements, 3 follow up open ended questions and a semi-structured interview.

Descriptive analysis of the results of the close ended statements of the questionnaire reveals that the majority of the participants liked blogging activity and found it useful for idiom learning but there were some disagreements and hesitations toward this factor that was also reflected in the interview, i.e. there were students that thought blogging is for personal journal keeping purposes and has no relation with language learning. This was mainly due to the unawareness about the social nature of blogs and its effect on language awareness rising which was also targeted in the questionnaire. The answers reveal that some of the participants had high level of stress because of the target audience, while others were indifferent or not aware of the fact. The answers of the interview reveal that those students who were aware of the target audience and were sensitive toward the social nature of blogs spent more time and effort on editing and reediting their blog posts.

Motivation as one of the major reasons of choosing blogging as a tool for this experiment was very high and the majority of the participants both in the questionnaire and the interview mentioned that blogging was a motivating writing tool and two of the interviewees mentioned that they will continue blogging. Most of the participants were able to overcome the technical challenges of blogging which is due to the user-friendliness of blogs. However, some factors affected the attitudes of the participants in the experimental group participants' attitudes. During the course they figured out that the assignments are not graded and due to the time restriction and intensity of other assignments it was hard to convince the participants to have a better attitude toward the blogging assignments.

5.3 Limitations and delimitations of the study

As no study is perfect, some delimitations and limitations can be suggested for the current study.

5.3.1 Limitation

- The study was carried out with a small sample and since it involved limited number of participants (only 21students), tentative generalization can be made based on the obtained results.

- Absence of randomization of samples was one of the main limitations of this study. This sample did not provide a varied population mix. The students of AUA with a limited variety of iBT scores were divided into two groups based on a convenient sampling approach.

- Another limitation of the study is that it was not longitudinal, i.e.it was carried out in a five-week course. Therefore more tentative generalizations of the findings can be drawn.

- Intensity of the assignments and variety of other tasks in the EEP course were negative factors that might have affected participants' idiom learning.

- Non graded blogging/emailing assignments might have negative factor on the results of the study.

- The Experimental group was given feedback by the researcher, and the nature of the feedback, i.e. comments on each blog post was more encouraging and was focused on the correct use of idioms in terms of idiomatic structure, formality and appropriateness of the context. On the other hand, the main teacher was giving feedback to the comparison group's e-mail assignments. This may have some influence on the production of idioms and make a difference in the comparison group.

5.3.2 Delimitation

This delimitation of the study may have impact on the amount of information available to us. This research was conducted within the following parameters:

- Only Armenian students of EEP with iBT mean score of 74.5 were included in this study. Their age mean was 25.37.
- Comparison of two modes, i.e. blogging vs. emailing was done in the current study.

5.4 Pedagogical Implications

The results of the current study suggest that blogging has a better contribution in improving of idiom production than e-mailing. Quantitative, as well as qualitative data demonstrating students' attitudes towards blogging reveal that it is a useful writing tool for take-home activities, particularly for challenging aspects of the language like production of idioms.

Based on the findings of the study, it is possible to suggest that blogging as an educational tool is proper for EFL learners' language awareness rising. Blogging as a new technology for the participants was highly motivating, thus it might be proper to encourage the learners to write on regular bases.

Data obtained from the questionnaire and interview revealed that the students were able to see their language mistakes when their blog posts were published. Uploading pictures, commenting and receiving comments were useful and interesting facilities of blog for most of the participants.

At the end of the data analysis, while reviewing the blog posts, it was interesting to see that the most active bloggers were the same students who showed a good improvement in the production of idioms during the course. This may support the effectiveness of blogging.

Based on the revealed results, it can be suggested that blogging activities were more beneficial for enhancing idiom production skills than e-mailing in the studied groups. Thus, it might be proper for EFL/ESL teachers to use blogging to design tasks for different aspects of language, especially idiom learning and particularly production of idioms which, based on the review of the related literature, is the most ignored aspect of idiom learning.

Being subscribed to the participants' blogs helped to follow their blogging activities even after the experiment. The RSS feed made it possible to see that two of the participants were still updating their blog posts two months after the experiment, from time to time using the learned idioms. Following, the blogs are also easy for teachers and also fellow students because of the RSS feed available in blogs.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

While carrying out the study some questions and ideas for further research raised. It would be proper to do a similar study with a larger sample and on longitudinal bases to follow the participants' natural blogging behavior and check whether they use the learned idioms.

The novelty factor of blogging may have an impact on language learning, teaching and enthusiasm of the EFL learners. This might be a proper aspect to study and see whether the learners are interested in blogging' when it is not any more a new writing tool for them.

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Appendix A

Idiom List

1. make a case
2. as a last resort
3. take something for granted
4. on the right track
5. get someone's foot in the door
6. be that as it may
7. off the top of someone's head
8. as a rule of thumb
9. at (one's) fingertips
10. grass- roots
11. give and take
12. the bottom line
13. throw a monkey wrench
14. reinvent the wheel

15. pick someone's brain
16. cover all the bases
17. against all odds
18. scratch the surface
19. to know someone inside out
20. at face value
21. abide by the rules
22. boil down to something
23. a hard nut to crack
24. a cut above the average
25. a case in point

Appendix B (Pre test)

A. Fill the blanks by completing the idioms. Each key word in the parentheses is part of an idiom. Use the given keywords to complete the idioms. You may need to change the form of the word, add an article and/or a word.

Example: A lot affects the outcome. It _**boils**_ down to scheduling and the commitment of the network.

Keywords: case , brain, ~~boil~~, resort, granted, face, right, foot, may, head, surface

1.   A dog was shot and killed by Birmingham police, leaving its owner, friends and supporters seeking answers. However, police maintain that the dog was threatening and was only killed as a …………….…..... .

2. Humanity has only scratch…………………………………. of its real potential.

3.   Brain research tells us that only twenty percent of human beings have a sense of irony, which means that eighty percent of the world takes everything …………………………….....

4.   Even if you're ………………track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.

5.   I think I could get the job if I could only get ……………..door. I'll try to get an appointment with the boss.

6.   "Knowing all the different positions, if somebody doesn't know their assignment, I can tell them what to do off the top of………………. It helps to have someone in the huddle who can help all the other positions. I can show them what to do and help pick them up."

7.   I spent the afternoon with my sister, picking ……………. for ideas to use in our celebration.

8. I'm sorry to hear about your troubles, but, be that ………………….., you still must carry out your responsibilities. I can't help you.

9.   For many of us, going online whenever we want is something we take…………………**.** However, an astounding 40 percent of residents in Philadelphia are without home Internet access. What's more, for too many, the sheer act of using a computer to go online remains a foreign and sometimes frightening concept.

10. I'm trying to …………….case for those people who don't have a sense of belonging that they should have, that there is something really worthwhile in having a sense of belonging, and recasting and looking at our modern history.

B. Mark each idiom that is familiar to you. Use the marked idioms in a short context.

Mark all idioms that you know with a check mark (✔). Illustrate your knowledge of all marked idioms with a sentence or two. One of the idioms has been taken as an example. IF you are not familiar with an idiom mark it with a cross (**X**).

Example: (✔)as a last resort

A dog was shot and killed by Birmingham police, leaving its owner, friends and supporters seeking answers. However, police maintain that the dog was threatening and was only killed as a last as **a last resort**.

1. ( ) as a rule of thumb
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………

 2. ( ) at (one's) fingertips
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………

3. ( ) to know someone inside out
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………

4. ( ) grass- roots
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………………

5. ( ) give and take
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………...

6. ( ) the bottom line
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………

7. ( ) throw a monkey wrench
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………

8. ( ) reinvent the wheel
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………

9. ( ) cover all the bases
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………

10. ( ) against all odds
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………

Appendix C (Post test)

A. Fill the blanks by completing the idioms. Each key word in the parentheses is part of an idiom. Use the given keywords to complete the idioms. Sometimes you may need to change the form of the neighboring words and/or add another word.

Example: A lot affects the outcome of your project. It ***boils*** down to scheduling and the commitment of the network.

Keywords: ~~boil~~, *rule, fingertip, reinvent, base, bottom, inside, wrench, value, brain, give, odd,*

1. The man who comes up with a means for doing or producing almost anything better, faster or more economically has his future and his fortune at his……………………… .

2. Robert Altman's Nashville is my all-time favorite film because it covers ……………………....- it's original, moving, and has something to say, but also funny and incredibly entertaining.

3. Do things with a partner. There is no need to ………………….wheel, especially when you have all the information to meet your goals with ease.

4. ………………………. line is that there is a lot more that could and should be done to help people with nutrition and exercise.

  5.   *The boss threw …………………….. into our plans when he said we'd have to work Saturday.*

6. I have learned, as a ………….…....., never to ask whether you can do something. Say, instead, that you are doing it. Then fasten your seat belt. The most remarkable things follow.

7. *Against…………………….., he graduated from school with his grandchildren.*

8. If you take life ……………value, it loses its luster pretty quickly. If you go after it, you get more out of it.

9. I spent the whole summer with my grandparents, picking ………………. for ideas to use in my problem.

10. I studied and studied for my driver's test until I knew the rules……………….. .

A. Mark each idiom that is familiar to you. Use the marked idioms in a short context.

Mark all idioms that you know with a check mark (✔). Illustrate your knowledge of all marked idioms with a sentence or two. One of the idioms has been taken as an example. IF you are not familiar with an idiom mark it with a cross (**X**).

Example: (✔) a hard nut to crack: T*his assignment is a hard*.................................. *even for the smartest students.*

1. ( ) scratch the surface

   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

2. ( ) as a last resort

   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

3. ( ) make a case

………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………

4. ( ) grass- root

   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

5. ( ) take something for granted

   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

6. ( ) give and take

   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

7. ( ) on the right track

   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

8. ( ) off the top of someone's head

………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………

9. ( ) be that as it may

   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

10. ( ) get someone's foot in the door

………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Appendix D

Questionnaire

Please circle the best answer to indicate your opinion about the blogging assignment.

Strongly disagree **(1)**, Disagree **(2)**, Neither agree nor disagree **(3)**, Agree **(4),** Strongly agree **(5)**

Q1.I liked blogging assignments during my English Enhancement classes.	1	2	3	4	5
Q2. I generally feel that my production of idioms has been improved after blogging.	1	2	3	4	5
Q3.I generally feel I use idioms more efficiently after blogging.	1	2	3	4	5
Q4. I'm interested to continue blogging after EEP classes.	1	2	3	4	5
Q5.Blogging was a time consuming assignment.	1	2	3	4	5
Q6.Blogging was a good tool for learning idioms.	1	2	3	4	5
Q7. Blog writing is motivating for language learning.	1	2	3	4	5
Q 8.The fact that my blog post could be read by others made me work harder.	1	2	3	4	5
Q9.Blogging was stressful because it could be read by others.	1	2	3	4	5
Q10. Uploading picture in blog was a good idea for learning idioms.	1	2	3	4	5
Q11.I had technical problems while blogging.	1	2	3	4	5
Q12.Technical problems were easy to solve when blogging.	1	2	3	4	5

13. Do you think the time limitation you had affected your blog writing task? Describe please.
……………………………………………………………………………………………
14. What do you like the best about learning of idioms through blogging?
…………………………………………………………………………………………..
15. What would you like to change about learning idioms through blogging?
…………………………………………………………………………………………..

Thank you!

Appendix E

Interview Questions

1. **Students' learning behavior while blogging;**

2. **I'm interested in how you blogged in terms of time you spent on;**

   b. time you consumed
   c. publishing
   d. editing
   e. re-reading
   f. reading other's blogs
   g. commenting
   h. Solving the challenges

   B. What's your opinion about the social nature of blogs?

   c. Stress

   d. Motivation

   Follow up free discussion (1-2 min)

2. Learning idioms while blogging;

   A. I want to know your opinion about the role of blogging on learning of idioms in your group;

   o Pictures
   o search in the internet
   o Do you find idioms useful as an EFL student?
   o Do you think that blog writing assignments were suitable for idiom learning?

   B. Now I'm interested to know what do you like the best and what didn't you like in blogging?

Appendix F

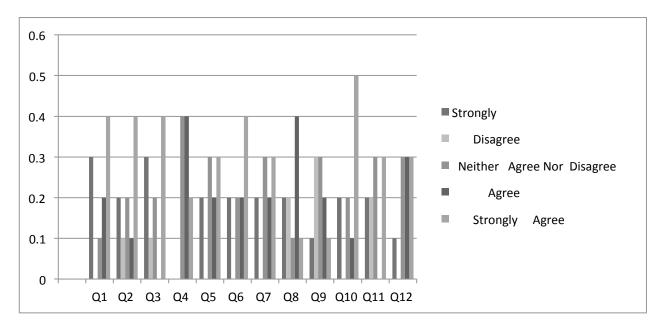## *Grading Rubric for the Idiom Production*

Grading rubric part A:

point	quality
2	The answer, i.e. the idiom phrase is completed correctly.
1	The answer is partially completed, i.e. the idiom is partially correct
0	No sentence is written / The answer is incorrect.

Grading rubric part B:

point	quality
2	The meaning is contextualized and idiom is used grammatically correctly.
1.5	The meaning is somewhat contextualized and idiom is used grammatically correctly.
1	The meaning is clearly contextualized but idiom is not used grammatically correctly.
0.5	The meaning is somewhat contextualized but idiom is not used grammatically correctly. /The meaning is poorly contextualized but idiom is used grammatically correctly. /The definition is given but it is not contextualized nor used in the sentence.
0	No sentence is written / the sentence doesn't make sense or it's not related to the idiom. / Meaning is not contextualized and idiom is not used grammatically correctly.

Appendix G

Histogram Output-Descriptive Analysis of the Questionnaire